

## RECENT CHANGES OF SICILIAN AGRICULTURE (1950-2010)

**Gianni PETINO\***

\* *Researcher, University of Catania, Faculty of Scienze Politiche, Department of Processi Politici, Sociali e Istituzionali, Piazza Universita, no 2, 95124, Italy, e-mail: petinog@unict.it*

**Abstract:** *Recent changes of Sicilian agriculture (1950-2010).* Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a radical transformation of land tenure in Sicily, it was a passing from the concentrations of the middle classes of the eighteenth century, which took advantage of the crumbling of the large feudal estates concentrated in few hands, to the often exasperated fragmentation of peasant property that, to this day, returns an apparent "communiting" passed unscathed through two centuries and even got worse during the fascist era. The Sicilian territory, especially in its inland areas, and long-term will likely continue to have among its characteristics an entirely agricultural vocation, even in the presence of forms of integration with other sectors such as tourism. On such background, this paper tries to analyze the dynamics of the agriculture starting from the past century to the contemporary period outlining the new recent changes of this economic sector.

**Rezumat:** *Transformări recente ale agriculturii siciliene (1950-2010).* Între secolele XIX și XX, în Sicilia a avut loc o transformare radicală și puternică a proprietății funciare, trecându-se la concentrațiile claselor de mijloc ale sec. al XVIII-lea, care au profitat de prăbușirea marilor moșii feudale concentrate în câteva proprietăți mari și de fragmentarea proprietății țărănești. Teritoriul sicilian, mai ales în zonele și regiunile sale interioare, pe termen lung, continuă, probabil, să aibă, printre caracteristicile sale particulare, o vocație în întregime agricolă, chiar și în prezența unor forme de integrare contemporană cu alte sectoare din domeniul serviciilor, cum ar fi, de exemplu, turismul. Pe acest fond general, lucrarea prezintă dinamica sectorului agricol începând cu secolul trecut și culminând cu cele mai recente schimbări ale perioadei contemporane.

**Key words:** *agriculture, economic geography, funciar estate, Sicily, Italy,*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *agricultură, geografie economică, proprietate funciară, Sicilia, Italia.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The regional agricultural scenario is primarily characterized by woody agricultural crops, that is to say olives, vines and fruit trees, especially citrus specialties, secondarily by the cultivation of crops, among them the grain destination with wheat being an excellent representative. This scenario has been for some time in production decline, accompanied by a simultaneous reduction of planted areas, this mainly due to atavistic delays in the development and to structural limits of a region that hardly moves away from a chronic diffuse marginality in all sectors.

The complex experience of development planning started in Sicily for more than two decades, even if adequately supported by a financial point of view, seems not to have had the overall effects and economic expectations. The governance mechanisms and the many partnership tables have almost always heard short-term interests rather than long-term planning. In opposition to what has been said there are some dynamics that are closely related to issues such as environment and quality, ethics and corporate social responsibility, typicality and tradition; in this context, the typical products, as well as represent the dynamics, have the considerable feature to perfectly suit the international trade, projecting towards most profitable conditions the efforts of those who invest. From this point of view, Sicily, within the Italian territory, has an excellent performance in order to the number of assignments, distributed by administrative region, finishing, in fact, at the top with 25 assignments, between PDO and PGI, making it the first of the southern regions. Among the certificated products there are four cheeses like Pecorino siciliano PDO, Vastedda del Belice PDO, Ragusano PDO and Piacentinu ennese PDO, six olive oils such as Monti Iblei PDO, Val di Mazara PDO, Valli Trapanesi PDO, Monte Etna PDO, the Valle del Belice PDO, Val Demone PDO, followed by thirteen in the vegetables and cereals category such as Arancia rossa PGI, Pesca di Leonforte PGI, Limone Interdonato di Messina PGI, Cappero di Pantelleria PGI, Nocellara del Belice PDO, Uva da tavola di Canicattì PGI, Pomodoro di Pachino PGI, Uva da tavola di Mazzarrone PGI, Ficodindia dell'Etna PDO, Pistacchio verde di Bronte PDO, the newly added Carota di Ispica PGI, Limone di Siracusa PGI and Arancia di Ribera PDO; finally the only product included in the category of Sicilian meat preparations represented by Salame S. Angelo PGI, and the only one present in the category of bakery products represented by Pagnotta del Dittaino PDO. These must be added to other 31 Sicilian wines including a DOCG, 23 DOC and seven IGT, of which contemporary Sicily has become a discrete level producer.

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS AND EVOLUTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

### 2. 1. The agricultural evolution from 1950 to 2000

The interpretation of the socio-economic "facts" and the speed with which they have occurred since World War II can not ignore the profound changes closely related to the transformation of the agricultural system, and between it and the Italian society as a whole. There is, in fact, a sudden change of the production structure of the whole country-system, from predominantly agricultural and rural connotations to intermediate stages between the two World Wars with weak industrialization, to the agricultural-industrial models after the Second World War and, as mentioned, to a largely industrial character to this day, with the

fully emerging characteristics of a post-industrial society. As confirmation, it is possible to compare different indicators such as, for example, the population employed in agriculture in different decades, or the intended use and consumption of soil, without neglecting the industrial contamination in the agricultural sector including the massive use of chemical, mechanization, genetics and the even more obvious integration with the food industry.

