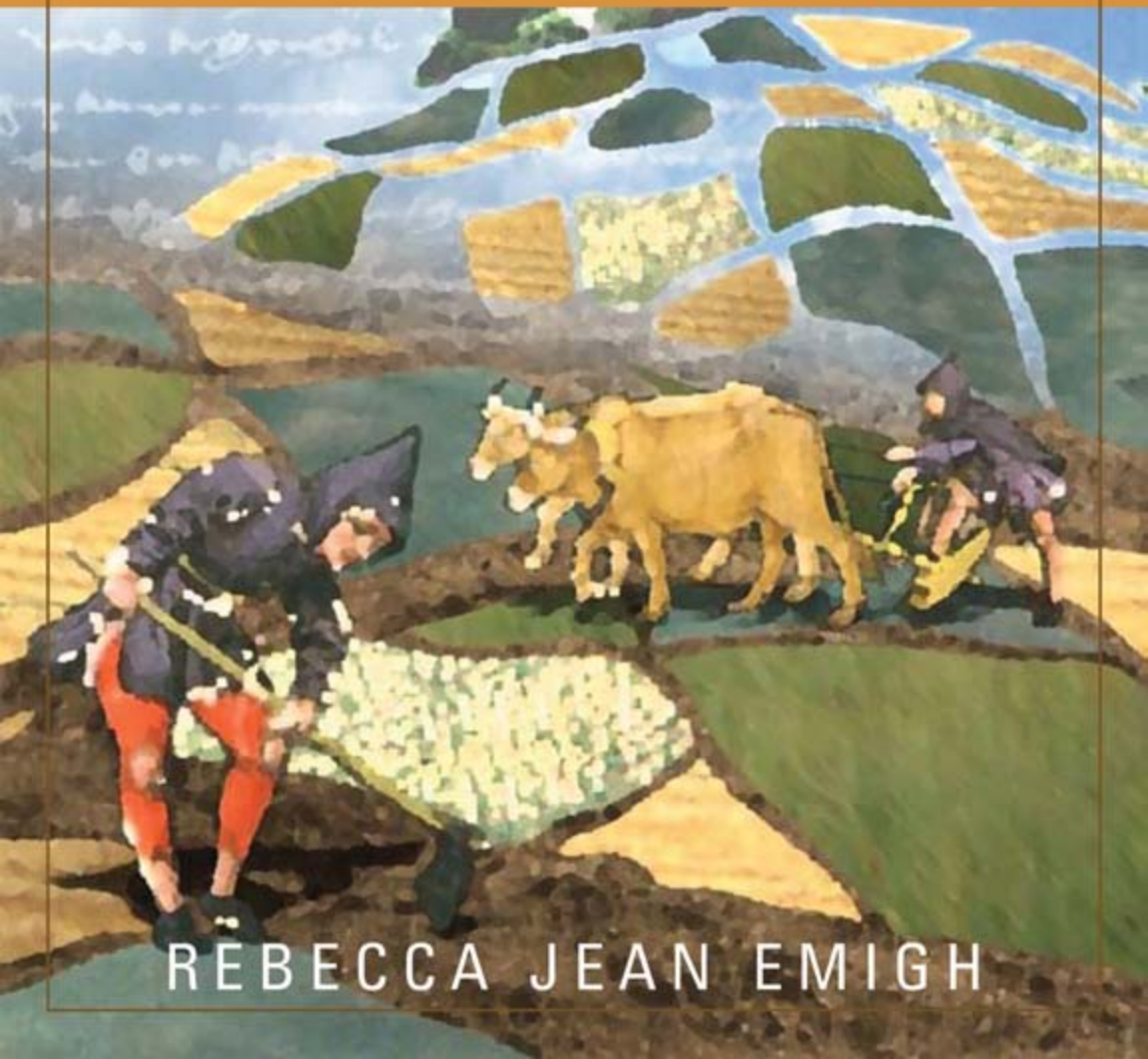
# THE UNDEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

## Sectors and Markets in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany



REBECCA JEAN EMIGH

# The Undevelopment of Capitalism

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Rebecca Jean Emigh

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Philadelphia

Temple University Press
1601 North Broad Street
Philadelphia PA 19122
www.temple.edu/tempress


Published 2008
Printed in the United States of America

♾ The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992

Emigh, Rebecca Jean, 1962-
The undevelopment of capitalism : sectors and markets in fifteenth-century Tuscany / Rebecca Jean Emigh.
p. cm. — (Politics, history, and social change)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-1-59213-618-6 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN-13: 978-1-59213-619-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Tuscany (Italy)—Economic conditions. 2. Tuscany (Italy)—History. 3. Capitalism—Italy—Tuscany—History—To 1500. I. Title.
HC307.T9E45 2008
330.945'505—dc22
2007049490

2 4 6 8 9 7 5 3 1

*For Steve, on our twenty-fifth anniversary, and for Vashti,*
*on her departure to college, with all my love*

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# Acknowledgments

I would like to thank those individuals who read this manuscript or its component parts, including John H. Evans, Cynthia Feliciano, Philip S. Gorski, John R. Hall, Richard Lachmann, Paul McLean, Dylan Riley, Charles Tilly, and the reviewers for Temple University Press. I have also appreciated the help and collegiality of Elizabeth Frankenberg, Vilma Ortiz, and William G. Roy and the support of Micah Kleit. Patricia Ahmed, Claire Banchich, Rachel Bindman, Tamara Black, Trevor Bond, Christina Fitzgerald, Arne Jaaska, Cynthia Maya, Jana Phifer, Dylan Riley, Zulema Valdez, and Nancy Wang Yuen provided research assistance; and Chase Langford made the figures and maps. Gabriella Battista, Gino Corti, Heather Dubnick, Donna Maurer, Franca Ragone, Emanuela Tallo, Vashti L. Emigh, and the staff at the Florentine State Archives assisted with the transcriptions, translations, and editing. Of course, all remaining errors are mine. This manuscript also benefited from talks I gave at the Sociology Departments at the University of California, San Diego and the University of Washington; at the Center for History, Society, and Culture, at the University of California, Davis; and at the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. I would also like to reiterate my thanks to all the numerous individuals whom I previously thanked in my articles on this subject and to all the participants of the fora where I presented initial versions of these articles. Even when I did not directly reuse the material from these articles, their help greatly improved my understanding of this subject and therefore, improved this book.

I would also like to thank the publishers of all my previous articles, and in

particular, the publishers of the ones from which I adapted, with permission, portions for use in this manuscript, including "The Spread of Sharecropping in Tuscany: The Political Economy of Transaction Costs," *American Sociological Review* 62 (3): 423–442, 1997; "The Mystery of the Missing Middle-Tenants: The 'Negative' Case of Fixed-Term Leasing and Agricultural Investment in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany," *Theory and Society* 27 (3): 351–375, 1998; "The Length of Leases: Short-Term Contracts and Long-Term Relationships," *Viator* 30: 345–382, 1999; "Means and Measures: Property Rights, Political Economy, and Productivity in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany," *Social Forces* 78 (2): 461–490, 1999; "Forms of Property Rights or Class Capacities: The Example of Tuscan Sharecropping," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 41 (1): 22–52, 2000; "Theorizing Strategies: Households and Markets in 15th-Century Tuscany," *History of the Family* 6 (4): 495–517, 2001; "Numeracy or Enumeration? The Uses of Numbers by States and Societies," *Social Science History* 26 (4): 653–698, 2002; "Economic Interests and Sectoral Relations: The Undevelopment of Capitalism in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany," *American Journal of Sociology* 108 (5): 1075–1113, 2003; and "Property Devolution in Tuscany," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33 (3): 385–420, 2003. With permission from the editors of *Vectors,* Tara McPherson and Steve Anderson, and the artist, Erik Loyer, the paperback book cover was adapted from Loyer's art published in Rebecca Jean Emigh, "The Unmaking of Markets: A Composite Visual History," *Vectors: Journal of Culture and Technology in a Dynamic Vernacular* 1, 2005. [Online]. Available: http://vectors.usc.edu/index.php?page=7&projectId=5 (click on "launch project"). The art was created with the support of a fellowship from *Vectors,* the University of Southern California. The images of the rural inhabitants were reproduced from the illuminated manuscript of Virgil's *Georgics* painted by Apollonio di Giovanni, probably sometime between 1450 and 1465, and located at the Riccardiana Library, Florence (Ms. 492, c. 18). Permission to reproduce these images was granted by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Further reproduction of these images is prohibited. My work was supported by funding from numerous UCLA Faculty Senate Grants; two UCLA Career Development Awards; a UCLA ISOP Faculty Small Grant Award; the Social Science Research Council; the IIE Fulbright Agency; The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation; the ASA/NSF Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline; and NSF grants #9100635, SBR-951560, and SBR-9512455. The UCLA Centers for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Studies provided generous support for research assistance.

Finally, my greatest thanks go to my husband, Steven Anthony McGinty, and my daughter, Vashti Louise Antonia Emigh, for their love.

# Methodological Notes

*Sources:* The names and abbreviations of all the manuscripts used in the text are given in the bibliography. Some of the *catasti* (e.g., the *Catasto* of 1427) were redacted in two stages. Households recorded their information in their *portata* (plural: *portate*) and then the tax officials copied the information into the *campione* (plural: *campioni*), made corrections, and added the tax calculations.

*Dates:* The Florentine year began on March 25, so the dates between January 1 and March 24 given in the manuscripts are one year behind the modern date. In the text, I give dates in the Florentine and the modern style when they differ. For example, January 3, 1427/8 refers to the date that would be given in the manuscripts as 1427. The same date in the modern style would be 1428. For notarial documents that were not foliated (abbreviated n.f. [no foliation]), I provide the redaction date in the same style.

*Standardization:* The manuscripts to which I refer to in the text have little or no punctuation, and the orthography varies from document to document and even within a single page of a document. In quoting from the documents in the text, I added punctuation and editorial additions only where necessary for clarity. I also standardized the spellings of names of persons and places in instances where the same name appears in my text several times, again for clarity. Otherwise, I retained the original spellings of names, as well as all other words, from the manuscripts. Many names are patronyms, in which the first

name is followed by the father's name (e.g., Stefanó *di* [of] Giovanni). A woman's first name is followed by either her husband's or her father's name.

*Ages:* When I calculated individuals' ages, for example, to discuss a document in which their ages ordinarily would not be given (e.g., a letter, a notarial document), I used the approximate redaction date of the *catasto* and the age given in the *catasto* declaration. In Montecatini and Castelnuovo, the 1427 *Catasto* declarations were redacted around 1429. Nevertheless, I follow standard usage and refer to "the *Catasto* of 1427." I assumed that the 1427 *Catasto* declarations in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve were redacted in 1427 (for a discussion of the problems of dating these registers, see Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:22–24). Of course, biological ages are not known. The *Catasto* of 1427 exhibits substantial age rounding, especially at ages that are multiples of five (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:170–183). Tuscans also altered their ages for a number of social and fiscal reasons (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:168–170, 257–260; Molho 1988).

*Currencies:* There were two Florentine currencies, one in gold and one in silver, and the exchange rate between them fluctuated (de Roover 1963: 31–34). In the *Catasto* of 1427, the exchange rate was four lire to one gold florin. Gold florins were divided into twenty gold soldi, and lire were divided into twenty *soldi di piccioli* (de Roover 1963:31–34). When necessary, I converted the values of currencies based on this exchange rate. Of course, the exchange rate in any particular transaction may have been slightly different, but the documents used here do not generally provide this information. If a notarial document explicitly mentioned a different conversion rate, I used it, but this was rare. The rate changed across the fifteenth century, creating more uncertainty about the conversion rates later in the century.

*Wealth:* In all examples in which I discuss individuals' wealth in terms of "total assets," I used the variable, total assets, from Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data compiled from the *Catasto* of 1427. When I refer to "taxable wealth" or "taxable assets," I used the values of the assets given by the tax officials minus any deductions that these officials allowed before calculating the tax. These values also come from Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data. When I refer to the estimated "value" of movable and immovable property, I used the value of the property declared by the owner, not the capitalized income determined by the *Catasto* officials for the purpose of calculating the tax. "Income" refers to the value of the crops or rent obtained from the property as declared by the owner. I calculated value and income directly from the *catasto* declarations. The poverty line, as defined by the *Catasto* officials in 1427, pro-

vides some measure of relative wealth. Households whose total assets were below fourteen florins were not taxed because it was assumed that they did not have sufficient assets for survival (Conti 1966:45).

*Measures:* The most common surface measure of land was the *staioro* (plural: *staiora*). The most common unit of dry measure was the *staio* (plural: *staia*); the *barile* (plural: *barili*) was used to measure wine.

# 1

# 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

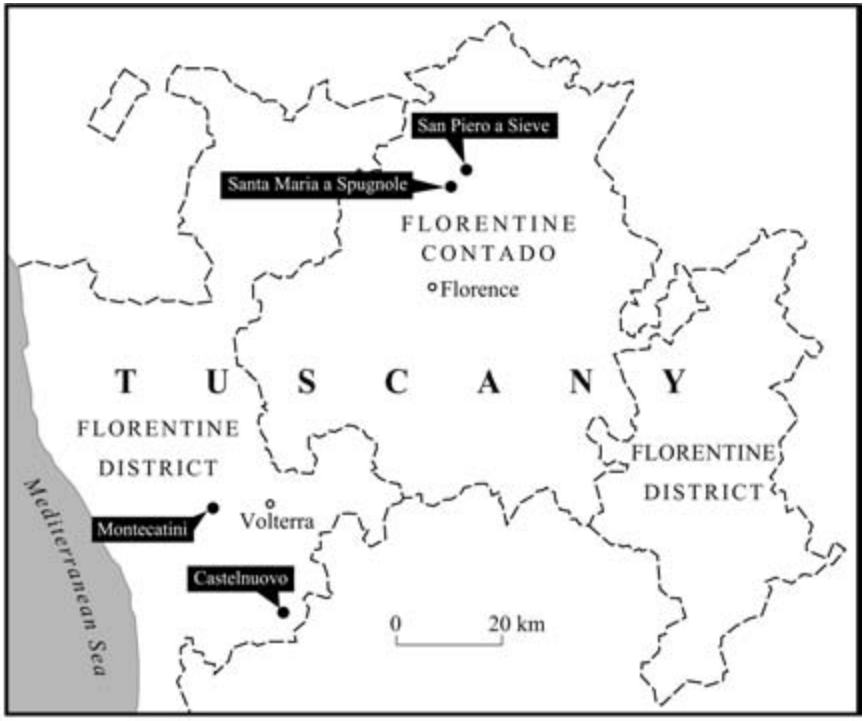


FIGURE 1–1 SELECTED RESEARCH SITES IN RURAL TUSCANY: CASTELNUOVO, MONTECATINI, SANTA MARIA A SPUGNOLE, AND SAN PIERO A SIEVE (Map drawn by Chase Langford)

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.

# 2

# Tuscany as a Negative Case of Transition to Capitalism

To investigate Tuscan history, I use negative case methodology (explained in detail in Emigh 1997*c*; for applications, see Bartram 2000; Emigh 1998*b*, 2003*a*; Riley 2003). This methodology is used to analyze a strategically chosen negative case, in which an outcome that had been predicted by theory did not occur. Because the case is compared to theoretical generalizations that incorporate dimensions of multiple cases, it is inherently comparative and deductive. Negative case methodology leads to the development of the content of sociological theory under two conditions: first, the negation, the gap between the expected outcome and the theoretical explanation, must be large; and second, a detailed examination of the empirical evidence must lead to an expansion of the theory's content. Negative case methodology uses a variety of research strategies, both qualitative and quantitative, to examine a single historical trajectory in detail.

There are three reasons why a focus on negative cases, where the outcome predicted by theory did not occur, is often more useful than an examination of positive cases, where the outcome predicted by theory did occur. First, negative case methodology capitalizes on the more general phenomenon that variations in outcome facilitate explanation (Tilly 1984:105–115). In particular, it combines the emphasis on difference, found in a wide variety of philosophical writings from John Stuart Mill (1950:214–216) to Michel Foucault (1977*a*:142, 1977*b*:194–196, 1979:5–10), with classic "deviant case" analysis (review in Emigh 1997*c*:653–655). In the Millian framework, the method of difference is more powerful because a single missing antecedent and a divergent outcome

facilitate causal arguments (Skocpol and Somers 1980:183). The use of difference is also a common post-positivist strategy, deployed most famously by Foucault (1977*a*, 1979:23, 1980:83, 116, 191–192), who developed Friedrich Nietzsche's methodology of genealogy. This method entails tracing a pattern backward in time to locate a striking difference between current and past practice (Poster 1984:89). Then, the difference is used to undermine commonly held notions about the rationality of the current one (Poster 1984:89). Thus, a wide range of research strategies takes advantage of the opportunities posed by different outcomes.

Negative case methodology's focus on a single case is an advantage, even though the use of single cases is often considered to be a disadvantage. Detailed empirical knowledge of a single case can be compared to a theory based on the knowledge of numerous cases; therefore, this methodology is not restricted to a particular constellation of similarities and differences found in a narrow range of cases (as in the Millian method of difference). Criticisms of single-case studies suggest that they are useless because it is impossible to form generalizations on the basis of one case. Of course, there are always limits to generalization depending on the study's logic and design. These limits may be exaggerated by a small number of cases. However, generalizability may not be the best use of single-case studies. Instead, the role of negative cases in developing the content of theory, not the range of its applicability, is more important (cf. Stinchcombe 1978:21–22; Walton 1992:125).

Second, the use of negative cases makes it easier to distinguish between important and irrelevant events, processes, structures, and patterns, because in practice it is much more difficult to assume, when the outcome is negative, that all of the constituent elements of the historical trajectory actually contributed to the outcome. Again, this methodology is a generalization of the method of difference, where the absent antecedent condition makes it possible to distinguish easily between important and irrelevant variables. Analyses of the transition to capitalism, for example, commonly focus on England or other similar cases in which the transition to capitalism occurred. This focus on positive cases, where there was a rapid transition to capitalism or economic development, makes it difficult to distinguish between aspects of the case that were conducive to economic development and aspects that were detrimental or irrelevant to it. There is also a directionality inherent in the focus on either positive or negative cases. A focus on positive cases can perpetuate the stereotype that the outcome is inevitable and that only in unusual cases does the outcome not occur. A reliance on positive European historical referents as comparisons often gives this literature on transitions to capitalism its "Western bias," because it suggests that the same conditions, events, or processes have to be repeated for economic development to occur.

Third, in the context of a Lakatosian philosophy of science, negative cases provide more powerful methodological tools than positive ones, because it is precisely the negative cases that present the anomalies necessary to rethink theoretical applications (Burawoy 1989:795), extend a theory's range, and provide the most persuasive evidence of scientific growth. Knowledge is accumulated not through disproof, but by the reincorporation of potentially damaging findings into the existing theory (Lakatos 1970:132–138). Research programs, similar to Kuhnian paradigms, consist of hard-core postulates, sets of previous research findings or theories that scientists working in similar disciplines accept by convention. By definition, hard-core postulates cannot be falsified. Consequently, anomalous findings are potentially disastrous for hard-core postulates. Scientists have two strategies for dealing with anomalous findings. The first is to dismiss anomalous findings as exceptions. This strategy leads to a degenerating problem shift that cannot sustain a successful research program. The second is to expand the range of the explanation by introducing auxiliary theories that conform to hard-core postulates but that also explain anomalous findings as well as anticipate new ones. This strategy is a progressive problem shift that leads to a successful research program (Lakatos 1970:133; see also review in Burawoy 1989:761). Thus, the way scientists deal with anomalies, not easily interpretable findings, identifies the research program as successful or not. Negative case methodology can easily be embedded in Lakatos's post-positivist philosophy, precisely because negative cases expand the content of the theory by explaining the anomalous outcome. This approach emphasizes the importance of science in extending knowledge and therefore, in expanding the range of theory, not just its generalizability, through negative cases. Lakatos's philosophy of science also provides some reasonably well-developed guidelines for suggesting how negative case methodology can be applied and judged (though, of course, they are not perfect). In particular, an adequate explanation should, first, account for the Tuscan outcome, by, second, using the central elements, not minor points or addendums, of the theory under consideration.

## Tuscany as a Negative Case

Tuscany's overall historical trajectory is well known. Its medieval city-state was a site of European economic and political power, which peaked before the demographic collapse of the mid-fourteenth century. There is considerable debate about whether it experienced a fifteenth-century recession (reviews in Brown 1989*b*; Brucker 1994:3–5; Butters 1985:4–6; Cipolla 1964; Federico and Malanima 2004:458–459; Goldthwaite 1985; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:103–104). Although banking and overall cloth production may have declined, the silk

industry remained strong (reviews in Butters 1985:5; Goldthwaite 1985:663; Tognetti 2002:16–33, 2004:9). Over the centuries, the center of economic and political power gradually shifted northwards, away from the Mediterranean toward the Netherlands, and then to England.

During the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, regardless of how many capitalist elements existed in the economy or its continued strength, there is little doubt that industrial capitalism did not arise there. This can be illustrated by considering estimates of the ratio of urban to rural population, that is, roughly the size of the urban and rural sectors. The population in Tuscany, as in all of Europe, declined dramatically in the mid-fourteenth century during the bubonic plagues, and then gradually increased again after the mid-fifteenth century. The ratio of urban to rural population in Tuscany, however, changed relatively little during this time. During the period of decrease, the population of Florence and of the nearby rural regions declined at roughly the same rate. The smaller cities and rural regions more distant from Florence seemed to have declined at a somewhat faster rate. During the recovery in the fifteenth century, urban and rural populations recovered at roughly the same rate. The increase in the urban population seemed to have preceded the rural rise by several decades, but by 1552, the rural regions had increased somewhat more than Florence. The increase in population in the towns and rural regions farthest from Florence was apparently strongest (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:69–78, especially tables 3.4 and 3.5). While the details of these trends are impossible to determine, it is clear that they illustrate no decisive increase of the urban sector vis-à-vis the rural sector during the fifteenth century and therefore, no dramatic shift toward industrialization.

This historical trajectory is paradoxical because many of the preconditions for a rapid transition to full-scale industrial capitalism existed in the late Middle Ages, including relatively efficient agricultural production; a well-developed, commercial manufacturing sector; the absence of a powerful feudal nobility and feudal obligations; and a large, precocious urban economy. However, these preconditions did not produce a rapid transition to capitalism. Tuscan economic development is not only paradoxical, it is also a negative case, where the theoretically expected outcome did not occur (Emigh 1997*c*), even from the point of view of the best-developed theories that attempt to explain its economic history. Most previous explanations attempt to resolve the paradox by arguing that the preconditions for capitalism were not present, and therefore, the transition did not occur. Thus, most explanations suggest that although the Tuscan economy appeared to be capitalist, it remained largely feudal or precapitalist (e.g., reviews in Aymard 1982:180–183; Wood 2002:79). However, a careful examination of recent historical evidence suggests that these explanations are insufficient. Instead, a capitalist dynamic was responsible.

Because I use negative case methodology to expand the content of theory, I focus on a single case, Tuscany. Thus, I do not consider in detail historical developments external to this case (i.e., the reasons for the shift in power to northern Europe). However, the close examination of the Tuscan case leads to my substantive argument about the contraction of rural markets, which in turn explains why this region was dependent on foreign markets and trade and consequently susceptible to external developments.

### *Marxist Theories*

Although Marx did not fully develop his transition theory, it is clear that the central mechanism, class conflict, was generated through the increasing complexity of property relations (Marx and Engels 1970:43–53) or primitive accumulation (Marx [1894] 1977*a*:873–930, 1965). Through conflict, one class secured a set of property rights that allowed them to extract surplus from another class. Capitalism emerged where successful members of this class used this surplus to gain control over additional resources that allowed them to extract additional surplus. Unsuccessful individuals became part of the class from which surplus was extracted. Fully capitalist production required, first, for all individuals to be separated from the means of their own reproduction (or subsistence) by becoming either capitalists or laborers and, second, for capitalists to realize profit through surplus extraction through the sale of commodities produced by laborers. These two requirements set the terms of Marxist debates. Starting from the requirement of the separation from the means of reproduction, the "relations of production" school focused on social processes that transformed customary peasants and lords into wage laborers and capitalist tenants (Brenner 1985*a*; Dobb [1947] 1963:124–126, 221–240). The "relations of exchange" school, starting from profit realization, focused on market expansion (Sweezy 1942:56–57, 1978; Wallerstein 1974:16). The latter had many affinities to Smith and Weber and therefore, sparked debates about the appropriateness of emphasizing exchange (Brenner 1977, 1985*b*; see also Sweezy et al. 1978). Wallerstein (1974:347–357) shifted the unit of analysis to the "world system" by considering national and global profit realization.

In applying these theories to Tuscany, Marxists generally argue either that the absence of fixed-term leasing (and the prevalence of sharecropping, which, at best, Marx considered to be a transition between feudal and capitalist agriculture) assured that agrarian capitalism would not develop (e.g., Brenner 1985*a*:53; Giorgetti 1968:742–743, 1972; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:105–107, 148–151; Romano 1974:1879–1884) or that Florence as a city emerged as a collective "feudal lord" that extracted surplus from the countryside (Aymard 1982:191–194;

Merrington 1975:82) preventing the development of markets.[1] However, fixed-term leasing was widespread (Emigh 1998*b*). Moreover, systems of land ownership and the choice of agrarian contracts did not directly determine economic outcomes (Epstein 2000*a*:5). Florentines were not able to extract a surplus from the countryside through extra-economic coercion (Emigh 1998*b*). Furthermore, cities had positive, as well as negative, effects on rural regions (Aymard 1982:191). Wallerstein (1974:214) correctly noted the relative decline of Italian city-states and their relegation to a semi-peripheral position in the world system just as capitalist production expanded globally, delaying their capitalist development. However, Wallerstein (1974:214–221) cannot sufficiently explain the internal conditions in these states that created their relative loss of power (Aymard 1982:185). Thus, from the Marxist perspective, Tuscany remains a negative case because preconditions (e.g., fixed-term leasing, absence of feudal exploitation) existed that should have produced a transition to capitalism yet did not (cf. Aymard 1982:180–185).

### *Neoinstitutionalist Theories*

Transaction costs and property rights that shape economic action are central to neoinstitutionalist economic theories (Greif 2006; Hopcroft 1999:8; North and Thomas 1973:8). This perspective is rooted in Smith, who emphasized the division of labor, the spread of market structures, and trade (cf. Hoffman 1996:198–205). His writing is more subtle than is often acknowledged, yet his central theme is still well captured by his phrase about individuals' natural propensity to "truck, barter, and exchange" (Smith [1776] 1976:17). Capitalism is an economic system that reflects, on an aggregate level, individual-level human nature. It unfolds naturally following expansions in the division of labor, which increase production and in turn trade. Urban and rural regions were part of this division of labor: urban regions provided markets for agricultural commodities, thereby benefiting rural regions (Smith [1776] 1976:401–402). Merchants were the best improvers of agriculture because they were accustomed to investing money in profitable projects, as in the Italian city-states (Smith [1776] 1976:427, 432, 444). Of course, Smith's argument does not explain the Tuscan case. The presence of Florence, a highly urbanized region, did not produce a transition to capitalism, and thus, it is clear that urban demand, in and of itself, cannot have this effect.

The neoinstitutionalist paradigm grows out of these ideas. North and Thomas (1973:5–8) argued that states' enforcement of property rights facili-

[1] Marx ([1894] 1977*a*:876, [1894] 1977*b*:937) mentioned Italy only in passing but pointed to tenurial relations and urban power.

tated economic growth by assuring that individuals who undertook risky or expensive innovations that eventually increased productivity benefited from them (cf. Root 1994:213). Greif (2006:5, 24–27) argued that corporate institutions that ensured property rights and contract enforcement developed in western Europe as early as the late medieval period and created economic growth there. A neoinstitutionalist argument can also explain why cities prevent growth: the concentration of urban power can produce institutional arrangements that prevent the development of trade and markets. Epstein (1991:32–33, 2000*b*:121) provided the best example of this type of argument for Tuscany by arguing that powerful Florentines adopted market restrictions that prevented agricultural innovation and investment, limiting the domestic market, preventing specialization, and reinforcing peasant subsistence agriculture. Scott (1998:10–11), drawing on Epstein, argued that Florentines invested in sharecropping precisely because it was productive in the short run and offered a high rate of return for a low initial investment. Florentines distorted the market for their own advantage through the terms of agricultural contracts. Thus, Epstein suggested that the preconditions necessary for further development (relatively unrestricted markets, productive agriculture) were not present.

Epstein's argument goes quite far in explaining the Tuscan case. He presented a balanced view that emphasized the strength of the urban economy and noted the lack of rural autonomy (Epstein 1991:40–42, 45, 2000*b*:119–121). It is not clear, however, that market restrictions were the culprit or that they had the hypothesized effect because they did not inhibit agricultural investment and innovations that increased agricultural productivity. Such improvements did not increase productivity merely by increasing the intensity of labor (Chapter 7). Thus, Epstein's attempt to explain the case by arguing that the preconditions for such a transition did not exist is not entirely successful. However, negative case methodology is again useful here because the evidence suggests that the neoinstitutionalist preconditions for the transition to capitalism did exist but did not produce the predicted outcome.

### *Weberian Theories*

In his early work, *The Protestant Ethic,* Weber (1958) argued that the preconditions for capitalism were omnipresent but that the Calvin doctrine of predestination sparked the transition only in western Europe. Through hard work and frugality, Calvinists demonstrated their salvation, inadvertently rationally reinvesting their profits and consequently creating perfect conditions for capitalism. Like Marx's, Weber's ([1927] 1981) mature theory was incomplete and subject to multiple interpretations. While Marx emphasized class conflict, Collins (1980, 1986:45–76, 1997) argued that Weber focused on institutions

that created the possibility of calculable actions. Universalistic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism, broke down barriers for economic participation and introduced disciplined religious practices. He also stressed the institutional preconditions—the military, coins, literate administrators, transportation, communication, writing, and record keeping—of what would become nation-states. These preconditions—Collins (1980:931) called them "ultimate conditions"—set the stage for further institutional developments that facilitated rational economic action: a methodical, nondualistic economic ethic; calculable laws; citizenship rights; and a bureaucratic state. In turn, these institutions enabled the rise of the elements of rational capitalism: the entrepreneurial organization of capital, rationalized technology, free labor, and unrestricted markets (Collins 1980:931). Thus, for Weber, capitalism is an orientation toward profit seeking in markets. While it may have religious origins, once established, it can operate independently.

Schluchter (1996) interpreted Weber's mature theory somewhat differently than Collins, though their theories have similar implications for the Tuscan case. Schluchter (1996:179–243) analyzed three historical transformations that produced capitalism (defined as formally free labor, the modern market economy, and a bourgeois mode of conduct). The first transformation consisted of three subsets of interrelated changes: a papal transformation that rationalized the church hierarchy; a feudal revolution that created systematically decentralized domination and a constant struggle between the central and local authorities; and an urban revolution that created new industry, commerce, and legal institutions (e.g., bonds, stocks, deeds). The second transformation created the bourgeois mode of conduct through the Protestant ethic that joined asceticism to rational inner-worldly action. The third transformation was the objectification of economic life and social relationships. Schluchter's (1996:325) first transformation largely corresponds to Collins's institutional analysis, though the second transformation emphasizes the unique role for the Protestant ethic that Collins (1980:926) downplayed (cf. Trigilia 2002:68).

Many of the institutional preconditions for the development of capitalism existed in fifteenth-century Tuscany, including Collins's ultimate conditions and Schluchter's first transformation. Thus, not surprisingly, Weberian treatments focus (though sometimes implicitly) on the points in his causal chain where further capitalist developments ceased to take place; most notably, that Tuscany had neither a Protestant ethic nor a nation-state. While such descriptions are historically accurate, they provide little explanation of the Tuscan historical trajectory, because they simply point out that such historical developments occurred considerably later in history than the height of Tuscan economic power. The Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern nation-states (as well as the use of industrial technology and a definitive shift toward

northern Europe as the site of geographic power) were later historical developments, so pointing to them as causes of fifteenth-century developments explains relatively little about whether Tuscany, during the crucial period between 1350 and 1500, was becoming more or less capitalist. A less historically anachronistic account focuses on how the development of a nation-state or a work ethic might have appeared in the fifteenth century.

Weber realized that his most important theoretical implication for Tuscany concerned the nation-state. He argued that medieval cities, such as Florence, were important precursors to capitalist development but could not sustain a full-scale transition to capitalism because they did not create a national market, which was possible only with the rise of a modern, bureaucratic, nation-state (Weber 1978:1266–1339; for similar interpretations, see Anderson 1974:143–172; Collins 1997:845, figure 1; Martines 1968:119–122; Tarrow 2004; Tilly 1990:15; Wallerstein 1974:148; Weiss and Hobson 1995:1–5; cf. Mielants 2007:42–45, 155–160). Of course, Italy was not a unified state until 1861, but arguing that the late unification of Italy was responsible for Tuscan economic development assumes that Italy was the only possible viable political unit. In fact, Tuscany was becoming a regional or territorial state during the early modern period (Becker 1968; Benadusi 1996:1–4, 12–13; Brackett 1992:1–2; Chittolini 1979:x, 1989:698; Cochrane 1973:66; Cohn 1999:1–3, 271; Connell 2000:2; Epstein 2000*b*:90–92, 119–121; Litchfield 1986:3–9; Malanima 1983; Stern 1994:1–19; Zorzi 2000:10–11).[2]

In contrast, the medieval Florentine commune was not a regional state (Martines 1968:464–465). Like many northern and central Italian regions, Tuscany developed out of a city-state with a high capital concentration (Tilly 1990:16–19) that was a major center for international trade, finance, and manufacturing (Chittolini 1989:689–690). Its multiple corporate groups were loosely held together by the Florentine government, which was composed of multiple judicial and executive bodies, whose members were generally Florentines who held office for short terms of several months (Weissman 1982:4–10). The government was not sovereign; many individuals fell outside of its jurisdiction (including the few remaining feudal lords). Florence was surrounded by smaller, though still powerful, cities whose shifting alliances created instability (Stern 1994:2–3). Thus, Tarrow (2004:443) argued that the class interests of urban elites prevented the development of a nation-state, which led to eventual economic decline. McLean (2005:642) argued that Florentine state development stalled because administrative reforms to create a unified state were often

[2] Blockmans (1989:751) argued that only when urban concentration was extremely high and feudal power extremely weak (as in Florence) could urban centers create stable power structures that were alternatives to monarchical states. These states were regional, not national (Blockmans 1989:734).

dismantled at the micro-level through individuals' cultural interactions that reinforced patronage.

Throughout the late medieval and early modern period, however, the Florentine government gradually, though unevenly, consolidated its judicial, fiscal, and military jurisdiction throughout the surrounding territories and established uniform laws, administration, and taxation (Becker 1968; Benadusi 1996:12–13; Benigni 1988:151; Brackett 1992:3–5; Carbone 1999:7–15; Chittolini 1979:293–352; Cochrane 1973:58–59; Jones 1997:359–440, 1999:12–14, 26–37; Kirshner 1995:5; Martines 1968:466; Pucci 1995:10; Stern 1994:1–19). Formal citizenship rights were extended to some non-Florentines in the sixteenth century (Cochrane 1973:65). Such actions diminished the powers of the guilds and the magnates (Stern 1994:3–4). Between 1385 and 1421, Florence militarily conquered the nearby cities and territories of Arezzo, Pisa, Cortona, and Livorno and incorporated them into its own region (Brucker 1977:187–208; Connell 2000:3; Stern 1994:5). Florentines dismantled local governments and administrative units in the surrounding countryside and subjected them to Florentine law and administration, thereby consolidating their control throughout Tuscany. A state bureaucracy developed. Notaries were important bureaucrats, the more important of whom often held relatively permanent and strategic positions in the government and, after the middle of the fifteenth century, often had law degrees (Martines 1968:171). Lawyers were also important administrators who helped solve jurisdictional issues (Martines 1968:172). After a period of several decades of foreign invasions at the end of the fifteenth century and a period of French and Spanish rule, Tuscany became independent, though allied with the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, although Tuscany was clearly not a modern nation-state during the Renaissance, its level of development was certainly comparable to, or even more advanced than, other states of that time.[3]

Territorial consolidation integrated urban and rural regions for the benefit of both. In the 1300s, Tuscan governing bodies and private individuals created a regional market for agricultural and commercial products by developing a vast infrastructure of roads, bridges, navigable waterways, marketplaces, hotels, hospitals, and legal and fiscal institutions that increased trade and

[3] Ertman's (1997:10) work supports this point about the relatively advanced nature of Tuscan state formation because he classified it—along with France—as a "patrimonial absolutist" state. Although this form of absolutism led to a different and later transition to capitalism in France than in England, capitalism developed earlier in both countries than in eastern Europe, where refeudalization occurred (Anderson 1974:15–19, 40–42; Brenner 1985*a*, 1985*b*; Mooers 1991:38–40, 47). In contrast, Stumpo (1984:187, 210) argued that Tuscany was not an absolutist state, especially in comparison to Piedmont during the early modern period, because of its sharp internal divisions, most notably between the city and the countryside. Epstein (2000*a*:98–105) made a similar argument: although Florentines did create a territorial state, they did not integrate these territories administratively or economically (cf. Epstein 2000*b*:119–121).

commerce between Florence and the surrounding countryside (de La Roncière 2005:395–399). Rural regions benefited politically and economically from the centralization and standardization of Florentine power (especially in comparison to the formerly independent city-states, such as Pistoia, Arezzo, Cortona, and Pisa) (Cohn 1999:5, 2000:206). Between 1402 and 1460, the wealth of the *contado* (the rural region closest to Florence and tied most tightly to its jurisdiction) increased by three times, while that of the district (the region beyond the *contado*) increased by seven times (Cohn 1999:4). Even Weber (1978:1321) noted that Tuscan government tended to eliminate urban exploitation of the countryside.[4]

In *Economy and Society* and *General Economic History*, Weber (1978:1321, [1927] 1981:259–260, 326–327) focused on the political, organizational, and political determinants of the Tuscan "failure," while in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he argued that Florentine merchants did not exhibit Protestants' ethical orientation (Weber 1958:74–76, 194–198). Although Protestantism, of course, did not exist in fifteenth-century Tuscany, it is possible to examine whether religious preconditions—either organizational or ethical factors that served purposes similar to the Protestant ethic—existed. For example, Nuccio (1984:648–662) argued that Florentine merchants thought that profits were sacred, thereby linking religious values and economic activities.[5] Similarly, Collins (1986:45–76) implied that religious institutions provided preconditions for the rise of capitalism in northern and central Italy. Finally, Cohen (1980) claimed that capitalist rationality developed in pre-Reformation Italy, and therefore, the effect of the Protestant ethic on capitalist development must have been small.[6]

[4] Furthermore, capitalist agriculture developed in other former city-states, such as Veneto, Lombardy, and Piedmont (de Vries 1976:52–53). Thus, it is unlikely that the legacies of city-states prevented agricultural development.

[5] Cf. Dahl (1998:31–33, 70–76) for a more tempered but still largely positive view of the relationship between religious and business ideology.

[6] This matter, however, is hardly settled. Holton (1983) disagreed with Cohen's (1980, 1983) analysis. Their debate ended largely in a draw, primarily because they, like Collins, Nuccio, Dahl, and Weber, were drawing extensively on secondary sources and a limited number of published primary sources. This issue is not resolvable without extensive archival research directed explicitly toward it. In particular, it might be possible to use writings of merchants, as does Nuccio (but to draw on a larger number of manuscripts), as evidence for the extent of their business orientation and then to match these writings to documents about their possessions and profits. Such detailed archival work is beyond the scope of this book. Similarly, political sociologists could conduct archival research on the relationship between the Florentine state and capitalism. With the exception of Epstein (2000*b*), the best social science works on this topic rely on secondary material (e.g., Ertman 1997; Lachmann 2000; Tarrow 2004), while historical research is often oriented toward somewhat different theoretical debates (e.g., Kirshner 1995).

Lachmann provides a final Weberian interpretation. Combining elite theory with Weber's distinction between politically and economically oriented capitalism, he argued that the transition to capitalism did not occur because once a single elite gained control of Florence, it failed to transform economic relations, drawing instead on its political power to maintain economic advantage (Lachmann 1990:409, 2000:89–92).[7] Citing land as Florentines' "favorite investment," Lachmann (2000:86) argued that sharecropping was an unproductive, exploitative tenurial form. Like Epstein, Lachmann explained well many dimensions of the Tuscan case. He emphasized urban power and correctly noted urban elites' important economic role. However, contrary to Lachmann's argument, Florentines did control Tuscany through economic, market mechanisms. In fact, their investments were primarily driven by economic incentives (Emigh 1997*d*, 1999*b*). Furthermore, during the fifteenth century, sharecropping increased agricultural productivity and was a capitalist form of land tenure (Emigh 1999*b*, 2000*a*). Thus, Florentine elites' investments did transform agricultural production during this period of time.

## Tuscany Remains a Negative Case

Thus, from the point of view of these theories, Tuscany is a negative case. The best-developed theories of the Tuscan case suggest, upon close inspection, that capitalism should have continued to develop there, yet such an outcome did not occur. Preconditions (state development, fixed-term leasing, property rights, market structures, agricultural investment, etc.) specified by different theories to promote the transition to capitalism existed during the fifteenth century, yet did not have the predicted effect because no dramatic shift to full-scale industrial capitalism occurred. The most promising works, however, by Lachmann (2000), Epstein (1991), and Aymard (1982) go the farthest in explaining Tuscan development because they explain the strength of the economy as well its ultimate demise by looking at the relationship between the rural and the urban regions. In fact, they discuss elements of sectoral theories.

[7] I agree with Lachmann's (2000:77–79) summary of the standard explanation of Tuscan decline: Florentines lost their competitive advantage to the English wool trade because of high Florentine labor costs. They increasingly shifted to luxury production, for which there was a more limited market and for which mass production was technologically difficult (Brown 1989*a*:107). Despite this overall trend, however, Epstein (1991), Goldthwaite (1985), Hoshino (1980), Malanima (1988), and Sella (1969) all suggested that Florentine cloth production remained strong (reviews in Brown 1989*a*, 1989*b*). Furthermore, the shift to luxury cloth production, in both wool and silk, was driven by Florentine merchants' searches for capitalist profits even if it delayed industrialization. Finally, the prices of textiles may have been shaped by guild restrictions and high food costs, but they also stemmed from the highly skilled Florentine labor force. As in the case of the evaluation of the Protestant ethic (see Footnote 6), more research with primary sources would be needed to adjudicate this point.

Epstein considered the effects of Florentine power on rural institutions, while Lachmann considered the activities of elite Florentine landlords in rural regions. Aymard also considered the aggregate patterns of rural and urban interactions in promoting and retarding development.

Negative case methodology can be fruitfully used here to develop the substantive content of sectoral theories (Chapter 3) by further investigating the empirical evidence and expanding on the work by Lachmann, Epstein, and Aymard. Sectoral theories alone cannot explain the Tuscan case (Emigh 2003*a*). Such theories suggest, once again, that preconditions for the transition to capitalism were in place, yet no such transition occurred. The preconditions for the expansion of the manufacturing sector were investment in agriculture and transfers of surplus from the rural region to the urban region (Chapter 3). Yet as the empirical chapters will show (Chapters 4–7), these preconditions were largely in place in fifteenth-century Tuscany, but no dramatic expansion of manufacturing, leading to industrialization, occurred. Thus, the substantive content of these theories must be extended to explain this negative case.

# 3

# Linking Sectors and Markets

Sectoral theories are the most promising devices for explaining the underdevelopment of Tuscan capitalism (Chapter 2), so their content is developed in this chapter by linking them to theories of markets. Sectoral theories explain how manufacturing and agricultural activities are organized and related. Theories of markets complement sectoral theories, because theories of markets explain how the exchange of the inputs and outputs from manufacturing and agriculture are coordinated through markets in capitalist economies. Instead of using the economic models of markets that implicitly underlie sectoral theories, however, I develop a sociocultural theory of markets. I conceptualize markets as structures that are simultaneously composed of resources that are actual and schemas that are virtual (Sewell 1992:13). This combined theory of sectors and markets explains the Tuscan case. Largely similar schemas but huge sectoral differences in resources between rural inhabitants and Florentines allowed urban markets to spread. As they did, they eliminated the institutional basis for rural inhabitants' participation in them, thereby undermining support for capitalist development.

This combination, though perfectly logical, is surprising. As I show, institutional theories of markets in economics and sociology are undergoing dramatic transformation, as long-standing classical and neoclassical models of markets are reevaluated. In contrast, though sociologists and economists used sectoral theories as wildly popular prescriptive models in the 1970s to encourage economic development, they are now mostly used and developed by economic

specialists. Sectoral theories have entered a stage of normal science (Kuhn [1962] 1970). Although models of sectors and markets have these long histories and consider related economic phenomenon, they are rarely examined together as I do to explain the Tuscan case.[1]

My approach might be called dialectical Weberianism. I draw on the Marxist insight that material and ideal factors are dialectically constituted. Thus, I consider markets as composed simultaneously of both factors. In contrast, a Weberian approach more often separates ideal and material factors to arrange them in a particular causal order. The Marxist literature, however, conceptualizes poorly the microfoundations of social action.[2] Thus, I draw on Weber's concepts of relational social action and substantive economic interests, not formal ones as in Marxist or neoclassical economics. Finally, Weberian formulations tend to be static. In contrast, I use the Marxist insight about dialectical change to show how sectoral differences lead to institutional change. Although I highlight sectoral theories, my approach can also be conceptualized as a dynamic theory of Weberian class formation that uses Weber's definitions of economic interests and social action, but adds a historical or dialectical dimension. For Weber, classes are defined by market position. In Tuscany, Florentines and rural inhabitants participated in the same markets with different amounts of resources, increasing Florentines' market position vis-à-vis rural inhabitants and leading to class formation (cf. Emigh 2000*a*).

## Markets

Markets are institutions that coordinate the exchange of goods and services. They are central to, but not coterminous with, capitalism. Although markets can exist without capitalism, capitalism cannot exist without markets. Thus, definitions of capitalism always entail markets: Marx's definition of capitalism in terms of wage labor and private property requires labor and commodity markets; Weber defined capitalism as profit-seeking behavior in markets; and Polanyi defined capitalism as an economic system in which markets were the primary mechanism of economic integration. It is useful to explore how changes in markets are linked to transitions to capitalism, without assuming them to be synonymous (Carruthers 1996:11).

[1] For example, as I show, although sectoral theories predict the creation of markets, they rarely explain the institutional components of markets (see Grabowski 1995:50 for an exception). In neoclassical economics, sectors are often considered only as discontinuities that prevent the smooth functioning of markets (cf. segmentation, Tilly and Tilly 1994:294).

[2] Consequently, "rational choice Marxism" uses neoclassical economics as a microfoundation.

## *No "Tuscan Path" to Agrarian Capitalism?*

The key to explaining the relationship between markets and capitalism in Tuscany is understanding when the penetration of a more advanced market into a less developed one increases the overall extent of the market. As Chapter 4 will show, rural communities of smallholders were characterized by Polanyian local markets for labor, land, capital, and commodities, but the economy as a whole was based on subsistence production. In Polanyi's terms ([1944] 1957:53), reciprocity was the principal mechanism that integrated the economy. In contrast, as Chapter 5 will show, Florence had a much more advanced market that was the primary mechanism for economic integration. Hypothetically, as the Florentine market spread into rural regions, it could have reinforced these local markets, thereby increasing the extent of the market, creating agrarian capitalism, and supporting the rise of industrial capitalism. This did not, however, occur.

Other countries followed distinct paths to market expansion and to agrarian and industrial capitalism. Marx and Lenin outlined three such paths (reviews in Byres 1991, 1996:20–22; de Janvry 1981:106–109; Goodman and Redclift 1982:100–112). The first represents the English case—which at least stereotypically—consists of large landowners who rent out their estates in fixed rents to capitalist tenant farmers. In turn, the tenants hire wage laborers to work the land. The second, stereotypically represented by Prussia, is the transformation of large feudal landlords into capitalist entrepreneurs, who turn their customary tenants into wage laborers (cf. Samsonowicz and Mączak 1985). Finally, there is the path of owner-operated family farms, as in the United States (cf. Latin America, Llambi 1989). Owner-operators become dependent upon the market as they produce most of their commodities for sale, as mechanized agriculture forces them to purchase technology, and as their relatively high incomes assure their purchase of consumer goods (review in Brenner and Glick 1991:70–71, 109). In contrast to these three forms of capitalist agriculture, subsistence agricultural production—peasant agriculture—is not primarily for the market.

De Vries (1974:4–10) provided a similar, but non-Marxist, description of two analogous paths. The first, the peasant model, occurs when population growth creates demand for agricultural products and cultivators respond by subdividing holdings and intensifying labor. However, holdings too small for subsistence along with diminishing returns to labor force rural inhabitants to sell land to large landowners or urban capitalists and to work as landless wage laborers. This path is similar to the Marxist one of large landlords and wage laborers. In the second path, the specialization model, some rural cultivators

specialize in the production of agricultural products for the market, while most are forced to find nonagricultural employment. Early modern Dutch agriculture followed this path (de Vries 1974:214, 237–238) to create the world's first modern economy (according to de Vries and van der Woude 1997:693; cf. Adams 2005:139–140). A similar pattern of agricultural specialization occurred around London, which increased productivity and released labor for manufacturing (Fisher 1935:51, 54, 56, 1971:10, 14; Wrigley 1967: 54–58, 1987:142–145, 181). Thus, de Vries's second model is similar to the Marxist owner-operator path.

All these paths create market-dependent agricultural producers who are separated from the means of their reproduction (de Janvry 1981:152–153). The large landowner path separates agricultural products from agricultural producers, forcing them to sell their wage labor and to buy commodities to survive. Owner-operators cannot produce what they need to survive because agricultural production is specialized.

It is not clear why Tuscany did not follow one of these paths. Although fixed-term leasing was common, it did not spread (Emigh 1997*d*:432), so it did not follow the path characterized by large landowners and wage laborers. Similarly, smallholding was also widespread and urban demand for foodstuffs was high (Emigh 1999*b*:476), but owner-operated farms did not emerge. To understand Tuscan development, a better understanding of market change is needed, so I turn to general models of markets.

### *Economic and Sociological Views of Markets*

An economic perspective suggests that gains in efficiency from exchange are necessary and sufficient for the emergence and operation of markets (review in Greif 2003:149). Because neoclassical theories define markets as impersonal exchanges coordinated by price, imperfect markets are ones in which noneconomic factors, such as culture and politics, intervene. Thus, the market is exogenous; it provides a framework within which organizational forms (e.g., the corporation, Chandler 1977:6–12) emerge to increase efficiency and compete over prices (Greif 2003:149). Because efficiency is assumed as the source of markets, economic historians focus on the historical prevalence of markets, not their origins or evolution (Greif 2003:149), and concomitantly, the universality of rationality (Hoffman 1996:8; Ogilvie 2001; cf. economic individualism, Macfarlane 1978:5).

This view has been recently tempered by the "institutional foundations of markets" perspective in economics that considers the politically determined rules, regulations, and property rights that, along with other social and cultural

phenomena, establish preconditions for markets (Greif 1998, 2003:149). This perspective, however, still conceptualizes economic action as separate from culture and politics. For example, North and Thomas (1973:5–8) argued that governments set minimal preconditions, such as property rights, that allow markets to operate. If laws establish only some of the necessary preconditions, markets may operate suboptimally (North and Thomas 1973:7). Laws must be relatively stable, enforceable, and, at least to some extent, enforced (North and Weingast 1989:803). Similarly, cultural beliefs or attitudes may encourage or prevent the development of markets (Greif 1994:915–917; North 1990:41). Like culture and politics, individuals' traits are established outside of markets; their preferences and tastes are fixed and stable. Their behavior is determined by formal properties of utility maximization. Consequently, individuals are interchangeable in markets.

Although this institutional perspective has commonalities with a sociological perspective of markets (Greif 2003:150), the latter suggests that markets are constituted by culture, politics, and the historically specific interests of actors (e.g., Block 2000:92, 2007:5–6; Carruthers 1996:25–26; Fligstein 1990:1–5, 1996:658, 2001:15–21, 2002; Krippner 2001:797–798; Lie 1993:275; Maynes 2006:3; McLean and Padgett 2004:195, 197; Perelman 2000:369–370; reviews in Carruthers 2005; Lie 1993, 1997; Spillman 1999; Zelizer 1988). Thus, markets are not merely economic institutions that are constrained or enabled by culture and politics. They are inherently economic, cultural, and political.

Three sociological views of markets are prominent (Fourcade 2007; cf. Fligstein 2002; Swedberg 1994:267, 2005:243–249). The first, which views markets as networks, often invokes Granovetter's (1985) concept of embeddedness to note that networks or social relationships constitute all market interactions (Fligstein 2002:64). Individuals' knowledge of each other shapes transactions (reviews in Fourcade 2007:1019–1021; Swedberg 1994:268–270, 2005:245–247). The second, which views markets as fields (Bourdieu 2005:193–207; Fligstein 2001:15–17; review in Fourcade 2007:1019, 1022–1023), points not to networks of buyers and sellers, but to powerful actors' use of cultural rules and political pressure to reproduce their power within a field, which is a space for social action. The third, which views markets as performance, analyzes how technologies create markets and economies that shape social understandings (Fourcade 2007:1019). The discipline of economics is a technology that produces and reproduces markets as individuals conduct transactions in accordance with the supposedly theoretical models of optimal markets that scholars espouse (Callon 1998:2; review in Fourcade 2007:1025).

I develop a fourth perspective, the sociocultural approach, which views markets as structures. Structures are mutually implicating and sustaining sets of

schemas and resources (Sewell 1992:13).[3] Markets coexist alongside other social structures (Sewell 1992:16), such as the state and property devolution. Sewell (1992:12) hinted at, but did not develop, this conceptualization vis-à-vis peasant's agricultural practices. Markets are composed of resources, including the objects being exchanged, such as commodities, goods, land, labor, and the physical infrastructure that supports such transactions, such as media of exchange and physical locations where exchange occurs. Markets also consist of schemas, organized patterns of cognitive perception, including the assignment of quantitative value to tangibles and intangibles (Podolny and Hill-Popper 2004:114), commensuration (Espeland and Stevens 1998:315, 319–322), numeracy, attributions of fairness and equity, conceptions of ownership, alienability of abstract and concrete entities, and etiquettes of buying and selling. Resources and schemas are historically and contextually contingent. For example, certain entities may be exchangeable in some contexts, but not in others; for example, foods that are sold as delicacies in some settings may be proscribed for sale in others. Similarly, bargaining over price might be appropriate at a bazaar, but inappropriate at a university bursar's office. Resources and schemas are intertwined. For example, insurance markets were established only where institutions developed to sell policies and where customers' moral values were consistent with the valuation of human life (Zelizer 1979:149–153). Similarly, the introduction of labor markets into societies where labor and its products are not seen as alienable is interpreted as the devil's work (Taussig 1980:3–14). Land may be viewed as a commodity by bureaucrats from the Bureau of Reclamation, but as an integral part of personal relationships to Native Americans (Espeland 1998:200–208).

My approach is largely compatible with the other sociological ones because it also attends to the relations between politics, culture, and the economy. It does not preclude analyses of social networks or power relations within a field (cf. Fourcade 2007:1026–1029). However, it has several advantages. First, the idea of markets as performance implies that markets are primarily modern phenomena because they are shaped by advanced technologies and economic theories. This perspective unintentionally reproduces the dichotomy between tradition and modernity (Chapter 1) I seek to avoid. By arguing that rationality is a modern consequence of markets, the performative perspective reverses the neoclassical assumption that rationality is universal. Both models, however, assume rationality instead of investigating its extent. In contrast, viewing markets as structures highlights schemas' variable content.

Second, conceptualizing markets as structures and societies as composed of multiple structures clarifies the relationship between them. The views of

[3] For an interesting application of Sewell's ideas to state structure, see Wells (2002).

markets as networks and fields imply that social structures shape markets. In contrast, the markets-as-performance perspective implies the reverse, that markets shape social structures (Fourcade 2007:1019). Structure, however, is not always defined (cf. Sewell 1992:1–2). For example, Bourdieu (2005:205–206) argued that markets depend on the structure of actors' relations, that fields affect firms' structures, and that firms' strategies depend on fields' structures. While his language captures well his complex idea of structured and structuring structures (Bourdieu 1984:170), it is not clear whether the market is a structure or how markets and structures are related. Viewing markets as structures is not incompatible with Bourdieu's analysis, since his theory of structure is similar to Sewell's (1992:15). However, it does clarify that markets are structures. The third advantage of my model, that it more adequately theorizes the relationship between economic and cultural factors, and the fourth advantage, that it better explains market change, are analyzed in detail in the following sections.

### *The Relationship between Economic and Cultural Factors*

Two prominent ways of combining culture and economic action conceive of cultural influences "from the inside" or "from the outside." The "culture-from-the-inside" view suggests that within given markets, a shared understanding of practice guides social action. Despite their differences, this view of culture is often (though not always) shared across the perspectives of markets as networks, fields, and performance. For example, Fligstein (1996:658, 2001:18, 28–36, 2002:64) used the term "conceptions of control" to refer to shared understandings and practices, or local cultures, that allow participants in production markets to interpret actors' behaviors within and across organizations, to gain control over their environment, and to limit competition. These conditions create stability that allows firms to achieve their primary goal, survival (instead of profit maximization as in the economic model). Similarly, Baker, Faulkner, and Fisher (1998:150–151) and Podolny (1993:829–830, 867) showed how producers and consumers in a given market have a shared understanding of the rules of exchange that create and sustain a hierarchy of producers. Abolafia (1996:8–9) analyzed specific markets in stocks, bonds, and futures, showing how each is created by skilled actors producing the rules, roles, and relationships that enable exchange. These works often draw on an interactional definition of culture, similar to the micro-Weberian one found in ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and organizational analysis (review in DiMaggio 1994:30–32). For example, Cetina and Bruegger (2004:182) showed how microsocial interactional practices underlie global financial markets.

Another culture-from-the-inside perspective deploys a different definition of culture as a set of patterned meanings. Markets can change individual-level

behavior and values (reviews in DiMaggio 1994:36; Yun-Shik 1991; for a recent reevaluation with respect to modernization theory, see Inglehart and Baker 2000). For example, Agnew (1986:194) analyzed theater as a cultural strategy for ordering meanings created by markets. Theater not only reflected market changes, but also modeled and materialized them (Agnew 1986:xi). This view is similar in some respects to the stereotypical Marxist view, perhaps best developed by Althusser (1971), that the economic base "determines" culture. A less structural, though similar idea is reification (Lukács 1971:83–86), which extends Marx's ([1894] 1977*a*:163–177) concept of the fetishism of commodities. Widespread capitalist relations and, in particular, commodification, change thought patterns so that individuals tend to view personal relationships as objects.

While the culture-from-the-inside perspective generally views the economy as prior to culture, the culture-from-the-outside perspective reverses the relationship. Culture, therefore, is often an overarching context or broad set of understandings within which economic action occurs (e.g., Lee 1999:554; cf. "cultural embeddedness," Spillman 1999:1047). Weber's (1958) analysis of the Protestant ethic as a cultural precondition for capitalist development is the classic example. Some research in this tradition implements a thin view of culture (e.g., the endless reanalysis of whether the Protestant ethic "causes" a transition to capitalism) because the effect of culture is reduced to a factor that is present or not. Other work, however, locates multiple sets of relationships that facilitate markets, which is closer to the spirit of Weber's ([1927] 1981) later work that considered a number of different cultural (and political and legal) preconditions to capitalism (Collins 1997; Gorski 2003:26–28; Schluchter 1996).

Cross-national comparisons illustrate the external effects of culture by showing how cultural variation leads to different economies (review in DiMaggio 1994:33–34), forms of business associations and wealth distributions (Greif 1994:929), money (Parry and Bloch 1989; Zelizer 1989:343), labor processes (Biernacki 1995:43), real estate markets (Davis 2004:303), and likelihoods of hostile corporate takeovers (Schneper and Guillén 2004:127). Another strategy highlights cultural variations among social groups within a given location. For example, French textile workers did not share mill owners' market culture. The workers resisted, therefore, trading money for personal freedoms (Reddy 1984:334). Similarly, Lie (1993) argued that markets do not emerge among anonymous individuals, but among those who trust each other.

Both the culture-from-the-inside and the culture-from-the-outside perspectives go beyond economic perspectives by showing that cultural and economic factors influence each other and that both are essential for the operation of markets. However, both perspectives often (though not always), deploy a strategy of first separating economy from culture and then showing

how they are related, sometimes by arranging them in a particular causal order. Thus, like the economic literature, both perspectives tend to treat culture and economy as analytically distinct (especially in simplistic treatments that search for the causal priority of culture or economy).

Another strategy considers the intersection of culture and economy. Zelizer (1988:619–620) conceptualized the market as an interaction of cultural, structural, and economic factors (the "multiple markets" model) without any of them being analytically prior (see also MacKenzie and Millo 2003:137–138; McLean and Padgett 2004:195, 197). She deployed this model to analyze the rise of insurance, children, and money (Zelizer 1979, 1985, 1994). Treating culture and economy as analytically equal highlights their intersection, but the form of their interaction is sometimes underspecified.

