FRONTMATTER


2. “Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—Afroitalini e cittadinanza.”


5. Igiaba Scego, ed., Italiani per vocazione (Fiesole, Italy: Cadmo, 2005).


INTRODUCTION


5. The original quote from Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks reads, “La crisi consiste ap-punto nel fatto che il vecchio muore e il nuovo non può nacere: in questo interregno si verificano i fenomeni morbosì più svia-riati” (The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a wide variety of morbid phenomena appear). It is often stylized in English as “The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.” See Antonio Gramsci, Quaderni dal carcere (Turin: Einaudi, 2001), 311; Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 276.


9. Breitbart News founder and one-time Trump adviser Steve Bannon had sought for many years to build a right-wing training academy in Italy. See “Italy Revokes Lease for Site of Bannon’s Right-Wing Academy,” Reuters, June 1, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-monastery-bannon-idUSKCN1T235I.


15. I generally refer to racial “subjectivity” and “subjects” rather than racial “identities” throughout this book—following Jacqueline Nassy Brown, “subjectivity” captures the way that “race” is made intelligible through intertwined processes of spatial differentiation, community struggle, and cultural practice. According to the critiques of scholars such as Kim TallBear, “identity” often privileges *individual* self-making instead of the web of (profoundly spatial) practices of domination and resistance that produce racial subjectivity. “Subjects” and “subjectivities,” on the other hand, complicate the notion of a stable, innate sense of self that exists prior to power. The conditions of possibility for Italian Blackness are shaped by the particular historical, geographical, legal, and political conditions in Italy and the Mediterranean—conditions that link up with the global circulation of anti-Black racisms and Black diasporic resistance but are also not wholly reducible to them. In this way, I am again moving away from an undifferentiated Blackness or Black politics toward a geographically and historically situated analysis of the emergent Black politics in Italy. See Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 91; Sam Spady, “Reflections on Late Identity: In Conversation with Melanie J. Newton, Nirmala Erevelles, Kim TallBear, Rinaldo Walcott, and Dean Itsuji Saranilio,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 90–115, https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.3.1.0090; Kim TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 777–95.


31. This historically myopic perspective on the part of European societies denies the deep entanglements of Europe and Africa, ties of colonialism and enslavement that generated the famous chant, “We are here because you were there!” See Stephen Small, 20 Questions and Answers on Black Europe (Amsterdam: Amrit Publishers, 2018).


35. Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (emphasis in the original).

36. Along similar lines, the Black Swiss scholar Jovita dos Santos Pinto notes, “As a Black European, who has worked on rendering visible a historical Black presence in Switzerland, I would argue Baldwin’s U.S.A./Europe comparison presents a risk. It might feed into the figure of the ‘stranger,’ of the person of color being ‘an eternal newcomer’ to Europe.” See Jovita dos Santos Pinto, Noémi Michel, Patricia Purschert, Paola Bachtet, and Vanessa Nae, “Baldwin’s Transatlantic Reverberations: Between ‘Stranger in the Village’ and *I Am Not Your Negro,*” *James Baldwin Review* 6 (2020): 184–85.


55. Robinson, Black Marxism, 102.


58. Robinson, Black Marxism, 104.

59. Robinson, Black Marxism, 104.

60. Small, 20 Questions and Answers. Italian colonialism in the Horn of Africa will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.


66. Merrill, *Alliance of Women*.


71. While Italy never adopted formal policies of assimilation or multiculturalism like France or the United Kingdom, the Italian model of immigrant reception has been frequently characterized as one of “diffusion.” See Umberto Melotti, “Immigration and Security in Europe: A Look at the Italian Case,” in *The Frontiers of Europe: A Transatlantic Problem?*, ed. Federiga M. Bindi and Irina Angelescu (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011), 107–26; Francesco Grignetti, “‘Immmigrazione diffusa,’ la risposta italiana alle banlieue,” *La Stampa*, May 2, 2016, http://www.lastampa.it/2016/05/02/estero/immigrazione-diffusa-la-risposta-italiana-alle-banlieue-8p5OHi0xLdTcN0uFaWuPM/pagina.html.

72. This section, as well as the previous two paragraphs, are adapted from my article “In Search of Black Italia: Notes on Race, Belonging, and Activism in the Black Mediterranean,” *Transition* 123, no. 1 (June 17, 2017): 158–62.

73. Merrill and Carter, “Inside and Outside Italian Political Culture.”


78. All interview excerpts were originally in Italian and were translated by the author, unless indicated otherwise.


81. See the Methodological Appendix at the end of this book for a more detailed description of my research process.
82. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
88. I am grateful to Jacqueline Nassy Brown for this insight into the practice of ethnography.

**1. ITALIAN ETHNONATIONALISM AND THE LIMITS OF CITIZENSHIP**

1. In the past, Italy has responded to the perceived threat of “radicalized Islamic terrorism” swiftly, with harsh security and surveillance measures. After the 2004 train bombings in Madrid and the 2005 attacks on London’s public transportation system, for instance, the Italian government immediately enacted some of the strictest Internet regulations in Europe. These regulations, which among other provisions targeted Internet cafés for heightened surveillance, led to the disproportionate policing of immigrant and Muslim communities. For more information, see Camilla Hawthorne, “Dangerous Networks: Internet Regulations as Racial Border Control in Italy,” in *DigitalSTS: A Handbook and Fieldguide*, ed. Janet Vertesi and David Ribes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 178–97.

