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Capitalism and Tuscany

Investigating the Past

This book takes up the classic social science question of why capitalist development occurs by asking where it does not occur. Karl Marx, Max Weber, Adam Smith, and Emile Durkheim were preoccupied with trying to explain what they perceived as profound changes in their societies associated with the transition to capitalism. This issue has preoccupied social scientists since then. Instead of considering where such a transition occurred, however, I examine a paradoxical case of capitalist development—or more appropriately "undevelopment"—in the Italian region of Tuscany. In the Middle Ages, this region had a highly advanced economy and was a center for finance, trade, and manufacturing. It is, in fact, sometimes considered to be fully capitalist (Cohen 1980:1349; Michels 1975:11), mature (Cipolla 1952:178), or even, perhaps, industrializing (Malanima 1988:63). Yet, despite this early development, the transition to full-scale industrial capitalism occurred relatively late there. The examination of highly developed regions in which capitalism did not emerge is an important way to develop theories of capitalism (Aymard 1982; Cipolla 1975; de Roover 1953:82; Goldstone 2000:177; Krantz and Hohenberg 1975; Lachmann 2000:15–16; cf. Tilly 1989:563). The northern and central Italian city-states, of which Tuscany was one of the most advanced, are perhaps the most dramatic examples of the non-emergence of capitalism. In contrast to the Netherlands, where an advanced economy led to a relatively early transition to capitalism, even if it did not produce the first transition to capitalism, Italy as a whole is considered to be a late developer (Cipolla 1975:8–9; Federico and Malanima 2004:437; Gerschenkron 1962:72–73; see also Cohen and Federico 2001:1; Jones 1978:361–364).[1] I use this paradoxical case in combination with "negative case methodology" (Emigh 1997*c*) to develop theories of transitions to capitalism and to explain the Tuscan case. Thus, I answer the question, "How did Tuscan capitalism undevelop?"

Here is the short answer: a high degree of inequality between the rural and urban sectors assured that the spread of capitalist markets in Tuscany—quite paradoxically—decreased overall market participation and undermined the growth of market institutions. Thus, capitalist markets—and even more fundamentally capitalism—"unmade" themselves in Tuscany. I combine theories of sectors, markets, and transitions to capitalism to make two sociological contributions. First, I show how sectoral relations are crucial to transitions to capitalism and, second, I show how capitalist development can contract markets. Finally, I make a broader epistemological point about deploying historical evidence.

Sectoral Explanations of Transitions to Capitalism

The first sociological contribution is to show how the relations between urban and rural regions are central to the rise of capitalism. Cities, on the one hand, are sometimes viewed as great contributors to economic development; on the other hand, they are considered hindrances. Does urban air lead to freedom, as Weber (1978:1239; cf. Mielants 2007:42–45, 155–160) suggested, or is the Marxist interpretation of cities as components of feudalism correct (Merrington 1975)? The same sort of debate continues unabated in the contemporary literature: are cities sites of modernization, technological innovation, and economic development, or do they inevitably lead to "urban bias" (Lipton 1977) or "overurbanization" (Gugler 1982), thereby stifling overall economic growth? The debate itself, of course, illustrates that cities can have both positive and negative effects on the economy (e.g., Hoselitz 1955:279; Mehta 1969:307) but underspecifies these divergent outcomes. What is needed, then, is a careful consideration of the types of interactions between urban and rural regions that create economic change or growth. Sectoral theories are the best developed analytic tools to explain these outcomes because they discuss sectoral relations; that is, how do economic activities of manufacturing—usually (though not always) located in cities—relate to economic activities of agricultural production—usually (though again not always) located in rural regions?

[1] Agricultural productivity was very high in north-central Italy throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period; in fact, it was higher than in England and the Netherlands (Federico and Malanima 2004:457–458). However, by the early 1800s, it was lower in Italy than anywhere else in western Europe (Bairoch 1990:139; Timmer 1988:287).

