

FORUM
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE ITALIAN
AMERICAN DIASPORA

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Introduction

Diaspora is a concept that has been applied only recently to migration studies. Indeed, until the last few decades, the term referred almost exclusively to the traumatic forced mobilities of people, and most notably to the exile of the Jews from their homeland and to the masses of enslaved Africans transported in chains to the Americas. Deprived of a legal national status until 1948, Jews in particular represented the most classic example of the diaspora phenomenon, because of their capacity to create a cohesive ethno-religious community that aspired to a return to their original space. More recently, scholars have been working to extend the meaning of diaspora by applying it to a multitude of groups, including voluntary migrants interested in maintaining their identity boundaries, community solidarity, and connections to the native land. In the 1990s, political scientist William Safran defined diaspora in terms of minorities' spatial dispersion, the persistence of their collective memory relating to an idealized homeland to which they wish to return, as well as the obstacles they face integrating into the host society. Afterwards, social scientist Robin Cohen enriched this model by identifying diasporic communities on the move due to labor, trade and imperialism, as well as those shaped around cultural commonalities. Migrants would even strive to maintain affinities based on empathy or solidarity with co-ethnic fellows settled in other countries (for a literary framework see Dufoix 4-34, Mellino 75-98, Tirabassi).

These studies followed in the wave of globalization and the new conceptualization of transnationalism, an early 1990s anthropologist-coined term used to examine migrants as living and maintaining their ethnic identity in between the host and native country by keeping connections (e.g. phone calls, gifts, return trips) to the homeland (see the 2014 *RSAJournal* forum on transnationalism edited by Ferdinando

Fasce and Marco Mariano). Hence, by pointing out the circular quality of migration and the migrants' de-territorialized identities, diaspora and transnationalism would challenge the functionality of the traditional nation-state in ruling and controlling mobilities. These concepts also follow a redefinition of straight-line assimilation theories, which until the 1970s had traditionally reiterated America's alleged "exceptional" capacity to assimilate and Americanize all foreigners regardless of their ethnicity. The growth of an American multicultural society debunked the assimilative myth of the American melting pot and encouraged a reevaluation of ethnic identities, even though some were warning about a potential "Balkanization" of American society. Within this scenario, many discovered a brand new interest in the places of departure, previously overlooked by a focus on the host society. Against this backdrop, today scholars of different backgrounds increasingly study countries of departure as migrant sending states interested in maintaining political, cultural, and economic ties to their "diasporas" abroad (see Gamlen).

Nonetheless, diaspora is still a highly debated concept, to the point that there is a wide degree of flexibility in its definition and many different approaches as to its practical application. German sociologist Thomas Faist differentiates between old and new theories of diaspora: while the former viewed diasporic groups as inherently aspiring to the homeland and preserving a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society, the latter were more inclined to sustain "continuous linkages across borders" (Faist 12) and strive for cultural hybridism with the host society. Nonetheless, some see diaspora in terms of political impact. Sociologist Rogers Brubaker thinks of it as being "an idiom, a stance, a claim;" consequently, Brubaker envisions diaspora as a "category of practice" (Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" 12-13) aimed at mobilizing loyalties, yet inevitably touching only a very small minority of the larger diasporic group. Still, Thomas Faist asserts that, aside from the academic discussion, states or nationalist-oriented groups may be interested in co-nationals scattered abroad in terms of nation-building or long-distance nationalism.

In the case of the Italian communities throughout the world, in the mid-1990s scholars Gianfausto Rosoli (304-22) and Rudolph Vecoli (114-22) applied the term diaspora with no theoretical insights. Generally, the

concept has been widely utilized to refer to any sort of mobility of people from Italy, including some very specific cases such as the Neapolitan musicians leaving their native city (see Luconi, “The Pitfalls of the ‘Italian Diaspora’” 152-53). Historian Guido Tintori (126-52) spoke about Italy’s diasporic politics with regard to the historically characterized political practice of the Italian nation-state holding tight to her communities abroad. Theoretically speaking, given the difficulty in finding a strong national identity among Italians throughout the world, migration historian Donna R. Gabaccia proposed the term “Italy’s many diasporas” to describe the very different local (village-oriented) and political-oriented identities (socialist, anarchist, fascist, etc.) that migrants preserved in foreign societies (see Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas*). Conversely, Stefano Luconi (see “The Pitfalls of the ‘Italian Diaspora’” and “Italians’ Global Migration”) provided the most critical voice in the application of the term to Italians. While the political-oriented groups were small minorities in the ethnic communities, he argued that Italians as a whole did not conform to diasporic requirements. The fact is that the majority of Italians left voluntarily, rather than due to a traumatic event; lacked a strong national or group identity across generations; lost connections to the homeland in the long term; and tended to assimilate into the host societies.

Nonetheless, today the term continues to hold popularity, as evidenced by the annual Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar, a workshop in Italy organized by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute in New York, one of main cultural centers promoting the study of the Italian presence and culture outside of Italy, in collaboration with Italian universities. Overall, cultural exchanges between scholars settled in Italy and the United States are constantly enriching and fruitful (see De Angelis 219-28; Izzo 9-28; Vellucci and Francellini, in particular the keynote addresses by Mary Jo Bona, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Anthony Julian Tamburri).

All scholars invited to this forum are Americans or Italians working in the United States with different backgrounds and expertise. They bring their own intellectual reflection and educational practice to the application of the concept diaspora as related to Italian migrants scattered throughout the world, especially Italians and their descendants in the United States.

LAURA E. RUBERTO

“Cultural Studies and the Intermittence of Ethnicity in Italian Diaspora Studies”

In being asked by the editors of *RSA Journal* to consider the concept *diaspora* as applied to the field of Cultural Studies, I have taken the opportunity to reflect more broadly on the term within both Diaspora Studies generally, and the related fields of Italian Migration Studies, Italian Studies, and Italian American Studies specifically. My doctoral training in the 1990s in the interdisciplinary Department of Literature at the University of California San Diego emphasizing critical theory, comparative transnationalism, and an anti-nationalist, de-colonizing perspective, coupled with my by now over twenty years of teaching in various trans-disciplinary programs and departments, has greatly shaped my association with and research use of the concept *diaspora*.