4. Pseudonyms.
5. In one notable example from 2017, a fifteen-year-old Italian-Senegalese student and aspiring fashion designer named Mbaye “Mami” Bousso designed an Italian flag–draped gown, which she wore to greet Italian president Sergio Mattarella in Mirandola (a town that had been devastated by an earthquake in 2012). Images of the meeting were circulated widely, to the celebration of the Italian Left—who elevated the young woman as a symbol of a new, multicultural Italy—and to the horror of the Right—who reported her to the police for “insulting” the Italian flag. See Paolo di Paolo, “Mirandola, quella ragazza nera vestita con il tricolore,” *La Repubblica*, June 9, 2017, https://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/06/09/news/mirandola_ragazza_tricolore-167693538/; Claudio Cartaldo, “Immi-grata veste col Tricolore: Denunciata per vilipendio,” *Il Giornale*, June 11, 2017, http://www
6. All conversations and interviews originally took place in Italian and were translated by me into English, unless otherwise specified.


12. European Convention on Nationality, European Treaty Series No. 166 Council of Europe § (1997), https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c8. The other seven countries that did not ratify the convention are Croatia, France, Greece, Latvia, Malta, Poland, and Russia.


14. It is important to note that many children of immigrants are not aware of this one-year window. Until an initiative spearheaded by Rete G2, municipalities made no effort to inform youth of the naturalization process.


18. For more information on the distinction between citizenship as a right and citizenship as a concession in Italian nationality law, see “La concessione e l’accertamento della cittadinanza italiana,” Progetto Melting Pot Europa, September 13, 2009, http://www.meltingpot.org/La-concessione-e-l-accertamento-della-cittadinanza-italiana.html.


20. There are over eight hundred thousand children with non-Italian citizenship in Italian schools, 61 percent of whom were born in Italy. They make up 9.4 percent of schoolchildren in Italy. See Cristina Nadotti, “Crescono gli studenti non cittadini italiani: Il 61% è nato in Italia,” La Repubblica, March 29, 2018, http://www.repubblica.it/scuola/2018/03/29/news/crescono_gli_studenti_non_cittadini_italiani_il_61_e_nato_in_italia-192524586/.


23. Moe, View from Vesuvius; Wong, Race and the Nation.

24. Tailmoun, Valeri, and Tesfaye, Campioni d’Italia?


31. Scholars such as Ann Stoler have explored the articulations of race, gender, kinship, and coloniality through the apparatus of citizenship law. See Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). In Italy, the reforms that granted Italian women the right to pass on citizenship to their children via jus sanguinis were the product of protracted Italian feminist struggles that were also linked to social issues such as divorce, abortion, and labor force participation.

32. I was born in 1987. Had I been born just a few years earlier, I would not have been automatically eligible for Italian citizenship through my mother.


34. Donati, Political History of National Citizenship, 14.

35. Keaton, Muslim Girls.


37. See, for instance, Leonardo de Franceschi’s important account of the citizenship reform movement in relation to struggles over media representation. Leonardo De Franceschi, La cittadinanza come luogo di lotta: Le seconde generazioni in Italia fra cinema e serialità (Rome: Arcane Editrice, 2018).


42. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks.

43. Pseudonym.

44. This forum was originally housed on Rete G2’s website, secondegenerazioni.it; it has since migrated to Facebook. See also Dorothy Louise Zinn, “Italy’s Second Generations and the Expression of Identity through Electronic Media,” Bulletin of Italian Politics 2, no. 1 (2010): 91–113; Zinn, “Loud and Clear.”

45. Pseudonym.

46. Critiques of the term “second generation” fall into four main categories. First, the term is imprecise, and has been rendered even more confusing with the introduction of terms such as “1.25” and “1.75” to refer to children who immigrated as small children or as young adults. Second, the term suggests that “foreignness” is a heritable category that is passed from immigrant parents to their children. Third, it flattens the variegations in experiences and legal statuses within the category of “second generation.” And finally, it severs the connections between children and their families by suggesting that the second generation is more “advanced” in a teleological progression of assimilation or integration into the host country. See Marinaro and Walston, “Italy’s Second Generations”; Bjorn Thomassen, “‘Second Generation Immigrants’ or ‘Italians with Immigrant Parents’? Italian and European Perspectives on Immigrants and Their Children,” Bulletin of Italian Politics 2, no. 1 (2010): 21–44; Stephen Small, Police and People in London: A Group of Young Black People (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1983).

47. There were many earlier attempts to reform Italian nationality law before 2011, all unsuccessful. For more information, see Marchetti, “Trees without Roots,” 45–67; De Franceschi, La cittadinanza come luogo di lotta.