Preliminarily, however, it's necessary to highlight certain "issues", part of which is southern character and many others, by contrast, are often attributable to national and supranational dynamics. In order of time, and beginning in the so-called "years of rebuilding"<sup>1</sup>, between 1946 and 1950, thanks to numerous studies and surveys more or less extensive and more or less focused on the complex but not extensive Italian territory, without possibility of misunderstanding almost all agriculture classic bipolar disorders are identified, they showed, on the one hand, at least two structural failures, mainly related to the distribution of property titles and to the more than obvious divergence between ownership and enterprise, on the other hand they let emerge technical and political issues. Just remember, for example, the Medici's important study on behalf of the National Institute of Agricultural Economics, which emphasized the high fragmentation of Italian agriculture in terms of ownership, with about nine and a half million owners (one out of every five residents), as well as in terms of areas with about five million homeowners with almost half a hectare each, and things did not improve in the remaining portions of property other than trifling number of 21,000 landowners with more than 100 hectares; the forms of tenure were represented by forms of direct farmer-run for about 40% while only 15.8% were real capitalist ownership and, in the case of Sicily, near a widespread small rural farmership, there were extensive large landed properties. From the technical point of view in most of Italian agriculture, and particularly in the South and in Sicily, the cultural practices were still based on antiquated methods and knowledge, by contrast, not only for different war contingencies, the sudden population increase had led to tilling even more marginal lands<sup>2</sup> and terracing most of the hilly and sometimes mountainous lands, even adding hydrogeological problems to the already well-known limitations. From the political point of view, and having to "start" from these not excellent bases, this was added to the error of not considering agriculture as a basic system with its importance, preferring its restructuring the industry that, after the Second World War, intercepted every effort for its reactivation and revitalization. In the fifties, always after important economic circumstances such as the Korean War, the entire Italian economy, and agriculture in it, underwent a period of intervention and investment such that it can be considered as a period of change. From the point of view of agricultural policies are witnessing the application of the extract of the land reform through the establishment of institutions for the expropriated land censuses, all or in part, that in Sicily were commensurate in little more than 75,000 hectares, for the most part extensive agriculture lands with little or absent capital penetration, consequently, also with

---

<sup>1</sup> The Second World War had weighed heavily on Italian agriculture with obvious direct damage to land, spare capital and equipment, as well as for the impoverishment of the soil due to a not adequate fertilization and excessive wear of ever renovated machinery. This must be added to the destruction of buildings and plantations.

<sup>2</sup> For marginal lands are to be understood, for ease of discussion, those lands that firms not feel convenient to use, without the risk of a debit balance, since the marginality is determined by all factors affecting revenues and costs, for instance, the natural productivity, technology, economic and social infrastructure, etc.

limited presence of land investments, among other things even extra-marginal lands including wetlands and rocky terrain also very distant from residential areas. The intervention of the land reform<sup>3</sup> and, most importantly, the subsequent granting of state subsidies to farmers have led the most optimistic to say that Italy was no longer a country of large estates. This statement, as confirmed by several authors and scholars, as well as being excessively optimistic, did not consider the fact that, while the southern landlordism was still existing although reduced, the "rural estate", consisting of hundreds of thousands of micro properties, was added to it especially in Sicily.

In the Fifties is also the active participation of Italy to the European Coal and Steel Community and later the European Economic Community, through which also agriculture find its supranational and national political space, enjoying a long period of internal protection from imports and a price support for domestic production, with the well known results. However, it's important to point out that what was undersigned in the fifties is an important step, representing a first example for a political and economic integration among different countries<sup>4</sup>, providing for a harmonious growth and development, thus improving the standard of living. The "Trattato di Roma" already dedicates ten articles, which together constitute the second part of Title II of the same agreement, to the Community Agricultural Policy; however it should be noted that, as far as you can tell from reading the objectives, there's no indication of how to achieve them but simply providing for the creation of specific common market organisms.

In the Sixties, always after several studies and researches, we begin to "think" to a more modern agriculture, but with a minor role in the Italian economy and an increasingly greater importance of private enterprise, although supported by public action. It starts the idea to modernize the farmer role as evidenced by the report on agriculture, developed in large part by Bandini, referring to the farm as a place where other economic factors have decisive importance in addition to the "ground" resource, beginning to emphasize the geo-economic component in which the entrepreneur and his farm directly depend on "the environment" in which they are established. The same report asserts the concept and importance of the family-run firms, of Anglo-Saxon derivation, of adequate size for the support and the autonomy of the family itself, introducing what later would be named production chain, that is to say forms of integration between pure production and processing arrangements, various types services and markets.

It is increasingly evident that the processes of transformation, integration and specialization have changed from the sixties onwards, and finally, the Italian agriculture, the area that receives and integrates with it, with results that only later will result in more remarkable phenomena, gradually changing the farmer role, even though its economic and social importance<sup>5</sup> has been drastically reduced. From these changes other phenomena arise

---

<sup>3</sup> Land reform, together with all national and regional special legislation, has enhanced the reduction of the vast possessions, both for coercive spin-offs, and the gradual transformation of the agricultural land that have been activated by the same reform.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that differences between countries as most of the efforts being made hereafter, will tend to weaken, till cancel them, the socio-economic gaps between different areas of the European fold, among which stand out in negative the Mediterranean one and, in this, the Sicily.