As I reflect here, a transnational and diasporic model of thinking about the movement of people (and things) generally and specifically the rhetorical use of the concept of *diaspora* as well as *transnationalism* has been part of the backbone of so much of my work in Cultural Studies, for me defined through my research in cinema, media, oral history, and material culture within specific Italian and Italian American contexts. By adopting such a discourse, I have always found an importance in connecting the Italian case study to other examples of border crossings and ethnic articulations in culture and politics. Connecting historical Italian emigration to contemporary immigration to Italy is the most obvious way, and what I mostly took on in my *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women's Work in Italy and the US* (2007), where I proposed what others have also argued, that “Italy’s own history of emigration and expansive diasporic communities, coupled with the rhetorical history of the peninsula as both a romantic, historical tourist attraction and, simultaneously, not quite a First World nation marks it as unique” (Ruberto, *Gramsci* 3). This thinking

also informed my ethnographic study stemming from my 2006 Fulbright Scholar award to Italy, where I compared returning Italian migrants' experiences with new immigrants to Italy in the southern Italian rural area of Irpinia through the concept of a dislocation that all migrant women experience, even those who are returning home (see Ruberto, "Always Italian").

The fluctuating, unfixed term *Italian diaspora* allows analyses of more standard migration patterns (i.e., Italian immigrants to Argentina, Australia, or the United States) alongside those itinerant communities not captured within conventional migration narratives (i.e., Italian colonial subjects in Africa, Italian prisoners of war during World War II). It also allows for an important dialogue with other diasporic groups – from the new immigrants and refugees to Italy who form their own diasporic communities to the many diasporas found globally. Placing such topics within a Diaspora Studies model allows us to look for what I propose here are the *edges of ethnicity*, the borders where ethnic identities sometimes lie. These expressions of identities, not always easily visible, potentially offer us complex renderings of what might otherwise be static, stereotypical formations. Moreover, such edges can be seen as useful links between varying diasporic communities, cultures, and experiences.

My use of the term *edge* evokes Roland Barthes. In his *The Pleasure of the Text* he notes: "is not the most erotic portion of the body where *the garment gapes?*... the intermittence of skin flashing..." (Barthes 9=10, emphasis in the original). The most provocative cultural expressions and texts are often those less obvious, not so apparent, or even somewhat invisible. The most challenging created texts or expressions are often those that may seem undervalued or exist in an otherwise alternative presence within that which may seem obvious or conventional. I thus seek to find such cultural gaps with respect to Italian ethnic mobilities – where the intermittence of ethnicity exists and ethnicity recurs as an edge or border, to evoke Barthes's words again: "Culture thus recurs as an edge: in no matter what form" (7).

By looking for such edges or intermittences of ethnicity we might, for instance, recuperate cultural expressions not always recognized as Italian ethnic. For instance, we might consider Italian Californian vernacular sites and thus map an unrecognized constructed Italian Californian ethnic

imaginary, which could take us from Sabato Rodia's Watts Towers in Los Angeles, all the way north to Romano Gabriel's Wooden Sculpture Garden in Eureka, passing Emanuele "Litto" Damonte's Hubcap Ranch in Pope Valley and Forestiere Baldassare's Underground Garden near Fresno, as well as the no longer extant sites of John Giudici's Capidro in San Mateo or Theodore Santoro's wooden animal displays in Oakland along the way (see Del Giudice; Ruberto "Al di là di Sabato Rodia").

Seeking such intermittent ethnic edges can also reimagine consumer and popular images by recognizing the fluid nature and marginalized aspects of an ethnic identity as well as considering how ethnic identity works within mainstream modes of production as it allows us to recognize that alternative or undervalued stories or practices may be present even in the most dominant ideological articulations. Film and television are particularly ripe for this kind of analysis. What does it mean, for instance, to have typical *fiesta* decorative illuminations in the opening wedding scene of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*? Why have Johnny Boy and Charlie, played so effortlessly by Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel, gingerly taken out white handkerchiefs to sit on tombstones in St. Patrick's Old Cathedral cemetery in *Mean Streets*? How is Italian ethnicity coded or recognizable in such fictional characters as Johnny Staccato from the 1959 NBC series, *Johnny Staccato*, or Jimmy Pesto, Sr. from the Fox series *Bob's Burgers* (2011-)? These examples might variously demonstrate a subtle sense of style, an eloquent expression of community identity, or a witty commentary on the changing ways the material culture of ethnic migrant communities shifts over time.

Others who work within Italian Diaspora Studies have likewise taken on the concept of the *edge* in related ways, suggesting that the term's malleability is a convenient one for interdisciplinary fields such as Cultural Studies. Ilaria Vanni Accarigi, working in Australia, has considered "transculture edges" by thinking about the term with respect to ecology and landscaping. In the United States, John Gennari has used the term to refer to that space between different communities, especially Italian Americans and African Americans, suggesting an overlap, a blending, as well as a rawness that collides and shapes culture/identity in dynamic and sometimes volatile ways.

I would like to propose the concept of edges as a worthwhile Cultural Studies approach to discussions of Italian migrations, transnationalism, and mobilities. Doing Italian Diaspora Studies through associations with edges, borders, and intermittences, means scholarship which not only keeps the destination countries and political landscapes in mind but also the home countries, by recognizing mobility as ongoing and multidirectional and recognizing ethnic/migrant culture as dynamic and non-static. I recognize the borderless borders implied by such edges. The contemporary moment with its fraught political shifts, economic realignments, and digital innovations is often associated with borderlessness, a world of unstable edges. I wish to capture this instability with the provocation of the edge; the idea that along these fractures and fissures we find new roadmaps for understanding how cultural identity is formed, embattled, negotiated, and emerges within and against political regimes of value.

An Italian Diaspora edges approach can help us link cultural Italian borders, those not fixed to Italy as a geo-political state, and thus can be particularly useful for a deeper understanding of unexpected encounters. For example, what happens to identity and culture as more migrants to Italy (or their Italian-born children) participate in a second (or third migration) out of Italy and on to other places with a strong presence of a pre-established Italian diaspora? Considering mobility in this way makes author Amara Lakhous, now living in the United States, an example of a new Italian American in fact, so that the standard model of what Italian American culture means (built out of the history of an early twentieth-century immigrant generation) also needs to be rethought (see Ruberto and Sciorra). Similarly, the developing presence of other kinds of new Italian migrants can also be captured through the concept of the edge – for instance, the Bangladeshi Italian community in England and the ways this diasporic group defines itself through cultural and historical connections to both Bengal and Italy (see Della Puppa and King).

I am not suggesting that all scholarly work needs to be comparative or needs to involve multiple sites. Rather, by self-consciously placing more nation-focused research within a larger field that recognizes that migratory directions and ethnic markers are not universal can be beneficial. Such an intersectional approach to Italian mobilities would further complicate our collective work. Theories of transnationalism and diasporas applied to

cultural expressions and products help uncover alternative voices, redirect hegemonic practices, and move to new perspectives and narratives.