56. Merrill, “In Other Wor(l)ds,” 78.
59. Keaton, Muslim Girls.
66. While the name of this group evokes the sans-papiers (without papers) movement in France, there are important differences between these mobilizations: Italiani senza cittadinanza were born and/or raised in Italy, and due to the country’s citizenship laws inherit their parents’ citizenship and live in Italy with a long-term residency permit; the sans-papiers are undocumented workers mobilizing for a regularization of their immigration status and less exploitative labor conditions.
70. Gilroy, Black Atlantic.
71. Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, Postcolonial Italy.
74. It is important to note that the “fear of replacement” is a commonly cited concern among white nationalist groups across Europe and the United States, and can be directly linked to French writer Renaud Camus’s notion of “the great replacement.” See Sergio Rame, “Ius soli, è sostituzione etnica: Subito 800mila nuovi ‘italiani,’” Il Giornale, June 15, 2017, http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/ius-soli-sostituzione-etnica-subito-800mila-nuovi-italiani-1409527.html; Thomas Chatterton Williams, “The French Origins of ‘You


77. Istat, “Cittadini non comunitari.”

78. Many scholars of Black Europe have noted that the preoccupation among European states with the supposed threat of radical Islam has overshadowed concerns about people of African descent, with the result that “there are less and less resources for Blacks and less attention to them as they are rendered marginal.” See Stephen Small, introduction to Hine, Keaton, and Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*, xxxii; Philomena Essed and Kwame Nimako, “Designs and (Co)Incidents: Cultures of Scholarship and Public Policy on Immigrants/Minorities in the Netherlands,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 47, no. 3–4 (2006): 281–312, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715206065784.

79. Generally speaking, Black people in Italy are interpellated primarily as “racial subjects,” while Arabs and North Africans are interpellated primarily as “Muslims,” thus invisibilizing the presence of Black Muslims in Italy. One notable exception is the Italian-Somali writer Igiaba Scego, who has written extensively about being Muslim. See, for instance, Igiaba Scego, “Non in mio nome,” *Internazionale*, January 7, 2015, https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/igiaba-scego/2015/01/07/non-in-mio-nome.

80. Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization.” The Muslim presence in what is now Italy dates back to ninth-century Sicily. Today, Islam is the second-most widely practiced religion in Italy after Christianity (including Catholicism); there are almost 1.5 million Muslims in Italy, and almost one-third of Italy’s immigrant population is Muslim. Nonetheless, Islam (unlike Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and some other Christian sects) is not formally recognized by the Italian state because it is seen by the government to be incompatible with the principles of the Italian constitution. This means that mosques cannot benefit from the *otto per mille* (0.8 percent) funding for organized religions that is compulsorily drawn from Italians’ annual income taxes. While concerns about Blackness and Islam in Italian space are often held separately in public discourse in Italy, the use of Catholicism as a “race-neutral” stand-in for whiteness suggests that Islamophobia and anti-Black racism should actually be analyzed in relation to one another. See Mustafa Hameed, “Lacking Recognition, Italy’s Muslims Face an Uncertain Future,” *Washington Post*, May 28, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/lacking-recognition-italys-muslims-face-an-uncertain-future/2013/05/28/e0d2761c-c7b3-11e2-9cd9-3b9a22a4000a_story.html.


84. Agamben, “Perché non ho firmato.”

86. Agamben, “Perché non ho firmato.”
89. Mezzadra and Neilson, Border as Method.
95. In a sense, it seems that the critical citizenship studies literature effectively tells us that national citizenship doesn’t matter (because of the multiple, overlapping, and transnational webs of political attachment that characterize our world), or that it should not matter (because it is inherently exclusive). Linda Bosniak offers some important reflections on the trend of focusing on “postnational” or “transnational” citizenship, and the need for scholars to continue thinking about citizenship in the context of “national society.” See Linda Bosniak, The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 6.
97. This bears a resemblance to Benedict Anderson’s assertion in Imagined Communities that racism and nationalism have distinct ontological bases and thus should not be conflated. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (New York: Verso, 2006), 148–50.
99. Goldberg, Racial State. Similarly to Cedric Robinson’s argument in Black Marxism that there is no capitalism that precedes racism, Goldberg suggests that there is no modern state that precedes racism.
100. Goldberg argues that the modern state is “nothing less than a racial state.” In this way, he directs attention away from the extreme cases of “racist states” such as Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa toward the broad realm of processes by which states include and exclude using the category of “race.” See Goldberg, Racial State, 2, 9, 114.
102. Cacho, Social Death; Reddy, Freedom with Violence.
103. Andall, Gender, Migration and Domestic Service.
104. Hans Lucht, Darkness before Daybreak: African Migrants Living on the Margins in Southern Italy Today (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 22; A. Sivanan-


112. The Legge Martelli also brought Italy in line with the broader European Union immigration policy framework, in preparation for Italy’s ascension to the EU in 1992.

113. “Immigration Policies in Italy.”


117. Under the 1992 nationality law, refugees could gain Italian citizenship after five years of residency, and adopted children could gain Italian citizenship after seven years of residency. Jus soli only exists for children born in Italy to stateless parents (apolidi), unknown parents, or parents who cannot transmit their citizenship to their children.


122. As I will discuss in chapter 3, there has also been a return to an explicit language of “race” among the Italian Far Right in the last several years.

124. It is important to clarify that this is different from the 
biological conflation of race and citizenship seen during Italian colonialism and fascism, when physiognomy was used to mark the boundaries of Italianness.


126. This will be discussed further in chapter 3.

127. Sartori, “L’Italia non è una nazione meticcia.”


2. BLACK ENTREPRENEURS AND THE “(RE)MAKING” OF ITALY


7. Arlene Dávila, Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 13–14; Elizabeth M. Liew Siew Chin, Pur-


11. I thank Heather Merrill for these important insights regarding the relationship between entrepreneurship and labor organizing in Italy.


