Like the migrants they study, historians of migration step across national boundaries. Like migrants, too, they thus expose themselves to what Gérard Noiriel calls "the tyranny of the national." National historiography dominates our discipline. As students of transnational phenomena, however, historians of migration must master more than one national "field." They are simultaneously historians of the world, of several nations, and of the ethnic, religious, and regional loyalties that sustain—and sometimes motivate—migration.

Historians of migration view human movement as an ordinary, rather than exceptional, dimension of human life and as an almost universal human experience. Yet modern historiography makes migration a significant theme mainly when it constructs nations. The immigrant paradigm of American history provides a familiar example. This historical interpretation defines the United States as a nation of immigrants, in which incorporation of foreigners symbolizes the promise and accomplishments of American democracy. The paradigm transforms migrants, and their historians, into "nowhere men," occupying a historiographical nowhere land.

Certainly, the migrants I have studied from Italy and Sicily were mobile people for whom migration was more often a way of life than a moment of transition from
one national identity to another. One early scholar of international migrations noted that the residents of Italy had been leaving home "since time immemorial." Migrations from what is now Italy attracted negative attention as early as the 1830s. They peaked in the years between 1890 and 1914, fell to nineteenth-century levels in the interwar years, and then grew to a mass movement again after World War II.

Most migrants who left Italy returned, although not from any love of their nation. Before 1861 there was no country of Italy; thereafter, observers noted, it was necessary to "make Italians." Modern Italian nationalism developed after unification, consolidating under fascism and the postwar Italian republic. Yet some scholars still deny Italy is a nation; others expect it to collapse. Until World War I, few migrants from Italy had strong national identities. They migrated through networks of kin and neighbors (paesani) from particular small towns; their strongest ties were to family and paesani. What surprises the modern student of these migrants is how effectively illiterate people with such particularist loyalties could communicate on a global scale, bridging continents.

Migrants from Italy pioneered ways of life that scholars today call transnational because they link human experience in more than one nation. Yet migrants also came face to face with the increasing power of nation-states during their wide-ranging migrations. The persons who appear as "emigrants," "expatriates," and returners in one nation's statistics appear as immigrants in a dozen other nations—notably Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Tunisia. As they went about the mundane task of finding work, migrants responded to states' demands for passports, health inspections, taxes, military service, departure, naturalization, and loyalty. Many became "Italian" only when they left home; when they returned, neighbors called them "germanesi" or "americani." During the extended warfare of the twentieth century, however, sending and receiving countries alike expected greater loyalty from migrants, and national identities became a source of difference among former kin and neighbors.

In this paper, I draw on a decade-long, collaborative project (Italian Workers around the World, dubbed informally "Italians Everywhere") on the global migrations of 27 million migrants from Italy. My goal is to query the tyranny of the national in the discipline of history. Some postmodernist critics hold historians themselves responsible for national tyranny through their participation in nation-building projects. The critics Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari go so far as to argue that "history is always written from a sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus." They thus call for "a Nomadology" to replace history. In sharp contrast, the historian Ernst Renan—writing in the middle of a great era of nation building a century ago—argued that "omission and historical error" produce nations and their foundational myths. For Renan, "the advancement of historical knowledge" was a "threat to nationhood," not an act of nation building.

The study of migration allows us to explore in some detail these two rather different understandings of the relation of historiography and modern nations. While historical practice and the lives of historians of Italy's migration have become more transnational, the hegemony of national historiographies has persisted. We do have transnational categories—notably diasporas and internationalism—that promise a release from the tyranny of the national. These categories also facilitate critiques of national historiographies—I use the immigrant paradigm of United States history as my example—and the role of historians in
creating or perpetuating their hegemony.

Still, even historians who recognize the tyranny of the national often find that their research reveals global human movements as simultaneously threatening and sustaining nations. Migration is a human activity that takes place on many geographical scales, including those "above" and "below" nations. For migrants in the twentieth century, however, the national remains an important scale. When we write transnational histories of modern migration, we produce a world history in which nations and nation states continue to be important constituent elements and explanatory forces.

What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been

The professional lives of many historians are increasingly transnational, but training and teaching obligations remain dominated by national fields of expertise. For students trained in United States history, transnational study of migration emerged in part from a national historiography in which immigration is a central theme no textbook dares ignore. Indeed one can speak—as I will below—of a distinctive interpretation of United States history that explains how immigration created the American nation.

Transnational approaches to the history of migration seemed perfectly compatible with the immigrant paradigm when I began graduate school in the mid-1970s. The "new ethnicity" of the late 1960s had challenged scholars to rethink linkages between national history and the histories of subnational ethnic groups and to write the histories of particular ethnic groups, including Italians. The labor historian Herbert Gutman had encouraged young labor historians to view the peasant cultures of Europe as foundations for immigrant working-class communities in the United States. Ethnic history traced the origins of American ethnic diversity and American pluralism to origins of Americans in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Not surprisingly, historians of Italian and other immigrants began to do significant research in the immigrants' homelands and in their native languages.

