Introduction

Political Membership and Historical Temporalities in the Mediterranean

In the autumn of 2011, I waited to meet an acquaintance inside a pizzeria in Milan, Italy. Egyptian migrants had organised a demonstration against Egypt's (at the time) temporary military rule.[1] They planned to gather in Piazzale Loreto, the same site where Mussolini's corpse had been displayed after his capture and death in 1945. One *pizzaiolo*, Sayyid, had arrived in Milan from Alexandria, Egypt, years earlier. He discussed the violence that had followed the ousting of Hosni Mubarak during the Arab Spring: a manifestation of endemic political oppression at the hands of the Egyptian military and police. Sayyid believed that systemic state violence, structural inequality, and political favouritism had driven many individuals and families from Egypt since the 1970s.[2]

But his story ran deeper. He claimed that Italy and Egypt shared in a Mediterranean heritage that should not be ignored in the current debates about migration. He shifted the conversation to his arrival in Italy in the wake of Sarkozy's 2007 proposal for a Euro-Mediterranean union, concurrent with a rise in anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric across Europe in the early 2000s. The sinking of vessels in the Mediterranean had begun to fill media reports as Frontex, the European Union's border and coast guard agency, aimed to establish rigid control over the continent's externalised borders.[3] Political figures on the Italian and European

[1] See Zeinab Abul-Magd, 'Understanding SCAF,' *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* (Summer 2012). [https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/understanding-scaf/] and *Militarizing the Nation: The Army, Business, and Revolution in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

[2] For more on Egyptian emigration, see Gerasimos Tsourapas, *The Politics of Migration in Modern Egypt: Strategies for Regime Survival in Autocracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, 'The Shift in Egypt's Migration Policy: 1952–1978,' *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, 1 (1982): 53–68.

[3] Dimitar Bechev and Kalypso Nicolaidis, 'The Union for the Mediterranean: A Genuine Breakthrough or More of the Same?', *The International Spectator* 43, 3 (2008): 13–20; Dimitar Bechev and Kalypso Nicolaidis (eds.), *Mediterranean Frontiers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014). See also Gabriele del Grande, *Mamadou va a morire: La strage dei clandestini nel Mediterraneo* (Roma: Infinito, 2007) and Nicolas De Genova (ed.), *The*

political Right embraced and fomented anti-immigrant rhetoric in their framing of national identity and belonging.[4] Sayyid abruptly interrupted his lament on the challenges of migration to describe an interaction he had had with an elderly Arabic-speaking Italian woman: 'it turned out she was born and raised in Alexandria… there used to be a lot of Italians in Egypt, you know!? We're here because they were there!' It was the first time I heard such a formulation. In the months and years that followed, I filled my notebooks with similar stories. Egyptian migrants in contemporary Italy repeatedly conjured the past presence of migrants from Italy in Egypt.[5]

When I began writing this book, I had planned to examine these overlapping Mediterranean 'imaginaries', what Claudio Fogu calls 'configurations of mental, verbal, or visualized images that refer explicitly or implicitly to ideas of Mediterranean-ness'. Such imaginaries seemed to feature among many migrants, like Sayyid, travelling between Italy and Egypt, but also flourished among hopeful migrants in Egypt's towns and cities. I assumed that such imaginaries would constitute part of a wider constellation of political-economic ties linking the two countries through migration.[6] More than 'images', I learned, such imaginaries were, and remain, attached to concrete historical processes. The contingencies to which they refer have contoured categories of legal, political, and social belonging in and across the Mediterranean. They are not merely part of an abstracted 'liquid continent' or a 'liquid site of imaginary production',

Borders of 'Europe': Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

[4] Martina Avanza, 'The Northern League and Its 'Innocuous' Xenophobia,' in Andrea Mammone and Giuseppe A. Veltri (eds.), *Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe* (London: Routledge, 2010), 131–142; Eva Garau, 'The Catholic Church, Universal Truth and the Debate on National Identity and Immigration: A New Model of 'Selective Solidarity',' in Andrea Mammone and Giuseppe A. Veltri (eds.), *Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe* (London: Routledge, 2010), 158–169. See also Maurizio Albahari, *Crimes of Peace: Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Antonia Lucia Dawes, *Race Talk: Languages of Racism and Resistance in Neapolitan Street Markets* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020); Matthew Carr, *Fortress Europe: Dispatches from a Gated Continent* (New York: C Hurst & Co, 2016). For a broader analysis of far-right populism and its engagement with migration for political purposes, see Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (eds.), *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[5] The research that went into this book was conducted between 2009 and 2016.