16. In the United States, for example, racial neoliberalism has constructed the figure of the Black “welfare queen.”

17. Goldberg, Threat of Race, 337 (emphasis in the original).

18. Maurizio Ferrera, “The Uncertain Future of the Italian Welfare State,” West European Politics 20, no. 1 (1997): 231–49, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389708425183; Ascoli Ugo and Pavolini Emmanuele, The Italian Welfare State in a European Perspective: A Comparative Analysis (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2016). Ironically, this sparse social assistance and an institutional reliance on the family to provide care is directly linked to the recruitment of foreign workers into Italy beginning as early as the 1960s. As Jacqueline Andall has argued, female domestic workers from countries including Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Philippines were systematically hired between the 1960s and 1980s to provide childcare for northern Italian families where both parents worked full time. These migrant workers replaced southern Italian workers, who had previously been migrating to northern Italy to work as live-in domestic laborers until their economic prospects (and the economic development of southern Italy generally) improved. See Andall, Gender, Migration and Domestic Service.


26. See Cedric Robinson’s arguments about intra-European racialism, which, as early as the feudal period, separated out groups such as the Irish, the Roma, Jews, and Slavs. Robinson, Black Marxism, 2005.

27. Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power; Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (London: Routledge, 2013); Zine Magubane, Bringing the Empire Home: Race, Class, and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).


29. Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman (1893; repr., Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Schneider, Italy’s “Southern Question.”


32. Merrill, “In Other Wor(l)ds,” 82.


34. Robinson, Black Marxism.


38. This chapter is deeply indebted to geographer Heather Merrill’s research on Black spaces and situated intersectionality in Italy. Her work provides invaluable insight into the multiple ways that Black Italians have transformed Italy into a diasporic node of interconnection.


42. See http://www.africansummerschool.org/mission/ for more information.


47. *Vu cumprà*, derived from “Vuoi comprare?” (Do you want to buy?) is a phrase used to refer to foreign (primarily African, and typically Senegalese) street hawkers in Italy. See Donald Martin Carter, *States of Grace: Senegalese in Italy and the New European Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

48. In addition to making use of their language skills, Black Italian entrepreneurs have also played an important role in the development of e-commerce and social media content production in Italy. The Internet emerged as an important tool for Black Italian women entrepreneurs because it allows them to save money on material overhead costs and also helps to overcome the geographical dispersion that characterizes the Black presence in Italy. The tech savvy of many young Black Italians is significant considering that Internet penetration rates in Italy have lagged behind other European countries; in fact,


51. As Forgacs and Gundle note, the concept of “Made in Italy” also has antecedents in Fascist and postwar Italy. See David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).


53. This line of argument is indebted to Marxist feminist critique, and particularly to the work of scholars such as Sylvia Yanagisako and Silvia Federici. This literature has approached the gendered relations of social reproduction as more than the “merely cultural” embellishments atop capitalism’s material base, and it also resists the separation between the political economic and the cultural as two distinct (but not equally important) terrains of struggle. See, for instance, Judith Butler, “Merely Cultural,” New Left Review 1, no. 227 (1998): 33–44; Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, Producing Culture and Capital: Family Firms in Italy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Silvia Federici, Caliban and the Witch (New York: Autonomedia, 2004); Papavero, “Minori e seconde generazioni”; Donald Martin Carter, “Blackness over Europe: Meditations on Cultural Belonging,” in Africa in Europe: Studies in Transnational Practice in the Long Twentieth Century, ed. Eve Rosenhaft and Robbie John Macvicar Aitken (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 201–13; Heather Merrill, “Postcolonial Borderlands: Black Life Worlds and Relational Place in Turin, Italy,” ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies 13, no. 2 (2014): 263–94. It is important to note that discussions about the Italian brain drain typically include only white Italians, despite the fact that large numbers of children of immigrants have also left Italy in the wake of the economic cri-


57. In one notable example, the young Burkinabe Madi Sakande was celebrated on the national television program *Mimanda Rai Tre* for saving a failing Italian refrigeration company. Like Evelyne Afaawua, Sakande was also the recipient of a MoneyGram Award for entrepreneurship in Italy. See [https://www.facebook.com/mimandara3/videos/10158673134395252/](https://www.facebook.com/mimandara3/videos/10158673134395252/) for more information.


65. Igiaba Scego, La mia casa è dove sono (Turin: Loescher, 2012); Tailmoun, Valeri, and Tesfaye, Campioni d’Italia?


69. Goldberg, Threat of Race, 337.


72. Malkki, “National Geographic.”

73. Choate, Emigrant Nation.


75. I will discuss the history of claims about Italy’s Mediterraneanness in greater detail in chapter 3.


77. Affricot, “Vogue Italia Cover.”


the significant presence of Afro-Latinx immigrants in the United States. The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (https://baji.org/) was founded for this reason—to bring Black voices into discussions of immigrants’ rights and immigration policy in the United States.


82. “Ambrosian,” or ambrosiano, refers to the city of Milan (the term derives from the city’s patron saint, Ambrose).


90. Shirley Anne Tate, Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization, Politics (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 12.

91. “Immigrants, We Get the Job Done” is a song that was adapted from Lin-Manuel Miranda’s hit Broadway musical Hamilton and released as a track on the The Hamilton Mixtape in 2017. “Immigrants” was accompanied by a music video depicting hardworking
immigrants sewing American flags in a garment factory, cleaning, carving meat in a slaughterhouse, picking fruit, and performing various forms of care work. The song was intended to counter the idea that immigrants steal “native” American jobs, by implying that immigrants are performing the kinds of grueling work that American citizens do not want to do. But the song was also criticized by many immigrants’ rights activists for glorifying the exploitation of migrant labor, and implying that immigrants should only be tolerated because of the labor they perform.