Alternative, and transnational, approaches to the history of the American nation also proliferated as scholars from other nations explored migration from their own perspectives. Scholars in Europe rediscovered what the first immigration historians of the United States had also argued—that immigration was the American expression of a European story of emigration. Ernesto Ragionieri, Frank Thistlethwaite (who called on scholars to breach the saltwater curtain), and Dirk Hoerder all wrote about migration within an Atlantic, capitalist, and world economy. For them, migration was no first step in the making of Americans but rather a connection between nations or among Karl Marx's "workers of the world." But while historians of the colonial empires and of the African slave trade soon made a similar Atlantic perspective a mainstream approach for students of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, historians of the modern United States largely ignored the Atlantic perspective pioneered by colleagues abroad.

The transformation of United States immigration experts into transnational
historians was often a product of biography, as Bruno Ramirez demonstrates in "Clio in Words and in Motion" in this issue. Like many historians of United States immigration, I am the descendant of immigrants. But unlike others in that very large category, my life in the 1970s and 1980s became that of an academic labor migrant reversing in eerie fashion the peregrinations of my Italian, German, and Swiss grandparents. Historiography encouraged me to accommodate both a personal interest in seeking roots (in Italy) and the studies of a Europeanist husband (in Germany). After fieldwork in Sicily, research in Rome and New York, lectures and seminars in Ann Arbor and Tübingen, an academic appointment as a historian of the United States followed at the Free University of Berlin. There, an inter-university project, "The German Workers of Chicago," introduced me to several scholarly collaborations focused on migration. After three years in the United States, I returned with a Fulbright grant to work with the Labor Migration Project at the University of Bremen. Even after a more permanent return to the United States, my professional networks continued to resemble a scholarly Atlantic Economy.

My transnational professional and personal life quickly alerted me to problems in American studies of Italian immigration. I did my initial research in the 1970s in Sicilian "red towns" alive with discussions of Eurocommunism, which demolished what I had learned about the cultural familism of southern Italians. I also quickly learned that dialects and regionalism were not quirks of my family (with its roots in Piemonte, its peculiar understanding of itself as more French than Italian, and its disdain for Italy's southerners). I stopped thinking of Italians as a primordial nation, and I began wondering how residents of Italy had become Italians. I ceased writing of immigrants and emigrants in order to take migrants' complex experiences more seriously. Finally, I stopped thinking of emigration from Italy as immigration to the United States. Most of Italy's migrants did not go to the United States. Instead, I adopted Samuel Bailey's village-outward methodology, which held the promise of tracing migrants from Italy to the five continents to which they emigrated in significant numbers.

My first two books were transnational studies that raised at least some reviewers' hackles for sidestepping the immigrant paradigm and its well-worn paths of immigration and adaptation to the United States in order to focus on connections and linkages between Old and New worlds. Still, neither book captured the continuous, multidirectional, and circular character of migrations from Italy, for both focused exclusively on Sicilian migration to and from the United States and the connections it created between people in the two places. My methodological conservatism in this regard is painfully easy to explain: I was looking for work repeatedly through the 1980s, and on the job market I was asked all too often whether I was really an Americanist or really a historian of Italy. (More than once, I imagined interviewers writing on my file "lacks focus.")

Only with a new job and with tenure finally and firmly in hand after thirteen years did I abandon my worries about losing my professional identity as a historian of the United States and think of tackling research on Italians everywhere. Organized as an international project together with Fraser Ottanelli of the University of South Florida, the project Italian Workers around the World rapidly introduced all its participants to the tyranny of the national in the writing of history.

The main objective of Italians Everywhere was to tell the dramatic story of a migration of 27 million humble workers who left Italy between 1789 and the 1970s. These 27 million migrants formed one of the largest migration systems in a
very mobile modern world. A century of migration from Italy involved a population almost as large as that of Italy itself in 1861. It represented about 10 percent of global migrations 1830-1930—a century when at least 10 percent of the world moved across national boundaries, and even larger numbers moved within them. Recognizing the era of international migration as a period of ascending nationalism, we hypothesized that migration shaped sending and receiving nations alike.

Because Italy's migrants traveled in so many directions, collaborative research seemed a necessity. Fortunately, we had good models for collaboration. Italians Everywhere led to communication with 150 colleagues studying emigration from Italy or immigrants from Italy in Europe, Australia, and the Americas. Between 1993 and 1996, six newsletters (Italian Workers around the World) circulated ongoing research. In April 1996, a working conference of twenty scholars convened in the multiethnic cigar makers' community of Ybor City (Tampa, Florida) with its rich heritage of radical labor activism. The conference submitted case studies of Italian workers to the scrutiny of comparativists. The collaboration will produce two books. The first ("For Us There Are No Frontiers") collects essays on workers and labor activism on three continents. The second ("Foreign, Female, and Fighting Back") focuses on women and work on four continents. In addition, I have written a monograph, Italy's Many Diasporas, as a synthesis of the Italians Everywhere project.

Ottanelli and I began this project determined to wrench the story of Italy's migrants from its earliest moorings in national historiographies. Deconstructing the "Italian" that Italian history takes for granted was a first necessity. Before 1920, half of Italy's migrants were illiterates; few spoke "Italian" (that is, the Tuscan dialect first adopted by Italy's intellectuals and later by its nation-state as a national language). Most had familial, local, regional, and religious—but not national—identities: they were Catholics, Sicilians, or Sambucari. Nor was the United States the destination of most of Italy's migrants. Of the national historiographies that had generated research on Italy's migrations, however, the most important was that of the United States, not Italy. Before 1914, the largest group—a little less than a third of the total—did go to the United States. But almost half of these were not immigrants; they were male sojourners who returned home. Nearly a quarter of Italy's migrants before World War I went to Argentina and Brazil, and the largest number (just under half) went to other European countries. The proportions of migrants leaving Italy for the United States declined to under a quarter after World War I and to 10 percent after 1945.