[6] On this idea of 'constellation' see Naor Ben-Yehoyada, *The Mediterranean Incarnate: Region Formation between Sicily and Tunisia since World War II* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017); developed further in Carl Rommel and Joseph John Viscomi, 'Introduction: Locating the Mediterranean,' in Carl Rommel and Joseph J. Viscomi (eds.), *Locating the Mediterranean: Connections and Separations across Space and Time* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2022), 1–29.

as Fogu and others claim.[7] While they might be flexible, they are not as fluid as liquid metaphors present them to be. In the entanglement of escalating xenophobia on the political Right, (abstract) humanitarianism on the political Left, and the intensification of public discourse on migration in and beyond Europe, stories of an historical Italian presence in Egypt helped migrants to navigate exclusionary political hierarchies.[8] This became increasingly evident when I witnessed the extent to which Egyptian migrants in Italy debated the fate of Italians in Egypt: some claimed that Gamal Abdel Nasser had expelled them unjustly during the Suez conflict in 1956, while others maintained that Italians departed on their own accord once they no longer benefitted from colonial structures. These contested processes provided the basis for a historicisation of contemporary migration.

Migration at the End of Empire puts a microhistorical lens to the departure of over 40,000 Italians from Egypt after the Second World War as a starting point to understand how historical temporalities and political membership are connected. This case invites us to challenge assumptions about nation and empire in the Mediterranean. This is especially true because Italians in and from Egypt did not fit neatly within a category of 'coloniser' or 'colonised'; they are part of the layered story of imperialism, colonialism, and decolonisation that adds nuance to the relationships between both metropole and colony and nation and empire.[9] Following Sayyid's invitation to explore these connected

[7] Claudio Fogu, *The Fishing Net and the Spider Web: Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), 3. Liquidity and fluidity have been common tropes used in cultural studies of the Mediterranean to understand historical dynamism in and around the Sea. I do not employ these terms as I believe they flatten asymmetrical histories. Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello. *La questione mediterranea* (Milan: Mondadori, 2019); Predrag Matvejević, *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Edwidge Tamalet Talbayev, *The Transcontinental Maghreb: Francophone Literatures across the Mediterranean* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

[8] Ida Danewid, 'White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean: Hospitality and the Erasure of History,' *Third World Quarterly* 38, 7 (2017): 1674–1689; S. A. Smythe, 'The Black Mediterranean and the Politics of Imagination,' *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* 286 (Spring 2018). [https://merip.org/2018/10/the-black-mediterranean-and-the-politics-of-the-imagination/].

[9] Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, Peter C. Perdue, 'Introduction: Refiguring Imperial Terrains,' in Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (eds.), *Imperial Formations* (Santa Fe, CA: SAR Press, 2007), 3–42; Ann Laura Stoler and Fredrick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,' in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56.

histories, this book focuses on empirical level of conflicting temporalities.[10] It draws upon a range of sources and materials, using microhistory to interrogate ruptures and continuities in historical time.[11]

'Time', in the subtitle, refers to a processual and unfolding (irreversible) historical time, on the one hand, and to two connected iterations of *out-of-time-ness* that were repeated in archival documents and oral histories, on the other. Firstly, before the Second World War ended, an Italian diplomat who had recently arrived in Egypt described the population of over 50,000 Italian residents as a 'community' that was 'out of time' (*fuori tempo*), concluding that their sense of belonging was out of sync with the transformations occurring around them.[12] Secondly, being 'out of time' referred to the limited horizons of Italians in and from Egypt – before, during, and after their departures, by them and by representatives of state and international institutions. In other words, the projected ending of 'the community' contoured impressions of the past and understandings of the future. An imminent ending shaped many of the anxieties and prognostications that manifested in the voices which populate this book. Writings about an 'existential crisis' facing Italians in, and later from, Egypt began in the nineteenth century and continued through the fascist *ventennio* (1919–1943) and into the time of writing. This sense of an ending is underpinned by the fact that some historical temporalities – especially those linked to the state – have more power than others, a point to which I will return.[13]

[10] Bevernage and Lorenz have made the case for a more empirical understanding of periodisation. Berber Bevernage and Chris Lorenz, 'Breaking up Time – Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future. An Introduction,' in Berber Bevernage and Chris Lorenza (eds.), *Breaking up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 29.