Although one variant of Marxist studies, as discussed previously, separates culture and economy and gives the latter causal primacy, a second tradition motivates their interaction. Gramsci (1971; Forgacs 2000), Thompson (1966), and Williams (1977:11–20, 136–141) worked toward a Marxist understanding of the dialectical relationship between ideal and material factors (cf. Burawoy 1985:39; Krippner 2001:801). Sewell's (1992) definition of structure provides a well-worked-out formulation of this reciprocal relationship in terms of resources and schemas. Thus, my conceptualization of markets as structures that are dialectically composed of schemas and resources expands on these treatments of markets as intersections of culture and economy by specifying the form of the intersection more precisely.

To combine the Marxist tradition, which often uses the terms ideal and material, with the Weberian one, which often uses the terms culture and economy, I provide some definitions. Economy is the organization of the production, distribution, and exchange of goods (cf. Trigilia 2002:2). Following Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:27), who worked within a Gramscian framework, I take culture to be the "semantic space, the field of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others." This view of culture is considerably broader than a purely linguistic one, which defines culture as codes, vocabularies, or symbols (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003:735). Culture and economy are domains—always overlapping—of human action and thought; resources and schemas are the components of these domains. Markets, then, are social institutions in both the cultural and the economic domain that are simultaneously composed of resources and schemas. Thus, a market is both a site of the distribution of goods (economic) and a field of representation (culture) and is composed of resources (e.g., commodities, goods, land, labor, infrastructure) and schemas (e.g., valuation, numeracy, equity, ownership, alienability). With this conceptualization, I avoid some of the problems with the culture-from-the-outside and culture-from-the-inside approaches.

### *Market Change*

Sociological and economic models point to different factors that propel market change. Some are external to markets (population growth, natural resources, environmental pressures, political and cultural changes) and some are internal to them (supply and demand, competition). These models also propose different relationships between production and consumption. Some models tightly link them; others delink them and focus on production. Despite these differences, however, most models focus on how markets either are stable or expand, not contract. In economic models, this emphasis is consistent with the assumption that markets are efficient and thus, should expand. In sociological models, the emphasis on stability is often consistent with an underlying assumption that social structures are reproductive.

Smith ([1776] 1976:23) linked the expansion of markets to population growth and natural resources. Nations endowed with geographies (i.e., water transport) that facilitate trade have more extensive markets. The division of labor depends on the extent of the market; specialized production using an extensive division of labor will occur when individuals can exchange goods that they make but cannot use (Smith ([1776] 1976:21, 25). Production markets become more extensive and diverse as consumption is increasingly satisfied through specialized commodities purchased in markets, not self-provisioning. In this sense, Smith considered the social structure of markets, by highlighting the social and infrastructural preconditions that facilitate exchange.[4] Thus, markets expand, driven by humans' propensity to "truck, barter, and exchange" (Smith [1776] 1976:17), limited only by natural resources that determine the extent of the market.

Smith ([1776] 1976:62–70; review in Trigilia 2002:21–22) also proposed a link between consumption and production markets through price, which brings supply into alignment with demand, influencing consumers' decisions to buy and producers' decisions to produce. The neoclassical concept of an equilibrium point, the price at which supply and demand are equal, elaborates Smith's idea (review in Gilpin 2001:55–56). On the one hand, if supply is low and demand is high, prices will be high and firms will increase production to meet consumers' demands. In principle, supply and demand should also predict the emergence of new producers to meet demand for existing products or to create novel ones; however, empirically, neither does so well (Sarasvathy and Dew 2005:533–534, 559–560). On the other hand, if supply is high and demand is low, prices will be low and production will be curtailed until consumption

[4] Neoinstitutionalists (e.g., North and Thomas 1973:8) develop this idea by analyzing how states create stable property rights.

reduces supply. Supply is also restricted when inefficient firms go out of business, as they lose profits because they have produced goods for which there is little demand and low profits. Because markets are based on efficiency, technologically efficient firms replace inefficient ones by meeting consumers' demands with lower priced goods (review in Greif 2003:149).

The Marxist model considers how competition changes production markets. Capitalists compete with each other, reducing labor costs by substituting capital (usually, capital that is increasingly technologically advanced) for labor. This competition decreases the number of firms by eliminating the capitalists who cannot effectively accomplish this substitution.

Thus, implicitly, the strongest prediction of the neoclassical and Marxist models is that the level of production should increase or stay constant. In the Marxist model, although the outcome of competition is a smaller number of producers, they must take over the production of their competitors and possibly even increase the level of production to maintain their profits as they compete. By extension, the number of consumers stays constant or increases. Similarly, the neoclassical model explains well how changes in supply and demand allow existing producers to expand so that production levels are constant or increase. Like the Marxist model, it does not explain well the emergence of new producers.

Though neither the neoclassical nor the Marxist model extends Smith's analysis of specialization, sociological models do. White (1981:517, 2002: 320–322; cf. Fligstein 2001:88, 2003:674) noted that producers seek to make different goods, thereby avoiding price competition. Specialization can lead to increased demand for goods and in turn higher levels of production. Firms enter into competitive or mutualistic relations depending on the degree to which their inputs and clients overlap (Haveman and Keister 2004:228, 232). Where the overlap is great, competition is fierce; where there is little overlap, cooperative relationships and complementary activities often emerge (Haveman and Keister 2004:256–257). Competition, moreover, is not necessarily detrimental to firms; it can create stability in markets and legitimacy among investors (Dobbin 2004:15). Competition and firms' avoidance of it, therefore, can increase the extent of markets by stimulating specialization.

While these models emphasize mechanisms of change internal to markets (competition, supply and demand), other sociological models, such as the markets-as-fields perspective, emphasize external factors. Fligstein (2001:84) argued that transformations occur primarily through exogenous forces: economic crisis, political intervention by states, or invasion (though demand is also important). Economic crises and government intervention destabilize markets by undermining the existing order, and firms attempt to reintroduce the status quo (Fligstein 2001:84). Invasion occurs as firms in established

markets seek stability through new markets (sometimes as a result of these crises or interventions). They usually enter closely related preexisting markets, such as the same product market in a nearby geographic region. New or altered markets are inherently unstable; the largest firms create conceptions of control and political coalitions to control competition (Fligstein 2001:77). Two components of markets can change: the particular role structure (i.e., who is a challenger and who is an incumbent) and the conceptions of control. Fligstein (2001:67) focused on market expansion because he linked economic stability to the multiplication of markets and the diversification of firms. Similarly, Bourdieu (2005:202–205) emphasized that fields tend to be reproduced, not transformed, because actors' strategies are oriented toward maintaining dominance. Thus, as in Fligstein's analysis, market change occurs mostly through external factors, such as technology, the state, demographic change, or challengers from different fields (Bourdieu 2005:202–205).

The Marxist model introduces an external factor, "primitive accumulation," to explain the origin of markets. It establishes the preconditions for markets and capitalist production by separating individuals from the means of their own reproduction, often through coercive, non-market means. Thus, laborers are created who are forced to exchange or buy goods because they cannot survive otherwise, not because they have inherent, pre-existing inclinations to truck, barter, and exchange as in the Smithian model. Furthermore, self-provisioning is often more efficient in the early stages of capitalism, so markets do not arise because of efficiency (Perelman 2000:32–35, 94–96). Similarly, in advanced capitalist economies, advertising creates consumers and therefore, the demand for products; products do not satisfy pre-existing and innate demands of consumers (review in Nairn and Berthon 2003:83–84; cf. Cohen 2003:292–344; Cook 2004:2–3; Corley 1987; Jacobson 2004:2; Laird 1998:31–37; Sackman 2005:86). Demand also plays a minor role in White's model. He argued that producers respond not to buyers' demands, but to other producers' volume of goods and revenues (White 1981:517–519, 2002:321). The population ecology model provides a final example of the influence of external factors: Hannan and Freeman (1977) argued that organizations are not greatly influenced by managers' strategic decisions, but by environmental selection pressures that eliminate inefficient organizations. Applied to markets, this perspective suggests that neither consumption and production, nor supply and demand, nor volumes and revenues directly explain market change.

In sum, though economic and sociological models focus on different mechanisms, either external or internal, that propel market change, most models assume that production markets expand, or at least remain constant, even if the number of producers declines. These models do not always explicitly consider growth or decline in consumers because production is not always

linked to consumption, though most imply that the number of consumers will either stay constant or increase. Sociological models often criticize economic ones by introducing social and cultural factors. Paradoxically, then, many sociological models delink consumption and production, which were linked through social structural practices in the original Smithian model.

### *The Intersection of Two Markets*

None of these approaches explicitly considers the penetration of a more advanced into a less advanced market or the contraction of markets more generally. However, since most of them implicitly (or explicitly) consider market expansion, they imply that the intersection of these two markets should have this effect. The classic or neoclassical economic perspective suggests that the more advanced market would reinforce pre-existing market structures, drawing more consumers and producers into market transactions. Because markets simply allow individuals to implement their innate tendencies to exchange, the intersection of the two markets should expand both. Sociological models proposing that competition (or attempts to avoid it) increases production and consumption by increasing specialization also suggest that the intersection of the two markets should increase their extent. The neoclassical mechanism of supply and demand and the Marxist mechanism of competition suggest that producers in the less advanced market would be eliminated if they could not produce as efficiently as those in the more advanced market. They do not, however, explain market contraction: while some producers may be eliminated, the level of production and, presumably, the level of consumption are maintained or increased by the more efficient producers.

Another Marxist perspective, however, does consider the expansion of a capitalist economy into a precapitalist one. Contrary to the predictions of neoclassical theory that capitalism should dissolve precapitalist economic elements (Gregory 1982:4), theories 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) suggest that capitalism can have the paradoxical effect of reinforcing or reproducing precapitalist forms (reviews in de Janvry 1981:7–26; Goodman and Redclift 1982:26–67; Murray 1994:99–100). These Marxists usually argue that surplus extraction, unequal exchange, and self-provisioning by peasants reduce costs and increase profits for capitalists. In the precapitalist sector, wages and costs are lower because labor is not fully remunerated through wages. Producers in the capitalist sector take advantage of these price differentials, thereby reproducing,

not eliminating, precapitalist forms. Thus, inequality—essential to capital accumulation—prevents a linear expansion of capitalism.

These Marxist models do not usually analyze market change directly. Many Marxists explicitly reject trade-based analyses of the circulation of commodities because of their similarity to neoclassical models (e.g., Brenner 1977). Thus, most Marxists working in this perspective focus on the relations of production. They consider whether these relations are capitalist, not the degree to which they and other social relations are capitalist. Consequently, the Marxist insight about inequality does not directly explain the outcome when a more advanced capitalist market penetrates a less developed one, because Marxists do not generally address the extent of change in social relations in markets. However, when the Marxist insight about inequality is extended to markets, it suggests that the growth of a capitalist market may have the paradoxical effect of limiting market participation. A capitalist market may expand into a precapitalist region, but this expansion may reduce the extent of the market thereby reinforcing precapitalist non-market elements. Thus, the growth and spread of a capitalist market may not lead to the overall expansion of markets.

In particular, I argue that when a capitalist market spreads into the precapitalist one, those with few resources cannot afford to buy goods or services or continue to produce at the level of the participants in the capitalist market. Though social actors are formally equal participants in markets, they cannot participate as substantive equals. As a consequence, they may withdraw from, or reduce their participation in, markets. This withdrawal may occur at different levels. In economies where agriculture production is prevalent, individuals may return to subsistence agriculture. In advanced capitalist economies, where this is generally not feasible, individuals may decrease their participation in the service sector or consumption markets. Thus, sometimes the penetration of a capitalist market into a less advanced market, or in Polyanian terms, a local market, turns the local market into a capitalist one, as Smith would predict. However, in the face of a large degree of inequality, the local market may be eliminated. Market contraction stems from a contradiction in capitalism. Inequality, central to the process of capitalist accumulation, under some historical conditions, prevents the further expansion of capitalism.

While I draw on this Marxist insight about inequality, I consider its institutional effects beyond just the relations of production, to show how it relates to, and changes with, other social relations such as exchange, consumption, and family provisioning and other social structures such as the state and property devolution. This institutional view of market change meshes with the view of markets as structures. Societies are composed of multiple and intersecting structures with different schemas and resources (Sewell 1992:16–19). While

some of these structures may be homologous (Bourdieu 1984:175, 232–241, 2005:16–17, 22, 208) and mutually sustaining, they need not be. Different structures may produce conflicting claims. Actors may claim resources and apply schemas in different structures in variable ways. Though change is hard to conceptualize in Bourdieu's model because structures are largely reproductive (Sewell 1992:15–16), from the markets-as-structures perspective, resources, schemas, and multiple structures enable market change.

While some sociological views of markets delink production and consumption, this institutional view of markets as structures relinks them. The "sociology of consumption" literature provides some illustrations (though markets are not analyzed explicitly as structures). Mintz (1985) showed, for example, how consumers of sugar were created, in part through factory production that required a short lunch break, high in calories. Thus, consumption and production markets were linked in the abstract through supply and demand, but more concretely through mutually sustaining social practices (i.e., structures, cf. Sewell 1992:13). When one practice changed, connected practices changed with it. Similarly, contemporary shopping is not simply a matter of buying goods based on innate needs or abstract demand, but a social and cultural activity of leisure (Applbaum 1998; Cohen 2003:257–289; Crewe 2003; Slater 1997). Shoppers are not born; parents teach children basic skills necessary for shopping, such as accounting, money management, and acquisition maximization (Williams 2006:145–148). Shopping and consumption, more generally, mark social status and are linked to social structures as diverse as education, stratification, credit, holidays, and transportation and communication infrastructure (Baudrillard 1981; Bourdieu 1984; Cohen 2003:257–289; Frank 1999:15, 45–48, 53–63; Schmidt 1995:3–16; Veblen 1899). Grabowski (1995:50), an economist, similarly argued that sets of social practices create market systems. In particular, he argued that the transformation of an economy based on market exchange to an economy based on a market system entails the creation of property rights and enforcement mechanisms, as well as cooperative relationships between buyers and sellers established by informal and formal rules. The view of markets as structures does not yield specific predictions about changes in production and consumption markets as do neoclassical equilibrium models, but it does suggest that markets as structures composed of schemas and resources are intricately connected institutionally to other social structures and change in relation to them. They are not simply mechanisms that coordinate supply and demand.

### *Tuscan Markets as Structures*

The view of markets as structures will provide a better explanation of Tuscan market change than the view of markets as fields. The latter would correctly

note that Florentines, actors from outside the rural regions, invaded rural markets as they searched for stability (in this case, through risk diversification). It would correctly predict that the Florentines, the more powerful and wealthier actors, subsequently dominated these markets (cf. Fligstein 2001:84). However, it fails to predict correctly the outcome: the Florentines' victory created an overall decrease in the extent of the market because the huge differences in resources between actors meant that rural inhabitants were not able to participate in markets once they were controlled by Florentines. The view of markets as fields fails to anticipate the institutional effects of the differences in resources on market structures. It focuses on the reproduction of social structures and therefore, on how the extent of markets either stays constant or expands. In Tuscany, inequality was generated by sectoral differences in merchant and agricultural activities. The penetration of a more developed capitalist economy into a less developed market in the presence of the 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 (chapters 4–7).

Furthermore, the perspective of markets as structures points to the connection between Tuscan social structures of property devolution and markets. In rural regions of smallholding, local markets were reinforced by property devolution. Florentines penetrated rural markets not only because of their greater resources, but also because of largely shared rural and urban schemas of market exchange. Rural inhabitants' participation in markets diminished as Florentine control of agricultural production detached their practices of property devolution from markets. The penetration of the capitalist market delinked sets of interlocking social practices that had sustained local, rural markets. Finally, the view of markets as structures specifies the interaction between culture and economy through the conceptualization of resources and schemas as dialectically constituted. In contrast, the markets-as-fields perspective often analytically separates cultural from economic factors.

### *Peasants and Markets*

This view of markets as structures helps to resolve a long-standing debate about peasants' participation in markets. Over and over, peasants' reaction to markets has been conceptualized in terms of whether or not they respond rationally to economic incentives; thus, peasants are portrayed either as cultural traditionalists bound to inefficient behaviors or as rational utility maximizers who follow incentives (reviews in Brettell 1999; Davis 1992:7–8; Dunaway 1996:7; Grabowski 1995:49–50; Gregory 1982:5–9; Hoffman 1996:13–18; Ogilvie 2001; Paige 1975:26–27, 30–33; Scott 1998:7–9). The debate is often

traced to Chayanov (1966), who argued that the principles of economics do not apply to peasant households because they are motivated to provision household members, not to maximize profits. In anthropology, this debate was taken up by the substantivists and formalists (Donham 1981). In political science, James Scott (1976) argued that peasants are engaged in a moral economy, while Popkin (1979) argued that peasants are rational actors. Similarly, in development economics, peasants are "efficient but poor" (Schultz 1964:38) or are traditionalists, disengaged from markets. In economic history, Hoffman (1996:35–80) argued that peasants were extensively involved in labor, rental, and credit markets in early modern France. In contrast, Tom Scott (1998:7) argued that peasant markets are underdeveloped vis-à-vis capitalist ones. Ogilvie (2001) advocated for the application of economic theory to serfdom, suggesting that peasants were rational actors. She dismissed arguments about the external effects of culture, that peasants' cultural views prevent their participation in markets because they dislike money or financial calculations and transactions (Ogilvie 2001:444, 451). Billings and Blee (2000:206) also rejected arguments about the external effects of culture, by criticizing previous explanations of Appalachian poverty based on a culture of familism. Instead, they argued that partible inheritance and family survival strategies rooted in a non-market system of production created poverty in Appalachia (Billings and Blee 2000:195, 204, 207; cf. Gregory 1982:8–9; Reddy 1984:327–334). The view of culture from the inside is also found: peasant mentality is a result of a subsistence economy ("limited good"; Foster 1965:296). Markets and inheritance are often posed as economic and cultural mechanisms for families' survival, respectively (Bourdieu 1976; cf. Dunaway 1996:7).

The demographic literature also conceptualizes a sharp difference between cultural practices of property devolution and economic practices of markets. A standard interpretation of the relationship between economic production and demographic reproduction is that they are linked in precapitalist economies, but delinked in capitalist ones (Seccombe 1992:26–27, 37–39, 248). In pre-industrial economies, a homeostatic mechanism is hypothesized to adjust between population and resources. Property devolution and, in particular, inheritance provide access to land, which in turn allows offspring to marry. The family provides the labor force for subsistence agricultural production. Thus, when individuals have easy access to land (e.g., when they receive large inheritances) or when it is plentiful (e.g., during periods of depopulation), they marry earlier and have more children, which increases the labor force and creates population growth, which in turn increases production and consumption and spurs economic growth. However, when land is less plentiful, marriage is delayed, creating demographic and economic decline. Thus, demographic and economic practices are linked by access to resources

through inheritance. Furthermore, within pre-industrial societies, Berkner (1972, 1976; Berkner and Mendels 1978) demonstrated that the degree of partibility or impartibility created demographic and economic variation. During the transition to capitalism, the relationship between economic production and demographic reproduction is altered because markets provide access to land, labor, and commodities (Mendels 1972; reviews in Emigh 2003*b*:385–387; Goldstone 1986:30–31; Mastboom 1996:235–238). Inheritance diminishes in importance because wage laborers are no longer dependent upon the availability of land to marry. Family members are no longer the unit of production as in subsistence agriculture. These economic changes can have cultural effects. The intergenerational transmission of property through inheritance creates cultural expectations about parents' and offsprings' behavior; labor markets replace them with individualism. Offspring were largely liberated because they could marry without their parents' approval or resources (review in Emigh 2003*b*:385–387).

The debate over peasant markets, then, reproduces the dichotomies found in the debates over the transition to capitalism and markets: modernity and tradition, rationality and irrationality (Chapter 1), and culture on the outside vis-à-vis culture on the inside. On the one hand, markets or market-like institutions are seen to coordinate economic or even non-economic activities in the past. On the other hand, markets are assumed not to exist or to be too laden with culture and politics to function smoothly, so precapitalist economies must be coordinated in some other way. Thus, the first considers that economic actors are everywhere rational (cf. review in Gregory 1982:6–28). The second views precapitalist economic activities as irrational, inefficient, and different from modern activities. Both, however, treat historical societies as relatively unchanging (either rational or irrational).

The resolution of this debate about peasants and markets is not to pose culture and economy as non-market and market behaviors, respectively, but to adopt a sociocultural view that all markets—urban, rural, historical, and contemporary—are cultural and economic institutions (cf. historical sociologists' views of capitalism, Chapter 1). This perspective considers that all markets have histories and then proceeds by examining similarities and differences in these particular historical trajectories (cf. Maynes 2006:3). The comparison of these similarities and differences would also provide better historical referents for contemporary events, because they are based on empirical research, not the presumption of difference or similarity (like the examination of historical capitalism, Emigh 2005*a*).

A nascent literature begins to take this approach, by showing how peasant behavior is indeed rational—better terms may be sensible or reasonable—but also shaped by politics, family, and culture. For example, Brettell (1999),

Sabean (1990), Levi (1988), and Whittle (2000) showed how peasants, especially in regions of partible inheritance, were engaged in markets for land and credit. Brettell (1999) argued that peasants are rational, but within the context of a broader political economy and cultural context produced by historical forces (cf. Emigh 1997*d*). Drawing on the Marxist tradition showing how capitalist and precapitalist forms of production are simultaneously reproduced, she showed how market strategies reinforce household production within the context of capitalist production. Markets can be integrated with a variety of economic and social institutions, including serfdom (Dennison 2006). Similarly, Salamon (1992:201–225) showed how different cultural orientations toward farming produced variable patterns of land and rental markets among farmers of German and English descent in the Midwest.

My sociocultural view of markets expands upon this research. Instead of separating culture or politics from economic activity, or showing how they provide context, I use the view of markets as structures to analyze the intersection of cultural and economic activities through the dialectical construction of resources and schemas. I will treat markets and property devolution (inheritance, dowry) analogously. Property devolution is a structure that consists of resources (e.g., land, money, goods) and schemas (e.g., partibility, honor, patriarchy, fairness, gender). Thus, instead of viewing markets and property devolution as opposing economic and cultural mechanisms, I treat them as social practices with intersecting cultural, political, and economic dimensions. Instead of assuming rationality or irrationality, I evaluate schemas historically.

## Sectors

Sectoral theories apply to two dimensions of economic transformations. First, they can explain transitions to capitalism per se, that is, the creation of capitalist social institutions (wage labor, private property, markets). Second, they can explain industrialization per se, by showing when agricultural investment along with a concomitant shift of surplus to manufacturing creates a smaller, but more productive, agricultural sector and a larger industrial one. Together, these two dimensions of sectoral theories can explain the rise of full-scale industrial capitalism. Sectoral theories, then, explain how rural and urban regions interact, whether these interactions transform economic activities, and whether they produce a transition to industrial capitalism.

In addition, sectoral theories help theorize the form of inequality that allowed the Florentine capitalist market to undermine Tuscan local markets. Inequality was financial and relational (Tilly 2001:362, 2003:35). It was generated by sectoral relations, the different levels of profits attainable in

manufacturing vis-à-vis agriculture that created asymmetrical social interactions, in which advantages accrued mostly to urban inhabitants. In Tuscany, urban residents were advantaged because they controlled merchant businesses (such as banking and cloth production) and agricultural enterprises and therefore, shifted between them, while rural inhabitants controlled only agricultural activities (over which they often had minimal control). Inequality was also sustained and justified through social categories (Tilly 2001:362), namely that Florentines were cultured, while peasants were not (Martines 1994:56).

### *No Tuscan Sectoral Shift?*

In Chapter 2, I argued that although sectoral theories provide the best explanations of the Tuscan historical trajectory, they do not fully account for it. Investment in agriculture and transfer of surplus to merchant activities did not produce a dramatic sectoral shift toward industrialization (Chapters 4–7). The pattern of a shrinking agricultural sector and a growing manufacturing sector is found elsewhere in Europe. A classic, and still largely intact, view of English history is that a structural shift from agriculture to industry occurred at least as early as the eighteenth century (Cole 1981:62–63; Crafts 1987:256–258; Harley and Crafts 2000:820–821, 839; Hoppit 1990:174–175, 177; Thompson 1994:8). Increased agricultural productivity made it possible for a smaller agricultural labor force to feed a larger urban and industrial labor force (Allen 1992:263–264; Brenner 1985*a*:51–52; Crafts 1981:3; Thompson 1994:8).

De Vries (1974:25, 48, 56–57, 120–121) showed how a particular pattern of urban demand, population growth, secure landownership, and an autonomous rural sector relatively free from urban restrictions in the Netherlands created highly productive and specialized agriculture based on household production. This pattern of urban and rural growth created a class of prosperous farmers, specializing in production for the market, as well as laborers for nonagricultural occupations (de Vries 1974:119–121). Hoffman (1996:173–184) also pointed to a pattern of urban and rural interaction that stimulated economic growth, including proximity to supplies of fertilizer and transportation infrastructure, which allowed Paris to spur agricultural innovation in the early modern period.

Although the details of the timing and extent of change are debated,[5] the general outlines of sectoral shifts were apparent elsewhere in Europe:

[5] For example, the timing of increased agricultural productivity in England and therefore, its effects are debated (Outhwaite 1986:18; Thompson 1994:8–9). Some suggest that large landowners were also responsible for improvements before the eighteenth century (Brenner 1993:711; review in Outhwaite

urban demand stimulated investment in agriculture, which in turn increased agricultural productivity and a transfer of resources to manufacturing, creating industrialization. Yet, in Tuscany, no such dramatic sectoral shift occurred. I turn, then, to a more detailed examination of these theories.

## *Sectoral Theories of Transitions to Capitalism*

Some sectoral theories explain the role of cities in the European transition from feudalism to capitalism (reviews in Hilton 1978:17–19; Holton 1986:33–62). Smith ([1776] 1976:432–445) argued that cities transformed rural regions by destroying feudal relations. Cities created markets for goods produced in rural regions, increased productivity as urban merchants invested in agriculture, and through the effects of commerce and manufacturing, introduced order and good government (Smith [1776] 1976:432–433; cf. Hoselitz 1955:282; Pirenne [1925] 1952:214–215, 219–222). Marx ([1894] 1977*b*:442–455; see Merrington 1975:77), however, argued that commercial or merchant capital could only redistribute surplus value; it could not produce self-reproducing capitalist accumulation. Thus, merchant capital and the cities that gave rise to it were important for primitive accumulation and the dissolution of feudal relations, but they could not sustain a transition to

1986:1–3). Others suggest that agriculture became more productive because of parliamentary enclosures and the actions of large landlords during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries (Overton 1996:1–3; Wordie 1989:18–19; review in Allen 1999:209). These developments coincided with the Industrial Revolution, suggesting a direct link between them. In contrast, other research suggests a period of slow growth from the seventeenth century (or perhaps before) to the middle of the eighteenth century and a second period of growth in the first half of the nineteenth century. Growth was slower or stagnated during the intervening second half of the eighteenth century (Allen 1999:209, 2005:26–27; Cole 1981:49, 56, 62; Jackson 1985:349; review in Outhwaite 1987:202–203). Small farmers provided the impetus for growth in the first period (Allen 1999:209, 2005:27). Allen (1999:210) argued that industrialization stemmed from the first phase of agricultural expansion before the middle of the eighteenth century and suggested that the slow economic growth in the early phases of the Industrial Revolution stemmed from agricultural stagnation in the second half of the eighteenth century. Jackson (1985:349–350) agreed with Allen about the timing of agricultural change, but was less certain of agriculture's direct contribution to industrial growth.

The contributions of agriculture to industrialization are also debated. Possible contributions include the release of labor and capital to the industrial sector and the creation of a domestic market for manufactured goods (Allen 1992:263; O'Brien 1977:172, 1985:773–774; Thompson 1994:8–9). Jones (1974:99–117) argued that English agriculture provided all three (cf. O'Brien 1977:175–180; Wordie 1989:19–22), Allen (1992:264–267, 2005) argued that its only contribution was labor (primarily in the seventeenth century) (cf. Crafts 1987:258; Crouzet 1990:88–90; O'Brien 1985:775, 782; review in Hagen 1988:22–23), and Williamson (1987:271) argued that it contributed none of these. At least part of the reason that agriculture did not have all of the predicted effects, however, is because trade was relatively important to the English economy (Cole 1981:41), and therefore, the closed economy assumptions of sectoral models do not fully apply (Crafts 1987:259–262).

capitalism (reviews in Merrington 1975:77; de Vries and van der Woude 1997:690–691). For Marxists, towns and cities were non-feudal regions that were simultaneously structural elements of a larger feudal order based on parcellized sovereignty (Merrington 1975:78; review in Holton 1984:23–24).

Weber (1978:1236–1241, 1323) also focused on cities' roles in dissolving feudal ties, but viewed medieval cities more positively than Marx as direct precursors to capitalism (cf. Wallerstein 1984:64–65; review in Trigilia 2002:67–72). He emphasized the unique role of occidental, as opposed to oriental, cities in promoting capitalism (Weber 1978:1236–1265). However, urban development was only an intermediate stage in the transition to capitalism when the city supplied crafts and trade and the rural regions supplied food (Weber 1978:1218). Bureaucratic, national states had to curtail urban autonomy to create capitalism and rural industrial enterprises (Weber 1978:1325, 1329). Cities, because they generally retained the distinction between citizens and noncitizens, could not create a unified, national economy (Weber 1978:1331–1333). Though Smith, Marx, and Weber focused on the role of cities per se in the transition to capitalism, their theories have an important sectoral component because they consider how urban and rural regions interact to transform precapitalist social relations into capitalist ones.

### *Sectoral Theories of Industrialization*

Sectoral theories, explaining the relationship between types of economic activities (e.g., the transportation sector, the service sector), were more fully developed as explanations of industrialization. The relationship between the manufacturing and agricultural sectors is fundamental to industrialization, which depends on an apparent paradox. The manufacturing sector must increase in relative size, in terms of the number of individuals it employs and its share of GDP, while the agricultural sector must decrease in relative size. At the same time, however, agricultural productivity must increase because a shrinking agricultural labor force must produce adequate food supplies for both sectors. Food can be imported, but historically this was difficult and expensive. Even in the contemporary world, only 10–12% of agricultural demand is met through trade (Mundlak 2000:6). Though constraints on food supplies were more limiting in the past than in the present (Langton 1998: 386–389), chronic undernourishment and food shortages in many regions of the world illustrate that they have not vanished (Jenkins and Scanlan 2001:718). The sectoral distinction between agriculture and manufacturing generally, though not necessarily, corresponds to the spatial distinction between the

rural and urban regions (Ellis 1984:29–30), and thus, the terms "urban sector" and "rural sector" are often used.[6]

Thus, the growth of manufacturing during industrialization depends upon the dual dynamic of agriculture's shrinking size and expanding productivity (Brenner 1985*a*:52; Hoffman 1996:5; Kriedte 1983:7–8; Timmer 1988:276–279; Varshney 1993*a*:6), particularly in the early stages of development (Hayami 1997:75; Johnston and Mellor 1961:590) and in relatively closed economies without significant foreign trade (Matsuyama 1992:318–320). Agricultural revolutions often preceded industrial ones (review in Saith 1985:12–15). For this dual dynamic to occur, first, investments in agriculture must increase its productivity, and second, some surplus must be transferred to the manufacturing sector (Ranis 1988:82–83). Without investment, agricultural productivity does not increase. Without a transfer of surplus, the agricultural sector grows instead of the manufacturing sector. As Varshney (1993*a*:6) noted, it is not a matter of whether these two processes should occur, but on what terms they should occur. Thus, it is important to distinguish, at least conceptually, between the transfer of surplus, which is necessary for industrialization by definition, and squeezing agriculture, which slows economic growth (Sah and Stiglitz 1984:136; Varshney 1993*a*:12).

In one sense, sectoral theories simply describe industrialization (or capitalization, the substitution of capital for labor) and, in particular, its historic rise; that is, they outline the shift of labor from agriculture to manufacturing. While some sectoral theories explain the rise of capitalist institutions, ones that explain industrialization can be applied to different economic systems (e.g., capitalist, socialist). Sectoral theories that explain the rise of industrial capitalism, then, attend to the establishment of capitalist relations as well as the process of industrialization.

The idea that agricultural investment and the transfer of surplus could be deliberately induced created a strong interaction between public policy and economic theory (classic, neoclassical, and Marxist). The debate between the classic economists Ricardo and Malthus over whether the corn laws (terms of trade) limiting grain imports in eighteenth-century England should be repealed may be the first example. If higher imports were allowed, food prices would have decreased; if imports were restricted, food prices would have re-

[6] Rural nonagricultural activities, for example, can be easily specified when sectors are defined in terms of agriculture and manufacturing, but not when they are defined in terms of urban and rural regions. Furthermore, the conceptual and empirical distinction between urban and rural is often arbitrary (Lin 2001). For a discussion of the contribution of rural nonfarm activities to development, see Bates (1993:222), Elbers and Lanjouw (2001), Lanjouw and Lanjouw (2001), Oi (1993), and Xiaohe, Findlay, and Watson (1994). Moore (1984*a*:105) proposed the concept of a "core-periphery continuum" to substitute for the distinction between urban and rural regions.

mained high (reviews in Mitra 1977:11–20; Moore 1984*b*:10; Varshney 1993*a*:6–8). The Marxist debate between Bukharin and Preobrazhensky about Soviet agriculture revolved around the issue of how surplus should be transferred (reviews in Bardhan 1986:74–75; Deutscher 1959:231–244, 403–426; Mitra 1977:44–68; Nove 1969:123–129; Saith 1985:1–5). Preobrazhensky ([1926] 1965:84–85), starting from Marx's theory of primitive accumulation, argued that industrialization could be financed only by forced transfers of resources from the private, agricultural sector to the socialist, industrial sector. In contrast, Bukharin ([1928] 1982:309–321) argued that the agricultural sector had to be developed as a domestic market for manufactured goods. Sah and Stiglitz (1984:137, 1986) reevaluated this debate and found that socialist industrialization could have been financed through forced transfers, but only to the detriment of both peasants and workers (cf. Harrison 1985:99–100; Li and Tsui 1990:145; Saith 1985:28; Skott 1999:366; review in Sun 2001).

Beginning with Lewis (1954), who considered the conditions under which labor shifted from agriculture to industry, a large neoclassical literature on economic development examines sectoral relationships. Initially, agriculture's role in development was undervalued. Some economists assumed that agriculture contributed little to development if its share of the economy decreased; others argued that it should be squeezed deliberately to provide resources for industrialization (review in Timmer 1988:277–278). In contrast, Johnston and Mellor (1961) and Ranis and Fei (1961) suggested that optimal development strategies, especially for societies with large agricultural sectors and little industry, included the investment of resources and technology in agriculture and some transfer of surplus between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, either through direct or indirect taxation or through terms of trade (prices) (Mellor 1995:5–8; Schultz 1964; Timmer 1988:278–280, 289; Varshney 1993*a*:5, 11–12; review in Timmer 1992). In countries with subsistence agriculture where the importation of food is difficult, policies harmful to agriculture lead to economic stagnation (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:16, 28, 30; Timmer 1988:277–278, 289). In countries with large export-oriented agricultural sectors, agriculture contributes substantially to industrialization (Varshney 1993*a*:11).[7] Timmer (1988) merged the ideas of Lewis and Schultz by arguing that agricultural productivity could be increased through technological developments, thereby creating surplus that could be transferred via taxation to industry or through some other government intervention that affected the terms

[7] However, Matsuyama (1992:319) argued that agricultural productivity and economic growth are negatively related in open economies. Where highly productive agriculture is a comparative advantage, resources shift toward export agriculture and away from industry, thereby delaying long-term development.

of trade (review in Varshney 1993*a*:10–11). Mellor (1976) emphasized linkages between agricultural and nonagricultural activities, especially through consumption (cf. Storm 1995:773), which facilitated development.

The reallocation of labor from rural to urban areas was part of Lewis's original two-sector model that was developed by Harris and Todaro (1970). Surplus labor not used in agriculture is released to the manufacturing sector. Individual-level migration decisions are driven by wage differentials between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Sectoral migration can be beneficial; it can decrease income differentials and increase efficiency (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:11, 97; Butzer, Larson, and Mundlak 2002:244; Larson and Mundlak 1997:310; Lu 2002:428). Urbanization, driven partly by rural to urban migration, creates dense urban markets that stimulate agricultural production (Harris 1990:14). However, rural to urban migration can also outstrip urban jobs and urban resources needed to support population growth (review in Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991:472–474). Because migration is primarily driven by the difference between rural and urban wages, it can continue even in the face of high urban unemployment rates (review in Brueckner and Zenou 1999:318; cf. Pugh 1996:1047).

### *Urban Bias versus Rural Autonomy*

Lipton (1977:13) used the term "urban bias" to describe a pattern of sectoral relations stemming from policies of taxation, pricing, and investment that favor urban over rural inhabitants, creating regional disparities with respect to consumption, wage, and production levels, standards of living (Bradshaw 1987:225), and excess rural-to-urban migration (Richardson 1987:230). Bates (1981:6–7) argued that governments intervene in markets to generate resources, which are then distributed to build support for political elites and their policies. These policies can hinder rural development, thereby preventing the creation of agricultural surplus and eliminating the possibility of transferring surplus to industry. Arguments about urban bias often corroborate neoliberal policies of free markets and price liberalization. The removal of controls allows agricultural prices to rise, increases producers' profits, and stimulates agricultural productivity (Gelan 2002:708; Pugh 1996:1053–1055; Richardson 1987:230). London and Smith (1988:455) distinguished between urban bias, which focuses on policies, and overurbanization (Bradshaw 1985; Gugler 1982; Smith 1987; Sovani 1964),[8] which measures the degree to which urban population growth exceeds the growth of the economy or nonagricultural labor-force opportunities

[8] While overurbanization often occurs in capitalist economies, "underurbanization" often accompanied socialism (Murray and Szelenyi 1984:90–92; Szelenyi 1984:1–2).

(cf. Bradshaw 1985:74–75; reviews in Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994; Dutt 1990; Moore 1984*b*). Overurbanization also has been associated with slow economic growth (Timberlake and Kentor 1983:504–505).

Urban bias is common in developing countries partly because cities concentrate interests spatially; the urban sector is small and geographically concentrated, so interest groups form relatively easily to press for beneficial policies (Varshney 1993*a*:14–15). Urban interests can overlap with governmental ones located in the capital city to produce powerful coalitions. In contrast, rural inhabitants are scattered geographically, making it harder for them to mobilize. Where rural actors are powerless, they will have little impact and rural interests will not be represented. In contrast, city dwellers may have a huge amount of power to implement their interests. Where there are powerful rural actors (such as large farmers), they may simply align with urban interests against the majority of the rural inhabitants to reinforce urban advantage (Bates 1981:119–121; Ellis 1984:38; Harriss and Harriss 1984:100; Moore 1984*b*:19–20).

Where powerful rural actors do exist, however, it is possible, though not guaranteed, that they can represent rural interests. There are multiple mechanisms that facilitate this representation, including an alliance between rural and urban actors, the existence of pro-rural urban actors, urban-centered agribusinesses whose primary economic interests lie in increasing agricultural production, or well-established democratic regimes that allow for political representation of the entire rural population (Colburn 1993; Varshney 1993*a*, 1993*b*; Widner 1993).[9] The term "rural autonomy" captures this idea that some actors must be free to pursue the rural interests of agriculture separately from other social interests and, in particular, urban interests (cf. state autonomy, Evans 1995:45). While Weber (1978:1325), for example, drew attention to the necessity of urban autonomy in creating the preconditions for the rise of market economy, some degree of rural autonomy may be crucial for agricultural development.

Some empirical research supports the urban bias thesis; some does not (review in Bradshaw 1987:225). Policies affecting prices or the allocation of resources do not necessarily have the intended effects (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:48–49; Guillaumont Jeanneney and Hua 2001:529; Hart 1998*b*: 28–29; Karshenas 1997:82–83, 96–99; Li and Tsui 1990:145; Skott 1999:366; cf. Storm 1995:773; review in Sun 2001). Becker, Hamer, and Morrison (1994:95), for example, found a strong but imperfect relationship between the lack of price distortions and economic growth. Poirson (2001:58–59) found that countries with a lower initial intersectoral differential in labor efficiency gained more

[9] Interestingly, Cuba's strong socialist ideology seemed to prevent urban bias (Colburn 1993).

economically by reallocating labor from agriculture to industry and services. Even in developing countries, urban bias can be avoided (Colburn 1993; Ellis 1984; Widner 1993). Furthermore, the agricultural sector does not always contribute to industrial accumulation, and the effect of agricultural surplus on economic growth varies (Karshenas 1997:96–99).

Marxists, who often follow Preobrazhensky, are generally skeptical of the urban bias thesis. They often consider how class relationships determine the terms of trade between urban and rural regions, which in turn affect capital accumulation (Mitra 1977:69, 92, 100). For example, Byres (1974: 221–222, 225–226, 1977:258–259, 1979:233–236) argued that the terms of trade had to be turned against agriculture, so that the surplus accumulated by agriculturalists could finance industrialization. Powerful rural landlords can prevent this transfer of surplus and, consequently, industrialization (Bernstein and Brass 1996:8–9; reviews in Bernstein 1996; Bernstein and Brass 1996; Karshenas 1997). Similarly, an alliance between these rural elites and the urban bourgeoisie can turn the terms of trade in favor of agricultural products to the detriment of overall development (Mitra 1977:102–103, 178). The creation of a small wealthy elite, as opposed to widespread income growth, also curtails development because it restricts the domestic market (review in Storm 1995:762).

Neoclassical and Marxist models also view inequality differently. Neoclassical models generally treat social processes that create urban bias as distortions that disrupt markets. Unequal income distributions are essential for growth because capitalists' savings finance development (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:97). However, in the absence of market distortions, the assumption of diminishing returns guarantees that perpetual inequality is impossible. Additional investments in any individual firm, industry, or region become less profitable after some point, so investments shift elsewhere (McIntyre 1992:82). In contrast, the Marxist concept of uneven development suggests that inequality is inherent in capitalism. Capital accumulation systematically requires continual and sometimes increasing spatial and sectoral inequalities (Browett 1984:156; Harvey 1982:373, 415–419; McIntyre 1992:83; cf. Huang 1995:166–167).

Furthermore, some phenomena attributed to urban bias may be better explained by relationships beyond regional ones. Urban bias, overurbanization, and economic stagnation may result from dependent status in the world economy (reviews in Bradshaw 1985:75; London and Smith 1988:455; cf. Alonso-Villar 2001:1368).[10] Similarly, Timmer (1993) argued that much of the variation in agricultural prices stems from changes in international trade and

[10] London and Smith (1988:460) found that urban bias and dependency had separate effects on economic growth (cf. Bradshaw 1985:95).

world prices, not sectoral differences or domestic policies (Bates 1993:220). Thus, the effects of urban bias depend on other social and economic factors.

### *Linkages between Urban and Rural Regions*

Another strand of sectoral theory considers in more detail how these other factors affect sectoral relations. Johnston and Mellor (1961:571–581) noted that increased agricultural productivity and the transfer of surplus can stimulate positive linkages between industry and agriculture: (1) the increased capacity to feed an urban population, (2) the release of labor from agriculture to manufacturing, (3) increased agricultural income that creates a domestic market for manufactured goods, (4) increased domestic savings available to finance industrialization, and (5) earnings from foreign exchange that support development (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:11, 31; Byres 1977:258, 1996:23–24, 422–423; Matsuyama 1992:318; Mundlak 2000:17; Mundle 1985:49, 76; O'Brien 1996:215; Stevens and Jabara 1988:52–53; Varshney 1993*a*:7). Though linkages were originally conceptualized as aggregate sectoral transfers, they are now analyzed in more detail to consider their nature and density and to explore how they create connections between and within urban and rural regions so that both sectors contribute to each other's economic growth (Becker, Hamer, and Morrison 1994:46–48; Epstein and Jezeph 2001; Storm 1995:764–767).

Linkages can be oriented toward production or consumption.[11] Forward production linkages are industrial products that serve as inputs to other industries; backward production linkages are the inputs to any given industry that create demand for the products of other industries (Hirschman 1958:98–119; reviews in Huang 1995:167; Krugman 1995:19–23). For example, backward production linkages describe the demand of agriculturalists for inputs (plows, fertilizers, tools, etc.), while forward linkages are created by the need to process agricultural goods (such as spinning or canning) (review in Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001:11). Consumption linkages are often the most important at low levels of development (Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001:14) and for urban and rural consumers (Douglass 1998:11). A "virtuous cycle" describes mutually reinforcing linkages that allow employment and income to increase in a dispersed pattern (Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001:11). Linkages are further analyzed in complicated modeling processes that combine spatial and sectoral analysis (Douglass 1998; Gelan 2002; Harriss and Harriss 1984; Hughes and Holland 1994:364, 376; Karshenas 1997; Roberts 2000), which unfortunately, often demand more data than are available (Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001:13).

[11] The Marxist idea of a domestic market is similar to the neoclassical idea of a consumption linkage (Hart 1998*b*:31; cf. Mundle 1985:76).

Not surprisingly, given that linkages are context specific, empirical findings about them vary. For example, depending on the pattern of intersectoral linkages, either urban or rural development may create overall economic growth (cf. Block 1999:241; Douglass 1998:6–7; Roberts 2000:408). Thus, these sectoral theories point to factors and patterns that may affect economic growth, not to some particular recipe for it. Furthermore, even if they were prescriptive, economic theories only predict aggregate output, not distributional or social outcomes. For example, urbanization can create economies of scale that increase efficiency (Richardson 1987:231), including agglomeration, specialization, and concentration (Harris 1990:10–12). However, economies of scale are generally economic (e.g., the size of the labor pool), while diseconomies are often social and affect particular households (e.g., congestion and pollution) (Richardson 1987:231). Thus, neoclassical models based on efficiency in terms of output maximization (Richardson 1987:238) do not necessarily attend to diseconomies.

Politics and culture, which may be ignored in economic models, also affect linkages and, more generally, sectoral relations (Bates 1993:223–227; Douglass 1998:18, 28–29). Politics based on ethnicity, religion, and caste that cut across urban and rural regions can prevent the formation of groups, based on economic interests, that would represent rural regions (Varshney 1993*b*: 179–180). Official state politics also influence economic outcomes (Varshney 1993*b*:206). Where sectoral theories consider culture and politics, however, they are often conceptualized as separate from economic factors, as in neoinstitutionalist models where the state establishes the preconditions for economic action. Thus, they create the same analytic difficulties as the culture-from-the-outside models.

Other treatments link politics, culture, and economy more explicitly. For example, Hart (1998*b*:27, 34, 38–39, 44) argued that sectoral linkages are affected by the social organization of production, the conditions of access to resources, and the logic of investment—all of which are located within historically specific economic and political structures and are affected by class, race, ethnicity, gender, and kinship. Thus, Hart (1998*a*:338, 1998*b*:44) comes close to conceptualizing the market as a cultural and political entity; for example, she considers how Taiwanese subcontracting is organized through kinship ties and networks.

Grantham (1993:496) made a related point: social organization—not the overall level of productivity—was crucial for the transfer of labor from agriculture to industry. The technological means to increase agricultural productivity to support industrialization existed in the Middle Ages (Grantham 1993:488). However, labor had to be organized socially to provide a large agricultural workforce during the relatively short harvest. Thus, social arrange-

ments that accommodated industrial and agricultural demands for labor, such as rural industry, factory closures during the harvest season, and large-scale temporary labor migration, allowed industrialization to proceed (Grantham 1993:493–495). Similarly, Grabowski (1995:50) argued that the growth of a market system consisting of economic and social institutions, not just the transfers of resources between sectors, led to economic growth. In different ways, Hart, Grantham, and Grabowski emphasize the institutional foundations of sectoral transfers and the social constitution of market structures that create linkages and support industrialization. Thus, these ideas are consistent with the view of markets as structures and suggest how theories of markets and sectors can be explicitly combined.

In sum, recent literature on sectoral relations goes beyond the simple policy prescriptions of earlier works, especially on forced transfers of surplus, to emphasize the institutions that support sectoral transfers. It also reemphasizes how some sectoral relationships extend markets by increasing the circulation of goods, services, and labor between rural and urban regions. In particular, sectoral theories point to three relationships: (1) investment that increases agricultural productivity, (2) transfers from rural to urban regions, and (3) linkages that increase the extent of the domestic market. These relationships can be examined in social and historical context by considering the market structures and institutions that underlie them. Though sectoral theories alone cannot explain the Tuscan case because the presence of these first two relationships did not create the third one (Chapters 2, 4–7), it can be explained by combining theories of sectors and markets.

## Combining Theories of Markets and Sectors

Theories of markets and sectors can be combined because they explain complementary economic activities. Sectoral theories explain the organization of economic activities in agriculture and manufacturing and the relationship between them. In capitalist economies, the exchange of goods and services is coordinated by markets, so theories of markets explain how the exchange of the inputs and outputs from the agriculture and manufacturing sectors is accomplished in such an economy. The rise of full-scale industrial capitalism, therefore, depends on the relationship between the growth of markets and sectoral shifts from agriculture to manufacturing.

Most sectoral models implicitly adopt economic models of markets that assume their expansion. Sophisticated versions recognize the import of culture and politics, but they often treat them as external to the economy in general and to markets in particular. In contrast, sociological theories of markets focus on how particular markets work and more often consider seriously their

political and cultural dimensions, but they rarely consider sectoral relations. Thus, the possibility that sectoral relations interact with markets as structures to create—or prevent—a dual dynamic of shrinking agricultural size and increasing productivity has not been explored. I do so explicitly, by considering how sectoral differences in economic interests, manifest in markets as structures composed of schemas and resources, created patterns of sectoral interactions that eroded Tuscan markets. Thus, I emphasize how the institutional foundations of sectoral transfers intersected with markets to undevelop capitalism in Tuscany. I go beyond simple sectoral theories that describe aggregate transfers to show how sectoral interactions between urban and rural residents worked in practice through markets.

Sectoral theories serve three purposes in explaining this case of stalled transition to capitalism. First, they will explain how urban and rural interaction continued to produce—or not—a qualitative transition to capitalist social relations where such social relations were already widespread.[12] Second, they will help explain the process of industrialization; that is, whether the urban sector grew vis-à-vis the rural one. Finally, they will help theorize the form of inequality; namely, the much greater economic wealth of urban residents. The sociocultural theory of markets will explain how markets worked within this set of sectoral relations and, in particular, how market structures linked urban and rural exchange.

### *Economic Interests and Sectoral Differences*

One crucial problem remains. Marxist and neoclassical sectoral arguments derive interests from actors' formal attributes. Neoclassical models use rational-actor assumptions about utility maximization; Marxists generally use class-based relations of production. Thus, the actors are interchangeable. These arguments miss the historically specific attributes of actors' interests that shape sectoral relations and market transactions.[13] Thus, Marxist and neoinstitutionalist theory fail to explain Tuscan economic change (Chapter 2).

Instead, I draw on Weber (1978:927), who defined interests by giving three characteristics of class: "(1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, insofar as (2) this component is

[12] In contrast, some theories of transitions to capitalism focus on a prior historical transformation, the dissolution of feudal relations and their transformation into capitalist ones. These theories explain little about fifteenth-century Tuscany because feudalism disappeared before then. The several-century gap between feudalism and full-scale capitalism is highly problematic for these theories (Lachmann 2000:19; Whittle 2000:11).

[13] Similarly, categorical analyses of individuals' class, status, and party fail to identify the interests that motivate historically specific actions (Bearman 1993:8–9).

represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets." Weberian substantive economic interests, then, arise out of actors' historically specific possession of goods and opportunities for income (not formal attributes). Classes form around these economic interests, and class interests flow out of classes. The effects of these interests are not predetermined, because individuals within classes may pursue their interests differently. I combine this conceptualization of economic interests with sectoral theories. Sectoral differences in agriculture and urban manufacturing influenced the possession of goods and opportunities for income, which affected substantive economic interests, which in turn shaped sectoral transfers, interactions, and relations (Chapter 5). Examining this particular pattern of sectoral differences, economic interests, and sectoral transfers highlights the institutional foundations of sectoral relations, which then interacted with market structures interacted to erode capitalism in Tuscany.

## Markets and Sectors in Tuscany

This combination of theories of markets and sectors is illustrated in Chapters 4–7. In fifteenth-century Tuscany, capitalist social relationships (private property, wage labor, markets, etc.) were widespread (Chapter 2), but they did not produce industrial capitalism. In Florence, as well as in the surrounding countryside, political and legal institutions upheld enforceable property rights and contracts. Rural and urban inhabitants participated in markets for labor, commodities, and credit. During the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, political and legal institutions were consolidated to create a relatively unified Tuscan, or perhaps Florentine, territorial state. Tuscan development was driven by capitalist elements.

This setting, as Weber predicted, facilitated economic interaction between the city and countryside. In fact, the two preconditions for a sectoral shift from agriculture to manufacturing existed: Florentine investment increased agricultural productivity, while Tuscan political and economic institutions transferred at least some of this agricultural surplus to urban activities (Chapter 5). However, even in the presence of these two first conditions, there was no rapid growth of a domestic market, the third important dimension of a sectoral shift. Thus, I try to explain why no sectoral shift occurred—that is, why there was no movement toward full-scale industrial capitalism—even in the presence of preconditions that might have facilitated such a transition. To do so, I consider the intersection of markets and sectors.

Urban and rural markets were linked to property devolution (cf. McLean and Padgett 2004:195, 197), and both were institutions in the cultural and

economic domain, composed of resources and schemas. Tuscan markets transferred resources (e.g., commodities, land, labor, infrastructure) and relied on schemas (e.g., valuation, numeracy, equity, ownership, alienability). Property devolution also transferred resources (e.g., land, money, goods) and relied on schemas (e.g., partibility, honor, patriarchy, fairness, gender). In fact, markets and property devolution were underpinned by largely similar (though not identical) schemas in urban and rural regions (Chapter 4). Property devolution took the form of partible inheritance and dowries, which were both tied to ideals of family honor (Kirshner and Molho 1978:434; Kuehn 1991:254–257; Molho 1988:208–209). Though inheritance may have become increasingly impartible (or preferentially partible) among wealthy families as the fifteenth century progressed, partibility remained the taken-for-granted context for property devolution: an equal division of property among sons and a dowry for daughters (Chapter 4). Intertwining activities with respect to markets, property devolution, and marriage alliances sustained rural and commercial families (Molho 1994*b*:3, 12).[14]

However, resources in the two sectors sharply diverged. Florentines controlled many more resources than rural inhabitants, and they controlled them in both the manufacturing and the agricultural sector, while rural inhabitants controlled them only in the latter. Thus, there was a large degree of sectoral inequality, especially with respect to financial capital (Tilly 2003:35). These sectoral differences influenced opportunities for rural and urban incomes that in turn created sectoral differences in economic interests that shaped sectoral transfers (Chapter 5). Florentines often owned land, but they sustained their families primarily through attempts to maximize profits in businesses such as banking, cloth production, and other activities typical of urban merchants. Land held a particular place in capitalist activity. Florentines were not *rentiers;* they invested in land and profited from it, but land did not have the same role in their portfolio as it would have for rural landlords or cultivators. Returns to profits from manufacturing were much higher but less secure than in agriculture. Thus, agricultural holdings were used by urban residents to balance the risk of their urban activities. For rural residents, land was the sole source of income (rural manufacture was rare at this time) (Chapter 5). Thus, urban and rural residents had different economic interests.

Markets and property devolution were also linked somewhat differently in the two sectors. To illustrate this point, I look at patterns of landholding, the site where the sectors could intersect. I characterize two widespread patterns as the "circulation of property" and the "consolidation of property" (Chapter 7

[14] Cf. Adams (2005:29, 33–35, 100–101, 104, 164–196) who shows how familial, merchant, and political practices were linked in Florence and other early modern European states.

explicitly compares them). The circulation of property characterized rural smallholding where there was little Florentine involvement. In these regions, smallholders owned numerous small plots of land that circulated among family members and other rural residents. There were local markets for land, labor, and commodities, though the economy was primarily integrated by reciprocity or household production (in Polanyian terms). Smallholders frequently bought and sold small plots of land to match family size to the amount of land under cultivation, to make or store profit, or to consolidate and rearrange holdings. Property devolution—partible inheritance and dowries (often given as land)—and marriage also split up and recombined land holdings (Chapter 4). Markets and property devolution were mutually constitutive and reinforcing (not substitutable as in, for example, Bourdieu's [1976] treatment) and were linked to family practices (Chapter 4). Families attempted to gain access to land through markets and property devolution to attain—at least primarily—a sufficient level of agricultural production to meet their needs.

The consolidation of property characterized regions of sharecropping, where Florentines owned large farms and leased them to rural tenants in share terms. Florentines bought and sold farms, but not as frequently as rural residents bought and sold plots in the smallholding regions (Chapter 6). Like rural residents, Florentines owned land to store profits or as a security (Herlihy 1981:411), but landownership was linked to urban family practices differently because of different economic interests. Elderly Florentines often bought land for their sons to inherit (Chapter 5; Herlihy 1981:410). A patrimony could be used by young men to establish an urban business or career. Their midlife profits could be returned to real estate late in life. Thus, real estate was a "bank" in several ways. It securely transmitted wealth between generations, as well as safely stored profits during a lifetime. Smallholders more frequently bought and sold land throughout the life course. They matched family size to the amount of land under cultivation. Therefore, they held the most land when they had many dependents (Chapter 4), often at midlife, exactly when Florentines held the least land. Household structure also affected the size of holdings because of this matching process. Florentines practiced preferentially partible inheritance and gave a cash dowry more often than rural residents, so Florentine's property devolution practices did not divide holdings as much as smallholders' did (Chapter 4; Molho 1994*b*:111–112, 145–153). Thus, urban investments in land were linked to the life cycle of the family as well as urban fortunes (Herlihy 1981). When the urban economy grew, so did rural investment. Land markets, therefore, were linked to urban and rural residents' property devolution, but in different ways. Land changed ownership much more frequently in regions of smallholding than in regions of sharecropping.

The expansion and extension of Florentine control through their increasing political jurisdiction facilitated the interaction between urban capitalist and rural local markets. Florentines and rural inhabitants' largely shared schemas about how markets operated also facilitated sales. Once rural inhabitants sold their land, however, their further participation in the land, labor, commodity, and credit markets was severely restricted. When Florentines entered the land market, rural inhabitants could still sell land. In fact, their opportunities for sales increased, and they did so for the usual reasons: to recombine land split apart by partible inheritance or dowry transactions, to adjust for the size of the family, or to sell land located at a distance. However, they could rarely buy land because Florentines had greater resources. Differences in resources and economic interests allowed the Florentine market to spread (Chapter 5). As it spread, rural inhabitants were removed from lively and well-functioning local markets, and the interlocking social practices between markets and property devolution were destroyed (Chapters 6, 7). The destruction of rural markets undermined the institutional support for a domestic market that could have supported a sustained transition to full-scale industrial capitalism. The possibility of the creation of dense sets of intersectoral linkages was, therefore, erased by the relationship between the urban and rural sectors. Instead of strengthening the rural market, the penetration of the capitalist market undermined it.

The sociocultural view of markets as structures is thus crucial to understanding Tuscan economic change. It explains how the institutional underpinnings for markets eroded through sectoral relationships as capitalist markets spread. This view departs from viewing markets and inheritance as opposites: instead it views all markets, historic or contemporary, as sites of economic and cultural action and seeks to explain the historical variability in how markets and inheritance were related. This sociological view of markets meshes well with recent sectoral theories. These theories go beyond simple explanations of economic change in terms of aggregate sectoral transfers to understand the institutional nature of sectoral relations and the patterns of intersectoral linkages that underlie such transfers and that promote or retard economic change. Combining theories of markets and sectors explains how, in the Tuscan case, a sectoral difference in resources and economic interests created divergent patterns of participation in markets that eventually undermined the creation of a rural domestic market because the vast majority of the population was excluded from markets. Although there was investment in agricultural production and some transfer of surplus to the manufacturing sector (Chapter 5), there was no shift in the relative size of the two sectors because of the way in which the sectoral activities were linked. Florentines invested in agriculture when their commercial ventures expanded, so the two

sectors tended to grow and shrink together, not substitute for each other. The rural sector was not economically autonomous.

In presenting the evidence in the following chapters, I have three broad goals. First, I explain how smallholders and sharecroppers, given their economic interests, organized agricultural production and property devolution to concretize the patterns of landholding I describe as the circulation of property and the consolidation of property. Second, I present evidence on sectoral relations, showing how investment increased agricultural productivity, demonstrating how agricultural surplus was transferred to manufacturing, and outlining the extent of the domestic market. Third, I show how markets operated and how they were linked to property devolution as well as sectoral differences.