A Cultural Studies/ethnic edge approach to the study of the Italian diaspora makes our research and writing more fluidly connected to our teaching and classroom work as well as our extra-academic contacts. Let me thus conclude with a brief anecdote that helps move my perspective into broader spaces of critical discourse. In the June 2018 Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar at Roma Tre University (in collaboration with the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, CUNY) I taught a course called “Mapping the Theories and Approaches to Italian Diaspora Studies – a meta-critical course where we reviewed and mapped out aspects of the field. At a certain point in the term a fellow in the seminar asked “How do we make Italian Diaspora Studies relevant?” Our group discussion led us to expanding and clarifying the question: “How do we make it relevant in the age of Black Lives Matter, the #metoo movement, Confederate statues debate, and overwhelming anti-immigrant prejudice and legislation? Where are Italian Americans in these debates and what role does studying Italian immigrant history and culture have in explicitly political work?” These questions open up so many other questions. For one, it assumes that Italian Diaspora Studies or Italian migration history is not relevant. What then constitutes relevancy? Does a group have to be in crisis for scholarship to be relevant?

I know that my colleagues and I work constantly to make our scholarship relevant – to academic and non-academic audiences, to our students, our deans, our colleagues in other fields, and even to the communities themselves that some of us study. We do this, for instance, when we as teachers, writers, and scholars explicitly connect the historical prejudices against Italian immigrants with contemporary prejudices against minority groups. We do this when we seek to unpack the ways some groups, like Italian Americans or non-minority Italian nationals in Italy, have at times been complicit in xenophobic and racist politics, in part because they have forgotten or mythologized what they characterized as unique in their community’s own past. But I also think the question of relevance is an important one to pose to each other, to push each other in our work. And so I end with this provocation. How can we use a Cultural Studies approach to Italian Diaspora Studies to do relevant work as we move further into this new millennium?

TERESA FIORE

Teaching and Researching Italian Migrations to the US: From the National and Diasporic Space to the Transnational Dimension

The traditional description of Italian migrations as relocations from point A to point B, or of dispersion from one to several points, has always been enriched and challenged by studies aimed at highlighting the circularity of movements, the combination of push and pull factors with additional elements determining the migration of individuals and groups in distinctive ways, as well as the experience of seasonal migration, permanent return, and relocation linked to colonial factors. Equally important, studies about the plural nature of forms of identity in the countries of arrival, and those about the inter-ethnic relationships these countries foster have broadened the reductive view that migrants simply bring a model from home and try to adapt it to a local one. This article intends to assess the impact and legacy of these approaches and to connect them to today's transnational reading of old and new forms of mobility from/to Italy, in particular. It also highlights the importance of interweaving social sciences and the humanities in this reading, in order to make the subject more relevant in our contemporary global scenario.

Moreover, to build on the relational point, in the contemporary US teaching and research context, the pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural composition of the student body and the redefinition of the university under economic and social pressures have designed an audience and a learning environment where traditional definitions and distinctions are in part fading. So, whom do we teach migrations to and in what political context? As our research is re-shaped by these shifts, in what (inter-)departmental space(s) can it continue to be relevant? Mostly, what can the "Italian case" bring to the discussion in order to enrich, and hopefully

enlighten, the current socio-political debates about migrants across the globe? As I argue, the peculiarities of the Italian case suggest that the multi-directionality of its migrations in the past and in the present, as well as the mobility prompted by its colonial phase, design a trans-national theoretical dimension that better serves the current scenario, especially if it is able to leverage previous scholarly contributions. My 2017 book *Pre-Occupied Spaces: Remapping Italy's Transnational Migrations and Colonial Legacies* has developed a theoretical and methodological framework for this vision that I hope can be of direct application to teaching and research environments.¹

The National Approach

The teaching of migrations from Italy has historically been characterized by a national model, a paradoxical approach since migrations by definition question and rethink national paradigms. The nation of departure and/or the nation of arrival have defined the space of reference to explore and systematize data and information regarding migrants either as leaving home or landing someplace else to find a new one. The exemplary source related to this phase is the canonical double volume *Partenze* and *Arrivi*, published by Donzelli in 2000, as the assemblage of decades of outstanding work on the two different “shores,” or sides of the border, of the migratory path. The contributors to this work have been active scholars in their own countries and/or fields, providing important interventions for decades, yet often without a recognizable institutional home for their subject. While aware of the complex trajectories of migrants and intent on creating bi-directional dialogues, this approach contributed to making Italians “less Italian” at home and ethnic subjects in the new environments of the countries of arrival, thus “marginalizing” them to a degree in the public and academic discourse on both sides. In the Italy-US case Italian migrations were not taught in Italian Studies, and remained largely secondary in American Studies. As many founders of Italian American centers/institutes and holders of Endowed Chairs have for long remarked, the discourse of ethnicity has only partially allowed Italian Americans to have a presence in the complex

galaxy of “minorities” in American Studies. Whether in History, the Social Sciences or the Humanities, the hyphenated Italians have not been automatically considered as a struggling group with a political claim like Latinos, for instance, but rather as an eventually successfully integrated group invested on heritage preservation, despite its complex trajectory of discrimination and stereotyping, interestingly combined with tangible cultural contributions and economic achievements. Essentially, despite the story it told, the national approach did not prove able to bring enough attention to the subject to create a structured presence in the academic world. Undoubtedly, the body of work it generated still constitutes the backbone of any type of research or teaching endeavors, given its attentive exploration of single outbound flows from distinct disciplinary vantage points ranging from history to sociology, economy, literature, and film. Yet, precisely because of its inherent geographical and field separations, this approach reveals its limitations in today’s academia where a porous view of the overlappings of Italian migration experiences and the cross-pollinations between the humanities and social sciences can prove to be more effective in uncovering overarching narratives.²