[11] Francesca Trivellato, 'Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory,' *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33, 1 (2015): 122–134 and 'Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?,' *California Italian Studies* 2, 1 (2011); Sebouh David Aslanian, Joyce E. Chaplin, Ann McGrath and Kristin Mann, 'AHR *conversation* How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History,' *The American Historical Review* 118, 5 (2013): 1431–1472.

[12] ACS, PCM 1944–1947 15-3/11222, notizie sulla collettività italiana d'Egitto, 21 December 1944. For a theorisation of synchronisation and temporality see, Helge Jordheim, 'In sync/Out of sync,' in Zoltán Blodizsár Simon and Lars Deile (eds.), *Historical Understanding: Past, Present, and Future* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 45–56.

[13] For an exploration of this that is uniquely focused on the regimes of historicity emanating from structures of power, see Christopher Clark, *Time and Power: Visions of History in German Politics, from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

The story of Italian departures points to how these processes continue to inflect ideas about migration in the contemporary Mediterranean.[14] Despite its frequent invocation by Egyptian migrants like Sayyid, in Italy little is known about Italian migration to and departures from Egypt; some individuals sigh curiously when they learn that Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, Giuseppe Ungaretti, and Dalida (Iolanda Cristina Gigliotti) were all born in Egypt. To many Italians from Egypt, theirs is a marginalised story. Beginning with the more 'recent' arrivals, Italians in Egypt included migrants who left Italy after the 1905 and 1908 earthquakes in Calabria and Sicily and during the period of mass emigration (1870–1914), Italian Jewish *protégés* from Ottoman territories in the Eastern Mediterranean, political exiles who had fled the peninsula during the Risorgimento (1815–1861), and merchants who had criss-crossed the sea since the time of the Maritime Republics, among others.

Until around the second half of the nineteenth century, a creole form of the Italian language functioned as a *lingua franca* in the Eastern Mediterranean. In Egypt, it attested to the political influence of an affluent, professional, and mercantile population that would begin to decline around the time of Italy's national unification in 1861. By 1894, Francesco Santorelli, editor of *Corriere Egiziano*, an Italian-language newspaper published in Cairo, would write that 'for some years now, the Italian colonies in the East, and especially in Egypt, are experiencing an acute existential crisis, a terrible and debilitating crisis'.[15] The idea of their decline in a world of intensifying imperial rivalry would propel Italy's colonial ambitions.[16] In many ways, 'the Italians of Egypt' (*gli italiani d'Egitto*), as they came to be known, symbolised the

[14] The most thorough contributions to research on departure in migration, see Nancy L. Green and François Weil (eds.), *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007). For a more focused study on the gendered aspects of emigration, see Linda Reeder, *Widows in White: Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[15] Francesco Santorelli, *L'Italia in Egitto (impressioni e note)* (Cairo: Tipografia italiana, 1894), 11.

[16] On *lingua franca* in the Mediterranean, see Jocelyn Dakhlia, *Lingua franca: Histoire d'une langue metisse en Méditerranée* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2008); Guido Cifoletti, *La lingua franca mediterranea* (Padova: Unipress, 1989); Barbara Spackman, *Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travelers in Ottoman Lands* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017). For an early Italian-language lament over the decreasing use of Italian in Egypt, see Santorelli, *L'Italia in Egitto,* echoed a decade later in L. A. Balboni, *Gl'Italiani nella civilità egiziana del secolo XIX (vol. I)* (Cairo: Tipo-litografico v. Penasson, 1906). For other works on how narratives of decline shaped imperial imagination, see Aaron L. Freidberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

intersection of national emergence and competing imperial ambitions in the Mediterranean.