<sup>5</sup> It is due to the strong productivity gains in the decades between the 60s and 70s that today the Italian agriculture, and in it stands out the Sicilian one, is one of the most important European agriculture, beyond very large countries such as Germany and able to compete with France, which from the side of

such as exodus of agriculture, the spread of mechanization, the abandonment of marginal lands and the productive specialization<sup>6</sup> of others, that is to say the intensification of horticultural and tree crops, especially in southern irrigated areas.

In the Seventies, as in the previous decade, agriculture productivity increases as well as the mechanization, supported by a system of indiscriminate financing and policies to support farm prices, in contrast intensifies the osmosis processes of labor, first towards industry and later towards the tertiary sector that, at the expense of the other two, will be the greatest attraction for the supply of and demand for new jobs. In this regard it should be noted that from these trends would start part-time or pluri-active farms, with forms of substitution of laborer farm work<sup>7</sup>, in addition to the growing use of subcontracting. Also in terms of agricultural employment, the seventies also represent a turning point because the extra-Community workers reach considerable numerical strength, focusing on harvesting areas thus compensating for a chronic lack, at least in one of the most important moment from the use of labor point of view. The greatest concentration of extra-Community employment outside is in the South of Italy, reaching a significant weight among the employed in agriculture.

In the Eighties a number of "virtuous" processes as the increase of mechanization<sup>8</sup> and interventions on price support, as well as protectionist barriers to support domestic production, come to an end. It should be also noted that the basis of these processes were European policies since the beginning dimly lit and that proved to be devastating in the long run, far beyond the worst auspices; it must be remembered, among many, the problem of agricultural surpluses to be stored or to be destroyed, problem that greatly raises the expenses<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, as evidenced by the 1982 General Census of Agriculture, the area has a general decline, with some caveats, however partially offset by the aforementioned increase in yields. In the south and Sicily important crops such as citrus fruits, while in the middle of the market crisis, see a reduction of the areas destined to the lemon crop as well as a reduction of investment and production. The vine crop decreases in mixed cultivation and increases in primary culture. In the same period, other indicators of technical progress in agriculture record significant increases such as the mineral nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium oxide fertilizer, with a slight decrease in the second half of the eighties due to a failure to adjust product prices. From the point of view of the area width we are still far from the minimum standards of economic convenience with a national total

---

the value of final production reaches better results, while from the point of view of added-value levels tend to be equated.

<sup>6</sup> The evolutionary phenomena and changes in the geography of local agricultural production are and will be accompanied by consequential changes in the "DNA" of farms, in fact, they gradually lose their promiscuous character and will feature a variety of products due to the need to meet the needs of farming families, specializing in a few productions, all (or almost all) functional to their progressive open to agricultural markets. This phenomenon is almost immediately evident in the agricultural areas of northern Italy and relatively slower in the areas of the South.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the drastic reduction in the number of farmers is taking place a profound transformation of the same social role of the farmer, his habits and living conditions. The people who still live in the "countryside" appear to be less influenced by the rhythms and the repetition of agricultural practices and more open to innovations, not only technical. At the same time large farmers abandon their residences in situ to move to the cities.

<sup>8</sup> The total mechanical power is more of 105 hp per employee in agriculture.

<sup>9</sup> In the late eighties estimated at around 40 billion ECU

average area of only 7.20 hectares and with a utilized agricultural area of 4.89 ha, values still higher than those recorded in Sicily.

It is well known that Sicily has always had a multitude of agricultural sectors, in the nineties it is necessary to make a balance of it, as a region with more pronounced adjustment and propensity to maintain agriculture as the dominant element of the local economy and especially for the influence it exerts on the territorial structure. It is known to most that the company fragmentation is one of the characteristics of Sicilian agriculture, coupled with the company fragmentation that gives us only an image of the "campaign" organized in gardens, although valuable. Since the beginning of our discussion we have mentioned several times the more or less intense processes of agrarian transformation that are also capillaries in the Italian territory and in the south; on the contrary, in Sicily, being a balance, up to the nineties little or nothing has changed: static agricultural sectors, small or very small business width and weak structural changes, with the province of Palermo as the only exception, the first of all, although late, during those years, to accept the general trends of the national agricultural area. In the same period, in fact, even a break on national policies, which until then had somehow privileged indiscriminate financing rather than address the needs of modernization of the agricultural system puts in larger contexts, with new rules and progressively rigorous approximations. It is also of the nineties a more rapid and effective success of the Community Agricultural Policy, which until then had been more protectionist and a role for maintaining high price levels.

Towards the end of the decade in the Italian agricultural scenery come up some topics such as multi-functionality, pluri-activity, valorization of quality and typical products, supply organization, promotion of technological innovation, of technical assistance and services, topics which, although specified in the enclosure to the Finance Act of 1998, would be unfair and simplistic to consider all of national origin, but rather the result of Community agreements, political struggles and compromises, pointing out that are the well known "accompanying measures" of the Mac Sharry's Reform<sup>10</sup> in 1992 and its amended to effectively affect on the subsequent policy agenda.

