



**Degree Program in Politics: Philosophy and
Economics**

Course of **International Relations**

Beyond borders: The Italian Diaspora and its influence on Italy's Foreign Policy

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Academic Year **2024/2025**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the complex relation between migration and foreign policy, with a particular focus on the Italian case. It examines significant waves of migration throughout world history from 1870 to 1970, investigating key factors such as economic opportunities, developments deriving from the Industrial Revolution, and the policies of both home and host countries. The work shows that migration is not merely a demographic or economic event but is deeply linked to the political and diplomatic life of nations.

Furthermore, the thesis investigates the interplay between migration and diplomacy, looking at how states employ diplomatic tools to manage migratory flows in accordance with their strategic objectives. The concept of diaspora is articulated and analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and liberalism, recognizing diasporas as vital actors on the international stage with the potential to influence the foreign policies of their countries of origin.

This thesis conducts a comparative analysis of three distinct cases, the Israeli, Romanian, and Haitian diasporas, highlighting the different motivations behind emigration as well as the diverse responses from the states of origin. This examination allows the formulation of categories to classify state approaches toward their diasporas, which include restriction and control, disengagement or abstention, changes in attitude, and engagement driven by interests and support for the diaspora.

The focus then shifts to the Italian case, exploring the history and demographics of the Italian diaspora from 1870 to 1970, the evolution of Italian foreign policies regarding emigration and the diaspora, and the application of the established categories to different historical periods in Italy. Additionally, the paper presents an overview of contemporary

data on Italian emigration and recent changes to the citizenship law (Law 36/25 of March 28, 2025). This new legislation, which introduces restrictions on citizenship acquisition for descendants of more distant generations, is examined in the context of the historical relationship between the Italian state and its extensive diaspora.

In conclusion, this thesis illustrates that the examination of diasporas and migration is essential for understanding the dynamics between states, individuals, and non-state actors within the international landscape. It emphasises the enduring effects of migration on the demographics, economies, and foreign policies of nations.

Introduction

Human migration refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one geographical location to another and has been a persistent and transformative phenomenon throughout human history. Particularly during the hundred years between 1870 and 1970, we witnessed some of the largest movements of people, which significantly influenced the distribution of the global population and initiated major cultural, social, economic, and political changes. Transatlantic migration towards the Americas, migration flows within Asia, the movement of migrants to Australia and so on have reshaped demographic maps, leading to significant population growth in some countries and a demographic decline in certain countries of origin. The reasons behind this major movement of people are varied and often linked to the Industrial Revolution, as individuals sought better job opportunities and wages. The policies of both home and host countries have played a major role in influencing these migrations, with some countries facilitating the process while others have imposed restrictions.

The historical period I will examine in this thesis (1870-1970) was marked by a complex interplay of migration, industrialisation, economic expansion, and the corresponding policies. As migration increased, we witnessed the development of borders, policies, and, more broadly, agreements among the parties involved. This underscores that migration is not merely a demographic or economic phenomenon; it is also deeply connected with the political and diplomatic spheres of many nations.

The relationship between diplomacy and migration constitutes a fascinating and complex area of international relations that has not been extensively studied. Migration has historically been, and continues to be, a significant yet contentious topic on the global agenda, influencing state interactions. It impacts not only the relations between countries

but also shapes the foreign policies of origin nations and their engagements with international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In the study of international relations, phenomena such as diasporas (large groups of people who leave their home countries and settle in others) hold particular significance. Diasporas can be analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and liberalism. From a constructivist perspective, diasporas are viewed as non-purely rational actors that can influence the decision-making processes regarding the foreign policies of their countries of origin. In contrast, liberalism considers individuals and private groups, including diasporas, as active players who advocate for their ideas and seek to impact the foreign policies of their home countries.

Diasporas possess diplomatic value for host countries and are recognized as crucial actors on the international stage. The individuals within these communities often share a cultural identity linked to their homeland and may actively seek to influence the policies of their home countries, particularly in relation to migration.