Extricating the study of Italy's migrations from the history of a particular nation did not mean ignoring nations and national states. Our collaborators all worked either within the history of Italy (or one of its distinctive regions) or in the history of one receiving nation. In addition, nation-states had touched almost every dimension of the migrants' lives. With increasing vigor, states defined borders, differentiating emigrants and immigrants from natives and generating much of the information we used to study them.

National loyalties among Italy's migrants also became more pronounced, especially between 1910 and 1960. Nationalist movements emerging in Italy in the 1880s and 1890s culminated in the fiercely nationalist fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, and during his reign both fascists and antifascists claimed to represent "the true Italians," including those living abroad. After World War II, too, the Italian republic continued to view migrants as part of the Italian nation (although we also found interesting an upswing in regionalism that followed the
devolution of funding for many migration-related programs from national to regional governments after 1970). Receiving nations, too, demanded loyalty from Italy's migrants in the interwar years, and as a result Argentines who are descended from migrants from Italy have national identities significantly different from those of Frenchmen and Americans (in Canada and the United States) of "Italian" descent. Our goal then was not to sidestep the tyranny of the national but to problematize it.

The publications generated by Italians Everywhere juxtaposed, compared, and connected the histories of migrants in Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil. The exercise made obvious the many omissions and errors Renan had claimed were necessary to foster national myths. In decidedly different, and thus telling, ways, each national historiography touched by Italy's migrants distorted their experiences to tell the history of a single nation and its making.

There is, of course, a large specialized literature on Italian emigration written by Italians. General histories of the nation of Italy, however, view migration either as an expression of the economic crisis in the Italian South between 1870 and 1914 or as a transfer of southerners to the Italian North in the 1950s and 1960s. In both cases, migration is posited as an expression of the vexing problem of economic backwardness in the Italian South—a region understood to be part of, but also fundamentally different from, the rest of the Italian nation. In Italy, the complex history of migration more often finds effective incorporation within the historiography of particular regions, including those in the center and north of Italy. Regional historiography in Italy documents, without ever truly resolving, very lively debates over the meaning and nature of the nation of Italy.

The place of migration in general accounts of Italy's national history are fundamentally incorrect. In fact, the majority of Italy's migrants before World War II were from the more developed north and center regions—not the South—and many more of these migrants went to Europe than to the Americas. Returners—scarcely appear in Italian national historiography (although they can sometimes be found in regional histories), and they never appear as the grandparents and parents of a sizable proportion (if not a majority) of the current nation of Italians. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that national histories written by non-Italian historians sometimes treat migration more extensively and more accurately than those by historians in Italy.

The historiographies of countries that "received" Italy's migrants divide sharply between those that acknowledge and those that deny migration as makers of their modern nations. Histories of Germany and Switzerland completely ignore migration, although foreigners were substantial components of their work forces (10 percent in Germany) and populations (15 percent in Switzerland) by early in the twentieth century. This is scarcely surprising, as neither viewed itself as an immigration country, granted citizenship to children born on its soil, or allowed for the easy naturalization of foreigners. Migrants to those two countries became—and remained—"Italians."

By contrast, the historiographies of Argentina, France, Canada, and Australia, like that of the United States, acknowledge immigration while differing in the role they assign migrants and their descendants in nation building. (All of those countries at particular times had higher proportions of immigrants in their populations than did the United States, past or present.) French and Argentine histories note the arrival of large numbers of immigrants at the turn of the century.
or in the interwar years. Both also describe immigrants finding rapid incorporation into the nation, which quickly rendered them invisible as distinctive social or cultural groups. In the French view, migrants and their children joined the nation by becoming French speakers and French citizens. In the history of Argentina, they helped create a culturally hybrid nation in the *crisol de razas* (melting pot). \( ^{30} \) In neither nation is there a history of migrants' descendants as a distinctive subgroup within the nation. The United States may have invented the concept of the melting pot (as Nancy L. Green discusses in "Le Melting-Pot" in this issue), but both France and Argentina have at times claimed to be more successful melting pots than the United States.

In very sharp contrast, the historiographies of the United States, Canada, and Australia all trace the impact of immigration on nation building over the longer term of the country's history. They all describe Italy's migrants acquiring dual identities as they became citizens. Historians of those three countries portray the descendants of migrants as members of ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities. In all three English-speaking countries, the identities of Italy's migrants remain "Italian," and their ethnic identity coexists peacefully with the civic nationalism of these self-consciously multiethnic nations. \( ^{31} \)

The Italians Everywhere project thus revealed two different agendas inherent in transnational history. One is to reject the tyranny of the national by seeking alternative concepts and alternative scales for writing history above, below, within, or outside individual nations—whether as global or regional histories. The other is to use transnational history to critique national historiographies from the outside and to insist that historians of particular nations recognize how histories focused on nation building distort the past. Each agenda generates useful insights into the connection between nation building and the predominance of national historiographies in our discipline.