A Diasporic Take

Right around the same time, a whole different methodological take was introduced by Donna Gabaccia’s work, whose focus on the Italian diaspora simultaneously incorporated and bypassed national references, while still highlighting the role of regional ties. In organizing information and interpretations around the notion of labor-driven dispersion, Gabaccia proposed a vision linked to a term that had been previously adopted to read the Jewish and African experiences. While her take proved controversial (for the absence of “forced” relocation according to traditional diaspora scholars), it still sparked a new way of perceiving and narrating Italian migrations along a historical axis that preceded the formation of the Italian nation and that also incorporated the supranational framework of the European Union. The title of her work, *Italy’s Many Diasporas* (2000), even gestured towards the multiplicity of dispersion in her use of the plural

form, thus attempting to dislodge the discourse out of an ethnic silo. In US academia, the silo had guaranteed some space to Italian American Studies, albeit in fragile ways, thanks to decade-long initiatives in publishing and conference organization, while simultaneously “ghettoizing” them. The diasporic model offered the possibility of overcoming the national space of reference for the study of Italian mobilities, and inspired a new generation of scholars to adopt this broader view (see Clò and Fiore 437). Whether directly or indirectly, Gabaccia’s intervention made Italian Studies more diasporic, i.e. responsive to a long-ignored chapter of the nation’s history. In the past decade, classes on the Italian American experience in English, especially in film, are now much more common in degree programs. However, for the most part, these classes continue to appear to be grafted onto the traditional curriculum rather than functioning as mechanisms for redesign. Indeed, the diasporic approach has not been successful in dislodging the ethnic container of either the traditional Italian American courses in American Studies or the new ones in Italian Studies. Recent comprehensive works such as *The Routledge History of Italian Americans* anthology continue to serve this ethnic model, albeit with a rich and solid palette of topics and with a finely curated balance between being academic and broadly accessible compared to previous efforts.

The Transnational Model

Despite the persistence of the “national” and “ethnic” models, the type of flexibility provided by the diasporic notion has strongly influenced the general conceptualization of the subject by allowing for a more fluid perception of the co-existence of different disciplinary approaches and different points of reference on the map of Italian world migrations. The transnational model that has emerged from this reconceptualization is best able to address the crucial questions of our current moment. For instance, in what specific ways can a country that has gone from being an emblem of mass emigration to practically all continents around the world to being one of the European Union countries with one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in terms of size and diversity in the past four decades contribute to the debate on migration? What stories

can its coterminous experience of migration and colonialism tell us that complicate current notions of post-colonialism?

A recent transdisciplinary project developed in the UK through a major government grant has formalized this type of approach.³ *Transnational Modern Languages* (TML) embraces a wide array of languages and cultures and its Italian component, *Transnational Italian Studies*, which interestingly worked as the trailblazer in this multi-language endeavour, is not only featuring work on emigration from and immigration to Italy in terms of colonial and post-colonial imbrications, but is also “transnationalizing” canonical literature, on the one hand, and emphasizing the role of translation, on the other, in this redesigned version of Italian Studies.

My own work can perhaps be seen as a precursor of this approach.⁴ Its larger goal has been to re-map Italy abroad while incorporating this “abroad” into Italy as part of circulatory routes and intersecting histories. Within the tripartite framework (the foci are on voyages, housing, and work) of *Pre-Occupied Spaces* the relocation of Italians to the US is explored right next to that of Italians to Argentina in terms of residential patterns (tenements and *conventillos*), and that of Italian construction workers to France alongside that of domestic workers to Egypt in terms of labor specialization. While the peculiarities of the countries of arrival are attentively illustrated, along with the distinctive contexts of departure, it is the dispersion of Italians in multi-directional ways that prevails as a whole. Additionally, the environments in which Italians arrived are recognized as being ethnically and culturally mixed. In the process of moving to and working in France, Italians came in touch with people from France’s former colonies in the same way in which Italians in Egypt stepped into a cosmopolitan milieu of expats and immigrants.

This multi-layered diasporic vision is further enriched by another set of only apparently unlikely connections, i.e. those of immigrants to Italy: the map encompasses immigrants from many different continents living in an abandoned pasta factory or a so-called ethnic neighbourhood in Rome, which are as mixed today as once were the tenements of New York or the *conventillos* of Buenos Aires. By constantly shuttling between the emigrant experience and the immigrant one, and regularly keeping in mind the colonial implications of immigration to Italy (primarily but not exclusively from colonies under other European regimes), the resulting transnational

map is strongly characterized by stratifications and nodes, which challenge linear notions of relocation from point A to point B.

From a methodological point of view, my approach relies on the notion of pre-occupied space, i.e., a space that is currently associated with immigration, and yet is occupied by stories of Italian emigration and colonialism, while also being replete with preoccupation about the “others,” seen as invaders, and with the locals’ sense of national identity. Space, in other words, hosts time in my definition of pre-occupied spaces (boats, residences, workplaces), which are concrete as much as they are metaphorical, forgotten, recuperated, or (re)invented realities. This focus on space reflects an early intuition on the part of Foucault that “the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space,” and his belief that “the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time” (Foucault 22-23).

Still, my analysis of pre-occupied spaces emphasizes their potential to dispel preoccupation. The current obsession with policing the Mediterranean has turned a liquid bridge into a solid wall, if not a fluid cemetery, in the (vain) attempt to stop and deter immigrants from entering Fortress Europe and defend a (supra-)national identity seen as distinct and worth protecting from the so-called invasion of others. Yet, those very waters were the ones traversed by Italians on ships heading to the US as part of voyages rife with dangers and dreams of comparable proportions. This pre-occupation becomes apparent through the combined use of historical sources, professional journalists’ pieces, sociological studies, literary texts and films in order to collapse time in space, and make spaces differently meaningful in our preoccupied times.

Applying the Transnational Model

Teaching immigration to the US in a US classroom where Italian and English can be used interchangeably becomes especially effective with the inclusion of heterogeneous sources such as the ones referenced above. In particular, when cultural texts that actively link Italian historical immigration to the US with immigration to Italy – for instance films such as Amelio’s *Lamerica* and Marra’s *Sailing Home* – play a central role

in the syllabus, they make pressing contemporary issues, such as labor exploitation and economically forced migrations linked to post-colonial as well as neo-imperialist mechanisms, come to the surface.⁵ As classes in the US, and in particular at State institutions, host an increasing number of students with a direct experience of immigration, or whose parents are immigrants from so-called developing countries, addressing migration in broader terms allows students to forge closer connections with the subject despite apparent distances. In other words, “the Italian case,” when presented within this trans-national framework, fosters reverberations and creates the conditions for unexpected connections on the part of the students that a traditional ethnic Italian American model may not trigger. This type of link is made even stronger when students become aware of the recent/current immigration of Italians to the US. One realization is that the Italian American experience is not the object of a historical study distant from their reality but, to a degree, a parallel phenomenon to their experiences, especially when they learn about undocumented Italians in the US or young people who wait tables in Manhattan as they search for jobs (see Fiore, “Immigration from Italy Since 1990” and “Migration Italian Style”).