3. MEDITERRANEANISM, AFRICA, AND THE RACIAL BORDERS OF ITALIANNESS

2. Some other recent examples include Scego, Italiani per vocazione; Tommy Kuti, Cì rido sopra: Crescere con la pelle nera nell’Italia di Salvini (Milan: Rizzoli, 2019); Esperance Hakuzwimana Ripanti, E poi basta: Manifesto di una donna nera italiana (Gallarate, Italy: People, 2019); Igiaba Scego, ed., Future: Il domani narrato dalle voci di oggi (Florence: Effegi, 2019); Delli, Razzismo all’italiana; Loretta Grace, Skin (Milan: Mondadori, 2019).
3. The woman’s reaction echoes an observation recorded by anthropologist Jeffrey Cole in his book The New Racism in Europe, when a Sicilian professor declared, “We can’t be racist because we’ve been emigrants for so long!” (101).
7. Andall and Duncan, National Belongings.
12. Robert Young notes that in the late nineteenth century, the British often characterized themselves as a “mongrel” race produced through the intermixture of many different European types (Celts, Saxons, Normans, Danes, etc.). But what is distinct about Italy is that its supposed racial indeterminacy was a result of “hybridization” not only with Europeans, but with Africans and Asians as well. See Jinthana Haritaworn, The Biopolitics of Mixing: Thai Multiracialities and Haunted Ascendancies (London: Routledge, 2012); Robert J. C. Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race (London: Routledge, 2005).


18. Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization.”


21. In fact, Cesare Lombroso wrote a book titled *Anti-Semitism and the Modern Sciences* (1894), in which he argues against many of the central claims of scientific anti-Semitism.


23. As Barbara Sòrgoni writes, the body of Sarah Baartman was used by Liberal and Fascist scientists to visualize the racial and gendered boundaries of Italianness. For Lombroso, for instance, Baartman’s physiognomy and the presence of similar traits among Italian prostitutes was used to support his arguments about a biological origin of crime. See Barbara Sòrgoni, “‘Defending the Race’: The Italian Reinvention of the Hottentot Venus during Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, no. 3 (2010): 411–24.


26. Schneider, *Italy’s ‘Southern Question’.*


32. Gibson, “Biology or Climate?,” 100.


39. As Gibson observes, Lombroso seems to have tentatively resolved this ambiguity by leaving open the possibility for malleability through environment or social intervention in the milieu for some groups (Jews and certain southern Italians, depending on the extent of their intermixture with Aryans), but not others (i.e., Africans). See Gibson, “Biology or Climate?,” 105.

40. Caglioti, “Race, Statistics and Italian Eugenics.”


45. Here it is important to note that Sergi and his contemporaries used the terms *razza* (race), *ceppo* (stock), and *stirpe* (kinship). Giuliani notes that *stirpe* corresponds to a “composite group of people”; during the early Fascist period, this term was also used in reference to Mediterranean groups whose shared relationships were tied to the Roman Empire. Yet, she and Mary Gibson note, authors rarely distinguished systematically between these terms, and often used them interchangeably. See Giuliani, “L’Italiano Negro,” 579; Gibson, “Biology or Climate?”

46. According to a letter written to Cesare Lombroso in 1897, Sergi saw Venice as an example par excellence of the population mixing that constituted the contemporary Med-

47. Giuseppe Sergi, Gli Arii in Europa e in Asia: studio etnografico, con figure e carte (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1903), vi, cited in Aaron Gillette, Racial Theories in Fascist Italy (London: Routledge, 2003). According to Sergi (and again, unlike Gobineau), the Dark Ages were actually caused by the arrival of “savage,” uncivilized Aryan invaders.


49. Pasquale Verdicchio, Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism through the Italian Diaspora (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 29–30; Giuseppe Sergi, Arii e italici: Attorno all’Italia preistorica, con figure dimostrative (Turin: Bocca, 1898); Re, “Italians and the Invention of Race”; Gibson, “Biology or Climate?,” 111.

50. Many scholars have grappled with the relationship between the production of racial categories and the production of scientific knowledge—specifically, whether the practices of bracketing, isolation, and simplification that characterize various strands of scientific racism are mere aberrations or are fundamentally inextricable from science. I refer to the practices of Lombroso, Niceforo, and Sergi as “science” rather than “pseudo-science” because the research they conducted was at the time considered to be standard scientific practice. For more on these debates, see Donna J. Haraway, Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse”: Feminism and Technoscience (London: Routledge, 1997); Naomi Zack, Philosophy of Science and Race (London: Routledge, 2014); Evelynn M. Hammonds and Rebecca M. Herzig, The Nature of Difference: Sciences of Race in the United States from Jefferson to Genomics (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009); Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton 2006).


54. It was not until the late twentieth century that Italian citizenship could be passed through the maternal line of descent. Pesarini, “Blood Is Thicker Than Water”; De Donno, “La Razza Ario-Mediterranea”; Barbara Sòrgoni, Parole e corpi: Antropologia, discorso giuridico e politiche sessuali interrazziali nella colonia Eritrea, 1890–1941 (Naples: Liguori, 1998).


56. De Donno.

57. I thank my colleague Angelo Matteo Caglioti for suggesting this evocative phrasing.

58. Miguel Mellino, “De-provincializing Italy: Notes on Race, Racialization, and Italy’s Coloniality,” in Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, Postcolonial Italy, 92; Caglioti, “Race, Statistics and Italian Eugenics,” 475. See, for instance, Renzo De Felice, Mussolini il duce...