**We Are the World**

Two dramatic themes entwined in the story of Italy's migrations. One—the conflict of labor and capital in a globalizing economy—seemed to require the writing of world history on a grand scale. The other—the transformation of intimates of single villages into Italians, Argentines, and Italo-Canadians—required a comparative approach that could simultaneously call into view many nodes in spatially extensive networks of migrants. History, as a discipline, has limited tolerance for the grand theories of global change that the anthropologist Janet Abu-Lughod has also dismissed as "global-babble." Even comparative history has its critics. Still, two concepts—diasporas and Karl Marx's international proletariat—seemed promising starting places for an empirical, and historical, but transnational project such as Italians Everywhere. \( ^{32} \)

Long used for the forced scattering of nations without their own states (Jews, African slaves), the term diaspora has recently attracted wider usage among advocates of global and transnational studies. \( ^{33} \) Social scientists studying contemporary migrations generally assume that new technologies of
communication and transportation allow transnational migrants to create diasporas, and to remain connected to each other and to their homelands, in ways unavailable in the past. Indeed, scholars now use the term diaspora to describe almost all migrants in order to highlight the transnationalism of their lives.

While some see transnationalism and globalization today as inherent threats to the power and hegemony of nation-states, theorists of diasporas and transnational ways of life also assume the strength, and centrality, of national identities formed in migrants' homelands. They thus increasingly talk of diasporas as "nations unbound" (by migration) or even as "deterritorialized nation states," in which migrants living outside the national territory remained politically engaged as voters and officeholders in the governments of sending societies. For much of the era of Italy's mass migrations, however, there was no nation of Italy; at most there was an Italian state. Can one speak of an Italian diaspora before there was an Italian nation? Ultimately, I decided to write of Italy's many diasporas, not a history of the Italian diaspora.

The advantage of the term diaspora for the study of Italy's migration is that it forces scholars to attend precisely to the movement's distinguishing characteristics—its circularity, continuity, and multidirectionality. However, it seemed more sensible to ask whether migrant networks resembled diasporas than to assume that they did. Without clear national identities in the nineteenth century, Italy's migrants could scarcely form a single "Italian" diaspora. They did, however, form many village- and region-based diasporas that overlapped and intersected in particular neighborhoods and workplaces in many receiving countries around the world. Transnational family economies linking wage-earning men abroad and women and children at home maintained the strength of local ties during international migrations but also gave them their global "reach." Italy's diasporas were diasporas of residents of a single town, such as the biellesi from Biella, or of a region, such as the siciliani from Sicily. Most communication within these diasporas, furthermore, occurred between the home village and its colonies (as Italians called them) abroad; there was limited circulation of people from one diaspora satellite to another.

Village and regional diasporas of migrants quickly became important sites for Italian nation building, especially in the early twentieth century. Even as Italy became an independent state, optimistic intellectuals portrayed settlements of migrants abroad as colonies through which Italy could extend its civilizing cultural and commercial influence (as it had in the late middle ages). Emilio Franzina has also rightly observed that migrants become "living agents" of Italian nationalism because so many migrants became Italian only when they encountered government record keepers, people from other parts of Italy, and anti-Italian sentiment abroad.

Initiatives to create an "Italian" diaspora emerged from all of Italy's nationalist movements. First Catholic, then secular, nationalists insisted that Italy's government protect its migrants and provide support (through consuls) so that they could learn Italian language, history, and culture and feel pride in their homeland. In 1912, Italy changed its laws so that migrants and their children born abroad remained citizens.

On this basis, Mussolini in the 1920s expanded diaspora initiatives enormously. The temptation was overwhelming: there were nine million Italians living abroad at that time; together with their children, they were almost half as large a group as Italy's resident population. Mussolini attracted the support of many migrants,
especially in the English-speaking world, for his imperialist adventures. But vigorous efforts by antifascists also contested Mussolini's efforts at nation building throughout the diaspora. In doing so, the antifascists substituted their own more democratic claims for the imagined community of Italians at home and abroad; they did not question the existence of a nation of Italians or the sentiments that linked those at home to those abroad.

After World War II, the new Italian republic was somewhat more circumspect in its relations to migrants, perhaps because talk of Italy's "colonies" now raised painful memories of fascism and imperialism. Abandoning references to the colonies, Italy's postwar governments referred instead to "gli italiani nel mondo"—a diaspora of "Italians around the world." Only in the second postwar era is it possible to talk of Italy as a nation "unbound" by migration, or of an Italian diaspora as a "de-territorialized nation state." And, even in this period, the Italian state hesitated to promote much political participation among citizens abroad.

Viewing Italy's migrations exclusively as a diaspora-in-formation also had one large drawback for understanding the lives of Italians everywhere. It privileged interactions among migrants from Italy and the formation of an Italian nation, and thus—ironically—reproduced rather than released scholarship from the tyranny of the national by ignoring migrants' interactions with peoples of other backgrounds. Internationalism and the related Marxist category of an international proletariat (workers of the world) proved helpful correctives, suggesting a very different global history, focused comparatively on the evolution of modern labor movements. Modern labor movements in many countries struggled to organize work forces of mixed native and foreign-born workers. By doing so, they pioneered modes of incorporating foreigners that nation-states would borrow later in the twentieth century.

The history of Italy's migrants reveals internationalism as much more than an abstraction of socialist theorists of the Second International. The best-known leaders of Italy's movement for national independence—Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini—were both migrant exiles and—in very differing ways—passionate internationalists. Italy's labor movement was "born anarchist" in the 1860s; the mass migrations from Italy overlapped with, and became an issue of debate in, the Second, or Socialist, International between 1889 and 1914. In the interwar years, Mussolini's nationalist imperialism faced sharp international opposition from antifascist migrants, many of whom linked national liberation for Italy to the internationalism of the Comintern.