This book employs concepts of temporality and membership to interrogate the periodisation of the Mediterranean, which conventionally charts the region's demise around the time at the centre of this book – specifically, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956.[17] By using 'political membership', I aim to encapsulate the various manifestations of 'community' or shared forms of belonging that surface in the archives of this migration. *Collettività*, *colonie*, *comunità*, *communauté*, and *al-galliya al-italiyya* are all terms invoked by and about Italian migrants and residents in and from Egypt, and they often appear interchangeably in source material. Each of these terms is interwoven with the political constellations from which historical actors derived meaning, and each represents different forms of legal, political, and social structure. Together, they helped to articulate membership in terms of rights and in relation to (state) institutions.[18]

As described by Ulbe Bosma, Gijs Kessler, and Leo Lucassen, a 'membership regime […] denotes the complex of rules, regulations, customs and values surrounding the entry and long-term settlement of migrants in a new polity'.[19] They argue that membership regimes reflect the power relations between 'newcomers and receiving societies'. In this case, arenas of 'newcomers' and 'receiving societies' fluctuate across time as the parameters of nation and empire transform, shifting and redefining terms of community. Political membership, I claim, allows for a flexible understanding of how such rules, regulations, customs, and values structure and delimit experiences and expectations. Changes in membership regimes invite questions about historical temporalities.

Membership in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Egypt and in the wider Mediterranean incorporated early modern ideas of belonging

[17] Naor Ben-Yehoyada, 'Mediterranean Modernity?,' in Purcell Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (eds.), *A Companion to Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 107–121, 109.

[18] See Henry Clements, 'Documenting Community in the Late Ottoman Empire,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 51, 3 (2019): 423–443. In her study of nineteenth century legal predicaments in Tunisia, Jessica Marglin uses 'legal belonging' in a similar fashion to examine how subjects are bound to the state, while incorporating a wider sense of membership than emerging terms such as citizenship and nationality. Jessica Maya Marglin, *The Shamama Case: Contesting Citizenship across the Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022), 1–3, 8–9.

[19] Ulbe Bosma, Gijs Kessler, and Leo Lucassen, 'Migration and Membership Regimes in Global and Historical Perspective: An Introduction,' in Ulbe Bosma, Gijs Kessler, and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration and Membership Regimes in Global and Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1–20, 11.

as well as modern ones (post-1800) related to the emergence of the nation-state.[20] Conflicts within and between membership regimes challenge us to think critically about the mutual constitution of migrants, communities, and state power.[21] Early modern forms of legal protection in the Mediterranean, many of which set standards for membership, have received a great deal of scholarly attention in their immediate contexts.[22] Few scholars, however, have extended their analyses into the twentieth century.[23] Still fewer have sought to comprehend how failed, cancelled, or superseded membership regimes endured. The complex of membership regimes detailed in this book meant that Italians in and from Egypt, as part of a transimperial community, never quite settled anywhere as they lived multiple, overlapping, and at times conflicting temporalities.[24]

[20] Ibid., 12; on the great variety of pre and early modern forms of citizenship see Maarten Prak, *Citizens without Nations: Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, c.1000–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Citizens All? Citizens Some! The Making of the Citizen,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, 4 (2003): 650–679; Simona Cerutti, 'A qui appartiennent les biens qui appartiennent à personne? Citoyenneté et droit d'aubaine à l'époque modern,' *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 62, 2 (2007): 355–386; J. L. Van Zanden and Maarten Prak, 'Towards an Economic Interpretation of Citizenship: The Dutch Republic between Medieval Communes and Modern Nation States,' *European Review of Economic History* 10 (2006): 111–145.

[21] I make this argument in relation to historical actors in Joseph John Viscomi, 'Pontremoli's Cry: Personhood, History, and Scale in the Eastern Mediterranean,' *History and Anthropology* 31, 1 (2020): 43–65.

[22] Daniel Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Fariba Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2018); Monique O'Connell and Eric R. Dursteler, *The Mediterranean World: From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Napoleon* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016); E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). Of more general relevance: Lauren Benton, Adam Clulow and Bain Attwood (eds.), *Protection and Empire: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlis in the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2005).

[23] An exception is Sarah Stein's *Extraterritorial Dreams*, which focuses on the twentieth century but is concerned primarily with Sephardic Jews and overlooks extraterritorial jurisdiction for other migrant and colonial communities. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016) and Jessica Maya Marglin, 'Extraterritoriality and Legal Belonging in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean,' *Law and History Review* 39, 4 (2021): 679–706.