# 4

# Smallholding

## *The Circulation of Property*

Francesco di Nuccino, a smallholder who lived in Castelnuovo, an unremarkable town in rural Tuscany, was fortunate to have two daughters married on the same day in 1425. To provide their dowries, he contracted several debts, traded houses, and then sold the exchanged house. Antonio di Michele, the groom of Francesco's daughter, Barbara, purchased one house (which was sold because it was part of a different dowry transaction) and sold two others before the receipt of her dowry. Just about a year later, Antonio purchased a piece of land (Emigh 2003*b*:411–413). These transactions show how land and credit markets were closely linked to family practices. These markets allowed a father to arrange a dowry and a husband to secure more property for his growing family. Such markets were also linked to agricultural production. Antonio di Domenico Cambiuzzi, another resident of the same town, was particularly enterprising. He and his family (including several adult sons) owned multiple plots of land and rented additional plots from another local inhabitant. They produced an agricultural output considerably higher than average, partly because of the possibility of renting land (Emigh 2001:507).

Using two small Tuscan towns, Montecatini di Val di Cecina and Castelnuovo di Val di Cecina, as examples of communities of smallholders, this chapter shows how local markets were crucial to these towns' economies because they were linked to property devolution (inheritance and dowry) and agricultural production, even though smallholding was based on family labor. Hypothetically, such well-functioning markets that were integrated economically and culturally with rural inhabitants' lives could have expanded into fully capitalist

ones that supported a transition to capitalism. This was not, however, the outcome. Instead, rural market institutions eroded when Florentines entered agricultural production. This chapter helps explain this outcome by showing how rural markets worked in regions of smallholding and thus, provides a backdrop for understanding how Florentines' entry into these markets erased them. It explores the resources and schema that composed markets and property devolution: the resources of land, labor, and commodities that smallholders exchanged and the schemas of partibility, gender, patriarchy, and numeracy that enabled such exchange. The first section of this chapter reviews property devolution practices throughout Tuscany to compare Florentines' and rural inhabitants' practices. Florentines and rural inhabitants held largely similar schemas of property devolution, but deployed them in somewhat different ways because Florentines had more resources than rural smallholders. The second section focuses on these two towns in the Val di Cecina to consider how markets were linked to property devolution, agricultural production, and numeracy.

In fifteenth-century Tuscany, smallholding was the most common form of landholding (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:115–117). It was found throughout rural Tuscany, but it was concentrated in the regions furthest from Florence. The region closest to Florence, which had been subjected to its control and jurisdiction for the longest period of time, was the *contado.* Beyond the *contado* was the district (*distretto*). The district, in general, had been subjected to Florentine control after the *contado*, so there were fewer Florentine institutions. Smallholding was found in both the *contado* and the district, but it was more common in the district because the spread of Florentine capital had transformed much of the *contado* into regions of sharecropping.

The economies of smallholding regions were based on subsistence agriculture. Since smallholders generally used family members to provide agricultural labor, they matched the amount of land under cultivation to the size of the family labor force and the needs of their families. Families used markets and property devolution to accomplish this matching process. Markets could supply labor for land or vice versa. The enterprising could also use these markets to accumulate a surplus that could be sold on commodity markets (Emigh 2001:501–508).

Partible inheritance prevailed throughout Tuscany. While cultural norms emphasized the preservation of the patrimony among male relatives, in practice, poor rural Tuscans had relatively little success in doing so. Instead, they relied on the frequent exchange of land among community residents through property devolution and markets.

Thus, I characterize the pattern of smallholders' landholding as the circulation of property. Plots of land were relatively small and inexpensive. Ownership and access to these plots changed frequently for mutually reinforcing

reasons. First, mortality was extremely high and marriage late for men so the likelihood of routine transmission of land from father to son through inheritance was small. Second, partible inheritance and dowries divided the land among heirs. Finally, local markets made it relatively easy to buy, sell, and lease land. In fact, households showed little preference toward maintaining an inheritance intact and often divided the patrimony when they could have kept it intact (Emigh 2001, 2003*b*).

## Property Devolution in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany

In urban and rural Tuscany, property devolution was bilateral and included partible postmortem inheritance for men and dowry at the time of marriage for women (Brown 1982:37; Kuehn 1992:485, 2002:141). Joint ownership of property by siblings was common. Though inheritance was partible, stereotypically giving equal shares to all male heirs, testaments frequently specified that land was to be held undivided and in common by heirs. Thus, partible inheritance often led to large, joint households (coresidence of married siblings, typically brothers in Tuscany), especially among the wealthy. Laws favored male over female inheritance. In instances of intestacy, women could inherit legally only a portion—no more than a quarter—of the estate. The rest went to the deceased's male relatives within eight degrees, including sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, father, paternal grandfather, paternal uncles, and brothers (Klapisch-Zuber 1985:19; Kuehn 1991:239, 241–243). Women were also legally entitled to a "suitable" dowry (as well as support from their natal family before marriage and during widowhood if they returned to this family) (Kuehn 1991:239). Florentine statutes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries progressively limited matrilineal inheritance.

Dowries were a universal component of the cultural field. Without a dowry, there was no marriage (Molho 1994*b*:12). Though the families of the future bride and groom assumed that a dowry would be given, they often engaged in lengthy and heated negotiations about its size and composition, as well as the timing and terms of its exchange and restitution, both legally and informally, even after the marriage took place (Emigh 2003*b*:415–417; Kirshner 1991*a*, 1991*b*; Molho 1988:210–216, 1994*b*:128–143; for an example, see Brucker 1971:29–30). Dowries ranged from a nonmonetary token among the impoverished to an enormous fortune among wealthy Florentines (Martines 1963:19). While the dowry legally belonged to the wife and was generally inherited by her children, it was managed by her male relatives (Kuehn 1996:65).

Similarly, inheritance was not always straightforward. A testament did not necessarily prevent family arguments; it was often the starting point for extensive litigation (Kirshner 1991*a*:129–132; Kuehn 1991:15, 1992:487). Florentine

laws concerning the details of female inheritance were subject to considerable interpretation, and legal decisions sometimes supported female over male rights (Kuehn 1991:239, 243, 246–254). High mortality assured that some families would have no male heirs. According to Wrigley's (1978) estimations, which are reasonably representative of fifteenth-century Tuscany, about 20 percent of families would have had no surviving heirs, about 20 percent would have had a female heir but no male heir, and about 60 percent would have had at least one male heir.

Male heirs were advantaged over females not only in the law, but also in practice. Cohn (1992:197) found that females and males inherited equally in only 13 percent of the cases in which parents had surviving sons and daughters (based on wills from Arezzo, Assisi, Florence, Perugia, Pisa, and Siena). Florentine wills placed the most emphasis on preserving the patrimony through the male lineage, often naming distant male relatives as heirs instead of daughters (Cohn 1992:197; Kent 1977:25–26, 135). Testators followed similar practices in Arezzo. In contrast, in Pisa and Siena, especially before the plagues of the mid-fourteenth century, there were fewer restrictions on the division or alienation of patrimonial property; daughters were more often chosen as heirs over distant male relatives. Furthermore, Florentines often imposed a fideicommissum[1] on legacies to prevent the division of the property (Kent 1977:135–149). Some Florentines practiced preferentially partible inheritance by leaving the oldest son the largest share of the patrimony (e.g., Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:4). These inheritance practices emphasized the relationship between fathers and sons (Kent 1977:45–62; Najemy 2002:55).

Of course, not all Florentines kept their patrimonies intact. In the fifteenth century, many Florentines sold land (e.g., Ciappelli 1992:41), preferably to relatives or neighbors (Crabb 2000:224; Kent 1977:126–132, 135). Additionally, Florentines bought and sold land as part of their business strategies and owned the least land during middle age. They often bought land late in life to deed to sons, who could then sell the property gradually to establish businesses in young adulthood (Herlihy 1977:23, 1981:408–411).

Marriage alliances, as well as the dowries brought to the paternal line, or patriline, through marriage, maintained the prominence of certain Florentine families, their patrilines, and their patrimonies (Molho 1994*b*:9, 171–178, 344–345; cf. Najemy 2002:54). Marriage alliances were tightly linked to business alliances (McLean and Padgett 2004:206). The tendency of Florentines to give cash dowries rather than land also may have prevented the fragmentation of the patrimony (Kirshner 1978:2, 1991*b*:184; Molho 1994*b*:111–112, 145–153).

[1] A fideicommissum is a gift of property (usually through a will) that stipulates that the recipient of the property has to transfer the property to another person (Black [1891] 1979:562).

Male authority was supported not only by property devolution, but also by two demographic characteristics that were common in Tuscany, but unusual elsewhere in Europe. First, there was a relatively large age gap between spouses because of early age at marriage for women and late age at marriage for men (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:204–211; Kirshner and Molho 1978:420, 432). Second, a relatively large proportion of Tuscans lived in extended families (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:292). These families reinforced patriarchy; formal and informal authority was held by the male head of the household and customarily transferred to the coresident male heir at the death of the elder male (Klapisch-Zuber 1985:19).

Although age at marriage and household structure varied, these two demographic characteristics were found throughout Tuscany. For example, household extension was more common among the wealthy (especially among the Florentine elite and the landowning peasantry), while the poor were more likely to establish new (presumably nuclear) households at marriage (Klapisch-Zuber 1985:19). Nevertheless, there was a relatively high percentage of household extension across a wide range of urban and rural social groups (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:282–298). Similarly, age at first marriage (especially for men) was somewhat older in Florence, but the same overall pattern of much later age at marriage for men than for women was found throughout the region (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:86–88, 210). Within rural regions, there was relatively little variation. For example, the differences in household structure and age at marriage between smallholders and sharecroppers, for which differences in tenancy might operate analogously to the difference between partible and impartible inheritance (strictly partible inheritance can decrease household complexity and lower age at marriage), were small (Emigh 1997*a*, 1997*b*, 1998*a*). Households of sharecroppers tended to be larger than those of smallholders, but it is not clear whether the indivisibility of the tenurial form or the labor requirements of sharecropping was responsible (Emigh 1997*a*).

Wheaton (1975:625–627) linked these demographic characteristics of household extension and age at marriage to patrilineal kinship systems. In several societies, including fifteenth-century Tuscany, large extended households were a dimension of a kinship system that emphasized, especially among the wealthy, the relationships between father and sons and between brothers. Goldschmidt and Kunkel (1971) distinguished between patrilineal impartible inheritance, which is generally associated with stem families (coresidence of a married couple and their married offspring), and patrilineal partible inheritance, which is generally associated with joint families. The latter term describes well the general outlines of Tuscan kinship (Cohn 1996:8–15; Klapisch-Zuber 1985:56), especially among the wealthy and Florentines.

Klapisch-Zuber (1985:55–56) stressed the cultural importance of the patrilineal system, but noted the large gap between its ideals and households' practices. She argued that only a minority of households exhibited patrilineal characteristics. Demographic patterns may have made the implementation of patrilineal norms difficult. Men's late age at first marriage and the tendency of widowers to marry successively younger women created a large age gap between fathers and sons. This large age difference between father and sons, along with overall high mortality, may have created pressures toward matrilineal and lateral property devolution (Martin 1984), decreasing the frequency and importance of father-to-son inheritance, despite patrilineal norms. While wealthy Florentines may have been able to preserve their patrilines and patrimonies, rural inhabitants may have had considerably less success. Brown (1982:40) argued that partible inheritance in rural Pesciatine regions (in the Florentine district) fragmented the land. Males delayed marriage until they could combine a small inheritance at the time of their father's death with purchased or leased land. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, families increasingly attempted to, and succeeded in, keeping their patrimonies intact (Brown 1982:40–41).

Mazzi and Raveggi (1983:239–315) provide little evidence that rural inhabitants in the Florentine *contado* were able to use inheritance to preserve a patriline or a patrimony, or even to establish descendents in a consistent way. High mortality reduced the number of surviving heirs to the point of virtually extinguishing some patrilines (Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:253, 273). Minor children were the recipients of inheritances (Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:273, 305). Thus, even where high mortality meant that partibility did not further fragment holdings, it may have prevented the intergenerational accumulation of patrimonies.

The property acquired through inheritance was certainly not trivial, but it was not necessarily larger, nor more important, than what was obtained through purchase or lease. For example, Balestracci's (1984:43–101) analysis of the del Massarizia family from the region around Siena shows that some family members cultivated considerably more land obtained through lease and purchase than through inheritance, depending on their entrepreneurial skills. At least one purchase reconsolidated land that had been divided through inheritance (Balestracci 1984:77). In fact, inheritances were not always useful. Like some Florentines who repudiated their inheritances (Kuehn 1992), one rural inhabitant did not accept his inheritance, consisting primarily of debts (Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:307).

Rural elites may have had more success in maintaining their patrimonies. In Poppi, a town in the Casentino (which was annexed to the Florentine district in 1440), Benadusi (1995, 1996:128–133) argued that the elite were slow to abandon partible inheritance practices in favor of the impartible ones that

became widespread in Tuscany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Klapisch-Zuber 1985:20). Yet, because of relatively high mortality rates, endogenous marriage practices, and inheritance practices (including fideicommissum), patrimonies were retained or even reconsolidated, thus strengthening certain lineages (Benadusi 1996:119–131). The number of marriages was limited by placing some offspring in religious orders (Benadusi 1995:170). The rural elites of Poppi thus seemed to form an intermediate case between the inhabitants of Florence, on the one hand, and those of other rural regions and nonelites on the other, with respect to the conservation of the patrimony and marriage practices.

In summary, in fifteenth-century Tuscany, the system of patrilineal partible inheritance suggests that father-to-son inheritance should have been a key social event that preserved the patrimony among male descendents. Though the norm of conserving a patrimony may have been widespread, families were not necessarily able to implement patrilineal partible inheritance evenly, nor was it always central to social life. Wealthy rural elites and Florentines had more success in implementing these ideals than the poor or nonelite rural inhabitants. In some contexts, partible inheritance leads to nuclear families (and lower average age at marriage). In Tuscany, however, it did not necessarily have the same effect. Though some families divided their property equally, other heirs were required to hold the patrimony in common and often formed joint households (Klapisch-Zuber 1985:46). Moreover, high mortality reduced the number of surviving heirs. Thus, overall, the greater ability of Florentines and the wealthy to preserve their patrimonies within the patrilineal partible inheritance system allowed them to consolidate property. In contrast, poor smallholders were less likely to do so, and as a consequence, their landholding patterns were based on the circulation of property.

## Smallholding in the Val di Cecina

To examine the circulation of property, I use the *Catasto* of 1427 and notarial (legal) documents for two small rural communities, Castelnuovo di Val di Cecina and Montecatini di Val di Cecina (Emigh 2001:501–503, 2003*b*: 396–398). The *Catasto* of 1427, redacted between 1427 and 1430, is a set of fiscal documents used to assess taxes.[2] It is the most complete of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century fiscal documents used for assessing taxes, the *catasti* and *estimi*, and has been studied in the most detail (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber

[2] *Catasto* declarations represent fiscal households. It is generally assumed that all of the individuals listed in the same declaration physically lived together, though this was not necessarily true (Kent 1977:24–25).

1978, 1981, 1985). I took advantage of this *Catasto*'s relative comprehensiveness and capitalized on previous research by Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1981, 1985). I examined all the *Catasto* declarations, both the *Portate* (the original tax declarations submitted by households) and the *Campioni* (the official versions of the tax declarations, copied and revised from the *Portate* by the officials of the office of the *Catasto*), for all of the 144 households in these two towns.[3] I also searched comprehensively for all other documents at the Florentine State Archives about the residents of these towns. As is typical for most unremarkable, poor, rural towns such as these, there is relatively little documentation. There were, however, many notarial documents, especially for Castelnuovo. These legal documents were drawn up in Latin, by notaries, who were licensed by the commune and members of a guild. The notaries had to know Latin, but the documents were formulaic: the notaries were not composing Latin text, merely copying well-known legal terminology that could be found in the town's notarial formulas. Notarial documents gave legal effect to transactions and interactions, including sales of property, wills, deeds, dowry declarations, and marriages. Of course, neither notarial documents, nor *Catasto* declarations necessarily represent accurately the transactions.[4]

I matched the notarial documents to the *Catasto* declarations, making it possible to provide more information for the households than would have been possible with only the *Catasto* declarations. When I found multiple notarial documents for a household, I can analyze a set of transactions. Although these households with plentiful documentation were often the wealthier ones because they had the resources to buy or sell property, they were not unusual. All the residents of these towns were relatively poor, especially in contrast to wealthy Florentines. The methodological technique of matching *Catasto* declarations and notarial documents makes it possible to provide information about rural households, about which little is known.

Castelnuovo and Montecatini are located in the Florentine district, south of Volterra, in a region called the Val di Cecina. By the fifteenth century, this

[3] Thus, I did not sample. Community-wide information is essential for understanding tenurial systems. The time-consuming nature of documentary work makes it difficult to accumulate well-defined variables for a large number of cases. These difficulties are also apparent in Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's path-breaking work: although their data represent all of Tuscany, some of their variables are unusable because they were not recorded in enough detail. My strategy of thoroughly examining a few communities resolves some of the problems with Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's variables, but creates other ones. Strictly speaking, statistical inference cannot be used with these data because they do not form a sample. The small number of cases makes generalization difficult.

[4] Notarial documents were redacted in three stages. The notary first took notes, then rewrote the contract out in full. Finally, if one of the parties requested it, the notary could write a somewhat more official version of the document on parchment (Petrucci 1995:153). The documents discussed in the following sections come from each of these three stages.

region had been a part of the *contado* of Volterra for a long time. I chose these towns as typical examples of Tuscan smallholding. The Val di Cecina was some distance from Florence and was relatively unaffected by the penetration of its urban market. The notarial documents and *Catasto* declarations in the Val di Cecina rarely mention Florence or Florentines, in sharp contrast to declarations in regions of sharecropping where Florentines are frequently mentioned as landlords, creditors, and relatives (Emigh 1997*d*, 1999*b*). Both Volterra and its *contado* came under Florentine control in 1427, after the Florentines suppressed a small armed uprising in Volterra resulting from the introduction of the *Catasto*. The *Catasto* declarations indicate that most individuals were smallholders who worked their own plots of land (*Archivio del Catasto* [hereafter *AC* followed by the volume number] 241, fols. 1r–105r, 1035r–1224r; *AC* 272, fols. 17r–56v, 467r–554v). Many rural inhabitants also leased small plots of land from their neighbors, in fixed and share terms. A light plow was used to till the most common crops of grain, grapes, and olives. Property rights were secure. Unlike peasants elsewhere in late medieval Europe, rural Tuscans were not subject to feudal or customary fines and fees, limits on heritability, or prohibitions on marriage (Jones 1968:204–206; Wickham 1994:259). The same general patriarchal culture existed in these towns as in other regions of Tuscany. Property devolution included postmortem male inheritance and dowries for women.

The economies of these rural regions are well described by Polanyi's term ([1944] 1957:57–64) "local market." There were local markets for labor, land, capital, and commodities (cf. Szelényi and Kostello 1996:1087), but the economy as a whole was based on subsistence production, or in Polanyi's terms ([1944] 1957:53) "householding" or "reciprocity," which was the principal mechanism that integrated the economic system.[5] Markets were important, but not the basis of the economy as in capitalist economies. There was an active market in these towns for land and houses; the majority of notarial documents found for Castelnuovo record sales of them (e.g., *Notarile antecosimiano* [hereafter *NA* followed by the volume number] 11269). Neighbors and relatives often bought and sold land among themselves. Plots of land were small and inexpensive.

Local markets for labor and commodities were also common, but evidence for them is thin because these transactions were rarely documented. Labor contracts were frequently oral and often not recorded in notarial documents.

[5] In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi ([1944] 1957:43–55) seemed to suggest that householding was different from reciprocity, but in the essay "The Economy as Instituted Process" (Polanyi 1957), a later work, householding seems to have been subsumed under the category of reciprocity. In the later work, he may have recognized that householding can be treated as a form of reciprocity.

For example, though *Catasto* declarations from these towns indicate that fixed-term and share-term leasing (both labor contracts) were common, leases are rarely found in the extant notarial documents for these towns. One exception is a document for a form of rental contract called *terratico* (*Diplomatico*, Strozziane Galletti, December 6, 1421), commonly found in the Val di Cecina. Wage labor is even more difficult to document because it was not generally recorded even in *Catasto* declarations. Taxes were assessed the same way for land worked by family members and by wage laborers, so the two types of labor are not recorded separately. Wage labor, however, was frequently used in the Tuscan countryside.[6] In Castelnuovo, for example, Iacopo di Francesco declared that he owed a salary ("*salaro*") to several workers (*AC* 272, fol. 56r). It is even more difficult for evidentiary reasons to document local markets for commodities, though they were also common in rural towns.[7] There is some indirect evidence for them. In virtually all the *Catasto* declarations for these towns, there are lists of debts and credits to different individuals, sometimes for grain and sometimes in monetary amounts. Although many of these debts and credits were loans, some recorded sales arranged on credit because the declarations of shopkeepers and artisans always have long lists of credits of money or grain owed to them for their goods or services (e.g., *AC* 272, fols. 483r–484v, 518r–519; see pp. 87–88 for more examples).[8] Some declarations indicate that the households had cash (e.g., *AC* 272, fol. 525v).

The Val di Cecina had the same general demographic characteristics as the rest of Tuscany, including a large age gap between spouses and relatively high rates of household extension. Data from the *Catasto* of 1427 from the Florentine rural district, of which the Val di Cecina was a part, show that about 43 percent of women were married between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. In contrast, only about 3 percent of men between those ages were married. The percent married remained high for women throughout their thirties and forties and then gradually declined. For men, the percent married rose more slowly, reaching 90 percent between the ages of forty-five and fifty-five (Emigh 2003*b*:397–398). Though the majority of households were nuclear (42.78 percent), substantial proportions of households were extended. Nuclear extended

[6] See *AC* 270, fols. 26r and 31r, for examples of the use of wage labor in Montecatini di Valdinievole, another town in the Florentine district.

[7] For example, personal correspondence of the Medici mentions grain sold in the Mugello (*Mediceo avanti il Principato* [hereafter *MAP,* followed by the *filza* number] VIII, no. 36) and more specifically at Scarperia (*MAP* XX, no. 74). For a list of rural markets in the 1300s, see de La Roncière (2005:138–139).

[8] Credits were commonly used in other Tuscan businesses (Marshall 1999:21, 71–88) and elsewhere in early modern Europe (McCants 2007:224). In Florence, credits could be traded (Goldthwaite 1991:650–651). Trading credits was probably common in rural areas as well.

families (with a married couple and one of their parents) comprised 21.61 percent of the population; vertically extended households (a married couple and their married offspring), 16.68 percent; and joint households, 16.77 percent. A small number of households were solitaries (2.15 percent) (Emigh 1997*a*:625).

Mortality was high, so orphanhood was common. When offspring were fifteen years old, the probability of their mother having died was nearly 20 percent and the probability of their father having died was over 30 percent. The probabilities of orphanhood rose gradually until about age seventy, when nearly all parents were dead. At all ages, the probability of the father having died was higher than the probability of the mother having died, reflecting the relatively large age differences between husbands and wives (Emigh 2003*b*:398–399).

Given the average male age at marriage and the orphanhood rates, fathers on average died around the time of their son's marriage. Nearly 60 percent of men between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine were married, while more than half of fathers were dead when their offspring were aged twenty-five. By the time their offspring reached age thirty, more than 60 percent of fathers had died. Thus, the overlap between men's marriages and their fathers' lifespan was relatively short because on average males inherited their fathers' property near the time of their marriages (Emigh 2003*b*:400). Because mortality was high and orphanhood common, protracted waits by offspring for parents to relinquish their inheritance or go into retirement as elsewhere in Europe (e.g., Berkner 1972, 1976) must have been rare.

### *Property Devolution*

The following examples illustrate how property devolution was intertwined with local markets (Emigh 2003*b*). High mortality made property devolution through inheritance, as well as claims to restore dowries, relatively unpredictable. Though many sons married and received their inheritances around the time of their father's death, other events, including orphanhood, the absence of a male heir, and transfers of inheritances or legacies at some point in the life course other than marriage, were common. Smallholders' access to local markets compensated for the unreliability of inheritance. Local markets also facilitated smallholders' property devolution by allowing them to arrange dowries and to rearrange landholdings, often acquired through inheritance. Local markets and property devolution mutually reinforced the circulation of property.

The testaments in the Val di Cecina reflect the context of patrilineal partible inheritance. For example, Antonio di Pagolo di Giovanni, who lived in Castelnuovo (Emigh 2003*b*:407–408), divided his inheritance equally among his heirs. His *Catasto* declaration indicated that he was seventy-one and that

he lived with his wife, Agnola, who was fifty-five (*AC* 272, fols. 529r–530r). His estimated taxable wealth placed him in the wealthiest quarter of the households in Castelnuovo (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). In 1436, he would have been nearly eighty years old when he made a will (*NA* 3865, fols. 22v–23r). He designated his daughters, Apollonia and Mea, to be heirs and promised them equal portions. Antonio's will promised his daughters a larger share of the estate than they would have received if he had died intestate (because distant male heirs were legally entitled to much of the property; Kuehn 1991:239). Similarly, Girolamo di Piero Giannini apparently had no surviving male heirs and designated his daughter, Veronica, and his grandnephew, Cecco di ser Antonio, to be his heirs in 1427 (*NA* 11270, fols. 32v–33r; Emigh 2003*b*: 402, 405). Again, this will promised a larger share of the patrimony to Veronica than she would have received if Girolamo had died intestate. It is surprising that Girolamo left property to Cecco, since he had lived in a monastery under the name of Brother ("*fra*") Mario since 1425 (*NA* 11273, no foliation [hereafter n.f.], April 4, 1425). In these examples, fathers followed the cultural practices of partibility, but directed property toward female heirs.

Nello di Giovanni Baracchini, another inhabitant of Castelnuovo, divided his patrimony differently, between his son and grandson (Emigh 2003*b*: 401–404). His *Catasto* declaration indicated that he was seventy and that he lived with his wife, Francesca, aged fifty. They also lived with Nello's son, Stefano, aged thirty; Stefano's wife, Ubera, aged twenty-five; and Stefano's three children, Bartolomeo, eleven; Agostino, three; and Cesaria, one (*AC* 272, fols. 508r–509v). Nello was a wealthy man in local terms; of the eighty-one households in Castelnuovo, only five were assessed a higher taxable fortune (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). A few years before the redaction of the *Catasto*, when he was about sixty-six years old, he made a will (*NA* 11269, n.f., March 27, 1425). He declared his son, Stefano, to be heir. He promised his grandson, Bartolomeo, a house and four pieces of land declared to be worth 198 lire in the *Catasto*. Stefano's portion of the estate would have been property and animals valued at about 439 lire in the *Catasto*. If Stefano restored his mother's dowry valued at 200 lire in cash, he would have been left with 239 lire, slightly more than his oldest son's share. Stefano undoubtedly managed his son's property and probably managed the share that represented his mother's dowry, and he benefited from this income. By promising property to Stefano and Bartolomeo, however, Nello divided his property, though he was not legally obliged to do so. Despite the many ambiguities of this family's situation (Emigh 2003*b*:402–405), it seems that Nello used the will to increase the amount of property received by his grandson. Thus, unlike the other cases discussed previously, Nello seems to have used preferentially partible inheritance to direct property to his male heirs to help preserve his patrimony intact

in the long term (though he divided the property in the short term). Perhaps, as a local elite, he was more likely to adopt inheritance practices similar to those practiced by rural elites in other locations or by Florentines (Benadusi 1995, 1996:128–133; Cohn 1992:197). This family's behavior may have been similar to Florentines and other rural elites in another respect: Nello's brother, Piero, had a daughter, Iacopa, married to Girolamo di Piero Giannini. This marriage alliance linked two prominent families in Castelnuovo (cf. Benadusi 1995, 1996:128–133; Molho 1994*b*:9, 171–178, 344–345).

High mortality reduced the possibility that inheritance could be used reliably to establish a family because it often was received at a point in time distant from marriage. Though on average, male age at marriage and age at father's death corresponded, in many other cases, they did not. For example, orphanhood was common and required that the orphan's inheritance be held in trust. The Giannini family also was involved in a complicated set of transactions to restore a dowry, for which a pair of orphans was responsible. Girolamo was the great uncle of Lisabetta and Albiera di Michele, who are listed as orphans of twelve and ten, respectively, in the *Catasto* (*AC* 272, fols. 554r–v; Emigh 2003*b*:402, 406). Their declaration states that they formed an independent household, though it is unlikely that they lived alone. Lisabetta and Albiera were responsible for the restoration of the dowry of their aunt, but were unable (or perhaps unwilling) to pay, and other arrangements had to be made for its payment (*NA* 11273, n.f., April 4, 1425). The assessed value of their taxable assets placed the orphans in the wealthiest quarter of the town's population (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). Their *Catasto* lists a few small pieces of unworked property, but the bulk of their assets were credits, perhaps left over from loans their father Michele di Cecco made or outstanding debts from a shop. The loans may have been made as investments for them. Their legal guardian ("*tutor*"), Girolamo di Piero Giannini, who died in 1428 or 1429, sold a piece of land for them in 1426 (*NA* 11155, fol. 20r), and he probably managed their other accounts. Lisabetta and Albiera were plausibly the only surviving heirs of their father. If so, they provide another example of a family with no surviving male heirs. Another set of orphans in Castelnuovo, Tomme and Andrea di Antonio di Nello di Lippo were a boy, aged nine, and a girl, Tomme's sister ("*sua sirocchia*"), aged seven, respectively, in the *Catasto* of 1427 (*AC* 272, fols. 547v–548v; Emigh 2003*b*:406–407). They lived close to their uncle, Bartolomeo di Nello di Lippo (perhaps even in the same house; *AC* 272, fols. 548v–549v), and presumably they were their father's heirs. Most of their own property was leased to others. Although they were not wealthy, they were not destitute: about one-third of the inhabitants of Castelnuovo had a smaller taxable income than they did (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). It is likely that their uncle managed their property for them. These examples illustrate

how mortality created a discontinuous transmission of property and how restoring a dowry could make claims on property.

In other cases, inheritances were received much later in life; while extra income was undoubtedly welcome, it did little to provide for marriage or the establishment of a family. Antonio di Chele di Neri was another smallholder living in Castelnuovo (*AC* 272, fols. 470r–471r; Emigh 2003*b*:408). His *Catasto* declaration lists twelve holdings and declares his age to be fifty and the age of his wife, Lucia, to be sixty. He also leased land from a neighbor, Piero di Giusto (*AC* 241, fols. 1039r–1040r; *AC* 272, fol. 553r). On May 31, 1425, arbitrators determined what to do with a legacy left to him and his wife by his wife's son, Giovanni di Iacopo (*NA* 11269, n.f., April 2, 1425; *NA* 11269, n.f., May 31, 1425). Giovanni had promised the legacy to them in a previously redacted testament. The amount of the legacy was determined by arbitrators, and they received two credits in the sum of 20 florins that had been owed to Giovanni. The credit of 20 florins could have represented a sizable proportion of their taxable wealth. According to their *Catasto* declaration, their total taxable wealth was 77 florins and 16 soldi, which was more than the average taxable wealth of smallholders in Castelnuovo of 74.7 florins (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). Also involved in this dispute were two other smallholders living in Castelnuovo, who were also relatives of Giovanni di Iacopo and may have had a claim to Antonio's assets. The arbitration over this legacy provides an example of parents who outlived their offspring. While the legacy may have proved to be useful economically, the timing of the transfer was not predictable, nor could it have facilitated their marriage. Overall, high mortality increased the unpredictability of inheritance and decreased its usefulness in establishing marriage or a family. It also increased the likelihood of a discontinuous transfer of property between the generations and increased the likelihood of female heirs, both of which made it more difficult to preserve a patriline. Thus, inheritance was undoubtedly useful whenever it occurred, but it was not continuous or reliable.

Dowries could be received considerably after the time of the marriage. On January 13, 1434, Niccolaio di Salvadore di Cerbone received 15 florins for the dowry of his wife, Francesca (*NA* 10054, fol. 109r). Niccolaio and Francesca lived in the household of Niccolaio's father, Salvadore, and Francesca's dowry must have represented a sizable addition to the household's assets. The declared taxable value of Salvadore's assets of 101 florins and 12 soldi placed their household just short of the wealthiest third of households in Castelnuovo (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). In Salvadore's *Catasto* declaration, Niccolaio's age is given as forty-four years, and Francesca's age is given as twenty-six (*AC* 272, fol. 500r). Two children of Niccolaio also are listed in this *Catasto* declaration, a son aged five and a daughter aged one. If Niccolaio and Francesca were

married before the birth of their oldest child, possibly sometime in 1423, Niccolaio would have received the 15 florins for Francesca's dowry about ten years after their marriage, when Francesca was about thirty-one years old.

In the Val di Cecina, preserving a patrimony intact was not particularly important. Pieces of land were small and could be bought and sold easily. Land sales could recombine land divided by inheritance. In a series of transactions, Pietro di Nanni Guidini[9] sold land and houses to other residents of Castelnuovo (*NA* 11269, n.f., August 21, 1427; *NA* 11269, n.f., September 11, 1427; *NA* 11269, n.f., October 26, 1427; *NA* 11269, n.f., October 29, 1427; *NA* 11269, n.f., January 3, 1427/8). In one transaction, Pietro sold half of a piece of land, which he held in common ("*pro indiviso*") with his sister, Cristena (*NA* 11269, n.f., September 21, 1427).[10] He sold this property to Simone di Iacopo Ciani, a smallholder in Castelnuovo, for 20 lire (*AC* 272, fols. 512v–513r). In turn, Simone sold the property to Cristena for 16 lire (*NA* 11269, n.f., September 24, 1427). Although the document does not explicitly say so, this transaction consolidated the ownership rights to the property originally held jointly by the siblings, Pietro and Cristena, in Cristena's name. The property may have been part of their inheritance—the notarial document indicates that Pietro and Cristena's father was deceased at the time of the transaction. If so, it consolidated the patrimony in the hands of the female, not the male heir.[11]

A similar transaction occurred in Montecatini. Nella and her son, Lazzaro, sold their half of a house and some pieces of land, which they held in common with Margherita, Nella's daughter, to Margherita's husband, Biagio di Chele, and to Biagio's brother, Neri di Chele (*AC* 272, fols. 22r–23v; *NA* 10054, fols. 74v–75v, 77r–v). This transaction apparently consolidated the rights to this property within the joint household of Biagio di Chele and Neri di Chele, even if it did not give the property rights to a single person. Nella probably had little interest in retaining property in Montecatini. She lived with her husband, Andrea d'Allegro, who was from the commune of Orciatico, in the former *contado* of Pisa (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981).

Fathers, such as Francesco di Nuccino, used local markets to dower their daughters. Francesco's declared taxable assets of 57 florins and 7 soldi was about average for Castelnuovo (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). On June 10, 1425, Antonio di Michele di Fede married Francesco's daughter, Barbara

[9] He was originally from Castelnuovo, but must have moved or died, because I was unable to locate his *Catasto* declaration among the documents for this town.

[10] She is called Cristofana in the *Catasto* (*AC* 272, fol. 549v).

[11] What is less clear, however, is why Simone di Iacopo was an intermediary in this transaction and why he seems to have incurred a net loss of 4 lire. Perhaps he owed money to Pietro di Nanni, and the debt was canceled during the transaction.

(*NA* 11269, n.f.). On the same day, Apollonia, Barbara's sister, married Giovanni di Taviano di Piero of Castelnuovo. The amount and composition of her dowry was to be decided by arbitrators (*NA* 11269, n.f.). On November 2, 1426, Francesco borrowed 42 lire[12] from an individual from Siena, whom he promised to repay within a year (*NA* 3863, n.f.). The debt was not listed in his *Catasto*; apparently he successfully repaid it (*AC* 272, fols. 475v–476r). His *Catasto*, however, lists a 10-florin debt to Giovanni di Tavanecchio from Castelnuovo for the remainder of a dowry. On December 19, Francesco made two transactions. He traded houses with Pietro di Corso and received 8 florins (*NA* 3863, n.f.). Then, he sold this exchanged house to Giovanni di Simone Righetti for 52 florins (*NA* 3863, n.f.). Antonio received the dowry of 100 lire on December 19, 1426 (*NA* 3863, n.f.). The house was apparently sold to provide money for the dowry. Francesco may have borrowed money for the dowry of Barbara or Apollonia—he either borrowed 82 lire (42 lire from the person from Siena and 40 lire from Giovanni) or only 42 lire and refinanced most of this amount after the first debt came due. Since Francesco listed a house in the *Catasto*, he apparently sold a second house; perhaps this was preferable to selling income-producing property. Thus, although some of the details are unknown, it is clear that Francesco made several transactions, including trading and selling property and borrowing money, to provide for his daughters' dowries.

On December 3, 1426, after Francesco contracted the debt, but before Antonio received the money, Antonio purchased a house in Castelnuovo for 72 florins. He purchased the house from two brothers and their cousins living in Volterra, who apparently sold the house in Castelnuovo to restore the dowry of their father's widow (either their mother or stepmother) (*NA* 12847, n.f.). On December 6, 1426, Antonio and his mother, Bartolomea, sold two houses in Castelnuovo for a total price of 232 lire (*NA* 3863, n.f.). They apparently sold one house to purchase another one. The house that they purchased had a higher value than the one they sold and may have been larger to accommodate more family members. On October 29, 1427, Antonio bought a piece of land with chestnut trees in Castelnuovo for 14 lire (*NA* 11269, n.f.).[13] He probably used Barbara's dowry to make these purchases.

A similar example comes from Montecatini. The *Catasto* gives the age of Giovanni di Guido as seventy-nine years and that of his wife, Tessa, as sixty (*AC* 272, fols. 21r–22r). Giovanni's son, Guido, lived in Montecatini and worked some of his land (*AC* 241, fol. 28r; *AC* 272, fol. 21r). On October 10,

[12] This is the amount listed in the notarial document. Francesco probably received less than 42 lire, thereby incorporating interest into the loan.

[13] He declared the value of the property to be 10 lire in his *Catasto*.

1427, Tessa's parents left her household goods, farm implements, pigs, wine, cloth, and chestnuts, valued at 80 lire, to be added to her dowry. On May 9, 1428, Giovanni purchased two pieces of land for 32 lire. The seller was from another town; presumably he sold land in Montecatini that was inconvenient for him to work (*NA* 10054, fols. 72v–73r). These examples demonstrate how husbands purchased property with their wives' dowries.

Newly established households were not necessarily dependent upon receiving a patrimony. They often had use of the wife's dowry, or they could lease land from their neighbors until they could purchase land. For example, on June 12, 1428, Michele di Michele received the dowry of his wife, Maria, which was a piece of property in Montecatini valued at 40 lire, from her father, Antonio di Petri (*NA* 11273, n.f.). Both Michele and Antonio were smallholders living in Montecatini (*AC* 241, fol. 29r; *AC* 272, fol. 32r). The piece of land given as Maria's dowry is the only piece of real property listed in Michele's *Catasto* of 1427 (valued at 20 lire). In contrast to Florentines, who usually gave cash dowries, these smallholders gave land, as well as cash, for dowries (for other examples, see Emigh 2003*b*:403, 405, 2002:676).

Partible property devolution, including partible inheritance and dowries, were normative in these towns. Testators showed relatively little inclination to preserve the patrimony intact and often left inheritances to direct female, rather than more distant male, heirs. High mortality rates assured that many families had no surviving sons, and they had to designate other heirs. Orphanhood was relatively common; it also created discontinuous transfers of property between generations. The timing of the receipt of the inheritance was unpredictable, so it did not always facilitate marriage or the provisioning of a family. The unanticipated restitution of a dowry could make unexpected demands on familial resources and inheritances. Thus, even if patrilineal inheritance was normative and reinforced by law, families frequently departed from it.

Given the high mortality rates and the flexibility of partible inheritance practices, age at marriage and household structure were not tightly linked to the receipt of the inheritance at the father's death as in other regions of Europe (Emigh 1997*a*, 1997*b*, 1998*a*; for a review of European patterns, see Emigh 1997*a*:613–618). Nor did smallholding create patterns of marriage or household structure that were distinct from those in Tuscan regions of sharecropping (partible and impartible land tenure can have effects similar to those of partible and impartible inheritance). Though stem families are often unusual in regions of partible inheritance, they were prevalent in the Val di Cecina, constituting nearly 17 percent of all households, about the same percentage as joint families (Emigh 1997*a*:625). The variety of household structures also decreased reliance on intergenerational property devolution (Emigh 1997*a*: 631–632).

Although the residents of Montecatini and Castelnuovo di Val di Cecina benefited from inheritance, they were not necessarily reliant upon it. Families also used local markets to arrange their affairs. Partible inheritance and dowries, high mortality, and the rural economy of the Val di Cecina were mutually reinforcing and assured that property frequently changed owners. Because land was fragmented by partible inheritance and dowries, buying, selling, and leasing land was both useful and necessary. The receipt of a dowry or a legacy often prompted the recipient to purchase land. The active land market meant that inheritance and dowries were not the only mechanisms for obtaining real property. As in other contexts where partible inheritance was practiced (cf. Levi 1988; Sabean 1990; Smith 1998:357–358; Whittle 2000: 118–119), neither households' economic survival nor the rural economy depended upon the preservation of large pieces of property. Instead, they relied on the circulation of many small pieces of property.

Interestingly, none of the preceding examples deal with the equal division of property among sons, which could have been the most common practice in the context of patrilineal partible inheritance (Goldschmidt and Kunkel 1971; Wheaton 1975:625–626). Of course, it is impossible to determine the exact proportion of different types of property devolution from the few notarial documents that survived. It is possible that few notarial documents recorded the transfer of property between fathers and sons because this type of property devolution was unproblematic and thus, did not require documentation. Since Cohn (1992, 1996), however, found numerous testaments naming male heirs, it is also possible that the absence of notarial documents specifying father-to-son inheritance is additional evidence that the residents of the Val di Cecina diverged from patrilineal practices more often than those of Florentines and other Tuscans. This interpretation is also plausible because the strength of the patrilineal system varied regionally (Benadusi 1995, 1996; Cohn 1992, 1996) and because the other evidence from Castelnuovo and Montecatini suggests that the patrilineal system was weak as a consequence of high mortality and local markets for land and labor that reinforced the circulation of property.

### *Agricultural Production with Family Labor and Local Markets*

These local markets were also linked with agricultural production (Emigh 2001). Smallholding was based on subsistence production, and households often used family labor to work their plots of land. Families matched the amount of land under cultivation to the size of the family labor force and the consumption needs of the family. However, the widespread presence of local markets for commodities, land, and labor meant that households did not have

to rely entirely on family labor. The enterprising could profit through these markets. To illustrate these possibilities, I use Chayanov's dependency ratio.

Chayanov (1966:5–6) argued that farms using family labor did not follow the same principles as capitalist farms. Owners of capitalist farms were motivated by profit. However, on peasant farms, households tried to assure their family members' survival and to avoid drudgery. Thus, Chayanov proposed that workers, generally able-bodied adults, in households with a high dependency ratio (the number of consumers divided by the number of workers; Chayanov 1966:78–79; Donham 1981:517; Sahlins 1972:101–130) must work longer and produce greater output to provide for household members than workers in households with a low dependency ratio. Chayanov (1966:78–79) showed that the dependency ratio was related to several measures of labor intensity, including the area of cultivated land, the number of days worked per year, and agricultural output per worker. These measures are not always available (Donham 1981:521–524; Sahlins 1972:101–130), as in fifteenth-century Tuscany. I used agricultural output per worker to measure labor intensity, following Chayanov (1966:78–79) and Sahlins (1972:119).

Chayanov's dependency ratio helps to evaluate whether families adjusted agricultural output—through the amount of land under cultivation and family members' labor intensity—to the families' size and consumption needs. Families with high dependency ratios and high outputs, as well as families with low dependency ratios and low outputs, were matching family size to agricultural production, as predicted by Chayanov. Local markets, however, created possibilities for families with extensive holdings, a large adult labor force, and relatively small consumption needs to create surplus, even in relatively uncommercialized regions. These families would have low dependency ratios and high output; they would not exhibit the pattern predicted by Chayanov. Thus, I use Chayanov's dependency ratio to assess whether families were engaging in subsistence production or surplus accumulation.

To approximate total household output, I used the *Catasto* of 1427 (Emigh 2001:503–505). Because taxation was partially based on the number of household members and the capitalized income from assets, the *Catasto* contains a relatively complete list of household members, household assets, and the yields (lists of agricultural products) when smallholders worked their own land or the income (rent in share or fixed terms, in money or kind) when smallholders leased land to others. Chayanov (1966:111, 133) noted that where leasing was possible, some households leased more land when the number of consumers increased. Thus, whenever possible, I matched the piece of leased land listed in the *Catasto* declaration of the lessor to the household of the lessee. This matching process was possible because the description of the piece of land in the lessor's declaration usually included the name of the lessee.

Thus, in the following analyses, a household's total output includes the output from the property that family members owned and worked themselves, as well as the output from any leased land that was worked by members of the household that I matched to the household. The value of total output represents the monetary value of the yield in soldi for all plots of land, using the standard prices that the *Catasto* officials assigned to crops in this region, which I coded directly from the *Catasto* declarations.[14]

I used Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data to create the dependency ratio. I coded adult males between the ages of fifteen and fifty as 1 worker and females between these ages as .5 of a worker. Although women were invaluable to agricultural households and often helped in the fields, subsistence needs were met, to a large extent, by grain production, for which men were primarily responsible (Emigh 2000*b*). I coded children below fifteen as .5 of a consumer, adults males between fifteen and fifty as 1 consumer, and women above fifteen and men above fifty as .8 of a consumer. With these operationalizations, the coefficient of the correlation between output and the dependency ratio was .458[15] for 100 cases.[16] This moderately strong correlation suggests that many households were following Chayanovian household strategies, that is, allocating labor on the basis of a tradeoff between the provision of household members and the drudgery of labor. To illustrate, I compare the average household output for these two towns of 431 soldi, the

[14] Tuscans tended to underreport output slightly to try to lower their tax assessments. In these analyses, however, the absolute value of total output is unimportant because only the correlation between output and the dependency ratio is needed to examine Chayanov's theory. Furthermore, landlords' and tenants' *Catasto* declarations frequently matched, suggesting that they provide reasonably consistent information (Emigh 1996, 2002).

[15] The p-value was .000. Of course, strictly speaking, tests of significance are merely advisory when the data form a population and not a sample. The value of the correlation coefficient depended on how workers and consumers were defined and, in particular, how narrowly workers were defined. With narrower definitions, for example, defining workers as only adult males between the ages of twenty and fifty, the correlation was stronger than the one reported here. When workers were defined more broadly, the correlation weakened. The operationalization of workers used here provided an intermediate value between these extremes (see Emigh 2001:505 for details). A different operationalization of the workforce is used in Chapter 7, pp. 169–170, where it is not a component of the dependency ratio, and therefore, the results are not so sensitive to the cut-off values used for the ages.

[16] Since leased land was not an asset of lessees, households were not required to record it in their *Catasto* declarations. As described previously, it was often possible to match leased land to the lessee. Total output, however, is underestimated for households with rented property that I was unable to match. I excluded households from the analysis when it was clear that output from rented property was missing; nevertheless, there were undoubtedly other households of lessees for whom there was simply no extant documentary evidence of rented property. If the omission of rented property was associated with a high dependency ratio, then the preceding analysis may understate the relation between total household output per worker and the dependency ratio.

average output per worker of 336 soldi, and the average dependency ratio of 2.52 to the values of these variables in selected households.

Some households followed Chayanovian strategies. Commucio di Guelfo was a smallholder and a resident of Montecatini (*AC* 241, fols. 6r–v). He owned nineteen pieces of land, which he and members of his household worked themselves. His household consisted of himself, age seventy, his wife, age fifty-eight, his married son, age thirty, his son's wife, age twenty, as well as four of his son's daughters, all under the age of fifteen. Thus, his household had a considerable number of dependents and relatively few adult workers. As Chayanov would have predicted, the members of this household worked hard to provide for their family. The total output of the household was over 1,200 soldi, considerably above the average output per household, despite the small number of adult workers. Similarly, Michele di Goro was a resident of Castelnuovo (*AC* 272, fols. 513v–514r). His household consisted of himself, age seventy-five, his wife, age sixty, and their son, age twenty-six. Unlike the household of Commucio di Guelfo, Michele and his family did not own much land. Michele listed only three cultivated pieces of land that the household worked. They also rented a piece of land from a widow who lived in Castelnuovo. Their total output of 460 soldi was just above the average household output for these towns, and their dependency ratio and their output per worker were also above average. Though they had access to relatively little land, they must have worked it intensively. The possibility of renting land also allowed them to increase their output.

Households with plentiful adult workers and few dependents also followed Chayanovian strategies if they had relatively low output per worker. For example, Marchionne d'Antonio, age thirty, his wife, age twenty-two, and their daughter, age two, were smallholders in Castelnuovo (*AC* 272, fols. 521v–523r). They owned more than twenty pieces of land. Nevertheless, their total household output of 215 soldi was below the average output of households in these two towns, and their dependency ratio and their output per worker were below average. Similarly, Niccolaio di Nieri, a resident of Montecatini, owned nineteen pieces of land (*AC* 272, fols. 32v–34v). His household consisted of himself, age forty; his brother, age thirty-five; their two wives, age thirty and twenty, respectively; and three minor children. Although they had several dependents, they also had a relatively large labor force. Their dependency ratio and output per worker were relatively low. Despite their extensive landholdings, their total household output was only 425 soldi, just below the average household output for these two towns. These households were engaging primarily in subsistence agriculture.

Although numerous households followed Chayanovian practices of increasing labor intensity when there were few adult workers and many dependents, other households did not. Most of the latter were using local markets

either to avoid labor intensification or to accumulate surplus. These households either had a high dependency ratio and a low output or a low dependency ratio and a high output. The household of Dino di Puccino, a smallholder living in Montecatini (*AC* 272, fols. 17r–v), provides an example of a household with a high dependency ratio and a low output. His *Catasto* declaration gives his age as forty. His household consisted of himself and six minor children. Though the household's dependency ratio was high, their output per worker was low. The value of total output for this household was only 70 soldi, considerably below the average household output. Some of Dino's property, however, was leased and thus, provided his family with rental income. Similarly, Martino di Chellino was a smallholder in Castelnuovo and owned about a dozen pieces of land, about half of which were leased (*AC* 272, fols. 494r–495v). He was forty years old and lived with his wife, age thirty, and their five minor children. Although the dependency ratio was above average, household output per worker was below average. While other households rented property to gain access to land to provide for dependents as Chayanov predicted, these households followed the opposite strategy. These families did not intensify their labor effort; instead, they leased their own land to other families and used the rental income to provide for their dependents.

Households with a low dependency ratio and a high agricultural output also did not follow Chayanovian strategies. Antonio di Domenico Cambiuzzi was a smallholder in Castelnuovo and owned sixteen pieces of land (*AC* 272, fols. 495v–496v). He and his family worked most of these properties themselves, and they also rented several pieces of land from another resident of Castelnuovo. Their total output was valued at nearly 2,000 soldi, considerably above the average output. His household consisted of himself, age forty-six; his wife, age thirty-six; two adult sons, ages twenty and eighteen; five minor children under the age of fifteen; and an elderly female relative, age seventy. Although his dependency ratio was below the average, his output per worker was relatively high. This household, contrary to Chayanov's theory, rented land even when they had a relatively low dependency ratio. The household of Giovanni di Simone Righetti provides a similar example (*AC* 272, fols. 485v–486v).

Other households of smallholders, most of whom worked their property, had an above-average output per worker and a below-average dependency ratio (Emigh 2001:507). Local markets for commodities in these towns meant that inhabitants could sell agricultural output that their household members did not need. Surplus could be invested in land relatively easily because small plots of land were bought and sold frequently. The household of Bartolomeo di Pagolo and his brothers (*AC* 272, fols. 523v–524v), for example, had a total output valued at 1,906 soldi, which was considerably higher than the average output for households in Castelnuovo and Montecatini, and an above-average output per

worker, though their dependency ratio was below average. Several notarial documents record Bartolomeo and his brothers' purchase of land a few years before the redaction of the *Catasto* (*NA* 3863, n.f., December 29, 1426; *NA* 11269, n.f., October 21, 1427). Local markets for land, commodities, and labor provided families with opportunities for profit and the accumulation of property and surplus, creating some incentives for individuals to work hard and produce high output even after subsistence needs had been met. Though Chayanov argued that the use of wage labor on capitalist farms severs the link between the provision of household needs and the avoidance of drudgery, local markets had the same effect on some households in these towns.

Chayanov's perspective is used as an alternative to neoclassical economics. It suggests that peasants do not respond to incentives for profit because family provisioning, not profit maximization, is paramount. My analyses illustrate that there is an overall correlation between labor intensification and household provisioning; that is, these smallholders often intensified their labor effort when there were few adults and many dependents, as Chayanov suggested. Local markets helped: smallholders could lease additional land if they did not own it and could work this land with their own family labor. Thus, many families were matching the amount of land under cultivation to family size, either by adjusting output or leasing land. Agricultural production was primarily oriented to subsistence. However, labor intensification was not the only possibility. If families owned land, they could lease out their land to other families and use the rental income to provide for their dependents. Even in these relatively uncommercialized regions, local markets created multiple ways for families to provide for their members, sometimes in combination with labor intensification. Local markets provided a further opportunity: families could sell agricultural output they did not need for their own consumption. Thus, some families engaged in surplus accumulation. These markets were intrinsically linked with family practices and agricultural production.

## *The Uses of Numeracy*

Smallholders' agricultural production and the circulation of property intersected with cultural practices in another way, to create widespread use of recording systems. Numeracy and literacy were widespread in rural Tuscany, even though rates were higher in urban regions (Balestracci 1984:18; Emigh 2002:664–666; Petrucci 1995:67–68). In the countryside, legal contracts were common, assuring that many inhabitants were familiar with written formats (Balestracci 1984:23–24). In the late medieval and early modern periods, there were schools in rural, as well as urban, regions (Balestracci 1984:22; Conti 1966:85; Petrucci 1995:74).

Numeracy was intrinsic to everyday life in Montecatini and Castelnuovo because it was linked to local markets for land in multiple ways (Emigh 2002). First, as discussed previously, there was an active land market, and sales of houses and land were common. Rural inhabitants purchased and sold property for many reasons: to consolidate holdings dispersed by partible inheritance, to invest extra income or the proceeds from a legacy or inheritance, to arrange for dowries, to repay debts, or to dispose of unwanted properties. Participation in economic activities necessitated these transactions, which required that individuals be numerate. They had to know the value and size of their property, which were recorded in the notarial documents and *Catasto* declarations, to engage in these transactions.

Second, numeracy was evident in testaments of individuals from Castelnuovo. Testators often specified the monetary amounts left as small legacies to religious institutions,[17] relatives, or neighbors (*NA* 3865, fols. 22v–23r; *NA* 11269, n.f., March 27, 1425; *NA* 11270, fols. 32v–33r).[18] These testaments were written by professional notaries, so the testators were not necessarily literate, but they had to be numerate to specify the amounts of their legacies and to give accounts of their property and its value.

Third, dowries were another aspect of social and economic life that necessitated numeracy. The content and value of the goods, property, or cash that constituted the dowry was usually given in three sets of transactions: dowry receipts, testaments, and dowry restitutions (e.g., *NA* 3863, n.f., September 23, 1426, n.f., December 19, 1426; *NA* 3865, fols. 22v–23r; *NA* 11269, n.f., March 27, 1425; *NA* 11270, fols. 46r–47r). It is plausible that women's property was recorded more precisely than men's because careful documentation would be required if the dowry had to be restored by heirs remote from the original transaction (e.g., *NA* 11155, fols. 20r–v; *NA* 11269, n.f., August 1, 1427; *NA* 11273, n.f., April 4, 1425).

Fourth, most rural inhabitants recorded debts in their *Catasto* declarations. Some individuals were deeply indebted to money lenders or landlords, but others simply owed a small amount to a local shopkeeper or neighbor (e.g., *AC* 272, fols. 477v–478r, 482r–483r, 484v–485r, 487v–488v, 519v–521v). Business transactions must have been conducted, at least to a large extent, on

[17] See Banker (1988:130–132), Cohn (1992), and Henderson ([1994] 1997) for discussions of Tuscan charitable bequests. They were often detailed numerically, for example, specifying exact monetary amounts and numbers of masses, prayers, candles, and priests, often for relatively small amounts of money.

[18] It is interesting, however, that the value of the property left to the principal heirs, which presumably was larger than the amounts left as small legacies, was not generally specified. For examples from Montecatini di Valdinievole, another town in the Florentine district, see *Diplomatico*, Agostiniani di Montecatini, September 4, 1412, August 18, 1418, and April 13, 1429.

credit. The *Catasto* declarations of shoemakers and blacksmiths in small towns are easily identifiable because they contain long lists of individuals who owed them money (usually summarized by the tax officials in the *Campioni*) (e.g., *AC* 272, fols. 483r–484v, 498r–v, 518r–519v, 523v–524v, 530r–v). Shopkeepers kept these accounts as part of their businesses, yet the declarations show that this record keeping was not one sided. It was also in the interest of the purchaser of the goods or services to know the amount of the debt, and numerous *Catasto* declarations list debts to the local shoemaker or blacksmith (e.g., *AC* 272, fols. 467r–468r, 471r–472r, 473v–475r, 477v–479v, 482r–483r, 484v–485r, 487v–488v).

Finally, the redaction of the *Catasto* itself in the Val di Cecina is evidence of widespread numeracy and literacy. Even the most cursory glance at the *Catasto* of 1427 quickly dispels the idea that the tax officials could have redacted such a survey without a numerate populace. These tax records were based on individuals' written accounts, the *Portate*, the "things brought," to the tax officials by Tuscans. The tax officials then copied the information from the *Portate* onto the *Campioni*, the official versions of the records, adding the tax calculations and assessments.[19] Thus, these records were not, as in other places or in earlier forms of Tuscan taxation, originally based on the tax officials' estimates or reports. Obviously, this practice of relying on the written reports of the taxpayers required a largely literate and numerate populace. Of course, not everyone had to be able to write, because *Portata* declarations were submitted by households, not by individuals.

Even more important for the redaction of the *Catasto* than the ability to write, however, was the considerable knowledge that Tuscans had to have of their assets and incomes. Rural and Florentine *Catasto* declarations consist primarily of lengthy descriptions of pieces of land, which at the minimum, generally give the location of the property, its boundaries, and the return from the property, either the rent or the yield. Yields, as well as rents in kind, are listed crop by crop, with the amount and the measure (e.g., six *staia* of grain). Most declarations give either the size or the value of the property, and often both, in numerical terms. The descriptions of land in rural regions given by rural inhabitants tend, in fact, to be more detailed than the accounts given by Florentines. In regions of smallholding, rural inhabitants held many small pieces of land, all of which were generally listed in detail (*AC* 241, fols.

[19] Curiously, though the *Catasto* contains many different kinds of mistakes in copying, naming individuals, or applying the regulations (e.g., Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:7), I cannot recall finding a mistake in the mathematical calculations, though they were complicated, requiring scribes to convert between currencies, find the monetary value of crop yields, and capitalize incomes (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:14–15).

1035r–1224r; *AC* 272, fols. 467r–554v). Florentines, even in their *Portata* declarations, tended to summarize their holdings, often by describing them as a farm (*podere*), not by listing them in detail as separate pieces land (e.g., *AC* 49, fols. 1140r–1200r; *AC* 60, fols. 82r–125r; see Conti 1966:28).

It is important to note that the *Catasto* of 1427 changed the system of assessing taxes. By the fifteenth century, all Tuscan regions had been assessed some sort of tax on goods, services, or property either by local authorities or Florentines (Conti 1966; Fiumi 1957, 1959:440–466; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:6–8). In all these regions, however, the *Catasto* of 1427 represented a substantial increase in the amount of information required from individuals. In the Florentine *contado,* the previous system of taxation (the *estimi*) was based on a system of tax farming, in which the tax officials either determined individual tax assessments directly or asked local officials to distribute a predetermined tax burden among the inhabitants of a town or region (Conti 1966:3–19; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:6–8). Like the *Catasto* of 1427, the *estimi* required that the value and size of property be declared, but unlike the *Catasto*, the declarations in the *estimi* were sometimes submitted by the local administrative unit, not necessarily by households. The *Catasto* required households to submit declarations, and in addition to value and size, households were required to submit property rents and yields for the first time.

With respect to rents and yields, the reports in the *Catasto* of 1427 were not influenced by individuals' experiences with earlier tax assessments. Furthermore, while size and value were relatively fixed (size could be changed only by reconfiguring plots; value only by inflation or deflation), yields and some rents (share rents in kind) were highly variable and changed every harvest. The *Catasto* officials recognized this problem and requested that yields be averaged over three years (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:14). Thus, to report yields, individuals had to be able to conduct, even if not formally, basic mathematical operations. Finally, size and value could have been recorded by the local administrative unit because they were often given in notarial documents that recorded land sales.[20] Yields, however, were not recorded in a similar fashion. Yields had to be reported by the individuals themselves on the basis of the harvest; they were not reporting this information simply because they had learned to do so in a previous round of tax assessment by Florentine state officials.

