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THE SUN IS ENERGY

Solar Entanglements of Renewable Futures in Sicily

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**SCIENZE POLITICHE
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In this lecture, I explore how farmers, town residents, municipalities, and activists in southeastern Sicily position themselves in relationship to the recent acceleration in solar energy infrastructure. Drawing on interviews with farmers and individuals working in the agricultural sector in the Simeto River area, as well as participant observation in climate change forums and other events in the Catania region, I find that competing understandings of land use, agricultural practices, and green economies form a “enviro-energetic web” that transects farmers actions and engagements with the renewable energy. At the ground level (literally) agricultural practices, are understood as a form of environmental protection and sustainability is viewed as goal applicable for both renewable energy production and agriculture. At the broader level, exploitation of natural resources, whether sun or soil, are conceptualized as entanglements of autonomy and dependence that reflect political and economic struggles within Italy and its relationship to the EU more generally. Within these dynamics, it is possible to see how the “new” green economy, could easily follow “old” patterns of extraction and exploitation, and may also allow for creative and alternative responses that support both the environment and agriculture.