Paradoxically, while students may be largely comfortable in traversing historical periods and geographical locations, non-trivial institutional challenges lie in the disciplinary space of this theoretical and methodological shift. Housing courses about Trans-national Italy in Italian Studies risks the fate of reduced visibility, and including them in American Ethnic Studies is not an automatic operation, especially in light of the current contraction of these disciplines. Migration Studies containers (certificates, minors, majors) will likely prove more congenial, in order to also include the Italian case in the broader conversation about migrations, to which it still belongs only infrequently.⁶ Cross-listed and co-taught courses, as well as courses that invite the use of different languages to access the materials of study are the most desirable space for the Italian experience to the US, and abroad, by extension. This will require much work, both at the level of curriculum development and administration, but appears to represent the most concrete path to “emancipate” ethnic experiences and make them relevant to the present and across migratory experiences.

JAMES PASTO

Who Are Our *Paesani*? On Remembering Randolph Bourne and Forgetting About Diaspora

I find it easy to say that I grew up in a small Italian village on the east coast of the United States. When I was born in 1958, Boston's North End was home to 11,174 people, of which 5,146 (41%) were born in Italy and 2,254 were the children or grandchildren of Italians, meaning that 81% of the population were "Italian." The remaining 2,026 were a mixed multitude, mainly descendants of Portuguese, Spanish, Irish, German, Polish, and Syrian immigrants who had been long settled in the neighborhood and had assimilated to its Italian-American ethos, i.e., its *Italianità* (a word, incidentally, we never used or heard). In 1970, while the total population of the North End had declined to 10,134, the number of Italian born increased to 6,414, 63%, a result of renewed Italian immigration to the United States and the North End (see Pasto, "Immigrants and Ethnic"). Their presence mattered. W.A. Marianne Boelen described her first visit to the North End (Cornerville) in 1970 as follows:

[I had] the impression of being back in one of the villages in the Abruzzi not only because of its physical appearance but mainly because of its social structure. The delicatessen stores, called *salumeria*, carried the famous Italian sausages and cheeses. In Italian tradition, the butcher store had the skins of lambs, with the head still attached, hanging on both sides of the door. The pastry stores had their ceilings covered with large chocolate Easter eggs wrapped in shiny, colored foil paper. The cafes sold cups of coffee in numerous varieties but no sandwiches or donuts. Finally, the typical Italian restaurants displayed the famous Italian menus. The only [foreign] language I heard around me was Italian. Cornerville street life seemed a replica of the village social structure.

People were constantly greeting one another, which gave the impression that everyone knew everyone else in the area and revealed an intricate network of social relations encompassing the entire neighborhood. It also shattered any preconceived notion of urban anonymity and cold impersonal relations that one would associate with city life. The rigidly sexual segregation of social gathering places was as valid in Cornerville as in Italian villages: men in the cafes or on street Corners, women chatting in pastry and grocery stores, and young girls, arm in arm, parading up and down the main street, laughing loudly to attract the attention of the men but never looking them in their eyes because that would signify an engagement in Italian culture. The old people were meeting in the square in front of the old church—women on the right, men on the left. (Boelen 23)

I would add to Boelen's account that the North End at that time also had active religious societies, each running summer *feste* with the annual procession of their patron saint, food stands, and music (see Ferraiuolo, Segretario); it had its "racket subculture," (i.e. "Mafia"; see Payne) centered on illegal numbers gambling and other activities; and it had many small family restaurants that served as standard fare food such as tripe, calamari, and cacciatora, alongside meatloaf or hot dogs, a menu duplicated in the homes (see Goode, Curtis and Theophano, and Cinotto). As Boelen notes, Italian, mainly as dialects, was still widely spoken, and even those of us who did not speak the languages of the "old country" spoke an Italian American ethnolect derived from them (see Pasto, "Immigrants and Ethnics"). As a coda, I would add that as this village was an aging urban one, it was undergoing many of the problems affecting urban areas at the time: poverty, unemployment, violence, and rebellion. Even Italian urban villages have their urban problems and traumas (see Pasto, "Streets of Fear").

However, having grown up in such an urban "Italian" village I never saw myself then, nor do I think of it now, as living in an "Italian Diaspora." Being Italian and Italian American in the North End was not based on attachment to the "old country," but on attachment to our new American location. We were Italians and Italian Americans and Americans, but most of all, we were "North Enders." There may be something very southern Italian about this. It was, in a way, a paradoxical transplantation of southern

campanilismo. Our attachment to our new place, to the North End, was a continuity of a tradition of attachment to the local as the primary place of being, if not quite an *axis mundi* then at least an *axis sociali*. Current discourse notwithstanding, post-War Americanization did not preclude ethnic identity, but was on the contrary the ground for that identity to emerge: first as Italian food began to become part of the shared American foodscape, and second, as Italian Americans *dispersed* out of the urban villages to live among and be part of the *Americani*, both, however, still socially marked and marketed as “Italian” (see Cinotto 2013). If there is an “Italian diaspora” at work in this American history then it is from the urban Italian American villages of initial settlement to the American suburbs. This trajectory was not unique to the North End, but occurred in various places, particularly on the East Coast – though it may have occurred later in the North End than it did in other Italian American “urban villages” due to the specific demographic, geographic, and historical factors of its Boston setting (see Pasto, “Immigrants and Ethnic”).

Let me pause here to digress to two essays on diaspora, one by Rogers Brubaker and the other by Stefano Luconi, and then return to the North End in order to explain the words of my title.

