


1948

From the latifundium crisis to land reform



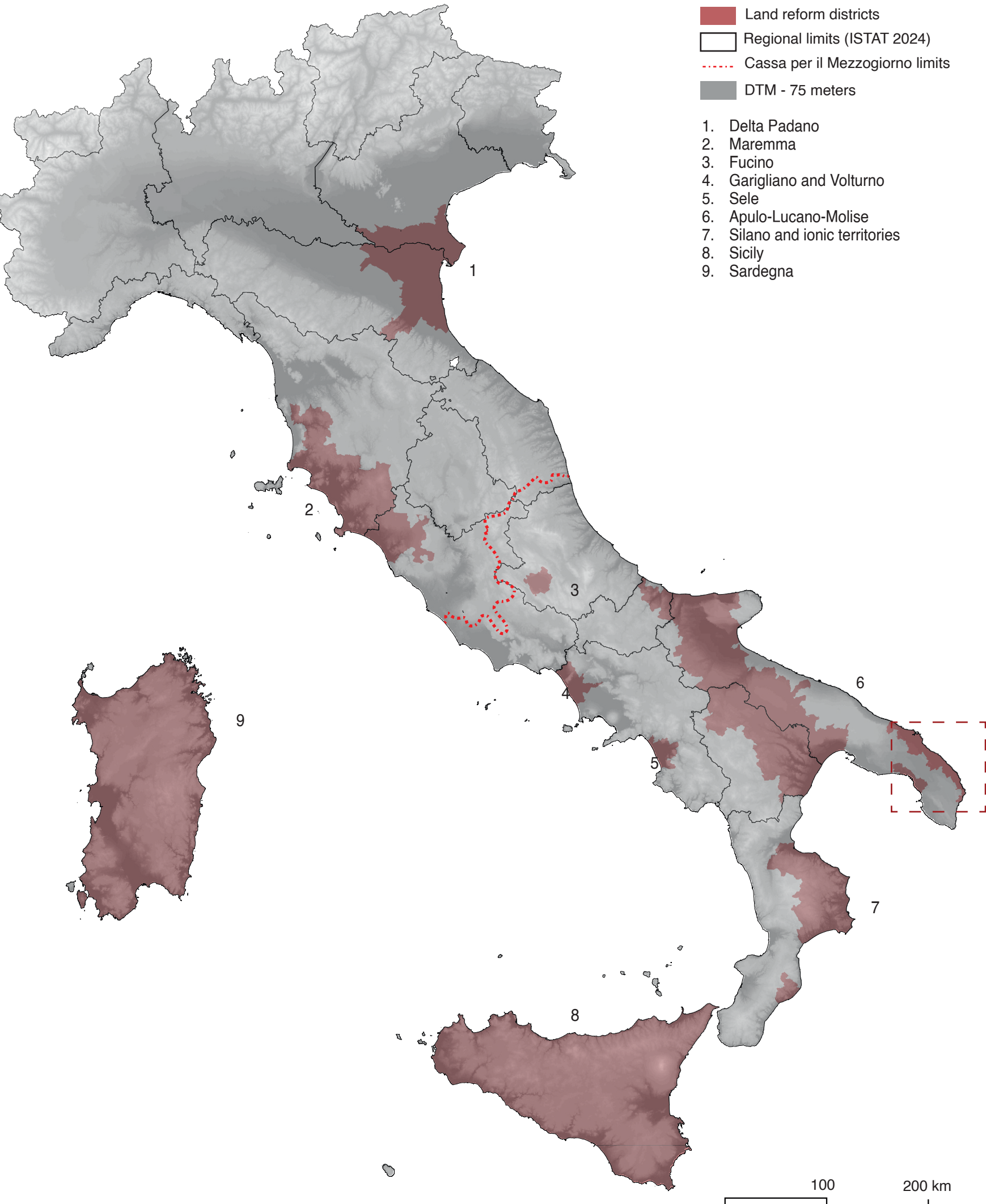
Low incomes, agricultural backwardness, unemployment, Systematic backwardness of the southern Italian economy

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Several peasant revolts and strike, and social pressure from trade unions and the PCI

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“Stralcio” Law, Cassa per il Mezzogiorno law, approved by the DC government