Sectoral theories have been used—or rejected—as explanations of transitions to capitalism (Aymard 1982; de Vries and van der Woude 1997:690–693; Epstein 1991; Holton 1986; Merrington 1975). That is, patterns of urban and rural interaction have been used to explain how capitalist social relationships, such as private property, wage labor, and markets, replace other relationships, such as communal property rights, family labor, and requisitioning. In addition, sectoral theories have been used to explain industrialization, which depends on the expansion of manufacturing and the contraction of agriculture, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and the share of the labor force. At the same time, however, agricultural productivity must increase, so that the smaller labor force employed in agriculture can produce enough food for both sectors (reviews in Ranis 1988:82–83; Timmer 1988:276–279; Varshney 1993*a*:6). Sectoral theories describe whether these transformations occur, on what terms they occur, and whether they promote economic growth and continued industrialization. Thus, sectoral theories can explain the sectoral shift associated with industrialization, once a set of capitalist social institutions is in place. Still, sectoral theories remain underutilized, especially in comparison to class analysis (N. A. 1984:1).

Early sectoral theories emphasized the importance of aggregate—and sometimes forced—transfers of resources between the rural and urban sectors that promote industrialization (i.e., investments that increased agricultural productivity and transfers of agricultural surpluses to the manufacturing sector) (e.g., Bukharin [1928] 1982:309–321; Lewis 1954; Preobrazhensky [1926] 1965:84–85). More recent theories, however, point to the role of dense intersectoral linkages and their underlying institutional supports in establishing patterns of sectoral interaction that increase urban and rural demand for goods and services, thereby creating economic growth (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:46–48; Epstein and Jezeph 2001; Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001:11–14; Storm 1995:764–767). I draw on these recent theoretical developments to explain the Tuscan case. Tuscan rural and urban interaction increased agricultural productivity and transferred surplus to merchant activities but did not produce the expected outcome of industrialization. Thus, aggregate transfers did not have the predicted effect. Because rural and urban interaction destroyed rural market institutions, it did not draw rural inhabitants into market structures and capitalist social relationships, nor did it create dense intersectoral relations that could have supported industrialization. Analyzing intersectoral linkages in their concrete social detail explains how the relations between urban and rural regions hindered the development of industrial capitalism in Tuscany.

By analyzing how these sectoral theories explain the undevelopment of capitalism in Tuscany, I contribute more generally to the literature on transitions to capitalism (reviews in Emigh 2005*a*; Holton 1985; Lachmann 1989;

Wood 2002). This literature has three characteristics. First, though it focuses on the qualitative transformation that establishes capitalist relationships,[2] quantitative changes in economic productivity are not entirely skirted, often because of the presumption of capitalism's superiority. In analyzing Tuscany, I examine both qualitative and quantitative changes to the extent possible (given that aggregate economic indicators cannot be assembled for this period in history), but without assuming the inevitability of capitalist development. Second, works tend to fall within sociology's major paradigms. Marxists emphasize that a capitalist class wins a historic struggle to control production, which they continue to transform according to their interests so that capitalist social relations predominate. Neoinstitutionalists, implementing the idea of individuals as inherently utility maximizing, consider how institutional relations foster (or not) the establishment of capitalist relations that allow individuals to pursue their interests. Weberians also attend to these institutional arrangements but emphasize their cultural and political roots. As a result, Weberians tend to view institutional arrangements as constitutive of capitalism, not just as preconditions as neoinstitutionalists do. Third, within these paradigms, authors locate different prime movers, that is, different sets of relationships or factors central to the rise of capitalism (cf. Crafts 1977:429–430), including agrarian class structure (Brenner 1985*a*, 1985*b*), the nation-state (Anderson 1974), the world system (Wallerstein 1974), power (Mann 1986), religious beliefs (Collins 1997), elites (Lachmann 2000), field systems (Hopcroft 1999), technology (Goldstone 2002), or a cultural climate conducive to the adoption of technology (Jacob 1997:113–115). However, the most interesting treatments combine these approaches, such as Lachmann, who uses elite theory as the prime mover in combination with Marx's emphasis on conflict. Perelman (2000:32–35, 94–96) combines a Marxist emphasis on class conflict and primitive accumulation with a Weberian-like emphasis on the cultural and political underpinnings of capitalism, which were created by classic economists' theory of laissez-faire that was used to justify dispossessing the peasants. Similarly, I combine a Marxist emphasis on the dialectical constitution of ideal and material factors with a Weberian understanding of social action. I call my approach "dialectical