In other parts of rural Tuscany, including the Val di Cecina, the *Catasto* of 1427 departed even more sharply from previous practice. Although the Volterran commune had been assessed Florentine taxes (though they infrequently

[20] Public land-measurers (*mensurator terrarum*) could be found in Tuscany (Wickham 1998:154).

paid them) (Cohn 1999:198; Fabbri 2000:229–230; Fiumi 1957), the *estimi* had never been redacted in the Val di Cecina, so the *Catasto* of 1427 represented the first time the Florentines requested the information in this format. While the subject cities did collect taxes, their local systems of taxation were considerably less systematic than the Florentines' (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:8). Thus, throughout Tuscany, the *Catasto* of 1427 represented new demands by tax officials for information that was more detailed than in the previous assessments. The collection of the *Catasto* of 1427 shows that the ability to think in terms of averages must have been widespread among agricultural producers for the officials to be able to collect such information.

In summary, this evidence points to usefulness of numeracy in the lives of these rural Tuscans. It allowed them to record assets and debts in a number of common transactions including property sales, testaments, dowries, and payment for goods and services. The local markets and economies of these towns depended on transfers of property through these mechanisms, which in turn required numeracy and literacy.

## Conclusions

Land patterns in these towns were characterized by the circulation of property. Smallholders lived in nucleated villages and owned, in varying numbers, small plots of land. These plots were relatively inexpensive and could be bought and sold with the incomes attained from agricultural production. Although the economy was based primarily on subsistence agriculture with family labor, smallholders used local markets to hire laborers and sell agricultural surplus, which in turn allowed families to subsist or even to accumulate property.

This circulation of holdings was sustained and reinforced not only by local markets, but also by demographic features (high mortality, late age at marriage for men, widespread household extension) and property devolution (partible inheritance and dowries). Rural and urban inhabitants shared the same general patrilineal cultural system, which emphasized father-to-son inheritance and the preservation of the patrimony across generations. However, wealthy urbanites retained their patrimonies more often than rural inhabitants. In regions of smallholding, local rural markets worked precisely because smallholders could not easily consolidate property. Consequently, small plots circulated among rural inhabitants. Widespread accounting and documentary techniques—numeracy and literacy—were also cultural practices that were shared by urban and rural inhabitants. In the Val di Cecina, they supported the transactions that made the circulation of property possible.

Like rural inhabitants of other Tuscan regions relatively remote from Florence (Cohn 1999:8), these rural inhabitants do not appear backward in

comparison to Florentines and other rural inhabitants; in fact, they look like active agents arranging their affairs. In some sense, these smallholders look like "rational peasants," buying and selling land and authoring their own transactions. Such a view, however, is too narrow. The economic practices entailed in local markets were intertwined with families' practices of property devolution and cultural systems of patriarchy and numeracy. Such practices are understood only in the community-wide context of agricultural production, local markets, and property devolution.

For smallholders and Florentines, land was linked to family practices and stored cash and profits, but in different ways. Overall, however, Florentines' practices consolidated land. They bought and sold land less frequently and practiced preferential partibility more often than smallholders. Furthermore, they tended to accumulate land late in life and held the least land in midlife because they often deeded land to sons as a way to transmit business earnings intergenerationally (Herlihy 1977:23, 1981:408–411). In contrast, smallholders bought and sold land more frequently throughout the life course and practiced more strictly partible inheritance. To a large extent, smallholders were matching the amount of land under cultivation to family size. They held the most land, therefore, when they had the most dependents to support. This often occurred at midlife, but also depended upon household structure. Land was more often given as a dowry among smallholders than Florentines, for whom cash was more common. Thus, overall, smallholders' practices circulated property.

Well-developed markets that were integrated culturally and economically with rural life could have developed into capitalist ones when stimulated by urban demand or more advanced markets. However, this outcome did not occur in Tuscany. With this backdrop of how local markets connected to agricultural production and property devolution, Chapters 5 and 6 show how such markets were eroded, not reinforced, by Florentine involvement, even in the presence of largely shared schemas about how markets worked.

# 5

# Urban Involvement in Agriculture

Giovanni Rucellai, a wealthy Tuscan merchant of the fifteenth century, wrote:

> Now I shall discuss the best way to invest money: whether it should be all in cash, or all in real estate and communal bonds, or some in one and some in the other. Now it is true that money is very difficult to conserve and handle; it is very susceptible to the whims of fortune, and few know how to manage it. But whoever possesses a lot of money and knows how to manage it is, as they say, the master of the business community because he is the nerve center of all of the trades and commercial activities . . . I would not wish to deny, however, that real estate is more secure and durable. (Brucker 1971:24–25)

Rucellai's advice captures well Florentines' involvement in agriculture. While business activities were the primary focus of their economic activities, agricultural investments were also important because they linked commercial ventures and family practices. Agriculture provided a more secure form of investment and therefore, helped Florentines manage their businesses. Because of their economic interests as urban merchants, Florentines invested in Tuscan agriculture, making it more productive.

By exploring in detail Florentines' economic interests and how they drove patterns of agricultural leasing and investment, this chapter provides evidence

for the link between sectors and substantive economic interests outlined in Chapter 3: (1) sectoral differences between agriculture and urban commerce influenced the possession of goods and opportunities for income, which (2) affected economic interests, which (3) in turn shaped sectoral transfers, interactions, and relations. First, the Tuscan political economy had two primary sectors, urban commerce and agriculture. Urban merchants engaged in commerce as their primary occupation and secondarily in agriculture; rural inhabitants participated only in agriculture. Urban commerce dominated the economy. Commercial activities were risky but profitable; agricultural ventures were less risky and less profitable. Because of these differential returns, Florentines were much more politically powerful and had many more resources than rural inhabitants. Thus, sectoral differences shaped the possession of goods and opportunities for income. Second, these differential possessions and incomes shaped economic interests. Florentines' economic interests lay in supporting their families through commercial activities and participating in agriculture as it served these interests. In contrast, rural inhabitants participated only in agriculture, and their interests lay in supporting their families through it. Rural inhabitants were not powerless, but when they interacted with Florentines, they generally had to accommodate to Florentines' economic interests to implement any of their own. Florentines invested in agriculture to diversify risk to create secure profits. Though they invested in both share-term and fixed-term leasing, they invested more in the former. They used fixed-term and share-term leasing to manage their properties and to supervise labor; as urban merchants living in Florence, they were mostly absentee landlords. Third, these economic interests shaped sectoral interactions. Sectoral transfers from urban to rural regions were private Florentine investments in agriculture. Surplus flowed from rural to urban regions as well: Florentines taxed agricultural produce and requisitioned grain to create revenues and to maintain a food supply, which in turn supported urban commerce.

The first third of this chapter reviews the secondary historical literature to provide an overview of the first two points above, and in particular, to provide information about urban and rural economic interests. The second third analyzes leases (preserved as notarial documents) from the fifteenth century to explore in more detail how urban economic interests shaped patterns of leasing and investment. It is difficult to gather direct evidence for economic interests, especially for historical subjects who rarely kept self-reflective records of such matters. Consequently, I look at the patterns of the distribution and use of fixed-term and share-term leases and investment in these rental contracts to provide evidence for economic interests. Economic models of transaction costs make predictions about these patterns based on incentives embodied in the terms of the leases. Thus, where the patterns follow the predictions of these

models, I can show how economic interests corresponded to these incentives. In contrast, where the economic models fail to predict these patterns, I can point to alternative explanations. The final third of this chapter returns to the historical literature to provide an overview of sectoral transfers between urban and rural regions.

## Economic Interests

### *Urban Economic Interests*

Florence was one of the most developed commercial centers of the late medieval and early modern period and was a major center for international trade, finance, and manufacturing, most notably, banking and cloth production (Weissman 1982:3). By the late Middle Ages and early modern period, Tuscany was becoming a territorial state (Becker 1968), but like many northern and central Italian regions, it originated as a city-state with a high capital concentration (Tilly 1990:16–19). Florentine advantage was maintained because urban commerce, which primarily produced luxury goods, yielded higher profits than agriculture (Goldthwaite 1968:246–251; Jones 1956:198–199; Martines 1963:35–37). The differential returns to sectoral activities maintained financial inequality between the sectors. In 1427, Florentines comprised 14 percent of the Tuscan population, but held 65 percent of the total taxable wealth (Epstein 1991:31; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:94–100).

Furthermore, inhabitants of the regions surrounding Florence did not have the same political and legal rights as Florentines. Other laws upheld landlords' position vis-à-vis their tenants (Jones 1956:195–196, 1968:225). Florentines were also powerful because there were no rural centers of power. Seigneurial power was particularly weak in rural Tuscany and was vanquished relatively early (Epstein 1991:31). There was relatively little rural protoindustry in rural Tuscany (Epstein 2000*a*:127–142), so rural regions also wielded little influence in this respect. Thus, Tuscany's political economy was shaped by the preeminence of Florence, both politically and economically (Emigh 2003*a*:1091–1092).

The sectoral differences in this political economy shaped economic interests based on the possession of goods and opportunities for income (Weber 1978:927). Florentines had two opportunities for income: from their principal activities as urban merchants and from rural agriculture. In contrast, rural inhabitants were primarily dependent upon agriculture. This major sectoral difference in economic interests affected agriculture because Florentines' economic interests as merchants determined how they participated in it. Urban merchants' primary occupations assured that they lived in Florence. At relatively

long distances from their rural properties, Florentines were unable to devote their entire energies to their agricultural properties. Furthermore, they used agricultural holdings to diversify their investments to reduce the risks associated with their merchant activities. Although Florentines responded to financial opportunities and invested in agricultural holdings, they were not compelled to do so because they had other sources of income from urban activities. Thus, rural agriculture was shaped by urban commerce (Emigh 1997*d*).

Urban merchants commonly owned land in rural regions (Casprini 2000:37–50; Cherubini 1985:6–10, 65–74; Ciappelli 1992:32–38; Clarke 1991:101–105, 116–118; Cohn 1999:18; de Roover 1966:226–227, 1999:32–42, 66–69; Goldthwaite 1968:205–206; Herlihy 1981:401; Jones 1956:193–203; Martines 1963:34–35, 105–144; Tognetti 1999:93–107, 2002:50). Their investments in agriculture formed a specific part of their business activities by diversifying their investment portfolios. Profits were lower in agriculture, but more secure (Goldthwaite 1968:246–251, 1980:49–50; Jones 1956:199; Martines 1963:37; Tognetti 1999:94).[1] Rucellai, for example, claimed that land was an investment that should balance, not dominate a portfolio (Goldthwaite 1980:49; Rucellai 1960:8–9). He apparently followed his own advice, pursuing both commercial and agricultural activities (Kent 1981:82). Leon Battista Alberti ([1969] 2004:235), the fifteenth-century Florentine humanist, gave similar advice about owning mixed assets. He argued that profits from a rural estate alone, though valuable, would be insufficient to support an urban family and recommended a business in wool or silk production as an honorable and secure occupation (Alberti [1969] 2004:195–196). Real estate also helped to guarantee credit in a business climate in which firms had unlimited liability (Jones 1956:202). Property functioned like a bond, assuring honesty and loyalty (Herlihy 1977:17). As a security, landholdings could help even out the swings between sudden gains and losses in business (Jones 1956:202; cf. Tognetti 1999:94). Thus, both agricultural and commercial investments were driven by capitalist interests. Agricultural investments were supposed to be profitable (e.g., Crabb 2000:69).[2] However, because agriculture was a capitalist risk-diversification strategy, Florentine landlords may have been unlikely to make highly risky or expensive investments and technological innovations. The farms were not their primary source of income, nor their principal business activity.

[1] For example, in the fourteenth century the highest expected return to commerce was 15 percent; to agriculture, 8 percent (Jones 1956:198–199).

[2] For example, one fourteenth-century Florentine advised buying a profitable small estate with a good yield over a large estate with a small yield because the former would be easier to sell (Dahl 1998:176; cf. Brucker 1971:23).

Some Florentines certainly lived entirely off the rents from their farms and did not engage in business (Brucker 1993:22; Jones 1956:197–198), but Martines (1963:35) argued that such individuals, *scioperati,* were less influential politically than merchants and were scorned by fellow Florentines (see also Jones 1956:198, 205).[3] Merchants were members of major guilds that held influential political roles. Merchants and *scioperati* did not form distinct groups, since there was a considerable amount of intermarriage between them and families were often composed of both.

Investments in urban businesses and agricultural holdings were also linked to family practices. The size of Florentines' landholdings was related to their life stage (Herlihy 1981:408–411). Families held the smallest amount of land during the middle of their lives. Fathers invested in land in old age to transmit a patrimony to their sons (e.g., Herlihy 1977:17), who gradually sold or mortgaged this land to provide capital to start their own businesses (Herlihy 1977:23, 1981:410–411). During middle age, therefore, these sons' businesses comprised most of their wealth. Florentines' transmission of real estate to their sons (instead of movables) suggests that landholdings were a less risky form of capital that could be entrusted to youth, their guardians, or young adults (Brucker 1971:25; e.g., Herlihy 1977:17). In contrast, the liquid capital associated with commercial holdings could be handled only by older, wiser adults (Herlihy 1981:410). Rucellai warned his sons about the risks involved in commercial activities, especially for minors and others with little experience, and advised real estate holdings for such individuals (Brucker 1971:24–25; Rucellai 1960:8–9).[4] Landholdings were related to the overall wealth of the family (Herlihy 1981:408–411). Less-well-off Florentines held relatively little land, while better-off Florentines had more extensive holdings. However, at the highest levels of wealth, the proportion of wealth held in real estate declined among Florentines (Herlihy 1981:407–408). The wealthiest Florentines still owned much real estate in absolute terms, but relative to the rest of their assets, they invested more in business ventures and the public debt (Herlihy 1981:408). This pattern suggests that a certain amount of land was a desirable investment, but property above that amount was unnecessary and additional capital was diverted to commercial ventures. Rural holdings assured families a private and fresh food supply (Alberti [1969] 2004:187–188; Cohn 1999:19; Crabb 2000:69, 219; Jones 1956:201), which was important, given the frequent shortages. Finally, rural estates were markers of wealth and therefore, social

[3] Brucker (1993:23) argued that some *scioperati* received approbation and some did not.

[4] See also Rucellai (1960:19) for Giovanni's business advice and de Roover (1958:18, 20, note 20), Kent (1981:90), and Martines (1963:35, note 64) for interpretations of this advice.

status (Baron 1938:22–23; Cherubini 1991:203; Jones 1956:198–199; Martines 1963:23). Martines (1963:36–37) argued that Florentines increasingly valued their rural holdings starting in the fifteenth century, when the practice of visiting their rural properties during August and September became common (see also Crabb 2000:68–69).[5]

Florentines often leased their land in share terms and, to a lesser extent, in fixed terms directly to tenants who worked it and paid rents in money and kind (usually agricultural produce). Thus, Florentine economic interests facilitated the rise of sharecropping, which began to spread well before 1350 (Jones 1968). Forms of land tenure evolved slowly out of feudal forms of landholding in previous centuries through a variety of means. In some instances, large feudal estates were converted, more or less intact, to commercial tenancies. In other instances, former serfs were converted into freehold smallholders. Some of these smallholders then sold their land to Florentines. By 1427, Herlihy and Klapisch–Zuber's (1981, 1985:115–119) data suggest that 56.6 percent of rural families were smallholders (they may have leased a few, additional plots), 18.9 percent were sharecroppers, and 4.3 percent were fixed-term lessees. Sharecropping continued to spread between 1427 and 1469 in the four rural quarters of the Florentine *contado* (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:117–118). By the fifteenth century, feudal tenures were virtually eliminated and land was owned outright. After the fifteenth century, the primary rural transformation was the spread of sharecropping, which slowly replaced smallholding and, to a lesser extent, fixed-term leasing. This transformation was particularly pronounced where urban capital spread into rural regions (Emigh 2003*a*:1092–1096).

### *Rural Economic Interests*

The political economy assured that Florentine landlords were more powerful than their rural tenants, so they set the terms of agricultural production. Rural interests, however, were not irrelevant. Sharecropping spread not only because of Florentines' economic interests, but also because of the relative reduction in the power differential between landlords and tenants from 1350 to 1500. Labor shortages created by plague epidemics gave rural tenants some bargaining power, since landlords' control was diminished by high rural mobility and the scarcity of tenants (Dahl 1998:161; Herlihy and Klapisch–Zuber 1985:73;

[5] The comparison with England is instructive. Though large English landlords are sometimes considered to be great improvers of agriculture (Brenner 1985*a*, 1985*b*), they also often engaged in lavish displays of wealth and social status. They were also absent for part of the year (during the London season). English landlords, like Florentines, made extensive use of stewards (de Vries 1976:78, 82).

Molho 1971:27), even if the fundamental power differential between them remained (Emigh 1997*d*:438).[6] While some lessees' attempts to improve the terms of their contracts were unsuccessful (Jones 1956:195, 1968:224) and some tenants' obligations may have even increased (Mirri 1959:555), other factors mitigated landlords' abilities to increase labor services or rents. Changes in tenancy were frequent (Jones 1956:196; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:16–17). Some land went uncultivated for lack of tenants (Herlihy 1968:272; Jones 1956:196; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:16). Sharecropping often appears as a capitalist labor contract under these conditions of declining landlords' power; landlords' investments are small, but important, concessions to attract tenants (Emigh 1997*d*:438, 2000*a*; Wells 1996:232). In Tuscany, these investments took the form of loans of cash and livestock to the tenants and capital improvements to the farms (Emigh 1999*b*:476–477). Thus, the spread of sharecropping was, at least partially, influenced by rural interests.

Rural residents almost certainly preferred to own property. As Chapter 4 shows, in regions of smallholding, inhabitants bought, sold, and leased land to their advantage depending on their entrepreneurial skills and their families' needs. In regions where Florentines were major landlords and when rural inhabitants owned insufficient land to support a family, however, there were relatively few reasons for rural inhabitants to prefer share-term to fixed-term leasing because the two types of leases were quite similar. Share-term and fixed-term leases of farms to tenant-workers contained similar elements including cash loans; provisions for livestock, seed, and other supplies; stipulations to work and live on the property and provide labor services; and regulations to prevent misuse of the property (Emigh 1998*b*:361–363; Herlihy 1977:13; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:50; Jones 1954:176–177, 1956:194–195, 1968:223; Kotelnikova 1974:20–21; Piccinni 1985:152; Pinto 1980:300–306). Urban and rural Tuscans used and were familiar with both forms of leasing. Not only did urban landlords lease land to rural inhabitants in both share terms and fixed terms, rural inhabitants also frequently leased land from their rural neighbors using both forms of rent (Ackerberg and Botticini 2000:251; Emigh 1998*b*:358–362, 2000*b*:126–130, 2001:503).

Sharecropping, however, had several advantages. First, tenants may have preferred sharecropping because they were not responsible for the entire fixed rent in the event of crop failure. Second, though landlords invested in fixed-term and share-term tenancies, as I show in the following analyses they invested more frequently in the latter (Table 5-7; Emigh 1998*b*:362–364). Loans, made by both small and large landowners to share-tenants when they took

[6] One fourteenth-century Florentine suggested that both the price of the land and the availability of labor be taken into account before making a purchase (Dahl 1998:176).

possession of the farm, were virtually an indispensable condition of share-tenancy (Herlihy 1977:13; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:119; Jones 1968:225; Pinto 1980:307). Loans included cash, cattle, seed, grain, farm implements, clothes, shoes, and food (Jones 1954:177, 1968:225; Kotelnikova 1974:20, 22; Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:28, 291–299; Piccinni 1982:56–59). Tenants borrowed money from new landlords to pay the old ones or had outstanding loans to both (Jones 1968:225; Kotelnikova 1974:22; Piccinni 1982:56–59).

Some tenants were deeply indebted (Cherubini 1985:131–138; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:146; Piccinni 1982:204–212). The terms of their loans were onerous (Luzzatto 1948:82), and the size of loans grew each year (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:119–120). Some landlords advanced credit with the intent of attracting tenants and binding them tightly to the land (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:119–120). Others reduced the value of the debts in exchange for more control over their tenants (Pinto 1980:312). Some sharecroppers worked as wage laborers to reduce their debts to the landlords (Pinto 1980:307). However, other tenants repaid their debts by the end of their tenancies, including one who had borrowed for food (Jones 1956:196).

Some tenants never repaid their loans and abandoned their tenancies response to the combined burden of rent and debt (Fiumi 1958:494; Giorgetti 1974:37; Herlihy 1965:243, 1968:272; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:106–107, 119; Imberciadori 1957:840–842; Jones 1954:176, 1968:225; Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:28, 291–299; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:16; Pinto 1982:252–329, 423–424). The incentives for flight were especially great when rural inhabitants did not own land. Landlords frequently complained about nonrepayment (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:106–107,119–120) and sometimes initiated legal proceedings (Jones 1968:225). One landlord seized the oxen of his former tenant, pending repayment of a loan (Jones 1956:196). Other landlords simply let tenants and their debts go (Jones 1968:225). Although tenants undoubtedly welcomed cash advances and livestock, which may have provided a dynamism to agricultural production not found in other regions, these loans also created ties of dependence (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:118–120; Jones 1956:195, 1968:234–241; Kotelnikova 1974; Luzzatto 1948:82).

The terms of the provisioning of livestock were even more variable than those of the loans. The arrangements, for both small and large landlords, included advancing oxen or money to the tenants and debiting them to hold the oxen at their own risk and sharing the oxen at halves for surrender, repayment, or division of price, profit, and loss when the lease expired (Imberciadori 1958:255; Jones 1956:195, 1968:224; Kotelnikova 1974:20, 23, 25; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:12; Pinto 1980:300–306). Leasing (*a soccio*) was a common way to provide livestock on share-tenancies (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber

1985:118–119; Jones 1954:177, 1956:195, 1968:224, note 7; Mirri 1959:555). Other animals and supplies for the farm were also sometimes shared or debited to the tenant (Jones 1956:195, 1968:224–225; Pinto 1980:300–306).

Finally, sharecropping may have offered one additional advantage vis-à-vis smallholding. Where sharecropping was accompanied by investment, the increased productivity it offered may have raised rural inhabitants' incomes, even though landlords received half of the harvest as rent. As Chapter 7 will show, sharecropped land could be more than twice as productive as land worked by smallholders. Thus, even half of the yield from sharecropping may have provided a higher income than smallholding. Furthermore, lessees paid the lowest taxes of all Tuscans since taxation was based on assets, not income. Of course, disposable income was also influenced by debts, and loans between share-landlords and their tenants were customary. Tenants may have been required to return a considerable portion of their income to their landlords as repayment for their loans. Repayment did not necessarily disadvantage sharecroppers vis-à-vis smallholders, however, because the overall magnitude of their debts was similar (Chapter 7). Rural indebtedness was widespread (Pinto 1982:207–223). Thus, where sharecropping was a capitalist form, it may have increased the income of rural inhabitants and reduced their risks. In fact, sharecropping parishes may have attracted tenants over time. Though contracts were short term, sharecroppers often remained on farms for a long time, especially if the farms were large, profitable, and accompanied by landlords' investments (Chapter 6; Emigh 1999*a*).

Rural inhabitants' economic interests lay almost exclusively in obtaining income from land. There was little rural manufacturing in the fifteenth century (Epstein 2000*a*:127–142), so migration to a city or to another rural region provided the only other opportunities for income. Some residents of the *contado* may have moved to more remote or mountainous regions, not subject to Florentine control or taxation (Cohn 1999:36–38). Though rural inhabitants preferred smallholding in theory, many did not own enough land to survive. Furthermore, sharecropping distributed risk and increased income. If rural inhabitants could have directed sharecropping, it might have been even more preferable. However, Florentines were much wealthier than rural inhabitants, and they, not rural inhabitants, had the capital to make investments that increased agricultural productivity (Emigh 1999*b*:472–474, 2003*a*:1096–1099).

## Share-Term and Fixed-Term Leasing

Tuscans' economic interests were apparent in their use of labor contracts and their patterns of agricultural investment. The following sections illustrate this

point by evaluating whether patterns of Tuscan leasing and investment fit economic models of tenancy choice.

## *Theories of Tenancy Choice*

Forms of labor contracts can be viewed from a property-rights framework (e.g., North 1981; North and Thomas 1973; see Cheung 1969:4), where the salient property right is the one to the agricultural yield. Owner-operators and fixed-term lessees retain all of the increased output from their increased effort and inputs because they have exclusive rights to the yield. In contrast, wage laborers receive none of the increase in output from their increased effort because they have no rights to the yield. Sharecroppers are an intermediate case: they retain some of the increased output from their increased effort, but some of this output goes to their landlords, because tenants and landlords split the yield (Binswanger, Deininger, and Feder 1995:2713; Mill [1848] 1909:304; Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:1967; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:36–37; Pertev 1986:28–29; Singh 1989:43).

These considerations gave rise to the classic view of sharecropping as an inefficient tenurial form (Smith [1776] 1976:412–414; reviews in Cheung 1969:32–42; Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:1967–1968; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:36–37; Pearce 1983:46–48; Pertev 1986:28–30).[7] In comparison to both owner operation and fixed-term leasing, sharecropping seemed to diminish incentives for investment and inputs. Because neither tenants nor landlords retained the entire output resulting from increased inputs, both landlords and tenants tended to work less and underinvest in share-tenancies, making sharecropping less productive than other tenurial forms (Pearce 1983:47; Sen 1966:445–446). Thus, in classic economic, as well as Marxist texts, sharecropping is considered to be a transitional form of agriculture that occurs between smallholding and fixed-term leasing and is destined to be replaced by the latter, which is assumed to be more efficient (Lenin [1899] 1956:194–195; Marx [1894] 1977*a*:905, 1977*b*:938–940; Smith [1776] 1976:412–414; review in Wells 1984:1–3, 5–6).

The comparison between sharecropping and fixed-term leasing has an additional dimension. Considering the tenants' point of view, the classic economic position holds that tenants work harder and invest more on land that is rented to them in fixed terms than in share terms because they retain all the output from their increased input. Thus, because the yield is higher, landlords

[7] This view is sometimes called the traditional or Marshallian position, though Marshall (1890:684–685) realized that sharecropping was relatively efficient under certain conditions, namely when landlords invested in their holdings and could enforce the contracts.

can obtain a higher rent by using fixed-term leases (Otsuka and Hayami 1988:36–40). From the landlord's point of view of the rental payment, landlords have virtually no incentive to invest in their holdings, since they receive only a fixed rent, regardless of their inputs. However, as long as there is some possibility to evict a tenant for one paying higher rents, landlords have incentives to lease their properties to tenants able to pay high rents and thus may undertake innovations to attract such tenants. Long-term leases also provide incentives to tenants to undertake land management costs and to make costly investments because the length of the lease assures that they will benefit from these investments (cf. Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:1991–1995). Thus, these additional considerations also suggest that sharecropping is less efficient and productive than fixed-term leasing.

Not surprisingly, classic Marxist texts also considered sharecropping to be an inefficient form of agricultural labor (Lenin [1899] 1956:194–195; Marx [1894] 1977*a*:905, 1977*b*:938–940; see Dobb [1947] 1963:251). Marxist analyses also often view sharecropping as a device for extracting a surplus from the peasantry in "feudal" settings (Bernstein 1996:31; Bhaduri 1973:120–121; Pearce 1983:52–65; Robertson 1982:449). Underlying some Marxist treatments of sharecropping is the assumption that agricultural production based on unpaid household labor, such as smallholding and sharecropping, is labor intensive because these agriculturists are unlikely to adopt technological innovations that substitute expensive capital for inexpensive household labor (Goodman and Redclift 1982:78; Lehmann 1986:603). This assumption often draws on a Chayanovian perspective that agricultural production based on family labor has unique features. Share-tenants are not necessarily separated from the means of their own subsistence. Although they do not own land, they may effectively possess the means of production and produce primarily for their own consumption. Sharecropping may be particularly labor intensive, according to this view, because sharecroppers not only use household labor, but also because landlords remove a large proportion of the surplus, forcing share-tenants to exploit more thoroughly their household members. Consistent with this view is evidence that sharecropping entails "feudal" or "quasi-feudal" labor services (Pearce 1983:43). Landlords maintain tenants' dependent status through loans, limits on the size of holdings, restrictions on labor movements, and the insecurity of contracts (Bernstein 1996:31; Byres 1996:327–331). As a result, landlords rely on labor intensification for their profit and are unlikely to make investments that increase productivity (Bernstein 1996:31; Byres 1996:327–331). This treatment of sharecropping as a labor-intensive form of agricultural production also underlies some neoclassical treatments of sharecropping. For example, Pertev (1986:47–48) showed that the landlord's income was maximized when there were many adult workers

and few dependents. Thus, it is possible that sharecropping is more productive than smallholding (or fixed-term leasing) only because it is more labor intensive. Thus, from the Marxist point of view, while fixed-term lessees and wage laborers are fully separated from the means of their own subsistence because they do not own land, and smallholders possess the means of their own subsistence because they own land, sharecroppers often possess the means of subsistence because they have access to the yield from their farms, but do not have a full set of property rights to the land.

Marxist studies of the transition from feudalism to capitalism argue that the establishment of a fully capitalist form of land tenure, using fixed-term leasing and wage labor, was a necessary component of agrarian capitalism, precisely because it alone provided optimal incentives for agricultural growth, a necessary precursor to industrial capitalism (Brenner 1985*a*:49–50, 60, 1985*b*:215, 297, 301, 303, 315; Dobb [1947] 1963:124–126, 221–240; Lenin [1899] 1956:331–340). Like classic economists, Marxists such as Brenner (1985*a*:49, 1985*b*:296, 301, 315) argued that fixed-term leasing with security of tenure supported the highest level of investment, because it secured landlords' investments that attracted tenants who paid high rents.

Thus, the spread of sharecropping in the presence of fixed-term leasing is sometimes assumed to signal agricultural stagnation or the refeudalization of tenurial relations because it is a movement away from fixed-term leasing, a more efficient form of land tenure, that could have supported the transition to full-scale industrial capitalism. Thus, because these two developments occurred in Tuscany—first, the decline of fixed-term leasing and the rise of sharecropping and second, delayed transition to capitalism—they do seem, at least initially, to suggest that sharecropping was not a capitalist development. Indeed, sharecropping is often blamed for delayed transition to capitalism in Tuscany (Brenner 1985*a*:53; Epstein 1991:39–44, 1993:467; Giorgetti 1968:742–747; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:105–107, 148–151; Lachmann 2000:86–89; Malanima 1982:88; Mirri 1970:422–423, 1979:59–60, 95–100; Romano 1974:1879–1884).

Beginning with Cheung's (1969:62) classic work on sharecropping's potential to distribute risk between landlords and tenants, however, neoclassical economists reinterpreted sharecropping. Starting with the assumption that landlords would not use a tenurial form that decreased their income, they argued that sharecropping would not be widespread unless it was an efficient tenurial form. As a result, neoclassical economists considered other incentives embodied in the terms of share-leases that could explain their differential adoption, including risk distribution and the enforcement and supervision of property rights (Cheung 1969:62; Newbery 1975:127–128, 132; Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:1987–1991; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:44–46; Stiglitz 1974:220). Thus, the neoclassical reinterpretation of sharecropping suggests

that inputs, yields, income, and productivity vary little by land tenure (Cheung 1969:4; Morooka and Hayami 1989:34–36; Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:2005–2006; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:49–52; Reid 1973:113–114). From this perspective, sharecropping, wage labor, and fixed-term leasing are simply alternative forms of labor contracts. Their use depends on transaction costs, most prominently, labor supervision, land management, output underreporting, and risk.

As a result, the neoclassical perspective suggests that, on average, the output from, and inputs to, owner cultivation, fixed-term leasing, and share-term leasing should be identical (Bell 1977:321). Consistent with this reinterpretation of sharecropping's efficiency is Otsuka and Hayami's (1988:50) review of empirical evidence across a wide variety of contexts showing that, on average, outputs from land worked by owner-cultivators, sharecroppers, and fixed-term lessees are the same. (Though output varies because different contracts are used to grow different crops depending on transaction costs.) However, in any particular setting, one contract may be more efficient than another. These particular outcomes cannot be explained by neoclassical theories. In some circumstances, sharecropping can be more productive than fixed-term leasing and owner cultivation (Otsuka and Hayami 1988:40). Otsuka and Hayami (1988:51–52) also reviewed evidence on differences in inputs (labor and fertilizer) between owner cultivation, sharecropping, and fixed-term leasing. Because fewer studies examined investment than agricultural output, they drew only tentative conclusions. There was some evidence that landlords and share-tenants provided fewer inputs (in terms of fertilizer) than owner-cultivators, although these results seemed to have been explained either by underreporting or differences in cropping patterns (Otsuka and Hayami 1988:51–52). There was little difference, however, in labor inputs between sharecropping and owner cultivation. There were also few differences between inputs in fixed-term leasing and sharecropping.

Despite the overall thrust of this neoclassical work suggesting that sharecropping, owner cultivation, and fixed-term leasing should be equally efficient, some neoclassical economists remain pessimistic about sharecropping's ability to promote innovation and investment. There is a broad range of circumstances under which innovations and investment will not occur in sharecropping (Basu 1989:251; Braverman and Stiglitz 1986:313; Ellis 1988:157; Naqvi 1990:935–936; Peach and Nowotny 1992:371). Underlying much of this work is the property-rights framework: because neither share-landlords nor share-tenants retain the entire increase in output from increased input, circumstances frequently arise where landlords and tenants have few incentives to invest or innovate. The same innovations and investments might be undertaken by owner-cultivators (Braverman and Stiglitz

1986:317). Also consistent with the North and Thomas's (1973) property-rights framework is the finding that innovations and investments are more likely when share-tenants have security of tenure and therefore secure property rights and when the returns to investments and innovations in sharecropping are high (Braverman and Stiglitz 1986:317; Peach and Nowotny 1992:371). This work casts doubt, therefore, on sharecropping's ability to sustain innovations and investment.

### *Locating the Fixed-Term Lessees*

I use notarial (legal) documents that represent a range of locations throughout Tuscany to assess Florentines' economic interests in using fixed-term and share-term leasing. In particular, I examine why and where the two forms of leasing were used and whether investment accompanied these forms of leasing. There is, unfortunately, no way to compare systematically the productivity of fixed-term and share-term leasing, because the yields from fixed-term leases were not recorded in *Catasto* declarations. However, it is possible to compare investment in these two forms using notarial documents.[8]

I coded information from 152 leases from seventeen different volumes of notarial documents (*Notarile antecosimiano*), redacted by about fifteen different notaries between the years 1420 and 1448 (Emigh 1997*d*:427–431, 1998*b*: 358–365). These leases constitute a sample of Tuscan leases, although certainly not a random one that would be representative of all Tuscan leases. The leases redacted by a given notary may have been more similar than leases redacted by different notaries for several reasons. A given notary may have been more likely to use the same language across different leases and individuals. A given landlord often used the same notary for different transactions, and leases granted by that landlord may have been more similar than leases of different landlords. These possibilities could reduce the overall variability of the findings, increase the association between variables, and increase the likelihood of obtaining statistically significant results.

Although a random sample would have eliminated some of these problems, it is nearly impossible to obtain, given that notarial documents are essentially unindexed, and the population is difficult to define. The registers in the Florentine Archives are only a small, and probably nonrandom, portion of what was originally redacted. Furthermore, not all leases were written, and

[8] In the *Catasto*, households were taxed on capitalized income from assets, but not on any other income. Thus, landlords' *Catasto* declarations list the rent from property leased in fixed-terms, but not the agricultural yield. In contrast, *Catasto* declarations provide information about sharecropping's productivity since a share of the harvest was the landlords' rent (income).

there is no way to consider the ratio of oral to written leases.[9] While these data have limitations, they do represent a useful range of landlords and tenants. The use of notarial documents also provides information from a source other than the *Catasto* (see Ackerberg and Botticini 2000:246, 2002:573; Galassi 1992:84), making it possible to compare results across sources. Data from the two sources are comparable, suggesting that the data from the notarial documents are roughly representative. For example, the spatial distribution of fixed-term and share-term leases found in these notarial documents in Figure 5-2 is approximately the same as the distribution from the *Catasto* of 1427 (Herlihy and Klapisch–Zuber 1981).

In a small data set, I recorded the terms of these contracts (fixed or share). Some leases had both share-term and fixed-term payments (cf. Jones 1954: 176, 1956:195).[10] Twenty of the leases specified a share-term payment, a fixed payment of crops, and occasionally, a small cash payment. However, these leases were predominantly share-term and are considered as such in the analyses below. Two leases were not used because the terms could not be determined.

I coded several variables from these leases, including the residence of the landlord and tenant; the location, size, and description of the land; the duration of the lease; and lessors' inputs. Of the cases in which the landowner's residence was identifiable, 91.24 percent (125) were Florentine, 7.3 percent (10) were from the *contado*, and 1.46 percent (2) were from the district. Of the cases in which the tenant's residence was identifiable, 79.1 percent (106) were from the *contado*, 19.4 percent (26) were Florentine, and 1.49 percent (2) were from the district. In addition, some leases provide information suggesting whether the tenant worked the land. First, some leases give the occupation of the tenant, such as an urban trade, or occasionally designate the tenant as a worker (*lavoratore*). Second, some leases indicate explicitly that the tenant worked the land. For example, the lease may specify that the tenant must work the land or that the tenant promises to work the land. Some of the leases, both share-term and fixed-term, state that the landlord leases the land "for work-

[9] For example, though leases for agricultural holdings are commonly found in notarial registers, I found no written leases for sharecroppers living in the parishes of Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve. Although I located many notarial documents recording the transactions of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, who owned large landholdings in these parishes, I could not locate any leases for agricultural holdings. In contrast, notarial documents recording leases of the Medici shops and houses in Florence are plentiful. Two leases for nonagricultural Mugellan properties were kept in the Medici's private records (see *MAP* LXXXIV, no. 78, *carta* 156; *MAP* CXLIX, no. 10). In addition, letters written by Matteo di ser Giovanni, the manager (*fattore*) of the Medici, suggest that share-term leases were oral and renegotiated annually (*MAP* XI, no. 348). See Chapter 6, p. 162.

[10] Mixed contracts also distribute risk (Stiglitz 1974:231).

TABLE 5–1 DISTRIBUTIONS OF SHARE-TERM AND FIXED-TERM LEASES USING NOTARIAL DOCUMENTS

| Term of Lease | All Documents | Subset of Documents: Agricultural Laborers Only |
|---|---|---|
| Fixed | 67.33% (101) | 26.32% (10) |
| Share | 32.67% (49) | 73.68% (28) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses
Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano*

ing."[11] Third, some leases contain a clause either giving the tenant permission to sublease or prohibiting subleasing. Where the lease prohibited subleasing, the tenants had to work the property. Where subleasing was permitted, the tenants were probably not working the land. These three measures were consistent, though none is a perfect measure of tenant status. Below, I use these variables first to help determine the prevalence of fixed-term leasing by middle-tenants and to specify some characteristics of landlords and tenants. Then, I use them to show where different types of leases were used. Finally, I use them to determine the extent of lessors' inputs.

Surprisingly, given that Tuscany is usually associated with sharecropping, Table 5-1, Column 1 shows that over 67 percent of these leases were fixed-term. Column 2 of Table 5-1 is a subset of these notarial documents, in which the lease indicates that the tenant worked the holding and thus, presents the distribution of fixed-term and share-term leases to worker-tenants. Lessees living outside of the Florentine *contado* were excluded. Column 2 provides the stereotypical image: about 74 percent of worker-tenants were sharecroppers.

What accounts for the dramatic difference between Columns 1 and 2? Some of the difference could arise from data limitations in the notarial documents, so I compared these notarial documents to Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data from the *Catasto* of 1427. Their measure of land tenure, which is a component of occupational status, gives the distribution of share-term and fixed-term leases to worker-tenants in the *contado* and thus approximately replicates Column 2 of Table 5-1. About 13 percent (1,040) of the tenants in their data were fixed-term lessees and about 87 percent (6,768) were share-term lessees. Of course, neither the *Catasto* nor the notarial documents give precise indications of whether the tenants worked the properties. In addition, tenant status is frequently missing, and some leases may have been negotiated orally and never recorded in the notarial documents. However, given these sources of distortion, the two estimates of the distribution of fixed-term and share-term leasing to

[11] The lease may say, "*locavit ad laborandum ad medium*" or "*locavit ad laborandum ad affictum.*" The phrase *locavit ad laborandum ad medium* may be formulaic, but this is unlikely because some share leases do not contain the words *ad laborandum.*

TABLE 5–2 TERM OF LEASE BY STATUS OF TENANT

| | Status of the Tenant | |
|---|---|---|
| Term of Lease | Not an Agricultural Laborer | Agricultural Laborer |
| Fixed | 100.00% (21) | 26.19% (11) |
| Share | 0.00% (0) | 73.81% (31) |
| Totals | 100.00% (21) | 100.00% (42) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses

| Statistics | DF | Value | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square Statistic | 1 | 30.516 | 0.001 |
| Fisher's Exact Test (right) | | | 0.000 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarible antecosimiano*

worker-tenants are remarkably similar. Although the notarial documents are not exactly representative of the *Catasto*, this cannot account for the large difference between Columns 1 and 2 in Table 5-1. Thus, most of the difference between Columns 1 and 2 probably stems from the activity of middle-tenants, who leased land from the landlord in fixed terms and then hired wage laborers or sublet it to worker-tenants in fixed or share terms.

This interpretation is supported by Table 5-2.[12] Using the leases for which it can be reasonably assumed that the tenant was working or not working the property, Table 5-2 shows that tenants who were not agricultural workers were more likely to receive a lease in fixed terms than those who were agricultural workers. The sizable number of fixed-term tenants, twenty-one (about one-third of the total number of leases), in Table 5-2 who did not work the property were probably these middle-tenants. Some leases gave the occupations of landlords and middle-tenants, which also suggest that they were unlikely to engage in agricultural labor. These occupations included silk, linen, and wool merchants; a woodworker; a lawyer; notaries; a clock maker; a goldsmith; shopkeepers; ecclesiastics; and other merchants and artisans. They are typical of Florentine landlords and middle-tenants (Jones 1956:193–194; Kotelnikova 1985). Landlords also included ecclesiastical organizations.

Table 5-3 estimates the extent of fixed-term middle-tenancy. These estimates are not precise (nor is it likely that any single source can provide a precise measure): they simply provide a rough guide of the extent of this form of leasing. Estimate 1 presents the empirical results from the analysis of notarial documents, only using those leases that give some indication of whether the tenant worked the property or not. The advantage of this estimate is that it is

[12] Tables 5-2, 5-4, 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7 present the Pearson chi-square statistics and their associated p-values as well as Fisher's exact tests. Given that the sample of notarial documents is a nonrandom one and that some of the cells of the tables are zeros, the assumptions upon which the p-values are based are not strictly met.

**TABLE 5–3 POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTIONS OF LEASES TO WORKER-TENANTS AND MIDDLE-TENANTS**

| | Estimate 1 | Estimate 2 | Estimate 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fixed-Term Worker-Tenants | 17.46% (11) | 23.15% | 10.62% (1040) |
| Fixed-Term Middle-Tenants | 33.33% (21) | 44.18% | 20.27% |
| Share-Term Worker-Tenants | 49.21% (31) | 32.67% (49) | 69.11% (6768) |
| Totals | 100.00% (63) | 100.00% (150) | 100.00% |

Note: the number (N) is in parentheses when the estimate is based on documentary sources

Estimate 1: based on a subset of notarial documents for which the status of the tenant (worker or not) can be reasonably determined

Estimate 2: based on imputing the missing cases of worker status based on the distribution of nonmissing cases

Estimate 3: based on combining the estimates of fixed-term and share-term leases to worker-tenants from Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data from the *Catasto* of 1427 with the distribution of fixed-term leases to middle-tenants and worker-tenants from the notarial documents

Sources: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano* and Herilihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1981)

based on the documents and no additional assumptions are necessary. The large number of missing cases of tenant status, however, may distort this estimate. Estimate 2 makes use of Table 5-2, which suggests that share-term leases were only contracted with worker-tenants, to redistribute the missing cases of tenant status. All of the share-term leases are redistributed to the category of share-term worker-tenant, while the missing cases of tenant status for fixed-term leases are redistributed according to the proportion of nonmissing cases of tenant status for fixed-term leases. Estimate 3 uses the proportion of fixed-term worker-tenants to share-term worker-tenants derived from Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data, as previously described, and the proportion of fixed-term middle-tenants to fixed-term worker-tenants from the notarial documents. Finally, for all these estimates, the problem remains that some leases to worker-tenants were oral. If written leases were more common among middle-tenants than among worker-tenants, Table 5-3 overestimates the percentage of fixed-term leases to middle-tenants with respect to share-term and fixed-term leases to worker-tenants. Still, however, Table 5-3 presents a possible range of the extent of fixed-term middle-tenancy, from about 20 to nearly 45 percent of all leases. These estimates suggest that fixed-term leasing ranged from a sizable minority to a majority of all contracts to worker-tenants and middle-tenants. Thus, fixed-term leasing was common in the first half of the 1400s, even if decreased afterwards.

### *Transaction Costs and Tenancy Choice*

The following analyses show how landlords' economic interests in maintaining profitable farms shaped tenancy choice. Landlords' use of fixed-term and share-term leasing lowered the transaction costs of land management and labor supervision. Sharecropping lowered total transaction costs as distance from Florence and therefore, distance from the site of landlords' principal business activities increased, as the size of farms increased, and when crops required extensive capital outlays easily damaged by mismanagement and careless hand labor.

Land tenure and labor contracts are associated with different land management costs and labor supervision costs (review in Otsuka and Hayami 1988:44–46). If landlords do not want to work their own properties, they can hire wage laborers paid in fixed hourly rates or lease in share or fixed terms. Figure 5-1 shows that these three types of agricultural labor form a continuum along the dimension of the output-sharing rate (i.e., the amount of the harvest that the landlord shares with the tenants). At one end of this continuum, landlords share none of the harvest with wage laborers; at the opposite end, fixed-term lessees assume the entire harvest. Between these two extremes, landlords divide the harvest with their sharecroppers.

These three forms of agricultural labor entail two types of transaction

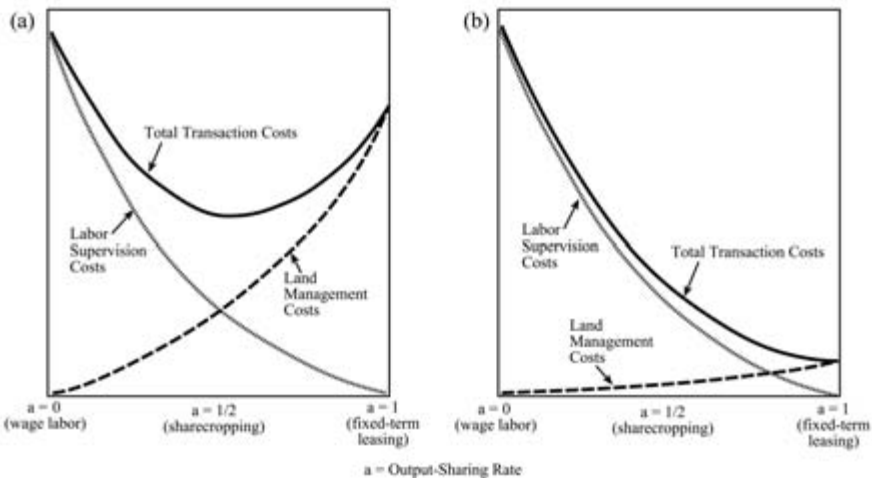


FIGURE 5–1 TRANSACTION-COST MODELS OF CONTRACTUAL CHOICE
(a) where labor supervision and land management costs are variable;
(b) where labor supervision costs are variable and land management costs are low and constant
Source: figure from Otsuka and Hayami (1988:45) (figure redrawn by Chase Langford)

costs: land management costs and labor supervision costs. Figure 5-1a shows the relationship between labor supervision costs and land management costs and the workers' share of the produce (Otsuka and Hayami 1988:45). Labor supervision costs decrease as the worker's share of the harvest increases. Because wage laborers do not share the harvest with the landlord, they receive no increase in pay for increased effort. As a consequence, they have few incentives to work hard, and the landlord's costs of labor supervision are high. In contrast, labor supervision costs are lowest for landlords of fixed-term lessees because the landlord receives the entire rental payment, regardless of the amount or intensity of labor (as long as the rent is paid before the harvest, or the lessee's effort is sufficient to provide a yield that makes it possible to pay the rent after the harvest). Landlords' costs of supervising share-tenants are intermediate because sharecroppers keep some of the increased output resulting from their efforts (Alston, Datta, and Nugent 1984:1124).

Land management costs follow the opposite pattern of labor supervision costs: land management costs increase as the worker's share of the harvest increases. Landlords' land management costs for wage labor are low because these workers have few incentives to misuse the land for their own short-term gains. Wage laborers do not receive any of the increase in output resulting from management practices. In contrast, fixed-term lessees can profit by overworking the land or by underinvesting in maintenance in the short term because they receive all of the increase in output associated with their practices, so land management costs to the landlord are high. Sharecropping has intermediate land management costs: they keep some, but not all, of the increased output resulting from their practices.

Total transaction costs are the sum of labor supervision and land management costs. Labor supervision costs are negatively associated with the worker's share, while land management costs are positively associated with the worker's share. Thus, when land management costs and labor supervision costs are considered together, sharecropping may have lower total transaction costs than either wage labor or fixed-term leasing (Figure 5-1a).

Conditions specific to the context, then, will determine whether sharecropping lowers the total transaction costs associated with agricultural production. Crops have variable production costs. Some crops are highly dependent on skilled labor because the profit margin is primarily determined by how carefully the plants are pruned or the crop is harvested. Other crops entail high land management costs—orchards and vineyards demand large initial capital outlays that are easily ruined by mismanagement. Sharecropping is often used with crops having both high land management and labor supervision costs because the labor supervision costs of wage labor and

the land management costs of fixed-term leasing are prohibitively high (Figure 5-1a).

Similarly, the physical distance between landlords and laborers affects land management and labor supervision costs. Such costs are virtually trivial when the landlord lives near the agricultural holding, but are expensive when the property is located far away. Location has differential effects on labor supervision and land management: supervision of wage labor must be essentially constant, while land management requires periodic, but not necessarily continuous, supervision. Thus, location may have a more variable effect on land management costs than on labor supervision costs. Land management and labor supervision costs are also related to security of tenure. Short-term leases offer few incentives for tenants to undertake expensive or time-consuming tasks that increase profits in the long term because tenants have no assurance that they will hold the lease when the benefits of investment occur. Security of tenure and long-term leases assure that tenants reap the benefits of costly land management practices. Finally, large properties have higher land management and labor supervision costs than small ones.

Thus, the types of crops, the location and size of the properties, and the length of the leases can change the relationship between the output-sharing rate and labor supervision and land management costs. Figure 5-1b presents a pattern in which land management costs are relatively low and vary less with the output-sharing rate than labor supervision costs because crops require less expensive land management practices, the distance between landlords and tenants is smaller, or leases are longer and incorporate incentives for the tenant to invest in the properties. Under these conditions, fixed-term leasing lowers total transactions costs.

The most important influences on Tuscan transaction costs were sectoral differences in economic interests. The leases show that landlords were primarily Florentines, whose principal occupations as merchants, artisans, and ecclesiastics shaped their participation in agriculture. They were urban dwellers, not rural landowners (like the English gentry). Their residences were given by the nature of the Florentine political economy based on urban commerce. The landlords' occupations and places of residence meant that they were unlikely to engage in the type of close, constant supervision required for wage labor (Caballero 1983:116). Thus, shape of the curve representing labor supervision costs in Figure 5-1a could not be changed dramatically. In contrast, however, the process of land management was not as intensive or as continuous, and as a result, the shape of the curve depicting land management costs in Figure 5-1a was more easily altered. For example, as Alberti ([1969] 2004:190) noted, if the distance between landlords' residences and their agricultural holdings was small, the possibility of landlords'

visits could have prevented gross mismanagement by fixed-term tenants.[13] Thus, fixed-term leasing may have reduced total transaction costs where land management was less problematic because of the properties' proximity to Florence (Figure 5-1b).

The primary Tuscan crops of grain, olives, and grapes also altered transaction costs. Olive groves and vineyards had high labor supervision costs and land management costs. They required large capital outlays that were easily ruined by poor management or careless labor practices. When land management and labor supervision costs were high and varied by the output-sharing rate, sharecropping could have reduced total transaction costs (Figure 5-1a). It may have been commonly used to grow grapes and olives. In contrast, grain production had lower labor supervision and land management costs; it did not require as much careful hand labor or such extensive investment. Labor supervision and, even more markedly, land management costs would have been lower for grain than for grapes and olives. Furthermore, to the extent that labor supervision costs associated with wage labor for all crops were prohibitive given Florentine landlords' primary occupations, the curve representing labor supervision costs in Figure 5-1b remains variable across the output-sharing rate as in Figure 5-1a. In contrast, to the extent that mismanagement by fixed-term tenants could be prevented by landlords' occasional visits to grain fields, the curve associated with land management costs varies relatively little in Figure 5-1b. Thus, fixed-term leasing may have been used more frequently with grain than with grapes or olives.

Although land management and labor supervision costs cannot be measured directly with the available evidence, empirical patterns of Tuscan leasing can be compared to the patterns expected on the basis of these transaction costs. I hypothesize that where land management costs were relatively low and constant across the output-sharing rate (i.e., where properties were small and close to Florence, where grain was grown as opposed to olive trees or vineyards, and where leases were long term), fixed-term leasing, as opposed to share-term leasing, was used to lower total transaction costs (Figure 5-1b). Where land management costs were relatively high and variable across the output-sharing rate (i.e., where large farms included vineyards and olive groves, where properties were far from Florence, and where leases were short term), sharecropping lowered total transaction costs (Figure 5-1a).

Ideally, I could have compared leases of properties with high labor supervision or land management costs (vineyards and olive groves) to those with low labor supervision and land management costs (grain fields). However, few

[13] Alberti ([1969] 2004:189) also noted that consolidated farms were easier to supervise.

**TABLE 5–4 TERM OF LEASE BY RESIDENCE OF TENANT FOR FLORENTINE LANDLORDS ONLY**

| | Residence of Tenant | |
|---|---|---|
| **Term of Lease** | **Florence** | ***Contado*** |
| Fixed | 100.00% (21) | 58.24% (53) |
| Share | 0.00% (0) | 41.76% (38) |
| Totals | 100.00% (21) | 100.00% (91) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses

| Statistics | DF | Value | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square Statistic | 1 | 13.272 | 0.001 |
| Fisher's Exact Test (right) | | | 0.000 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano*

leases were contracted for individual properties with high land management and labor supervision costs, making such an analysis impossible. Instead, I used the difference between plots of land on which only grain was grown and farms that typically included grain fields, as well as olive groves and vineyards. Then I compared leases of farms (or leases of multiple mixed holdings) that had high transaction costs to grain fields that had lower transaction costs. Finally, though all leases were relatively short term, I recoded the duration of the leases into two groups: shorter-term leases (one to three years) and longer-term leases (three and a half years to five years).

In Table 5-4, the term of the lease is cross-tabulated by the tenant's residence for Florentine landlords only. Florentine tenants, most likely middle-tenants, were more likely to be given a fixed-term lease than were residents of the *contado*. All of the Florentine tenants, as compared to about 60 percent of the tenants residing in the *contado*, were given fixed-term leases. Conversely, none of Florentine tenants were given share-term leases, as compared to about 40 percent of the residents of the *contado*. Florentine landlords were more likely to lease to other Florentines in fixed terms and more likely to lease to residents of the *contado* in share terms.

In Table 5-5, the term of the lease is cross-tabulated by the type of property. Landlords of plots of land sown with grain were more likely to lease in fixed

**TABLE 5–5 TERM OF LEASE BY TYPE OF PROPERTY**

| | Type of Property | |
|---|---|---|
| **Term of Lease** | **Plot with Grain** | **Farm** |
| Fixed | 100.00% (29) | 59.46% (66) |
| Share | 0.00% (0) | 40.54% (45) |
| Totals | 100.00% (29) | 100.00% (111) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses

| Statistics | DF | Value | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square Statistic | 1 | 17.326 | 0.001 |
| Fisher's Exact Test (right) | | | 0.000 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano*

TABLE 5–6 TERM OF LEASE BY DURATION OF LEASE

| | Duration of Lease | |
|---|---|---|
| Term of Lease | 1 to 3 Years | 3.5 to 5 Years |
| Fixed | 58.62% (34) | 74.71% (65) |
| Share | 41.38% (24) | 25.29% (22) |
| Totals | 100.00% (58) | 100.00% (87) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses

| Statistics | DF | Value | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square Statistic | 1 | 4.160 | 0.041 |
| Fisher's Exact Test (left) | | | 0.032 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano*

terms than were owners of farms. All owners of plots leased in fixed terms, as compared to about 60 percent of the owners of farms. Conversely, none of the owners of grain fields leased in share terms, as compared to about 40 percent of farm owners. Larger consolidated farms that often included buildings, vineyards, olive groves, orchards, and gardens were more often leased in share terms.

In Table 5-6, the term of lease is cross-tabulated by the duration of the lease.[14] This table suggests that fixed-term lessees held longer-term leases. Although these results are in the expected direction, they are borderline significant. Given that the nonrandomness of this sample may increase the association between the variables, these results should not be overinterpreted. Also, all leases were relatively short term; it is not clear that the differences of a few years represented in these leases had many practical implications.

I also compared the average size of properties leased under fixed and share terms. The average size of properties was 22.82 *staiora* for fixed-term leases and 123.08 *staiora* for share-term leases. Again, these results should not be overemphasized because of the relatively small number of leases for which size was given. (Only thirty-four of the fixed-term leases and eight of the share-term leases gave the size of the property.) Nevertheless, these results suggest that fixed-term leases were used more often for small properties.

Figure 5-2 presents two maps of the Florentine *contado*. In Figure 5-2a, share-term and fixed-term leases are plotted according to the tenant's toponym given in the leases, for all leases in which the landlord was Florentine. Figure 5-2a shows that fixed-term leases were more likely to be used when the tenant was Florentine or from a location near Florence. Sharecropping was more frequent when the tenant was from an outlying area. In Figure 5-2b, share-term and fixed-term leases are plotted according to the location of the land given in the

[14] The order of these variables is ambiguous. It is not clear whether landlords chose the term of the lease first and then chose a duration based on the term, or whether they chose the duration first and then factored the duration into the choice of the term.

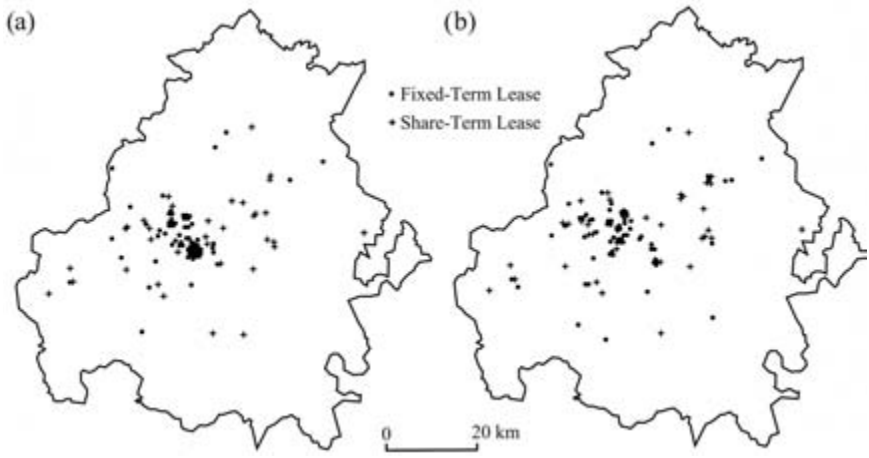


FIGURE 5–2 FLORENTINE *CONTADO* SHOWING FIXED-TERM AND SHARE-TERM LEASES
(a) by tenant's toponym; (b) by location of property.
Sources: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano* and boundaries and locations from Klapisch-Zuber (1983) (map drawn by Chase Langford)

leases, for all leases contracted by Florentine landlords. The same pattern is apparent in Figure 5-2b: fixed-term leases were more frequent for properties closer to Florence than were share-term leases.

These results can be explained in terms of the transaction costs of land management and labor supervision. Sharecropping lowered the total costs of land management and labor supervision as distance from Florence and therefore, distance from the site of landlords' principal business activities increased, as the size of farms increased, and when crops required extensive capital outlays that could be easily damaged by mismanagement. In contrast, fixed-term leasing lowered total transaction costs when landlords and tenants lived close by, when properties were small, and when crops had low land management costs. When tenants and landowners were Florentines living in close proximity, their relationship with each other and the possibility of the landlord's visiting the property regularly helped prevent gross mismanagement by the tenant. Land management costs were less variable across the output-sharing rate, and fixed-term leasing was used more often to lower total transactions costs. The size of the property and type of crop were also important. Large farms typically included vineyards and olive trees that raised labor supervision and land management costs and increased the use of sharecropping to lower total transaction costs. In addition, landlords may have given longer leases to fixed-term lessees than to share-term lessees to provide incentives for the former to undertake expensive tasks of land management. Given that fixed-term lessees were often Florentine and leased land nearby, landlords could more easily supervise long-term

leases (Emigh 1998*b*:360). These findings, then, suggest that share-term and fixed-term leasing were used to lower total transaction costs in accordance with landlords' economic interests as urban merchants.