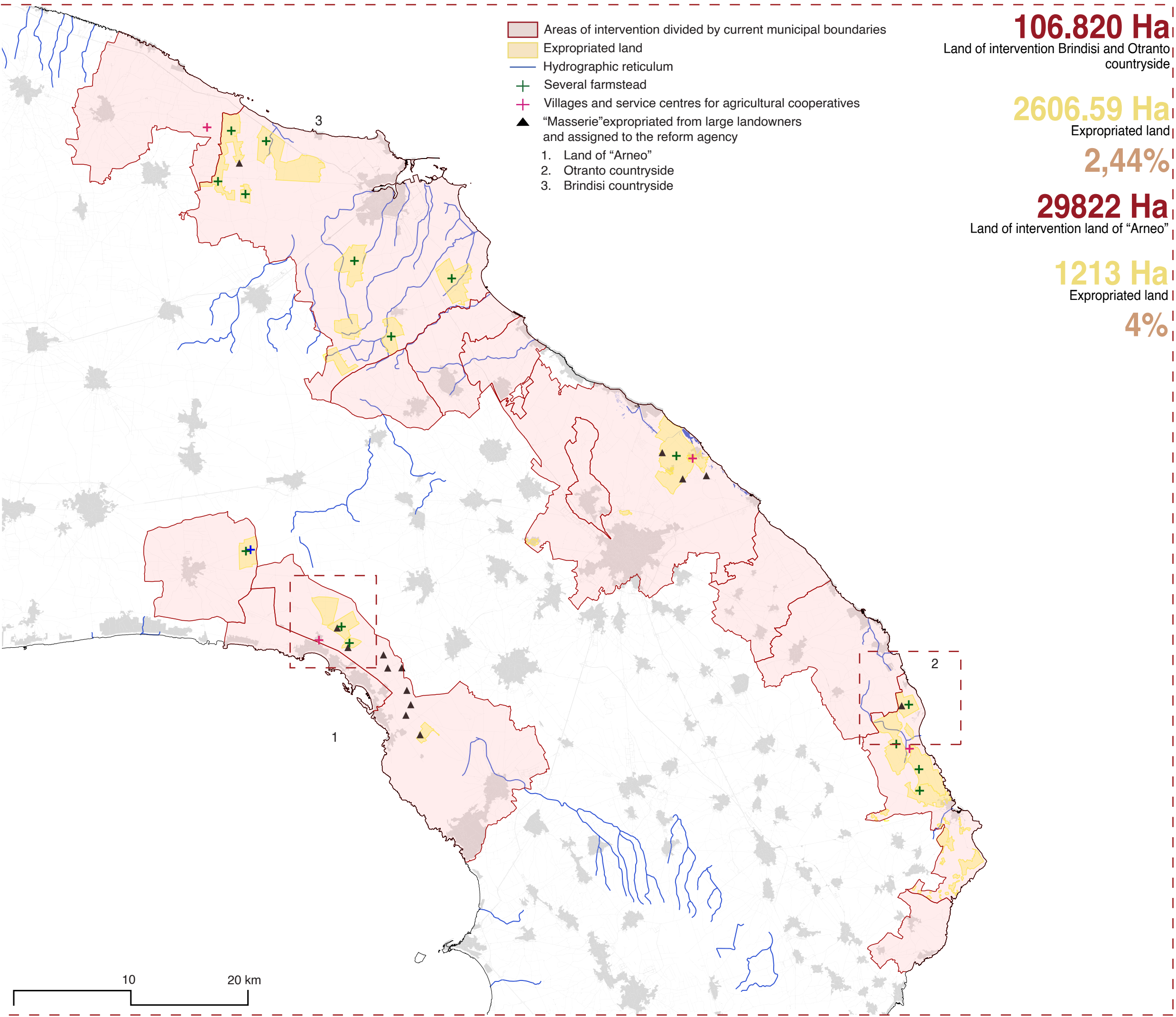
1950 - 1980

How the land reform redesigned the territory

This work explores how, since the Second World War, the Italian agricultural landscape has been at the centre of a grand strategy of modernisation and land infrastructuring, based on the modern myth of a small, family-run peasant estate. in particular the landscape of the ‘Mezzogiorno’.

- **Research questions:**
- What remains in the territories of the Italian agrarian reform? What spatial results did one of the greatest wealth redistribution policies in Italy produce?
- What remains in the disciplines of the project?
- What project for these territories?

Over the decades, the legacies of this reform have manifested themselves in various ways, influencing the landscape, agricultural practices and socio-economic conditions (De Leo, 2009).