[2] In contrast, economic historians focus on quantitative economic growth. They emphasize the gradual nature of industrialization, its historical precursors, and the role of technology in creating rapid, self-sustaining economic growth. Thus, they often distinguish between Smithian growth based on the expansion of markets and specialization and Schumpeterian growth based on the application of technology (e.g., Hoffman 1996:132–142; Jones [1988] 2000:190; More 2000:1–8; Parker 1984:211–213; Snooks 1994; review in Emigh 2005*a*:367–369). Consequently, economic historians might ask why Smithian growth did not lead to Schumpeterian growth in Tuscany (instead of asking about the transition to capitalism).

Weberianism." Like Marxist analyses, I emphasize inequality, but I conceptualize it in terms of sectors, not classes (cf. Emigh 2000*a*).

Fortunately, searches for a one-dimensional cause of the rise of capitalism are mostly viewed as outdated; such a multifaceted and variable economic system had different roots in different places and times. Furthermore, the rise of industrial capitalism in England may have been highly contingent, conjectural, or even accidental (Crafts 1977:431; Goldstone 2000:175; Pomeranz 2000:16; Thompson 1994:7). Nevertheless, there is considerable value in highlighting, even if only for analytic purposes, sets of relationships that were central to capitalist development in given places and times. Here, I focus on sectoral relationships.

Undoubtedly, there is an interaction between my case selection of Tuscany, which originated as a city-state, and my explanation that focuses on the relations between urban and rural regions. I consider a period of time, the fifteenth century, in which capitalist preconditions were widespread in Tuscany (not the period when such preconditions initially appeared) and yet did not spread, and therefore, no transition to full-scale industrial capitalism occurred. Sectoral theories are most appropriate for explaining this historical moment because industrialization is based on a sectoral shift from agriculture to manufacturing once capitalist social relations have been established. However, a comparison between England and Tuscany suggests that sectoral theories hold more generally (Hopcroft and Emigh 2000). Finally, examining historical cases of urban bias or overurbanization, such as Tuscany, questions the assumption that this phenomenon is more pronounced in contemporary contexts than in historic ones (Wrigley 1990:101).[3]

How Markets Change

The second sociological contribution of this book is the development of explanations of how markets change (cf. Fligstein 2001:14). Is their expansion linked to population growth and natural resources as Smith ([1776] 1976:23) envisioned? Do they change through shifts in supply and demand (the neoclassical economic model) or competition (the Marxist model)? Smith assumed that markets continue to expand (limited perhaps only by natural resources). In contrast, Marxists considered the inherently destructive tendencies of markets. Competition requires capitalists to substitute capital for labor, to reduce costs and prices, and to expand the scale of production (Marx [1894] 1977*b*:298, 329–338, 373–375, 569–570). However, this process also

[3] This argument is implicit in analyses of the impact of the modern world system and globalization on urbanization (e.g., Bradshaw 1985:75; Smith 1987:270–271, 1996:144).

reduces the number of capitalists as some inevitably fail to survive. Markets tend to become monopolies, where competition is minimal. Thus, competition leads to the eventual collapse of markets. Consequently, though the outcome is different (market development, market collapse), both perspectives view change as unidirectional (cf. Maynes 2006:2; Sewell 1996:247). Polanyi's ([1944] 1957:73) argument that markets are self-destructive because they commodify all aspects of human existence is similar to Marx's. However, politics conditioned this outcome, so it was not inevitable; in particular, class mobilization could have created social institutions that counteracted commodification (Burawoy 2003:228). Thus, contemporary sociology should seek to understand how market change produces these different outcomes, though relatively little scholarship has done so (cf. Fligstein 2001:14), and most focuses on market expansion (review in Chapter 3), not market contraction as in Tuscany.