## **2. 2. What changes in the twenty-first century**

Under the auspices of "Agenda 2000"<sup>11</sup> and with the prediction of EC Regulation 1257/99 included in the first, some affirmed cross-cutting themes are useful to rethink agriculture in an integrated and, above all, projected to global markets form, at least in intention, in a more balanced way. The above mentioned new Rural Development

---

<sup>10</sup> This reform takes its name from the Irish Ray MacSharry, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. The proposals contained in it and aimed to definitely change the support to agriculture, consisted in significant reduction of guaranteed prices for a substantial realignment of domestic prices with those on world markets, accompanied by policies to provide income support quite apart from the quantity produced. These accompanying measures consisted of agri-environmental measures, afforestation and early retirement, applied with the enactment of the Community Regulations No 2078/92, 2079/92 and 2080/92. These measures are the first organic intervention on agriculture and environment of the European Union.

<sup>11</sup> This document comes from the need to restructure the overall layout of the CAP given a set of economic facts and expectations such as the enlargement to the East, new negotiations within the WTO framework, progress of the of European integration beyond the high balance costs. One of the most significant issue of Agenda 2000 is the institutionalization of rural development policies, which will form the second pillar of the CAP.

Regulation, the 1257/99, is the element of synthesis and connection, both of the structural intervention and accompanying measures of the aforesaid Mac Sharry reform<sup>12</sup>.

The main features of the interventions<sup>13</sup> provided for by that Regulation 1257/99 nearly anticipated all the possible causes and contributing causes of the delay of the national agricultural system, of the South and certainly of Sicily. These include the need to pursue more vigorously the application of agri-environmental measures through the diffusion of environmentally-friendly forms of agriculture, intensifications of cultivation and livestock techniques, environment and landscape protection, to which to add, without error of method, disadvantaged areas measures and particularly the development of rural areas, actions that, in many ways, can be overlapped generating virtuous and super additive classical phenomena, indicating a perfect coincidence between the measures and certain characteristics of Sicilian agriculture.

The model of agriculture that is "designed" by Agenda 2000 was to carry out the creation of an integrated economic sector in an open market and at the same time to respond to the principles of sustainability and compatibility with non-economic components such as land, environment and society. From these propositions was born the concept of multifunctionality in agriculture, where there are agricultural activities carried out in addition to other functions, such as the social one<sup>14</sup> and services to the collectivity<sup>15</sup>.

What is contained in the Mac Sharry reform and Agenda 2000, is further enhanced by the Fischler reform of 2003, which collects information from previous reforms, adding a much more innovative approach. Among the major innovations, for example, we mention the decoupling, the cross compliance and the modulation<sup>16</sup>. From the perspective of rural development policies, which are part of the second pillar of PAC<sup>17</sup>, in 2005 is enacted the Regulation 1698/2005 which states that the rural development policy for 2007-2013 is focused on three themes or thematic axes, that is to say improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry, improving the environment and the countryside and improving the quality of life in rural areas in addition to the diversification of the rural economy. The rural development policies are centered on some basic principles, including the multi-sectoral and integrated approach in the rural economy, flexibility and specialization, transparency, subsidiarity and partnership, in particular the latter involves the construction of organisms

---

<sup>12</sup> Six previous regulations, the Reg 950/97 on the firm investments, the establishment of young farmers and their professional training, the Reg 951/97 on processing and marketing of agricultural products the Reg 2078/92, 2079/92 and 2080/92 for the agri-environmental measures, early retirement and afforestation, the Reg 4256/88 and subsequent amendments on rural development, whose provisions are contained in the new Regulation 1257/99

<sup>13</sup> The main characteristics of the operations covered by Regulation 1257/99 are summarized as follows: investment in agricultural holdings, setting-up of young people, training, early retirement, less favored areas and areas with environmental restrictions, agri-environmental measures, processing and marketing of agricultural products, forestry and adaptation and development of rural areas.

<sup>14</sup> The social function regards the employment, an adequate distribution of the population in the area, the preservation of local identities and traditions, food security, etc..

<sup>15</sup> The function of service to the community regards the environmental protection, the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, the integration and development of tourism, etc.

<sup>16</sup> These will be joined by other equally important as the financial discipline, business consulting and market reform.

<sup>17</sup> The pillars on which the Common Agricultural Policy is based are two, the first regards market intervention and the second rural development policies.

and procedures at the base of which there is a comparison and coordination at various levels of government. In addition to rural development policies, which are also a stimulus, there is trend of studies and researches with the clear aim to overcome the sectoral approach to reach a broader vision on a local and regional level, through surveys of the agricultural sector in isolation to larger scale analysis in a rural character. It is also recognized, as already mentioned, that agriculture has multi-functional role, so that to the production of goods, food and non-food, is added the production of services for the protection and land conservation, of recreation and accommodation, through the activation of a valorization process of the local resources. Just starting on agriculture, the conditions for the emergence and spread of the diversification of activities in rural areas are created, as well as the quality of products and generated services, the respect for environment and landscape, and for the integration with other rural world activities.

The correspondence between what is fixed by the Community policies and their implementation in regional areas, combined with socio-economic demands of the territories, finds an important moment in the European Union proposition to emphasize the role of agriculture in the production of environmental public property, while remaining unchanged on the two pillars of the CAP. This role has in the "greening" of CAP<sup>18</sup> the promoting and support to sustainable development of European agriculture. Basically agriculture, once and for all, is considered the protagonist in land management.