Another major transaction cost associated with sharecropping is output underreporting (Datta, O'Hara, and Nugent 1986:145). Landlords depend upon the tenants, who harvest the crops, to report the yield accurately. If tenants underreport the yield, they increase their own share at the landlord's expense. If output underreporting is problematic, the total transaction costs represented in Figure 5-1a would be higher for sharecropping, reducing the differences among the total transaction costs of the three contracts. While output underreporting by sharecroppers was problematic in fifteenth-century Tuscany (Epstein 1994*a*:116, 1994*b*:131; Galassi 1994:126; Herlihy 1968:274), Figure 5-2 suggests that tenurial choices were not primarily shaped by output underreporting. Output underreporting would have been most pronounced for the farms farthest from Florence; if output underreporting had been the primary determinant of labor contracts, sharecropping would have been used less often as the distances from the landlords' residences increased. Figure 5-2, however, shows the opposite pattern. In Tuscany, output underreporting may have been handled primarily by hiring a manager, not though tenancy choice.

Finally, sharecropping, as opposed to fixed-term leasing, distributes risks between landlords and tenants (Cheung 1969:62; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:46; Rao 1987:1168; Reid 1975:430–436). Tenants' risk aversion affected Tuscan tenancy choice (Ackerberg and Botticini 2002:588, cf. Ackerberg and Botticini 2000:254). However, tenants' preferences for share-term leases are unlikely to explain entirely the use of sharecropping because risk reduction cannot explain the spatial distribution of fixed-term and share-term leasing.

### *Investment in Leasing*

These leases also make it possible to investigate whether landlords were more likely to invest in properties that were sharecropped or leased in fixed terms. Table 5-7 cross-tabulates the term of the lease by a variable that indicates whether or not the lease states that the lessor was required to provide inputs for the property. This table shows that share-term leases were much more likely to specify the lessors' inputs than fixed-term leases were. Table 5-7 in combination with Table 5-2, which shows that fixed-term leases were often given to middle-tenants, suggests that middle-tenancy was not accompanied by landlords' investment or involvement.[15]

[15] The small sample size prevents the construction of a three-way table based on Tables 5-2 and 5-7. In addition, the leases do not necessarily name the properties' owner, nor do they always state whether the lessee worked the property or sublet it to a worker-tenant.

TABLE 5–7 TERM OF LEASE BY LESSOR'S INPUTS

| | Lessor's Inputs | |
|---|---|---|
| Term of Lease | Lease Does Not Specify Lessor's Inputs | Lease Specifies Lessor's Inputs |
| Fixed | 87.96% (95) | 14.29% (6) |
| Share | 12.04% (13) | 85.71% (36) |
| Totals | 100.00% (108) | 100.00% (42) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses

| Statistics | DF | Value | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square Statistic | 1 | 74.630 | 0.001 |
| Fisher's Exact Test (right) | | | 0.000 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Notarile antecosimiano*

A detailed analysis of the leases supports this interpretation. As was typical of all Tuscan leases, the share-term contracts specified the lessor's and the tenant's obligations and inputs in detail. Typical inputs included oxen, seed, fertilizer, and loans. For example, on August 13, 1430, Antonio di Stefano leased a farm in share terms to Stefano di Giovanni, on behalf of Alessandra, the wife of ser Paolo di ser Lando. A pair of oxen valued at twenty-six florins, a donkey valued at about five and a half florins, and about fifteen florins in cash were also provided to Stefano at unspecified terms (*NA* 833, fol. 110r). Similarly, Michele di Silvestro leased a farm in share terms to Domenico di Bartolomeo and his brother, Giovanni, on August 15, 1420. Michele provided a loan of twenty-five florins, to be repaid when the farm was relinquished. The lease specified the amounts of seed and fertilizer that Michele had to provide. The tenants held an ox and a donkey at unspecified terms. The lease stated that the tenants had to bring Michele's share of the harvest to his Florentine residence and that Michele would pay the gate tax. Besides the share rent, the tenants had to provide a pair of capons, a pair of young chickens, and five dozen eggs (*NA* 11060, no. 110, fols. 138r–v).

Like the share-term contracts, leases to fixed-term worker-tenants are detailed, with variable conditions (cf. Jones 1954:176). Some contracts list detailed prescriptions for working the properties. For example, in a fixed-term contract given to a resident of a rural parish, the tenant had to work the land diligently, to maintain the hedges and ditches, and to refrain from felling any trees (*NA* 11060, fols. 382r–383r). In addition to the fixed monetary rent of thirty-five lire, the tenant had to provide the lessor with thirty-six *staia* of wheat and a pair of capons. This rural tenant probably worked the property. Similarly, in another fixed-term lease to a resident of the *contado*, the tenant was required to cultivate and work the land (*NA* 167, fols. 106r–v). In another instance, a lessor provided a fixed-term tenant with animals for working the property, valued at ten florins (*NA* 833, fol. 147v). Similarly, Antonia and Zenobio, fixed-term tenants of the abbey of San Bartolomeo di Ripoli (in the

*contado*), were required to cultivate the property well ("*bene cultivare*"). In addition to their fixed rent of eighty lire a year, they had to bring goods to the abbey, including wax, chickens, and a goose (*NA* 15591, fol. 49r).

The leases given to Florentines and middle-tenants are much less variable. They are brief, usually giving only the confines of the property and the rent. They do not contain requirements for working the property or clauses for providing livestock, seed, fertilizer, or other capital inputs. For example, ser Tommaso di ser Piero leased, in fixed terms, a farm with a house in the rural parish of San Martino a Montughi (in the *contado*) from a representative of Santa Maria Novella for two years, for twelve florins a year. The rent had to be paid every six months. The lease provides virtually no other details. Tommaso, a notary, was unlikely to have worked the property himself (*NA* 810, fol. 203r; other examples include *NA* 682, fol. 114v; *NA* 684, fol. 263v; *NA* 11060, no. 116, fol. 147r). The fixed-term leases to middle-tenants had a different character than share-term and fixed-term leases to worker-tenants because the former did not make provisions for lessors to invest in the properties or to supervise agricultural activities.

Some leases hint at the motives behind middle-tenancy. In one case, Antonia di Francesco Marini, a Florentine, leased part of a farm to Niccolaio di Lotto, also a Florentine, for four years, for ninety florins, and paid the rent at the time of the lease. Niccolaio then sublet half of the same property to Giovanni di Matteo, a rural resident, in fixed-terms, for the same price. However, the rent was due each year. If the rent was actually paid, Niccolaio would have profited. It cannot be determined whether Giovanni actually worked the property or sublet it. As was typical of leases to middle-tenants, the lease did not provide any capital for working the property (*NA* 682, fols. 127r–v). In this case, middle-tenancy was a form of speculation, in which the lessee tried to profit by paying cash in advance and collecting a higher rent later. This interpretation of fixed-term leasing as a financial transaction is consistent with the common use of fixed rents on properties held as mortgaged securities (Jones 1956:194). In another case, Bernardo di Zanobio, a Florentine, leased a farm to Francesco di Chimento Guidotti and Lagia di Lorenzo di Cecco Cioni, also Florentines, for thirty-five florins. Francesco, also acting on behalf of Lagia and another woman, sublet the property in share terms to a rural inhabitant (*NA* 9715, n.f., March 26, 1435). This lease differs from most other share-term contracts because it does not specify any inputs to the farm and gives no details about the lessor's and the lessee's obligations. The motivation for subleasing is not clear; it was undoubtedly part of a broader set of financial transactions only partially documented in these leases.

Another way that middle-tenants profitably used subletting was to speculate on the difference between the amount of the fixed rent and the share rent.

For example, in 1433, Tommaso di Andrea Lambertesci leased a farm to Bernardo di Lamberto Lambertesci in the rural parish of San Cristofano in Perticaia, in the *piviere* (an administrative unit that comprised several parishes; Klapisch-Zuber 1983:12) of Rignano (in the *contado*), in fixed terms, for five years for a rent of sixty florins a year. The lease says explicitly that Bernardo can sublet. The *Catasto* of 1427 states that Bernardo is wool manufacturer or merchant (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). A few days later, Bernardo sublet the property in share terms, for half the produce, to Piero di Pasquo and his brother, Masio, local residents of San Cristofano in Perticaia for two years. The lease specifically says it is leased "for working" ("*locavit etc. ad laborandum ad medium*"; *NA* 684, fols. 372r, 380r). As in the preceding example, this share-term lease provides no details about the operation of the farm and does not specify any obligations or inputs of either the lessor or lessee. In this and the preceding example, a Florentine fixed-term lessee sublet the property to a sharecropper. These leases to sharecroppers are unlike other share-leases that specified the parties' inputs and obligations. Middle-tenancy, then, as these two examples show, were aspects of Florentine business transactions (cf. Jones 1965:83). It was not, apparently, accompanied by investment in agriculture.[16] Furthermore, leasing a farm and subletting it to worker-tenants may simply have provided a small profit or secured a fresh food supply for urban dwellers who owned no rural property of their own (Kotelnikova 1985:752–758).

These leases suggest that landlords who wanted to invest in agriculture leased their property directly to share-term or fixed-term worker-tenants and provided inputs to increase productivity. Share-term leases and, to a lesser extent, fixed-term leases to worker-tenants, were accompanied by lessors'—probably landlords'—investment. This interpretation is consistent with landlords' employment of managers to supervise directly their worker-tenants when they made capital investments and provided inputs (Emigh 1996:715; Jones 1956:200–201, 1968:222). The detailed prescriptions for working the land, maintaining the properties, and providing produce that were common to both share-term and fixed-terms leases to worker-tenants have been interpreted as feudal labor services (Cohn 1999:19; Jones 1968:223; Kotelnikova 1974:21). It is more likely, however, that they, like tenancy choice and the deployment of a manager, were aspects of landlords' management and supervisory practices, driven by their economic interests as urban merchants.

In contrast, when landlords leased property to middle-tenants, it seems that neither landlords nor middle-tenants made investments. *Rentiers*, content

[16] Giorgetti (1968:761–764) made a similar argument: investments in fixed-term leasing in the eighteenth century were profitable only where there were long-term fixed leases (twenty-five years).

with whatever rent or produce the farm provided, leased their property to middle-tenants without making investments. It is notable that the two documents clearly representing subleases in share-terms to worker-tenants by a middle-tenant specify neither lessors' and lessees' obligations nor the lessors' inputs. In this context, where middle-tenants were urban merchants, they were probably uninterested in making investments to rural properties that were not their own. As Alberti ([1969] 2004:188) noted, investments in rural estates by individuals other than owners were unwise. Unlike rural middle-tenants in other contexts, the farms were not their primary source of income, nor their principal business activity.

In sum, the patterns of the use and distribution of fixed-term and share-term leasing, as well as differential investment in these forms, can be explained by landlords' substantive economic interests in agriculture. Florentines' involvement in agriculture diversified their risk and therefore, was part of their capitalist business practices. Leasing was a response to urban landlords' economic interests in reducing the total transaction costs of supervising and managing their often distant properties to increase their profitability (Emigh 1997*d*:438; cf. Ackerberg and Botticini 2000:254, 2002:588; Galassi 1992:88–89). Investments were made to increase productivity and profitability when Florentines intended to be involved directly in their tenancies. In contrast, investments were not made when leasing entailed financial speculation.

## Sectoral Transfers

### *Urban to Rural Transfers: Agricultural Investment*

These economic interests shaped two sets of sectoral transfers (discussed in the following two sections). First, urban to rural transfers primarily took the form of private Florentine investment in agriculture. Second, rural to urban transfers took place as Florentines converted rural profits and real estate to urban commerce, but also through restrictions that the Florentine city-state imposed on agriculture.

One aspect of urban to rural transfers was the investment of cash, livestock, and other inputs specified in the leases discussed in the preceding section; however, Florentines' investments profoundly influenced agriculture even beyond these particular investments (Cherubini 1967:113, 138; Pinto 1982:207–223). Florentines purchased land in rural regions and consolidated small, scattered plots into larger farms, providing capital inputs for the farms, as well as loans and livestock (Brown 1989*a*:103; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:117–119; Imberciadori 1951; Jones 1956:194–196, 1968:224–228). Consolidation could require extensive investment, especially when landlords built

outlying dwellings to relocate tenants from nucleated villages (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:117; Jones 1968:228). Ideally, a consolidated farm was composed of varied terrain, so that grain, as well as grapes and olives, would thrive (Alberti [1969] 2004:188). As a result of consolidation, by the fifteenth century, the land in many rural communities was owned primarily by wealthy landlords (Jones 1968:230–231). Migration to Florence was concentrated among the wealthiest and the poorest rural inhabitants (Herlihy 1968:266–268; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:112–115; see Jones 1956:193 for examples of some prominent Florentine families with rural origins). Because many wealthy migrants owned rural properties, migration to Florence increased absentee landlordism and concentrated Florentine ownership of rural properties.

Landlords' investments of loans and livestock increased productivity, especially when smallholders had been working plots without the benefit of animals or capital investments usually associated with consolidated farms (Cherubini 1967:138; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:50). Alessandra Strozzi, for example, noted that she provided an ox to a tenant because the farm needed it and that the expenditure would be repaid by a higher yield. She also noted that the farm would have had a higher current yield if improvements had been made earlier (Crabb 2000:69). Similarly, Alberti ([1969] 2004:188) noted that unless expenditures were made, a farm was unlikely to provide the expected produce. Many other landlords knew about the details of their farms, were involved in their management, and made improvements (Chapter 6; Jones 1956:184, 192, 201). Rucellai, for example, discussed the weather and harvests with his tenants (Kent 1981:75). Florentines were often admonished to attend to the management of their rural estates (Cohn 1999:19; Jones 1956:204–205). The introduction of sharecropping was also associated with novel cropping patterns, including a mixed agriculture of wine, olives, mulberry trees, and grain (Brown 1989*a*, 1989*b*; Emigh 1999*b*:472) that also increased agricultural income and productivity.

Other techniques also increased agricultural productivity. As commercial agriculture spread, producers increasingly used three-course rotations, instead of two-course ones, which reduced the amount of time land was left fallow. The fallow field was worked intensively. It was ploughed or hoed several times and commonly planted with beans in the spring. Beans improved the soil and gave the cultivator an additional crop. Sometimes this intensive cropping reduced the period of fallow to a few months or weeks (Herlihy 1968:252–253). Fertilization was common and several methods and sources were used, including green-manuring (ploughing under a crop), urban refuse and manure, and even wool clippings (Herlihy 1968:253; Kotelnikova 1974:20; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:13). The terms of some share-leases specified that tenants had to haul

manure from the stable to the fields or from the city to the farms. Some landlords specifically gave their tenants permission to remove urban refuse.

Historians discuss the extent and effect of these investments in a forum called the "return to the land debate" (Herlihy 1981; Jones 1965:83; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:133–135; Romano 1974:1904). Some historians argued that Florentines were purchasing land in rural regions to retreat from urban business activities and therefore, making few investments (Brucker 1969:88; Cipolla 1970:212; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:135–139; Luzzatto 1953:112; Rodolico [1905] 1970:149–151, 1933:326–330). Others, however, claimed that Florentines' rural and urban activities were both driven by incentives for profit (Butters 1985:5–6; Cipolla 1949:184; Clarke 1991:103; Goldthwaite 1968:246–251, 1980:49–50; Jones 1956:197–203; Tognetti 1999:94). Herlihy (1981) provided the best evidence for this debate and found little to suggest that Florentines withdrew from business ventures when they invested in land. In 1427, the upper 2 to 3 percent of the city's wealthiest families had no more invested in real estate than in business (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1978:254). Florentines apparently followed Giovanni Rucellai's advice that agricultural investments diversified portfolios and should increase together with business ones. Thus, Herlihy (1981:416) argued that when the Tuscan economy expanded, Florentines invested in both commerce and agriculture; when the economy contracted, they invested in neither. Increases in agricultural productivity, therefore, were highly dependent upon continued urban inputs and the strength of the Florentine economy. Both may have declined along with the loss of Tuscany's relative European power in the early modern period.

Urban demand for food was high and provided ample incentives for investment in agriculture. Food was frequently imported because of local shortages (Cherubini 1991:201; Dahl 1998:118–119; Hunt 1994:44–57; Jones 1966:384–385; Pinto 1978*a*:73–106, 1981:283; Tangheroni 1978). Sharecropping is often blamed for shortages because it was inefficient, unproductive, and exploitative (Brucker 1994:5–8; Epstein 1991:39). One standard interpretation of the Florentine loss of international advantage during the late Middle Ages was inadequate agricultural production, for which sharecropping was the culprit. Cipolla (1975:9), for example, argued that inadequate domestic food production created high food costs, which created high labor costs because grain prices and wages were tightly linked. In turn, high labor costs made it difficult for Florentine goods to compete internationally.[17] Furthermore, there was relatively little difference between urban and rural wages because urban commerce drew workers from rural regions (review in Brown 1989*a*:110–111).

[17] See also Footnote 7 in Chapter 2 for a related discussion of wages.

Even the urban and rural population tended to rise and fall in tandem (Emigh 2003*a*:1087–1088). Thus, the urban and rural economies were linked through prices, wages, urban demand for food, and urban investments in agriculture.

However, it is unlikely that sharecropping per se was the culprit for inadequate food production, at least in the fifteenth century. When sharecropping was accompanied by investment, it increased agricultural productivity (Chapter 7). This investment was a sectoral transfer from urban to rural regions. It took the form of private Florentine investment in rural farms.[18] Furthermore, it is unlikely that Florentines were using land as a diversion from their businesses. Instead, sharecropping was a capitalist strategy to diversify risk, and landlords used forms of leasing to lower the costs of labor supervision and land management.

### *Rural to Urban Transfers: Agricultural Surplus*

For industrialization to occur, resources must be transferred in the opposite direction as well, from the agricultural to the urban manufacturing sector. However, the concentration of urban power—urban bias—can divert too much surplus from rural to urban regions (e.g., Bates 1981:6–7; Bradshaw 1987:225; review in Chapter 3). Tuscany was, in fact, a likely setting for urban bias, given the preponderance of urban power. And, as discussed previously, there was also considerable rural to urban migration, another indication of urban bias.

In comparison to the city, the countryside was relatively undeveloped. Although urban growth and investment stimulated agricultural change, the gap between urban and rural development never closed. Differential power relations stemming from the differences in wealth and political rights reinforced Florentine control over agricultural production, including restrictions on trade in agricultural commodities, such as limitations on markets and requisitioning of grain (Britnell 1991:32; de Roover 1968:287–288; Epstein 1991:33; Herlihy 1958:110–116; Pinto 1978*a*:79–80, 1978*b*; Polica 1980:670).

Market restrictions imposed on agriculture clearly show that Florentines were more powerful than rural Tuscans, and these restrictions may have had negative consequences, but their effects should not be overdrawn. They did not, in fact, prevent investment in agriculture or preclude increased productivity. Though the officials in charge of grain supplies tried to regulate the price of grain and secure the transport of food from the *contado*, they were

[18] De La Roncière (2005:395–399) documented a wider pattern of Florentine investment through infrastructural development in the 1300s, which included roads, bridges, marketplaces, police, water transport, hospitals, and hotels. Though the mid-century epidemics disrupted some activities, some continued afterward.

largely unsuccessful (de Roover 1968:287–288; Goldthwaite 1975:25–27). Internal constraints on markets were gradually relaxed over time. The tax on grain brought into Florence was eliminated in the course of the fifteenth century or, at least, not enforced (Goldthwaite 1975:27). Furthermore, many Florentines were involved in agricultural production for profit; they wanted high, not low, grain prices. At the very least, this created tension between Florentines' different interests in agriculture: high grain prices that created profits for landlords, maintaining a sufficient supply of food for urban needs to prevent unrest, and low grain prices to curb urban labor costs (de Roover 1968:287–288; review in Herlihy 1958:111–112). Similarly, though guild regulations and restrictions are often blamed for Tuscany's economic decline, they were not strong enough to prevent some Tuscan wool merchants from relocating to rural regions (Brown 1989*a*:104–105; for the opposing view, see Epstein 2000*a*:127–142). Though rural protoindustry was not extensive, production of cloth, leather, pottery, and metalworking were common in the countryside (de La Roncière 2005:9–14; cf. Mill [1848] 1909:310–311). Furthermore, both the Florentine government and the guilds were quite flexible and took considerable steps to increase production and compete with foreign trade (review in Brown 1989*a*:107; cf. de Roover 1968:289–296).

Similarly, rural regions were subject to Florentine taxes, both direct taxes on individuals and assets and indirect taxes on agricultural goods.[19] Taxes were high; urban and rural dwellers complained about them and sought relief (Brucker 1977:472–473, 503; Cohn 1999:191, 250–254; Jones 1956:189; McLean 2005:638–639). Some Florentines argued that tax relief would promote rural prosperity, increase production, and decrease the risk of famine (Brucker 1977:223–224). The *Catasto* of 1427 was adopted, at least in part, as a way to rationalize and distribute equally the tax burden (Brucker 1977:483–485; Cohn 1999:9, 268–269; Molho 1971:84–86). The differential effect of taxation on rural and urban inhabitants, however, is difficult to disentangle. For example, though Florentines were allowed more tax deductions than rural inhabitants, they were taxed at a higher rate. Furthermore, citizens of Florence were supposed to be assessed forced loans that yielded interest, not direct tax payments, but their resulting shares of the Florentine public debt were often worth only a fraction of their face value (Molho 1971:87, 157–163). Finally, because taxation was based primarily on assets, urban landlords paid tax on their rural holdings but lessees paid few taxes and none on agricultural income (Emigh 1998*b*:357). Thus, as

[19] I focus on the relative taxation of rural and urban inhabitants. See Cohn (1999:13–16) for regional differences in tax policies; Cohn (1999:55–109) and Molho (1971:23–45) for rural taxation; Butters (1985:38–39), de la Roncière (1968), and Molho (1971:45–59) for indirect taxes; and Molho (1971) for taxation between the 1400s and the 1430s.

sharecropping spread in the fifteenth century, Florentines' share of taxation on rural products increased, while tenants' share decreased.

Thus, it is unlikely that taxation, prices, and market restrictions harmed rural regions, given that the regulations were contradictory and difficult to enforce. While the detrimental effects of such practices cannot be ruled out, they did not work in the theorized way; that is, they did not prevent the adoption of capitalist agriculture nor did they prevent investments in agriculture that increased productivity. Given that moderate sectoral transfers spur economic development (Chapter 3), these practices may have stimulated the commercial sector. Sectoral theories suggest that this transfer of surplus was necessary for the development of industrial capitalism because of the sectoral transfers from the urban to the rural regions in the form of agricultural investment.

## Conclusions

Sectoral differences between agriculture and urban commerce shaped substantive economic interests, which in turn, shaped sectoral transfers. In Tuscany, urban and rural residents had different primary occupations, which provided them with different amounts of resources and political power, giving rise to different economic interests. While the secondary historical literature provides some information about economic interests, I also used the fit between economic theories and patterns of leasing and investment to provide evidence about them.

Marxist and neoclassical theories suggest that incentives embodied in rental contracts influence landlords' use of, and investment in, them. The evidence presented in this chapter provides mixed support for these theories. Tuscan notarial documents from the 1420s and 1430s suggest that transaction costs of labor supervision and land management influenced tenurial choice. Differential use of share-term and fixed-term leasing allowed absentee landlords, perhaps with the help of a manager, to obtain profitable returns from their holdings. Thus, the incentives in the rental contract explained their use. The rental contracts' incentives, however, were not linked directly to investment. Given that much of the neoclassical and Marxist literature suggests that sharecropping is associated with underinvestment, it is surprising that most share-term leases specified landlords' inputs, in contrast to most fixed-term leases that did not. Furthermore, urban landlords invested more in properties leased to worker-tenants than to middle-tenants (who were more often fixed-term lessees).

Micro-level incentives fail not only to explain the patterns of investment, but also the distribution of landowning and cropping patterns that determined transaction costs. For example, where both landlords and tenants were rural inhabitants living in close proximity to each other, the supervision of

wage labor and management of fixed-term lessees were relatively unproblematic (as in England). In Tuscany, however, landlords' primary residences were in Florence, far from most of their farms. They could not easily prevent damage to their properties or force tenants to work hard or carefully. Middle-tenants were generally Florentine urban merchants, not rural inhabitants dependent upon agricultural income (as in England). Furthermore, typical Tuscan crops of olives and grapes (not widely grown in England) had high labor supervision and land management costs.

Thus, to fully understand the use of, and investment in, rental contracts, the context in which leasing was embedded—the Florentine political economy and the substantive economic interests it created—must be analyzed. Overall, this context was more important in determining the use of, and investment in, rental contracts than the incentives embodied in them. Tuscany's origin as a city-state and the well-developed Florentine economy based on urban commerce meant that political and economic power was concentrated in Florence. Florentines were protocapitalist merchants, who held land to diversify risk based on their sectoral economic interests. Urban commerce and manufacturing were profitable but risky. Agriculture returns were lower but more secure. Urban families invested and profited in agricultural holdings leased in both fixed and share terms, but they were supposed neither to create large profits nor to provide entirely for their families. Thus, Florentines were major landowners in rural regions where they invested in agriculture and, to a large extent, controlled agricultural production.

Florentine economic interests, stemming from their occupations and urban residence, shaped transaction costs, which in turn influenced tenurial choice. The spatial distribution of share-term and fixed-term leasing was a response to absentee landlords' need to supervise and manage their properties. Though fixed-term leasing could easily be supervised in the vicinity of Florence, elsewhere fixed-term leasing was unlikely to be feasible. Thus, entrepreneurial Florentine landlords used share-term leasing, especially on properties far from Florence. Landlords who wanted to invest in agriculture to increase productivity leased their property directly to share-term or fixed-term worker-tenants, provided inputs, and hired a manager to supervise the workers. In contrast, middle-tenancy appeared more often as financial speculation, unaccompanied by investment. Given this use of sharecropping, then, it is not surprising that share-term tenancy was more often accompanied by investment than was fixed-term tenancy.

As landlords invested in agriculture, the Florentine capitalist market transformed the countryside. Florentines purchased land, consolidated it into compact farms, and leased them to rural inhabitants. Fifteenth-century Tuscan sharecropping spread in response to urban as well as rural economic interests

(Emigh 1997*d*, 2000*a*). First, landlords' economic interests in supervising and managing their properties and increasing their income made sharecropping attractive. Second, after the mid-fourteenth century, there was a shift in the balance of power that gave tenants some bargaining power; though this shift did not erase the fundamental difference in power between urban and rural regions, it provided some representation of tenants' economic interests. Sharecropping may have been less risky for tenants and thus, preferable.

Florentines' investments in agriculture formed a sectoral transfer from the urban to the rural region. As they invested in farms, they often transferred profits from businesses to agriculture. Thus, this sectoral transfer took the form of private investment in agriculture. At the same time, Florentines' political power shaped agricultural policies. Surplus was also transferred from rural regions to Florence through taxation and requisitions. Thus, sectoral differences between urban commerce and agriculture shaped urban and rural inhabitants' possession of goods and land and their opportunities for income. Substantive economic interests flowed from the ownership of capital and land and from incomes, and such interests in turn shaped sectoral transfers, interactions, and relations (Chapter 3). My analysis of this pattern of sectoral differences, economic interests, and sectoral transfers illustrates the institutional nature of intersectoral relations and linkages. Instead of viewing sectoral relations only in terms of aggregate transfers, I traced the detailed and concrete patterns of sectoral transfers through sectoral differences and economic interests, thereby capturing the social institutional nature of such sectoral interactions.

Sharecropping has often been interpreted as a feudal form of agricultural production that delayed the transition to capitalism in Tuscany. Its spread has been viewed as a refeudalization of agricultural relations (Giorgetti 1972:146; Lachmann 2000:83–89) or, at best, a transitional form between feudalism and capitalism (Kotel'nikova 1975:282–284, 304–306; Mirri 1979:41). However, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that Tuscan sharecropping in the fifteenth century was a capitalist form of agriculture. Florentines' engagement in leasing occurred not because landlords and tenants were overly risk averse, lacked entrepreneurial skill, or were disengaged from the market. Fixed-term and share-term leasing were capitalist forms of land tenure, based on reducing transaction costs and risk diversification. The urban and rural ventures of urban protocapitalist merchants were shaped by the same profit motive. Thus, contrary to previous arguments that sharecropping was a feudal form of land tenure or that it did not represent a substantial change in productive relations, in this context, sharecropping did represent a fundamental change in rural regions and was driven by the capitalist, not feudal, elements of the economy (cf. Brucker 1994:5–8; Epstein 1991:39). However, as

the next chapter will show, sharecropping also erased institutional supports for rural markets as it spread and decreased rural autonomy. Therefore, even though sharecropping was a capitalist tenurial form because it was embedded with this particular Tuscan pattern of sectoral differences, economic interests, and sectoral transfers, it did not support a transition to capitalism.

# 6

# Sharecropping

## *The Consolidation of Property*

The *Portata* of Stefano di Lotto, a sharecropper in the parish of Santa Maria a Spugnole, states somewhat poignantly, "nothing of value is found here"[1] (*AC* 142, fol. 568r), indicating that Stefano and his family—his wife, their two adult sons, Piero and Lotto, and Lotto's wife—had no discernible taxable assets. The declaration, apparently written by the manager of the Medici farms (see Footnote 11), states that Stefano was a tenant of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and that he owed him fifty florins. This declaration forms a striking contrast to the ones from Montecatini and Castelnuovo, in which smallholders typically listed small plots of land, animals, and multiple debts to different individuals (Chapter 4). What were the differences in the systems of agricultural production in these two locations that gave rise to such different conditions? This chapter and the next one answer this question. This chapter does so by exploring in detail the patterns of agricultural production, markets, and property devolution in the sharecropping parishes of the Mugello; the next chapter does so by explicitly comparing agricultural productivity, rural income, and indebtedness in the sharecropping parishes of the Mugello and in the smallholding communities of the Val di Cecina.

Though forms of land tenure evolved slowly out of feudal tenures by a variety of means, the primary transformation in the fifteenth century was the gradual replacement of smallholding by sharecropping where urban, capitalist

[1] "*non si trova nulla di valsente*"

markets driven by commerce, manufacturing, and finance met rural, local markets that supported subsistence agricultural production. This spread of capitalist markets, as well as their underlying sectoral relations, had the potential—at least in the abstract—to produce a transition to capitalism, but did not. In fact, two sectoral relations that were preconditions for the transition to capitalism, rural investment and the transfer of surplus to the manufacturing sector, existed in fifteenth-century Tuscany, but did not produce such a transition, nor did they produce a domestic market (Chapters 3, 5). This chapter explains this paradoxical outcome by examining how individuals from the two sectors interacted in the process of agricultural production as sharecropping spread. Thus, it illustrates how the spread of capitalist markets and urban landownership, driven by Florentines' economic interests, erased rural market institutions.

To illustrate these points, the first major section of this chapter details the patterns of rural life in the sharecropping parishes so that they can be compared to such patterns in the smallholding communities. It discusses agricultural production, markets, and sharecroppers' property devolution. In contrast to the smallholding communities, where rural inhabitants' interactions tightly linked these institutions, in the sharecropping regions, they were delinked. Florentines controlled agricultural production and markets; rural residents' property devolution was largely detached from them. The second major section uses longitudinal qualitative evidence to examine the nature of long-term relationships between Florentines and rural inhabitants. It shows that where such relationships developed, rural inhabitants depended on Florentines to arrange their affairs. In the sharecropping parishes, this dependence shaped rural life, detaching local inhabitants from markets that were important to smallholders. Thus, together these sections show how rural market institutions eroded as the Florentine capitalist market and sharecropping spread.

I use the same strategy to examine sharecropping as I used to examine smallholding. I examine in detail rural life in two sharecropping parishes, San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole,[2] in the Mugello, north of Florence. I chose these parishes because they illustrate this tenurial form where its spread was driven by urban interests and capitalist markets and thus, was at the leading edges of capitalist developments. The Mugello was relatively close to Florence and had been integrated into its *contado* for a long time. It was a relatively prosperous region with fertile soil (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber

[2] Both parishes were in the rural quarter of Santa Maria Novella, in the *piviere* of San Giovanni in Petroio. Santa Maria a Spugnole, or possibly parts of it, was also called San Niccolò a Spugnole and San Giovanni in Petroio.

1985:51). San Piero a Sieve was on an important road and had some shops and an inn. The parish is characterized by the flat flood plain of the Sieve River and the hills rising above it. Santa Maria a Spugnole sits above San Piero a Sieve, atop these rolling hills. Wheat and other grains were more commonly listed in these parishes' *Catasto* declarations than wine or olives. The relatively flat terrain and fertile flood plain was ideal for cereal cultivation.

These parishes were characterized by the consolidation of property. Florentines purchased small plots of land, bundled them together as farms, and let them out to a single tenant family. Plots, once attached to consolidated farms, were rarely resold separately. While Florentines bought, sold, and inherited these farms, their ownership changed less frequently than did the plots in the smallholding regions. Thus, overall, landholdings were consolidated into relatively large units that were owned by Florentines and that changed ownership relatively infrequently.

In many respects, urban and rural economic interests intersected in sharecropping: it distributed risk, provided capital to relatively poor rural inhabitants (Chapter 5), increased productivity, and increased income for Florentines and sharecroppers (Chapter 7). Local inhabitants sold land for many of the reasons that smallholders in the Val di Cecina did. Once land had been consolidated by Florentines, however, rural inhabitants could no longer participate in land markets, and their ability to participate in commodity and labor markets must have been reduced. Thus, rural inhabitants' participation in markets decreased as urban capital penetrated rural regions and agricultural production was tied to urban capitalist business practices.

It is important to distinguish between asymmetrical and reciprocal sharecropping (cf. Imberciadori 1958:255; Kotel'nikova 1975:305–306, 1983*b*:98). Smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo practiced reciprocal sharecropping. Land was leased to neighbors living within the same community. Families generally used leasing to match household size to the amount of land under cultivation. Neighbors were alternatively lessees or lessors depending on their stage in their life cycle. In contrast, in regions of asymmetrical leasing, Florentines were always lessors, while rural inhabitants were always lessees, regardless of their life cycle (Emigh 2000*a*:37–39). In these Mugellan parishes, though there were some remaining smallholders and a few rural landlords, asymmetrical sharecropping predominated. The various branches of the Medici family were the largest landowners in these parishes; they had apparently originated from this region (de Roover 1963:35). This family purchased land there from the end of the fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century (Franchetti Pardo and Casali 1978). In addition, other Florentine families, including members of the Pepi and Cavalcanti families, owned land.

As in Chapter 4, I matched *Catasto* declarations to notarial documents. One interesting piece of evidence, however, comes from the relative scarcity of notarial documents for these sharecropping parishes, in contrast to the relative plethora of them for the smallholding communities. Of course, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions from the lack of documents because many records did not survive. However, it is possible that landlords, their managers, or their notaries took over the task of keeping records from rural residents, reducing the overall number of documents and producing an overall slow decline in literacy and numeracy in sharecropping regions.

I also use the personal correspondence of the Medici. Many Florentine families, as well as some rural families, kept extensive personal records, including letters and financial records (Emigh 2002:664–666). The surviving records of the Medici family are extensive—as were their landholdings—no doubt reflecting the extent of their political power. That they kept records and held land, however, was not unusual.

## Agricultural Production, Markets, and Property Devolution

In the smallholding communities of Montecatini and Castelnuovo, agricultural production, local markets, and property devolution were interlinked social institutions. Though agricultural production was oriented primarily to subsistence production, well-functioning local markets were essential for smallholders to arrange their affairs. In contrast, in the sharecropping parishes, though agriculture was still based on family labor, agricultural production and markets were generally controlled by Florentines, and property devolution was largely detached from these social institutions. Thus, in contrast to the smallholders in Castelnuovo and Montecatini, who appeared to be authors of their own transactions and used local markets to organize agricultural production, Mugellan sharecroppers had much less control over agricultural production. Instead, Florentine landlords and their managers assumed many of the duties and responsibilities of agricultural production. Patterns of landholding, investments, management practices, land markets, and property devolution illustrate this point.

### *Landholding*

By the fifteenth century, the penetration of the Florentine market had had a considerable effect on these regions. Although there was still a mix of smallholding and sharecropping in these two parishes, sharecropping

predominated.[3] Florentine landlords had purchased land in these parishes and had started to consolidate the land into farms. Farms, which formed a continuum between completely contiguous landholdings and entirely separate plots, were leased out as a unit to a single tenant family.

Consequently, rural inhabitants of San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole owned little land. Most of the inhabitants' 1427 *Catasto* declarations were short, listing few, if any, pieces of land and few debts. One of these debts was usually a relatively large one to the landlord. For example, Piero di Giovanni, a resident of San Piero a Sieve, was a sharecropper of Giovenco d'Antonio de' Medici, a Florentine. On his *Catasto* declaration, Piero declared that he and his family worked a farm of Giovenco's and that they owed him sixteen florins (*AC* 144, fol. 514r; *AC* 321, fol. 530r).[4] Giovenco d'Antonio de' Medici also declared that Piero was his worker on a farm in San Piero a Sieve and that Piero had a sixteen-florin loan. Some declarations, such as Giovenco's, gave the terms by which the landlord and tenant held the animals. The most common arrangements in these parishes were that the costs of, and profits from, raising the livestock were divided in halves between the landlord and tenant (Emigh 1996:714). Giovenco's declaration was typical: he declared that he had oxen valued at twenty-six florins, which were held between him and his tenant for half the damages and half the profits (*AC* 61, fol. 841r; *AC* 81, fol. 115v). Giovenco's *Catasto* declaration also gives his share of the farm's yield.

Some residents in these parishes also owned a few properties, such as the household of Agnozzo di Lotto, and his brothers, Cambio and Lapo, who were residents of Santa Maria a Spugnole (and were brothers of Stefano discussed previously, who lived in a separate household; *AC* 142, fols. 605r–606r; *AC* 177, fols. 517v–518v). Their household also included their wives and a few adult children. Their 1427 *Catasto* declaration lists a house and two pieces of land that they owned and worked themselves. They also sharecropped two farms owned by Florentines, one owned by Gostanza di Berto Cavalcanti and the other owned by Gostanza di Rosso Cavalcanti. Agnozzo's declaration indicates that he was a sharecropper of Gostanza di Berto Cavalcanti because his *Campione* lists a fifty-florin debt to her that the officials did not allow him to

[3] Of the seventy-three households in San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole, thirty-nine were sharecroppers of Florentine landowners (about 53 percent). Other households were share-tenants of rural landlords. Yet others were composed of widows or, especially in San Piero a Sieve, small merchants, who ordinarily did not engage in agricultural production. The remaining residents were either smallholders or had no discernible source of income (Chapter 7). Thus, the majority of residents engaged in agricultural production were sharecroppers.

[4] Piero's *Campione* gives Giovanni d'Antonio de' Medici as the landlord (*AC* 321, fol. 530). The scribe may have miscopied the name from the *Portata* to the *Campione*. In any case, Giovanni and Giovenco were brothers (*AC* 81, fol. 117v).

take as a tax deduction.[5] Gostanza di Rosso Cavalcanti also listed Agnozzo as a tenant on her farm in Santa Maria a Spugnole and listed a forty-florin loan to him (*AC* 38, fol. 342v; *AC* 74, fol. 154v). She also listed a pair of oxen valued at twenty-two florins. In addition, however, although Agnozzo's declaration did not mention it, he was also a tenant of Gostanza di Berto Cavalcanti. She declared that Agnozzo was her sharecropper and gave the amount of the loan as fifty florins (*AC* 53, fols. 1131r–v; *AC* 79, fol. 459v). She also declared that he held a pair of oxen valued at twenty-two florins.

Piero di Bartolo also owned land, but he leased out this property and assumed a tenancy of the Medici (*AC* 142, fol. 570r; *AC* 177, fols. 509r–v). Piero leased two of his three pieces of land to Giovanni di Chiaro, another inhabitant of Santa Maria a Spugnole, presumably in share terms.[6] Piero also sharecropped a farm of Niccola and Cambio di Vieri de' Medici in Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 78, fol. 482r). Both Piero and Niccola declared that Piero held a pair of oxen of Niccola's worth twenty florins but that he had no other loan from them.

Some of the Mugellan *Catasto* declarations in 1427 looked like the ones from Castelnuovo and Montecatini because the households had relatively long lists of property and multiple small debts to different individuals. For example, Iacopo di Lorenzo was a smallholder in Santa Maria a Spugnole. His declaration lists more than nineteen pieces of land that he and his household owned and worked, as well as livestock and a number of outstanding debts and credits (*AC* 142, fols. 617r–618v; *AC* 177, fols. 521r–522v). The total taxable wealth of his household was 663 florins (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981). His household was a large one and included his wife, his children, his mother, three brothers, their wives, and their children. As in Montecatini and Castelnuovo, some local residents were relatively wealthy in local terms, and they leased land to other rural inhabitants. For example, Simone di Giovanni, age forty, was a resident of San Piero a Sieve, who lived with his mother and his two sons. His household owned more than thirty-five pieces of land, some of which had been partially consolidated and leased as farms ("*podere*") (*AC* 144, fols. 565r–569v; *AC* 321, fols. 540v–544r). His taxable wealth of 976 florins

[5] According to the regulations of the *Catasto* of 1427, creditors were subject to tax on the amount of a loan because it was an asset, while debtors were allowed to subtract debts from their taxable assets. However, tax officials did not consider loans contracted between landlords and share-tenants to be true commercial debts or assets. Consequently, tenants were not allowed to deduct the value of these loans from their taxable assets, and the tax officials often did not assess landlords for them (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:16–17, 119). Thus, the way that Gostanza's loan is presented on Agnozzo's declaration indicates that he was her tenant.

[6] The *Portata* says, "*rende mi in parte.*" Though this phrase is somewhat ambiguous, it generally indicates sharecropping in this region.

was large, even in comparison to some Florentines (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1981).

Though some smallholders remained in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve, most inhabitants were sharecroppers of Florentines in 1427. Instead of owning and working multiple small plots of land, as in the smallholding parishes of Montecatini and Castelnuovo, rural inhabitants in these parishes generally owned only a few, if any, pieces of land.

### *Loans and Livestock: Investing in the Tenancies*

As these examples suggest, Florentines supplied loans, livestock, and other supplies on their sharecropped farms. The loan contracted between the landlord and the tenant was an integral part of share-tenancy both in Tuscany in general (Chapter 5) and in these parishes in particular. Rural indebtedness was common among smallholders, so the fact that sharecroppers were indebted was not particularly remarkable. But unlike smallholders' loans, those of sharecroppers were—somewhat like their holdings—consolidated. Smallholders typically owed money to a range of individuals. They might owe money to someone from whom they leased land, but there was no necessary connection between leasing and borrowing. In contrast, sharecroppers tended to owe a single, large debt to their landlords, which was a virtual condition of this form of tenancy. Thus, the nature of rural indebtedness in the sharecropping regions tied the rural inhabitants to particular Florentines and their capital in a way that the debts of smallholders did not. Similarly, the provision of livestock was also linked to Florentine capital. In the smallholding regions, it was also common for rural inhabitants to own livestock or to hold livestock in common with other rural inhabitants. These arrangements, however, were dispersed across many different individuals and were not necessarily linked to land holding. In contrast, in the region of sharecropping, the provisioning of livestock was linked to tenancy. Few individuals owned their own animals; again, they were dependent upon Florentine capital.

To show the extent to which landlords in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve provided loans or livestock to their tenants, I matched landlords' to tenants' 1427 *Catasto* declarations (Emigh 1996:711–716).[7] In thirty-eight of the forty-six tenancies for which it was clear that I could match the landlords' and tenants' declarations, either the tenants' or the landlords' declarations indicate that a loan or livestock was provided. In three cases, no loans were declared, but the landlords' declarations (and, in one case the tenant's)

[7] For more examples and methodological details, see Emigh (1996).

indicate that livestock was provided. In six of the cases where neither a loan nor livestock were provided, the holding was a small piece of rental property for which loans may not have been customary. In one case, the holding was described as twenty-one separate pieces of land. In the remaining case, an entire farm ("*podere*") was rented, without any indication of either loans or livestock being provided. Thus, the usual practice of landlords renting large farms in these parishes was to provide loans and livestock.

Typically, the landlord provided a loan and livestock, both of which were declared on his or her declaration, while the tenant declared the loan but not the livestock (Emigh 1996:713). For example, Stefano di Lotto's declaration (discussed previously) lists the loan of fifty florins from this family's landlord Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici but not the livestock (*AC* 142, fol. 568r; *AC* 177, fol. 508r). Giovanni's *Catasto* lists the loan for fifty florins, in addition to a pair of oxen valued at twenty-two florins and sheep valued at twelve florins (*AC* 49, fol. 1145r; *Monte comune o delle graticole, copie del catasto* [hereafter *MC* followed by the volume number] 75, fol. 670v).[8] Likewise, Lapino d'Azzino, a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 142, fol. 569r; *AC* 177, fol. 508r), declared a loan from Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici for thirty florins (*AC* 49, fol. 1145v; *MC* 75, fol. 671r). Giovanni's declaration lists the same debt for thirty florins, in addition to a pair of oxen valued at twenty florins and other livestock ("*bestie minuti*") valued at twelve florins. Matteo di ser Giovanni, the manager (*fattore*) of Giovanni's farms, also wrote Lapino's *Portata* declaration, which explicitly states that the household members were Giovanni's tenants. Lapino lived with his wife, his adult son, his son's wife, and their two children.

Antonio di Nanni Comandi's declaration followed a slightly different, though similar pattern. Antonio declared his age to be twenty-two (*AC* 142, fol. 554r; *AC* 177, fol. 505v). He lived with his mother, Mea, and his mother's daughter, Dianora, from a previous marriage.[9] He worked a farm of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, though this is not apparent from Antonio's *Catasto*. The *Catasto* officials allowed Antonio to take a debt to Giovanni as a tax deduction; perhaps they did not realize it was associated with share-tenancy.[10] Giovanni's *Catasto*, however, lists him as a worker (*AC* 49, fol. 1146r; *MC* 75, fol. 671r). Antonio's declaration states that the loan was ten florins; Giovanni's

[8] In 1448, the Medici had loaned to their 121 tenants in the Mugello cash and animals valued at over 4,700 florins (Jones 1968:225).

[9] The *Portata* states, "*La Danora sua figliuola da marito. Èssi marita, ma non ne [più?] avere a marito*" (*AC* 142, fol. 554r).

[10] This deduction did not affect the tax calculations because Antonio had no taxable wealth.

states that it was fifteen florins given to provide oxen. Giovanni also declared that Antonio had other animals ("*bestie minute*") valued at ten florins.[11]

Other landlords besides Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici followed the practice of providing loans and livestock. Their *Catasto* declarations usually followed the same pattern as well: the amount of the loan matched, but the livestock was declared on the landlords', not the tenants', declaration. For example, Puccino di Sandro was a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 142, fol. 553r; *AC* 177, fols. 505r–v) and a tenant of Simone di Giovanni, the wealthiest local resident of San Piero a Sieve (discussed previously; *AC* 144, fols. 565r–569v; *AC* 321, fols. 540v–544r). Both Simone and Puccino declared a loan for fifty florins, and Simone also declared oxen in the value of eighteen florins and fifteen goats and sheep valued at three florins and fifteen soldi.

Giovanni di Lagio was a resident of San Piero a Sieve (*AC* 144, fol. 516r; *AC* 321, fol. 530r) and a tenant of Tommaso di Francesco de' Medici, a Florentine (*AC* 55, fol. 887v; *AC* 79, fol. 565v). On his *Portata*, Tommaso declared that the family had a loan of twenty-three and a half florins, a pair of oxen valued at twenty florins, and three pigs held in halves. Tommaso's share of the pigs was seven and a half lire. Giovanni's declaration does not mention the loan, the oxen, or the pigs. In sum, local residents must have welcomed the loans and livestock that wealthy urban landlords generally provided. However, these resources also tied them to particular Florentine landlords and capital in a way that smallholders, with their multiple debts to different individuals, were not.

### *Management Practices*

Most landlords in these parishes were involved in their tenancies and invested in their share-tenancies beyond the provisioning of loans and livestock. Some declarations mentioned fertilizer, either the portion of the crop remaining after the harvest that was plowed under the ground as fertilizer (*sovescio*) (Herlihy 1968:253) or manure (*concime*) (*AC* 49, fol. 1140r; *AC* 55, fols. 887v, 888r; *AC* 60, fols. 83r, 86r; *AC* 142, fol. 573r). Other landlords' declarations note their

[11] Because Matteo di ser Giovanni apparently wrote the *Portate* of Stefano di Lotto, Lapino d'Azzino, and Antonio di Nanni, it seems unlikely that the difference between the documents—that the animals are mentioned on Giovanni's declaration but not on his tenants'—was an oversight. The *Portate* do not explicitly state that Matteo wrote them, but the handwriting is similar in appearance to the writing on the signed letters from Matteo to the Medici (e.g., *MAP* XIII, nos. 3, 42). Although Matteo wrote some portions of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's *Portata,* the listings for the Mugellan farms do not appear to be in his handwriting. Matteo may have seen no purpose in listing the oxen on Stefano's and Lapino's declarations (Emigh [1996:710–711] compared the tax regulations for loans and livestock). The pattern on Antonio's declaration, however, is slightly different from the pattern on Stefano's and Lapino's; it is not clear how the discrepancy between Antonio's and Giovanni's declarations arose.

monetary contributions for the maintenance of vineyards or other expenses (*AC* 51, fol. 699v; *AC* 60, fols. 83r, 85r, 86r). Some landlords also provided a loan of grain. For example, Iacopo di Tura, a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 142, fol. 572; *AC* 177, fol. 510r) was a tenant of Averardo di Francesco de' Medici. Averardo provided a loan of forty-five florins, twenty-two *staia* of grain, and four *staia* of fodder ("*biade*") (*AC* 60, fol. 85r; *AC* 81, fol. 53r).

Florentines controlled other dimensions of agricultural production. Absentee urban landlords commonly hired managers to reduce the transaction costs of leasing, including land management and labor supervision and, in particular, share-tenants' output underreporting (Chapter 5). The personal correspondence between Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, and the manager of their farms, Matteo di ser Giovanni, details the family's involvement and management practices. Although these letters illustrate the practices of a single landlord, other fifteenth-century landlords, including the Rucellai and the Strozzi, knew of the details of their farms and tenants (Crabb 2000:69; Kent 2002:40–41; cf. Dahl 1998:164–165). And, as the preceding sections illustrated, the leasing practices of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's family and other Florentines were similar.

The Medici were interested, involved landlords who carefully supervised their farms. The letters describe plans for working the farms and for transporting and selling grain at local and Florentine markets. The Medici arranged for capital improvements to their properties and relied on the farms for produce. For example, on March 11, 1437/8, Matteo wrote a detailed letter to Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici at Ferrara about the affairs of the farms. He told Cosimo about settling the accounts with the workers, the sale of grain, the poor weather, the state of the orchards and the person who tended them, the vineyards, the figs that were drying, digging ditches, and the health of the workers (*MAP* V, no. 645). On July 24, 1440, Matteo reported to Cosimo and Lorenzo more details about the weather and compared some of the farms' current yields to those of the previous year. At Ponzano (in the *contado*), the worker had been sick and the harvest was not good (*MAP* XIII, no. 42). In a letter of March 23, 1439/40, Matteo reviewed a detailed plan that he had made with Lorenzo de' Medici to make wine and fill casks. Lorenzo had proposed a plan that made little sense to Matteo, who asked him to reconsider. Matteo also reported the arrangements for transporting wheat, the carriers' negligence, a shipment of wheat to the officials of the *Monte* (the Florentine public debt), and the sale of some wheat in Scarperia (a town near San Piero a Sieve) in the previous November (*MAP* XX, no. 74).[12] In a letter of April 9, 1440,

[12] Borgo San Lorenzo, Petrone, and Scarperia, all in the *contado*, had major markets in the 1300s (de La Roncière 2005:138–139).

Matteo again described arrangements for tasting and transporting wine (*MAP* XX, no. 82). In a letter of March 12, 1439/40, Matteo mentioned settling the worker's accounts (*MAP* XX, no. 623; see also *MAP* XX, no. 74). He also reported that a worker had torn down a wall and rebuilt it on the other side of a recently purchased piece of land (*MAP* XX, no. 623). In another letter of March 24, 1432, Matteo reported on the work a mason was doing for them, including building a granary (*MAP* XX, no. 31). Thus, the Medici were not only involved with their farms, but they also made capital improvements. The Medici were not unique; other Florentines sold agricultural products with the intent to profit (Jones 1956:201, 204). Thus, sharecroppers, unlike smallholders, did not control agricultural production. Instead, Florentines actively managed the farms.

## *Land Markets*

To a large extent, Florentines also controlled land markets. In these parishes, while rural residents sold land, they rarely purchased it. The price of land was high, and land was sold in relatively large units that only the wealthiest local residents and Florentines could afford. The Medici, in particular, purchased land in this region up to the last two decades of the fifteenth century (Franchetti Pardo and Casali 1978:65–125; Lillie 1993).[13] They reorganized it, as much as possible, into compact farms and leased each of them to a single tenant family. Another Florentine family, the Pepi, also purchased land in this region in the fifteenth century (Emigh 1999*a*).

In comparison to later centuries, in the fifteenth century, farms were not entirely fixed spatially because land consolidation was in progress (Emigh 1998*a*:44–47, 62; Jones 1968:233–234; Pinto 1982:258–263). A comparison between the 1427 *Portata* and *Campione* declarations suggests that farms did not always comprise adjacent pieces of land. The *Campioni* often list properties as farms (*poderi*) without giving detailed descriptions of the boundaries. For example, the *Campione* of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici lists numerous farms (*poderi*), "containing pieces of land with confines as indicated in the *Portata*" (*MC* 75, fols. 668r–681r; listings of the Mugellan properties start on fol. 670r). In the *Portata*, the same farms are described in more detail. Some listings indicate that the farms comprised separate pieces of land, giving the size of the property or providing some of the boundaries of the individual plots (*AC* 49, fols. 1140r–1200r; listings of the property in the Mugello start on

[13] For a list of Medici purchases and possessions in the Mugello, see Franchetti Pardo and Casali (1978:65–112). The Medici's property expanded until the end of the 1400s when they were forced to sell numerous holdings (Franchetti Pardo and Casali 1978:140–144; Lillie 1993:63).

fol. 1144v). Other families' declarations also show that identical properties were often described in more detail in the *Portate* than in the *Campioni*.[14]

Even the land descriptions in the *Portate,* however, may have been summarized. For example, in the *Catasto* of 1427, Federigo di Francesco declared two properties in Santa Maria a Spugnole, one of which was located at Rabatta. The *Campione* lists three specific boundaries of the property at Rabatta, in addition to a general reference to other boundaries. On November 6, 1427, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici purchased property, located in Santa Maria a Spugnole at Rabatta, from Federigo di Francesco for 400 florins (*NA* 682, fol. 308r). It is likely that the farm in Federigo's 1427 *Catasto* is the one sold to Giovanni in this transaction. Although the farm is called a farm ("*podere*") in the *Portata* (*AC* 40, fol. 696r; *AC* 75, fol. 282r), the notarial document recording the sale of the property lists more than twenty separate pieces of land (*NA* 682, fols. 305v–308r). If the properties are identical, the varying descriptions illustrate how the *Portata* declarations summarized land descriptions. Even if they are not the same properties, however, the large number of different landowners listed in the boundaries of the pieces of land in the notarial document suggests that many farms were not composed of completely contiguous pieces of land.

Giovanni's purchase of land from Federigo was only one of his many purchases. Giovanni's sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, also bought land in the Mugello throughout the mid-fifteenth century. For example, in 1444, Simone di Giovanni, one of the wealthiest local residents of these parishes (discussed previously), sold several pieces of land in San Piero a Sieve in two separate transactions to the Medici for 14 florins (*NA* 676, fols. 311v–313r; *NA* 689, fol. 324v). In 1446, he sold land in San Piero a Sieve to Cosimo for 30 florins (*NA* 689, fols. 116r–v). In 1464, Simone's widow, Piera, sold land in a neighboring parish to Cosimo for 377 florins (*NA* 735, fols. 315r–316r). In 1439, Gostanza, the widow of Rosso Cavalcanti, sold Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici another farm in Santa Maria a Spugnole, for 200 florins (*NA* 686, fols. 294r–296v). The Medici bought land throughout the Mugello from other Florentines, entities, and local residents (*NA* 676, fols. 309–311r [1444]; *NA* 688, fols. 321r–322v, 347r–v [1444]; *NA* 1170, fol. 59v [1412]; *NA* 7936, fol. 75r [1410]; *NA* 7939, fols. 75r–76r [1410]; *NA* 9276, fols. 188v–189r [1455]; *NA* 11059, n.f., December 31, 1397).

[14] E.g., Giovanni d'Andrea di messer Allamanno de' Medici (*AC* 53, fols. 994r–995v; *AC* 79, fols. 255v–258r), Tommaso di Francesco de' Medici (*AC* 55, fols. 887r–889v; *AC* 79, fols. 565r–567r), Nanni di Bardo (*AC* 55, fols. 527r–v; *AC* 79, fol. 539r), Gostanza di Berto Cavalcanti (*AC* 53, fols. 1130r–1131v; *AC* 79, fols. 459–460r), and Giovenco d'Antonio de' Medici (*AC* 61, fols. 841r–844r; *AC* 81, fols. 115r–117v).

Matteo actively searched for properties for the Medici to purchase. In a letter of October 28, 1444, he told Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici about trying to arrange the purchase of a vineyard. The Medici had purchased a farm that did not have a vineyard, and Matteo indicated that the farm needed one. He urged Giovanni to make the arrangements quickly, before someone else could intervene and buy a house that was also entailed in the deal (*MAP* V, no. 536). In a letter of September 22, 1457, Matteo wrote that he was finally able to purchase a farm from a person named Piero and indicated that he would try to arrange for the transfer of the ownership, so that he would not have to pay another tax on it. It is not clear whether Matteo purchased it for himself or as an agent for the Medici (*MAP* IX, no. 316).[15] Other managers of the Medici were also looking for property for them and arranging purchases, sales, and leases in other locations (Dahl 1998:164–165).

Thus, the farms in these Mugellan parishes were not yet fixed geographically in the fifteenth century. Even in these parishes, already transformed by the Florentine market, the process of land consolidation was not complete. Farms were still relatively flexible units because landlords were still buying plots of land and combining them into larger units. Landlords could also reorganize existing farms into different combinations of individual plots.[16] However, it was primarily Florentines, not rural residents, who could purchase land. Property, even if not composed of completely contiguous plots, was sold in relatively large units, and the price was beyond what rural residents could afford.

### *Property Devolution*

As in all of Tuscany, property devolution in these Mugellan parishes entailed partible inheritance and dowries (Chapter 4). However, since most families owned little land, not surprisingly, there is little evidence about inheritance. Other than dowry transactions, few other documents can be linked to the 1427 *Catasto* declarations. For example, Piero di Stefano di Lotto, a tenant of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, who was listed in the household of his father, Stefano, in the *Catasto* (discussed previously; *AC* 142, fol. 568r; *AC* 177, fol. 508r), received a dowry of 60 lire for his wife, Antonia,

[15] Although Matteo says explicitly, "the farm is mine," he often purchased properties for the Medici in his name, acting as their agent.

[16] Alberti ([1969] 2004:188–189) argued that consolidated farms were ideal, but indirectly pointed to the difficulties of finding completely contiguous property that simultaneously supported grain, wood, and wine production. If the farm was not composed of contiguous properties, he argued that its parts should be in close proximity.

from her uncle (*NA* 792, fol. 188r) in 1434 when he was about thirty-two years old.[17] Stefano's income from the farm would have been 101 lire and 14 soldi (*AC* 49, fol. 1145r; *MC* 75, fol. 670v). Thus, the dowry was over half of his yearly income.

Cambio di Lotto, who lived in the household of his brother, Agnozzo di Lotto (discussed previously), gave a dowry of 105 lire to the future husband of his daughter, Niccolosa (*Diplomatico, Pupilli*, July 14, 1427). Agnozzo and his household owned several pieces of property and held several tenancies. The yearly income from their own property was about 20 lire, and their income from the sharecropped property of Gostanza di Berto Cavalcanti and Gostanza di Rosso Cavalcanti was approximately 220 lire (*AC* 38, fol. 342v; *AC* 53, fols. 1131r–v; *AC* 74, fol. 154v; *AC* 79, fol. 459v).[18] Similarly, Antonio di Nanni Comandi (discussed previously; *AC* 142, fol. 554r; *AC* 177, fol. 505v) was about twenty-seven on May 22, 1432, when he received a dowry for his wife, Lucia, in the sum of 100 lire (*NA* 792, fol. 132r). On December 11, 1435, he provided a dowry for his sister, Maddalena, not listed in the *Catasto*, in the amount of 150 lire (*NA* 792, fols. 242r–v). Their yearly income from the farm they sharecropped from Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici would have been 37 lire and 12 soldi (*AC* 49, fol. 1146r; *MC* 75, fol. 671r). Antonio di Nanni Comandi gave a dowry that was substantially more than his yearly income, unlike Cambio, who gave a dowry that was less than his household's yearly income. However, Agnozzo di Lotto's household was much larger than Antonio's.