In a 2005 essay, Rogers Brubaker noted the then-recent proliferation of the term and concept of “diaspora,” and focused on what are still two key characteristics of its present use: the stretching of its meaning “to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted,” and “the re-essentialization of belonging [the problem of “groupism”]⁷ that its application entails” (Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora” 1, 12). Continuing in a critical vein Brubaker asked “if, as Homi Bhaba put it [...], ‘there is no such whole as the nation, the culture, of even the self,’ then why should there be any such whole or Chinese or Jewish or Armenian or Kurdish diaspora” (12). In answer to the question and to overcome the problem of groupism as it related to the emergent term of diaspora, Brubaker suggested that

we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim. [...] As a category of practice [diaspora is] used to make claims, articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties. It is often a category with a strong normative change. It

does not so much *describe* the world as seek to *remake* it. [...] Diaspora is a way of formulating the identities and loyalties of a population. (12)

If Brubaker is right (and I think he is) that “diaspora” is a rhetoric of “formulating identities and loyalties of a population,” then along with multiculturalism, it is rhetoric for a reason and in a season – the long standing and intensifying transnationalization (diasporization?) of capital and the resulting weakening of national boundaries. In the past, “ethnicity” had the capacity to both recognize the diversity of relocated (migrant, immigrant, refugee, etc.) populations, and this remained within the framework of a national/international system (see Anagnostou, Conzen et. al.). However, something other than ethnicity is needed to formulate identities and loyalties in an increasingly denationalized, and still militarized global system of capital, where population flows across borders are increasing and will continue to increase, precluding, at least soon, the stabilization needed to formulate local ethnic identities incorporated within a shared polity (see Hsu). Diasporic identity fills that need, even more than multicultural identity. Multicultural theory, in its classical formulation, was rooted in the state-based Liberal political tradition (see Laden and Owen).⁸ With the decline of the state, multiculturalism is reformulated as diaspora to “normalize” increasing migration, displacement, and trauma as facets of “global” identities. Diaspora is to global diversity what ethnicity was to national diversity, although, to be clear, at this point largely as pedagogic practice and political strategy only (see Ndhlovu).

Shifting focus to Italy and the application of diaspora, Stefano Luconi pointed to the “pitfalls” of the concept of diaspora when applied to Italian migrations. In essence, Luconi views the term diaspora as narrowly defined along the lines set out by Safran and Cohen and whose key features include: a forced exile from a “homeland” regarded as the true home; an active collective memory of that homeland; a myth of return to the homeland; and the continued impact of the homeland and its myth on the group’s current identity. Whereas Gabaccia (*Italy’s Many Diasporas*) has argued on similar grounds that Italy has “many diasporas,” Luconi states that Italian migration “has been less a worldwide diasporic dispersal of people than a continuous inflow and outflow of individuals [...] across the country’s

borders” (Luconi, “The Pitfalls of the ‘Italian Diaspora’” 164). Moreover, where Italians have settled, their assimilation to the local/national culture has been the normative experience, resulting in a gradual attenuation of an “Italian” identity. In respect to the United States, Luconi adds that racialization as whites further precluded the development of an Italian diasporic consciousness. Luconi’s trajectory of Italian American identity in the US follows the now standard “becoming white” formulation (see Roediger). Within such a formulation, whiteness brings with it a necessary and perpetual unmarkedness. And an odd paradox. Thus, when combined with the corresponding view that only non-white minorities have diasporic identities, the linkage of “American” and “white” as a single identity appears to sustain a white-centric, nationalist model of American identity as well as the “forever foreignness” of non-whites. In this racial formation, we can have White citizens but no White Diaspora: we can have Americans abroad; but no American Diaspora.

With these two essays in mind, I want to work back towards the North End, now by way of Randolph Bourne’s 1916 essay “Transnational America,” a term he used to refer to the ideal amalgamation of evolving American cultural groups. Notably, for Bourne, this precluded “parochial” (diasporic?) attachments to distant homelands by all Americans, foremost among them, “native” Anglo-Saxon Americans. In fact Bourne stated that Anglo-Saxon attachment to England and Englishness inhibited their own ability to form local attachments to the many new and diverse immigrants coming to the United States, and it accounted for their penchant to see amalgamation as a unidirectional Anglo-Conformity. Alternatively, for Bourne, “an American culture” lay in the here and future: the end product of an amalgamation of native and immigrants that would be a “world federation in miniature [...] the peaceful living side by side, with character substantially preserved, of the most heterogeneous peoples under the sun” (Bourne 122).

While Bourne’s essay elides issues of racial segregation and indigeneity,⁹ it nevertheless speaks to a vision at odds with diaspora as a category of practice. Bourne’s transnationalism, we might say, is for a world structured “campanilistically.” It is a world that starts from the local, the here and now, and then radiates out from this center. And this campanilistic connection

brings us full circle back to my Italian village on the East Coast, my North End, where I began. This is my roots, my Italian American roots. Not Italy. Growing up, my *paesani* were not Italians in Italy, or in Argentina, or in Germany, or elsewhere. My *paesani* were the North Enders who were my friends and neighbors, many of them but not all of them Italians. My *paesani* were also my fellow Bostonians and fellow Americans, from all places and all ancestries, people I worked with and struggled with and sometimes contended with. These days, my *paesani* are the people who live as neighbors on my street, the people I see every day, the people I share ideas, tools, jokes, and emergencies with. These are the people my fate is most immediately linked to. Am I to abjure them to identify with an Italian Diaspora? With Italians abroad? Abroad like me? Perhaps Luconi is right, and I am lucky that Italian migration was not forced, that assimilation did occur, and that I have a place I think of as home. But I think Brubaker is right too, that diaspora is not so much a condition as a stance, a pedagogy. It is not a good pedagogy, to my mind. A Bourne-based pedagogy is much better. Immigrants even today are not so mobile and not so transitory as rumor has it (see Waldinger and Fitzgerald). Many are here to stay. Pass the word to them and tell everyone. Forget diaspora! Our *paese* is the place where we now live; our neighbors are our *paesani*.

ELIZABETH ZANONI

Making Homes Through Migration and Food

In 1999 Young & Rubicam, an American advertising firm, launched a new marketing campaign for Barilla, the Italian pasta manufacturing company, with the tagline, “Dove c’è Barilla, c’è casa” (Where there is Barilla, there’s home). The commercials feature Italians living, working, and traveling abroad at the close of the twentieth century eating Barilla brand pasta to retain their connection to home. In one commercial spot, an older married couple make an impromptu trip to Japan to visit their beloved son; they surprise him by preparing, with the help of their son’s Japanese wife, a bowl of steaming spaghetti. In another, filmed on location in the Olympic Village of Munich, Germany, the coach of the Italian youth trampoline diving team lifts the spirits of his homesick gymnasts by serving pasta; by the end of the ad, kids from other countries eagerly join in on the meal (“Campaign: Where There’s Barilla There’s Home”). “Home” in these commercials serves as a cleverly expansive symbol for the intimate domestic realm of family and the public realm of the Italian nation state. Wherever Italians travel in this modern, integrated world, the ads imply, they remain linked to hearth, family, and nation through Barilla pasta; and this increasingly globalized world is simultaneously transformed through exposure to traditional Italian cuisine and through the positive cultural exchanges that food allows.