One need not view migrants from Italy as a rootless international proletariat to appreciate their internationalism. In fact, most of Italy's migrants were not factory workers, nor were they completely dependent on wage labor for their survival. Italy's labor migrants were overwhelmingly male (60-90 percent), and as "men without women" were tied by sentiment and economic interdependence to the "women who waited." Women's work in agricultural subsistence production underwrote men's departures and returns, and subsistence production remained an important dimension of family economies during Italy's mass migrations.

As workers, Italy's migrants engaged in three forms of international organizing, only one of which linked migrants into an Italian diaspora. In Germany and Switzerland, members of Italy's trade federations, Socialist Party activists, and activist exiles became involved in binational collaborations with the Swiss and German trade federations that organized industries employing large numbers of Italian migrants. Their experiments represented the Second International's best
response (sparked by Italian Socialists' demands) to migrants' wage depression and scabbing. This form of internationalism ultimately sought to organize workers into multinational unions open to citizens of several countries and operating in several lands.\textsuperscript{46}

In a second form of internationalism, common in France, Austria, and the Americas, Italy's migrants instead became active in multiethnic experiments in organizing national labor movements. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the United States, the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA) in Argentina, France's Confédération Général du Travail (CGT), and the socialist unions of Austria all admitted foreign-born workers. In the American AFL and (briefly) the French CGT, and in the United States, Argentine, and Austrian Socialist parties, foreigners (or citizens speaking distinctive languages) initially found incorporation in ethnic or language locals within multiethnic national organizations. The American IWW, the Argentine FORA, and the Brazilian Workers' Federation instead created culturally hybrid but unitary organizations with multiethnic memberships they often termed cosmopolitan.\textsuperscript{47}

Only the third form of internationalism among Italy's migrants contributed to the formation of an Italian diaspora. Anarchists from Italy faced special disadvantages as exiles and migrants. Tainted by their early support for terrorism, Italian anarchists lived under constant police surveillance, and they repeatedly fled from one country or continent to another.\textsuperscript{48} They forged networks of Italian-speaking anarchists in order to survive. Interlocking subscriptions linked hundreds of their ephemeral Italian-language newspapers (published on every continent except Antarctica) into a global network. These facilitated the development of a worldwide, Italian-language discourse that linked in mortal combat followers of Errico Malatesta's anarcho-syndicalism and libertarians opposed to all forms of organization. This was a deterritorialized but distinctively Italian anarchism—an Italian-language ideology unbound by migration. But one hesitates to call this network of anarchists a national or even "Italian" diaspora. Anarcho-syndicalists and libertarians were both vehement opponents of nationalism and of all national states, including Italy's.

While concepts such as diaspora or internationalism promised an escape from the tyranny of the national and promised new ways of writing world histories of migration, both also documented the many linkages of local, national, and transnational in migrants' lives. Becoming central to migrants' identities only rather belatedly, nationalism and national states shaped local and global histories for much longer. Internationalism among workers allowed Germany to deny it was a nation of immigrants. It created ethnic segmentation in nations that would later celebrate their multiculturalism. It linked anarchists into a distinctive "Italian" diaspora. And it blended native- and foreign-born workers into unitary labor movements that ignored cultural differences—as would the nations of Argentina and France themselves. Even in nomadology, the national finds its place.

\textbf{Bringing It All Back Home}
World histories organized around such concepts as diaspora and internationalism allow historians to examine and critique national historiographies as outsiders. Italians Everywhere provided ample materials for revising the historiographies of many nations. By way of conclusion, I suggest how American immigration history and the immigrant paradigm of United States history hold up under such scrutiny.

To simplify somewhat, the immigrant paradigm defines a particular interpretation of American exceptionalism. It portrays the United States as the world's first democracy and its most open frontier in the nineteenth century and as the world's strongest industrializing economy in the twentieth. These exceptional traits made the United States extraordinarily attractive to humble settlers, seeking freedom and prosperity, from abroad. Second, it views the incorporation of immigrants as the key to the American character—we are a "nation of immigrants." Since the 1970s, the most important critics of the immigrant paradigm have been students of the country's racial minorities. They rightly point to long-term, rigid, and institutionalized exclusion on a racial basis as the central theme—and central tragedy—of American nation building and American democracy. Most see immigration history, and immigration historians, as guardians of an immigrant paradigm they view as a destructive national myth.

Curiously, however, the immigrant paradigm of American history is not a product of immigration history; it originates in a critique of racial nationalism within the Chicago School of Sociology. Rejecting social Darwinist notions that an overheated melting pot was unable to absorb immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, the Chicago School documented immigrants' rapid "straight-line" assimilation in American cities. The first immigration historians began writing around the same time. But unlike the Chicago sociologists, Carl Wittke, Theodore Blegen, and Marcus Lee Hansen studied older immigrations (German, British, Scandinavian) to nineteenth-century rural America. They focused a great deal of attention on migration as a transnational, and local, phenomenon.