More specifically, the Tuscan case directs analytic focuses toward what occurs when a more advanced capitalist market intersects with a less developed one. The classic or neoclassical economic perspective suggests that this intersection reinforces and extends the less developed market. However, a Marxist perspective stemming from the idea of the "development of underdevelopment" (Frank 1966:17), the "articulation of modes of production" (Althusser and Balibar 1970:307; Laclau 1971:35–38; Meillassoux 1981:xiii; Steinberg 2003:451), or "unequal exchange" (Amin 1976:287; Emmanuel 1972:265–267) suggests that the spread of capitalism can have the paradoxical effect of reinforcing or reproducing non-market, precapitalist economic forms. If this idea is extended to markets, it suggests that the growth of a capitalist market could have the paradoxical effect of limiting market participation. Such was the case in Tuscany: the penetration of more developed capitalist, urban markets into less developed, rural markets in the presence of a high degree of sectoral inequality essentially erased, or unmade the less developed market structures, thereby decreasing the extent of the market, and in the long run, undeveloping capitalism. Similarly, in some contemporary markets—contrary to the currently hegemonic neoliberal "free-markets" rhetoric—the use of barter, family labor, and informal exchange increased when a more highly developed capitalist market penetrated a less developed one (e.g., the informal sector, see Castells and Portes 1989:12–16; Portes and Walton 1981:84–87; or involution in Russia, see Burawoy 2001:270).

Thus, I draw on Marx and Polanyi's insights about the effect of capitalism's contradictions on markets. Instead of assuming them to be inevitable, I consider the historical conditions under which they emerge. Instead of emphasizing competition or commodification, I focus on inequality. While capital accumulation is central to capitalist production, it also generates social inequality that can undermine capitalism as social actors with vastly different amounts of resources become unable to participate in markets as substantive equals, though they are formal equals.

To synthesize these points, I develop a sociocultural model of markets as structures. I use Sewell's (1992) definition of structures, which are composed of resources that are actual and schemas that are virtual. Thus, I also contribute to the theorization of the intersection of cultural and economic factors in the "new economic sociology" (Swedberg and Granovetter 2001:2–3) and in the sociology of markets (e.g., Abolafia 1996; Biernacki 1995; Carruthers 1996; Fligstein 2001; MacKenzie and Millo 2003:109; Maynes 2006:3; McLean and Padgett 2004:193; Zelizer 1988; Zukin 1998). Markets were economic and cultural institutions in fifteenth-century Tuscany, largely supported by similar schemas toward exchange in rural and urban regions. Across the fifteenth-century, sectoral differences in resources and economic interests intersected with schemas in such a way that changed and advanced urban vis-à-vis rural markets, thereby changing economic and cultural conditions. This dynamic deterred the development of long-run sectoral relations that might have spurred agricultural capitalism and in turn industrial capitalism. Thus, my argument about sectors, markets, and the undevelopment of capitalism in Tuscany is a sociologically institutionalist perspective (socio-institutionalism, not neo-institutionalism).

Historical Sociology's Critique of the Inevitable: Explaining the Present with the Past

Finally, this book addresses an epistemological point about the role of historical cases in understanding the present. Contemporary historical sociology has shown that what seems obvious to contemporary eyes is not natural or inevitable but is viewed this way because of historical processes (Goodwin 2004:2; Roy 2001:xv–xvii, 5–8; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:20; Tilly 1990:4–5). Such is true of capitalism, as this and other works in historical sociology seek to show.

Classic works in social science, however, had a considerably different view of capitalism as an inevitably more efficient economic system. In some sense, Marx was reacting to, and building upon, Smith; similarly, Weber followed Marx (Kaye 1986:172–173). They worked in a tradition that assumed progress toward rationality and efficiency; consequently, they assumed that capitalism arose because of inherently advantageous conditions in England (Sayer 1992:1382), or the West more generally, and unfolded naturally thereafter. Conditions needed to establish capitalism, such as the overt violence of primitive accumulation (Marx) or religious beliefs (Weber), were not necessary for its reproduction because of its self-perpetuating nature.