Considering the significant role that diasporas play in international relations, both historically and currently, it raises an important question about the impact of Italian migration on Italy's foreign policy. This thesis aims to address this question by exploring major migration trends, the general influence of diasporas, and the specific contributions of the Italian diaspora.

To tackle this complex issue, the thesis is organized into three chapters, each concentrating on a different aspect of the topic.

The first chapter will provide a general overview of the main migratory flows during the specified period. It will examine the primary reasons for emigration, such as better job opportunities and economic changes, and describe the most significant destinations for

migrants between 1870 and 1970. The chapter will then introduce the topic of diplomacy and migration, explaining how states utilise diplomatic tools to manage migratory flows in alignment with their objectives. Some examples of bilateral and multilateral agreements will be discussed, along with an analysis of the efficiency of foreign policies. The chapter will conclude with a short overview of the Italian case and the research question.

The second chapter will focus on the concept of diaspora, defining it and analysing it in relation to certain international relations theories, particularly constructivism and liberalism, which I have already mentioned. To illustrate the various ways in which states interact with their diasporas, three distinct cases will be presented: the Romanian diaspora, the Israeli diaspora, and the Haitian diaspora. For each case, I will analyse the reasons for emigration, examine the numbers, and explore the policies implemented by the state to address this phenomenon. This will lead to the creation of categories regarding how states engage with their diasporas.

The third chapter focuses entirely on the Italian case, providing a detailed analysis of the history and statistics of the Italian diaspora from the unification of Italy up until the 1960s. It examines the various phases of migration, the primary destinations, and the underlying reasons for these movements. The chapter will also explore the relationship between Italian foreign policies and the diaspora, outlining the legislative measures and initiatives undertaken by the Italian state to address emigration and engage with citizens abroad during different historical periods.

Additionally, the categories established in the second chapter will be applied to the Italian context across its various social, political, and historical phases. The chapter will conclude with an overview of contemporary migration data and highlight how today's

emigrant differs significantly from those of the past. It will also discuss the recent changes to citizenship law, particularly Law 36/25 of March 2025, and analyse how these changes affect the descendants of those who emigrated during the diaspora, including the motivations behind the decision to amend this law.

Through this framework, the aim of the thesis is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the intricate relationship between migration and a country's foreign policy, with a specific focus on the Italian context. This will be contextualized within the broader landscape of global migration and the dynamics of migration diplomacy.

Chapter 1: Migration and Foreign Policies

1.1 Major migration waves in world history (1870-1970)

Throughout world history, human migration across countries and territories has been a persistent phenomenon. Notably, the 19th and 20th centuries saw significant movements of people. During this two-hundred-year period, the globe underwent numerous social, economic, and political transformations, many of which were driven by mass long-distance migration.

The transatlantic migrations to the United States, South America—particularly Argentina and Brazil—and Canada are among the most well-known and studied. Historians recognize their historical and social significance. However, there were also noteworthy migration flows in Asia and Africa. Between 1840 and 1960, approximately 60 million people emigrated to the Americas, while 48 to 52 million people moved within Asia and emigrated to Southeast Asia.

The migratory flows observed during this period have significantly influenced global population distribution. Host countries or regions of destination experienced substantial demographic growth, with their populations increasing by approximately four to five times between 1850 and 1950. In contrast, the countries or regions of origin for these migrants faced a decline in population. This historical period was marked by a complex interplay among migration, industrialization, economic expansion, and associated policies. The rise in migration coincided with the development of borders, regulations, and more generally agreements between states and international organizations regarding this issue.

The primary reasons for emigration during those times were linked to employment opportunities. Many individuals were looking for a better life, particularly in the aftermath of both World Wars. The new industrial revolution and economic changes drove people to relocate to more industrialized regions where job opportunities were abundant, especially in factories, mines, and construction. Additionally, the policies of both the home and receiving countries played a significant role in this phenomenon, with some governments actively attracting migrants while others encouraged their citizens to leave¹.