Finally, another sharecropper, Piero di Ridolfo, provided a cash dowry for his daughter, Biagia, whose groom was from a neighboring parish. In his *Catasto*, he listed no property (*AC* 142, fol. 588r; *AC* 177, fol. 514r).[19] He listed three debts, to a baker, to the blacksmith, and to his landlord, Federigo di Francesco.[20] Piero's share of the yearly income at Federigo's farm at Cagialla was 52 lire and 3 soldi (*AC* 40, fol. 696r; *AC* 75, fol. 282r). In 1438, he

[17] In the Mugellan notarial contracts, the parties in the transactions often jointly gave or received dowries. Husbands often gave their wives marriage donations (e.g., *Diplomatico, Pupilli*, July 14, 1427; *NA* 686, fol. 199r; *NA* 792, fols. 132r, 188r, 242r–v).

[18] The monetary value of these crops is somewhat ambiguous because the *Catasto* officials did not use the standard prices for wine and grain. The amount of pork (though apparently not the value) is also ambiguous.

[19] He may have written his own *Portata* declaration. The declaration is written in the first person, and the handwriting is unique.

[20] The *Catasto* official mistakenly credited him for this debt, even though he identified Federigo as his share-landlord (*oste*) in his *Portata*. In any case, this deduction was irrelevant since he paid only a head tax.

gave 75 lire, a sum larger than his yearly income, for his daughter's dowry, when she was about seventeen years old (*NA* 686, fol. 199r). Of course, the dowries of wealthy Florentines, which could reach 2,000 florins (Kirshner and Molho 1978:417–418), dwarf these rural dowries.

The *Catasto* declarations alone provide little insight about how tenants provided their daughters' dowries because they rarely list assets. However, their landlords' declarations show that they had income from their share-tenancies, which may have provided cash for dowries. These sharecroppers were not wealthy, but their incomes were often higher than the poverty level of one florin of income a year used by the *Catasto* officials when calculating taxes (Conti 1966:45). Property devolution through dowries and inheritance played an even smaller role in the Mugello than in the Val di Cecina, since sharecroppers were more dependent on obtaining income through leasing than were smallholders. The diminished importance of the transmission of property between local families may explain why the Mugellan dowries were somewhat smaller than the ones in the Val di Cecina.

In the smallholding communities, I often traced a set of financial transactions surrounding the provision of a dowry. However, in the Mugellan parishes, this was not possible because of the lack of documentation. Of course, notarial registers are essentially unindexed and were frequently destroyed. Nevertheless, another possible explanation for the sparser documentation in the Mugellan parishes than in the communities in the Val di Cecina is that fewer rural inhabitants owned property in the former than in the latter. In the sharecropping parishes, Florentines owned much of the land, so rural inhabitants bought and sold property less often; in contrast, such transactions were the most frequently recorded ones in the notarial documents in the smallholding communities. Smallholders provided dowries through sets of financial transactions that involved local markets for land and credit. Such local markets, however, were much less extensive in the Mugello than in the Val di Cecina because few rural inhabitants owned land. In addition, few rural inhabitants may have made testaments, since they had little property to transmit to heirs. Thus, the institution of property devolution in the Mugellan parishes was largely detached from markets and from the actual process of agricultural production. Instead, it was linked to rural economic practices only through sharecroppers' incomes. Furthermore, Florentines, not sharecroppers, controlled markets and agricultural production. Thus, rural life was largely shaped by urban economic interests and practices in these Mugellan parishes.

## Long-Term Associations

I examine in more detail the relationships between some families of landlords and tenants in Santa Maria a Spugnole[21] who had extensive dealings with each other over long periods of time. This provides evidence for tenants who stayed in the parish or for whom I can find relatively extensive documentary evidence. Though most evidence suggests that the contractual terms of the leases were short-term, typically between one and five years (Chapter 5; Cohn 1998:194, 1999:34; Emigh 1997*d*:429), some tenants sustained long-term relationships with landlords. Tracing these families does not illustrate anything about the tenants who moved or who had relatively superficial relationships with their landlords. I cannot compare those who moved to those who stayed with these analyses, so I cannot document the prevalence of the patterns described in this section. It does illustrate, however, how rural inhabitants became dependent upon Florentines to arrange agricultural production when they became tied to a family of urban landlords. These conditions created leases that were quasi-heritable between generations of sharecroppers and allowed landlords to move tenants between farms based on family size or other characteristics. Thus, to the extent that this pattern prevailed, it stands in sharp contrast to the one created by the circulation of property in the smallholding communities, where smallholders matched the amount of land under cultivation to the size of the family and relied on local markets to arrange agricultural production.

### *Retaining Tenancies*

I found families who stayed in Santa Maria a Spugnole by matching sets of *catasto* declarations for this parish over the course of the fifteenth century and then by locating the corresponding landlords' declarations among the Florentine registers (for details, see Emigh 1999*a*; Chapters 4 and 7). The family of Nanni di Dietaiuti di Nuto provides an example of an association that lasted for three generations of tenants and landlords. In this case, the tenant family changed farms frequently. In 1427, Nanni di Dietaiuti di Nuto and his brother, Nencio, were residents of the nearby commune of Villanuova in the Mugello.

[21] In this section, all the places to which I refer are in the parish of Santa Maria a Spugnole, unless otherwise noted. Within parishes, there were often placenames for specific locations, such as farms or small settlements, such as Aglioni, Alliona, Docciole, and Trebbio. Again, in this section, all of these placenames refer to locations within Santa Maria a Spugnole unless otherwise noted. The actual settlements within the parishes were sometimes called the placename of the parish, either with or without the name of the saint (i.e., Santa Maria a Spugnole or Spugnole could refer to the parish or the settlement).

Their household included the wives and offspring of both Nanni and Nencio, including Nanni's adult son, Antonio. They owned a small piece of land of size four *staiora* and a number of animals. They explicitly stated that they were workers of Bartolomeo di Bartolomeo de' Medici (*AC* 177, fols. 397r–v). Bartolomeo also listed Nanni and Nencio as tenants on his farm (*AC* 79, fol. 605r), which Papi di Bartolomeo de' Medici, Bartolomeo's brother, rented, along with two other farms, for a fixed annual rent of eighty florins.

Between 1427 and 1435, Nanni di Dietaiuti and his family must have moved from Villanuova to Santa Maria a Spugnole, because in 1435, they were registered as residents of the latter (*AC* 570, fol. 62r). In addition, Nanni and his brother must have divided their households between these years, because Nencio and his family were not listed as members of Nanni's household in 1435. Nanni's household included himself; his wife, Margherita; their adult son, Stefano; Stefano's wife, Piera; as well as Nuto, Nanni's other adult son. They did not list any property on their declaration as they had in 1427. Although their own declaration does not mention it, they rented property from Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici. In Cosimo and Lorenzo's 1430 and 1433 declarations, Nanni di Dietaiuti was listed as one of the workers of a vineyard of six *staiora* at Schifanoia, in San Piero a Sieve (*AC* 373, fol. 736r; *AC* 407, fol. 42v; *AC* 470, fol. 528v; *AC* 497, fol. 183v).[22]

Nanni di Dietaiuti and his family must have assumed a more substantial Medici tenancy between 1433 and 1442. Although I was unable to locate his declaration in 1444 in Santa Maria a Spugnole, Nanni was listed as the worker at the farm at Aglioni in the 1442 declaration of Cosimo di Giovanni and his nephew, Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici (who had inherited the property of his father, Lorenzo) (*AC* 622, fol. 606r). Between 1442 and 1446, Nanni must have moved farms, because the 1446 declaration of Cosimo and Pierfrancesco lists Nanni as the worker at the farm at Villa d'Aglioni (*AC* 676, fol. 516r). It is difficult to determine whether Nanni was moved to a different-sized farm. Although the income from the farm that Nanni leased at Villa d'Aglioni in 1446[23] was higher than the income from Aglioni in 1442,[24] the income from Aglioni in 1446,[25] then worked by a different tenant, was ac-

[22] The *Campione* states that Nanni di Dietaiuti was the worker at Nuovoli in San Piero a Sieve (cf. *AC* 470, fol. 528v and *AC* 497, fol. 183v). This information must have been miscopied from the *Portata*.

[23] The yield was 96 *staia* of wheat, 24 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 24 *staia* of spelt, and 20 *barili* of wine (*AC* 676, fol. 516r).

[24] The yield was 78 *staia* of wheat, 18 *staia* of fodder, 18 *staia* of spelt, 15 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 8 lire (*AC* 622, fol. 606r).

[25] The yield was 120 *staia* of wheat, 24 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 36 *staia* of spelt, and 35 *barili* of wine (*AC* 676, fol. 516r).

tually higher than the income from the farm at Villa d'Aglioni as worked by Nanni in 1446 (*AC* 676, fol. 516r).

In 1431, Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici acquired the farm of Bartolomeo di Bartolomeo de' Medici that Nanni di Dietaiuti had worked in 1427 (*AC* 676, fol. 528r). Cosimo and Pierfrancesco noted that Nanni was the former worker on this property in their 1442 and 1446 *Catasto* declarations (*AC* 622, fols. 615v–616r; *AC* 676, fol. 528v). Thus, it appears that Cosimo did not retain Nanni di Dietaiuti as a worker on the same farm when he acquired Bartolomeo's property. Perhaps Cosimo leased the vineyard in San Piero a Sieve—a relatively small piece of property—to Nanni in 1430 and 1433 as a trial, to determine if he was a suitable tenant, and then subsequently leased him a large farm.

By 1451, Nanni di Dietaiuti had died and Stefano di Nanni di Dietaiuti, his son, was the head of the household that included his wife, Piera, and his brother, Nuto di Nanni (*AC* 755, fol. 1080r). Although they did not mention it, they were still tenants of Cosimo and Pierfrancesco de' Medici on the same farm. In their 1451 declaration, Cosimo and Pierfrancesco listed the sons of Nanni di Dietaiuti as their tenants at the farm at Villa d'Aglioni (*AC* 712, fol. 638r). Thus, although Nanni had changed farms several times, the lease of the last farm he had worked passed to his descendents. By 1457, however, Cosimo and Pierfrancesco moved Stefano di Nanni back to the farm at Aglioni, where his father had been a tenant (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 562r). The evidence from Cosimo and Pierfrancesco's 1457 declaration seems to indicate that Aglioni was a larger, more productive farm than the one at Villa d'Aglioni. The income from Aglioni in 1457[26] was higher than the income from Villa d'Aglioni both in 1457,[27] when it was worked by a new tenant, and in 1451,[28] when Stefano had been the tenant (*AC* 712, fol. 638r; *MAP* LXXXII, fol. 562r). In the *Catasto* declaration of 1460, Stefano's household included his wife, Piera; his brother, Nuto; his brother's wife, Lisa; as well as several minor children (*AC* 876, fol. 324r).

Between 1460 and 1469, Stefano and Nuto had divided their joint household, because the 1469 declarations list Nuto and Stefano as heads of separate households. Stefano lived with his two children, Menico and Maddalena. Their declaration states that he worked a farm of Pierfrancesco de' Medici (*AC* 964, fol. 289r). By 1469, Cosimo de' Medici had died, and his property was divided between his son, Piero di Cosimo, and his nephew, Pierfrancesco

[26] The yield was 120 *staia* of wheat, 18 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 27 *staia* of spelt, 35 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 8 lire (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 562r).

[27] The yield was 96 *staia* of wheat, 18 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 18 *staia* of spelt, 20 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 8 lire (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 562r).

[28] The yield was 96 *staia* of wheat, 24 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 24 *staia* of spelt, and 20 *barili* of wine (*AC* 712, fol. 638r).

di Lorenzo. Pierfrancesco's 1469 declaration lists Stefano as the tenant at Villa d'Aglioni (*AC* 924, fol. 316r). Stefano was moved back to Villa d'Aglioni, which must have been the slightly smaller, less productive farm,[29] possibly because of the loss of an adult male worker from his household, his brother, Nuto. Nuto still lived in Santa Maria a Spugnole. His household included his wife, Lisa, and Mea, their daughter. Nuto also declared that he worked a farm of Pierfrancesco de' Medici (*AC* 964, fol. 285r). In Pierfrancesco's 1469 declaration, Nuto di Nanni was listed as a tenant at the farm at Docciole (*AC* 924, fol. 315v). The income[30] indicates that this farm was somewhat smaller than the one he had worked together with Stefano in 1457. He probably had been moved to a smaller farm because his family's labor force was smaller.

Though the declarations for Santa Maria a Spugnole for 1480 are no longer extant, it was possible to locate the families of Stefano di Nanni and Nuto di Nanni in 1480 in their landlords' declarations. The property of Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo had passed to his sons, Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici. Stefano di Nanni had moved back to the farm at Aglioni (*AC* 1016, fol. 404r). The lease of the farm at Docciole had passed from Nuto, to his son, Domenico. The 1480 declaration of Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici lists Domenico, the son of Nuto di Nanni, as the worker at the farm at Docciole (*AC* 1016, fol. 403v). The *Catasto* of 1487 provides one more glimpse of this family. Dietaiuti di Stefano di Nanni was the head of the household that include his wife, Mattea, and their minor daughter. They sharecropped a farm of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici (*AC* 1138, fol. 297r).

The family of Nanni di Dietaiuti provides an example of a long-lasting association between a tenant family and the Medici. Nanni and his descendants were tenants of Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici and his descendants for at least fifty-seven years, from 1430, when Nanni leased the vineyard at Schifanoia from Cosimo, to 1487, when his grandson, Dietaiuti di Stefano di Nanni, was a tenant of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Cosimo's great-nephew. Twice, the Medici leased the farm to a tenant's son. The farms at Villa d'Aglioni and Aglioni were worked by both Nanni di Dietaiuti and his son, Stefano di Nanni. When Nanni di Dietaiuti died, Stefano di Nanni retained the lease at Villa d'Aglioni, Nanni's tenancy at that time. Similarly, when Nuto di Nanni died, the lease of the farm at Docciole was given to his son, Domenico. Nuto's brother, Stefano di Nanni, leased a separate farm, after working a farm jointly

[29] The yield from Villa d'Aglioni in 1469 was 96 *staia* of wheat, 18 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 18 *staia* of spelt, 20 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 8 lire (*AC* 924, fol. 316r).

[30] The yield from Docciole in 1469 was 80 *staia* of wheat, 18 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 18 *staia* of spelt, 20 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 6 lire *(AC* 924, fol. 315v).

with him. Both Stefano and Nuto seemed to have been moved to smaller farms when they divided their joint household. Nanni di Dietaiuti and his son Stefano did not remain tenants in one location, though they remained tenants of the Medici. Finally, it provides an example of sharecroppers losing their own land. Nanni di Dietaiuti's household owned a small piece of land in 1427, which disappeared from subsequent declarations (*AC* 177, fol. 397r–v).

The family of Giovanni di Chiaro di Iacopo provides another example of a long-term association between landlords and tenants. Although Giovanni and his family moved farms and landlords several times, they remained residents of Santa Maria a Spugnole, where they owned a little land for much of the fifteenth century. In the *Catasto* of 1427, Giovanni and his minor brother, Matteo, were listed as residents of the parish of Santa Maria a Spugnole. They lived with their mother, Pippa; their sister, Caterina; and Giovanni's wife, Caterina. They owned a number of small pieces of land that they worked themselves. They explicitly stated that they were workers of Averardo di Francesco de' Medici and of Piero di Bartolo, another local resident (discussed previously) (*AC* 142, fols. 549r–v; *AC* 177, fols. 502v–503r). Piero listed Giovanni as his tenant on two pieces of land, probably leased in share terms (*AC* 142, fol. 570r; *AC* 177, fol. 509r). Averardo also listed Giovanni di Chiaro as his tenant on the farm at Alliona (*AC* 60, fol. 85r; *AC* 81, fol. 452v). Averardo's land that Giovanni sharecropped may have been near to his own, because Averardo listed the "heirs of Chiaro," probably referring to the father of Giovanni di Chiaro, as a boundary of his property.

In 1430 and 1433, the same farm of Averardo was leased to Giovanni (*AC* 389, fol. 28v; *AC* 410, fol. 6r; *AC* 482, fol. 160v; *AC* 500, fol. 59v).[31] In the *Catasto* of 1435, Giovanni's household included his wife, Caterina; their three minor daughters; Matteo, Giovanni's brother; and Pippa, Giovanni and Matteo's mother. They owned a number of small pieces of land and declared that they worked a farm of Francesco di Giuliano d'Averardo de' Medici (*AC* 570, fol. 65r).[32] They also leased land from Piero di Bartolo's son, Giovanni di Piero (*AC* 570, fol. 45r).

Between 1433 and 1442, the patrimony of Averardo di Francesco de' Medici, held by Francesco di Giuliano d'Averardo de' Medici, became the

[31] The farm's yield was the same in 1433 as in 1430, except that it did not yield any pork. However, the *Catasto* officials apparently taxed Averardo for the amount of pork that had been declared in 1430. In the *Campione, "nel sechondo charne per lire 8 piccioli, lire 8"* was added to the list of the crops, and the value of this pork from the second *Catasto* was added into the farm's total yield, which was then capitalized at seven percent (*AC* 500, fol. 59v).

[32] It is not entirely clear why Giovanni listed Averardo's grandson, Francesco, as their landlord. In Averardo's 1433 *Catasto* declaration, Giuliano, Averardo's son, was listed as a member of Averardo's household, although Francesco was not (*AC* 500, fol. 63v).

property of Cosimo di Giovanni and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo and was listed in their *Catasto* declaration in 1442 (*AC* 622, fol. 618v). The farm at Alliona, which Giovanni and presumably Matteo had worked in 1427, 1430, and 1435, had been leased to another tenant, and Giovanni was explicitly listed as the former tenant (*AC* 622, fol. 619r). Cosimo retained Giovanni as a tenant, however, and moved him to what must have been a much larger and much more productive farm at Aglioni (*AC* 622, fol. 606v).[33]

In 1444, Giovanni was still a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole. Giovanni's first wife, Caterina, must have died, because Rosa was listed as his wife. Giovanni's daughter, Nanna, was also listed as a member of the household. They still lived with Matteo, Giovanni's brother; his wife, Maddalena; and Pippa, the mother of Giovanni and Matteo. By 1444, almost all of their own land had been alienated. They owned only a vineyard of one *staioro*. The extent of Cosimo de' Medici's land consolidation is apparent from the boundaries of this property; Cosimo was listed as the owner of land on three of the four boundaries (*AC* 570, fol. 77r). Giovanni still worked a farm of Cosimo and Pierfrancesco de' Medici, though his own declaration does not mention it. In the 1446 *Catasto* declaration of Cosimo and Pierfrancesco, Giovanni and his brother, Matteo, were named as the workers at Aglioni (*AC* 676, fol. 516r).

The same inhabitants of Giovanni's household were given in 1451 as in 1444: Giovanni; his wife, Rosa; his daughter, Nanna; and his mother, Pippa. Matteo, Giovanni's brother, and his wife, Maddalena, were also listed among the household members. However, a note on the declaration indicated that Giovanni and Matteo were no longer living in the same household by that time.[34] The small piece of property listed in the *Catasto* of 1444 was also given on their 1451 declaration and was held in common by them.[35] Sometime between 1446 and 1451, perhaps when the joint household of Giovanni and Matteo was divided, Matteo di Chiaro moved from the farm at Aglioni to one near Trebbio. In the 1451 declaration of Cosimo di Giovanni and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici, Giovanni and Matteo di Chiaro were named as former tenants at Aglioni (*AC* 712, fols. 637v–639r), and Matteo was given as the current tenant near Trebbio (*AC* 712, fol. 637v). The farm near Trebbio must

[33] The yield of the farm at Aglioni in 1442 was 108 *staia* of wheat, 14 *staia* of fodder, 13 *staia* of spelt, 35 *barili* of wine, and meat valued at 8 lire (*AC* 622, fol. 606v). The yield from Alliona in 1433 was 48 *staia* of wheat, 2 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 8 *staia* of spelt, and 8 *barili* of wine (*AC* 482, fol. 160v; *AC* 500, fol. 59v). The yields at Alliona were similar in 1427 and 1430 (Emigh 1999*a*:364). (There were two farms called Aglioni, so the one worked by Giovanni di Chiaro was different from the one sharecropped by the family of Nanni di Dietaiuti.)

[34] This declaration is damaged and the note is not clear: "*el detto Giovanni e partito più tempo fa [illegible] da Matteo suo fratello*" (*AC* 755, fol. 1089r).

[35] "*per non diviso*" (*AC* 755, fol. 1089r).

have been considerably smaller than the farm at Aglioni, as the income was much less.[36] Matteo may have been moved to a smaller farm because of the reduction in the size of the adult male labor force, since he no longer worked the farm with his brother. In 1457, Cosimo and Pierfrancesco again listed Matteo as their tenant on a farm near Trebbio (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 561v).[37]

In 1460, Giovanni and Matteo were listed in separate *Catasto* declarations in Santa Maria a Spugnole. Giovanni's household included his wife, Rosa, and his son, Chiaro di Giovanni.[38] Giovanni stated that he was sickly ("*infermo*") (*AC* 876, fol. 313r). Matteo's household included his wife, Maddalena, and their two children, Iacopo and Caterina (*AC* 876, fol. 317r). Part of the piece of the property listed in the *Catasto* declaration of Giovanni and Matteo in 1457 was again listed in their separate declarations in 1460, but part had been sold to Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici. The 1460 declarations indicate that the remaining property was subsequently sold to Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici and that it was listed in his 1469 declaration (*AC* 876, fols. 313r, 317r). Pierfrancesco's 1469 declaration gives the purchase date as August 30, 1465 (*AC* 924, fol. 323v). Matteo and his family must have left Santa Maria a Spugnole after 1460. Their 1460 *Catasto* declaration indicates that their 1469 declaration was in a different parish.[39]

However, Chiaro di Giovanni, the son of Giovanni di Chiaro, continued to live in Santa Maria a Spugnole and was the head of the household in his 1469 declaration. He was twenty-six years old and lived with his wife, Mattea, and their two minor daughters. He stated that he was a sharecropper of Pierfrancesco de' Medici (*AC* 964, fol. 261r). He also may have left the parish sometime after 1469. I cannot locate a declaration for him among the 1487 declarations for Santa Maria a Spugnole, and his 1469 declaration indicates

[36] The yield of the farm at Aglioni in 1446 was 120 *staia* of wheat, 24 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 36 *staia* of spelt, and 35 *barili* of wine (*AC* 676, fol. 516r). The yield of the farm at Trebbio in 1451 was 72 *staia* of wheat, 12 *staia* of broad beans and vetches, 24 *staia* of spelt, and 15 *barili* of wine (*AC* 712, fol. 637v).

[37] I cannot locate a farm for Giovanni di Chiaro in either the 1451 or the 1457 declaration of Cosimo and Pierfrancesco de' Medici, unless Giovanni was the tenant given as Giudoandrea di Chiaro, also a worker on a farm at Trebbio in Cosimo and Pierfrancesco's 1457 declaration (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 561v).

[38] Chiaro was apparently Rosa's son, not Caterina's. Caterina last appeared in the *Catasto* of 1435, and Rosa first appeared in the *Catasto* of 1444, so Caterina died sometime between 1435 and 1444. If Chiaro was sixteen in 1460 as indicated in the *Catasto* declaration, he would have been born in 1444 and thus Rosa's son.

[39] Next to his name in the list of the household members (*bocche*), the declaration stated, "*salda in lui detto numero 173.*" This information generally indicated the individual's location in subsequent declarations. The number 173, however, did not refer to Santa Maria a Spugnole, which was usually numbered 163, 164, or 165.

that he lived in another parish.[40] In 1469, Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici declared Chiaro to be his tenant on the farm at Agliaia (*AC* 924, fol. 321v). This was clearly a smaller farm than had been worked by his father and his uncle, perhaps because Chiaro was the only adult male worker.[41] In the 1480 declaration of Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Chiaro was given as a tenant on the same farm as in 1469 (*AC* 1016, fol. 409r). Thus, Chiaro was retained as a tenant when the farm passed from Pierfrancesco to Lorenzo and Giovanni, his sons.

Giovanni di Chiaro's family provides another example of a long-term association between tenants and landlords. This association lasted for three generations of landlords, from Cosimo di Giovanni, to Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo, to Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco, and two generations of tenants, from Giovanni di Chiaro to his son, Chiaro di Giovanni. Matteo di Chiaro, the brother of Giovanni di Chiaro, also leased a farm after sharecropping a farm with his brother for several years. The relationship between the landlords' and tenants' families spanned at least thirty-eight years, from 1442 to 1480. Giovanni di Chiaro was able to stay in the parish of Santa Maria a Spugnole because he became a tenant of Cosimo de' Medici when he obtained Averardo de' Medici's property. Although Giovanni did change farms, Cosimo retained him as a tenant, which allowed him to continue to live near his own property. The pattern of tenants' movements between farms suggests that landlords matched farm size to the households' labor capacities. Both Matteo di Chiaro and Chiaro di Giovanni may have moved out of Santa Maria a Spugnole after they sold all of their land.

Matteo di Piero di Piero's family provides an example of an intermittent, though long-term association between the Cavalcanti and their tenants. In 1427, Matteo was a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole. He lived with his wife, Margherita, and their children. They had four daughters and two sons, Piero, age twenty-five, who was lame; and Coso, age thirteen (*AC* 142, fol. 582v; *AC* 177, fols. 511r–v).[42] They declared that they owned a vineyard located in San Martino a Beriano.[43] Matteo listed a debt to Rosso Cavalcanti, although I can-

[40] His declaration states, "*al 87 in Chiaro detto Santa Maria Novella numero 1000.*" It is not at all clear where this parish is or if 1,000 was the number of a parish. The index for the documents for the *Archivio del Catasto* for 1487 lists the highest parish number as 234.

[41] The yield from Agliaia in 1469 was 48 *staia* of wheat, 15 *staia* of fodder, and 8 *barili* of wine (*AC* 924, fol. 321v). Cf. the yield in 1446 for the farm at Aglioni (Footnote 36).

[42] A note by Piero's name in the *Portata* says, "*è zoppo e z'è ratrato e non può andare a piè e pero tiene il sopradetto asino per suo chava[l]chare.*" Coso was an addition to the *Campione* and did not appear in the *Portata*. It is not clear why he was charged the head tax if he was thirteen.

[43] It is not clear where this parish is or how exactly how the place name is spelled, but the name suggests that it was in the *contado*.

not find a farm that they worked.[44] They were also sharecroppers of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici. Giovanni listed Matteo as his tenant in Santa Maria a Spugnole at Trebbio and declared that Matteo's brother also worked the farm (*AC* 49, fol. 1145r; *MC* 75, fol. 670v).

In 1430, Matteo was still a sharecropper at Trebbio. The farm was listed in the *Catasto* declaration of Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici, who had inherited their father's property (*AC* 373, fol. 734r; *AC* 407, fol. 40r). In 1433, however, Gostanza, the widow of Rosso Cavalcanti, declared that Matteo was a tenant on her farm at Colombaietta (*AC* 454, fol. 256r). Matteo's brother, Pippo di Piero, took over Matteo's tenancy at Trebbio. The 1433 *Catasto* declaration of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici lists Pippo as the tenant at Trebbio (*AC* 470, fol. 526v; *AC* 497, fol. 181v). It is possible—as suggested by the 1427 *Catasto*, which states that Matteo and his brother worked the farm—that Pippo had been working alongside Matteo all along and took primary responsibility for the farm between 1430 and 1433.

In 1435, Matteo and Pippo were registered as residents of Santa Maria a Spugnole, though in separate households. Matteo's household consisted of his children, including his adult son, Coso (*AC* 570, fol. 70r). Pippo had moved to Spugnole from the nearby parish of Santo Stefano a Cornetole (*AC* 570, fol. 11r). He lived in a household with his wife, Sandra, and their son, Giuntino. This family continued to reside in the parish. By 1444, Matteo had died, and his son, Coso, was head of the household. Antonia, Coso's wife; their daughter, Mattea; and Lorenzo, Coso's adult brother, were also members of the household (*AC* 570, fol. 34r). Coso and Lorenzo's lame brother, Piero, must have continued to live in the parish as well. Gostanza, the widow of Berto Cavalcanti, listed Piero,[45] a tailor, as a tenant in her house in Tagliaferro, for which he paid an annual rent of two pairs of capons (*AC* 624, fol. 547v). In the *Catasto* of 1451, Coso and his family still lived in Spugnole. Coso's brother, Lorenzo, and his wife also lived in the same household (*AC* 755, fol. 1076r).

Unfortunately, the family of Matteo di Piero disappears from the documentary record of the landlords of Santa Maria a Spugnole for a period of time. No documents suggest that this family held share-tenancies of the Medici after 1435. The 1442 and 1446 declarations of Cosimo di Giovanni and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici list Matteo di Piero as the former tenant on the farm at Trebbio (*AC* 622, fol. 605v; *AC* 676, fol. 515v). Furthermore, Gostanza, the widow of Rosso Cavalcanti, did not list anyone from Matteo di

[44] I checked through the declarations of Gostanza, the widow of Rosso Cavalcanti (*AC* 38, fols. 342r–345r; *AC* 74, fols. 154v–156r) and Rosso di Rosso Cavalcanti (*AC* 74, fols. 84r–v).

[45] The declaration says, "*Piero di Teo Fagralani.*" Piero's father, Matteo, was also called Teo, so this person appears to be the same Piero di Matteo that was listed in the *Catasto* of 1427.

Piero's family in her 1442 *Catasto* declaration (*AC* 618, fols. 357r–358v). In 1446 and 1451, the property that had been Gostanza's was listed on the declaration of Bernarda, the daughter of Bernardo di Filippo di Cione, Rosso's aunt, but no one from Matteo di Piero's family was given as a tenant (*AC* 667, fols. 281r–283v; *AC* 703, fols. 129r–130v). In 1457, however, Lorenzo, the son of Matteo di Piero, was given as a tenant on a farm at Cerreto in Spugnole. The farm was declared as joint property of Rosso di Rosso Cavalcanti, Gostanza's son, and Bernarda (*AC* 811, fol. 55r).[46] Although it is difficult to determine the exact nature and extent of the association between the family of Matteo di Piero and the Cavalcanti, it is clear that they had intermittent dealings with each other between 1427 and 1457. Matteo di Piero was definitely a tenant of the Cavalcanti in 1433 and his son, Lorenzo, was a tenant in 1457. Ownership of these Cavalcanti farms had been transferred between Gostanza and her son, Rosso, through his aunt, Bernarda.

Matteo and his family seemed to have been particularly enterprising and successful at finding tenancies in the parish. In 1457, Coso di Matteo rented a house and some land in fixed terms from Chirico di Giovanni Pepi, for an annual rent of sixty lire (*AC* 804, fol. 42r). They were also one of the few families in this parish that managed to purchase some property in the region, in contrast to most of the other families who sold their land, such as Giovanni di Chiaro and Nanni di Dietaiuti (for another example, see Emigh 1999*a*:371–374). After 1457, I cannot identify Coso di Matteo or Lorenzo di Matteo as tenants on any farms in the region, but they may have been a rare example of a rural family that used sharecropping as an avenue of upward mobility. Coso and Lorenzo's 1460, 1469, and 1487 declarations list small pieces of property that they owned in Santa Maria a Spugnole and a small house in Florence (*AC* 876, fols. 283r, 288r; *AC* 964, fol. 217r; *AC* 1138, fol. 234r).

The family of Lapino d'Azzino (discussed previously) provides another example of a family that remained sharecroppers of the Medici family for at least forty-two years, from 1427 to 1469. The association between the two families spanned at least two generations of landlords and tenants and possibly three. Lapino, his son, Pippo, and his grandson, Francesco, were tenants of the Medici (although it is not entirely clear whether Francesco was given a separate farm when he became the head of household). The farm also passed between three generations of the Medici, from Giovanni; to his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo; to Pierfrancesco, the son of Lorenzo di Giovanni. Furthermore, the family of Lapino d'Azzino stayed on the same farm at Cerreto for nearly twenty-five

[46] The 1457 declaration also implies that Matteo di Piero was the worker in 1427 ("*lavoralo Lorenzo di Teo Fagnini detto podere, e nel primo chatasto 1427*"), although Gostanza gave Agnozzo di Lotto as the tenant at Cerreto in 1427 (*AC* 38, fol. 342v; *AC* 74, fol. 154v).

years. The lease of this farm passed from Lapino to his son, Pippo. One reason for the long association may have been the rather large loans, sometimes reaching ninety florins, this family had. The size of the family, however, may have been irrelevant to their staying in one place. According to the Medici's *catasti*, Pippo stayed on the same farm at Cerreto in the mid-1440s and early 1450s, even though he was the only adult male worker in the household listed in his own *catasto* declarations during those years. It is interesting that Pippo and his family moved farms some time in the mid-1450s, just before their *Catasto* declaration of 1460, which lists three adult male workers, Pippo, and his sons, Francesco and Martino. Though Pippo may have been too old or too sick to engage in physical labor at that time, the household in the 1460 declaration still had a larger labor force than in preceding years (Emigh 1999*a*:351–355). Similarly, the association between the family of Francesco di Luca and the Medici lasted at least from 1435 to 1469, almost thirty-five years. This association spanned two generations of landlords, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici, and two generations of tenants, Francesco di Luca and Domenico di Francesco (Emigh 1999*a*:362–364).

The affairs of the family of Nanni di Domenico illustrate that landlords other than the Medici developed long-term associations with their tenants. Nanni di Domenico was a tenant of the Pepi family for at least thirty years, from 1427 to 1457, even though possession of the farms passed between the brothers of the Pepi family. It is possible that they were tenants on the same farm the entire thirty years, although they were certainly tenants on the farms at Rio and Capocandoli from 1427 to 1446, a span of nineteen years. Although the Pepi owned several farms in the Mugello, their holdings were not as extensive as those of the Medici. Thus, the Pepi could not follow the same strategy as the Medici by moving their tenants between their own farms. Some landlords may have moved tenants between farms to accommodate changes in family size, making it possible for families to remain in the same parish with the same landlord, though the tenancy changed. Though this was not possible for the Pepi, Nanni di Domenico and his family remained their tenants for a considerable period of time despite several changes in the composition of their family (Emigh 1999*a*:371–374).

Luca di Cola was a sharecropper in the parish of Santa Maria a Spugnole for close to twenty years, at least from 1427 to 1446, possibly longer, though he moved between several different farms and changed landlords at least once. He was the sharecropper of Gostanza di Rosso Cavalcanti for at least fifteen years, between 1427 and 1442, on different farms. Although the length of this association between the Cavalcanti and Luca di Cola was shorter than that of other families and their tenants, it was still considerably longer than the average duration of a lease in fifteenth-century Tuscany (Emigh 1999*a*:373–376).

Of course, many sharecroppers changed tenancies frequently. Especially after the plagues of the mid-fourteenth century, rural mobility was high and changes in tenancy were frequent (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:120; Jones 1956:196; Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:68; Niccolini di Camugliano 1925:16–17). Tenants often changed landlords, even when they stayed within a small region (Cohn 1999:34; Mazzi and Raveggi 1983:68).

Nevertheless, some tenants formed long-term associations with landlords. In these cases, the leases of the farms seemed to have become quasi-heritable when sons or brothers assumed the same tenancy as their father (even if the landlord had changed). In other cases, the association between the landlord and tenant seems to have been quasi-heritable when the son assumed a tenancy from the same landlord (even if the farm had changed). Other landlords and tenants may have followed the same practices. Members of the Rucellai family, another prominent Florentine family, leased to several generations of tenants at their properties at Quaracchi in the *contado* (Kent 1981:75).

### *Relationships Among Landlords, Managers, and Tenants*

Landlords, managers, and tenants also formed long-term relationships because other activities created social ties between them. For example, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's 1427 *Catasto* states that Nanni d'Orso was a worker on a farm in San Bartolo a Gagliano[47] (*AC* 49, fol. 1152v; *MC* 75, fol. 675v). Thirteen years later, in a letter of March 23, 1439/40, Matteo di ser Giovanni, the Medici's manager, reported that Nanni sold some grain (*MAP* XX, no. 74), and in a letter of November 15, 1440, Matteo reported that Nanni had been involved in a different transaction involving wheat (*MAP* XI, no. 455). The family of Antonio di Nanni Comandi (discussed previously), who sharecropped a farm of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, also had a long association with the Medici (*AC* 142, fol. 554r; *AC* 177, fol. 505v). In 1410, Antonio's father, Nanni, acted as an agent for Giovanni di Bicci when he purchased some land in San Piero a Sieve (*NA* 7936, fol. 75r) and Santa Maria a Spugnole (*NA* 7936, fols. 75r–76r).[48] Piero di Ridolfo was listed as a tenant of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici in 1430 (*AC* 373, fol. 734r; *AC* 407, fol. 40v), 1433 (*AC* 470, fol. 527v; *AC* 497, fol. 182v), and 1435 (*AC* 570, fol. 5r). He brought a letter from the Medici to Matteo on April 9, 1440 (*MAP* XX, no. 82).[49] On January 5, 1440/1,

[47] This farm may have been in the commune of Gagliano, which was near Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve.

[48] Here Comandi was listed as the name of Nanni's father; in the *Catasto,* it was written as a surname.

[49] "*Per Piero Ridolfi ho la vostra.*" In the Medici correspondence, Ridolfo was written as a surname; in the *Catasto*, it is written as his father's name.

ser Alexo di Matteo Galluzzi wrote to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici that Piero was imprisoned for not paying the salt tax (*MAP* V, no. 376).[50]

Several letters mention Nanni di Pierozzo, who may have been the son of Pierozzo di Neri. According to Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's 1427 *Catasto*, Nanni sharecropped a farm in Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 49, fol. 1145; *AC* 177, fol. 528r; *AC* 330bis, fol. 175r; *MC* 75, fol. 670v). Pierozzo was also listed as a tenant on Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici's 1430 *Catasto* (*AC* 407, fol. 39v). In the 1457 declaration of Cosimo di Giovanni and Pierofrancesco de' Medici, the heirs ("*rede*") of Pierozzo were listed as tenants on the same farm (*MAP* LXXXII, fol. 561v).[51]

On March 23, 1439/40, Pierozzo was a messenger for Matteo di ser Giovanni (*MAP* XX, no. 74). If Nanni was his son, he seemed to be carrying out the same tasks as his father (and thus provides another example of a long-term relationship). On March 24, 1431/2, Nanni brought one of Matteo's letters to the Medici (*MAP* XX, no. 31). On January 24, 1437/8, he wrote a letter to Cosimo in his own hand giving the details about the sale of farm goods and the fate of some other tenants who apparently died of the plague. Nanni told Cosimo that they would plant the fodder ("*biade*") when there was a break from the rain and snow (*MAP* XI, no. 110). A lease of a mill in Campiano, a town close to San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole in the Mugello, written by Matteo di ser Giovanni in 1431, names Nanni di Pierozzo as a manager ("*fattore*") of the Medici (*MAP* LXXXIX, no. 244). This contract, written in Italian, is very detailed and provides both the terms and the rent.

In fact, much of the documentary record in these parishes is linked to the Medici. Matteo di ser Giovanni also wrote the 1427 *Portata* declarations for several residents of Santa Maria a Spugnole, including Meo di Michele (*AC* 142, fol. 567r),[52] Stefano di Lotto (*AC* 142, fol. 568r), Antonio di Nanni Comandi

[50] "*Qui vene Piero Ridolfi e fu preso per la gabella del sale et al capitano et in niuno modo se ne puo trarre se non si paga qualche danno fallo dire cosa agli huomini del popolo che proveghino.*" It is not clear whether Piero was still a tenant of the Medici at that time. He was listed as a former worker of the Medici in their 1442 *Catasto* declaration (*AC* 622, fol. 606r).

[51] Though I cannot find a *Catasto* declaration for Nanni di Pierozzo in Santa Maria a Spugnole, Pierozzo di Pierozzo, the son of Pierozzo di Neri, was a resident there in 1444 (*AC* 570, fol. 109r) and 1451 (*AC* 755, fol. 1090r). It is therefore likely that Pierozzo di Pierozzo was the tenant on the Medici farm in 1457, though it is unclear whether he worked the farm by himself or with other family members. Betto di Pierozzo, who may have been another son of Pierozzo di Neri, was listed as a tenant in the nearby parish of Santa Maria a Campiano in the 1442 declaration of Cosimo di Giovanni and Pierofrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici (*AC* 622, fol. 618v).

[52] I can find no evidence that Meo di Michele was a Medici tenant. The 1427 *Catasto* declaration of Meo lists a small piece of property that he worked by himself and two mules. Meo declared his age to be thirty, and he lived with his wife, Maddalena, who was eighteen (*AC* 177, fol. 507v). Was he a day laborer for the Medici?

(*AC* 142, fol. 554r), and Lapino d'Azzino (*AC* 142, fol. 569r).[53] As previously discussed in this chapter, Stefano di Lotto, Antonio di Nanni, and Lapino d'Azzino were all sharecroppers of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici. The Medici also arranged other affairs for their workers: in 1428, a Florentine notary wrote a document excusing Nanni di Paolo, probably a Medici tenant, from the imposition of the head tax in the *Catasto*. The document was kept as part of the Medici family records (*MAP* XCIV, no. 183).

Letters written between the Medici and their manager, Matteo, provide evidence (in addition to the evidence provided by matching the *catasto* declarations of landlords and tenants across the fifteenth-century in the preceding section) that landlords were cognizant of their tenants' domestic situations, that they tried to find suitable farms for them, and that they tried to match the size of the farm to that of the family. In a letter of January 21, 1441, Matteo discussed at length which farm to give to a tenant, Giovanni di Nino. Cosimo had not been entirely pleased with his work (*MAP* XI, no. 348). According to the *Catasto* declarations of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici in 1427 and of Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici in 1430, Nino di Giovanni and his sons, Giovanni and Meo, were tenants in Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 49, fol. 1145v; *AC* 407, fol. 41r; *MC* 75, fol. 670v). In 1427, Nino declared his age to be eighty and declared his son, Giovanni, to be forty-six (*AC* 177, fol. 527v; *AC* 330bis, fol. 176v). In 1440, Giovanni would have been about fifty-eight years old. Like some of the other Medici tenants, the declaration of Nino di Giovanni is found in the *Aggiunte* of the *Archivio del Catasto*,[54] indicating that

[53] The *Portata* declarations do not explicitly state that Matteo wrote them, but the handwriting is clearly the same as the signed letters from Matteo to the Medici family (see Footnote 11). These *Portate* are written in the third-person singular. Neri di Berto Cavalcanti, the son of Gostanza Cavalcanti, wrote the *Portata* of Cristofano di Giovanni Marini, a resident of Santa Maria a Spugnole (*AC* 142, fol. 590r). Though I can find no evidence that Cristofano was a tenant of the Cavalcanti, it does provide another example of a Florentine writing a declaration for a rural inhabitant.

[54] Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber (1981) coded eight families as living in Santa Maria a Spugnole and as having *Campioni* found in the *Aggiunte* (*AC* 330bis, fols. 169v–178r). The heads of household were Agostino di Antonio, Francesco di Iacopo Delromagne, Pierozzo di Neri, Iacopo di Romagnetto, Nino di Giovanni, Salvi di Bartolo, Cecco di Nencio, and Berto di Bartolo. Berto di Bartolo, however, probably lived in the parish of San Michele a Montecuccoli (in the *contado*). Two other *Aggiunte* declarations, those of Benedetto di Grazino (*AC* 330bis, fol. 175v) and Nanni di Piero (*AC* 330bis, fol. 176r), suggest that these families lived in Santa Maria a Spugnole, even though Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber coded them elsewhere. Of these nine *Aggiunte* declarations in Santa Maria a Spugnole, four explicitly list tenants of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici: Pierozzo di Neri, Iacopo di Romagnetto, Nino di Giovanni, and Cecco di Nencio (*AC* 49, fols. 1145r–1146v; *MC* 75, fols. 670v–671v). Benedetto di Grazino and Nanni di Piero were tenants of Averardo di Francesco de' Medici (*AC* 60, fols. 85v–86r; *AC* 81, fol. 453r). The remaining three *Aggiunte* declarations of Agostino di Antonio, Francesco di Iacopo Delromagne, and Salvi di Bartolo list no assets, and I could not match these families to any farms. They may have been tenants on farms I cannot identify or day laborers. Or, they may have had little or no income.

the members of this family were newcomers to the parish. Unlike most of the declarations of the families who had lived in the *contado* for a while, Nino di Giovanni's declaration did not have the value of the previous tax assessment (the *estimo*), another indication that this family had recently moved to the parish. These families may have been attracted to the relatively well-stocked and capitalized farms found there.

In the letter of January 21, 1440/1, Matteo also discussed his arrangements for renting the farms near Trebbio (*MAP* XI, no. 348).[55] Matteo acknowledged the domestic situation of Cecco and his son, Berna, in discussing which farms to rent to them, noting that they liked to live near each other, but that one house was not enough for both of them. It is possible that Berna is the same person that Matteo wrote about in a subsequent letter of November 22, 1459 (*MAP* VI, no. 415) (if so, the letter would provide another example of a long-term relationship between tenants and landlords). Matteo sent Berna to Florence with some wine for Cosimo and Piero de' Medici to taste along with his letter, which explained Berna's situation, so that Giovanni di Cosimo would be able to decide which farm to lease to him. Berna and his family had a farm at Cafaggiolo (in Santa Maria a Campiano, near to Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve), but the Medici had asked that he be transferred to Fiesole (a town in the hills above Florence). Berna indicated that he wanted to stay at Cafaggiolo, and Matteo proposed a compromise: Berna would come to Fiesole for eight days to prune and sow. Matteo indicated that Berna had been a diligent worker. Berna's domestic situation was explicitly considered, both in the context of the inconvenience of his moving when his wife had several small children and in relation to the suitability of the farm to his family. Near the end of the letter, Matteo again admonished Giovanni to consider what to do in the context of the entire family (*MAP* VI, no. 415). This letter shows how Matteo mediated between the Medici and their tenants.

Similarly, in a letter to Cosimo and Lorenzo from Trebbio on December 26, 1438, Matteo relayed detailed information about the rental of some of the farms for the upcoming year. One of their workers, Marco di Domenico, brought the letter from Trebbio to Florence. Matteo reported that he had encouraged Marco to retain a lease for two other properties in addition to renting the Medici farm at Cupo.[56] One of the other landlords, Niccolò Valori, may have required a written

[55] The buildings at Trebbio suggest another way landlords could organize their tenants' affairs. They include the Medici villa, farms buildings, and a small church. A private church was convenient for an isolated hilltop location like Trebbio and could be used by the landlords, tenants, and their families. The two closest churches, Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Giovanni in Petroio (with the same names as the locations), were several miles from Trebbio, across hilly terrain (Lillie 1998*a*:89–91, 1998*b*:24).

[56] This farm may have been at the nearby parish of San Michele a Cupo.

lease, as Matteo reported that Marco was going to Florence to arrange the contract. Marco had told Matteo that he needed a loan of fifteen florins for one of his landlords, and another loan in the amount of seven florins for the other landlord, as well twenty-four *staia* of grain, to assume the rental of the Medici farm at Cupo. Matteo recommended that Cosimo and Lorenzo make this loan to Marco, adding that they would not be able to arrange a better rental (*MAP* XIII, no. 3). Again, Marco and his brother's domestic situations were explicitly considered with respect to the leasing arrangements: Matteo told Cosimo and Lorenzo that although the two brothers were not married, Marco had three children above the age of ten and intended to marry. In a letter of March 12, 1439/40, Matteo again told Cosimo and Lorenzo that he had moved some workers to other locations (*MAP* XX, no. 623). In a letter to Giovanni di Cosimo on January 2, 1445/6, Matteo reported that some workers wanted to move from their farms because they were unhappy about the tax assessment they received in their current location. Matteo urged Giovanni to try to make a suitable arrangement for these workers. The farms would improve, Matteo assured Giovanni, if the tenants worked more willingly (*MAP* V, no. 546). These letters suggest that Cosimo and Lorenzo and their manager moved the tenants between farms to account for their circumstances and, in particular, to match families and their domestic situations to farms. They knew their tenants and were personally involved with their affairs.

Although Florentines were undoubtedly more powerful and wealthier than their tenants, rural inhabitants had some advantages during this period of time. Depopulation reduced landlords' power over their tenants in the fifteenth century. In these parishes, as elsewhere in rural Tuscany, rural mobility was high and tenants were scarce because of labor shortages (Herlihy 1968:272; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:73). Matteo's letters suggest that tenants, especially good ones, were difficult to find. His letter of December 26, 1438, urging Cosimo and Lorenzo to rent the farm to Marco despite the loan because a better tenant could not be found suggests, as does the rest of the letter, in which Matteo complains more generally about the difficulties in finding tenants, that they were in short supply (*MAP* XIII, no. 3). Matteo also complained about the problem of finding honest tenants (cf. Dahl 1998:176). On July 24, 1440, he wrote to Cosimo and Lorenzo explaining that he tried not to be deceived by the tenants, but that he could not be everywhere at once. The best solution, he assured them, was to have dealings with good people (*MAP* XIII, no. 42).[57] Many rural inhabitants never repaid their loans (Giorgetti 1974:37; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber

[57] Of course, Matteo's comments about being deceived may reflect his own attempts to convince the Medici that he was properly supervising the tenants. It is also quite possible that Florentines deliberately manipulated their high status, as well as their cultural, political, and economic power. For example, one fourteenth-century Florentine suggested that landlords should be wary of conducting business

1985:106–107, 119–120; Pinto 1982:252–329, 423–424). *Catasto* declarations of Florentine landlords in the Mugello, Cante di Rustico Cavalcanti (*AC* 53, fol. 632r) and Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (*AC* 49, fol. 1146v), also have references to tenants who left farms without repaying their debts. Thus, landlords may have invested in their properties and considered their sharecroppers' wishes with respect to living arrangements to retain scarce tenants.

Along with rural depopulation, the relative fluidity created by land consolidation and the mixture of tenures assured that tenants had some leverage and bargaining power. Sharecropping was relatively flexible and less firmly institutionalized than in later centuries (Emigh 1998*a*). Though many rural inhabitants were landless, if they owned land, they could withdraw from onerous share-leases. The process of land consolidation assured that farms were not fixed geographically and that farm size, and thus the ideal tenant family for the farm, would change.

Though it is impossible to draw strong conclusions about tenants' behavior on the basis of Matteo's letters to the Medici, the tenants' efforts to get along with the landlords and the managers, as well as the landlords' concessions to their tenants, seem apparent. Of course, Matteo must have been using the letters to persuade the Medici that he was a capable manager (and perhaps even to excuse himself of any wrongdoing). Still, however, it is possible to view Matteo's letters as indirect, secondhand reports of tenants' requests for goods, money, and favors, as well as their own efforts to appear as diligent workers.

The strategy of getting along with the Medici or their manager to obtain a good tenancy must have been employed with considerable frequency in these parishes, in sharp contrast to the strategies of the smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo, who used local markets to arrange for their affairs. Retaining a tenancy over the long term must have required the tenants to stay on good terms with the landlord and their manager. Most of the residents in these parishes owned little land, and most of them lost it as the fifteenth century progressed. The boundaries of the properties show that much of the land, though not all, was associated with consolidated farms (some composed of contiguous pieces of land), owned by Florentines who had purchased it throughout the fifteenth century. It would have been quite difficult for these sharecroppers to purchase a large consolidated farm on the basis of their income from agricultural production (see Chapter 7 for values of income vis-à-vis the average value

in the countryside, where fellow workers could support each other. Instead, Florentines should conduct business in town, where they would be advantaged because workers would feel inferior (Dahl 1998:176). Alberti ([1969] 2004:189–190) also complained of lazy and dishonest tenants and outlined the landlords' role in teaching them diligence. The image of the dependent, inferior peasant and the superior patron landlord is also found in literature of the time (Cherubini 1991:327–346; Martines 1994:39–68; Romano 1974:1904–1905; cf. for the English case, Williams 1973).

of holdings). There were few small plots of land that smallholders could purchase, and in any event, few rural residents had enough income to buy even small plots. Because property did not circulate, rural inhabitants could not link property devolution or agricultural production to local markets. There were simply too few plots of land left for smallholding, which depended upon the circulation of property, to be successful. In Castelnuovo and Montecatini, the land was much more fragmented, land prices were lower, and many more rural residents could participate in land markets.

### *Leasing Practices*

Tenants also had strong incentives to get along with their landlords because of leasing practices in these parishes. Although written Tuscan share-term leases typically lasted five years, a letter to the Medici on January 21, 1440/1 suggests that leases were oral and were renegotiated each year (*MAP* XI, no. 348).[58] Even if the tenants formed lasting relationships with the Medici and their manager, there was no guarantee that these relationships would last. The Medici could end the association at any time if they were displeased with tenants or if a newcomer to the parish proved to be a more diligent worker. This pattern of oral leases may have been a new policy adopted over the course of the early fifteenth century: Bicci di Chiarissimo de' Medici leased in fixed terms a piece of land in 1362 (*NA* 2634, fols. 37v–38v, see also fols. 41r–v) and in 1414, his son, Giovanni di Bicci, rented a vineyard in share terms (*NA* 1772, fol. 112v).

This pattern of short-term oral leases is also suggested by the lack of written leases. Though many leases, both in share and fixed terms, can be found in the notarial registers for the first half of the fifteenth century (Chapter 5), I found very few written leases for property in the parishes of San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole. I found no written leases for farms of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici or his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo.[59] In contrast, notarial documents that record leases of their shops and houses in Florence are relatively plentiful (e.g., *NA* 683, fols. 143v–144v; *NA* 684, fol. 19v; *NA* 689, fols. 26r–v, 41v–42r, 111r). In addition to the lease of a mill in Campiano to Nanni di Pierozzo (discussed previously), two other leases for Mugellan property were kept as private records of the Medici family, not as public notarial documents. One leased unspecified property in San Piero a Sieve and a neighboring parish to a husband and wife for

[58] In this respect, the Medici were more similar to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landlords who gave annual leases than to other fifteenth-century landlords who gave five-year leases (Emigh 1997*d*:429; Jones 1968:220).

[59] Nor are any leases listed among the extensive documentation of the Medici's rural holdings given by Franchetti Pardo and Casali (1978:126–135).

a fixed rent (*MAP* LXXXIV, no. 78, *carta* 156); the other, an inn ("*albergo*") in San Piero a Sieve to Cecco di Tommaso (*MAP* CXLIX, no. 10).[60] The lease for the inn is also vague: it does not give the amount of rent or the value of the property. These leases, then, contrast sharply to the generally detailed leases found for other rental properties of the Medici and other Florentines (Chapter 5).

The only written lease I can match to a specific tenant in the 1427 *Catasto* was redacted in February 1433/4 for a fixed rent (*NA* 684, fols. 385v–386r). In this document, Bernardo d'Andrea de' Medici rented to Antonio di Nanni of San Piero a Sieve a piece of land with chestnut trees for three years for a rent of forty-eight *staia* of grain. Antonio di Nanni was associated with the Medici family for several years. His own *Catasto* declaration of 1427 is uninformative (*AC* 144, fol. 533r; *AC* 321, fol. 532v), listing only some livestock and his family members. The declarations of the Medici clearly indicate, however, that he worked other property, including that of Andrea di Lamberto de' Medici (*AC* 56, fols. 435r–v; *AC* 80, fol. 554r)[61] and of Pippa, the widow of Pagolo de' Medici (*AC* 59, fol. 779r; *AC* 80, fol. 449). The declarations of Pippa and Andrea also state that Antonio was a worker for messer Amerigo d'Antonio de' Medici, the rector ("*proposto*") of Santa Liperata.

In sum, this evidence, based on the tenants who were traceable through the documentary record, does not show the prevalence of long-term relationships. Instead, it shows how the spread of Florentine landownership erased the possibility of agricultural production based on smallholding and how rural inhabitants became increasingly dependent on Florentine landlords. As land consolidation continued, the pattern of long-term relationships between landlords and tenants probably spread as well. More consolidated share-tenancies in a region meant that Florentines could more easily move tenants between farms on the basis of family size (or the family's ability to be suitable tenants). Thus, the orchestration of agricultural life in these parishes through the Medici and their manager stands in sharp contrast to the flow of events in the smallholding communities in the Val di Cecina, where rural inhabitants directed their own affairs.

## Conclusions

The Medici, as well as other landlords in these Mugellan parishes, were actively involved with their farms. They invested in their properties, managed

[60] The *Catasto* declaration of Cecco di Tommaso states that he rented the inn in San Piero a Sieve for sixty florins a year. Cecco declared a large debt for rent in arrears and other expenses related to this property on his declaration (*AC* 144, fols. 547r–v; *AC* 321, fol. 537r).

[61] Andrea di Lamberto's *Campione* is misleading because it lists the worker of his property in San Bartolo a Petrone as "Domenhi." The *Portata*, however, lists Domenico as a worker only of a small portion of the property and Antonio di Nanni as the worker of the rest of it.

agricultural production, sold produce at markets, made capital improvements to the farms, and intervened in their tenants' domestic affairs. Tenants who successfully established relationships with powerful landlords had access to large, relatively well-stocked tenancies. Though the extent of long-term relationships between tenants and landlords cannot be determined, the nature of these relationships made the patterns of agricultural production, property devolution, and daily life in these parishes different from those in the smallholding communities of Montecatini and Castelnuovo.

In the process of investing in agriculture, Florentines—and the Florentine capitalist market—transformed the countryside. In Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve, landholding was characterized by the consolidation of property. Florentines' properties were not always organized into completely contiguous pieces of property, but land consolidation was well under way. Some smallholders remained, but most rural inhabitants owned little land and were sharecroppers who leased large expanses of land from Florentines as farms, in share terms, for half of the produce. Sharecroppers generally lived in a building on the farm owned by the landlord; in contrast, smallholders lived in houses they owned in nucleated villages. Landlords customarily provided loans, livestock, and other inputs to their tenants. Unlike smallholders in Castelnuovo and Montecatini, who owned animals and generally owed money to a range of different individuals, sharecroppers tended to have economic ties to a single Florentine landlord. Their obligations were, like their tenancies, consolidated. In these Mugellan parishes, Florentines, not rural inhabitants as in regions of smallholding, organized agricultural production. The Medici, who were major landlords in these parishes, were also involved in their tenants' everyday lives and, at least partially, organized not only their economic, but also their legal and domestic matters.

The nature of the documentary record may have been linked to Florentine control of agricultural production. First, less documentation may have been required in the sharecropping parishes. In the smallholding communities, the most common notarial contracts recorded real estate sales. In the sharecropping parishes, Florentines, not rural inhabitants, owned most of the land, and it was held as large consolidated properties that were not bought and sold as often as small plots were in the smallholding communities. Leases may have been oral, not written. Second, Florentines arranged most of their tenants' affairs; they quite possibly took over the record-keeping duties as well. Some documents concerning sharecroppers were kept as personal records of the Medici, not as public notarial documents. The Medici's manager wrote some sharecroppers' *Portate*. Landlords may have been the sole recorders of information about livestock; although most tenants and landlords declared the value of the loan on their *Catasto* declarations, usually only landlords declared

the value of the livestock. Thus, as Florentines controlled more aspects of agricultural production, rural inhabitants' need for record keeping may have been eliminated. Literacy and numeracy may have slowly declined over time as sharecropping spread.[62]

Urban capitalist markets spread into rural regions as Florentines purchased land on the basis of their economic interests as urban merchants (Chapter 5). As capitalist markets expanded, they simultaneously spread through and destroyed local markets, essentially creating a capitalist market that excluded rural inhabitants. This occurred because smallholders actively engaged in markets, not because they were market averse. Within any particular smallholding region, the wealthier (or more enterprising) local inhabitants were more successful. Once Florentines entered local markets, however, they completely dominated them. Florentines were much wealthier and had more resources than local inhabitants because of their earnings from urban commerce, so Florentines could generally outbid them. Florentines bought land from local inhabitants in the Mugello, who must have sold land for the same reasons as the rural inhabitants did in the smallholding communities, but were rarely able to purchase land. Thus, in regions of sharecropping, rural residents progressively lost their land and therefore, their primary basis for engaging in markets. Consequently, local market structures, such as those that existed in the Val di Cecina, which might have developed into capitalist domestic markets, were largely eliminated.

More generally, Florentines' control of sharecropping undercut the creation of a rural, domestic market several other ways. First, the mixed agriculture (including grain, olives, and grapes) practiced on most sharecropped tenancies made rural residents virtually self-sufficient and thus created disincentives for market participation (Brown 1989*a*:111; Epstein 1991:39; Malanima 1982:65). Their demand for other goods was limited (Malanima 1982:70). The crop mix was not solely a result of urban control because smallholders grew the same crops and they participated in markets, which helped organize agricultural production. Furthermore, this particular effect was not responsible for the lack of a market in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve, where the topography made cereal production more common than viticulture or olive production. However, in other regions, Florentine capital outlays may have expanded viticulture and olive production, reinforcing the contraction of the market. Second, landlords, such as the Medici, matched the sizes of farms and families, limiting the amount of surplus the rural tenants could accumulate and the amount of excess

[62] This may explain why McArdle (1978:161) described the sharecroppers and other rural Tuscan inhabitants as largely illiterate in the late sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries and dependent upon the landlords' managers to keep records of their leases and debts.

labor they could supply for industrial production (Malanima 1982:64–67). However, despite the fact that most rural households had looms, which could have been put in the service of protoindustry (Brown 1989*a*:108–110), there was relatively limited rural industry (Epstein 2000*a*:127–142). Third, it was probably Florentines who marketed the agricultural surplus. The most enterprising urban landlords, who raised agricultural productivity through their involvement and investment in agriculture, were likely to sell their crops on the market themselves. This practice undermined rural inhabitants' participation in commodity markets.