It was Oscar Handlin's study of Irish immigrants in the urban East that produced the classic statement of the immigrant paradigm by a historian in his 1951 book The Uprooted. To this day, Handlin's book along with the Chicago sociologists and analyses of American pluralism—beginning with J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur and Alexis de Tocqueville, and continuing through Frederick Jackson Turner and Louis Hartz and David Hollinger—are the works most cited by critics of the immigrant paradigm.

Rather than inventing the immigrant paradigm, immigration historians, since Rudolph Vecoli's seminal article "Contadini in Chicago," have been critics of it. Recovering the histories of immigrant ethnic groups, immigration historians rejected sociologists' theories of "straight-line" assimilation to document instead ethnicity's persistence and the transformation of immigrants into ethnics. In 1985, John Bodnar summarized their work by substituting transplanting for Handlin's uprooting. As critics of the immigrant paradigm, immigration historians have established mainly that the acquisition of an ethnic identity accompanied foreigners' successful incorporation into the American nation. This has been their main contribution to contemporary discussions of American pluralism.

Unlike immigration history and its critics, Italians Everywhere treated the United States as one of an impressive number of countries employing Italian labor and grappling with the threat mass migrations seemed to pose for nation building. In this transnational approach, the United States is unexceptional, just one of many
receiving countries. Through comparison of connected cases, transnational study also makes it possible to ask what—if anything—is distinctive about migrants' experiences in the United States, thus raising different questions, from the outside, about the validity and contours of the immigrant paradigm. Like other critiques, Italians Everywhere points to fundamental ways that the immigrant paradigm gets the facts wrong.

First and foremost, the United States was considerably less attractive to Italy's migrants than to most other mobile Europeans (two-thirds of whom traveled to the United States). American land did not attract Italians before or after 1890. Industrialization made the country more attractive after 1890, but even then only a third of Italy's migrants sought work in the United States. After 1914, the magnetism of the United States disappeared beneath draconic and discriminatory immigration restrictions.

Nor did the United States present Italy's migrants with the most promising work opportunities. In the United States, as many as three-quarters of male migrants from Italy worked in seasonal unskilled jobs, mainly in construction. Mining, agriculture, and skilled trade and petty commerce were of some, if secondary, importance, but factory employment remained quite limited among male migrants. The much smaller numbers of women and children migrating from Italy were more likely to find work as factory operatives in garment, textile, shoe, and cigar industries. By contrast, in Argentina and Brazil, the majority of Italian migrants were semiskilled industrial workers, skilled tradesmen, petty merchants, and white-collar workers. Independent farmers and sharecroppers were also much better represented than in the United States. In Europe, the numbers of Italian miners, skilled craftsmen, and semiskilled industrial workers (especially in Germany and France) equaled those working in seasonal, unskilled, construction jobs (more common in Switzerland).

Italy's migrants scarcely differentiated images of opportunity in the United States from other distant magnets. Less than 10 percent of the republican exiles who fled Italy during fifty years of revolts and wars before Italy's unification sought freedom in the United States. For labor migrants later in the century, any transoceanic destination where jobs beckoned was "l'America," whether it was the United States, Canada, or Argentina. A woman who went to Melbourne even insisted "I migrated to America. It did not occur to me that Australia was not in fact America."

The United States attracted migrants from the poorest parts of Italy, where illiteracy and unemployment were high. Its job market proved attractive mainly to ambitious and hardworking but poor Sicilians and southern Italians who—already disparaged within Italy and Europe for their poverty, "African origins," and criminality—found few closer work opportunities. Southerners were three-quarters of the Italians bound for the United States and Africa, slightly more than half of those migrating to Latin America, but only about a third of migrants to Europe.

Permanent settlement in the United States was not always a financially advantageous choice even for impoverished southerners. The wages of unskilled men stretched further in Italy than in the United States, where high costs of living accompanied relatively high American wages. In the United States, the average unskilled Italian man earned only a third of a family's minimum living costs, and it could take ten years or more of wage earning by all family members to save enough to purchase a house. In Italy, by contrast, the thousand lire many men could save during a three- to five-year sojourn in the United States represented two to three times a typical peasant family's annual cash income, and it was
sufficient to erect a modern, if modest, dwelling. Permanent settlement in the United States became possible when women and children worked for wages outside the family group. Italian migrants thus settled permanently mainly in American cities with light industries and high rates of female employment. Yet even in the twentieth century, women were less likely to migrate to the United States than to Argentina, and higher proportions worked in Argentina than in the United States. Rates of return are slippery indicators of migrants' satisfactions with life in the United States, because so many left Italy intending to return. (Statistical evidence, furthermore, is uneven.) Still, rates of return from the United States were high when costs of oceanic journeys are considered. With the village home nearby for the Europe-bound, vast majorities (two-thirds to 90 percent) returned after short seasonal "campaigns" north of the Alps. Estimated at 49 percent 1905-1920, only slightly higher than rates from Argentina, return rates from the United States rose sharply thereafter. Between 1920 and 1945, returners soared to 83 percent of new arrivals in the United States, while return rates from Europe and South America instead dropped.

Dino Cinel has offered a provocative interpretation of the migrants from Italy who remained in the United States to become Italian Americans. He argues that hyphenated, defensive, and insecure identities were a logical outcome of a sense of failure among a group that did not achieve the goal of return. Others disagree with Cinel, arguing instead that, as Euro-Americans, the descendants of Italy's migrants confirm the immigrant paradigm and are firmly part of the American mainstream. Yet even Richard Alba, who wrote of the "twilight of ethnicity" among Italian Americans in the 1970s, found that well over half of the grandchildren of Italian immigrants still claimed a "hyphenated" or ethnic "Italian-American" identity.