1.1.1 United States of America

Between 1846 and 1940, approximately 55 million individuals emigrated from Europe to the Americas, while an additional 2.5 million people migrated from Asia, specifically India, China, and Japan, as well as from Africa to the Americas². More than 65% of these emigrants went to the United States, while the remainder primarily established themselves in Canada and Argentina, with smaller contingents migrating to Brazil and Cuba. It is evident that, over several decades, the United States has been the primary destination for migrants within the Americas. Additionally, noteworthy alternatives during this period included the British dominions and various regions of Latin America. Only during the period from 1870 to 1910, approximately 20.4 million emigrants arrived in the United States, but also other destinations attracted significant numbers of emigrants as well, with

¹ McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

² McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 156. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

3.5 million individuals choosing Argentina, 3.1 million opting for Canada, and 2.6 million choosing Brazil as their new residence³.

The migration of individuals from Europe to the United States largely occurred independently of any political control, with the exception of the Irish famine. For the majority of those who participated in this migration, it represented a permanent relocation; only a small minority chose to return to their countries of origin. This observation indicates that the majority of migrants relocated to the United States with the intention of fully integrating into the prevailing culture. This aspiration, as noted by analysts such as Robert Park, is considered to be an inevitable outcome over time⁴.

One of the primary reasons why individuals emigrated to the United States was the better economic opportunities available. The relative real wage in the United States was higher, indicating a better standard of living and more opportunities in general compared to those found in European countries. During the period in question, the growth of the American Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was notably higher in comparison to the GDP growth rates of the emigrants' countries of origin. This disparity served as an indication that the United States was experiencing rapid economic expansion and presented a greater number of job opportunities⁵.

³ Balderas, J. Ulyses, and Michael J. Greenwood. "From Europe to the Americas: A Comparative Panel-Data Analysis of Migration to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, 1870-1910." *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 4 (2010): 1301–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40925861>.

⁴ Petersen, William. "International Migration." *Annual Review of Sociology* 4 (1978): 533–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2945981>.

⁵ Balderas, J. Ulyses, and Michael J. Greenwood. "From Europe to the Americas: A Comparative Panel-Data Analysis of Migration to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, 1870-1910." *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 4 (2010): 1301–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40925861>.

1.1.2 Argentina

One of the main reasons why most of the emigrants choose to go to Argentina or the United States is that Buenos Aires and New York used to have the two biggest ports in the Americas.

Furthermore, around 1914, Argentina emerged as one of the leading nations in agricultural production and livestock breeding worldwide. The country also became a significant exporter of grains. This rapid development created substantial opportunities for migrants seeking better prospects. At the beginning of Argentina's growth, the nation lacked a well-established middle class, which facilitated the integration of immigrants into various commercial sectors. Emigrants were generally welcomed in Argentina because they were seen as a way to “civilise” the country⁶.

One significant factor influencing migrants' decisions to choose Argentina is the established pattern of migration. New migrants often follow the pathways established by earlier migrants from their home countries. Argentina also used to provide subsidies to immigrants⁷.

⁶ Baily, Samuel L. “The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914.” *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (1983): 281–305. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1865403>.

⁷ Balderas, J. Ulyses, and Michael J. Greenwood. “From Europe to the Americas: A Comparative Panel-Data Analysis of Migration to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, 1870-1910.” *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 4 (2010): 1301–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40925861>.

1.1.3 Canada

Between 1870 and 1910, Canada experienced an influx of approximately 3.1 million migrants. This figure, while significant, is relatively modest when compared with the 20.4 million migrants accepted by the United States during the same period⁸. Canada has historically been a compelling destination for migrants, particularly those originating from the British Isles. The country implemented a series of stringent emigration policies until 1920, shaping the flow and demographics of incoming populations⁹.

In the second post-war period, Canada experienced strong demographic growth and economic development; however, it approached migration with caution. The country tended to connect immigration to labor market needs, accepting migrants based on whether their skills and previous work experience were in demand. As a result, the number of migrants entering the country fluctuated significantly. The demand for workers was influenced by the economic recession and the overall social and economic context. In 1978, new regulations were introduced, establishing a more closely regulated system that remained connected to the job market and economic conditions.