However, these arguments explaining the lack of a domestic market are incomplete because they miss how local markets operated in rural regions of smallholding and therefore, miss how such market institutions were erased as capitalist markets and sharecropping spread. Thus, it was not so much that markets did not exist because they were incompatible with sharecropping as a tenurial form (cf. Brown 1989*a*:110), but that local markets structures were eliminated by the inequality in capitalist markets. Florentines had much greater economic resources than rural inhabitants, so the latter had little chance of participating as equals in markets.

As the capitalist market spread, it undermined sets of compatible social practices, the interconnected institutions that supported smallholders' participation in markets. Most sharecroppers owned little property, the basis for smallholders' participation in land, labor, credit, and commodity markets. Sharecropping unlinked property devolution, agricultural production, and local markets; these were mutually reinforcing in smallholding regions. While smallholders used markets and property devolution to match family size to the amount of land under cultivation, in regions of sharecropping, landlords and their managers undertook the matching process. Landlords and their managers controlled many other aspects of agricultural production that smallholders coordinated through local markets: Florentines marketed the produce, provided credit, and arranged for leases. Leases became quasi-heritable, substituting for property devolution. Though inheritance was partible and dowries were still customary, they were not linked to markets. Dowries were more often given as cash than as land, and such cash did not come from interconnected sets of financial transactions as in the region of smallholding. In fact, there was little property devolution per se, in the sense of the intergenerational transmission of real estate, as in the Val di Cecina.

Thus, urban control of sharecropping—especially when it was a protocapitalist response by urban merchants to Florentine commercial conditions—limited rural inhabitants' involvement in markets, by reducing their needs

and opportunities to buy and sell land and agricultural commodities and to arrange credit with multiple parties. Sometimes, the intensification of market activities turns local markets into capitalist ones. In Tuscany, however, the intensification of capitalist markets undermined local markets and erased social institutions that supported them, inhibiting the growth of a widespread, domestic market. Thus, the form of the interaction between the urban and rural sectors did not produce a domestic market, even in the presence of sectoral transfers (investment in agriculture that raised its productivity and the transfer of surplus from agriculture to manufacturing) that are preconditions for the creation of such a market (Chapters 3, 5).

# 7

# Comparing Productivity, Income, and Indebtedness

Was sharecropping more productive than smallholding? Were sharecroppers miserably impoverished (review in Brucker 1994:6–7) or relatively prosperous (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:120; Klapisch and Demonet 1975:424; cf. reviews in Cherubini 1985:131–138; Cohn 2000:183)? To answer these questions, this chapter compares the agricultural productivity, income, and indebtedness of smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo di Val di Cecina and sharecroppers in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve.

## Agricultural Productivity

### *Using the Catasto*

In the *Catasto* of 1427, taxation was based on capitalized income from assets and the number of household members that households reported in their *Portate.*[1] As a consequence, the *Catasto* contains a relatively complete list of households' assets, the yields or income from these assets, and household members. For agricultural holdings, income was generally reported as detailed lists of crops obtained from the property. When smallholders worked their own property, their declarations list the income from these properties.

[1] In some regions, such as Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve, taxes were based on assets, not capitalized income. Still, income was usually reported.

However, the income from sharecropped farms was listed on the landlords' declarations. Thus, to obtain the yield for sharecropped holdings in San Piero a Sieve and Santa Maria a Spugnole, it was necessary to identify the landlords. (Chapter 4 describes the process of matching landlords' and tenants' declarations in Montecatini and Castelnuovo.) In matching these declarations, I used any information on the tenants' declarations that suggested the identity of the landlords. Some declarations state directly that the members of the household were tenants and give the landlord's name. Other declarations list a loan that was contracted between the landlord and tenant and give the landlord's name. I also identified landlords by examining the names of landowners that identified the boundaries of properties listed on declarations in these regions. I reformatted Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data to make an index to locate the page and volume of landlords' declarations. Though these methods do not guarantee that I found all the sharecropped holdings in this region, they represent a reasonably exhaustive search strategy (Emigh 1999*b*:468–475).

To analyze agricultural productivity, I coded variables directly from the *Catasto* declarations.[2] The dependent variable, total output, represents the monetary value of the yield, in soldi, for each property. I calculated this value using the standard prices that the *Catasto* officials assigned to crops in the Mugello (instead of using prices for the Mugello in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve and prices for the Val di Cecina in Castelnuovo and Montecatini), so that the monetary value of the output would be comparable in the two regions. The lists of the yields also provide the information for the total number of crops. The monetary value and size (in *staiora*) of properties was given on the *Catasto* declarations. To measure labor intensity,[3] I coded

[2] Some Tuscans misrepresented their assets and income to lower their tax assessments. However, few incentives for misreporting were correlated with land tenure, making comparisons by tenure—the strategy employed here—valid, even where absolute estimates are not. Furthermore, landlords' and tenants' declarations frequently matched (Emigh 1996, 2002), suggesting that the *Catasto* provides reasonably consistent information.

[3] This measure of labor intensity has some disadvantages; it excludes women's labor and does not account for the number of hours worked. However, increasing the number of adult male workers was the primary way that rural households obtained more labor, and therefore, this measure captures the most important component of labor intensity. Women's labor was essential for rural households, but males were primarily responsible for most agricultural labor. *Catasto* declarations, for example, indicate that widows never worked their land sown with grain. They always rented it to others (Emigh 2000*b*). Thus, excluding female labor is not highly problematic for these analyses. Similarly, the number of hours worked is less variable than the number of adult male workers because the former was determined primarily by the number of daylight hours. In Chapter 4, p. 83, I used a different measure of labor intensity to create a dependency ratio, which is sensitive to the cutoff values used for age.

the number of adult males, between the ages of fourteen and seventy, [4] from the lists of household members. I coded region as "0" for residents of the Val di Cecina and "1" for residents of the Mugello.

Although Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's data contain information on land tenure, this variable was frequently missing and was not recorded in enough detail to be usable in some of these analyses. Therefore, I coded land tenure from the *Catasto* declarations. Households indicated ownership by listing property in their declarations. Land tenure could be determined because the declarations usually state whether a household member or a tenant worked the declared properties. Other rural declarations state explicitly that an individual is a worker (*lavoratore*) and give the landlord's name. Elsewhere, tenants listed their debts, identifying the creditor as a landlord leasing in share terms (*oste*). Sharecropping was also indicated when households declared a large debt that the officials did not allow as a tax deduction. Based on the variable for land tenure ("0" for plots worked by owners and "1" for plots worked by sharecroppers), I created a variable that indicated whether households had only share holdings.

I used both the plot-level unit of analysis and the household-level unit of analysis, because some variables were either not defined at both levels or were missing so frequently that they could not be used at both levels. Land tenure is a property of plots of land, not households. There is no measure of the size of the labor force used on each plot of land, only the size of the labor force used on all the land held by the household. Size and value were usually missing at the household level. Total output, total number of crops, and region were defined at both the plot and household levels of analysis.

### *Productivity in 1427*

Though a range of classic economic literature (Lenin [1899] 1956:194–195; Marx [1894] 1977*a*:905, [1894] 1977*b*:938–940; Smith [1776] 1976:412–414) downplayed the productivity of sharecropping because it is inefficient or labor intensive, the neoclassical economic reinterpretation of sharecropping suggests that returns to forms of land tenure should vary relatively little (Cheung 1969:4; Morooka and Hayami 1989:34–36; Otsuka, Chuma, and Hayami 1992:2005–2006; Otsuka and Hayami 1988:49–52; Reid 1973: 113–114). However, in Tuscany, landlords' investments may have increased the productivity of sharecropping vis-à-vis other forms of land tenure (Chapter 5). Table 7-1 compares the overall productivity of plots of land in the

[4] Thus, I followed the practice of the *Catasto* officials, who considered men between these ages in the *contado* to be able-bodied workers and therefore, eligible for the head tax (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:10).

**TABLE 7–1 MEAN PRODUCTIVITY BY REGION AND LAND TENURE, PLOT LEVEL OF ANALYSIS**

| | Montecatini and Castelnuovo (smallholding regions) | Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve (sharecropping regions) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Worked by Owner | Worked by Owner | Sharecropped |
| Productivity (in soldi/*staiora*) | 51.69 (86.45) | 50.26 (52.05) | 120.77 (61.73) |
| Total surface area represented (in *staiora*) | 978.75 | 208.00 | 541.00 |

Note: standard deviations in parentheses
Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

two parishes in the Mugello and the two towns in the Val di Cecina by land tenure. Mean productivity is given in monetary output per unit of land (in soldi/*staiora*) for all plots that yielded some agricultural produce.[5] This table shows that sharecropping in the Mugello was more than twice as productive as smallholding either in this region or in the Val di Cecina. The average output for plots of land held by smallholders was about 50 soldi per *staiora* in comparison to about 120 soldi per *staiora* for plots held by sharecroppers.

Table 7-2 considers some influences on output at the plot level of analysis.[6] The dependent variable in these regression models is the logarithm of the monetary value of the total output (in soldi).[7] The logarithm of size is included in the equations to account for differences in the size of the holdings. Region is included in the equations to account for major differences between the Val di Cecina and the Mugello. In Model 1, the positive coefficient for the variable land tenure shows that net of the other variables, plots of land that were sharecropped had higher output than plots of land that were worked by their owners. Once the number of crops is included in the equation in Model 2, however, the coefficient of land tenure is substantially reduced. This result suggests that much of the effect of sharecropping on increasing total output was a consequence of sharecropped land supporting more crops per unit of land than land

[5] I excluded plots of land with no output from Tables 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3. The *Catasto* declarations give little information about why these plots were left uncultivated, so I was unable to analyze them. They may have been unsuitable for agriculture. Households were supposed to declare three-year averages of their agricultural produce. Consequently, plots that had been left temporarily fallow as part of the agricultural rotation system should be included in Tables 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3.

[6] The data used in Tables 7-2, 7-3, 7-5, and 7-8 represent a population, not a sample, so the p-values are advisory.

[7] I used logarithms of the variables whenever they improved the fit of the regression models.

TABLE 7–2 REGRESSIONS OF LOGARITHM OF TOTAL OUTPUT, PLOT LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

| | Model 1<br>Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value) | Model 2<br>Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value) | Model 3<br>Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 3.533<br>(.112)<br>(.000) | 2.503<br>(.165)<br>(.000) | 1.787<br>(.198)<br>(.000) |
| Log of Size | .437<br>(.073)<br>(.000) | .296<br>(.066)<br>(.000) | .129<br>(.066)<br>(.052) |
| Region | .591<br>(.286)<br>(.040) | .650<br>(.249)<br>(.001) | -.347<br>(.293)<br>(.238) |
| Land Tenure | 2.033<br>(.392)<br>(.000) | .656<br>(.385)<br>(.090) | .893<br>(.574)<br>(.122) |
| Number of Crops | | .895<br>(.116)<br>(.000) | .494<br>(.149)<br>(.001) |
| Log of Value | | | .563<br>(.073)<br>(.000) |
| N | 193 | 193 | 164 |
| Adjusted R-Squared | .494 | .615 | .516 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

worked by the owners. Grain was the most common crop in these Mugellan parishes, not wine or olives. Grain was not a high-priced crop like olives or wine, so landlords in this region were not increasing productivity (measured in monetary terms) simply by substituting a high-priced crop for a low-priced one.

In Model 3, I include the logarithm of the value of the plot of land to provide a rough measure of its quality. In addition, it provides some indication of the value of improvements to the properties. For share holdings, the value given in the *Catasto* declarations often included the value of improvements to the property, such as a house and other farm buildings (e.g., storage facilities, threshing floors, and stalls for animals) that landlords made to increase productivity. The positive coefficient on the logarithm of value indicates that the output of plots increased as the value of the property increased. Since the variable, value, is a combination of the intrinsic quality of the land and the improvements to the property, this result suggests that improvements to the properties increased productivity. In Model 3, once the logarithm of value is

included in the equation, the coefficient on number of crops decreases somewhat but remains a strong, positive predictor of output. These results suggest that planting more crops and investing in the properties increased productivity. Because number of crops remains a strong predictor of the logarithm of total output when the logarithm of value is included in the equation, these results also help to discount the alternative explanation of the differences in productivity: that landlords of sharecropped land owned the more fertile land, and that differences in productivity merely reflected underlying differences in the quality of the properties.[8]

These data also show that share-tenants were much more likely to plant broad beans (*fave*) and vetches (*vecce*) than other rural inhabitants. None of the plots of land worked by the owners, either in the Val di Cecina or in the Mugello, were planted with these crops. In contrast, either broad beans or vetches were planted on twenty-nine of the sixty-six sharecropped properties in these Mugellan parishes. These crops increased the fertility of the soil and provided the cultivator with an extra food or fodder crop (Herlihy 1968:253).

Table 7-3 presents results at the household level of analysis to consider whether sharecropping was more labor intensive than smallholding and thus, to suggest whether increases in labor intensity alone accounted for sharecropping's greater productivity. The dependent variable is the logarithm of the monetary value of household output. The independent variables are total number of crops of the household, the number of adult male workers, an indicator variable for households with only share holdings, and a term for the interaction between the number of male workers and households with only share holdings.[9] The number of adult male workers is included in this regression as a measure of labor intensity. If the number of crops was increased solely by labor-intensive means, by increasing the

[8] This measure of value cannot account for the regional differences in prices. They were higher in the Mugello than in the Val di Cecina because the land was more fertile and closer to Florence. Thus, in Model 3, the coefficient on region is insignificant once value is included in the equation because of these regional price differences.

[9] Total size of holdings, at the household level of analysis, was not used in Table 7-3 because it had many missing values. The inclusion of number of crops helps to account for differences in the underlying size of holdings. In separate exploratory analyses, not presented here, total size was included in the equation in Table 7-3. There were only fifteen cases for this equation. Number of crops was still statistically significant. Neither total number of adult male workers nor the variable indicating households with only share holdings was significant. This result again suggests that increasing the number of crops was the most important means of increasing overall output, not increasing the number of male workers. Given the small number of cases, strong conclusions cannot be drawn about insignificant coefficients. This exploratory analysis also suggests that Table 7-3 provides reasonable results without the inclusion of total size, as the pattern of the results was similar in the two analyses.

**TABLE 7–3 REGRESSIONS OF LOGARITHM OF TOTAL OUTPUT, HOUSEHOLD LEVEL OF ANALYSIS**

| | Coefficient (std. error) (p-value) |
|---|---|
| Intercept | 3.895<br>(.267)<br>(.000) |
| Number of Crops | .530<br>(.069)<br>(.000) |
| Number of Adult Male Workers | .368<br>(.104)<br>(.001) |
| Only Share Holdings | 1.303<br>(.520)<br>(.014) |
| Workers x Only Share Holdings | .068<br>(.335)<br>(.839) |
| N | 103 |
| Adjusted R-Squared | .570 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

number of adult male workers, then the number of crops should have no effect once the number of adult male workers is included in the equation. As Table 7-3 shows, however, the number of crops has a positive effect on total output separate from the effect of the number of adult male workers. This result suggests that the number of crops had an effect on increasing total output that was not achieved solely through labor intensity. Table 7-3 assesses the labor intensity of sharecropping one other way. It includes an interaction term of the number of adult male workers and sharecropping to assess whether the slope of the coefficient for the number of workers is different for sharecroppers and other rural inhabitants. As Table 7-3 shows, however, the coefficient of this interaction term is nearly zero. Thus, the relationship between the number of adult male workers and output in households of sharecroppers and households of other rural inhabitants was the same. This evidence again suggests that sharecropping was no more labor intensive than smallholding. Although the coefficient on the number of adult male workers indicates that an increase in the number of workers increased the household's total output, the coefficient on the interaction term shows that sharecroppers did not use labor to increase output in a way different from other rural inhabitants.

These results show that sharecropping could be more productive than smallholding, where landlords introduced innovations and invested in their sharecropped holdings. They confirm the qualitative evidence in Chapter 6 suggesting that landlords of share holdings in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve were involved in their tenancies. They made capital improvements to their properties, provided working capital to tenants in the form of cash and livestock, changed cropping patterns, and cultivated beans that increased soil fertility. Florentines, not rural inhabitants, could make these investments because they were much wealthier. The average value of the assets of the Florentine households that owned land in these regions was 8,432.48 florins. The respective values for households in the Val di Cecina and the Mugello were 92.51 and 64.60 florins.[10] Tables 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3 show that these investments and innovations increased the productivity of share holdings. Improved productivity was achieved not only by increasing labor intensity, but also by increasing labor productivity. These landlords were not unusual. Landlords throughout Tuscany invested in their share-tenancies (Chapter 5).

## *Longitudinal Analyses*

Given that sharecropping was so productive—and that it could be part of a capitalist strategy of land management and labor supervision (Chapter 5)—it is all the more surprising that it did not support a transition to capitalism in the region. To investigate sharecropping's long-term potential, I analyze longitudinal data for Santa Maria a Spugnole. I focus on this parish because it had highly productive sharecropping that might have sustained increases in agricultural output over time. More of the inhabitants of Santa Maria a Spugnole were engaged in agricultural production and more of the land there was owned by Florentines and let out to a single tenant family than in San Piero a Sieve (where there were more shopkeepers). Thus, the examination of sharecropping in Santa Maria a Spugnole provides a way to examine what might have happened at the leading edges of the development of capitalist agriculture.

Tracing the productivity of farms over time is not easy. Although in principle, the *catasti* and *estimi*, the sets of fiscal documents redacted throughout the fifteenth century to assess taxes and forced loans, provide this information, matching landlords and tenants is difficult. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981)

[10] I calculated these amounts using Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) value of household's assets for rural households in these regions and for their matching landlords. These values are not strictly comparable because land prices were higher in the Mugello than in the Val di Cecina. Nevertheless, any sources of biases in these figures would not be large enough to erase the enormous differences in wealth between the Florentines and the rural inhabitants.

machine-readable data set for the *Catasto* of 1427 provides an invaluable tool for locating individuals at that date. This is the only *catasto*, however, for which there is a comprehensive and systematic index. Although this problem cannot be solved definitively, I tried to locate farms by focusing on a relatively small region, a single parish, for which it was possible to search intensively for families and their landlords. Of course, there may be little variability with respect to landlords' and tenants' practices within such a small region, but Chapters 5 and 6 suggest that landlords' practices in Santa Maria a Spugnole were not unusual.

In Florence, cadastral surveys were redacted in 1427, 1431, 1433, 1442, 1446,[11] 1451, 1458, 1469, and 1480 (Conti 1966:24). These various fifteenth-century redactions have slightly different formats. Some are *estimi*, not *catasti*; a few have other, more specialized names (Conti 1966:23–24, 79).[12] For the sake of simplicity, I refer to them below as *catasti*. Declarations are rarely dated, so the exact dating of events is impossible. Again, for simplicity, I always refer to the different redactions by the date given for that particular volume in the index to the *Archivio del Catasto* at the Florentine State Archives. Finally, I use both the *portate* and the *campioni* whenever both sets of documents were redacted (in 1427, 1430, and 1433).

Locating the farms was also difficult. The farm was often in the same individual's *catasto* declaration in the preceding and subsequent years, but the landlord's declaration still had to be located. The indexes of the names in the *Archivio di Stato* for the *catasto* registers are quite incomplete, so I located the volume for the quarter and the section of Florence (*gonfalone*) in which the individual had lived in the preceding redaction and then searched that particular volume for the declaration. The individual volumes generally have manuscript indexes, so it was often relatively easy to find the declaration. However, when the volume was unindexed, I searched through all its pages for the declaration. Fortunately, the Florentine families who owned land in Santa Maria a Spugnole did not change their residences very frequently, and so between the index and the manual search, I was able to find the farms for several families throughout the fifteenth century. It was somewhat more difficult to locate the farms when the property had been sold to another landlord. This task was greatly facilitated by the 1457 and 1469 registers because declarees had to give the name of the previous owner of the farm in 1427, making it possible to identify the owner's name at two distinct points. Many other declarations give the owner's name in the preceding redactions' declarations, which also facilitated the matching process.

[11] Conti (1966:24) gives 1447 as the date of this redaction, although the index to the *Archivio del Catasto* in the Florentine State Archives gives the date as 1446.

[12] For the Medici declarations in 1427 and 1457, I used copies of their *Catasto* declarations in the *Monte comune o delle graticole (MC)* and the *Mediceo avanti il Principato (MAP)*, respectively.

Once I located landlords, I recorded their names, the yield from their farms, the names of the farms, and a unique number to identify the same farm in different redactions. To do so, I matched the farms across the years of the different *catasto* redactions using several indicators. First, virtually all farms had names, though these were occasionally inconsistent.[13] Second, I used the boundaries of the farms, though some were also inconsistent. Finally, I used the workers' names, often listed on the farms, and where available, the former workers' names. Finally, once the farms were matched and data were coded, it became much easier to identify farms that were missing for specific years, and I then conducted an intensive search to find them in the declarations of landlords for the region.

Although it is possible to compile a reasonably comprehensive list of landlords and farms in 1427 because Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's data can be used as an index to the *Catasto* registers, there is virtually no way to obtain such a list for the later years. Thus, the data presented below are not comprehensive; they represent only the farms I was able to match over time. Consequently, the data represent the more stable landlords, generally the successful ones who were able to retain their holdings over time, either the Medici or those who were able to resist the Medici's consolidation strategies. This is not a disadvantage, however, given my overall strategy of focusing on sharecropping on the most prosperous capitalist farms, because the data represent exactly these farms. They were probably the more profitable farms that the families felt were worthwhile to retain and maintain. Thus, if productivity increased anywhere, it should have been on these farms.

This matching process produced about twenty-nine farms for which the landlord's share of the yield is recorded in at least five of the following years: 1427, 1430, 1433, 1442, 1446, 1451, 1457, 1469, and 1480. These data represent twenty-one different landlords. Although Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici and his descendants were major landlords in the region, and thus, his family's farms are overrepresented, the farms of other Florentine families are also represented, including those of the Pepi and three branches of the Cavalcanti.

Finally, I coded data from the actual list of crops on the declarations, not from the official, summary value of the crops assigned by the *Catasto* officials or from the capitalized amount derived from these official values. In most of the *catasto* declarations after 1427, the officials used either the list of crops from the 1427 declarations or the list of crops from the preceding *catasto* declarations to calculate taxes. In 1433, for example, the pattern is particularly clear.

[13] For example, in 1433, Averardo di Francesco de' Medici listed a farm located at Torricella (*AC* 500, fol. 59v). By 1442, Cosimo and Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Medici had inherited the farm and gave two place names: Torricella and Colombaia (*AC* 622, fol. 619v). In 1480, Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco de' Medici listed the same farm as Colombaia (*AC* 1016, fol. 409v).

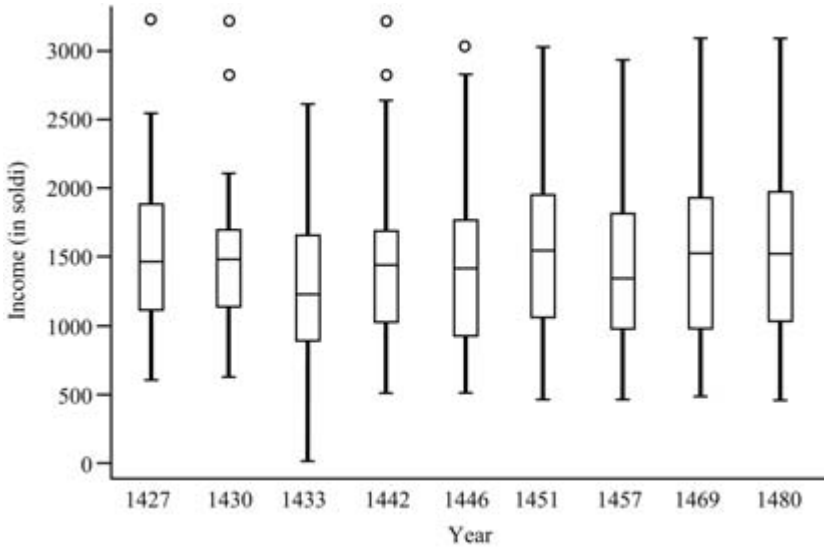


FIGURE 7–1 BOXPLOTS OF LANDLORDS' INCOME BY YEAR
Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto* (figure drawn by Chase Langford)

The tax officials compared the 1433 *Portata* to the 1427 *Campione* and used the higher amount for each crop. Thus, the official calculations representing the taxable amount showed much less variability in the income from the property than the amount given by declarees as the actual yields, because the official calculations were influenced by the previous registers. Of course, even the declared yields from the crops may have been influenced by the tax official's policies and tendencies to use the preceding yields and to penalize owners for increased yields. Nevertheless, it is also clear that landlords were listing the crop yields, not simply repeating the ones from the preceding declarations.

Figure 7-1 presents boxplots of the landlords' income, that is, their share of the yield from these farms across the fifteenth century. These figures represent the median monetary value of their income, calculated in soldi, using 1427 prices. I used the prices as declared by the tax officials for this region, using the most common value given for these crops in 1427. These farms were all sharecropped, and thus, the yield from the entire farm—assuming that the yield was divided equally between the landlord and tenant—would have been double the amount reported in these boxplots. The boxplots give the medians, which range from a low of 1,220 soldi in 1433 to a high of 1,534 soldi in 1451. The difference between the median income in 1427 (1,441.5 soldi), and 1480 (1,518 soldi), was 76.5 soldi, or about one florin (I use the 1427 exchange rate

between florins and lire to match the use of 1427 prices). The means are even closer: the average in 1427 was 1,525.08 soldi and the average in 1480 was 1,537.77 soldi, a difference of less than 13 soldi over a period of fifty-three years.

It is impossible to determine why productivity did not increase over time, but some clues are given by one of the important predictors of productivity in 1427, the number of crops (Tables 7-2 and 7-3). The average number of crops per farm decreased from a high of 5.25 crops in 1427 to 4.04 crops in 1480. Perhaps even more significantly, the use of beans (*fave* and *vecce*), which increased productivity, also declined over time. In 1427, these crops were found on over 90 percent of these farms, while in 1480, they were found on just over half of the farms. These data suggest that landlords decreased their use of these crops over time.

Thus, even in Santa Maria a Spugnole, where landlords transformed agricultural relations and invested in their tenancies and where sharecropping was much more productive than smallholding, sharecropping did not seem to sustain large increases in productivity over time. This pattern of productivity can be compared, at least roughly, to patterns in north-central Italy more generally. Federico and Malanima (2004:444, 448) showed that overall agricultural output increased slightly, while per capita output per worker fell during the fifteenth century in this region. Assuming that landlords in Santa Maria a Spugnole kept family size, and thus the labor force, approximately stable on these farms across the fifteenth century, this comparison suggests that while agricultural output per capita may have declined in the north-central Italy more generally, the form of sharecropping practiced on these relatively well-stocked Mugellan farms might have at least prevented a decrease in agricultural productivity that occurred elsewhere. These results suggest that sharecropping was a productive form of agriculture, even if it did not lead to sustained increases in productivity over time.

## The Well-Being of Rural Inhabitants

### *Income*

Sharecropping may be a harsh form of land tenure that subjected rural inhabitants to a high degree of exploitation, because landlords were entitled to a high rent of half the farms' yield and because share-tenants were deeply indebted. Thus, sharecropping is sometimes defined as a labor-repressive agrarian system (review in Royce 1993:3–4; cf. "seigneurial sharecropping," Robertson 1987:9–12). This view is an extension of the economic theories

discussed in Chapter 5. Marxists considered sharecropping to be inefficient (Lenin [1899] 1956; Marx [1894] 1977*b*:938–950; reviews in Pertev 1986; Wells 1996:3–5). They often focused on how property rights allowed share-landlords to extract surplus from the peasantry during the labor process in "feudal" settings (Bhaduri 1973; Pearce 1983:52–65; Robertson 1982:449). Epstein (1991:41) argued that fifteenth-century Tuscan sharecropping was a harsh form of agricultural production because of the high rents, generally half of the harvest, that created rural impoverishment. However, since the previous analyses show that sharecropping was much more productive than smallholding, it is possible that even half the income from sharecropped farms was more than the entire income from the small, scattered plots of smallholders.

To determine the income of rural inhabitants, I calculated the household's share of the yield from all the properties they worked, both from their own land and from land that they leased. Land owned and worked by household members was listed in the household's 1427 *Catasto* declaration and their income was listed as agricultural yields from these properties. Land leased by the household from another family was listed on the landlord's declaration. Following the matching process previously described, I matched all leased land to the household of the lessee. The landlords' declarations gave income as rents. For sharecropped land, calculating income was unproblematic once the declarations were matched, because the landlord's rent and the tenant's income could be determined easily from the landlord's declaration. In the Mugello, the share terms were usually one-half of the harvest. In the Val di Cecina, the terms, which were generally stated on the declaration, were either one-third or one-half. For fixed-term leasing, although the amount of the landlord's rent was given on his or her declaration, the income was rarely given on the tenant's declaration.[14] Furthermore, the tenant's income cannot be calculated from the landlord's declaration as for sharecropping. Thus, the results below do not reflect the tenant's income from fixed-term leasing. However, for all households, if I ascertained that its members leased land either in fixed or share terms, but I could not locate their tenancy, I excluded that household from the analysis because total income was missing. As fixed-term leasing was relatively rare in these regions, this was not a major problem. I also excluded households from these analyses if the head of the household declared some nonagricultural occupation, because the *Catasto* declarations do report yearly income from trade and business. Although most of these households had some land, the exclusion of their other major source of income would have produced inconsistent results.

[14] For an exception, in which the rent and yield were given, see Emigh (2002:683).

TABLE 7–4 MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (IN SOLDI) BY REGION AND LAND TENURE

| | Montecatini and Castelnuovo (smallholding regions) | Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve (sharecropping regions) |
|---|---|---|
| No Property or Holdings | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| (std. dev.) | (0.00) | (0.00) |
| (N) | (1) | (10) |
| Only Own Property | 499.65 | 1060.29 |
| (std. dev.) | (409.97) | (2134.66) |
| (N) | (95) | (12) |
| Only Share Holdings | None | 1563.73 |
| (std. dev.) | | (917.89) |
| (N) | | (22) |
| Mixed Holdings | 531.36 | 1647.52 |
| | (409.39) | (1128.72) |
| | (14) | (14) |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

For analyses of agricultural productivity, I calculated the monetary value of the yield using the prices for the Mugello. Here, in contrast, I calculated the monetary value of households' incomes using the most common values of local prices given by the tax officials in *Catasto* declarations, that is, the prices for the Mugello for the declarations from the Mugello and the prices for the Val di Cecina for the declarations from the Val di Cecina. I used the two sets of local prices rather than a single standard price so that the results reflected the regional differences in costs and prices, which were higher in the Mugello.

I classified households into the following categories using the land tenure variable for the plots of land in the productivity analyses: (1) households without holdings, either their own or leased land; (2) households with only their own land; (3) households with only share holdings; and (4) households with mixed holdings of both their own and leased land. Table 7-4 gives mean household income, by region, within these categories. Both the regional and the tenurial differences are striking, though number of cases for some categories is small. First, there are more households with no discernable source of income in the sharecropping parishes in the Mugello than in the smallholding communities in the Val di Cecina. Of the 110 agricultural households in the Val di Cecina, only one household had no holdings. In the sharecropping region, 10 out of 58 households (about 17 percent) had no holdings at all. Thus, both in absolute and relative terms, there were more households with little access to land in the sharecropping region.

The average income for households with access to land, however, was much higher in the sharecropping region, irrespective of the type of land

tenure. Much of this was undoubtedly because of the higher prices of agricultural products in the Mugello, as Table 7-1 shows that agricultural productivity of smallholders in the Mugello was not higher than that of smallholders in the Val di Cecina. For smallholders in the communities in the Val di Cecina, mean household income was just under 500 soldi, while in the Mugellan parishes, the household income for smallholders was over twice this amount, about 1,060 soldi. Similarly, households with only share holdings or with mixed holdings did much better in the Mugellan parishes than in the Val di Cecina. Households with mixed holdings in the smallholding communities had an average income of about 531 soldi, about the same as smallholders in these communities. This is not surprising; Chapter 4 shows that reciprocal leasing and smallholding were interconnected practices of an economy based on household production and the circulation of property. In the sharecropping parishes, households with share holdings had an average income of about 1,564 soldi and households of mixed holdings had an even higher average income of about 1,648 soldi. Mugellan sharecroppers, as well as those households with mixed holdings, earned on average about 1,000 soldi more than smallholders in the Val di Cecina. Mugellan households with leases also had higher income than Mugellan households that worked only their own land. Such differences were not trivial to rural inhabitants, though they were relatively small sums of money for wealthy Florentines. The *Catasto* officials set the poverty line at 14 florins of assets or 1 florin of yearly income, and they did not assess taxes to households whose assets or income fell below these amounts (Conti 1966:45). At the 1427 exchange rate of 80 soldi to each florin, the poverty line was about 80 soldi of income each year. Thus, the average income of households in the Val di Cecina with mixed households was over six times the poverty rate, but the average income of these Mugellan households was over twenty times the poverty rate. The average income of Mugellan smallholders was about thirteen times the poverty rate, as compared to Mugellan sharecroppers, whose income was about nineteen times over the poverty rate.

However, as the relatively large percentage of households with no holdings in the Mugello also shows, the situation was more variable there. The standard deviation for income for smallholders in these Mugellan parishes is much higher than in the Val di Cecina. Although some of this higher variance is a statistical artifact of the smaller number of households and higher mean income, it also reflects the more variable income of Mugellan smallholders. Access to a well-stocked share-tenancy in the Mugello provided a much higher income than owning a small farm, at least on average. This result reinforces the qualitative evidence in Chapter 6, suggesting that developing an ongoing relationship with the landlord of a large farm was key to increasing income in

TABLE 7–5 TOBIT REGRESSIONS OF LOGARITHM OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| | Model 1 Coefficient (std. error) (p-value) | Model 2 Coefficient (std. error) (p-value) |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 2.463<br>(.271)<br>(.000) | 2.230<br>(.413)<br>(.000) |
| Number of Crops | .871<br>(.067)<br>(.000) | .776<br>(.141)<br>(.000) |
| Number of Adult Male Workers | .284<br>(.103)<br>(.007) | .301<br>(.151)<br>(.051) |
| Region | .170<br>(.241)<br>(.483) | –.207<br>(.410)<br>(.615) |
| Only Share Holdings | 0.831<br>(.320)<br>(.011) | 2.196<br>(1.240)<br>(.081) |
| Value | | .003<br>(.001)<br>(.020) |
| N | 119 | 71 |
| Pseudo R-Squared | .291 | .285 |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

these parishes. In contrast, in the Val di Cecina, the circulation of property between neighbors diminished the differences between their incomes.

To examine the influences on income in Table 7-5, I used several variables from the household-level analyses of agricultural productivity, including the number of crops grown by the household, the number of adult male workers, and a variable indicating whether the household had only share holdings. I also used the total value of all cultivated holdings (both owned and leased land) and region.[15]

I used a tobit model to analyze the logarithm of income. As Table 7-4 shows, the Mugellan households with zero observed income are an important part of explaining rural well-being. A tobit model estimates coefficients in the presence of left censored data; in this instance, households with zero income where the logarithm of income is undefined. Model 1 in Table 7-5 shows that the logarithm of income increased as the number of adult male workers and

[15] Because household income and output are based on different pieces of land, the number of missing values for these variables is different.

the number of crops grown increased. These variables had similar effects on household output (Table 7-3). However, because household income, unlike household output, includes income from rented property, the number of adult male workers is a stronger predictor of output than income. Interestingly, though Table 7-4 shows that there were strong overall regional differences in income, region had little effect, net of the other variables. Much of the increase in income must have been the result of increasing the number of crops (though this in turn may have depended upon the quality of the soil). Households with only share holdings had higher income than other households, net of the other variables, though this was not a strong predictor. In any event, sharecroppers were clearly not worse off than other rural inhabitants, even though they gave half of the yield to their landlords.

In Table 7-5, the total value of the holdings is included in Model 2. The total value of holdings is frequently missing at the household level, and thus, its inclusion reduces the number of cases for this model. Its inclusion helps to account for the total amount of land under cultivation in the absence of a measure of size of holdings, which is an obvious determinant of household income. It also provides some measure of the quality of the land under cultivation. Not surprisingly, as value of the holdings increases, household income increases. The rest of the coefficients, however, change relatively little once value is included. The value of the coefficient for share holdings increases in magnitude, but it is less precisely specified. (The coefficient of region changes sign, but it is imprecisely specified in both models.)

Sharecropping is sometimes synonymous with labor-repressive agriculture. Because the rent is half of the harvest, sharecropping is often considered a harsh and exploitative form of land tenure, in which landlords confiscate a large share of the surplus. However, the analyses of income showed that sharecroppers' income was often higher than smallholders'. Rural inhabitants who obtained a share-term lease of a consolidated tenancy must have benefited monetarily from the size of the holding and the investments provided by Florentines. Sharecroppers were not impoverished with respect to other rural inhabitants. If sharecropping was a harsh form of land tenure, it was not because landlords took half of the yield, leaving the tenants with little income. It was because it increased rural stratification, leaving many rural inhabitants with little or no access to land. The Mugellan tenants who got a lease, especially those who also owned some land, did well in comparison to smallholders. However, rural inhabitants with little access to land fared much worse. They suffered from Florentine land consolidation, because it concentrated land into relatively large blocks, which were then let to a single family. Fragmentation of land in the smallholding region made access to it more equal.

The results confirm the qualitative findings in Chapter 6, showing how forming a relationship with a landlord of a large, well-stocked farm was an important tactic in the Mugello.

Because the price of land was lower and sold in smaller units in the Val di Cecina than in the Mugello, it was less expensive, and rural inhabitants could purchase it. Large farms, often costing hundreds of florins (e.g., Chapter 6 provides examples of large sets of properties that were sold for 200, 377, and 400 florins), were beyond the means of smallholders earning an income of about 1,060 soldi, or about 13.25 florins a year. Households with mixed holdings in the Mugello had an average income of about 1,648 soldi, about 20.6 florins a year (Table 7-4). While their income was higher than the income of households with only their own holdings in the Mugello, it was still not high enough to buy a large farm worth several hundred florins or even to buy relatively small plots of land in that region. In the two communities in the Val di Cecina, the average size of a holding was 5.54 *staiora* and the average value 21.79 soldi. In the Mugellan parishes, the average size of a holding was 20.11 *staiora* and the average value about 232.17 soldi. Thus, even on average, the holdings were about four times as large, and the price of a holding more than eleven times higher, in the Mugello than in the Val di Cecina. The average household income in the communities in the Val di Cecina was more than twenty-three times the value of the average holding (cf. the average yearly income in Table 7-4 of 499.65 and 531.36 soldi to the average value of holdings of 21.79 soldi). In contrast, the average household income in the Mugellan parishes was only about six times the value of the average holding (cf. average yearly income in Table 7-4 of 1,060.29, 1,563.73, and 1,647.52 soldi to the average value of holdings of 232.17 soldi). Furthermore, a much higher proportion of the rural inhabitants in the Mugellan parishes than in the communities in the Val di Cecina had no income; these households could not have participated in land markets. Thus, overall, more households in the Val di Cecina than in the Mugello would have had incomes that allowed them to participate in land markets. Finally, given that Florentines were actively searching for properties to purchase, rural inhabitants in the Mugello would have had to compete directly against much wealthier Florentines to purchase properties. It is not surprising that most rural inhabitants in the Mugello sold land during the fifteenth century (Chapter 6).

### *Indebtedness*

The loans that accompanied Tuscan sharecropping have been associated with rural exploitation (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:119–120; cf. review in

Chapter 5). Such loans may be a form of debt bondage from which sharecroppers can never escape (Bhaduri 1973:122; Ellis 1988:151). From the Marxist perspective, such loans are forms of extra-economic exploitation indicating that sharecropping is a feudal form of land tenure (Bhaduri 1973:120–121, 124). Furthermore, "debt sales" may increase the extent of sharecropping, when smallholders are forced to sell their holdings because of outstanding debts (Cooper 1983:240–241). The qualitative examples in Chapters 4 and 6 illustrated that the structure of rural indebtedness was much different for smallholders and sharecroppers. Furthermore, the relatively high income of sharecroppers may have been irrelevant if they were considerably more indebted than other rural inhabitants.[16]

Neoclassical economists tend to assume the opposite: that sharecropping was simply a contract. Loans between landlords and share-tenants, a phenomenon that economists call interlinked credit markets, are common (Bardhan 1989; Bell 1989; Bell and Srinivasan 1989; Bhaduri 1973; Braverman and Guasch 1986: 1260–1261; Braverman and Stiglitz 1982; Caiati 1984; Cooper 1983:240–244; Hoffman 1996:70; Jones 1968:225; Keegan 1983; McArdle 1978:211–212; Srinivasan 1989), so they are not prima facie evidence of an exploitative form of land tenure. Furthermore, debt and credit networks were central to Tuscan friendship and patronage ties more generally (Weissman 1989:277), so again, they are not necessarily indicative of exploitation. Finally, most rural inhabitants, not just sharecroppers, were indebted (Pinto 1982:207–223). Most Tuscan smallholders borrowed in proportion to their assets (Emigh 2000*a*:36). Throughout the early modern world, in fact, those with the highest debts often had the highest assets (McCants 2007:221). In this section, I compare quantitatively the indebtedness of smallholders and sharecroppers to assess the well-being of rural inhabitants.

To do so, I used the same strategy of matching landlords' and tenant's declarations as previously described. I also used the variable from Table 7-4 that created categories of households that described their landholdings. Unlike the analysis for income, however, I include households with nonagricultural occupations, because the analyses below focus on debts and assets, which were comparable across different occupations. I derive one other variable from the *Catasto* of 1427, the value of the tax from the previous assessment, the *Estimo* of 1424. The *Catasto* declarations for Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve give the value of the *Estimo* (the declarations for Montecatini and Castelnuovo do not give it because they were not part of the Florentine *contado* where it had been assessed). For assets, I used Herlihy

[16] There is no direct way to adjust income for indebtedness because *Catasto* declarations give yearly income, but they give total debt that may have been accumulated and repaid over many years.

**TABLE 7–6 MEAN HOUSEHOLD ASSETS, DEBTS, NET WORTH, AND *ESTIMO* BY REGION**

| | Montecatini and Castelnuovo (smallholding regions) | Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve (sharecropping regions) |
|---|---|---|
| Assets (in florins) | 92.51 | 64.60 |
| (std. dev.) | (93.36) | (60.66) |
| (N) | (133) | (73) |
| Debts (in florins) | 20.73 | 32.82 |
| (std. dev.) | (32.29) | (61.65) |
| (N) | (132) | (73) |
| Net Worth (in florins) | 72.25 | 31.79 |
| (std. dev.) | (83.73) | (145.08) |
| (N) | (132) | (73) |
| *Estimo* (in soldi) | NA | 10.30 |
| (std. dev.) | | (18.70) |
| (N) | | (59) |

Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) data because it provides a good indication of households' total movable and immovable property. Land was the major asset in rural regions, but other assets (e.g., animals, cash, credits, houses) were included in their variable, assets. While the qualitative evidence in Chapter 6 suggested that Mugellan sharecroppers had few assets, the systematic examination of this variable makes it possible to assess the prevalence of this pattern. I coded total declared debts—loans for which households both received and did not receive tax credit—directly from the *Catasto* declarations.[17] Using these measures, I considered the relationship between debts and assets by land tenure to determine if sharecroppers' borrowing was different from smallholders'. Finally, I considered the spread of sharecropping in the Mugellan parishes by examining the relations among land tenure, assets, debts, and the value of the previous tax assessment, to discover if sharecroppers were losing assets or increasing their debts relative to the previous tax assessment (Emigh 2000*a*:32–40).

Table 7-6 gives the means of assets, debts, net worth (assets minus debts), and the *Estimo*. It seems to confirm the stereotypical view: the mean of household assets was higher, the mean of debts was smaller, and mean of net worth was larger in the smallholding communities than in the sharecropping parishes. Table 7-7 presents the means of these variables by location and land tenure. It

[17] For a detailed analysis of the difference between my variable, debts, and Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber's (1981) variable, deductions, see Emigh (2000*a*:35).

**TABLE 7–7 MEAN DEBTS, ASSETS, NET WORTH, AND *ESTIMO* BY LAND TENURE AND REGION**

| | Montecatini and Castelnuovo (smallholding regions) | Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve (sharecropping regions) |
|---|---|---|
| *Debts* (in florins) | | |
| No Property or Holdings | 0.00 | 8.25 |
| | (1) | (10) |
| Own Property Only | 18.57 | 58.11 |
| | (100) | (12) |
| Share Holdings Only | 53.32 | 19.96 |
| | (1) | (24) |
| Mixed Holdings | 21.69 | 35.59 |
| | (16) | (17) |
| Nonagricultural Occupations | 34.19 | 65.16 |
| | (14) | (8) |
| *Assets* (in florins) | | |
| No Property or Holdings | 1.00 | 8.00 |
| | (1) | (10) |
| Own Property Only | 90.79 | 208.08 |
| | (101) | (12) |
| Share Holdings Only | 0.00 | 3.67 |
| | (1) | (24) |
| Mixed Holdings | 77.63 | 63.41 |
| | (16) | (17) |
| Nonagricultural Occupations | 135.07 | 118.75 |
| | (14) | (8) |
| *Net Worth* (in florins) | | |
| No Property or Holdings | 1.00 | –0.25 |
| | (1) | (10) |
| Own Property Only | 72.82 | 149.97 |
| | (100) | (12) |
| Share Holdings Only | –53.32 | –16.30 |
| | (1) | (24) |
| Mixed Holdings | 55.93 | 27.82 |
| | (16) | (17) |
| Nonagricultural Occupations | 100.88 | 53.59 |
| | (14) | (8) |
| *Estimo* (in soldi) | | |
| No Property or Holdings | | 3.31 |
| | | (4) |
| Own Property Only | | 22.07 |
| | | (11) |
| Share Holdings Only | | 3.98 |
| | | (18) |
| Mixed Holdings | | 10.76 |
| | | (17) |
| Nonagricultural Occupations | | 12.48 |
| | | (7) |

Note: number (N) in parentheses
Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

shows that this stereotypical view of sharecropping is inadequate. Sharecroppers in Santa Maria a Spugnole and San Piero a Sieve were not deeply indebted in comparison to other inhabitants in these parishes or in comparison to smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo. On average, sharecroppers in these parishes owed only about one florin more than smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo (cf. 19.96 and 18.57 florins). In the sharecropping parishes, sharetenants were less indebted than smallholders or households with mixed holdings (cf. 19.96 to 58.11 and 35.59 florins). Assets were related to debts. The smallholders in the sharecropping parishes had higher mean debts (58.11 florins) and higher mean assets (208.08 florins) than the smallholders in Montecatini and Castelnuovo (18.57 and 90.79 florins).[18]

Table 7-7 also shows that smallholders' net worth in the sharecropping region was higher than smallholders' net worth in the smallholding region (cf. 149.97 and 72.82 florins). Table 7-7 explains why Table 7-6 shows that average debts were higher in the sharecropping region: the smallholders, not the sharecroppers, had highly valued assets and large debts. Smallholders in the sharecropping parishes, like smallholders throughout rural Tuscany (Emigh 2000*a*:36), borrowed in relation to their assets. Thus, higher land prices in the Mugello may have allowed smallholders to borrow more money. Sharecroppers' negative net worth (-16.30 florins in the sharecropping region), not their level of debt, is unusual because their borrowing, unlike other rural inhabitants' borrowing, was not proportionate to their assets. These results suggest that the relationship between households' assets and debts was stronger than the relationship between debts and land tenure.

Table 7-7 also illustrates the distinction between asymmetrical and reciprocal leasing. In regions of smallholding, leasing was reciprocal; it matched household size to the amount of land under cultivation (Chapter 4). As the family grew, the household purchased and leased more land. Thus, Table 7-7 shows that in the smallholding communities, the average assets of smallholders and households with mixed holdings were similar (cf. 90.79 and 77.63 florins). Most of the households with mixed holdings in the smallholding communities had numerous holdings of their own and leased a few plots of land from their neighbors. In the sharecropping regions, however, leasing was asymmetrical. Florentines owned extensive holdings, making it difficult for local inhabitants to purchase land. In the sharecropping parishes, the mean of assets for smallholders was much higher than the mean for households with mixed holdings (cf. 208.08 and 63.41 florins). Households with mixed holdings in the sharecropping parishes tended to have only a few holdings of their own, which were inadequate for survival, and sharecropped farms of Florentines. In these

[18] Assets may have been higher in these parishes because land values were higher.

parishes, tenancy was necessary for survival, irrespective of the household's life cycle. Households were more dependent upon leasing to compensate for inadequate holdings (in relation to household size or the ambition of the householders).

Although the calculation of taxes in the *Estimo* and the *Catasto* were different, the *Estimo* provides a rough measure of relative wealth in 1424. Table 7-7 shows that the mean value of the *Estimo* follows the same pattern as average net worth or assets. It is lowest for sharecroppers and households without holdings (3.31 soldi) and highest for smallholders (22.07). The aggregate fortunes of these smallholders and sharecroppers did not shift dramatically between 1424 and 1427.

Table 7-8 illustrates the relationships among land tenure, assets, and debts, by presenting the coefficients, standard errors, p-values, and exponentiated coefficients for multinomial logistic regressions, in which the dependent variable is land tenure and the independent variables are assets and debts.[19] The omitted category of the dependent variable contains households with only share holdings. The exponentiated coefficients give the odds ratios for a response falling in each category of the dependent variable as opposed to the omitted category, for a one-unit increase in the value of the independent variable, net of the other variables. The units can be changed by multiplying the coefficient by a fixed value before exponentiating. The regressions were stratified by region, but the results for the smallholding communities are not presented in Table 7-8 because they provided little explanatory power. Land tenure in the smallholding regions was probably related to the life cycle of the household (Chapter 4), not assets and debts.

Table 7-8 shows that debts are not strongly related to land tenure. The coefficient is near zero and imprecisely specified in all of the equations. Households with large debts were not more likely to be sharecroppers. The relationship between assets and land tenure is stronger. Not surprisingly,

[19] The variables, assets and total debts, are skewed. Although taking logarithms of skewed variables generally improves the fit of statistical models, this solution was not useful for the models in Table 7-8, because using logarithms required dropping all the cases with zero values for assets, debts, and the *Estimo*. I estimated the equations in Table 7-8 using the logarithms of the variables and found that the substantive conclusions based on the results did not change, but there were too few cases to provide usable results.

In the previous regressions, land tenure is the independent variable; that is, if households have a given arrangement of holdings (size, value, crops, and labor), I consider what they produce (output and income). Instead, in Table 7-8, I consider whether—given a pattern of household assets and debts—rural inhabitants leased land or not (or given this pattern, whether landlords leased to them or not). In selecting these arrangements of independent and dependent variables, I am assessing the relationship of some variables net of others, not establishing causal direction.

TABLE 7–8 MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF LAND TENURE ON ASSETS AND DEBTS, SAN PIERO A SIEVE AND SANTA MARIA A SPUGNOLE

| | *No Holdings* | *Own Holdings* | *Mixed Holdings* | *Nonagricultural Occupations* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value)<br>exp(Coefficient) | Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value)<br>exp(Coefficient) | Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value)<br>exp(Coefficient) | Coefficient<br>(std. error)<br>(p-value)<br>exp(Coefficient) |
| **Intercept** | **–.634**<br>**(.513)**<br>**(.216)** | **–2.944**<br>**(.693)**<br>**(.000)** | **–2.054**<br>**(.618)**<br>**(.001)** | **–3.207**<br>**(.726)**<br>**(.000)** |
| **Assets** | **.068**<br>**(.044)**<br>**(.119)**<br>**1.071** | **.153**<br>**(.042)**<br>**(.000)**<br>**1.165** | **.147**<br>**(.042)**<br>**(.000)**<br>**1.159** | **.151**<br>**(.042)**<br>**(.000)**<br>**1.163** |
| **Debts** | **–.047**<br>**(.028)**<br>**(.090)**<br>**.954** | **–.030**<br>**(.023)**<br>**(.190)**<br>**.970** | **–.030**<br>**(.023)**<br>**(.196)**<br>**.971** | **–.028**<br>**–.028**<br>**(.232)**<br>**.973** |
| N | 71 | | | |
| Log Likelihood -77.099 | | | | |
| Pseudo R-Squared | .291 | | | |

Note: The dependent variable is land tenure; the omitted category represents households with only share holdings
Source: data from author's compilation from *Archivio del Catasto*

households with higher assets were more likely to have been smallholders than sharecroppers. For a one-florin increase in assets, the odds of having own holdings as opposed to only share holdings is 1.165, net of debts. As the qualitative evidence in Chapter 6 also showed, households that had little land of their own often rented land in share terms. The exponentiated coefficients are small, partially a result of the units. For example, the odds of a household having own holdings as opposed to only share holdings for a five-florin increase in assets is 2.146.

The relationship between assets and land tenure is not surprising because land was the major asset of rural inhabitants, and those with only share holdings had, by definition, no land of their own. Assets, however, could include other real estate (houses) or movable assets (animals, credits, cash) that sharecroppers in principle, though not in practice, might have had. Thus, Table 7-8 confirms what Chapter 6 illustrated qualitatively, namely that sharecroppers in these Mugellan parishes had few assets and were dependent upon their landlords. Table 7-8 also clearly shows—and this finding contrasts to the stereotypical view of deeply indebted sharecroppers—that the level of debt was not strongly related to land tenure. Levels of assets and debts were related to each other, and once this relationship is taken into account, as in Table 7-8, there is little remaining relationship between debt and land tenure.

Sharecropping may spread through debt sales. Although there is no archival source that makes it possible to determine the exact number of rural inhabitants who became sharecroppers after being forced to sell their own property, the data can provide some evidence about extent of rural inhabitants' loss of assets. The variables, the *Estimo* (the amount of tax assessed in 1424, based primarily on assets) and household assets, provide a way to compare the relative wealth of households in 1424 and 1427 respectively and therefore, can help assess whether sharecropping spread as smallholders lost their property. The coefficient of the *Estimo* can show whether households with a greater tax assessment and therefore, greater wealth in 1424, net of their assets and debts in 1427, were more likely to have their own property or mixed holdings in comparison to share holdings. However, when the variable *Estimo* was added to the equations in Table 7-8, the coefficients were nearly zero and imprecisely specified in all the equations. As Table 7-7 also suggested, the relative fortunes of these rural inhabitants did not change dramatically between 1424 and 1427. Though not conclusive, these results provide little evidence that sharecropping spread through the lost of assets, widespread indebtedness, or forced debt sales. Of course, only longitudinal tenancy data and records of sales could establish this point definitively.

## Conclusions

Widespread rural indebtedness and frequent debt sales are sometimes indicators of rural exploitation. Heavy indebtedness or harsh terms of repayment sometimes create personal ties between landlords and tenants and extra-economic coercion, reminiscent of feudal relations. However, the results from the previous section show that sharecroppers in these Mugellan parishes were not deeply indebted. What was unusual about sharecroppers' debts was not their size—indebtedness was widespread among all rural inhabitants (Pinto 1982:207–223)—but that they were not proportional to their assets, as were the debts of other rural Tuscans.

Though the level of smallholders' and sharecroppers' debts was similar, they were structured differently. For smallholders, debt, even if usual, depended upon their individual situations, preferences, and skill (Chapter 4). Debt, like land tenure, was related to the age of the head of the household or the life cycle of families (Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber 1985:304; cf. McCants 2007:227–231). For sharecroppers, debts, even when they were small and repaid quickly, were a virtual condition of tenancy, bearing little relation to the age of the head of the household or the level of assets (Chapters 5 and 6). Smallholders typically owed money to many individuals, undoubtedly dimin-

ishing the pressure from any particular creditor (Chapter 4). In contrast, sharecroppers' principal creditors were their current landlords, who controlled the terms of the lease, increasing the personal ties of dependence between them (Chapter 6). This dependence must have been strongest for households with mixed holdings because their own property tied them to a region. When sharecroppers did not own land, nonrepayment and desertion may have been easier. Thus, although these sharecroppers were not deeply indebted, the structure of these loans created some ties of dependence. In some cases, landlords may have used loans to extract surplus from the tenants, to bind them tightly to a particular holding, and to control the labor process. However, several factors mitigated against excessively strong ties of personal dependence, including the possibility of deserting a tenancy, the relatively low overall levels of debt, and opportunities for repayment.

Table 7-8 suggests that rural inhabitants did not lose land primarily because of forced sales through debt. At least equally important were rural inhabitants' interests in selling their land as participants in markets. In the smallholding communities, buying and selling small plots of land was a common strategy to match the amount of land under cultivation to family size, to obtain or dispense of excess cash when needed, and to dispose of inherited land located too far away to be useful (Chapter 4). In the sharecropping parishes, rural inhabitants must have sold land for the same reasons. However, they rarely purchased land, because Florentines were much wealthier than rural residents and could outbid them monetarily. Florentines consolidated land through multiple methods, by converting customary or feudal tenures or by purchasing land from smallholders (Jones 1968:225–228). Of course, some rural Tuscans lost their land when moneylenders, after making numerous small loans to them at very high interest rates, seized their land because of nonpayment (Jones 1956:188; Pinto 1982:207–223; Polica 1980). However, Table 7-8 suggests that such forced sales did not predominate.

In the fifteenth century, though Florentines were clearly more powerful than rural inhabitants, tenants had some advantages. The coexistence of smallholding and sharecropping gave tenants some leeway. Even where sharecropping predominated, many households owned some land and had the option of withdrawing from share-leases. Rural depopulation gave tenants some bargaining power. Rural mobility was high, and tenants were not tied to particular tenancies. Landlords were compelled to invest in their properties and to provide loans to retain scarce tenants. In addition, landlords' practices were variable during this period of time, and sharecropping was not firmly institutionalized (Emigh 1998*a*). This evidence suggests that sharecropping in Tuscany between 1350 and 1500 was not a harsh form of land tenure.

Furthermore, the income from these sharecropped tenancies was relatively large. Tables 7-4 and 7-5 show that even the half the yield from large, consolidated farms was considerably greater than the income of smallholders working small, scattered plots.[20] Tenants who secured the lease of the farm of a wealthy Florentine must have done quite well. If sharecropping was detrimental to rural inhabitants in the short run, it was because it increased stratification. These results show that there were many more households without any access to land in the sharecropping regions of the Mugello. It is impossible to know how they survived, but it is possible they were day laborers for other households. In contrast, in the smallholding regions, virtually all households had some holdings. In addition, the fortunes of rural inhabitants in the smallholding regions were considerably less variable. Although some individuals were doing very well in the sharecropping parishes, many were miserable. Thus, sharecropping seemed to have been harsh not for those with sharetenancies, but for those without. In fact, rural inhabitants may have found that sharecropping coincided with their economic interests in increasing income, even though it may have decreased their control over agricultural production. Sharecroppers' increased income, however, did not allow them to purchase land once Florentines started to consolidate holdings. Florentines were much wealthier than rural inhabitants, and sharecroppers' income did not allow them to compete with Florentines or to purchase the relatively large holdings that were common in the Mugello. In contrast, the smaller, less expensive plots of land in the Val di Cecina formed the basis of a land market in which many rural inhabitants could participate.

Tables 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3 illustrated that sharecropping was more productive than smallholding. This superior productivity stemmed from increasing not only the intensity of labor, but also the productivity of labor. Sharecropping was more productive because landlords made capital improvements to their properties, provided working capital to tenants in the form of cash and livestock, changed cropping patterns, and cultivated beans that increased the fertility of the soil. However, sharecropping did not seem to support increased productivity over time. The returns to sharecropped land, at least on the pro-

[20] It is unlikely that the increased productivity from sharecropping stemmed from increases in farm size. Although economies of scale suggest that large farms are more productive than small ones (Brenner [1985*a*:29, 49] consequently argued that the properties of English gentry and yeoman were more productive than peasants' small scattered plots), in undeveloped countries, small farms are generally more productive. The increased quality and quantity of labor, associated with increased diligence, entrepreneurship, and better management, usually explains increased productivity. In contrast, in developed countries, large farms are associated with economies of scale that make them more productive (review in Stevens and Jabara 1988:67–68; review of the efficiency of small farms in Ellis 1988:191–207).

ductive, capitalized farms in Santa Maria a Spugnole, were relatively constant across the fifteenth century. These productivity patterns were linked to Florentines' economic interests as urban merchants. Florentines invested in sharecropping as a capitalist risk-diversification strategy. Thus, they may have been unlikely to make expensive or risky investments that might have sustained increases in productivity over time. It is also possible that as the fifteenth century progressed, as land was consolidated, and as labor shortages eased, landlords' power over their tenants grew, and they were no longer forced to continue to make investments to attract scarce tenants that increased productivity. Agricultural investment and innovation were therefore tied tightly to urban business practices. Rural regions had little autonomy and rural interests were represented only when they coincided with urban ones. This pattern of sectoral relationships—along with the tendency of the spread of the capitalist market to undermine local market institutions—was unlikely to produce a transition to capitalism.