59. Caglioti, “Race, Statistics and Italian Eugenics.”


67. Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*.


69. Giuliani, “L’Italiano Negro.”


71. De Donno, 403–4. The Italian Fascist regime had a complex relationship with the Catholic Church. The 1929 Lateran Treaty suspended church-state conflict in Italy by recognizing Vatican City as an independent state. In addition, the Catholic Church was supportive of Fascist pronatalist policies in the Italian countryside, and had its own tradition of anti-Semitic racist thought. In the mid-1930s, however, the Catholic Church began to change its stance on Jews and oppose Nazi Germany. See also Caglioti, “Race, Statistics and Italian Eugenics”; Gaia Giuliani, “Gender, Race and the Colonial Archive. Sexualized Exoticism and Gendered Racism in Contemporary Italy,” *Italian Studies* 71, no. 4 (2016): 550–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2016.1222767.


74. Giuliani, “L’Italiano Negro.”


76. Iyob, “Madamismo and Beyond,” 218.
79. The 1933 law made explicit reference to “race,” and race in turn was understood as something that could be scientifically measured in the body. “Mixed-race” children of unknown parentage were forced to undergo a series of physical measurements to determine whether they had sufficiently “Italian” racial features. See Pesarini, “Blood Is Thicker Than Water”; De Donno, “La Razza Ario-Mediterranea”; Šorgoni, “Racist Discourses and Practices.”
81. Under the 1938 Racial Laws, Jewish Italians were stripped of key civil rights including the ability to run for office and pursue higher education.
83. Iyob, “Madamismo and Beyond,” 218.
84. Caglioti, “Race, Statistics and Italian Eugenics.”
85. Francesco Cassata, La difesa della razza: Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2008); Pinkus, Bodily Regimes.
86. One reason why Marro is less well known is that very few of his notes and records remain today because of his ties to Italian Fascism. In addition, there were fierce debates among the Fascist Aryanists about whether race was a purely biological or spiritual concept, and Marro was ultimately on the losing side of this battle. Marro tended to focus on the spiritual character of race as opposed to physical characteristics. This is likely because Marro saw himself as a critic of the Italian positivist school of racial science. For Marro, physical features did not provide clear evidence of where racial lines began and ended. Marro’s critique likely stemmed from the fact that because many Italians shared certain physical traits (such as skin color) with their colonized subjects, physiognomy did not provide a sufficient basis on which Italian superiority or authority could be determined—hence, the turn to “spiritual” qualities. Nonetheless, Marro was also criticized by Landra for his insufficiently “scientific” analysis of race, and it was this “biological” camp that ultimately triumphed. The biological anthropologist Gianluigi Mangiapane, based at the University of Turin, has played a key role in recuperating the documents tied to Marro that remain in the archives of the university’s Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Many thanks to Dr. Mangiapane for allowing me to browse the collection of Marro’s writings at the University of Turin and for sharing his own biographical research on this relatively unknown but nonetheless influential figure in Fascist Italy.


94. The use of *razzisti* (which directly translates as “racist”) in this context lies somewhere between Kwame Anthony Appiah’s notions of racialism (the idea that inherited characteristics allow us to divide humans into races) and racism (the idea that positive moral characteristics are unevenly distributed across races). See Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms,” in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3–17.

95. My explanatory comments are bracketed.

96. This inconsistency stands as a remnant of the debates among the scientists who helped to write the manifesto under Mussolini’s instructions—as Aaron Gillette points out, in earlier drafts the Italians were actually identified as a Mediterranean race. See Aaron Gillette, “The Origins of the Manifesto of Racial Scientists,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 6, no. 3 (2001): 313, https://doi.org/10.1080/13545710110084253.


98. Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (London: Routledge, 2007). As Mia Fuller has demonstrated, the Fascist state saw northern Africa as more closely linked to the Roman Empire and by extension modern Italy, while sub-Saharan Africa (i.e., Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia) was understood as prehistoric, lacking the necessary archaeological footprint necessary to connect it to the great Mediterranean civilizations of antiquity. During the Liberal and early Fascist periods, the Horn of Africa was regarded as “a mythical kingdom” inhabited by a more “noble” (and, at least in the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia, Christian) sub-Saharan African population—an idea tied to Sergi’s Euro-Mediterranean race originating in the highlands of the Horn of Africa. The notion of a civilizational divide between North and sub-Saharan Africa persisted into late Fascism, translating into different colonial management and architectural practices applied by Italian administrators to the two regions.