The classic social scientists struggled to explain what they viewed as a dramatic rupture between pre-industrial and industrial society that altered individuals and societies in fundamental ways. They often assumed that precapitalist society was what capitalist society was not. Thus, they often provided better explanations of capitalist, than precapitalist, society. Their analyses led to the influential ideas of "tradition" and "modernity" (Adams, Clemens, and Orloff 2005; cf. Sewell 1996:247) that framed precapitalist actors as bound by inefficient and unscientific traditions and capitalist actors as guided by modern and efficient economic and scientific rationality. Granovetter (1985:482), drawing on Polanyi, presented the idea in a moderated format: in non-market economies, the economy is embedded within society, but it becomes less so in market economies. Similarly, the view of markets as performance, that they are created by actions that mimic models developed by economists (review in Fourcade 2007:1019, 1024–1026), similarly assumes that markets are mostly modern phenomena.

This idea of capitalism as naturally efficient and capitalist actors as rational profit maximizers has been institutionalized in the discipline of economics and, through rational choice theory, in sociology as well as historical sociology (e.g., Kiser and Hechter 1991). This perspective assumes the universality of utility-maximizing behavior. Thus, precapitalist actors are also rational and will respond to economic incentives. It is only the "wrong" culture or politics that prevents these incentives from being realized. Rational economic changes would be implemented, but powerful actors prevent changes that would increase efficiency because they would be contrary to their own interests (Knight 1992:40). This work supports the commonsense idea that capitalism is efficient and rational; only inefficient cultural beliefs and political patronage prevent economic progress. It has also been reinforced by the dramatic collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe, as well structural adjustment programs and other shifts from planned to free-market economies (Emigh 2005*a*). Thus, unlike the classic perspective, it assumes a continuity of behavior between the past and present. However, like the classic position, the outcome is more often assumed than empirically demonstrated.

Thus, paradoxically, these two research perspectives, the classic sociological tradition and, more recently, neoclassical economics and rational choice theory, share an important similarity: by providing relatively fixed views of rationality, they provide few tools for viewing its historical change or for comparing the past and the present. The classic tradition assumes that the past is different from the present: the nineteenth century was a dramatic point of departure, creating the dichotomous categories of tradition and modernity. Within the broad categories of modern and traditional, rationality is relatively fixed because it is either present or not. Yet, not only is this dichotomy questioned (see Harris 1989:236; McLean and Padgett 2004:195; Parry and Bloch 1989:7), but tradition is more often assumed than researched (Hobsbawm 1983:4; with respect to money and exchange, Smart 1993:58–59), thereby providing little comparative understanding of modernity (Emigh 2005*a*). The economic view, in contrast, homogenizes these two historical periods by assuming that all actors maximize their economic utility. Thus, again, rationality is relatively fixed.

However, neither rupture nor continuity should be assumed; in fact, they should be the focus of investigation. Much of the field of historical sociology attempts to do this, by showing how capitalism in general and rationality and markets in particular are historically constructed (e.g., Carruthers 1996:195–196; Espeland 1998:34–42; Lachmann 2000:8; for markets, also see Krippner 2001; Lie 1993; Zelizer 1988). The view of capitalism as efficient or inevitable is being challenged by work in historical sociology (or works that could be considered as such even if in different disciplines) and "comparative capitalisms" to provide different tools for viewing historical change (e.g., Biernacki 1995; Biggart and Guillén 1999; Block 2000; Dobbin 2001; Duplessis 1997; Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley 1998; Fligstein 2001; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Gourevitch 1996; Hamilton and Biggart 1988; Jacoby 2005; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Lachmann 2000; Perelman 2000; Soskice 1999; Whitley 1999; Wood 2002). This tradition does not assume that capitalism arose because it is inherently efficient, nor does it presume that capitalism is a single entity.