From the local point of view, Sicily in this case, these virtuous processes, in an integrated and comprehensive form, are programmed and their policies planned through the Development Rural Plan<sup>19</sup>. It represents an overview of the state of agriculture, Sicilian in our case, highlighting the conditions of the system as a whole, of the individual sectors and of multi-functional integration forms. Among them, only for brevity of discussion, we mention the food system, because it is more responsive to some of the topics covered so far. As reported verbatim from the PSR *"il sistema agroalimentare siciliano, avvantaggiandosi di favorevoli caratteristiche pedoclimatiche e di specifiche vocazionalità territoriali, si caratterizza per una spiccata diversificazione dell'offerta con produzioni destagionalizzate e produzioni provenienti da metodi rispettosi dell'ambiente e della salute dei consumatori (...). Alcuni areali della Sicilia fortemente specializzati in particolari comparti (ortofrutticolo, olivicolo, viti-vinicolo, caseario) vantano produzioni di alta qualità a forte immagine e vocazione all'export, anche per la presenza di produzioni DOP, IGP, DOC, IGT. (...). Infatti la Sicilia conta 19 prodotti già riconosciuti (12 DOP e 7 IGP), 7 prodotti in fase di riconoscimento (4 DOP, 1 IGP e 3 prodotti ai sensi del Reg. CE 1760/2000) e 10 prodotti in protezione transitoria (6 DOP e 4 IGP). Inoltre, si riscontrano 30 vini a denominazione (1 DOCG, 22 DOC, 7 IGT)<sup>20</sup> (...). A livello nazionale sono stati altresì riconosciuti 239 "Prodotti Tradizionali", all'interno dei quali si ritrovano produzioni tipiche e di nicchia che in quanto tali non dispongono di una massa critica tale da consentire l'implementazione di adeguate azioni di collocazione sui tradizionali canali di commercializzazione. Per tali produzioni si dovranno quindi ricercare forme di*

---

<sup>18</sup> The new CAP 2014-2020 while maintaining its structure on two pillars, namely markets and rural development, introduces strengthening tools to the agro-environmental measures.

<sup>19</sup> The current Rural Development Plan is related to the intervention period 2007-2013, even if it has seen the light only in April 2010.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that such numerical information are actually much lower than the actual consistency because the PSR was prepared with data for 2005.

*valorizzazione legate all'identità dei territori e alla riscoperta dei legami tra la loro origine e l'arte, la storia e la cultura delle popolazioni rurali, nell'ambito dell'asse 3, ad esempio all'interno di percorsi turistici enogastronomici e "strade del vino".*

This growing attention to issues of protection and enhancement of local and traditional food products means, to those who are responsible for their achievement, to address this issue with two aspects. In fact, if in some cases there are questions of what are the market reactions and the evolution of consumer tastes, it is increasingly highlighted the need to transform these strategies, and therefore these products, in "strong" management and territorial development instruments. Among the used instruments, the strengthening of the product territoriality meets requirements focused on competitive local territorial system, giving up the productive chain point of view and looking to territory as a genus of knowledge and of products derived from it. In the evaluation of a product the importance of its origin is undeniable, yet the support of productive traditions can not be reduced to the "struggle" to defend this or that commercial production, indeed, after the acquisition of a protection mark PDO or PGI, it has to become first of all a cultural fact and secondarily a "strong" element of individual or group success, and of the their connection with the territory. It is desirable that the "designation of origin" can and should be extended to any reality of the planet and that the competition does not concern only those who can take advantage from having resources and critical mass, as determined by regulations, instead it's recommendable that the "designation of origin" could become the direction of a global competition based on local identities.

The debate on the promotion, including through appropriate collective marks, in many cases has lost the "cornerstone" made by "collective participation". Through a "widespread" managing of the specific resources it can be possible to imagine a process of social production not secondary to the productive and commercial process. The coordinated relationship between the economic and social actors is decisive in the creation and management of "quality" and, above all, makes objective the "typical". Topics such as multifunctionality in agriculture find natural conclusion when the intersection of the production and tourist systems generates self supporting processes in terms of resources and ideas. To strengthen the process of interaction, as previously mentioned, the decision-making processes involved in the initial stages of the planned "participatory development" take places, as well as the shift of decision-making power to the rural *governance* that have the characteristic of triggering processes of integrated development; more precisely, through an integrated planning, social and economic partnerships are constituted, consisting of public and private stakeholders, with common interests in order to make choices that impact on the development itself. The support base for those participatory development processes is largely found in the ability of local authorities to initiate, through the support of policymakers, capacity building processes, that is to say processes that through vocational education and training, tend to increase management and self-government skills of the people involved. More people are involved, the greater the involvement of the local community, both in reference to whom production is concerned and to its network of interconnected suppliers, crucial to the success of the product itself.