In 1962, migration laws were amended to eliminate racial discrimination based on country of origin. By 1967, all forms of racial discrimination were eradicated, and the primary criterion for determining a migrant's eligibility to enter the country was the needs of the Canadian market.

⁸ Balderas, J. Ulyses, and Michael J. Greenwood. "From Europe to the Americas: A Comparative Panel-Data Analysis of Migration to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States, 1870-1910." *Journal of Population Economics* 23, no. 4 (2010): 1301–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40925861>.

⁹ McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

Canada also promoted temporary migration. In 1973, an ad hoc program was established that allowed for one-year visas for employment purposes. This system was particularly utilized when it was challenging to find suitable local candidates for specific job vacancies. The number of migrants holding temporary visas frequently surpassed that of their counterparts possessing permanent visas.

Until the 1960s, the majority of migrants entering Canada were predominantly from Europe. However, beginning in the 1970s, a significant shift occurred, with Asia emerging as the primary region of origin for immigrants to Canada. This transition highlights the evolving demographic landscape of the nation and reflects broader global migration trends during that period¹⁰.

1.1.4 Australia

Australia welcomed a substantial influx of emigrants following the two World Wars, receiving over 500,000 migrants. While this number may seem modest compared to the millions who went to the United States, but it is still significant when considering the size of the Australian population. This had the effect of positioning Australia among the top countries that contributed to addressing the refugee crisis. Australia experienced a significant period of large-scale immigration from 1947 to 1985, during which the country welcomed approximately 4.3 million individuals.

¹⁰ Ongley, Patrick, and David Pearson. "Post-1945 International Migration: New Zealand, Australia and Canada Compared." *The International Migration Review* 29, no. 3 (1995): 765–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547504>.

Starting from the latter part of the 1970s, Australia experienced a decline in the number of migrants entering the country¹¹. The rate of immigration to the country appears to be aligned with prevailing labor market conditions and political developments¹². In 1975, legislation was enacted that granted British, Irish, and Commonwealth citizens the right to enter Australia for employment or tourism purposes without the necessity of obtaining a visa in advance.

During the post-World War II era, the predominant demographic of migrants entering the country was primarily European. However, this trend experienced a significant transformation during the 1980s, as migration from Asian countries began to surpass that of European migrants¹³.

In Australia, the majority of immigrants receive assistance, meaning that the societal costs associated with them are not solely indirect. Despite this, economists have noted a positive impact on Australia's economy as a result of immigration. One of the few negative critiques directed at immigrants in Australia concerns pollution and the excessive consumption of natural resources¹⁴.

¹¹ Price, Charles A. "Refugees and Mass Migration: Australia." *The International Migration Review* 20, no. 1 (1986): 81–86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2545686>.

¹² Ongley, Patrick, and David Pearson. "Post-1945 International Migration: New Zealand, Australia and Canada Compared." *The International Migration Review* 29, no. 3 (1995): 765–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547504>.

¹³ Ongley, Patrick, and David Pearson. "Post-1945 International Migration: New Zealand, Australia and Canada Compared." *The International Migration Review* 29, no. 3 (1995): 765–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547504>.

¹⁴ Petersen, William. "International Migration." *Annual Review of Sociology* 4 (1978): 533–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2945981>.

1.1.5 Asia

Although Asian migrations are less studied than transoceanic migrations, they are comparable in terms of scale and historical significance. Between 1846 and 1940, approximately 48 to 52 million individuals from India and Southern China emigrated to Southeast and Central Asia, the Indian Ocean Rim, the South Pacific, Manchuria, Siberia, and Japan. Additionally, between 46 and 51 million people from Northeast Asia and Russia migrated to these regions during the same period.

The majority of migration from India was directed towards the colonies of the British Empire, with less than 10% of this movement consisting of indentured labourers. However, many migrants received assistance from local authorities, or they often entered into some form of debt obligation under the labour recruitment system.

A significant proportion of Chinese migrants came from the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. It is estimated that fewer than 750,000 of these individuals signed indentured contracts with employers in Europe and Latin America.