# 8

# Conclusions

Fifteenth-century Tuscany is a negative case because the outcome predicted by theory did not occur (Emigh 1997*c*). Marxist, Weberian, and neoinstitutionalist theories, as well as sectoral theories rooted in these paradigms, suggest that during this period of time, preconditions existed that should have produced a continued transition to capitalism, yet no such transition occurred (Chapter 2). I used negative case methodology to explain empirically the Tuscan case and to expand the substantive content of theories of transitions to capitalism.

## Explaining the Tuscan Historical Trajectory

### *Patterns of Landholding*

The empirical evidence revolved around an examination of landholding, the point at which sectoral activities intersected with markets and property devolution. To analyze such patterns, I examined several small communities in detail, as exemplars of smallholding (Chapter 4) and sharecropping (Chapter 6) in fifteenth-century Tuscany. I also explicitly compared the agricultural productivity, income, and indebtedness of these smallholders and sharecroppers (Chapter 7). In addition, regionwide evidence was presented about the distribution of share-term and fixed-term leasing (Chapter 5). This information was combined with reviews of secondary literature. Although detailed information about income, productivity, and indebtedness was not available for

other smallholding and sharecropping regions, this literature suggests that the communities I examined were not unusual.

The regions of Tuscan smallholding were characterized by what Polanyi ([1944] 1957:43–55; 1957:250) called local markets. Though the economy was principally integrated by reciprocity—subsistence production organized through households—there were local, well-developed markets for land, labor, and capital. Partible inheritance, dowries, and local markets were mutually reinforcing. These practices divided the land into relatively small pieces that were frequently bought and sold to adjust for the size of a family, to recombine pieces of land split apart by inheritance, to dispose of land located at inconvenient locations, and to pay off debts. Though such markets were not capitalist ones, coordinated by impersonal exchange based on price and profit, they were well developed and well functioning. They offered enterprising local inhabitants concrete ways to increase income. Markets and partible property devolution produced a pattern of landholding in which smallholders frequently exchanged small plots of land. Both institutions split up and recombined family holdings. Thus, landholding in the smallholding regions was characterized by the circulation of property.

In contrast, in the sharecropping regions, most rural inhabitants leased relatively large, consolidated farms from Florentines. Florentines bought and sold land; they purchased plots to add to their farms and they also sold consolidated farms. However, overall, Florentines sold farms less frequently in the sharecropping regions than smallholders did in the smallholding regions, so land changed ownership less frequently in the sharecropping regions. Thus, landholding in the sharecropping regions was characterized by the consolidation of property.

Credit markets in the sharecropping regions were like land markets: consolidated. Smallholders owed a range of debts to many individuals, while sharecroppers tended to owe a single debt to their landlord. Although overall levels of debts were similar among sharecroppers and smallholders, smallholders tended to borrow in proportion to their assets, while sharecroppers did not. Thus, contrary to the idea that sharecropping and its system of interlinked loans appear where markets are underdeveloped (reviews in Ackerberg and Botticini 2000:242; Braverman and Guasch 1986:1261), this evidence suggests that sharecropping—in this particular asymmetrical form—unmakes credit markets. Credit markets were more extensive in the smallholding regions than in the sharecropping regions.

### *Florentine Involvement in Rural Regions*

These two patterns of landholding—the circulation of property in the smallholding regions and the consolidation of property in the sharecropping

regions—were linked to sectoral relations. The circulation of property allowed Florentines to penetrate land markets in rural regions, thereby changing landholding patterns so that the consolidation of property prevailed. As Florentines purchased land, urban capitalist markets expanded. This Florentine expansion occurred because smallholders actively engaged in local markets (not because they avoided them) where the circulation of property prevailed. Smallholders bought and sold land to arrange their affairs. In the sharecropping regions, Florentines bought land from local inhabitants, who must have sold land for the same reasons as smallholders in smallholding regions. Florentines consolidated land in rural regions though a variety of methods, including converting customary or feudal tenures or purchasing land from smallholders (Jones 1968:225–228). Some Florentines, as well as rural moneylenders, seized land after essentially forcing rural inhabitants to become excessively indebted (Polica 1980). Rural inhabitants in the sharecropping regions, however, did not lose land primarily through indebtedness (Chapters 6 and 7). Rural inhabitants had multiple interests in selling their land as participants in markets, including, but not restricted to, paying off debts. In both regions, wealthier (or more enterprising) individuals accumulated land more successfully.

Once Florentines entered local markets, therefore, they dominated them because they were much wealthier than rural inhabitants and could generally outbid them. Urban businesses generated higher average profits than agriculture, creating this greater Florentine wealth. Financial inequality (a form of relational inequality, Tilly 2003:35) between the urban and rural sectors, therefore, assured that Florentines dominated land markets. Thus, in the sharecropping regions, rural inhabitants could sell, but rarely buy, land. As they lost their land, they also lost their primary basis for market participation. Consequently, local market structures that might have developed into capitalist domestic markets were largely eliminated in rural regions as sharecropping spread. Thus, I argued that a capitalist market simultaneously spread through and destroyed local markets, creating a capitalist market that excluded rural inhabitants.

In the sharecropping regions, Florentines controlled most aspects of agricultural production (Chapter 6). Sharecroppers were dependent upon landlords and their managers, who made investments, arranged for leases, moved families between farms, and sold agricultural produce. Thus, they conducted many of the tasks of agricultural coordination that smallholders accomplished through local markets. In the sharecropping regions, obtaining a lease substituted for some aspects of property devolution because family members could assume leases. Sharecroppers of large, productive farms had considerably more income than other rural residents. However, since land was distributed

more unevenly in the sharecropping regions than in the smallholding regions, more rural inhabitants in the sharecropping regions had no discernible source of income. Establishing a good, long-term relationship with a wealthy landlord contributed to economic success. Rural inhabitants without leases had few options because of the higher degree of rural stratification in the sharecropping regions. Sharecropping, though it reduced rural autonomy, was not a harsh form of land tenure for tenants; it was a harsh form for the landless (cf. Brucker 1994:6–7).

In fifteenth-century Tuscany, sharecropping was not a feudal form of agriculture. Where landlords invested in sharecropping, it was more productive than smallholding (Chapters 6 and 7). It did not rely primarily on debt bondage to tie labor to tenancies. Although the structure of sharecroppers' debts was different from that of smallholders', which may have reduced sharecroppers' autonomy, loans were generally contractual. Furthermore, forms of leasing were differentially used to reduce the transactions costs of labor supervision and land management associated with absentee landlordism (Chapter 5). Thus, most evidence suggests that in fifteenth-century Tuscany, sharecropping was a contractual and capitalist form, driven by urban investment.

### *Economic Interests*

Sectoral differences in substantive economic interests and resources allowed urban capitalist markets to eliminate rural local markets (Chapter 5). Florentines' economic interests as capitalist merchants were oriented toward maximizing profits in their urban businesses, which drove their investments in land and commerce. These businesses provided the primary support for their families. In contrast, rural inhabitants' economic interests lay in obtaining agricultural income for their families, whose members also provided the primary labor force for agricultural production. Florentines' greater wealth dominated where urban and rural sectors converged in markets, and therefore, the resultant patterns were driven mostly by urban economic interests.

The Florentine economy, based on urban manufacturing, trade, and banking, drove rural investment (Chapter 5). Florentines commonly invested in agriculture as a capitalist risk-diversification strategy. Their main occupations were those of urban merchants. Profits in these urban pursuits were high, but such ventures were risky. Profits were lower, but usually more secure, in agriculture than in urban manufacturing. Florentines generally treated agricultural ventures as profit-making enterprises; they were not primarily *rentiers*. However, given that agriculture, as a capitalist risk-diversification strategy, was supposed to generate stable, but not huge, profits, Florentines were unlikely to

pursue highly risky or aggressive investment strategies. In fact, such strategies would have contradicted their own capitalist motives.

Rural interests, however, were not irrelevant. Sharecropping was compatible with rural inhabitants' interests in increasing income and reducing risk. Florentines' land purchases were often congruent with rural inhabitants' interests in selling land at a high price. Nevertheless, rural inhabitants would have preferred to own land and to direct agricultural production, as they did in smallholding regions. Sharecropping was not an avenue of upward mobility as elsewhere (e.g., the frontier of what is now the American Midwest [Salamon 1992:24–25] or in California [Wells 1996:114–115]). Instead, most sharecroppers lost their land to urban inhabitants over time. Thus, rural interests were realized in sharecropping when they aligned with urban ones. Other rural interests, such as the control of agricultural production, were not consistent with urban ones and therefore, were not generally represented. Thus, urban economic interests primarily shaped the distribution of share-term and fixed-term leasing.

Economic activities and family practices were linked in both urban and rural regions, but in different ways (cf. Adams 2005:29, 33–35, 104; Fligstein 2002:66–67). Sectoral differences in urban and rural inhabitants' deployment of largely shared practices of property devolution (partible inheritance and dowries) helped Florentines consolidate property (Chapter 4). Florentines more often implemented impartible or preferentially partible inheritance and more often gave cash dowries than smallholders, which decreased changes of ownership and property division among Florentines in comparison to smallholders. Florentines tended to buy land late in life to leave to sons to preserve commercial profits. Rural inhabitants did the reverse: they more often sold land late in life because of a smaller family labor force. In addition, rural inhabitants bought and sold more land throughout their lives than Florentines. Thus, property devolution practices of urban families tended to consolidate holdings in rural regions where they owned land. In contrast, smallholders' practices reinforced the circulation of property.

### *The Lack of a Domestic Market*

These historically specific economic interests help explain the Tuscan historical trajectory. Sectoral theories suggest that given agricultural investment, increased productivity, and intersectoral transfers to the manufacturing sector, a strong domestic market should have emerged (Chapter 3). In fact, such preconditions existed in Tuscany; urban investment increased agricultural productivity, while urban policies of taxation and prices transferred some agricultural surplus to urban regions (Chapter 5). However, such preconditions did not

produce a strong domestic market. Tuscany remained highly dependent upon international markets, primarily for luxury goods. Consequently, its economic trajectory was strongly affected by external developments, including the shift of power toward northern Europe during the early modern period. Why then, did a domestic market fail to emerge in Tuscany? Why do sectoral theories provide the wrong answer?

To explain the Tuscan outcome, Epstein (1991:41) drew on something like a sectoral theory. He argued that urban exploitation prevented investment, and thus, no transformation of agriculture occurred to increase its productivity. Consequently, rural income was also too low to support a domestic market for manufactured goods (cf. Kotelnikova 1983*a*:150). As I showed, however, sharecropping could increase productivity, which in turn, could increase sharecroppers' income. Thus, while Epstein correctly noted the lack of a domestic market, his explanation of this outcome is incomplete. In essence, Epstein's neoinstitutionalist argument suggests that a crucial precondition for sectoral change (investment in agriculture) was missing, and thus, no domestic market emerged.

In contrast, I argued that the preconditions were present for the creation of a domestic market, yet such an outcome did not occur. Preconditions do not translate directly to outcomes because sectoral theories predicting the growth of a domestic market based on actors' formal economic interests (relations of production or profit maximization) do not account for the variability in substantive economic interests that created differences in rural and urban residents' treatment of landholdings. The incorporation of these substantive economic interests into the sectoral theory explains the outcome. Rural inhabitants not only had economic interests to engage in markets, but also, in fact, did so. In principle, they could have increased their participation in markets. They were, however, much less powerful and had fewer resources than Florentines, and thus, when urbanites entered local markets because of their economic interests in agriculture, rural residents could realize only some of their interests. Florentine investments in land, though they were based on capitalist strategies that increased productivity, were not based on economic interests that wealthy rural landlords, completely dependent upon agricultural income, might have had.

The pattern of intersectoral transfers that resulted from Florentine economic interests removed rural inhabitants from rural markets and destroyed rural market structures, replacing them with Florentine markets within which rural inhabitants could not compete. These transfers, driven by the growth of the Florentine market, thereby undermined the structural basis for a domestic market. Furthermore, without rural markets, the possibility of creating dense sets of market transactions between urban and rural regions was reduced, and

the overall extent of the market in both regions was limited. Thus, the erosion of rural markets undermined the institutional support necessary for the spread of capitalism—thereby undeveloping it. Thus, the spread of the Florentine capitalist market eliminated local markets that could have supported a domestic market not because preconditions specified by sectoral theories were absent, but because of sectoral relations, and in particular, how sectoral differences in resources and economic interests shaped markets and property devolution.

To be clear, the method I used cannot determine how widespread the particular form of productive sharecropping found in the Mugellan parishes was, so I cannot determine how many rural inhabitants benefited from the increased income associated with it. For example, if this particular form of sharecropping was limited spatially, and most sharecropping was unproductive, Epstein's argument that overall sharecropping was detrimental to rural income would still hold. Instead, my evidence suggests that even if sharecropping did increase rural income, the way in which it was institutionalized did not create market structures through which rural income could have increased the extent of the domestic market. Thus, I am not primarily arguing against Epstein; I am providing a fuller explanation of the dynamics of market contraction.

Florentine control of sharecropping undercut the creation of a rural, domestic market in several other ways. First, the mixed agriculture (including grain, olives, and grapes) practiced on most sharecropped tenancies made rural inhabitants virtually self-sufficient (Brown 1989*a*:111; Epstein 1991:39; Kotelnikova 1983*a*:149–150; Malanima 1982:65), therefore decreasing their use of markets. The crop mix was not solely a result of urban control because smallholders also used it, but Florentine capital outlays may have expanded viticulture and olive production. Second, landlords may have matched the sizes of farms and families, limiting the amount of surplus the rural tenants could accumulate, as well as the amount of labor they could supply for industrial production (Malanima 1982:64–67). Some landlords were certainly cognizant of their tenants' domestic arrangements (Chapter 6). Third, it was probably Florentines who marketed agricultural surplus (Chapter 6). The most enterprising urban landlords, who raised agricultural productivity through their involvement in the production process and their investments in agriculture, were likely to sell their crops on the market themselves. This practice would have undermined rural inhabitants' participation in local commodity markets.

Thus, urban control of sharecropping—especially when it was a capitalist response by urban merchants to Florentine market conditions—limited rural inhabitants' involvement in markets, by reducing their needs and opportunities

to buy and sell land and agricultural commodities. Sometimes, the intensification of market activities turns local markets into capitalist ones. In Tuscany, however, the intensification of capitalist markets undermined local markets, inhibiting the growth of a widespread, domestic market.

### *The Lack of Rural Autonomy*

Sharecropping tightly tied agricultural production to urban interests. Because the urban economy had much more strength and power than the rural one, the links between the urban and the rural sector—that is, intersectoral relations—essentially eliminated rural autonomy. This dependence between the urban and rural sectors assured that they expanded and contracted together (Herlihy 1981; Chapter 2, p. 18). Furthermore, sharecropping may have drawn labor toward it by increasing rural income (Chapters 6 and 7), thereby preventing the decline in the size of the rural sector. This dynamic was the opposite of the inverse relationship between the rural and urban sectors—the contraction of the rural sector and the expansion of the urban sector—that was necessary for a transition to full-scale industrial capitalism. Because the Florentine capitalist market drove agricultural change, the manufacturing and agricultural sectors expanded and contracted together. Urban expansion was limited, to a large extent, by the food supply produced by the rural sector, which in turn depended on urban investment in agriculture to increase productivity. Thus, not only was there no domestic market, there was no other internal dynamic that supported independent rural growth in the absence of this urban investment and therefore, no stimuli to the urban economy other than international trade. External changes, therefore, such as competition by English and Dutch manufacturing during the late medieval and early modern periods, strongly affected the entire Tuscan economy.

Though fifteenth-century sharecropping was a capitalist form that had possibilities for sustaining a transition to capitalism, it did not. The way in which it was institutionalized prevented rural autonomy. Once Florentines had consolidated land and rural inhabitants had been turned into landless sharecroppers, few institutions represented rural interests. This dynamic had long-term consequences for agriculture. Although neoclassical theories stress that share-tenancy is a contractual choice made by current landlords and tenants (Chapter 5), its historical development restricts these choices.[1] After 1500, sharecropping became more repressive, less advantageous for tenants, and incapable of supporting technological innovations (Bernadskaja

[1] Some economists recognize this point (e.g., Rao 1998:94).

1957:793; Cipolla 1970:212; Cochrane 1973:113; Emigh 1998*a*:44–52, 2000*a*:45; Litchfield 1986:253–256; McArdle 1978:71; Romano 1974:1880–1881; Sereni 1968:178–186, 1984:173–174). During the second half of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, though urban residents were more powerful than rural ones, there was a relatively small gap in their power because of labor shortages. Once these shortages passed and rural inhabitants had no remaining land to sell, the difference between the power of the landlords and tenants dramatically increased. Tuscan agriculture stabilized in the sixteenth century and remained relatively unchanged until the late-eighteenth century, when the reforms of the Austrian Habsburgs and the agronomists of the *Accademia dei Georgofili* increased agricultural productivity (Cochrane 1973:399–400, 429, 435–439, 445–449, 488–491; Giorgetti 1968:772–777; Litchfield 1986:261; Pazzagli 1973:335–343).[2] The failure of sharecropping to sustain increases in productivity in Santa Maria a Spugnole over the fifteenth century (Chapter 7) may reflect this result on a smaller scale: once landlords had consolidated most of the land, their reduced incentives to attract tenants may have decreased investment.

The absence of rural autonomy thereby illustrates its importance (cf. state autonomy, Evans 1995:45; urban autonomy, Weber 1978:1325). Florentines were not passive, uninvolved, *rentier* landlords. Instead, they were too involved in agriculture, tying it to urban fortunes and markets. Truly absentee landlordism—or rural ownership of land—might have expanded the domestic market, by creating an autonomous rural sector that allowed rural residents to stay engaged in local markets, thereby strengthening them. Instead, Florentine involvement created a dependent agricultural sector.

Urban control of the countryside is practically a cliché in Tuscan history. It is often blamed for the economic stagnation. In this sense, I do not depart from previous explanations of the Tuscan trajectory by Epstein (1991), Aymard (1982), Lachmann (2000:41–92), or even Weber (1978:1266–1339). In explaining how the lack of rural autonomy and urban domination undermined a long-term transition to full-scale industrial capitalism, however, I point to a capitalist dynamic, not a precapitalist (or feudal) one. In doing so, I depart sharply from previous explanations. I reject, therefore, explanations that suggest, in one form or another, that Florentine urban domination was feudal or precapitalist. These explanations preserve the idea that the Tuscan economy only appeared to be capitalist, but was really precapitalist and that the precapitalist elements prevented the full-scale transition to industrial capitalism. Thus,

[2] See also the conference proceedings edited by Cherubini et al. (1981) for extensive discussions of Tuscan agriculture in the eighteenth century and afterwards.

I reject explanations that judge the nature and potential of institutions by whether or not they developed into fully capitalist ones. This view assumes that truly capitalist institutions will always remain capitalist and that a capitalist economic system will always continue to develop because of its inherently superior productive capability and efficiency. The Tuscan case illustrates that this view was not necessarily true—a capitalist dynamic was, and can be, responsible for the undevelopment of capitalism. In this sense, I follow de Vries and van der Woude (1997:690–691), who argued that cities can be transformative (in contrast to standard Marxist theories that merchant capital cannot have this effect). Cities can create a transition to capitalism; however, since capitalist developments are not necessarily self-sustaining, this outcome is not guaranteed.

To be clear, I am not arguing that the Tuscan economy was fully capitalist—of course, there were many precapitalist elements.[3] I am arguing, however, that the leading capitalist developments undeveloped capitalism. In fact, fewer precapitalist elements or less restricted markets might have undeveloped capitalism even faster, if they had allowed Florentine capitalist markets to erode rural market structures more quickly and thoroughly.

The comparison to England is instructive. In many ways, English and Tuscan agriculture were similar; in both locations large landowners consolidated land for economic and social reasons. As in Tuscany, in England, a large landed estate was a source of social prestige, with lower, but perhaps more secure, returns than business (Jones 1974:94). Furthermore, in both locations, agriculture was relatively productive at an early point in history and agriculturalists knew and used common labor-intensive techniques (the primary means of increasing agricultural productivity that prepared the way for the industrial revolution) (Hopcroft and Emigh 2000). In fact, until 1600, or perhaps even until 1800, agriculture in north-central Italy was more productive—perhaps dramatically so—than in England (Federico and Malanima 2004:457–458). However, over time, agricultural productivity increased in England, while it fell in Italy. Furthermore, though there is considerable debate over whether the impetus for innovation in English agriculture came from large landlords, yeoman, or peasant proprietors, what is clear, in sharp contrast to Tuscany, is that there were English rural centers of power and many influential individuals who earned their living primarily from agriculture (Allen 1992:20–21; Brenner 1985*a*, 1985*b*; de Vries

[3] There is also a large historical debate about whether luxury consumption during the Renaissance, either by individuals or the Florentine state, was linked to economic expansion or contraction and whether it was responsible for the delayed transition to capitalism there (review in Goldthwaite 1985:659–662). Though more detailed studies with primary sources would be necessary to adjudicate this debate, it is unlikely that Florentine luxury consumption was higher than that of other capitalist elites, such as the English gentry.

1976:75–76; Hopcroft 1994:1589; Jones 1974:94–96, 1981:74; Smith 1998:370; Whittle 2000:307–311). This assured that rural interests were represented separately from urban ones (cf. Hopcroft and Emigh 2000).

Furthermore, there was a unique sectoral relationship in England. London merchants had close ties to the English nobility and gentry through kinship, trade, and finance (Fisher 1971:10; Lachmann 2000:118; Tilly 1989:580). Because of impartible inheritance in England, only the eldest son inherited landed property; other brothers often became businessmen (who frequently bought estates after financial successes). Thus, in England, there were ties between rural elites and merchants within families. In Tuscany, these interests were often combined in the same person. Brenner (1985*a*:58, 1993:713) argued that a seventeenth-century alliance between an agrarian capitalist aristocracy and an entrepreneurial merchant class set the stage for the development of a unified national state in England capable of protecting private property. The political developments of the seventeenth century thoroughly entrenched landlords' interests in the government, which subsequently favored farm producers over consumers (Jones 1981:74). The gentry consolidated their control over agricultural surplus, and merchants were transformed from marginal to dominant actors (Lachmann 2000:118, 235). These developments were important precursors to full-scale industrial capitalism.

In contrast, in Tuscany, large landowners and urban merchants were the same individuals.[4] Economic interests were balanced within individuals' activities, not among political coalitions. Thus, Lachmann's (2000) argument goes far in explaining the Tuscan case, even though it remains an incomplete account of agriculture's role in delayed transition to capitalism. Elite relationships were important in shaping economic outcomes. In England, a unified elite, the gentry, had a singular interest in maintaining and protecting agricultural productivity and income. In Tuscany, no such elite existed. The dominant elite, the merchants, had only a partial interest in agriculture; their predominant interests lay in protecting their commercial interests. While Lachmann's analysis incorrectly suggests that Florentines did not transform agricultural production through capitalist motives, it correctly points to the importance of rural elites in establishing autonomous agrarian capitalism as a precursor to full-scale industrial capitalism.

Finally, though the widespread presence of fixed-term leasing in England and sharecropping in Tuscany seems to be an obvious and important difference in their outcomes, these tenurial forms per se were not important. Instead, social conditions in each location shaped the distribution of leasing and

[4] Similarly, McLean (2005:641) shows how Florentines had dual roles as custodians and as subjects of the state.

its outcomes. In fact, fixed-term middle-tenancy was also common in Tuscany. However, different economic interests shaped English and Tuscan middle-tenancy. English middle-tenants were rural inhabitants, dependent upon agricultural income. In contrast, Tuscan middle-tenants were Florentines, engaged in agriculture because of their urban economic interests. Thus, English and Tuscan middle-tenancy had different effects, not because of the incentives embodied in the tenurial form, but because of the social conditions that gave rise to its use. Similarly, sharecropping can be either capitalist or feudal (e.g., Emigh 2000*a*). In Tuscany, it was capitalist, at least in the fifteenth century. Urban landlords' economic interests, however, drove the use of sharecropping, so its spread did not create an autonomous rural sector. Thus, the terms of tenurial contracts do not directly determine the effects of tenurial forms; they are determined by the social context in which the forms are found. In England, rural and urban interests were represented; in Tuscany, rural interests were subordinate to urban ones.

More generally, transitions to capitalism depend on the relative balance of power. Theories of urban bias and overurbanization suggest that cities can concentrate power, allowing urban interests to trump rural ones, and in some cases, slow economic growth or the transition to full-scale industrial capitalism (Chapter 3). The mechanisms usually identified revolve around differential pricing, taxation, investment, or laws that harm rural inhabitants. I identified two other mechanisms. First, a high degree of inequality can make it virtually impossible for some individuals to participate in markets—regardless of whether they have formal (legal or otherwise) access to them. In Tuscany, when urban markets penetrated local rural markets, rural inhabitants did not have enough resources to compete with Florentines, so their market participation was severely curtailed. Market contraction stems from a contradiction in capitalism. Although inequality is central to the process of capital accumulation, it can also concentrate resources so that many individuals are excluded from full economic participation. Thus, in the presence of high degrees of inequality, Florentine capitalist markets unmade themselves. Second, the spread of the urban market can undermine the institutional support for rural market structures. As urban landownership and thus, urban control of agricultural spread, not only rural inhabitants' agricultural activities, but also their practices of property devolution and family provisioning were detached from markets. In regions of smallholding, agricultural production, property devolution, and markets were interlinked social practices. In regions of sharecropping, however, they were detached from each other, eroding the institutional support for markets.

Differences in power—the relative strength of the landowners, tenants, and their security of tenure—also affect landholding, which in turn affects the transition to agrarian capitalism (Brenner 1985*a*, 1985*b*). For agrarian capital-

ism to develop, landowners and tenants must be in unique structural positions: they must be exposed to market pressures and hold land in a largely, but not completely, secure way. Complete security of holdings, either by large landlords or by peasant cultivators, encourages rent seeking. The security of holdings was influenced by many factors, including inheritance practices, tenurial systems, field systems, and seigneurial rights (de Vries 1974:11–15). In Tuscany, property rights to holdings were secure for smallholders, but they sold land for many reasons. The greater wealth of Florentines did not eliminate smallholders' security of tenure per se, but greatly diminished it vis-à-vis their own because Florentines could more often purchase land sold by smallholders. Once rural inhabitants became sharecroppers, however, their security was tenuous, especially in comparison to Florentines, because leases were relatively short term, lasting between one and five years. Florentines were much wealthier and more powerful than rural inhabitants.

In comparison to the power imbalance in Tuscany, as well as in France and eastern Europe, a relative balance of power prevailed in England, the United States, and the Netherlands. Brenner (1985*a*, 1985*b*) argued that the extreme case of landlords' power was found in eastern Europe after the mid-fourteenth century. Landlords were strong enough to reimpose feudalism, essentially preventing the development of capitalist agriculture (at least until later centuries when such feudal landlords were themselves subject to market forces and thus forced to innovate and become capitalist entrepreneurs [cf. Samsonowicz and Mączak 1985]). In France, peasants were strong enough to retain their holdings and to prevent large landlords from consolidating land. In England, in contrast, landlords' positions were weaker than in eastern Europe, but stronger than in France. Therefore, landlords were not strong enough to reimpose feudalism as in eastern Europe. They did not have complete security of tenure; market insecurity forced them to innovate. The cases of the United States and the Netherlands provide a different scenario: family farmers had security of tenure, but became dependent upon markets because of specialization (de Vries 1974:214, 237–238; review in Brenner and Glick 1991:109). Thus, American and Dutch owner-operators' and English landlords' holdings were similarly secure, but for different reasons. Though another class of landholders did not threaten the security of owner-operators, markets diminished it once they began to specialize because they became dependent on the market both for their own provisioning and for commercial production. In Tuscany, there was an extreme power imbalance, especially in later centuries when sharecropping was widespread. Unlike eastern Europe, where this power imbalance created feudalism, in Tuscany, it undeveloped capitalism, creating the mixed economic forms that prevailed there until its

late industrialization as a part of Italy. The capitalist practices of urban merchants created and sustained this imbalance. Urban and rural sectoral inequality coincided with the difference of power between urban and rural landholders: the urban sector was more powerful, and urban landowners were more powerful than rural ones.

Thus, Tuscany did not follow any of the three classic paths to agrarian capitalism that forced rural landlords and tenants to become market dependent (Chapter 3). It did not follow the path consisting of large capitalist landlords, middle-tenants, and wage laborers (stereotypically England), or the path of the transformation of feudal estates into capitalist ones with wage laborers (stereotypically Prussia), or the path of capitalized family farms (stereotypically the United States and the Netherlands). Tuscany did not follow these paths because Florentine landlords had a high degree of security of tenure vis-à-vis their rural tenants and because most large landowners were urban merchants, who depended on urban markets for commerce, not on rural markets for agricultural income. Furthermore, rural inhabitants were removed from markets as urban landownership spread. Thus, neither urban landlords nor rural tenants were market dependent vis-à-vis their agricultural activities.

## *Sectors and Markets in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany*

Thus, in summary, I presented historical evidence showing that the preconditions existed for a sectoral shift that increased the relative size of the urban sector vis-à-vis the rural sector, yet no such shift occurred. There was investment in the agricultural sector, and where it occurred, it increased agricultural productivity. At the same time, sectoral transfers, in the form of taxation, prices, requisitioning, and trade, shifted resources toward the urban sector. Some of the transfers stemmed from market restrictions that may have been detrimental to the economy, but it is unlikely that they were of sufficient size to have had a powerful effect. They did not, in fact, prevent rural investment. Furthermore, it is unlikely that removing market restrictions would have had the effect of reducing urban control. Given the huge sectoral differences in resources between urban and rural inhabitants, and the fact that Florentines, not rural inhabitants, had the resources to invest in agriculture, it is likely that the reduction of market restrictions would simply have increased the speed of the spread of Florentine ownership and capital and thus, eroded rural market institutions even faster and to a greater extent.

A consideration of how rural and urban interests shaped sectoral relations illustrates why these preconditions did not have predicted effect. Florentine

urban merchants were, to a large extent, protocapitalist actors. They were major landlords in rural regions. They had substantial economic interests in rural regions, but their agricultural interests were primarily shaped by their principal economic activities in urban manufacturing. Unlike rural inhabitants, Florentines were not entirely dependent upon agricultural income. Rural inhabitants, however, were not powerful enough to realize their interests when they did not coincide with those of Florentines. As Florentine capital spread into rural regions on the basis of their urban economic interests, rural inhabitants sold their land to Florentines and became landless sharecroppers. Thus, they lost the land that had formed the primary institutional basis of their market participation. Thus, as Florentine markets spread into rural regions, they undermined market structures.

In Tuscany, there were no centers of rural power, and rural residents were much less influential, both economically and politically, than urban ones. Florentines, in general, controlled agricultural production. This control was not necessarily detrimental to rural inhabitants, nor was sharecropping necessarily a harsh form of land tenure. Nevertheless, Florentine investment in sharecropping tied agricultural development tightly to urban fortunes and did not create autonomous rural growth. The urban and rural sectors expanded and contracted together, not separately. Thus, when the urban economy lost relative power in Europe, the fate of the rural regions was tied to it. Agricultural investment was highly dependent upon the urban economy, both to generate demand for agricultural products and for investment.

These patterns of intersectoral transfers and economic interests explain both the considerable strength of the Tuscan economy and the underdevelopment of capitalism. Merchants were dependent upon the urban market to survive and tried to adapt to changing economic circumstances to maintain or increase their profits in the commercial sector. They also recognized financial opportunities in agriculture and tried to capitalize on them. Merchants did transform agriculture, but did not create an autonomous rural economy. The direct detrimental impact of urban control was undoubtedly tempered by the fact that merchants were rural landowners, in contrast to settings where urban residents have little or no involvement with rural regions. The lack of rural centers of power and the dependence of agriculture on urban involvement did not create an autonomous rural economy, nor did it allow rural inhabitants to realize many of their own economic interests. In contrast to previous explanations of the Tuscan historical trajectory that focus on the continuation or emergence of feudal relations there, I argued that a capitalist, not a feudal, dynamic was responsible for this phenomenon.

## Expanding Theoretical Content

### *The Development of Theories of Markets and Sectors*

To be successful, negative case methodology must develop theory by expanding its substantive content to explain an empirical case (Chapter 2). In this case, this expanded theory should explain the Tuscan historical trajectory summarized in the preceding sections. I developed sectoral theories because explanations that have incorporated sectoral dimensions, such as those of Lachmann, Epstein, and Aymard, go farthest in explaining the Tuscan case (Chapter 3). Sectoral theories can be used to explain two necessary dimensions of transitions to full-scale industrial capitalism. First, sectoral theories can explain the emergence of capitalist social relations: private property, wage labor, and markets. In fifteenth-century Tuscany, such relations were widespread. Thus, my primary analytic task was to determine whether these relations continued to develop or whether they contracted. Other empirical cases might better illuminate the role of sectoral theories in explaining the initial establishment of capitalist social relations.

I analyzed the dynamics that increased or decreased the prevalence of these relations by considering the second dimension of sectoral theories: how industrialization depends on a dual dynamic of increasing agricultural productivity and decreasing the size of the agricultural vis-à-vis the manufacturing sector. The best-developed theories point to sectoral relationships, that is, patterns of urban and rural interaction that create these changes. Generally, they show how urban residents' demand for foodstuffs they cannot produce themselves spurs agricultural production and market transactions (Chapter 3). Specifically, they highlight two preconditions for the transition to full-scale industrial capitalism: first, transfers from the urban to the rural sector in the form of agricultural investment increase productivity, and second, transfers from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector decrease the size of the former vis-à-vis the latter. Sectoral transfers can create linkages that increase the extent of the domestic market.

As the Tuscan evidence showed, however, this outcome, an expanded domestic market, did not occur, even in the presence of these preconditions (investment in agriculture and the transfer of surplus). In fact, the penetration of the Florentine capitalist market into rural regions decreased overall market participation because it undermined the interlocking sets of social institutions that had supported rural inhabitants' participation in local markets. The Tuscan case is a particularly interesting site for the application of sectoral theories because of the argument that patterns of sectoral interactions that create urban

bias, overurbanization, and economic stagnation result from a region's dependent status in the modern world economy (review in London and Smith 1988:455). Though Tuscany exhibited some of these patterns (i.e., market restrictions on agriculture, policies favoring urban regions, rural to urban migration), this explanation cannot account for the Tuscan outcome because they occurred before the modern world economy coalesced. Thus, sectoral theories, in their current state, though promising, do not explain the Tuscan case, and their substantive context had to be expanded to explain it.

Most generally, I expanded these theories, first, by replacing formal with substantive economic interests in theories of markets and sectors, second, by combining these revised theories of markets and sectors, and third, by inserting this combination into theories of transitions to capitalism. Not surprisingly, theories of markets and sectors use actors' formal attributes to theorize economic interests. Neoclassical theories rely on utility maximization and Marxist theories analyze the relations of production. Instead, I used a substantive definition of economic interests, based on Weber, to underpin sectoral theories: economic interests arise from the possession of goods and opportunities for income. Florentines' opportunities for income in urban commerce and agriculture and rural inhabitants' opportunities only in the latter explain why Florentines dominated markets. In contrast, economic interests based on utility maximization or relations of production (though important) cannot explain the outcome. Actors in neoclassical models are generally interchangeable; that is, everyone should respond to opportunities for profit maximization in similar ways. In Tuscany, however, urban and rural inhabitants were not interchangeable because they had different substantive economic interests in rural holdings and vastly different amounts of resources. Both urban and rural residents used sharecropping to increase their overall income, but these actions removed rural, but not urban, residents from markets. A Marxist theory based on the means of production predicts the opposite outcome. According to this theory, smallholders, who had more control over the means of their own reproduction, should have relied less, not more, heavily on markets than sharecroppers who had less direct control. Theories based on substantive interests do not generate universal predictions, as do theories based on formal interests. Instead, theories based on substantive interests consider the historical context to specify the interests' effects. Thus, these theories point to where answers lie rather than trying to prespecify the answers.

With this conceptualization of substantive economic interests as an underpinning, I combined theories of markets and sectors (Chapter 3). Such theories are rarely considered together explicitly. Economic theories of sectors generally assume that markets will arise naturally to coordinate urban and rural exchange because they are efficient. The neoinstitutionalist economic and

sociological theories of markets developed separately from sectoral theories. Nevertheless, recent discussions of sectoral theories hint at combinations of theories of markets and sectors by emphasizing the institutional foundations of sectoral transfers and the social constitution of market structures that create sectoral linkages and, consequently, support industrialization (Grabowski 1995:50; Grantham 1993:488, 493–496; Hart 1998*a*:338, 1998*b*:44). Extensive backward and forward linkages between the urban and rural sectors cannot form without rural market structures. I explicitly develop this perspective by arguing that theories of markets and sectors explain complementary economic activities. Theories of sectors explain how agriculture and manufacturing are organized and related; theories of markets explain how the exchange of their inputs and outputs is coordinated in capitalist economies. Combining the theories therefore explains how markets coordinate different sectoral activities. The two sectors are organized in different ways and produce different goods and services; markets can arise—or not—that transfer these goods and services. The rise of full-scale industrial capitalism depends on how markets coordinate the sectoral shift from agriculture to manufacturing.

To apply this perspective to Tuscany, I showed how sectoral relations interacted with markets as social institutions to illustrate two dynamics. First, the agricultural sector did not shrink vis-à-vis the urban one as agricultural productivity increased. The commercial and the agricultural sector contracted and expanded together because Florentines' economic interests and urban business cycles drove their private investment in agriculture. Because sharecropping increased rural income, which aligned with rural economic interests, it may have drawn labor toward it. Second, sectoral differences in economic interests created sectoral interactions that decreased the extent of the market, even though they increased agricultural productivity. Florentines' investment in agriculture, based on their interests as urban merchants, removed rural inhabitants from markets by destroying local market structures. Thus, I illustrated my more general point that sectoral differences affected urban and rural economic interests based on the possession of goods and opportunities for income, which in turn shaped sectoral transfers, interactions, and relations (Chapter 5). The examination of this particular pattern of sectoral differences, economic interests, and sectoral transfers shows how the interaction between the institutional foundations of sectoral relations and markets undeveloped capitalism in Tuscany. Thus, I draw on recent sectoral theories that emphasize the concrete social and institutional linkages between urban and rural regions, not just aggregate transfers (Chapter 3). Tracing sectoral differences to economic interests to sectoral transfers shows how, in this particular context, sectoral linkages were institutionalized. Combining theories of sectors and markets requires a theory of markets as social institutions;

thus, I developed a theory of markets as structures, which I called the sociocultural view of markets.

### *Markets as Structures*

The economic view that markets arise from efficiency was too narrow to explain the empirical findings. Markets in urban and rural regions were linked to family practices (Chapters 4 and 5). Furthermore, efficiency arguments incorrectly predict that local Tuscan markets should develop into capitalist ones. Hypothetically, rural inhabitants in smallholding regions could be construed as "rational actors"; they were authors of their own transactions, they were often numerate, and they bought and sold for their own advantage. In contrast, sharecroppers depended on Florentines and disengaged from markets. But this economic view is again too narrow. It explains little of how seemingly "rational" smallholders were transformed into "irrational" sharecroppers or why sharecroppers "rationally" depended on their landlords.

The neoinstitutionalist economic view of markets has not ignored the cultural and political dimensions of markets (Chapter 3). Still, these theories are more likely to view such phenomena as external to markets, even if influential. Similarly, sociological theories that separate culture from economy lead to two views of markets, neither of which explain the Tuscan outcome. The culture-from-the-outside perspective would incorrectly imply that Tuscan culture was irrelevant to market change. Rural and urban areas had the same broad cultural conditions; thus, culture as an overarching feature of Tuscan life cannot explain why urban and rural market structures diverged when they intersected. In fact, several attempts to apply the classic culture-from-the-outside argument to Tuscany using the Weberian Protestant ethic (i.e., Tuscans had no Protestant ethic) produced inconclusive results (Chapter 2). Rural and urban inhabitants' shared cultural understanding of markets within sharecropping regions that allowed Florentines to purchase land also undermines the culture-from-the-inside perspective. These shared understandings of markets did not increase their extent. It was not true that actors within particular regions had largely different cultural expectations about market participation, allowing some to dominate transactions. In other words, the stereotypical view of the difference in urban and rural culture, that is, of Florentines as savvy capitalists familiar with markets and finances and of rural Tuscans as ignorant peasants duped by complicated transactions, does not explain the outcome. Smallholders, as well as Florentines, engaged in land markets.

Recent sociological treatments, however, emphasize that markets are intrinsically economic, cultural, and political institutions, even though they undertheorize the form of their intersection (e.g., Zelizer 1988:619–620). I

developed this perspective by specifying the form of the intersection. Drawing on Sewell's (1992) concepts, I argued that Tuscan markets were structures simultaneously composed of resources that were actual (e.g., commodities, goods, land, labor, infrastructure) and schemas that were virtual (e.g., valuation, numeracy, equity, ownership, alienability). Similarly, property devolution was composed of resources (e.g., land, money, goods) and schemas (e.g., partibility, honor, patriarchy, fairness, gender). This conceptualization of markets, like that of economic interests, relies on substantive components (resources, schemas) that must be analyzed in historical context. In Tuscany, schemas associated with markets and property devolution were largely similar in the rural and urban sectors, but there were large differences in sectoral resources. Furthermore, there was a smaller, though important, difference in urban and rural residents' implementation of property devolution (more impartibility among Florentines), also most likely related to sectoral differences in wealth. These largely shared schemas, but vastly different resources, allowed urban residents to consolidate land, removing rural inhabitants from markets and undermining the creation of a domestic market that could have facilitated a dramatic sectoral shift toward industrialization. Shared schemas were crucial for the spread of Florentine landholding: rural inhabitants knew how to participate in markets because the circulation of property in regions of smallholding depended on them. Small differences in the implementation of property devolution reinforced urban consolidation of property in regions of sharecropping. Consolidation diminished rural inhabitants' participation in markets by undermining the mutually sustaining sets of social institutions (property devolution, agricultural production, family practices, and markets) that had supported the circulation of property. The view of markets as structures is a deeply institutional one; local markets in smallholding regions were composed of interlocking practices of consumption and production, tied to multiple social institutions. It is not a thin, purely economic view of markets driven only by supply and demand. This conceptualization of markets as structures explains how they operated and changed.

Over time, the elimination of rural markets through this difference in urban and rural resources may have changed schemas. It may have reduced numeracy and literacy, it may have changed peasants' mentality, or it may have changed partibility into preferential partibility. These points are suggestive—I did not present direct evidence to support them—but they fit well with the Tuscan historical trajectory in later centuries.

My argument that similar schemas intersected with different sectoral resources and economic interests (that then possibly produced different schema) reverses the usual convention. Instead of arguing that the city and country engender different cultural orientations that lead to different economic actions in

the two locations (like a Weberian cultural argument), I argued that largely shared cultural conditions allowed capitalist markets to spread. My argument also diverges from a standard Marxist explanation that different economic situations (e.g., urban capitalism and rural smallholding) produce different ideologies.

This combination of divergent resources and similar schemas is illustrative. Other combinations of schemas, resources, or both may explain historical change elsewhere. Furthermore, though I treated politics mostly as a constant background factor, its intersection with culture and economy could be theorized more fully in future work. Thus, in outlining this pattern of Tuscan schemas and resources, I am suggesting how a conceptualization of markets as structures can explain historical change, not arguing that change is always explained by similar schemas and different resources.

Most sociological theories of market change explicitly or implicitly analyze market expansion (Chapter 3), so they do not explain cases of market contraction, as in Tuscany. Marxist theories provide better foundations for analyses of market contraction because they note that capitalist expansion is not linear—paradoxically, it can strengthen precapitalist structures (Chapter 3). In Tuscany, however, the specific mechanisms that drove nonlinear expansion elsewhere, such as unequal exchange or the underremuneration of labor, probably did not exist (or occurred at relatively low levels). Market restrictions did not necessarily have a strong effect (Chapter 5). Share-term and fixed-term leasing were alternative forms of labor contracts used to reduce transaction costs (Chapter 5), so sharecropping was probably not underremunerated. Furthermore, most Marxist models do not analyze market change directly because they reject analyses based on exchange to focus on the relations of production. Nevertheless, Marxist models show how inequality can reproduce precapitalist forms, so I expanded on this idea to argue that inequality in resources unmade capitalist markets. Inequality was financial and relational (Tilly 2003:35). Advantages accrued to some social actors, urban inhabitants, because they controlled commerce and agriculture, while others, rural inhabitants, controlled only agricultural activities. Thus, I argued more generally that in the presence of a large degree of inequality, the spread of capitalist markets may reduce or eliminate less developed ones. Smallholders, though familiar with markets, did not have the resources to participate in them once Florentines dominated. As they disengaged from markets, the links between markets and other social institutions eroded. Market contraction pointed to a contradiction in capitalism: although capital accumulation was central to the spread of capitalist markets in Tuscany, it also eliminated the further expansion of these markets. A similar dynamic of market contraction, in fact, seems to be occurring in some former socialist countries (e.g., involution in Russia;

Burawoy 2001:270). The spread of the informal economy in less developed countries may have similar roots in inequality (Castells and Portes 1989; Portes and Walton 1981:84–87). This combined theory of sectors and markets may explain other patterns of inequality, market expansion, or contraction in a range of sectoral interactions, for example, between the energy, service, manufacturing, and information technology sectors. Of course, since the main point of negative case methodology is to develop theories' substantive content, not to evaluate their generalizability, further work would be necessary to apply these insights elsewhere.

### *Markets and Property Devolution*

I rejected theoretical views of peasants' societies that pose markets and property devolution as opposing economic and cultural institutions (Chapter 3). If they were opposing institutions, Tuscan sharecropping could be viewed as a "moral economy" (Scott 1976) that prevented agrarian capitalism. Such an explanation, however, would miss how sharecropping replaced smallholding as capitalist markets expanded. Thus, I examined the variability of peasants' participation in markets (cf. Brettell 1999; Dennison 2006; Whittle 2000: 308–309) because I conceptualize markets and property devolution as structures that intersect differently in different contexts.

The demographic literature also conceptualizes a difference between cultural practices of property devolution and economic practices of markets (Chapter 3). In preindustrial economies, a homeostatic mechanism, which operates largely through cultural practices of inheritance, is hypothesized to link population and resources. Thus, inheritance mediates economic production and demographic reproduction. In contrast, in capitalist economies, economic production is coordinated through markets that are largely detached from demographic reproduction. Inheritance and markets are posed as cultural and economic institutions, respectively. Furthermore, in both precapitalist and capitalist societies, the economy is conceptualized as affecting culture; that is, the type of economy sets broad parameters for cultural forms such as parental authority and individualism (culture from the inside). Within preindustrial economies, culture affects the economy; that is, demographic and economic practices vary depending the prevalence of impartible or partible inheritance (culture from the outside).

This standard argument that economic production and demographic reproduction are linked through cultural practices of property devolution, however, seems flawed for Tuscany. Rural inhabitants should have had different demographic practices (age at marriage, household structure, fertility) because smallholders practiced partible inheritance, while sharecroppers held

leases that were impartible, capitalist labor contracts. However, sharecroppers' and smallholders' demographic practices were largely similar (Emigh 1997*a*, 1997*b*, 1998*a*). (Of course, the data needed to discern small and possibly offsetting effects are not generally available for this period of time.) To reconcile the argument with the Tuscan evidence, sharecropping and smallholding could be viewed as similar precapitalist forms, in which economic production and demographic reproduction are linked in similar ways, creating similar demographic practices. Such an interpretation, however, is inconsistent with the empirical differences between these tenurial forms. Or, it could be concluded that cultural practices of property devolution were not linked to economic production and demographic reproduction. Such a conclusion, however, also contradicts the empirical evidence that markets, agricultural production, family practices, and property devolution were interrelated.

Instead, the problem with this argument lies in its logic of conceptualizing the economy and culture as separate spheres that in turn have aggregate effects on each other. Furthermore, this argument assumes most of what needs to be explained because it presupposes completely different roles for culture and economy in precapitalist and capitalist societies and presumes sharp differences between cultural practices of property devolution and economic practices of markets. Instead, the variability in the relationships between economy and culture needs to be examined. Thus, I argued that markets and property devolution should be viewed as intrinsically interrelated economic and cultural institutions, simultaneously composed of schemas and resources, to investigate the variability in the relationships between them. In the smallholding regions, markets, property devolution, family practices, and agricultural production were mutually sustaining social institutions. In contrast, in the smallholding regions, these social institutions were either detached from each other, or they were linked only through urban, but not rural, residents' market participation. Thus, cultural, economic, and demographic practices were all relevant to the Tuscan outcome of delayed transition to capitalism, but not in the way hypothesized by the standard argument, namely, that individuals' participation in markets delinks economic production and demographic reproduction during the transition to capitalism. In Tuscany, sharecroppers disengaged, not engaged, in markets as capitalist markets spread. Thus, the Tuscan case shows that the link between culture and economy is more fundamental than the standard argument suggests. It is not just that culture and economy affect each other or that markets can delink economic reproduction and demographic reproduction by eliminating inheritance as a cultural mediator. They are intrinsically connected.

This point is also important for the debate about whether demographic factors affect transitions to capitalism. Cycles of population growth and de-

cline may have dissolved feudal relations (review in Emigh 2005*a*:358–359). During periods of labor shortages, landlords reduced or eliminated onerous feudal obligations to induce tenants to work, eventually creating capitalist land and labor markets. Brenner (1985*a*, 1985*b*), however, sharply criticized these population models, noting that in eastern Europe, but not in western Europe, reenserfment followed a cycle of population collapse and regrowth. Thus, demographic factors have been discounted as explanations of transitions to capitalism. However, as I argued, discounting demographic arguments that view culture and economy too narrowly may obscure their real importance. Instead, I expanded the influence of demographic explanations by showing how property devolution, family practices, agricultural production, and markets had variable relationships in smallholding and sharecropping regions that affected delayed transition to capitalism. Markets were linked to—or delinked from—demographic practices because of their cultural and economic attributes. Thus, demographic factors affect the transition to capitalism not just because of the proposed homeostatic mechanism between population and resources and their social implications; their effects are more fundamental.

## *Transitions to Capitalism: Evidence, Theories, and Epistemology*

I argued that sectoral theories—and in particular the expanded version I developed—provide useful theories of transitions to capitalism. Most generally, these theories suggest that urban and rural interaction determines whether a transition to full-scale industrial capitalism continues or not. Unlike previous sectoral explanations, I did not argue that cities have intrinsically positive or negative effects on transitions to capitalism: as the debates in the literature obviously show, they can have either effect (Chapters 1 and 3). Instead, I argued that sectoral theories show how patterns of urban and rural interaction, as well as the instantiation of this pattern through markets, allows capitalism either to spread or to contract.

The Tuscan case illuminates a possible pattern. It suggests that a large degree of sectoral inequality can undermine the growth of widespread rural markets that could sustain a transition to full-scale industrial capitalism. Florentines' capitalist economic interests led them to invest in agriculture as a risk-diversification strategy and to use sharecropping to reduce transaction costs. Florentines' much greater resources made it impossible for rural inhabitants to participate in land markets once Florentines had consolidated land, thereby destroying the basis for rural inhabitants' more general market participation. Thus, paradoxically, this sectoral dynamic was primarily capitalist,

not feudal. In Tuscany, "too much capitalism" undermined its own structural basis. By implication, less inequality (in the presence of preconditions suggested by previous theories to lead to capitalism, most notably capitalist social institutions) could have facilitated the spread of markets by increasing widespread participation in them. Some brief comparisons suggest this result may hold more broadly, although negative case methodology cannot directly address this proposition.

More generally, my primary point in using the Tuscan case has been to deploy negative case methodology, which makes use of a negative case to expand the substantive content of sectoral theories. Thus, my work is comparative in the sense that it compares theory—which is a generalization based on numerous cases—to a single empirical trajectory. Thus, I have not developed full-scale comparisons to other empirical cases, nor have I attempted to show whether the expanded sectoral theory could be generalized to these other cases. These are all valid points of sociological inquiry, but beyond the scope of the current project. Future work, however, could do this by showing that sectoral theories are useful—or not useful—in other contexts.

To draw these conclusions about the undevelopment of capitalism in fifteenth-century Tuscany, I combined archival evidence from a few towns with archival evidence drawn more broadly throughout Tuscany and with secondary evidence. My use of archival materials provides not only empirical evidence, but also makes an epistemological point. Collecting evidence for any time period before the modern one poses many difficulties, including linguistic and paleographical, and raises problems of coverage and scope. Yet, unless such evidence is collected specifically to address theories of the transition to capitalism, it is difficult to evaluate them, even though they form the foundation of the social sciences. Without such direct evidence, it is easy to assume that the past is different from the present, instead of investigating whether and how it was different.

In conducting this investigation, I viewed capitalism generally, and markets in particular, as inherently political, economic, and cultural institutions. I used the archival evidence to illustrate how culture, politics, and economics were present in both urban and rural markets, allowing the former to expand while contracting the latter. I rejected arguments suggesting that rural inhabitants' behavior was too constrained by culture to participate in markets as purely economic entities or that Florentines' economic behavior was too constrained by politics to be capitalist. Such explanations fail to view capitalism and markets as inherently political, economic, and cultural. They assume a dramatic rupture between traditional, culture-bound societies and modern capitalist economies and suggest that, on balance, Tuscany was a traditional society, with premodern cultural and political institutions.

Paradoxically, a quite different theoretical tradition arrives at the same conclusion. From the neoclassical point of view, rationality is temporally invariant, and thus, the tools of formal analysis can be universally deployed in historical cases. From this point of view, political and cultural factors are again conceptualized as separate from economic ones and given as reasons that capitalism fails to develop because they interfere with individuals' self-interests in participating in efficient markets. Yet, neither perspective accounts for the Tuscan historical trajectory: the unmaking of markets and the undevelopment of capitalism.

Instead, I explain rationality's historical variability and substantive content. At first glance, Tuscan sharecroppers could be easily mistaken for precapitalist actors, engaged in noneconomic cultural patronage. Sharecroppers could be interpreted as participating in a primitive "gift economy," surviving in the midst of an otherwise early capitalist one, in which payments were not made primarily in exchange for goods and services, but instead in relationship to social status and need (e.g., Herlihy 1977:13). In comparison, Tuscan smallholders seem to be classic "poor, but efficient" rational actors (Schultz 1964:38) making use of their scarce resources to accumulate small plots of land. Both accounts, however, are misleading. First, such accounts confuse forms of rationality: though smallholders were engaged in markets, they were not participating in a capitalist system of production. Therefore, assuming fully capitalist rationality for them is historically anachronistic. Similarly, sharecroppers did respond to opportunities for increased income by leasing and selling land from Florentines. And, of the two forms of agricultural production, smallholding and sharecropping, sharecropping had more capitalist features. Thus, assuming that sharecroppers were mired in noncapitalist rationality contradicts the historical evidence. Second, if rationality means nothing more than acting sensibly to increase income, then both sharecroppers and smallholders were "rational actors." But this characterization explains little about their actions: how smallholders' rationality revolved around markets and property devolution, while sharecroppers' revolved around getting along with the landlord. Third, these characterizations of rationality explain little about how market-engaged, but non-capitalist, smallholders participating in subsistence agriculture became market-disengaged, but dependent, sharecroppers engaging in a largely capitalist system.

Thus, more generally, I argue that explanations based on formal attributes (utility maximization, relations of production) explain some (the use of share-term and fixed-term leasing to lower transaction costs) but not all outcomes (higher investment in sharecropping that increased productivity, sectoral interactions that delayed the transition to capitalism). Florentines' substantive economic interests, however, explain their use of leasing as a

capitalist strategy to reduce transaction costs and their greater investment in share-term leasing than in fixed-term leasing; patterns of sectoral interactions stemmed from these economic interests. Furthermore, formal explanations often ignore the context that gives meaning to such attributes. It would be possible to adopt a broad utility maximization framework, suggesting that rural inhabitants have fixed goals that they implement differently in the two different regions (maximization of income through property accumulation in the smallholding regions; maximization of income through social ties in the sharecropping region). However, such a perspective, though not necessarily incorrect, would explain little about the social and historical dynamics that transformed Tuscany or how capitalism undeveloped there. Similarly, it is possible to adopt a utility maximization framework for Florentines. In fact, I argued that share-tenancy was a capitalist strategy to supervise properties held to diversify risk. But again, alone, such a perspective explains little about historical transformations that undeveloped capitalism because it merely suggests that if Florentines were capitalists, capitalism should have developed.

Treatments that sharply separate culture, politics, and economies are linked to views of capitalism as a naturally unfolding system that needs no culture or politics to continue. Applied to Tuscany, these treatments suggest feudal cultural, political, or economic dynamics were responsible for delayed transition to capitalism. In contrast, a perspective that views politics, culture, and economics as variably intertwined in precapitalist and capitalist economies shows that a capitalist dynamic was responsible for its own undevelopment in Tuscany. Thus, an essential piece of my explanation is a rejection of the presumption that capitalism is an ever-expanding system, unfolding naturally because it is more efficient. This assumption produces explanations that disregard empirical evidence. If I had adopted such a view, I could not have explained how smallholders' engagement in markets became sharecroppers' disengagement from markets. If markets always expand in capitalist economies, then both sharecroppers and smallholders must be engaged in precapitalist systems of agriculture, since full-scale industrial capitalism emerged late in Tuscany. Or, both systems must be largely capitalist ones, subject to slow growth and change, not dramatic rupture. The empirical evidence contradicts both accounts.

Instead, the Polanyian view is more helpful in conceptualizing how capitalism is not necessarily self-sustaining. Polanyi ([1944] 1957:73) argued that the state had to counteract the harmful effects of commodification for capitalism to continue. To expand this perspective, I adapted the Marxist idea that capitalist growth is inherently uneven and nonlinear. Instead of focusing on capital accumulation per se, I considered how high degrees of inequality stemming from capital accumulation eroded the institutions that supported

markets. Thus, more generally, like Polanyi, I analyzed the institutional supports that capitalism requires for its development. Standard Marxist class theory poorly explains Tuscan inequality because Florentines did not form a rural class of landlords in the Marxist sense. Thus, to explain urban and rural inequality, I used a sectoral theory, which shows that financial inequality (Tilly 2001, 2003) stemmed from differences in economic interests. Thus, while some explanations focus on the direct exploitation of rural by urban regions (e.g., Merrington 1975), my evidence suggests it was not the primary mechanism (though it certainly occurred). Florentines formed a Weberian economic class, based on their substantive economic interests and their market position in relation to rural inhabitants (cf. Emigh 2000*a*).

Economic theories generally assume that capitalist development perpetuates itself and therefore, search for cultural or political factors that prevent such development. Sociological treatments in contrast, such as those based on Marx or Weber, recognize that capitalism is a social system, requiring particular institutional arrangements or contingent factors for its establishment. Thus, the common social science approach to search for "causes" of the transition to capitalism was born. From these points of view, though, once established, capitalism is robust and reproduces itself relatively easily, especially from the Weberian point of view. Marx and Polanyi, at least in some of their work, however, note the contradictory tendencies of capitalism that contain its demise. I reinforced this point by showing how markets can unmake themselves and how capitalism can undevelop itself. The Tuscan case shows that neither capitalist economic interests nor capitalist social institutions always produce a transition to capitalism. In fact, such behavior can undermine the growth of capitalism because there is no necessary alignment between rationality, economic behavior, and the transition to capitalism as the Marxist and neoinstitutionalist models suggest. Thus, it is not so such the presence or absence of institutions or interests per se, but their particular social configuration, that explains the historical trajectory. This perspective toward social change is different from the neoclassical one (which assumes that an economy will evolve in the direction set by the preconditions) or the Marxist one (which considers how a new economy grows out of innate contradictions in the previous set of economic arrangements). I called this overall perspective dialectical Weberianism because it explains social change by considering the simultaneous constitution of material and ideal factors in creating historical changes in social structures, while drawing on Weber's underlying theory of social action to motivate individuals' actions based on substantive interests.

Thus, most generally, the Tuscan case reinforces the point that capitalism is not a self-sustaining system. Contrary to the implications of some economic analyses—and some policy advisors (such as those who advocate

"shock therapy" in Eastern Europe or "structural adjustment" in less-developed countries)—the establishment of capitalist social institutions never assures a transition to full-scale industrial capitalism. In fact, the interaction of capitalist social institutions can undevelop capitalism just as easily as they develop capitalism. Contemporary analyses of capitalist development must, either implicitly or explicitly, reference historical economic change. They often make use of stereotypical historical trajectories based either on little empirical research because of the difficulties of using premodern evidence, or on the English case, where capitalism did develop. However, Tuscany—illuminated by my detailed empirical work based on primary sources—may provide a better historical referent for many contemporary cases. Like modern cases of economic stagnation, Tuscany highlights how the spread of capitalism can paradoxically prevent its further growth.

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