It is this plurality that distinguished nation building in the United States, Canada, and Australia from that of other migrant-receiving nations from the 1920s to the 1980s. In 1985, Robert F. Harney suggested that it reflected "Italo-phobia," which he deemed "an English-speaking disease." While hyphenated identities may reflect voluntary choice, multinational comparisons suggest it is, instead, "the state that makes the nation" in this particular multiethnic form.

In the United States, the making of hyphenated identities among Italy's migrants seems intimately related to the history of immigration restriction, not to the promise of America democracy. Restriction of Asian and European labor migrations to the United States differed, of course, but largely in degree. The United States excluded, first, Chinese laborers (but not merchants) in 1882; in 1885, the Foran Act (unsuccessfully) excluded all contract laborers, including those from Europe. In 1899, the United States began categorizing all immigrants by social Darwinist racial groups, dividing migrants from Italy into northern Italian "Alpine" and southern Italian "Mediterranean" races. In 1917, the country excluded illiterates. In 1921 and 1924, while barring all Asians, it imposed discriminatory "national origins quotas" on many Europeans. The goal was to reduce the immigration of nations (such as Italians) not among the country's original settlers. Discriminatory quotas persisted until 1965, when they fell to the same critique of racial nationalism that produced domestic civil rights legislation. Migrants became Italian Americans during years when state policy restricted their migrations as undesirable. Restriction of European migrations took slightly different forms in Canada and Australia and was suspended immediately after World War II rather than persisting as it did in the United States until 1965, but it
had pursued similar discriminatory ends in the interwar years.  

The United States shares with other English-speaking countries its early efforts to label Asians and some migrants from Europe as unworthy to enter while remaining willing to accept the children of both restricted (European) and excluded (Asian) immigrants as native-born citizens. The English-speaking countries in turn share with France and Argentina a sense of civic nationalism that, since the 1940s, increasingly encourages and allows migrants to naturalize and to develop new national identities as Americans, Canadians, or Argentines. Unlike France and Argentina, however, the English-speaking countries retain a firm sense of some migrants as culturally different ethnics, and they left open civil and social spaces for foreigners to organize autonomously and to reproduce homeland loyalties. Over the long term, migrants' descendants in English-speaking countries found themselves living in countries that trumpet their multietnicism (usually called multiculturalism) and culturally plural citizenries as a symbol of democratic nationalism. France instead consciously insists that its model of incorporation without attention to race, religion, ethnicity, or origin is a better model for republican nations.  

France, Canada, Germany, Australia, and Argentina are just as much nations of immigrants as the United States is, yet none has generated an equivalent of the immigrant paradigm as symbol of their nation's distinctiveness. Here is the only truly American exceptionalism revealed by Italians Everywhere. Histories of Argentina, Brazil, and France show limited interest in migrants once they have become citizens and entered the nation. And Germans and Swiss simply deny that theirs are nations of immigrants at all. Other self-consciously multietnic and multicultural histories, such as those of Canada and Australia, view migration as only one of many "makers" of their nations.  

The intriguing question about American exceptionalism, then, is why the United States, alone among immigrant-receiving and even self-consciously multicultural countries, has generated an immigrant paradigm to explain the making of its nation. In fact, the history of migration from Italy to the United States bears but limited resemblance to the immigrant paradigm. Many of the "immigrants" of the past were not immigrants at all; they were not particularly interested in becoming American or even in migrating to the United States rather than to some other destination. Canada, Australia, and the United States shared unresolved tensions between territorial and racial definitions of their nations, expressed in a sharp contrast between restrictive and discriminatory public policies toward undesirable immigrants and increasingly inclusive definitions of citizenship.  

The immigrant paradigm, I believe, is the product of the unique manner in which the United States has grappled with that ambivalence to create an American nation. The United States shares with Canada and Australia a long history of subjecting and excluding the indigenous peoples it conquered. Like Canada, furthermore, the United States has incorporated territories of several empires (French and English in the case of both; Spanish in the case of the United States). What makes the United States different from Canada and Australia is its long history of slavery as a source of significant national disunity. It is this history, I believe (along with many critics of the immigrant paradigm), that explains the creation of an immigrant paradigm in the United States and not in the other English-speaking countries. By focusing our attention on race, exclusion, and state policy, Italians Everywhere raises many of the same critiques of the immigrant paradigm developed by historians of this country's racial minorities. The racial dynamics of the United States best explain the creation and persistence of an immigrant paradigm that ignores, when it does not also falsify, the history of
African Americans.

I have presented United States history, with its immigrant paradigm, less as myopic nationalism than—as Renan might have predicted—a highly selective tale. The most important and negative legacy of the immigrant paradigm is that it historically divides the histories of Americans into the histories of immigrants and others. Students of the country's racial minorities rightly note that, as a myth of nation building, the immigrant paradigm repeatedly serves to exclude racial minorities (especially Native Americans and the descendants of African slaves) from the American nation, despite their native birth. Ironically, this was never the intention of most immigration historians, who were not the creators of the immigrant paradigm, but critics of it.