This view is not unrelated to the classics, whose works also suggested capitalism's different and sometimes contradictory paths. For Weber, religious institutions and beliefs might be necessary for the rise of capitalism but not for its reproduction or spread (Holton 1985:113; Schluchter 1996:239–214). Thus, capitalism has a different trajectory depending on the conditions under which it arose. Marx and Polanyi analyzed capitalism's contradictions, not only with respect to markets, but also with respect to broader social processes. Polanyi ([1944] 1957:201) argued that capitalism is not self-sustaining because of its contradictory nature. Without corrective action by the state, capitalism collapses because of the misery it creates (review in Lie 1993:277–278). Similarly, Marx ([1894] 1977*b*:349–375) argued that the concentration of wealth by capitalists at the expense of laborers creates crisis. From Marx and Engels's (1970:94) idea that institutions such as the state could sustain capitalism and therefore prevent economic change arose the Western Marxist analysis of the power of culture (e.g., Althusser 1971; Gramsci 1971). Thus, these traditions also motivate the idea that capitalism is not an inevitably unfolding economic system and cannot continue without cultural and political institutions.

Recent work in historical sociology furthers these ideas. Like Polanyi, this research considers the conditions under which contradictions emerge, not their inevitability. Furthermore, it views culture and politics as constitutive of capitalism, instead of as impediments to efficient economic change (e.g., Biernacki 1995; Block 2000; Carruthers 1996; Lachmann 2000; Perelman 2000). Thus, historical sociologists view capitalism as historically invariant because it always entails the economy, culture, and politics. However, the configuration of capitalism, that is, how culture, politics, and economics interact, is historically specific.

Historical Sociology's Methodology

Because capitalism has no single trajectory and has no inevitable outcome, empirical research about the past is necessary to understand the present. Historical sociology developed a classic tradition by deploying secondary evidence to make broad comparisons between relatively large units, usually nation-states (e.g., Bendix [1956] 1974; Moore 1966). More recently, historical sociologists have taken up archival research and are developing a body of work based on primary evidence (e.g., Biernacki 1995; Carruthers 1996; McLean and Padgett 2004).

I merged these two traditions. First, I sought archival evidence. Sociologists rarely use archival evidence from the period before 1500 to address theories of transitions to capitalism, though this period forms one of the most important underlying reference points for contemporary research.[4] The distinction between modern and post-modern is, after all, underpinned by the concept, pre-modern. Implicitly, historical referents underlie fundamental social science concepts (Emigh 2005*a*). To know the present, scholars need empirical knowledge, not presuppositions, of the past. Thus, my use of primary, archival evidence work is an explicit attempt to fill this gap.

[4] Homans's (1941) use of primary documents to examine peasant life in thirteenth-century England is an exception. This lacuna is partially attributable to the difficulties of the research, for which Latin, a vernacular language, and extensive paleographical knowledge are minimal prerequisites that sociologists rarely possess. The flowering of social science research for fifteenth-century Tuscany, of which this book is an example (others include Ackerberg and Botticini 2002; Galassi 1992; McLean 1998; and Padgett and Ansell 1993), stems from Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981, 1985) work. They digitized some information from the set of fiscal documents, the *Catasto* of 1427. They also microfilmed most of the urban, as well as some of the rural, declarations. Though it is usually necessary to return to the original sources to conduct research, their data provide a most valuable service as an index, making it possible to employ data analytic techniques based on sampling, matching documents, and selecting cases. Because of the historical importance and wealth of Florence during the Middle Ages, the Florentine archival holdings are vast. In combination with Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's index, the possibilities for social science research are virtually endless.

Second, I also use secondary evidence, drawing on the vast historiography of Florence. This secondary work was crucial. Given the fragmented nature of the archival evidence and the impossibility of collecting it systematically for large regions, secondary evidence provides a fuller view of Tuscan history. Curiously, I also use my own work as a secondary source, by citing my own articles where the original archival evidence is often given in more detail. Writing this book has entailed a two-part process: first, presenting the original archival evidence to address a specific historical debate or point (often narrower than the transition to capitalism[5]) and second, drawing this material together into a treatment of the transition to capitalism. This two-part process was necessary because of the scarcity of sociological literature based on primary sources for this period.