[24] Roberta Pergher, *Mussolini's Nation-Empire: Sovereignty and Settlement in Italy's Borderlands, 1922–1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 70. For the Egyptian context see, Will Hanley, 'When Did Egyptians Stop Being Ottomans?

This dilemma prompts questions about how to approach the relationship between individual and collective itineraries, and about the contexts in which migrants moved.

Nancy Green argues that migration history since the transnational turn (which she situates after 1989) has fostered notions of 'unfettered' movement across borders, emphasising migrant agency while downplaying the role of state interference in mobility. Such an approach, she claims, elides the many frictions encountered by mobile subjects as they negotiate their surroundings, particularly those frictions provoked by what she calls the 'stubborn state'.[25] I agree that it is time to reassess the transnational framework. The state's absence or its conceptual separation from migrants' experience flattens our knowledge about how and along what paths mobility occurs. The same is true of rigidly defined top-down or bottom-up framings. Green proposes that we concentrate on two aspects: first, how states conceived of subjects who lived elsewhere and, second, how mobile subjects deployed citizenship in different ways in their movements.[26] This microhistorical study of migrant Italian subjects and state institutions does not intend to reify any particular national form of identity, but rather seeks to comprehend how the politics of departure came to shape the encounter between migrants and the state, an aspect that recent decades of anti-immigrant nationalist (and nativist) rhetoric has demonstrated is more necessary than ever. By embracing Green's approach to understand departure at the end of empire, then, I repostulate the connections between migrants and the state and illustrate how national, imperial, and colonial forms of membership are bound together in temporal hierarchies.[27]

An Imperial Citizenship Case Study,' in Willem Mass (ed.), *Multilevel Citizenship* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 89–109. Mae Ngai has argued that legal regimes and state policies in the United State created 'impossible subjects' in the case of undocumented migrants. Here, I point to a similar dynamic in which settled categories are themselves rendered impossible by legal and political regimes that change under their feet. Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). See also Raffaela Del Sarto, 'Borderlands: The Middle East and North Africa as the EU's Southern Buffer Zone,' in D. Bechev and K. Nicolaidis (eds.), *Mediterranean Frontiers: Borders, Conflict and Memory in a Transnational World* (London: Routledge, 2010), 149–165. My definition of transimperial comes from Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, 'Transimperial History – Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition,' *Journal of Modern European History* 16, 4 (2018): 429–452.

[25] Nancy L. Green, *The Limits of Transnationalism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 3, 60.

[26] Ibid., 55.

[27] Much of the historiography of migration assumes a temporal progression from subject to citizen and neglects the permeability of membership regimes. Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign: Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Oxford:

Prior to 1861, 'Italy' as a nation was yet unformed. In Egypt, individuals from the Italian peninsula occupied a variety of positions under the authorities of their respective consuls, but these relationships were neither strictly regulated nor necessarily based on claims of national belonging. An 1840 estimate counted around 2,000 'Italians', but this number expanded rapidly after Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882.[28] Like destinations in the Americas and Europe, many Italians arrived in search of temporary or seasonal employment. The population rose from 18,665 in 1882 to 24,454 in 1897, to peak at 52,462 (from 1927 onwards most of the growth has been attributed to 'natural' growth, that is, Italians born locally).[29] By the late nineteenth century, many 'Italians' living in French Algeria or in the French Protectorate of Tunisia had been naturalised as French citizens or lived with limited rights under colonial authorities, yet in Egypt, Greek, Italian, French, and other 'foreign' nationals lived under extraterritorial jurisdiction, linked by nationality to their (mostly) autonomous national consuls, courts, and institutions. This unique relationship between territory and membership would be phased out between 1937 and 1949 as Egypt's nationalists sought to redefine the terms of national sovereignty.[30]

Oxford University Press, 2017). See also Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 45, 53.