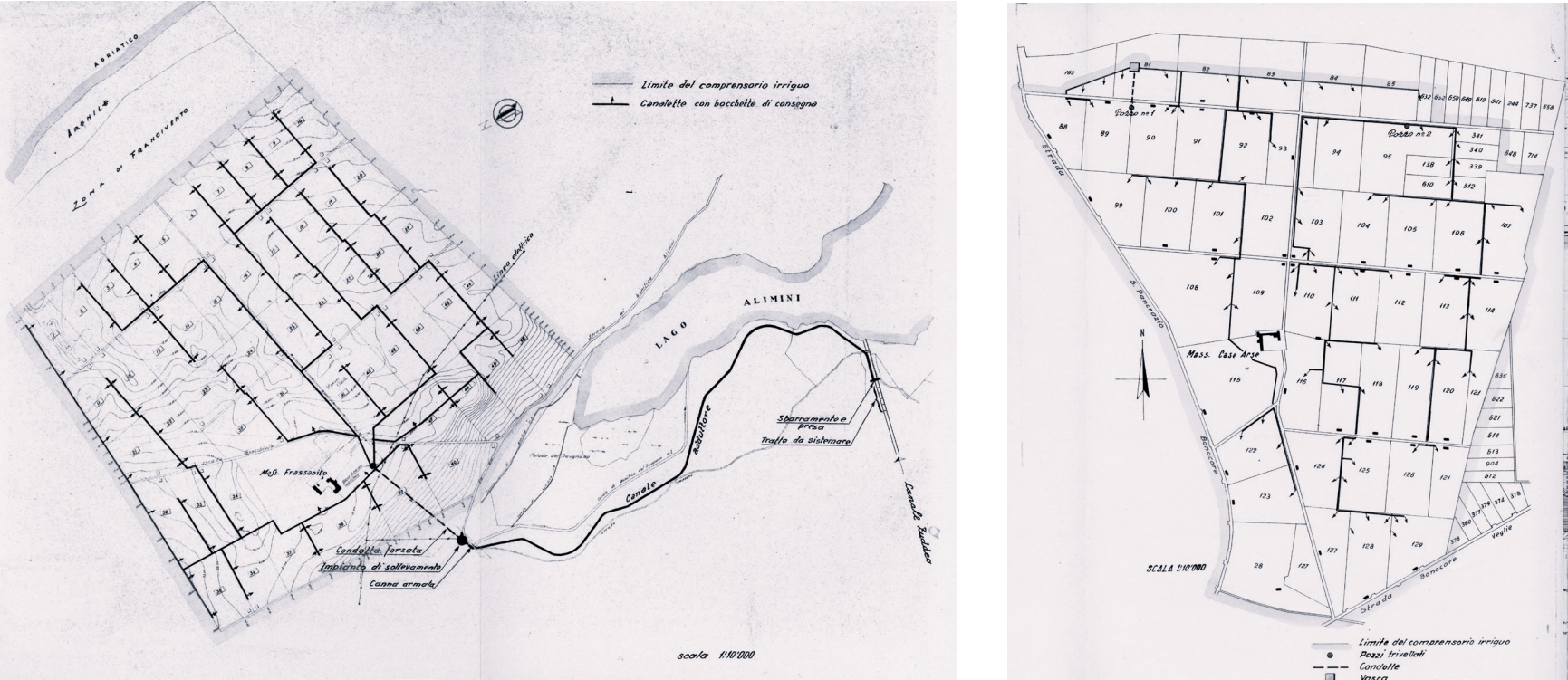
The territorial project told by the archives

The **research starts from a period conducted in various State Archives** (Bari and Lecce). Through the analysis of local historical cartography - preserved in the ‘ERSAP Fund’ and some collections and atlases published by the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno concerning the entire national territory - it was possible to examine the locational logic used by the reform institutions.

According to the Cassa's five-year report on extraordinary works in the public interest in Italy (1955), over 1,000 kilometres of **roads**, numerous **hydroelectric plants** and a vast network of **aqueducts** were built in the first five years of activity, contributing not only to improving living conditions but

also to facilitating the industrialisation of the most backward areas. Water works were particularly important for the agricultural sector, providing the water needed to irrigate areas that had hitherto been subject to low productivity.