The previously hoped involvement is useful also in issues such as protection and promotion. More precisely, it would tend, as well as a purely commercial "fact", and for which already exist ad hoc regulations, even to a knowledge-sharing process and to a sense of belonging to a specific community. These processes, without rhetoric, involve participation and support to almost zero costs. The processes of protection put in place till

today tend to focus only on the recognition of the origin almost exclusively in terms of origin of the product and, in the most rigorous cases, of the origin of the raw materials used to make the typical product. Short or almost absent are those actions focused on the "origin" as a set of cultural, economic and environmental "facts" capable, alone and in alchemical mixture between them, to affect or enhance what we would consider as geographically adjacent. It is well known to most people, and not only to industry insiders, the coexistence of production value and illegal dumps in the same areas, industrial plants and farms, or, better, natural reserves and livestock activities. In one case or another, in negative or positive sense, to be the co-resident of a polluting activity or action of environmental protection, must necessarily make a difference. The sense of this difference was full embraced by the local marketing, with competition between territories and not only among products, even if they are geographically identified. However, an error is often made and it is to consider the territorial element as it is administratively defined: where the common sense wants the land and territorial policy actions to be coincident, the territorial element have to be compared with the natural environment, diversified through processes that can not be controlled or changed, so terms like *terroir*, or suitability, apparently produced by the human imagination, take more significance, and in point out that certain climatic climatic, pedologic, agronomic or natural factors, can not be bounded with hypothetical boundaries such as administrative borders.

### **2. 3. Notes on the geography of typical Sicilian products based on EU protection**

Within a "container" such as agriculture lies a highly complex whole, within which there are infinite behaviors and strategies of individuals and groups, formal and informal, objectives and interrelationships that would make of the "shared and sustainable" approach a strong tool for the government of the territory and for the revival in the primary sector, for too long relegated to the "simple" role in the production of "raw" agricultural products. The agricultural sector, as a "place" of "creation" of essential goods for human life, from the latter receiving some resources to produce them, is always subject and object of socio-economic attention; the escalation of social and environmental issues and the emergence of the fragility of the agricultural production system at all stages of the supply chain have given new impetus to the implementation of protection mechanisms, sometimes unfortunately not very effective, of some sectors such as the ones of "local" and traditional productions. These methods of protection provided for the recognition of certain specificities, even qualitative, for those productions that had some differential characteristics with respect to mass production. The names and geographical indications among the most significant.

The "certification" as a tool for the enhancement of local products, should not be limited to "simple" rules of the allocation of marks, but it must be wide-ranging other than codifying the products characteristics, integrating different and very strict economic and social paths, with a dynamic point of view keeping up with the changes in the market components and with the aim to control the devaluation and the erosion of the concept of "typicality". The renewed awareness of the utility of promoting the quality to support the income of rural workers and of disadvantaged areas, the response to the needs of a market increasingly attentive to the goodness and the origin of the goods, the guarantee of a uniform protection of geographical locations and social know-how, and the provision of a minimum level of product guarantee are the basic ingredients to start a long and difficult path, that is the affirmation of good practices in agriculture.

On this basis the role of typical products seems to be strategic. Equipped with undeniable potential for success in the markets, typical products tend to have a considerable weight for the revival of agriculture and of the territories in which it rests. By the way it should be clarified that it is only "potential" which, without proper protection and enhancement by the public decision-maker, would not spontaneously spread on. Considering the scenario in which actually dominate the major forms of distribution and transformation, sometimes with behaviors outside of competition, these productions have both advantages and disadvantages, summarized but not limited to the high costs of production, the high added-value rate, high consumer prices, with significant impact on communities of origin.

The typical products of Southern Italy are not always accompanied by modern and effective sales strategies. This gap is generated by firms of modest size, low level of aggregation, lacks of market power and almost absent marketing strategies. Taken together, these limits tend to undermine the value and the high quality perception by the potential consumers that are often increasingly inclined to free themselves from the policy of low prices, looking for a satisfactory quality/price ratio.

The typical products, moreover, have the considerable characteristic to be perfectly suitable to the market both inside specialized retail places and mass retail channel, in specific sectors, so being, even inside mass consumption places, niches quality areas. Even for this reason, potential market of the local products appears to be of considerable interest. A possible improvement of quality characteristics of typical products, including the intangible component, is closely related to sales growth and economic recovery of areas in which they are produced. Some of these products, as previously mentioned, have obtained special certifications such as geographical Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), the certification of Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) and, formerly, the Denomination of Controlled Origin (DOC) and Indication of Geographical Typicity (IGT). It should be stated that these certifications not only regard the quality, which happens to be consequential, but they also communicate that these productions take place in a certain place with certain equally productive capacity of the populations who live and work in those places.

The Italian national scene compared to the European context, among other things, turns out to be the richest in terms of attributions, with as many as 234 in PDO (145) and PGI (89) and one TSG, closely followed only by France and Spain, whose territories are, however, larger than the Italian. Within the Italian territory, the number of attributions, distributed by administrative region, see the excellent performance of Sicily finishing, in fact, at the top with 25 products, including PDO and PGI, being the first of the southern regions. Among the certificated products there are four cheeses like Pecorino siciliano PDO, Vastedda del Belice PDO, Ragusano PDO and Piacentinu ennese PDO, six olive oils such as Monti Iblei PDO, Val di Mazara PDO, Valli Trapanesi PDO, Monte Etna PDO, the Valle del Belice PDO, Val Demone PDO, followed by thirteen in the vegetables and cereals category such as Arancia rossa PGI, Pesca di Leonforte PGI, Limone Interdonato di Messina PGI, Cappero di Pantelleria PGI, Nocellara del Belice PDO, Uva da tavola di Canicattì PGI, Pomodoro di Pachino PGI, Uva da tavola di Mazzarrone PGI, Ficodindia dell'Etna PDO, Pistacchio verde di Bronte PDO, the newly added Carota di Ispica PGI, Limone di Siracusa PGI and Arancia di Ribera PDO; finally the only product included in the category of Sicilian meat preparations represented by Salame S. Angelo PGI, and the only one present in the category of bakery products represented by Pagnotta del Dittaino PDO. To these must be added 31 Sicilian wines one of which DOCG, 23 DOC and seven IGT, of which Sicily has