Migration in Northeastern Asia is one of the least studied phenomena. However, after 1860, the Qing government gradually relaxed restrictions on movement in Manchuria, and following the emancipation of serfs in Russia in 1861, both governments actively promoted settlement in these regions. During the 1880s, homesteading policies were introduced, and in the 1890s, a railway was constructed to further encourage migration. It is estimated that between 28 and 33 million Chinese, 2 million Koreans, and 500,000 Japanese migrated to Manchuria and Siberia during this period.

All of these regions experienced significant population growth¹⁵.

¹⁵ McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

1.1.6 Africa

Between 1840 and 1940, Africa experienced significant immigration from Europe, contributing to its demographic diversity. It is estimated that approximately three million French and Italian immigrants settled in various regions of the continent, especially in the north, alongside over one million individuals from other European countries, as well as migrants from Syria, Lebanon, Arab countries, India, and China. While these numerical figures are intriguing, they remain significantly modest in comparison to the 20.4 million emigrants who have entered the United States of America.

Following the conclusion of the transatlantic slave trade, Africa experienced significant internal migration, particularly in regions such as western Sudan, the Middle East, and areas adjacent to the Indian Ocean. During this period, many migrants were looking for better job opportunities. By the late 18th century and into the early 19th century, these internal labour migrants started to go to southern and central Africa to work in plantations and mines. During the mid-19th century, internal migration within coastal cities in both the western and eastern regions of Africa began to gain momentum. This period also marked the onset of significant movement toward agricultural areas, reflecting broader socio-economic transformations within the continent¹⁶.

¹⁶ McKeown, Adam. "Global Migration, 1846-1940." *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

1.2 The Relationship Between Migration and Diplomacy

The relationship between migration and diplomacy presents an interesting area of analysis within international relations. Given that migration has historically been a significant and contentious issue on the global agenda, it undoubtedly shapes the diplomatic interactions and policy decisions of states. The dynamics of migration influence not only bilateral relations but also multilateral ones as countries navigate the complexities of demographic changes, economic factors, and humanitarian considerations. Understanding this interplay is essential for comprehending the broader implications for international cooperation and conflict.

Diplomacy is intrinsically linked to migration, as states engage in diplomatic procedures to effectively manage migration flows and related issues. Through diplomatic channels, governments can pursue their strategic objectives concerning migration and enhance their bilateral relations with other nations.

Migration diplomacy pertains specifically to the actions undertaken by sovereign states in addressing cross-border population mobility. These actions are invariably influenced by the respective goals and objectives of the states involved. Understanding this dynamic is essential for analysing how states navigate the complexities of migration in the context of their national interests and international relations¹⁷.

Countries employ various instruments to manage migration, including bilateral agreements like those established between Australia and New Zealand in the 1970s. These agreements allow New Zealand citizens to travel to Australia without a visa, whether for tourism or to seek employment and reside there, this right is mutual between the two

¹⁷ Adamson, Fiona B. and Tsourapas, Gerasimos. "Migration Diplomacy in World Politics." *International Studies Perspective*, (2019): 113–128.

countries. These two nations have a closer economic relationship, resulting in the development of a shared labour market. Consequently, migration patterns between the two countries have been significantly shaped by these agreements. Notably, over 80% of the migrants that Australia has received from Oceania are from New Zealand¹⁸.

When examining the policies that govern migration, also the case of the European Union is particularly interesting. The EU has established a regional migration regime that grants it supranational authority to manage migration and refugee matters. It operates as a border-free zone for its citizens, allowing for the free movement of goods, people, capital, and services without barriers. Simultaneously, the European Union has strengthened its external barriers with the aim of establishing a protective "ring fence" around its member states. In addition, the Union has implemented a common regulatory framework for visas and asylum. The two most significant conventions concerning migration within the European Union are the Schengen and Dublin conventions. These frameworks govern internal and external migration policies, addressing critical issues related to border control and asylum processes. Furthermore, they try to avoid the phenomenon of "asylum shopping"¹⁹.