While transnational history allows us to mount a critique of the immigrant paradigm that shares much with existing ones, it also offers something new. Through an incredible sleight-of-historiography, the immigrant paradigm forces into the American nation migrants that the nation not only sought to exclude but whose histories are scarcely paeans to the promise and triumph of American democracy. Criticisms of the immigrant paradigm by historians of immigration are important because they bring into dialogue histories of immigrant and racial minorities that evolved as separate and competing interpretations of United States history. If a more-perfect American pluralism requires a new tale of nation formation, transnational historians could participate in its making. Histories of migration and immigration to the United States provide evidence that the acquisition of an ethnic or racial identity—while often a response to exclusion—can sometimes be transformed into an element in national belonging. They show that there have been many paths into the American nation and that exclusionary obstacles of many sorts have been part of many of these paths. They demonstrate, finally, that no one path links all immigrants or separates one homogeneous category of immigrants from either Americans or racial outsiders.

For historians who reject responsibility for reproducing nations (and I include myself in this group), projects such as Italians Everywhere reveal the promise and perils of that choice. Much of human history refuses to fall within the confines of nations and national historiographies. Counterbalancing the marginality of life "outside" a national historiography are transnational scholarly practices that promise to redefine the historical nowhere and the many worlds humans have ever occupied above and below nations and their states.

Notes

Donna R. Gabaccia is Charles H. Stone Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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Readers may contact Gabaccia at drgabacc@email.uncc.edu.

2 Donna R. Gabaccia, "Do We Still Need Immigration History?" *Polish American Studies*, 55 (Spring 1998), 54-55.


7 Vito Teti, "Noti sui comportamenti delle donne sole degli 'americani' durante la prima emigrazione in Calabria" (Notes on the comportment of women left alone by the "Americans" during the first period of emigration from Calabria), *Studi emigrazione* (Rome), 24 (no. 87, 1987), 13-46; René del Fabbro, *Transalpini: Italienische Arbeitswanderung nach Süddeutschland im Kaiserreich 1870-1918* (The transalpinians: Italian labor migration to southern Germany during the reign of the kaisers 1870-1918) (Osnabrück, 1996), 266-67.


11 Ernesto Ragionieri, "Italiani all'estero ed emigrazione di lavoratori italiani: Una tema di storia movimento operaio" (Italians abroad and the emigration of Italian workers: A theme in the history of


23 Spencer Di Scala, Italy: From Revolution to Republic, 1700 to the Present (Boulder, 1995); Ruggiero Romano and Corrado Vivanti, coord., Storia d'Italia (History of Italy) (Turin, 1972-1976); Giuseppe Galasso, dir., Storia d'Italia (History of Italy) (Turin, 1979).


25 Giuseppe Galasso and Rosario Romeo, Storia del mezzogiorno (History of southern Italy) (Rome, 1991); Storia d'Italia: Le regioni dall'unità a oggi (History of Italy: The regions from unification to the present) (Turin, 1989-).


29 Ulrich Herbert, A History of Foreign Labor in Germany (Ann Arbor, 1984); Madelyn Holmes, Forgotten Migrants: Foreign Workers in Switzerland before World War I (Rutherford, 1988).


34 Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, eds., Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration.

36 Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, ch. 4.

37 Leone Carpi, *Della colonie e dell'emigrazione d'italiani all'estero sotto l'aspetto dell'industria, commercio, ed agricoltura* (About colonies and Italian emigration abroad with regard to industry, commerce, and agriculture) (4 vols., Milan, 1874), I, II; Gerolamo Boccardo, *L'emigrazione e le colonie* (Emigration and colonies) (Florence, 1871).


41 Nadia Venturini, "'Over the Years People Don't Know': Italian Americans and African Americans in Harlem in the 1930s," in "For Us There Are No Frontiers," ed. Gabaccia and Ottanelli; Fraser M. Ottanelli, "If fascism comes to America we will push it back into the ocean': Italian-American Antifascism during the 1920s and 1930s," *ibid.*


43 *Italiani nel mondo* (Rome), 31 (March 1975); *ibid.* (April 1975); *ibid.* (Oct. 1975); *ibid.*, 36 (Jan. 1980).

44 Gabaccia and Ottanelli, "Diaspora or International Proletariat?"


47 Angelo Trento, "'Wherever We Work, That Land Is Ours': Italian Anarchists and Working-Class Solidarity in São Paulo," in "For Us There Are No Frontiers," ed. Gabaccia and Ottanelli; Carina Silverstein, "Labor and Migration in an Agricultural Economy: Italians in Argentina," *ibid.*; Michael

48 Gabaccia, "Worker Internationalism and Italian Labor Migration."


52 These authors may not be familiar to historians outside of immigration history—a telling reminder of their fate in American historiography. See Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (Cleveland, 1939); Theodore Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860* (Northfield, Minn., 1931); Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940). For a discussion of their works, see Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines."


60 M. Triaca, Amelia: A Long Journey (Richmond, 1985), 35, quoted in Bosworth, Italy and the Wider World, 134.


62 Gabaccia, Italy's Many Diasporas, ch. 4.

63 Baily, Immigrants in the Lands of Promise, 63, 159.

64 Del Fabbro, Transalpini, 4; Gabaccia, Militants and Migrants, 155-63. Rosoli, ed., Secolo di emigrazione italiana, table XX; Baily, Immigrants in the Lands of Promise, table 3.4; Betty Boyd Caroli, Italian Repatriation from the United States, 1900-1914 (New York, 1973), 49-50.