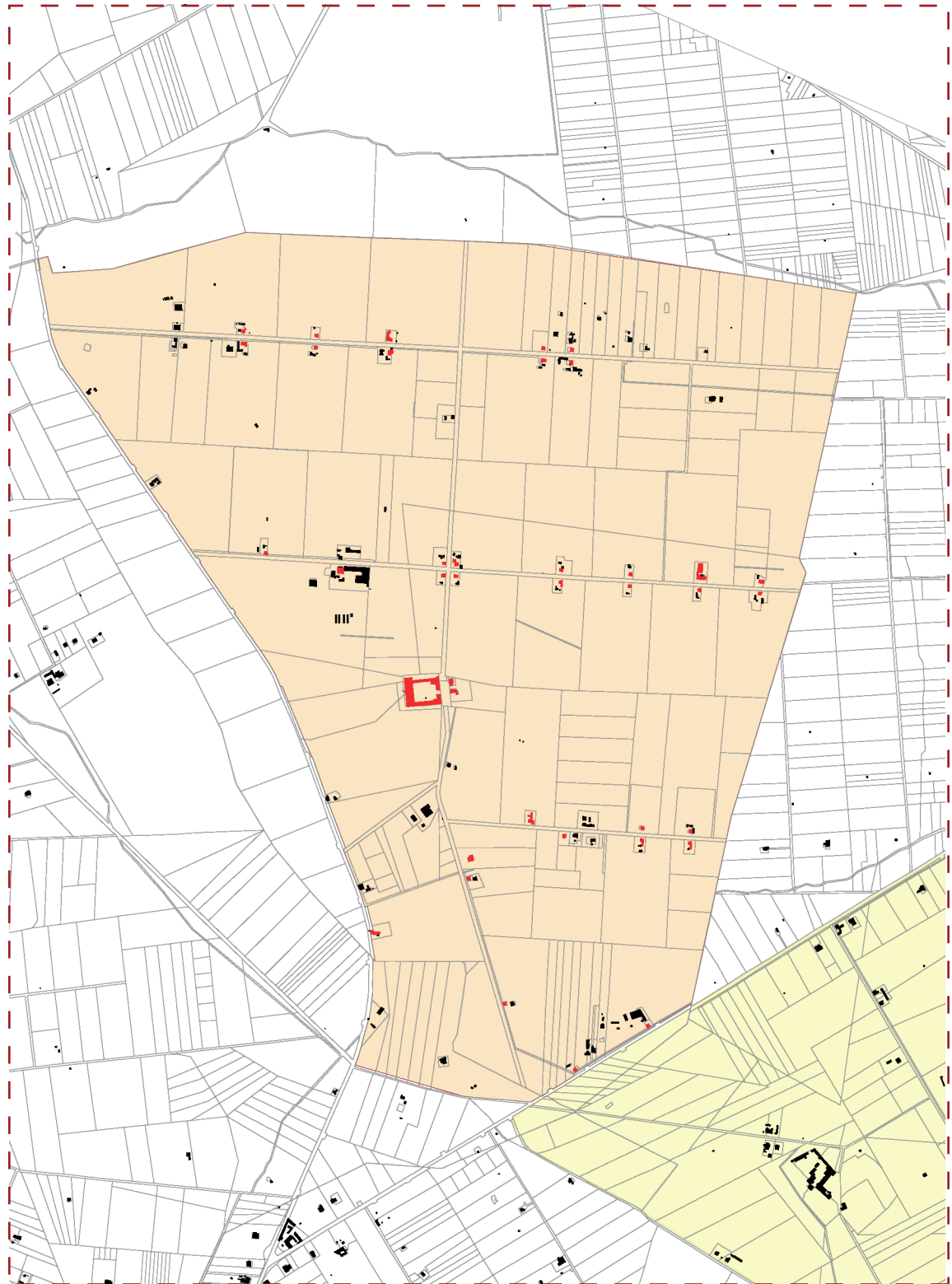
- **Political debate: PCI vs DC**  
The Italian Communist Party saw the agrarian reform as an opportunity for the democratic and cooperative development of Italian agriculture, The Christian Democracy saw the agrarian reform as a way to create a class of small bourgeois peasants.
- **Land subdivisions, dispersed houses**



- **Villages and service centres for agricultural cooperatives**



- **Frassanito' irrigation system.**
- Dimensions: 225 Ha. In Otranto countryside.
- The plant financed by the Cassa was built from 1952 to 1958.
- Soil characteristics: indigenous soils derived from tuff stone.
- Cultivation system: cereal and horticultural.
- Fractioning of the property: farms between 4 and 7 hectares predominate.
- Irrigation system layout: The system with a free-flowing distribution network is fed by lifting water from the Fontanelle lake. The distribution network is in prefabricated conduits.
- The system includes a historical Masseria, and several land subdivisions with farmhouses, today, most of these are used as holiday homes and residences during the summer season, the agricultural land is maintained has become gardens only for the use of accommodation functions, small cultivated areas are still used for accommodation activities.
- In an area such as this, the agrarian reform has been totally overtaken by the economic model based on the renting of buildings for tourist rentals.



- **Case Arse' irrigation system.**
- Dimensions: 242 Ha. In Nardò' countryside
- The plant financed by the Cassa was built from 1952 to 1958.
- Soil characteristics: indigenous soils derived from tuff stone.
- Cultivation system: cereal and horticultural.
- Fractioning of the property: farms between 5 and 7 hectares predominate.
- Irrigation system layout: the water raised from the wells feeds two separate distribution networks, connected to each other for possible compensation needs. The distribution network is in prefabricated conduits.
- The system includes, an historical Masseria, one of the largest tobacco factories in Salento, now disused, a former rural school used as a home by a former tobacco factory manager and a disused church.
- Many of the farmhouses have been incorporated by new constructions, or renovated, some abandoned.
- Some fields are still used by farms that also own the farmhouses, other farms are simply the summer residence in the countryside of some families from neighbouring municipalities, others are abandoned.