Italian proverb popularized over a century earlier to encapsulate the experiences of a more numerous and less privileged group of Italians abroad: “Tutto il mondo è paese” (All the world is a village, or, All the world is one home place). For the over 26 million people who left Italy after 1870 to become part of the global proletariat, “home” or *paese* signified both the villages and families they left behind *and* everywhere they traveled and settled. And while the proverb did not explicitly mention food,

the migrants to which it referred made the world their home in part by recreating cooking traditions from their villages and towns (see Cinotto, Diner).

Both the proverb and the commercial tagline characterize migration from Italy as webs of connections between the international and local, the cosmopolitan and provincial, the public and the private. They also offer a metaphorical launching pad for reflecting on the usefulness of the term diaspora for the study of Italians' historic migrations to the United States as well as the global cuisine their migrations helped foster. For this forum, I draw from my research on Italian food and migration in the US and Argentina to argue for diaspora's continued utility as a framework for exploring Italy's many migrations historically and comparatively. As one of the principal mediums around which migrants formed identities as working-class laborers, ingredients and culinary traditions helped migrants create, reproduce, and imagine many "homes" through food and culinary traditions, homes that remained linked back to Italy *and* to migrant homes in other parts of the world. Furthermore, historians' interest in change over time and causality make them especially well-suited for exploring the historic relationship between diasporic communities and the expanding power of nation states, a topic that diaspora scholars have yet to fully examine (see Gabaccia, "Juggling Jargons").

Since the 1990s, scholars have broadened their definition of diaspora beyond the forced and calamitous scatterings of Africans, Armenians, and Jews. For the involuntary migrations of these victim diasporas, a yearning to return home, a strong sense of solidarity with their co-ethnics in receiving locations, and the persistence of a common diasporic consciousness over time characterized migrants' experiences. As academics began applying the term diaspora to an increasing number of migrants, both voluntary and involuntary, and from a range of sending locations, scholars asked important questions about types, scales, and experiences of mobility, leading to new definitions and concepts. The most critical typology developed for diaspora studies was articulated by migration scholar Robin Cohen in his 1997 *Global Diasporas*. The way in which the experiences of migrants from Italy paralleled and departed from Cohen's typology have been smartly analyzed by historian Donna Gabaccia, whose book *Italy's Many Diasporas*

focused on the temporary, circulatory, changing, and multi-sited networks that migrants maintained between the villages they left behind and the communities they created abroad.¹⁰ With the limited space at my disposal, I will draw from Gabaccia's insights as well as my own research to argue that diaspora continues to hold analytical value for the study of Italy's global migrants, the networks they sustained with homes left behind, and the changing identities and cultures – including food cultures – they constructed abroad.

In keeping with diaspora's focus on the worldwide dispersal of people, the term provides a useful framework for writing global histories of Italy's migrations *and* global histories of the US. Migrant diasporas, while shaped by American nation-building projects, were not vehicles for inducing straight-line assimilation or for making the US an exceptional (and exceptionally successful) melting pot as compared to other nations (see Fasce and Mariano). In their challenge to methodological nationalism, historians employing a diasporic lens echo those who have applied a transnational perspective to study the ways migrants' social relations – political, familial, and cultural – spanned more than one country.¹¹ Evidence of enduring transatlantic connections between migrants and their home towns abound in the diasporas I study. Italian-language migrant print culture such as newspapers, as well as trade data, show how merchants from Italy linked migrant eaters to their home regions by facilitating the flow of Italian foodstuff, such as cheese, olive oil, canned tomatoes, wine and liquors, pasta, rice, and lemons. In New York and in other diasporic communities, these migrant sellers, buyers, and eaters formed what I called “migrant marketplaces,” transnational spaces constituted by material and imagined links between migrants and the traveling foods and culinary experiences that followed them (see Zanoni, *Migrant Marketplaces* and “Migrant Marketplaces”). Homeland foods connected migrants abroad to their pre-migration lives, helping them reproduce and sustain culinary traditions, identities, and family arrangements. Rather than the quick abandonment of homeland ties, these ongoing linkages home – reinforced through foodways and high rates of return – reflected the transnational lives of working-class migrants.

Diasporic perspectives also produce global histories of Italy's migrations and of the US through comparative research that considers migrant

communities in multiple receiving destinations as well as connections among these destinations. Even while diaspora connotes the dissemination of peoples worldwide, peoples united by their migration experiences, a shared sense of identity, and an intense longing for a homeland to which they cannot easily return, most research continues to focus on a diaspora in a single nation, detached from diasporas elsewhere. And yet, a consideration of migrants within only one national context obscures the global and circular quality of Italy's migrations; as one of the most internationally mobile ethnic groups during the age of mass migration, Italians traveled to and settled in a range of receiving countries, countries linked to each other through mobile people as well as by other forces of globalization such as trade, industrialization, and imperialism.

In my own research I followed the lead of historian Samuel Baily by comparing Italian migrants and their foodways in the US and Argentina, the two most popular overseas destinations for Italian migrants and trade goods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This broader hemispheric perspective allowed me to internationalize histories of US and Argentine migration and foodways, and to uncover similarities and north-south linkages between these two major diasporic nodes. For example, I found that over the course of the twentieth century migrant marketplaces in both New York and Buenos Aires feminized, as World War I, immigration restriction, a growing, more gender-balanced second generation of Italians abroad, and ties between femininity and consumption globally shifted ties between food and identity from single male laborers to female consumers and families. Exploring both diasporic sites as one analytical site also exposed hemispheric connections between migrants in New York and Argentina fostered in large part by the expansion of US companies, including food businesses, into Latin America after World War I.

Comparing diasporas of Italians in more than one nation from a historical perspective also holds the potential to illuminate how diasporas affect and were affected by the rise and consolidation of nation states and national identities, a subject little explored by diaspora scholars. Unlike groups such as Africans, Jews, Armenians, Poles, and Irish who, at various times during their migrations, did not have an independent home to return to, by the late nineteenth century migrants from Italy left a united nation state

(see Jacobson). However, this new country held little sway over and appeal to migrants who instead identified with the traditions and values of their local *paesi*. The politically, culturally, and linguistically diverse migrant communities created, as Gabaccia has argued, multiple diasporas rather than one diaspora rooted firmly in Italy as a unified concept; indeed “trans-local” rather than “trans-national” perhaps best describes the networks that linked one small village in Italy to its villagers abroad (see Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*). And yet, these local identities did not persist over time, and, unlike other marginalized diasporic peoples, Italy's migrants abroad became “Italians” and eventually “Italian Americans” in the US and “Argentines” in Argentina. Comparing migrant marketplaces in New York to those in Buenos Aires allowed me to consider how nation-specific differences in the US and Argentina – migration legislation and methods of incorporation; trade and tariff policies; economic, industrial, social, political terrains; and ethno-racial landscapes – transformed diasporas in dissimilar ways and at distinct times, even while in both locations diasporic identities were slowly replaced by national ones. It also revealed the varied, rather than singular, way migrants responded to nation-building initiatives and assimilative pressures.