become a contemporary producer. Whether it's an appellation or an indication, in addition to different legal and production requirements of the two aforementioned types of certification, the highly distinctive and important element, in our humble opinion, is the geographical component far from being generic, with the exception of the traditional specialty guaranteed, certainly able to diversify and identify a product from not always protected similar goods, where protection, other than being politically and normatively supported by the European Union (EU), is often desired and demanded from local communities. It is precisely the local communities that give vigor and strength to the accreditation and certification processes to the standards of product and process, as supported by the EU, because when we deal with PDO, PGI, etc, we are discussing of "collective marks", that is to say where's the tendency to protect a more general interest by ensuring the rights of anyone who conforms to the production disciplinary and/or takes part to protective bodies intending to mark their products.

The most worthy of attention limit when disserting of products with names that contain geographic features can be considered the defense of tangible and intangible product characteristics at the increasing of the geographical scale. This limit consists in communicating and protecting the aforementioned characteristics resulting from the place of origin from the supply side, and vice versa, from the demand side, that is to say of consumption, the possibility of having "guaranteed" the use, the well-being and satisfaction from it. While the territorial proximity to places of production enables an immediate and direct verification and validation, assuming that the consumer could be average informed, to the increase of the geographical distance those possibility decrease, leaving to the European certification and protection "rules" the task to control the rules for completion of the protected products and production sites. However, exiting from the political-administrative boundaries of Europe, these certifications begin to falter in effectiveness and rigor with respect to a global competitive context that is not always within the limits of fair competition, considering the proliferation of frauds and imitations that do not spare even the dynamics of the internal market of the same EU countries.

Reiterating and emphasizing that the rigor and control by the responsible institutions are part of the total value of the product ending on the market, remains to be determined, albeit in a very concise way, which scenario or process is possible for a proper and better remuneration of he product and ultimately of who realizes it. We can surely think of a better and truly collective system of governance, as well as the improvement of mechanisms of communication regarding the markets, accelerating and forming anew the process of internationalization of firms.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

Several authors have already repeatedly drawn attention to the economic development of Sicily as a pole of attraction for labor and investment, increasingly based on local industrialization as polarizing element of the internal workforce with, however, added strong and far from the exhaustion phenomena of migration to places and capitals in the Italian territory which can offer, at least initially, better and higher incomes compared to the misery of marginal Sicilian agriculture. Sicily is characterized, as other regions, by a marked differentiation between areas with high rates of agricultural development and other, intertwined to the classic conditions of marginality, on the verge of abandonment.

Sometimes the above dichotomy is not as clear and evident as a scholar would prefer, but there would often be a multitude of imperfect mix of agronomic, geographic and economic factors that define the structural characteristics of Sicilian agriculture not easy to interpret and, in any case, not easy to be identified, which, in our brief review, we reviewed and, through historical and geographical clarifications, also updated. The overall picture that can be drawn, albeit briefly, is basically that of an agricultural area "filled" with places, not just economic, having different identity and performances, full of potentialities and, to be fair, with an uncertain future both in case of commodities or specialty capabilities, however suggested, in the near future, from the markets.