An important entity in this context is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which began to play a significant role toward the end of the 20th century. Its growing importance can be attributed to various dynamics that have contributed to the migration and refugee situation. The conclusion of the Cold War and the collapse of the

¹⁸ Ongley, Patrick, and David Pearson. "Post-1945 International Migration: New Zealand, Australia and Canada Compared." *The International Migration Review* 29, no. 3 (1995): 765–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547504>.

¹⁹ Hollifield, James F. "The Emerging Migration State." *The International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 885–912. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27645420>.

USSR marked the beginning of a new phase in international migration, leading to a crisis in the asylum system. This shift was largely due to the growth in the number of migrants and refugees between 1980 and 1990, which reached levels similar to those seen immediately after World War II. In this context, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has emerged as a pivotal international institution tasked with addressing the contemporary migration crisis. The necessity for international coordination arises from the inability of Western democracies to address this phenomenon individually. Effective management of the situation requires the cooperative efforts of all states, with the UNHCR playing a pivotal role in facilitating and promoting such collaboration²⁰.

The mobility of individuals is often a contentious issue where international diplomacy can have a key role. In the contemporary world, migration stands out as a significant topic in public policy, impacting relations between nations and diplomatic efforts. This is largely due to the fact that the movement of people is intricately connected to the borders that states must uphold and safeguard, as well as to social institutions²¹.

According to Professor Sebnem Koser Akcapar in her article "International Relations and Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century," migration and its associated issues remain highly relevant today, particularly in the context of Europe and Turkey. She highlights the growing significance of diplomatic tools in tackling these issues. Additionally, migration policies can be utilized by countries to achieve various

²⁰ Hollifield, James F. "The Emerging Migration State." *The International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 885–912. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27645420>.

²¹ Akcapar, Sebnem K. "International Relations and Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century." *PERCEPTIONS, Winter 2017, Volume XXII, Number 4, pp. 1-34* (2017).

objectives. According to this article, border management has become a priority for both Europe and Turkey, particularly since 2015, due to an increase in the number of individuals attempting to cross borders. In this context, diplomacy emerges as the most effective instrument we possess, as it fosters the cooperation necessary to address this challenge. Engaging in dialogue can ease the burden of this issue for all affected states and provide a platform for the international community to implement effective actions. Consequently, it is increasingly crucial for the international community to employ diplomacy in addressing these issues²².

1.2.1 Efficiency of Public Policies and Diplomacy on Migration

The effectiveness of public policy can be evaluated by examining the differences between intended objectives and actual outcomes. Scholars' research suggests that public policies exert a limited influence on migration flows, which are predominantly shaped by significant socio-economic dynamics. From this perspective, public policies influence migration dynamics; however, they do not constitute the predominant determining factor. The influence of migration policies on the characteristics of migration is significant. Such policies can dictate the mechanisms by which migrants transition between their host state and home country, as well as the roads through which they seek integration into society. This includes various aspects, like access to education, family reunification, employment opportunities, and marital pathways. Consequently, migration policies play a crucial role

²² Akcapar, Sebnem K. "International Relations and Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century." *PERCEPTIONS, Winter 2017, Volume XXII, Number 4, pp. 1-34* (2017).

in shaping the experiences and opportunities afforded to migrants within their new social contexts²³.

The concept of the policy gap encompasses three principal dimensions. Firstly, it highlights the disjunction between public opinion and the policy elites during the decision-making and implementation stages. Secondly, it examines the dynamics in the relationship between states and agents. Lastly, it explores the interplay between international and domestic arenas of policymaking. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities and challenges that arise in the development and execution of public policy.

The first point highlights the discrepancies between public opinion and the public policies that politicians and the political class implement. It is a common belief that public sentiment is more restrictive regarding migration than political actions; however, some studies indicate that this is not always the case. Politicians cannot solely rely on public opinion when deciding which policies to adopt; they must also take into account economic interests, international obligations, and humanitarian considerations.