100. Mellino, “De-provincializing Italy,” 88.

101. Lombardi-Diop, “Spotless Italy.”

102. Lombardi-Diop.

103. Visweswaran, *Un/Common Cultures*.


107. Lombardi-Diop, “Spotless Italy.”
109. Lombardi-Diop, “Spotless Italy.”
111. Greene, Equivocal Subjects; Shelleen Greene, “Buffalo Soldiers on Film: Il soldato afroamericano nel cinema neorealista e postbellico italiano,” in De Franceschi, L’Africa in Italia, 93–108.
113. Lombardi-Diop, “Spotless Italy.”
115. Giglioli, “Producing Sicily as Europe.”
117. Merrill, Alliance of Women.
122. “‘Bologna è meticcia’: La contestazione non violenta che manda in bestia i Salviner,” Radio Città del Capo (blog), November 9, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZK9c0_O_g&ab_channel=RadioCitt%C3%A0delCapo. Frisina and Hawthorne, “Riconoscersi nel successo di Evelyne,” 192.
127. Claudio Fogu, “From Mare Nostrum to Mare Aliorum: Mediterranean Theory and Mediterraneism in Contemporary Italian Thought,” California Italian Studies 1, no. 1
129. Giglioli, “Producing Sicily as Europe.”
131. See figure 3.5 for a graphical illustration of meticciato’s return at the end of the twentieth century.
132. Portelli, “Problem of the Color Blind.”
139. The word “race” appears only once in the Italian constitution, in the first section of Article 3: “All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions.” See Maria Teresa Milcia and Gaia Giuliani, “Giochi al buio o parole per dirlo? Riflessioni su razza, razzismo e antirazzismo intorno a un colloquio con Gaia Giuliani,” *Voci: Annuale di Scienze Umane* 13 (2016): 171–89.
143. Guglielmo and Salerno, *Are Italians White?*
144. Of course, there has been an African presence in the Italian peninsula for as long as written and archaeological records exist, long before people from the African continent were racialized as “Black.”

4. TRANSLATION AND THE LIVED GEOGRAPHIES OF THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN

1. This chapter is adapted from my article, “In Search of Black Italia: Notes on Race, Belonging, and Activism in the Black Mediterranean,” Transition 123, no. 1 (June 17, 2017): 152–74.


5. Hawthorne and Piccolo, “‘Razza’ e ‘umano.’”


13. I use the phrase “Black body” deliberately in this particular instance to mark the inherent dehumanization of the racializing (or, to borrow Fanonian terminology, epidermalizing) gaze.

15. I will explore this division further in chapter 5.

16. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 89.

17. Portelli, “Problem of the Color Blind,” 30; Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, xii.


25. Pseudonym.


29. Emphasis added.


31. Stephen Small, 20 Questions and Answers; Brown, Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail, 42.


34. Pseudonym.

35. See also García Peña, “Black in English.”


38. Campt, *Other Germans*.


40. Wright, *Physics of Blackness*; Wright, “Postwar Blackness.”


48. Ironically, after Italian national unification it was not uncommon for northern Italian commentators to draw comparisons between southern Italians and Native Americans. See, for instance, Leopoldo Franchetti’s description, quoted in Moe, *View from Vesuvius*, 239. For more on the racial politics of comparison in postunification Italy, see also Wong, *Race and the Nation*.


53. Carter and Merrill, “Bordering Humanism.”


61. Drawing on Jacqueline Nassy Brown (2009, 91–92), here I understand political subjectivity (as opposed to identity) as something that draws on particular constructions of identity in response to a broader set of political conditions.


66. El-Tayeb, xvii.


68. Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization.”

69. Goldberg, 335.

71. Law, *Mediterranean Racisms*.

72. Law.


74. This demographic balance is already beginning to shift toward southern Italy with the most recent refugee “emergency” and the insertion of irregular migrants into the informal or “black” economies of southern Italian agriculture and construction. This will be addressed further in the book’s conclusion.

75. Saucier and Woods, “Ex Aqua,” 64.


86. The title of this section is indebted to Norma Alarcón’s 1989 article “Traddutore, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism,” and to her discussion of linguistic mediation as a potential act of betrayal.

87. Pseudonym.

88. Esther and Marcus are both pseudonyms. *Nuovi italiani* is one of many terms used to describe the children of immigrants who were born and raised in Italy.


91. Recently, various translators have proposed *nerèzza* and *nerità* as possible translations for “Blackness,” though neither term has reached widespread circulation in Italy.


93. Pseudonym.
95. Hine, Keaton, and Small, Black Europe and the African Diaspora; Baldwin, Notes of a Native; Grada Kilomba, Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism (Mün-ster: Unrast, 2008).
98. “Neri Italiani—Black Italians” is the name of an Afro-descendant youth organ-ization in Rome.
100. Giuliani, “Gender, Race and the Colonial Archive,” 2.

5. REFUGEES AND CITIZENS-IN-WAITING
1. All names in this dialogue are pseudonyms.
2. Doreen Massey, Space, Place, and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Merrill, “Postcolonial Borderlands,” 267.
3. Scott, Conscripts of Modernity.
6. Bonilla, Non-Sovereign Futures, 43.
8. According to Bonilla (2017, 206), maroon political projects are emblematic of stra tegic entanglement, as they “undertook political projects that were predicated on various forms of coexistence, interdependence, and noninterference—rather than sovereign control.” This differs from other readings of maroons, such as those more common in Afro-pessimist theory, which approaches these communities as examples of “Black fugitivity.” Afro-pessimist conceptions of fugitivity, I argue, tend to emphasize disengage-ment as opposed to entanglement. For various perspectives on marronage, refusal, entanglement, and fugitivity, see, for instance, Bonilla, “Freedom, Sovereignty, and Other Entanglements”; Paul Khalil Saucier and Tryon P. Woods, On Marronage: Ethical Confrontations with Antiblackness (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2015); Damien M. Sojoyner, “Another Life Is Possible: Black Fugitivity and Enclosed Places,” Cultural Anthropology 32, no. 4 (2017): 514–36, https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.04.
9. The complex relationship between Eritreans and Ethiopians in Italy, and particu larly the embrace by some of the unifying category habesha (a term referring to people from the highlands of Eritrea and Ethiopia, from which the name “Abyssinia” is derived), is beyond the scope of this chapter.
12. Giulia Barrera, “Mussolini’s Colonial Race Laws.” Note also that various forms of interracial relationships (spanning the spectrum from coercive to voluntary) were also relatively common in the Portuguese colonies, a phenomenon that shaped Gilberto Freyre’s notion of Lusotropicalism. Lusotropicalism’s emphasis on miscegenation, racial liminality, and Portuguese “southerness” shares many traits with Italian invocations of Mediterraneanism. Iyob, “Madamismo and Beyond.”