[28] A. B. Clot-Bey, *Aperçu général sur l'Egypte* (Bruxelles: Meline, Cans, 1840). See Angelo Iacovella, 'La presenza italiana in Egitto: Problemi storici e demografici,' *Altreitalie* 6 12 (1994): 60–69, and Claudio Zanier, 'I fondi non inventariati delle legazioni e dei consolati degli stati pre-unitari all'archivio storico del ministero degli Affari Esteri: La rappresentanza di Sardegna ad Alessandria d'Egitto (1825–1861),' *Oriente Moderno* 1–2 (1985): 49–57. For more on nineteenth-century census registers in Egypt, see Kenneth M. Cuno and Michael J. Reimer, 'The Census Registers of Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A New Source for Social Historians,' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24, 2 (1997): 193–216.

[29] Davide Amicucci, 'La comunità italiana in Egitto attraverso i censimenti dal 1882 al 1947,' in Paolo Branca (ed.), *Tradizione e modernizzazione in Egitto 1798–1998* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2000), 81–94, 82; Christos Aliprantis, *Annuario statistico dell'emigrazione italiana dal 1876 al 1925 con notizie sull'emigrazione negli anni 1869–1975* (Rome: Edizione del Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione, 1926).

[30] On the relationship between the colonial state and territorial boundaries in Egypt before the First World War, see Matthew Ellis, *Desert Borderland: The Making of Modern Egypt and Libya* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018); on nationality in roughly the same period, see Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); on the relationship between British colonial rule and Egypt's legal complexity, see Aimee L. Genell, *Empire by Law: The Ottoman Origins of the Mandates System in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

The population of Italians in Egypt was heterogenous in ethnolinguistic origins and social status. While members of the wider community cut across all social strata, around three quarters of the population was considered working class. Most individuals and families shared in a form of citizenship that oscillated from 'thin' to 'thick' dependent upon when they had acquired nationality and which political rights they had been entitled.[31] They embraced shifting political perspectives, ranging from internationalist anarchists to monarchists, staunch nationalists, and later to devout fascists and communists. All these categories were complicated by the end of empire. Many Italians resided in the urban centres of Cairo and Alexandria. Another, smaller population lived in the Suez Canal cities of Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez.[32] In all of Egypt, Italian residents were the second largest 'foreign' (i.e. non-Egyptian) population after Greeks.[33] Within each city, some neighbourhoods housed larger concentrations of Italians, yet nowhere did they supersede ten percent of the total population. They tended to reside in areas distinguished by class: lower- and middle-class districts of Shubra (Rod al Farag) and Bulaq in Cairo, and in Alexandria, the working-class area of Attarin and the city's emergent middle-class neighbourhoods of Camp Cesar and Ibrahamiyyah. Elite Italians lived farther east in Alexandria, in Roushdy or Bulkeley, or in Cairo in Heliopolis, Zamalek, and Ma'adi.[34] Institutions linked to the Italian state were similarly dispersed: Italian hospitals operated in Alexandria (until 1967) and Cairo (until the time of writing); schools in Alexandria (until 1945) and Cairo (until the time of

[31] It is precisely this ambiguity that permits a nuaced understanding of the emergence of modern citizenship, one that is not unidirectional or teleologically oriented towards twenty-first century categories. Marglin, *The Shamama Case*, 3. For more on the difference between notions of 'thin' and 'thick' citizenship, see Charles Tilly, 'A Primer on Citizenship,' *Theory and Society* 26, 4 (1997): 599–603; Bryan S. Turner, 'Citizenship Studies: A General Theory,' *Citizenship Studies* 1, 1 (1997): 5–18. For similar notions of flexible citizenship, see also Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

[32] On the latter, see Lucia Carminati, 'Suez: A Hollow Canal in Need of Peopling. Currents and Stoppages in the Historiography, 1859–1956,' *History Compass* 19 (2021): 1–14.

[33] In comparison, the larger community of Greeks in Egypt numbered around 60,000 on the eve of the Second World War and was spread between major urban centres and smaller towns and villages. For fuller analyses of the internal dynamics and politics of the Greek communities, see Angelos Dalachanis, *The Greek Exodus from Egypt* (New York: Berghahn, 2018) and Alexandre Kitroeff, *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019) and his *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919–1937: Ethnicity and Class* (London: Ithaca Press, 1989).

[34] On Alexandria's districts and neighbourhoods, see Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality;* for Cairo, see André Raymond, *Cairo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).