The different ways in which migrants' diasporic consciousness influenced and was influenced by the expanding power of the US, Argentina, and the Italian nation state is evident in migrants' evolving food practices. While in both the US and Argentina migrants sustained commodity paths in foodstuffs to recreate their regional cuisines, they also experimented with novel ingredients abroad, especially meat, which they incorporated into traditional cookery, creating new but familiar dishes. Over time, these changing regional foods and the identities they reflected and produced became understood by the US and Argentina, and by migrant sellers and buyers themselves, as “Italian.” Liberal and especially Fascist Italy, as well as middle-class *prominenti* nationalists abroad, also promoted “long distance nationalism” or “diasporic nationalism” among migrant eaters by encouraging the consumption of Italian exports as a patriotic duty to the homeland (see Gellner; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc). The evolution of migrant cuisines – shaped by exposure to new ingredients, the innovations of Italian entrepreneurs, the changing tastes of migrant

eaters, the desire to appeal to consumers beyond ethnic enclaves, and the assimilative forces of culinary nationalists in the US and Argentina – signaled the attenuation of diasporic subjectivities. At the same time, enduring trans-local and trans-national food traditions in migrant diasporas challenged nationalist culinary movements in the US and Argentina while transforming US American and Argentine cuisine (see Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*). Many of the foods in migrant marketplaces came to influence the culinary mainstream as curious multicultural groups of eaters began exploring novel tastes in migrant diasporas. While today pizza and pasta are considered typical American and Argentine fare, they are rooted in the early-twentieth century diasporas of migrant eaters who, over time, popularized such dishes among non-Italians. Furthermore, migrants who returned back to Italy brought with them culinary experiences and expectations that would come to influence the regional foods of their homes and ultimately global notions of what constituted “Italian” cuisine. Today, eating Barilla brand pasta constitutes “home” not only for Italians in Italy or abroad, as the commercials suggest, but for families from many different backgrounds in the US, Argentina, and elsewhere, thanks to the historic and global movements of Italians over a century ago.¹²

The national cuisines of the US, Argentina, and Italy were not constructed in the absence of mass migrations and the diasporic communities they formed, but rather because of them. Comparative approaches combined with an attention to temporality show that diaspora is most useful for historians of Italy’s migrations and of Italian America when they attend to the factors that create or deter the building and maintenance of diasporas (see Gabaccia, “Juggling Jargons”). In the migrant marketplaces of the US and Argentina, food served both functions – it allowed migrants to make “all the world one home place” by recreating and conserving identities and values rooted in their home regions in Italy; and as migrants confronted new ingredients, tastes, and the power of nationalist movements, their culinary traditions changed as well, reflecting both a waning of local identities, and the embracing of national ones.

Notes

- ¹ See also my forthcoming “Italy and Italian Studies.”
- ² For example, the classic text by Samuel Bailey about New York City and Buenos Aires as cities of Italian immigrants adopted a comparative reading in order to connect usually separated fields, often active in distinct languages (English vs. Spanish, in this case). See also Zimmer’s book and the ongoing work of Georgios Anagnostou on Greeks and Italians in the US. Also, the Calandra Italian American Institute’s annual April conferences have increasingly fostered permeability across geographies and disciplines (see <https://calandrainstitute.org/public-programs/calandra-annual-international-conference>).
- ³ Co-coordinated by a group of faculty affiliated with several UK universities, the project involves exhibits, conferences, publications, media interventions, school outreach, student projects, partnerships across continents, etc. For a full description of its genesis, scope and groundbreaking potential see <https://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/about/project/>. For its main forthcoming publication in Italian Studies, see Burdett.
- ⁴ For a list of previous works that have in part interwoven these subjects, see the Introduction to *Pre-Occupied Spaces*.
- ⁵ For a specific example of this intertwined use of sources that privilege the cultural text, whether a film, a novel, or a repertoire of songs, see the Aperture and two chapters of Part I of Fiore’s *Pre-Occupied Spaces*, entitled “Waters: Migrant Voyages and Ships from and to Italy.” The cultural text prompts a shift away from numbers linked to immigration (individuals, dates, funds) towards stories, which afford migrants a voice, and thus more agency.
- ⁶ A notable absence or indirect inclusion that I found striking was a plenary session at the 2018 MLA convention in New York City. Titled “States of Insecurity: Accepting Vulnerability, Permeability, and Instability,” the session addressed immigration related to the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia, through the contribution of eminent scholars from these specific area studies. Yet, at a time in which headlines were regularly covering migration to Italy, the only reference to Lampedusa was in a presentation by Lisa Lowe, an expert on British, French and Asian global migrations. In other words, scholars with expertise in Italian migrations are not necessarily embraced in a transnational exchange, despite the intrinsically transnational nature of the country’s mobility.
- ⁷ On “groupism” see Brubaker.
- ⁸ Some might argue that Black Americans may have had a more “diasporic” sense of group identity (e.g. Gilroy, Knadler) whereas the model set out by Conzen et. al. speaks more to European and Latin American models of migration and settlement. However, Wilkerson’s work suggests an ethnic model is relevant as well.
- ⁹ See Clayton’s discussion of Bourne regarding anti-Black racism (199-200). There is no record that I have found of any discussion of indigenous Americans in his essays,

though one suspects that Bourne would have viewed amalgamation to include these two groups rather than create separate identities. In some of the wider literature there is a tendency to conflate indigenous and diasporic groups, often as part of a polemic against the nation state (see Fleischmann, Van Styvendale and McCarrroll), but this ignores ways in which both national and diasporaic can elite the specificity of indigenous rights, with Taiwan (see Munsterhjelm 2014) being a good example, though by far not the only one.

¹⁰ For scholars of Italian migration who have engaged directly or indirectly with the diaspora concept see Gabaccia's discussion of the literature in *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 1-12; 192-96.

¹¹ On transnationalism, a good starting point is the work of anthropologists who popularized the term in the 1990s (see Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc). On methodological nationalism see for example Wimmer and Glick Schiller.

¹² For a recent collection on representations of Italian food in Italy and abroad see Naccarato, Nowak and Eckert.

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