15. Fuller, Moderns Abroad.
19. Del Boca, 18.

15. Del Boca, “Myths, Suppressions, Denials.”
19. Del Boca, 18.


21. Many of Italy’s post–World War II labor needs were filled by internal migrants from southern Italy.

22. At this time, the Eritreans arriving to Italy were recognized as Ethiopian citizens, as Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia by the United Nations in 1952 and subsequently annexed by Ethiopia. From 1941 to 1952, Eritrea was governed by a British military administration. Andall, Gender, Migration and Domestic Service.


25. Forgacs, Italy’s Margins.


38. According to the United Nations, a person who requests protection while overseas and is then given permission to enter a receiving country is a *refugee*; a person who requests protection after entering the receiving country is an *asylum seeker*.


46. Merrill, Black Spaces.

47. According to Security Set 94/2009, which made undocumented immigration a crime, housing an undocumented immigrant in Italy is punishable by up to three years in prison.


51. Accoglienza refers to refugee reception and resettlement.


53. At least some of this can be attributed to the much smaller size of the Eritrean community in Milan—in 2017, there were 1,742 Eritreans (with non-Italian citizenship) living in the city, compared to 35,884 from Egypt and 7,861 from Morocco alone. For additional information on the composition of Milan’s immigrant communities, see “Cittadini stranieri Milano 2017,” Tuttitalia.it, 2021, https://www.tuttitalia.it/lombardia/18-milano-statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2017/.


58. Bonilla, Non-Sovereign Futures, xiii.

59. For a related discussion of engagement with the state and the “uncomfortable and problematic position of ‘being at home with the law,’” see Jennifer C. Nash, Black

60. Maurice Stierl has also critiqued the “academic exercise of romantic abstraction” in some accounts of migrant resistance. See Maurice Stierl, Migrant Resistance in Contemporary Europe (London: Routledge, 2018).


66. A video of the demonstration can be found online: Abrham Fa, “Manifestazione per Idy a Firenze, parenti e tutta la comunità di stranieri,” Facebook, March 10, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/abrham.fa/videos/1722563141120963/.

67. Scott, Conscripts of Modernity, 4. Glen Coulthard, for instance, has argued that anti-essentialist critiques of the liberal politics of recognition must first consider the ongoing power of the (settler colonial) state to adjudicate claims for recognition. See chapter 3 of Glen Sean Coulthard, Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).


70. Du Bois, 640.

71. Hawthorne, “Asmarina.”


CONCLUSION

1. Note for the epigraph: Brigante refers to the history of brigandage or banditry (brigantaggio) in southern Italy during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Brigantaggio has been explained both as a response to massive wealth inequality after the unification of Italy, as well as a form of popular revolt against unification.

3. In the 2018 elections, the party formerly known as the Lega Nord (Northern League) dropped the “Nord” from its name in a bid to court voters from southern Italy.


9. All names in this section, except for Mary, are pseudonyms.


12. *Terroni* is a derogative term used to refer to people from southern Italy—it literally translates as “people of the dirt.”


18. The first paragraphs of this section are adapted from Hawthorne, “In Search of Black Italia.”


23. El-Tayeb, xviii.


27. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*. 


30. Glissant, Poetics of Relation, 49.

31. J. Michael Dash, introduction to Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays, by Édouard Glissant (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), xli. These insights are also a useful rejoinder to a faddish “hype of hybridity,” which uncritically celebrates examples of in-betweenness without considering the conditions of possibility that make hybridity possible (including histories of racial theorization and scientific racism), or the ways that some forms of hybridity are actually quite compatible with global processes of capital accumulation. Indeed, as Robert Young has suggested, “hybridity” itself can only appear as a problem or conceptual framework when it is already assumed that there are pre-existing and bounded racial or cultural groups (otherwise, “hybridity” as such would not merit a name; it would be merely another relational state of being). The same could be said for the “invention” of the Mediterranean as a scientific object of inquiry by nineteenth-century European scholars—precisely because of the ontological challenges it posed to regionally bounded studies of history and environment. See Young, Colonial Desire.


CODA

1. Scego, Future.


9. As of May 2020, the national average infection rate was 2.1 cases per 1,000 residents. See ISMU, “I tassi di affezione da Covid-19.”


17. Along these lines, some activists in Europe have used the language of abolition to call for the abolition of Frontex, the European Union border agency. See Maurice Stierl, “Black Lives Are Being Lost in the Mediterranean—but the World Remains Silent,” The Conversation, July 8, 2020, http://theconversation.com/black-lives-are-being-lost-in-the-mediterranean-but-the-world-remains-silent-141822.


METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX


3. For a thorough account of anti-Black surveillance and profiling in the context of airport security, see Browne, Dark Matters.

4. Brown, Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail, 2005; Campt, Other Germans.

5. Campt, Other Germans, 183.