## REFERENCES

- Altamore, L., Columba, P., Di Marco, L., Fardella, G. G.,** (2004), *Il caso Sicilia*, in "Atti del Convegno Il futuro dei sistemi olicoli in aree marginali: aspetti socio-economici, gestione delle risorse naturali e produzioni di qualità, Matera.
- Bandini, M.,** (1957), *Cento anni di storia dell'agricoltura italiana*, Ed. Cinque Lune, Roma.
- Barone, G.,** (1986), *Mezzogiorno e modernizzazione*, Ed. Einaudi, Torino.
- Basile, E., Romano D.** (a cura di) (2002), *Sviluppo rurale: società, territorio, impresa*, Ed. Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Bica, D.,** (2007), *Vitigni di Sicilia*, Regione siciliana, Assessorato agricoltura e foreste, Servizi allo sviluppo, Palermo.
- Cesaretti, G. P., Mariani A.C., Sodano V.,** (1994), *Sistema agroalimentare e mercati agricoli*, Ed. Il Mulino, Bologna.
- CNR,** (1986), *Stato della ricerca sulle terre marginali della Sicilia*, Atti del Convegno IPRA del 18 dicembre 1985, Palermo.
- Crescimanno, M., Fardella, G.G., Tudisca S.,** (1987), *Le coltivazioni in serra in alcuni ambienti della Sicilia*, Progetto IPRA, CNR, Roma.
- Daneo, F.,** (1980), *Breve storia dell'agricoltura italiana 1860-1970*, Ed. A. Mondadori, Cles.
- Di Blasi A.,** (1968), *La proprietà fondiaria nella Sicilia centro-orientale: considerazioni geografiche*, Ed. Edigraf, Catania.
- Fanfani, R.,** (2000), *L'agricoltura in Italia*, Ed. il Mulino, Bologna.
- Fidone, E., Petino G. jr** (2005), *La valorizzazione delle produzioni tipiche fra ruralità e marketing territoriale*, in "Atti della XXVI Conferenza Italiana di Scienze Regionali", Napoli.
- Formica, C.,** (1973), *Premessa*, in "Ricerche sulle dimore rurali d'Italia", in Barbieri G. e Gambi L. (eds.) CNR, Ed. Leo S. Olshki, Firenze.
- Formica, C.,** (1975), *Lo spazio rurale nel Mezzogiorno: esodo, desertificazione e riorganizzazione*, Ed. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli.
- Galante, E.,** (1986), *Libro bianco sulle terre marginali*, CNR, Roma.
- Grillotti, Di Giacomo, M. G.,** (1992), *Una Geografia per l'agricoltura: metodologie di analisi e prospettive applicative per il mondo agrario e rurale italiano*, Ed. REDA, Roma.
- Grillotti Di, Giacomo, M. G.,** (2000), *Una Geografia per l'agricoltura: lo sviluppo agricolo nello sviluppo territoriale italiano*, Ed. Società Geografica Italiana, Roma.
- INEA, Annuario dell'agricoltura italiana**, varie annate, Ed. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli.
- INEA** (1967), *Tendenze nell'evoluzione delle strutture delle aziende agricole italiane*, Roma.
- Malassis, L., Gherì, G.,** (1995), *Introduzione all'economia agroalimentare*, Ed. il Mulino, Bologna.
- Mariani A., Viganò, E.,** (2002), *Il sistema agroalimentare dell'Unione Europea*, Ed. Carocci, Roma.
- Medici, G.,** (1947), *La distribuzione della proprietà fondiaria in Italia: Sicilia*, Ed. Italiane, INEA, Roma.
- Medici, G., Orlando, G.** (1952), *Agricoltura e disoccupazione*, Ed. Zanichelli, Bologna.

- Milone, F.**, (1959), *Memoria illustrativa della carta di uso del suolo della Sicilia*, Ed. CNR, Roma.
- Milone, F.**, (1960), *Sicilia: la natura e l'uomo*, Ed. Boringhieri, Torino.
- Pacione, M.**, (1993), *Geografia degli spazi rurali: insediamenti, risorse, nuova qualità della vita*, Ed. UNICOPLI, Milano.
- Pecora, A.**, (1974), *Le regioni d'Italia: Sicilia*, Ed. UTET, Roma.
- Petino, A.**, (a cura di) (1976), *Catania contemporanea: cento anni di vita economica*, in "Annali del mezzogiorno" vol. XVI, Ed. Istituto di Storia Economica dell'Università degli Studi di Catania.
- Petino, G. Jr, Postorino A., Rizzo M.**, (2001), *Il commercio elettronico di olii e vini siciliani*, in "Atti del XXXVIII Convegno SIDEA", Catania.
- Petino, G. Jr**, (2003), *L'identificazione dei distretti rurali per la valorizzazione turistica della Sicilia*, in "Atti del Convegno di studi Centri storici e identità locale nella progettazione dello sviluppo sostenibile di sistemi del turismo", Catania.
- Petino, G. jr, Rizzo M.** (2003), *E-commerce in Sicily: sicilian oil and wine*, in "Proceedings of EFITA2003" information technology for a better agri-food sector, environment and rural living, Debrecen – Budapest.
- Petino, G., sen** (1959), *Prime osservazioni sulla dinamica dei fenomeni migratori e di "rimbalzo" nel versante orientale dell'Etna*, ed. CE.ME.SL., Catania.
- Petino, G., sen** (1961), "Pull factors" or "Push factors" for rural migrations: an example in the province of Catania, comunicazione al "I Conseil Mediterranéen de Recherches en Sciences Sociales", Catania.
- Petino, G., sen** (1985), *Appunti per una storia dell'agricoltura siciliana*, Università degli Studi di Catania.
- Ploeg J. D. van der**, (2006), *Oltre la modernizzazione: processi di sviluppo rurale in Europa*, Ed. Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.
- Rochefort, R.**, (1965), *Le travail en Sicile: Étude de géographie sociale*, in "Tiers-Monde", Paris.
- Rossini, E., Vanzetti C.** (1986), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana*, Ed. Edagricole, Bologna.
- Ruggiero V., Ruocco D., Telleschi A.**, (1969), *Considerazioni geografiche sulla occupazione agricola e industriale in Sicilia*, in "Annali del Mezzogiorno" vol. IX, Ed. Istituto di Storia Economica dell'Università degli Studi di Catania, Catania.
- Segrè, A.**, (2008), *Politiche per lo sviluppo agricolo e la sicurezza alimentare*, Ed. Carocci, Roma.
- Scaramuzzi, F.**, (a cura di) (1998), *Agricoltura e ruralità*, Atti della Giornata di Studio del 18 dicembre 1997 ai Georgofili, Ed. Studio Editoriale Fiorentino, Firenze.
- Scarpelli, L.**, (2009), *Organizzazione del territorio e governance multilivello*, Ed Pàtron, Bologna.
- Trischitta, D.**, (1983), *Toponomi e paesaggio nella Sicilia orientale*, Ed. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli.