REVIEW ESSAYS

IMMIGRATION, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE IN MODERN ARGENTINA

Ricardo D. Salvatore Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

IMMIGRANTS IN THE LANDS OF PROMISE: ITALIANS IN BUENOS AIRES AND NEW YORK CITY, 1870 TO 1914. By Samuel L. Baily. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999. Pp. 308. \$45.00 cloth.)

COUSINS AND STRANGERS: SPANISH IMMIGRANTS IN BUENOS AIRES, 1850–1930. By José C. Moya. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. Pp. 567. \$55.00 cloth.)

MASSACRE IN THE PAMPAS, 1872: BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA IN THE AGE OF MIGRATION. By John Lynch. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. Pp. 237. \$28.95 cloth.)

ITALIANI MALAGENTE: IMMIGRAZIONE, CRIMINALITA, RAZZISMO IN ARGENTINA, 1890–1940. By Eugenia Scarzanella. (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1999. Pp. 207.)

For different reasons, the four books selected for this review essay all mark a new departure—or at least a renovation—in studies of Argentine immigration. They invite readers to focus on novel dimensions of the immigration process, present the results of careful investigation of new sources, and pose intriguing continuities over time. Samuel Baily's comparative work presents a transnational framework for studying migratory flows. Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires, when compared with their counterparts in New York, had advantages in a variety of fields. José Moya offers a fascinating account of the achievements of Spanish immigrants in Buenos

Aires, pointing to their success in building a rich institutional life and their long-term upward mobility. John Lynch's study examines the effect of "law-lessness" in the frontier in relation to the possibility of attracting British immigration to Argentina. And Eugenia Scarzanella places the subject of Italian immigrants in the context of the formation of Argentine scientific criminology, which owes much to the influence of Italian intellectuals.

By refocusing the decision context into small communities with continuing ties to their places of origin, Baily reminds readers of the social embeddedness of the migration process. Both Baily and Moya ponder the importance of the social and institutional capital that facilitated the insertion of Italians and Spaniards into Argentine society and culture. These institutions, which included mutual-aid societies, banks, and housing cooperatives, appear impressive in perspective. And so does the circulation of information across the Atlantic among peasants, laborers, and skilled workers. Three of the four books under review emphasize the importance of locality in shaping migratory flows. Localities serve as nodes of information gathering and pooling of resources, maintain connections among participants in the overseas diaspora, and provoke in certain situations major disruptions in international relations that can stop the flow of migrants. Also significant in these new studies is the extent to which they make available useful evidence that fosters understanding of the experience of migrants and migration. New sources of data (or new interest in reading these sources) appear to be the root of this renovation. Cadastral records from municipal offices, census manuscripts, registers of mutual-aid societies, criminological theses, and British Foreign Office papers reveal unsuspected facts about the experience of immigration.

Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870 to 1914 is the long-awaited book by a scholar well known to Argentine historians, Samuel Baily. Based on years of patient collecting of information in archives in Italy, the United States, and Argentina, this comparative study promises a new synthesis of the experience of immigration when examined in a transnational perspective. Baily's book proposes to study Italian migration to two metropolitan cities, using a comparative, "villageoutward" approach. He chose Buenos Aires and New York as the foci of the study. It starts with a reconceptualization of migration as a socially embedded, transnational, and collective process. By paying attention to the collective strategies of migratory groups, Baily attempts to reconstruct the major contours of Italian migration to these two cities and to compare them in order to understand better immigrants' adjustment to the host societies. Immigrants in the Lands of Promise follows the immigrants from their Italian villages to New York and Buenos Aires. Then the study focuses on the similarities and differences between the two immigrant groups. Italians in New York and Buenos Aires shared many similarities and remained connected through bonds of family, friendship, and local solidarity. But as Baily makes

clear, those who chose Buenos Aires as their destination were better received by the host society and generally achieved greater economic and social success than those who went to New York.

In Baily's opinion, "informal personal networks" were crucial in facilitating the migration process and "the adjustment" of Italian immigrants to the host society. The concept of networks—the constellation of family, kin, and "paesani" relations that united migratory communities—operates in the book as a necessary ingredient of each stage of migration. Through these networks circulated material aid, social connections, good advice, and information that cushioned the experience of emigration. Thanks partly to this assistance, migrants were able to endure the difficult journey from their villages to the nearest Italian port, cross the ocean, and finally settle in Buenos Aires or New York. Immigrants mined this social capital intensively to find housing and jobs and to move up the occupational ladder.

Immigrants in the Lands of Promise moves from local to regional, national, and global dimensions with ease. Baily occasionally reaffirms with local examples (such as the Agnonesi from the village of Agnone) what he previously asserted about the larger collective of "Italian immigration." In explaining the factors that motivated members of Italian communities to emigrate, Baily resorts to familiar push factors. An economy poor in land under the pressure of rapid demographic growth produced situations of poverty that led families and village communities to view emigration as a viable alternative. Here, a Ricardian argument (the expansion of production over lands of low fertility) combines with a modernization argument (the new facilities provided by railroads and steam navigation) to portray emigration as a necessity. On the destination chosen by emigrants, Baily suggests that the information provided by the transatlantic networks made villagers aware of international tendencies in aggregate production and employment. While their villages in Italy appeared closed and isolated, villagers were informed about the opportunities in the global economy. The Agnonesi emigrated to Buenos Aires until the mid-1890s and then massively favored New York, particularly after 1900. This shift in destination was in tune with the relative performance of the two host economies. Even in the Italian villages, potential emigrants knew that the recovery of the U.S. economy after the 1893 crisis was much stronger than that of Argentina after the 1890 crisis.

In comparing the two cities, Buenos Aires comes up as the winner. For a variety of reasons, the southern metropolis proved to be a more welcoming "land of promise." Porteños showed less antagonism toward Italians. The disillusionment of a literary and scientific elite in Argentina paled in comparison with the strong working-class "nativism" that emerged in the United States. In Buenos Aires, the reception and adjustment of Italian immigrants was facilitated by a more open employment structure that offered ample opportunities for skilled workers, white-collar workers, and

small merchants. New York offered mostly semiskilled jobs, as the upper layers of the occupational hierarchy were closed to Italians. Home ownership was within the reach of Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires, but not for most Italian immigrants in New York. As time progressed, both groups of immigrants moved from downtown outward (a move paralleling their entry into the middle class), but those residing in Buenos Aires were able to make the move earlier, before 1914. The availability of land and mortgages for home building made ownership a real possibility. New York Italians, in contrast, began to move out of Manhattan only after World War I.

Perceiving fewer possibilities for a permanent engagement with the host society, New York Italians sent their savings back home to help their families or to buy land. The majority expected to return to Italy after *fare l'America*. Baily regards this evidence as a clear indication of a short-term collective strategy. By contrast, Italian immigrants who went to Buenos Aires carried the expectation of residing permanently in the country. Although they saved as much as New York Italians, they did not send these savings home in remittances. As a result, Italians in Buenos Aires were better prepared to invest in the host community and their own future. They supported ethnic institutions (a way of supporting Italian schools), built their own houses, and invested in commerce and industry. Their long-term collective strategy paid off in the end in both upward social mobility and integration into the nation.

Formal and informal social institutions cushioned the adjustment of immigrants in the host societies. The family, the household, and the neighborhood were the key informal institutions, while mutual-aid societies, ethnic schools, and labor unions were the formal counterpart. The values of the Italian family, Baily argues, were transferred almost without change to the new environments: dominant male figures, wives in control of family relations and domestic affairs, and children who contributed to the family economy. A high degree of endogamous marriage facilitated this transfer. But the households also adapted to their new social milieus. Unlike the situation in Italy, nuclear families were the norm in New York and Buenos Aires. But they had to accept temporary boarders, relatives, and other conjugal units as part of the household. These "extended households" were thus the byproduct of adaptation. Where family incomes were more unstable (in Buenos Aires), more extended households were formed. In both New York and Buenos Aires, Italian immigrants clustered in certain neighborhoods according to their region of origin (Mulberry and East Harlem in New York, La Boca and San Nicolás in Buenos Aires). Close proximity and day-to-day interaction provided a comforting environment for the newcomers. The Agnonesi from Barrio del Carmen, Baily reports, attended the same church, patronized the same pharmacy, socialized at the same club, and sent money to Italy through the same agency.

The institutional setups that assisted Italian immigrants differed. In

New York, the Catholic Church and political parties played an important role in integrating Italians into public life. In Buenos Aires, however, the Catholic Church was not a central part of the lives of Italian communities, and most immigrants refused to participate in party politics. In compensation, Italians could achieve important positions in Argentine labor unions and build an impressive network of mutual-aid societies. The societies provided multiple services that included schooling, health care, and job placement. In New York, in contrast, Italian mutual-aid societies were small, poor, and regionally based. Italian immigrants failed to exert influence in any major American labor union. Thus Italian immigrants channeled their demands through different institutions: political parties and the church in New York; mutual-aid societies and labor unions in Buenos Aires. The richly dense institutional network built by Italians in Buenos Aires facilitated a rapid and more complete adjustment to the host society than occurred in New York.