The second point addresses the delegation of control functions from the state to agents, including international organizations, internal bureaucracies, and non-state actors. The potential risk here is that the perspectives of these agents may not align perfectly with state policies. This misalignment could result in the implementation of immigration and emigration policies that do not reflect the state's view on these issues. The transference of this authority may also result in a shift of responsibilities from the state to individual

²³ Lahav, Gallya, and Guiraudon, Virginie. "Actors and Venues in Immigration Control: Closing the gap between political demands and policy outcomes." *West European Politics*. (2006): 201-223.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402380500512551>

agents, which could have significant implications for the rights of migrants and the overall accountability of migratory policies.

The final issue concerns the interplay between national migratory policies and international norms, institutions, and agreements. Such international agreements may impose limitations on national policies, preventing arbitrary expulsion and ensuring the right to asylum. Conversely, there is a risk that states may exploit international conventions as tools to enhance border control. This complexity underscores the intricate relationship between national and international frameworks regarding migration policy, which can have unexpected outcomes and pose risks to the human rights of migrants²⁴.

Today, we are witnessing a growing collaboration in diplomacy and cooperation among states on an international level regarding migration. Additionally, international organizations are playing an increasingly important role. Various international actors are pressuring third countries to engage in this issue. In the European Union, the fight against illegal migration is a key focus in numerous agreements. The EU has adopted different strategies to address this challenge, often urging third countries to accept readmission agreements within its treaties. In 2003, the Commission even announced €250 million in aid for countries willing to enter into such agreements²⁵. It is essential for a nation-state

²⁴ Lahav, Gallya, and Guiraudon, Virginie. "Actors and Venues in Immigration Control: Closing the gap between political demands and policy outcomes." *West European Politics*. (2006): 201-223.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402380500512551>

²⁵ Lahav, Gallya, and Guiraudon, Virginie. "Actors and Venues in Immigration Control: Closing the gap between political demands and policy outcomes." *West European Politics*. (2006): 218.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402380500512551>

or the European Union to adopt a strategic approach to immigration, as such policies significantly influence enlargement, trade, and development initiatives.

The collaboration between countries can lead to the diffusion of norms and national models for migration control. This implies that nations with more restrictive policies may attempt to influence others to adopt similar frameworks. A notable example of this policy transfer is the cooperation between the EU and the UN to export migration control tools to Africa. In this instance, West African countries were encouraged to adopt a common migration regime based on European standards, which were formally accepted by the EU²⁶. Exporting these models to countries with limited resources or unstable political situations carries certain risks. The administrative capacity in such regions may be insufficient to effectively implement these policies, potentially leading to human rights violations or further destabilization²⁷.

1.3 Short Overview of Italian Emigration

Italian migration has been a significant phenomenon, particularly during the period between the two world wars and at the end of the Second World War. In 1901 alone, there were approximately 121,390 Italian emigrants to the United States. Most of the Italians who chose to emigrate were driven by the economic conditions in Italy or were seeking

²⁶ Lahav, Gallya, and Guiraudon, Virginie. "Actors and Venues in Immigration Control: Closing the gap between political demands and policy outcomes." *West European Politics*. (2006): 217.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402380500512551>

²⁷ Lahav, Gallya, and Guiraudon, Virginie. "Actors and Venues in Immigration Control: Closing the gap between political demands and policy outcomes." *West European Politics*. (2006): 201-223.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402380500512551>

better job opportunities, as the job market in the Americas was more attractive compared to that in Italy. After the unification of Italy in 1871, the number of people leaving the country grew exponentially. This increase led to the creation of laws aimed at protecting emigrants from illegal activities.

In response to the increasing emigration rates in 1901, the position of Commissar for Emigration was established. This technical body, operating under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to unify emigration services to ensure better oversight and compliance with the law.

During the fascist era, immigration policies underwent a significant transformation from a stance of encouragement to one of obstruction. This period was also characterized by efforts to facilitate the repatriation of previous emigrants.

Following the two world wars, laws concerning emigration were introduced, particularly aimed at regulating emigration agencies and ensuring safe travel with basic hygiene standards for migrants. During this time, Italy also established bilateral agreements with host countries to assist its citizens in finding employment upon arrival.

Italy has actively advocated for the establishment of agreements regarding migration policies through both bilateral and multilateral channels²⁸.