Chapter Outline

The remaining chapters explain these arguments and provide empirical evidence. Chapter 2 reviews theories of transitions to capitalism for fifteenth-century Tuscany in the context of the overarching methodology used here, negative case methodology. In the spirit of this methodology, Chapter 3 then develops the content of sectoral theories, which provide the most promising explanations for the Tuscan case, first by reviewing theories of markets and sectors, and then by combining these theories to explain the Tuscan trajectory. Chapter 3 ends by foreshadowing the application of the theory to the evidence in the following chapters. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 present qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the theoretical argument. Chapter 4 illustrates how well-functioning rural markets (which, hypothetically, could have developed into capitalist markets), in regions of smallholding relatively unaffected by the Florentine economy, were linked to household agricultural production and property devolution. Chapter 5 explains how capitalist urban markets based on urban trade and finance (which, hypothetically, could have expanded creating a transition to capitalism), a high degree of inequality between urban and rural sectors, and practices of property devolution were linked to Florentines' investments in sharecropping (an agricultural contract in which the rent is a share of the harvest, usually one-half in Tuscany). Chapters 6 and 7 show how rural inhabitants' participation in rural markets was undermined by this large degree of sectoral inequality when Florentines took control of agricultural production. Chapter 6 does so by examining sharecropping in detail (and is analogous to the treatment of smallholders in Chapter 4). Chapter 7 does so by explicitly

[5] For example, I considered sharecroppers' mobility (Emigh 1999*a*) and their provisions of oxen (Emigh 1996).

comparing quantitatively the income, indebtedness, and productivity of smallholders and sharecroppers. Together, these empirical chapters show how Florentines and rural inhabitants had similar orientations to (schemas of) markets that facilitated their joint participation in them. Florentines' much greater resources, however, allowed them to consolidate landholdings, thereby eliminating rural ownership and destroying the institutional basis for rural inhabitants' participation in markets. Thus, capitalist markets unmade themselves as they spread. Chapter 8 links the empirical evidence for the substantive arguments about markets and sectors in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 to the theoretical and epistemological issues in Chapters 1 and 3.

Most of the archival evidence focuses on four small communities in rural Tuscany: two smallholding communes, Montecatini and Castelnuovo, in a region called the Val di Cecina south of Volterra, and two sharecropping parishes, Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve, in a region called the Mugello north of Florence (see the map in Figure 1-1; see Emigh 2005*b* for visual representations of these towns). Within these small towns, I examined as much archival evidence about individual rural inhabitants as possible and visited the sites. In Chapters 4 and 6, I matched different types of documents to emulate historical ethnographies (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:31) and to create as full a picture of social reality—as much "thick description" (Geertz 1973:12)—as possible in these locations. Because it is difficult to amass large amounts of evidence for rural regions during this period of time, these ethnographies are thinner than contemporary ones. Nevertheless, the goal of creating historical ethnographies that captured the social dynamics of smallholding and sharecropping meant that I focused on a few locations and did not sample documents for all of Tuscany. Since the towns I chose are unremarkable, nothing suggests, however, that similar patterns were not found throughout Tuscany. To provide as much context as possible for these towns, as well as to show they are unremarkable, I also discuss historical literature from other regions of Tuscany.

Adapting documentary evidence for historical ethnographies created other difficulties. Though ethnographies often highlight meaning and intention, the documentary record provides little direct evidence of them. Thus, I often inferred meaning and intention and presented as much evidence as possible for the reader to judge the plausibility of my interpretations. More detail—that would distract from a book-length presentation—is frequently available in my previously published articles. In addition, it was sometimes impossible to present the material in a way that was simultaneously topically and ethnographically organized. In contemporary ethnographic or interview-based studies, data collection often continues until all the required material is gathered for each unit of analysis (e.g., by asking or observing the same information of all individuals or households). Documentary evidence, however, is