Immigrants in the Lands of Promise is exceptional in various regards. The book is written in a clear, economical style. Statistics and narrative are combined in a balanced, articulated, and useful manner. Micro and macro data are used to examine the questions posed by the new wave of migration studies. Baily's stubborn loyalty to quantitative methods produces important insights into issues that needed to be addressed and quantified: immigrants' savings, long-term occupational mobility, residential patterns, rates of endogamy, and more. Baily is clearly committed to an analytical kind of social history, in which the comparative method marks the differences between a common origin and the subsequent migratory experience. While comparisons are not always fruitful (as when the discussion slips into the national terrain rather than the two cities), Baily shows a strong commitment to placing the nature of the findings in a comparative perspective.

Immigrants in the Lands of Promise takes as a given rather than a working hypothesis the idea that the Italian migration experience was mediated by informal social networks. Baily makes little effort to prove either the existence of such networks or their influence on other variables. Perhaps he thought that sufficient proof of these micro networks had already been provided in One Family, Two Worlds, a book edited by Baily and Franco Ramella, or that the Sola family (which is used to introduce the theme in the preface of the new book) constituted a microcosm representing Italian emigration. It is nonetheless necessary to keep in mind that the argument advanced by Baily (and other scholars working on "migration chains" or "informal networks") works against alternate economic explanations of transcontinental migration. Economic historians have presented alternative explanations of migration flows and immigrants' integration into labor markets by using regression analysis and economic theory. They have argued that migrants responded to wage differentials (rather than to family invitations); that employers paid them according to their marginal productivity, which in turn depended on skills; that immigrants obtained jobs

through a competitive process (rather than through the *padrone* system); and that in a context of costly information, the method of adjusting one's capabilities to market conditions was "trial and error" rather than social assistance.

Immigrants in the Lands of Promise presents an alternative to these economic interpretations. The book relocates the family, the neighborhood, and the village as the proper contexts for decision making and then sets the Atlantic economy as the general background producing information, opportunities, and social connections. In Baily's framework, immigrants developed through experience "collective strategies" for managing economic opportunities and resources. On the one hand, this approach is a welcome departure that should be taken seriously by economic historians. On the other hand, concentrating on the social dimension has its cost. By banishing market forces to the background, the study runs the risk of minimizing the importance of this powerful force (the market) in remaking immigrants as social beings. New York and Buenos Aires were arguably the most commercialized societies in the world, where everything was for sale. Market culture must have had a tremendous impact on migrants coming from a less commercialized rural environment.

By focusing on the social side, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise* fails to engage in critical discussions of the remaking of immigrants' social and cultural identities. Baily rarely ventures into the terrain of culture. His few general observations on "the Italian family" or "the perceptions" of native Argentines of Italian immigrants are the exception rather than the rule. When Baily deals with the "barrio," his few comments about Ligurian associations or Agnonese social life seem insufficient for readers wanting an interpretive "thick description." The book tends to treat most categories as social and consequently to examine them within the contours of social science history. Whether the subject matter is the padrone system, the household economy, or mutual-aid societies, it is always viewed as part of a social dynamic that encompasses rational agents and structuring social forces. This book is not about sensibilities, oral traditions, meanings, or regional identities.

In the introduction, Baily casts his findings as a broader effort to remake migration studies by using a transnational, comparative perspective. He seems to imply that by embracing the concept of informal personal networks, one can leave aside the framework of studies of national assimilation. This is better said than done. In my view, Baily remains committed to the kind of questions raised by Gino Germani on assimilation, integration, and upward mobility. Baily's concept of adjustment shows only marginal differences from those of assimilation and fusion. The quantitative evidence amassed by Baily leaves the definite impression that Italians in Buenos Aires fared relatively better than their New York counterparts: their adjustment was less traumatic, which facilitated a more rapid integration of Italians into native society and culture. In the end, Germani appears vindicated rather than superseded.

José Moya's Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930 marks an auspicious turn in immigration studies. Moya based his study on a dual preoccupation with seeing the forest and the trees simultaneously in order to assess the interaction between global and local forces. He combines knowledge gained by students of migration chains with the accuracy provided by macro statistical measurements of migration flows, occupational patterns, and social mobility. An array of diverse sources (including censuses, ethnic associations, advertisements, newspaper articles) serves as a solid foundation for reconstructing the motivations and strategies of Spanish immigrants in Buenos Aires over an eighty-year period.

Moya begins by taking readers to the small villages in Spain where the idea of migrating to Argentina first emerged. This first contact, in his view, prepared villages for the era of mass migration. Moya follows the immigrants as they began to inject themselves into Porteño society. He examines the multiple obstacles and possibilities facing Spaniards in getting a job, finding lodging, and building the social connections needed to survive. Throughout *Cousins and Strangers*, Moya is concerned with not only the relative success of Spaniards vis-à-vis other immigrant groups but the question of regional fragmentation. How was it that Spaniards, coming from a fragmented nation, managed to overcome *campanilismo* (regional or local fragmentation) and build institutions that distributed benefits to all Spanish immigrants?

In analyzing migration flows in Cousins and Strangers, Moya underscores the centrality of information circulated through micro social networks across the Atlantic in maintaining migration flows in the long run. He argues that crucial information passed along by family members, friends, and generations maintains the initial connection between emigration and immigration areas, independently of economic crises, changes in political regimes, or the amount of official propaganda. Once the information flow was established (as between the village of Mataró and Buenos Aires), migration remained dormant for a while before being activated by new global conditions (technologies of transportation, changes in labor-market conditions, and the acceleration of the modernization process). Micro social networks thus played an essential role in preparing the terrain for mass migration—much more so than government propaganda. The experiences amassed by relatives, neighbors, and friends in distant Buenos Aires were what made the residents of small villages in Spain prefer Argentina as their destination. Moya applies the same theory of information to explain the spread of "emigration fever" in the Iberian Peninsula. In the 1840s and 1850s, "Spanish emigration" to Argentina came basically from two regions, La Coruña and Pontevedra. By the 1920s, the origins of emigrants were much more diverse. By then, a number of neighboring regions had caught the fever, chiefly because they had received the flow of information emanating from the pioneering areas. Emigration fever never spread to all of Spain, however,

in part because micro social networks circulated information slowly in piecemeal fashion.

Viewing emigration decisions from the perspective of the local community is central to Moya's argument in Cousins and Strangers. Employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, he manages to undermine the notion of a Spanish emigration. Rather than a national phenomenon, emigration was regional from the start. Each region (or even village) had a peculiar migration experience that conditioned the future emigration process. At first, emigrants sought areas where they could use their skills profitably. Some regions (such as Mataró and Bilbao) sent skilled workers with industrial experience; others (such as Navarre) sent sheep and cattle raisers to areas with similar landscapes and possibilities; still others (the coastal towns in La Coruña) sent sailors and fishermen overseas. It is therefore not surprising to find emigrants from La Coruña in La Boca and Barracas, those from Navarre on the farms and ranches of the pampas, and the Mataronese in the industrial districts of Buenos Aires. In time, this pattern changed as migration branched out into other families, regions, and occupational groups.

The story of Spanish immigrants in Buenos Aires is one of upward social mobility. Moya claims that Spanish immigrants transformed a dual society (of "haves" and "have-nots") into a more complex multilayered society. Opportunities for Spanish immigrants were ample, in part due to "the backwardness" of Buenos Aires labor markets, which were less affected by the processes of de-skilling, Taylorism, and proletarianization. Compared with native workers, Spaniards were more successful in securing skilled occupations and entering into commerce but less successful in securing white-collar jobs. Compared with their Italian competitors, Spaniards showed an advantage in language skills and literacy rates but were unable to translate it into a clear dominance of the labor market. They did better in commerce, where language skills and literacy were decisive. More than other immigrant groups, Spaniards accepted employment in domestic service, perhaps anticipating a long-term, intergenerational upward mobility. This long-term mobility, Moya argues, was real. If a first-generation Spanish immigrant worked as a maid, her daughters were likely to become teachers. This escape from menial labor constituted an important measure of the success of immigrant families. In addition, many expected to buy land in the old country, and they fulfilled their aspirations.

Another significant contribution of *Cousins and Strangers* is the analysis of Spanish immigrants' institutional life. Moya found that two types of institutions contributed differently to the insertion and adaptation of Spanish immigrants into the host society and culture. On the one hand were large and efficient all-Spanish institutions that provided basic welfare services to their members. The success of these institutions was based on their non-discriminatory membership policies, the low cost of their services (they in-

tegrated smaller local *mutuales* through a policy of "reciprocal rights"), and the effective distribution of benefits (thanks to rigid rules controlling fraud). On the other hand were a great number of local and small institutions that replicated the cultural practices and sociability of the Spanish villages and towns they represented. The latter type of institution complemented the work of larger institutions, providing close contacts, confraternity, active participation, and a sense of self-esteem. The efforts of the two types of institutions made possible the balance between two opposing forces: the tendency of regional (and local) communities to preserve their identity versus the need to cooperate in pan-Hispanic fashion for the sake of common economic benefits. This need, according to Moya, facilitated the process of integration.

Some degree of factionalism was certainly produced by class, ideology, and regional origin. But by and large, the power of "the organized community" prevailed over the forces of campanilismo. The institutional structure of the Spanish community was impressive. In addition to clubs, cultural associations, institutions for the welfare of children and mothers, and a great number of mutual-aid societies, Spaniards controlled large banks, a hospital, and a trade association. The leaders of these institutions were by 1914 well integrated into the native elite, and through their institutions, they could promote Spanish "high culture." More important, Spanish institutions could offer the newcomers a variety of benefits: burial costs, free medical care, protection for unwed mothers and young girls, loans, and places to socialize. By practicing useful philanthropy, leaders of the Spanish community managed to minimize interregional conflict. While indications suggest that similar institutions existed in Spain, the amazing degree of institutional development in Argentina was made possible by the government's liberal policies and the lack of state provisions for immigrants and their families.

In the final part of *Cousins and Strangers*, Moya deals with the cultural reception of Spanish immigration. From the post-independence era to 1930, Spaniards had traveled a long journey in the Argentine imagination. They had turned from being "enemies" into "strangers" and finally into "cousins." The change in popular sentiments toward Spaniards was accompanied by transformations in elite ideology, from the Hispanophobia of post-independence leaders to the Hispanismo of the centenary celebrations in 1910. The wars of independence had fueled anti-Spanish sentiments among both elite and popular sectors: Spaniards who chose not to leave Argentina had to renounce their allegiance to the *madre patria*. With the fall of dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas came an expansion in civil liberties, which gave Spaniards a voice in the public sphere. But when they tried to redress some common misconceptions about Spain, they clashed with a liberal elite that sided with the Italians (the embodiment of republican values). No longer "enemies," the Spanish immigrants were treated as "strangers," suspected

guests in a republic that did not welcome criticism from foreigners. All these animosities began to crumble toward the end of the nineteenth century, when an elite disillusioned with Italian immigration began to talk favorably of "the Spanish race." Leading intellectuals such as José María Ramos Mejía or Eugenio Cambaceres tried to promote the idea that Argentines belonged to a wider transatlantic family with roots in Spain. Argentines and Spaniards were no longer strangers but cousins.

This shift in perceptions involved a volta-face in which Italians assumed the negatively valued position occupied earlier by Spaniards. To explain it, Moya assembles a variety of arguments. First, the massive inflow of Italian immigrants coincided with the hegemony of social Darwinism. Compared with the more exotic and less desired newcomers (Sicilians, Calabrians, Polish Jews, and Russians), Spaniards seemed "acceptable." Also, after the 1898 defeat, Spain was no longer considered a colonial power. The United States now represented the imperialist Other. In addition, the anti-positivist revolt, a replica of European currents, prepared the way for a revival of Hispanic spiritualism. Finally, gauchos, the new icon of Argentine cultural nationalists, stood in continuity—not opposition—to Spanish tradition. They had inherited the virtues of the Spanish conquistadores.

In Cousins and Strangers, Moya has written a superb piece of social history. His combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, his persistence in relating the micro social to the macro economic dimension, his summary narration of eight decades of perceptions of Spaniards in Argentine culture, and his obsession with insightful details make this book required reading for students of immigration. More than Immigrants in the Lands of Promise, Moya's study engages the issue of culture. Whether dealing with the stereotypes of gallegos and andaluces, examining the emergence of Hispanismo, or narrating the conduct of the meetings of small ethnic associations, the book takes readers close to the threads of meanings and symbols that reconstituted community in the New World. Yet the question of "campanilismo" is resolved by resorting to economic and social arguments. The immigrant "have-nots" tolerated the cultural and political dominance of the minority of "haves" simply because the "haves" provided welfare "goods" at low transaction costs. And the regional or local noise produced by small associations assuaged the cultural longings of Spaniards. In these enclaves, it seemed as if they had never left home.

In this regard, a few shortcomings of *Cousins and Strangers* should be pointed out. In this analysis of cultural trends, the narrative falls into the trap of assuming a homogeneous "Spanish culture," a category deeply contested within the immigrant community, as shown in earlier chapters. In the attempt to narrate almost a hundred years of "perceptions" of Spanish immigrants, Moya sometimes equates popular and elite views of Spaniards, perhaps too hastily. Nineteenth-century gallego jokes seem to correspond too well with native liberal ideology. This affinity requires further reflection

and, if possible, a critical counterpoint. In the end, when politics entered the scene (anarchist organizations and rhetoric), the whole edifice of harmony trembled. What in the "social space" were tolerable disagreements became in the political terrain irreconcilable positions. More important, Moya presents Hispanismo as hegemonic in intellectual circles. This current was only one of several schools of thought at the time of the centenary.¹

Although not focusing on immigration per se, John Lynch's Massacre in the Pampas, 1872: Britain and Argentina in the Age of Migration contributes to understanding of a perplexing question in Argentine history: why was British emigration to Argentina during the age of mass migration so insignificant? The argument presented by Lynch is straightforward. In January 1872, a gang of Argentine religious zealots killed thirty-six persons, most of them foreigners, in the frontier town of Tandil. The incident outraged the British immigrant community, which started to question the effectiveness and fairness of the local judicial system. When their demands for protection from local and provincial authorities were not met, the British consular authorities became involved, calling for more information about the crimes and a more effective investigation and prosecution. Argentine statesmen and journalists responded strongly to these demands. Believing that the assassins of Tandil had been properly prosecuted and condemned, Argentine statesmen and publicists accused British officials of creating a negative image of Argentina. Rather than responding to British residents' demands for greater security and better justice, the Argentine government avoided the issue, protecting itself behind a screen of nationalistic rhetoric, defending their country's right to conduct a given frontier policy without interference.

The issue of frontier security heightened tensions in British-Argentine relations. Since 1870 the Emigration Commission had been advising potential emigrants about risks to life and property in the Argentine pampas. According to the commission, Indian raids and wandering gaucho assassins threatened the lives of immigrants in the southern frontier. The Tandil murders of 1872 confirmed these presumptions, generating strong suspicions and fear of their criollo hosts among the immigrant community recently settled in the New South. The nationalist reaction on the Argentine side did little to alleviate these fears and suspicions. In the end, British diplomats and emigration officials concluded that Argentina was neither physically nor morally suited to "British life." Cities were insalubrious, the cost of living was high, work was hard, and government did not protect immigrants from crime. In the frontier, gauchos hated foreigners and could vent their hostility with impunity. Consequently, British emigration authorities recommended that potential emigrants prefer British colonies as their desti-

^{1.} See Oscar Terán, *Vida intelectual en el Buenos Aires fin-de-siglo (1880–1910)* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000).

nation. All this negative propaganda affected the prospects of British emigration to Argentina, which declined after 1872.

The Tandil massacre brought to the surface the great cultural clash between native-born Argentines and British immigrants. The murders committed by Gerónimo Solané and his followers revealed the existence in the creole population of deep-seated resentment against foreigners. Coupled with the failure of the Argentine government to improve security on the frontier, this resentment turned the frontier of the province of Buenos Aires into dangerous territory for British immigrants. When the Tandil incident reached the English Parliament and the English press, Argentina was characterized as a dangerous frontier country, comparable with India during the sepoy mutiny. In this regard, Massacre in the Pampas illuminates the limited impact of British immigration in Argentina. Negative information about the prospects for Britons in the new settler economy circulated widely in the British press and discouraged many would-be emigrants. A dismal report by Foreign Officer Hugh MacDonell on conditions in Argentina, published immediately after the massacre, had a crucial impact. In exaggerating the disadvantages of frontier insecurity, minimizing the actual economic advantages for immigrants, and demeaning local inhabitants in clearly racial terms, the report seemed to confirm that Argentina—a land of violent "gauchos" and "indios"—was not a fit place for industrious and law-abiding Anglo-Saxons.

By emphasizing the key role of information and diplomatic relations around an issue of security and justice, Massacre in the Pampas opens up a major avenue for historians of immigration. Yet Lynch's answers in this regard are insufficient. Negative propaganda about frontier insecurity certainly affected migration flows, but so did other possibly more powerful forces. The decline in British immigration after 1872 coincided with a general slowdown in migration flows during an international depression. Wage differentials net of transportation costs might have not compensated for the greater insecurity of income in an emerging export economy. The difference between the skills needed in Argentina and those contributed by British immigrants might also be a crucial explanatory factor. Perhaps as important as "frontier insecurity" was the impact of the 1871 epidemic of yellow fever in persuading Britons that Argentina was unsafe. More research in this direction is badly needed. How attractive were the prospects of emigrating to Argentina to workers of a mature industrial economy? Were British emigrants' preferences for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Cape Colony rational economic decisions based on wage differentials and expected standards of living?² Or were they governed by cultural prejudice?³ The emer-

^{2.} See Dudley Baines, Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1901 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

^{3.} The emergence of scientific racism associated with the new theories of evolution and

gence of scientific racism associated with the new theories of evolution and degeneracy and its diffusion among "the mechanics" (skilled workers) of the British isles, probably influenced the reception given to the MacDonell report. How important was "frontier insecurity" in the decision making of most British immigrants? Was it a more important consideration than the risk of disease or unemployment? How did British immigrants value free schooling and other benefits offered by Argentina to all immigrants?

Lynch's work is to be commended for dealing with the overlooked issue of frontier insecurity in the history of immigration and for presenting the British reaction to the 1872 murders. Even so, Massacre in the Pampas proves disappointing as an explanation of the decline in British immigration. Instead of an explanation, readers will glean from Lynch's abundant reproduction of British sources an imperial and ethnocentric perspective on the Argentine frontier and its peoples. In Lynch's narrative, two fictive subalternities, gauchos and Indians, are submerged in the sphere of colonial state preoccupations about "frontier security" and the problem of "disorder" and "lawlessness." The British official script carried strong moral condemnation of both gauchos and Indians. Lynch's narrative tends to reinforce this perspective, presenting British observations as objective and well-grounded while construing the various views from Argentine statesmen and journalists as nationalistic, irrational, and self-serving. Readers are presented with a discourse about the inferiority of this new republic: an army too weak to present a credible threat to belligerent Indian tribes, a judicial system too lenient on criminals, and a lawless population of violent and utterly uncivilized creatures. Lynch does nothing to disarm or call into doubt the ethnocentric and imperialist character of this discourse.

Eugenia Scarzanella's *Italiani malagente: Immigrazione, criminalitá, razzismo in Argentina, 1890–1940* tackles the topic of immigration from a different angle. She looks at the ways in which Italians helped form a discipline involving immigrants, criminals, and the question of race. Scarzanella traces the influence of Italian scientific, political, and religious thought in shaping ideas about criminality and race in Argentina. The book covers ample territory: from constructions of criminality to the spiritual colonization of Patagonia, from policies of institutional confinement to "positive eugenics." *Italiani malagente* shows the persistence of positivist conceptions of crime and social problems well into the 1930s.⁴ The author presents especially interesting results on the connection between Argentine and Italian criminologists in the Fascist period, a link that facilitated the promotion of

degeneracy and its diffusion among "the mechanics" of the British Isles probably influenced the reception accorded the MacDonell report.

^{4.} A similar perspective can be found in R. D. Salvatore, "Positivist Criminology and State Formation in Modern Argentina (1890–1940)," in *Criminals and Their Scientists*, edited by Peter Becker and Richard Wetzett (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

eugenic policies and speculation about the "ideal Argentine race" when mass immigration was no longer feasible.

Throughout *Italiani malagente*, Scarzanella reveals how Italian ideas and policies helped construct images of race and crime in Argentina. First, the ideas of Cesare Lombroso, Enrico Ferri, and Pietro Gori contributed to the formation of scientific criminology in Argentina. The new discipline took as its object of study the "mala vida," a constellation of subjectivities that included professional thieves, prostitutes, vagabonds, beggars, and juvenile delinquents. Positivist criminologists addressed the various dimensions of "the social question" in Argentina, paying special attention to the relationship between immigration and social ills such as poverty, juvenile crime, prostitution, and alcoholism. Save for rare exceptions, criminologists blamed immigrants for spreading these social illnesses—so much so that even the perceived increase in "madness" was attributed to the inability of immigrants to adapt to the new environment. Theories of degeneration, argues Scarzanella, united the different strands of early criminological thought.

An analysis of several famous criminal cases reveals the preoccupations of both experts and the public with immigrant culture. The 1914 murder of a banker by his female lover (in combination with Calabrese immigrants) opened up space for speculating about the existence of criminal associations in Argentina, the nature of female criminality, and the instability of marital relations in an immigrant-dominated city. If Calabrese immigrants had "infiltrated" the police, their crimes would remain unpunished. Similarly, the case of infamous child murderer Santos Godino highlighted the extreme consequences of abandoned children, the dangers facing children in the metropolis, and the effect of the obsessive materialism of immigrant parents. While these famous cases defied the certainties of criminological knowledge about the boundaries separating madness from crime, they all reaffirmed the widespread belief that immigration was at the root of the crime problem.

Visits by various prominent Italian intellectuals (Enrico Ferri, Gina Lombroso, Guglielmo Ferrero, and Maria Montessori among others) added prestige to the institutions created by Argentine positivist reformers. These Italian visitors asserted the modernity of institutions of confinement and tutelage, supported the work of cooperatives, and applauded initiatives supporting the welfare of women and children. "Tours of progress" in penitentiaries, orphan houses, mental asylums, and housing cooperatives consolidated ties between Italian and Argentine men of science. The support of these ambassadors of Italian scientific culture reinforced the confidence of Argentine reformers: their initiatives fit with international notions of "progress." Even the special brand of feminism embraced by Argentines in the 1910s (one concerned with the health of infants and destitute mothers) appears related to the visit of prominent Italian feminist Maria Montessori.