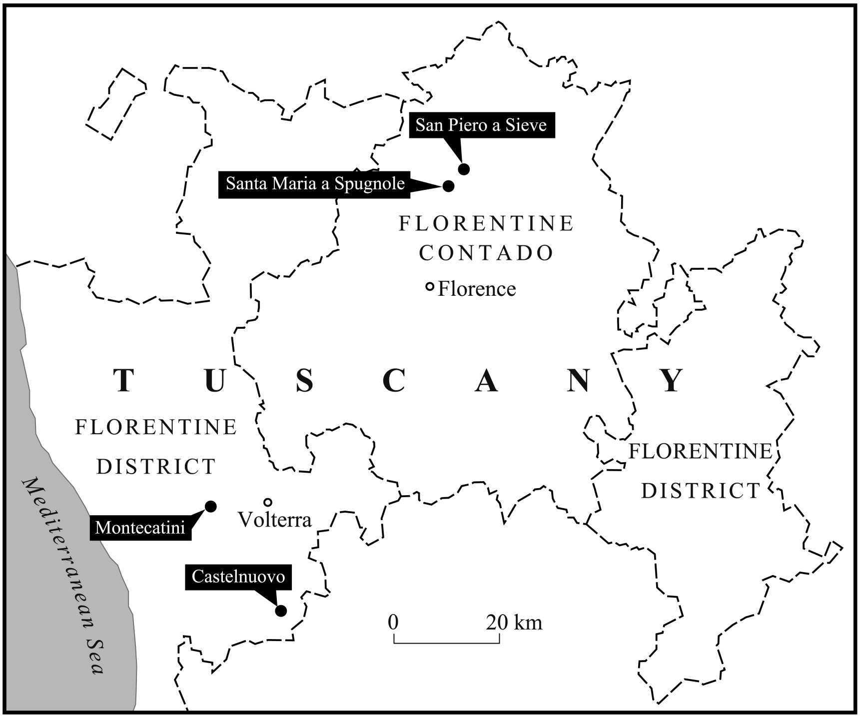

FIGURE 1–1 SELECTED RESEARCH SITES IN RURAL TUSCANY: CASTELNUOVO, MONTECATINI, SANTA MARIA A SPUGNOLE, AND SAN PIERO A SIEVE (Map drawn by Chase Langford)

limited to what can be found in the archives. Thus, topics (i.e., property devolution, landholding) may discuss different households or individuals; similarly, each description of a household or individual may discuss different topics. The nature of the documentary evidence made it impossible to present each household or individual in its entirety first and then to discuss each topic.

As a compromise, I arranged the evidence so that each household or individual is described in as much detail as possible in the substantive section for which the evidence provides the most information. This evidence gives details such as names, ages, and relationships (though I do not discuss information given in the original documents that was irrelevant to the overall argument). If the household or family is discussed in other sections in less detail, I refer to the more detailed section to eliminate repetition. I tried to arrange the material so that the first discussion was the most detailed, but given the tradeoffs among the substantive explanation, the integrity of the historical ethnography, the elimination of repetition, and the ease of reading the material, this arrangement was not always possible.

These historical ethnographies are combined with an analysis of the distribution of leasing throughout Tuscany based on archival evidence (Chapter 5). Throughout this book, I also draw on the large secondary literature, especially to discuss Florence, urban manufacturing, and Florentines' family practices. In using secondary evidence, I risk doing what I advocate against: by reviewing literature written for the purpose of other theoretical debates in other fields, I may simply repeat inadequate explanations of historical events. For this, I have no solution here; given the difficulties of using archival evidence, a single book cannot provide empirical evidence for all scholarly debates. However, by showing that archival evidence from this period can address some sociological issues, I hope that other researchers will take up other issues for which I have not used archival evidence and therefore revise the arguments that I have made in their future work. Finally, in light of the interdisciplinary nature of my argument and evidence, I present the material so that readers could skip details (theoretical, historical, methodological) depending on their interests, by providing ample summaries of the main points.

I examine the relations between urban and rural regions in Tuscany, roughly between 1350 and 1500. During this critical period, the transition to capitalism could have but did not occur. The post-plague period of late medieval history (after 1350) was often critical in establishing long-term economic patterns in Europe in general (Brenner 1985*a*:35–36) and in Tuscany in particular (Epstein 1991:4–5; Molho 1994*a*:66–71). Around 1500, the Tuscan historical trajectory was altered by foreign invasions (Butters 1985:viii). Because of the usefulness of the *Catasto* of 1427, much of the evidence is presented for the point about midway between these two dates.