After World War I, the exchange of scientific ideas and policy initiatives continued. New themes displaced criminality, such as the education of rural women in "home economics," concern about the decline in Argentine birthrates, and increased interest in providing health aids and food to working-class mothers. From then on, "biopolitics" and "biotypologies" drew the attention of Italian and Argentine statesmen and intellectuals. In the mid-1920s and early 1930s, Italian doctors, demographers, and criminologists associated with Fascism (Nícola Pende and Benigno Di Tulio among others) cooperated with their Argentine colleagues in programs aimed at protecting motherhood, policing working-class families, and cultivating some mild forms of "positive eugenics." As a result of this cooperation, some Argentine scientists and politicians started to entertain the idea of an "ideal Argentine race" resulting from "fusion," the Italian counterpart to the German idea of "racial purity."

In distant Patagonia, other Italian colonizers contributed to the development of racial thought. Following the paths of the army, Salesian missionaries settled in recently conquered territory and began their evangelical work. They mapped the territory, registered climatic changes, and left enduring descriptions of "the dying races." Due to their training in positivism and their understanding of Christian charity, Salesian fathers viewed Patagonian indigenous peoples as potentially good Christians who were nonetheless prone to degenerate for biological reasons. Following the vision of Don Bosco, Salesian missionaries tried to convert the sons of caciques to Catholicism. Their highest achievement was to send Ceferino Namuncurá, a Patagonian seminarist, to Rome in 1904 to meet the Pope.

One of the chief contributions of *Italiani malagente* is that it treats the question of race as an area of common interest between Italian and Argentine scientists. From criminologists' early debates over the connection between immigration and delinquency to the preoccupation in the interwar period with the formation of "an Argentine race," a persistent preoccupation emerged with understanding the implications of race in the development of the Argentine nation. Even Salesian missionaries contributed to this enterprise of making explicit the connections among nation, civilization, and race in their ethnographic work on the dying races of Patagonia. Scarzanella's focus on race is refreshing, given the tendency of immigration studies to avoid this question altogether. Nevertheless, some weak points in her analysis call for further comment.

First, Scarzanella exaggerates the importance of theories of degeneration in the conceptual makeup of the new disciplines of criminology, psychiatry, social medicine, and eugenics. Her suggestion that the criminologists' vision was informed by theories of degeneration appears too restrictive.⁵ Degeneration (usually linked to the notion of inherited traits)

^{5.} Elsewhere, I have suggested that criminologists' vision of the tenuous lines dividing the

was not the most common current among positivist criminologists, at least not the preferred framework of José Ingenieros and his followers. Second, disagreements split the positivist camp regarding the connection between immigration and criminality. The work of Cornelio Moyano Gacitúa (1905) stressing the correlation between the two variables was contradicted by Mario Lancelotti in 1912. By and large, statistical data did not support the claims of Moyano Gacitúa. It is true that ideas about "Mediterranean atavism" circulated in the literary production of the period, but it seems unfair to locate the origins of these constructs in positivist criminology. As other studies have pointed out, positivist criminologists attributed as much importance to inherited traits as to the social and geographical environment in which most immigrants lived.

Italiani malagente provides some answers to a difficult question rarely raised by immigration studies: what happened to the social and scientific perceptions of immigrants after massive immigration tapered off? Apparently, with the decline of mass immigration, the cooperation between Italian and Argentine scientists intensified. Once it was clear that the new nation had to produce demographic growth by its own means, the social question was replaced by issues of motherhood, the health of infants, and the care of the nation's "reproductive capital." Thus it is not surprising that race turned into a central issue and Argentine social policy makers began to sympathize with the cultural ambassadors of Fascist Italy. Perhaps a more enduring legacy of the immigration era was the transatlantic cooperation between scientists on questions of crime, race, motherhood, and nation. The changing reception of Italian immigrants by the host society, Scarzanella suggests, was not just a product of elite disillusionment. It was the result of a parallel migration of ideas across the Atlantic.

In the near future, other studies now under way or about to be published will add other dimensions to the study of immigration. Themes such as political citizenship, male sociability, and the contribution of immigrants to the formation of rich commercial cultures in the pampas will continue the renovation of immigration studies. But it is likely that the four books reviewed in this essay will remain important references for researchers in this field. These books deserve a wide readership for their contributions in evidence and methodology and especially for opening up new avenues of research.

world of crime from the world of work can be viewed as an "interpretive grid" for understanding better the cultural challenges of an export economy subjected to severe labor turnover and cyclical instability. See R. D. Salvatore, "Penitentiaries, Visions of Class, and Export Economies: Brazil and Argentina Compared," in *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*, edited by Ricardo D. Salvatore and Carlos Aguirre (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 194–223.