Taking into account the discussions presented in this and in the preceding paragraphs of this chapter and reflecting on the implications of Italian migration from the 1880s to the 1970s, a pertinent question arises regarding the extent to which Italian migration shaped the foreign policies of the Italian state. The subsequent chapters will engage with this

²⁸ Cometti, Elizabeth. "Trends in Italian Emigration." *The Western Political Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1958): 820–34. <https://doi.org/10.2307/443655>.

question and will try to provide a comprehensive analysis of the influence of Italian migration on the evolution of Italy's foreign policy.

Chapter 2: The Power of Diaspora over the State

2.1 Concept of Diaspora and Introduction

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the term diaspora indicates: “A group of people who spread from the original country to other countries”²⁹. The term "migration" is currently utilized to describe a diverse range of phenomena characterized by the relocation of individuals or groups from one geographic location to another. This process is often precipitated by a variety of factors, including political instability, social upheaval, and economic necessity. As such, migration encompasses a multifaceted array of experiences that reflect the underlying motivations and circumstances influencing individuals' decisions to move³⁰.

Established theories in International Relations, particularly constructivism and liberalism, provide valuable insights for analysing the complexities of diasporas³¹. Before we delve into the specifics, it would be beneficial first to provide a general overview of these theories.

Constructivism is a theory in international relations that emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and social interactions in shaping global politics. Constructivism argues that reality is socially constructed, meaning that institutions, identities, and even conflicts arise from shared beliefs rather than fixed laws of nature. For example, concepts like

²⁹ Cambridge dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diaspora>

³⁰ Clifford, James. “Diasporas.” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 302–38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656365>.

³¹ Shain, Yossi, and Aharon Barth. “Diasporas and International Relations Theory.” *International Organization* 57, no. 3 (2003): 449–79. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594834>.

sovereignty, human rights, or alliances exist because societies collectively accept them. Change happens when ideas evolve, altering how states and individuals perceive their interests. Liberalism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of cooperation between states and institutions as a pathway to peace and interdependence. It holds that international anarchy can be mitigated through institutions like the United Nations, which reduce uncertainty and foster trust among states. Therefore, liberalism identifies three key principles: economic interdependence, institutionalism, and democratic peace.

According to Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, diasporas can be connected to the theories of constructivism and liberalism. They argue that constructivism views the state as a social actor that is not purely rational and is primarily driven by utility. Furthermore, constructivism considers interests to be variable and endogenous, shaped by national identity, which is not predetermined but rather influenced by both international and national forces. Diasporas are increasingly recognized as entities that exist "out of the state but within populations," underscoring the significant role of parental identity in shaping their experiences. The positions of individuals within these diasporic communities can considerably influence international affairs and highlight the complexities associated with identity issues. This situation can influence the decisional process of foreign policy of the home country with the host countries in both directions, so the study of diasporas adds some non-rational actors to the theory of constructivism.

On the other hand, liberalism contends that states are not the primary or sole actors in international relations. Instead, it emphasizes the role of individuals and private groups that strive to promote their own ideas. In this framework, the state is viewed as a temporary coalition that holds power for a limited time. Consequently, diasporas and migrants are regarded as groups with specific interests that seek to influence the foreign

policies of their respective countries. Diasporas hold significant diplomatic value for the countries that host them. Consequently, the study of diasporas broadens the definition of "domestic" to encompass not only individuals within a state's borders but also those who identify as part of its population. According to Shain and Barth, diasporas serve as crucial actors on the international stage, sharing a collective identity with their homeland and actively seeking to influence both the internal and external policies of their country, often leveraging their positions in host nations.³²

In this chapter, I will explore the circumstances surrounding three distinct diasporas in three diverse countries: Israel, Romania, and Haiti. Each of these countries and their diasporas has very different historical, economic, and cultural reasons for emigration, which is why I have chosen these examples. By selecting varied countries, my aim is to establish categories for understanding how nations respond when their citizens choose to emigrate. Additionally, I will investigate whether and how these countries assist their citizens who wish to leave.

2.2 Israeli diaspora

2.2.1 Numbers and Reasons of the Diaspora

The relationship between Israelis and the diaspora represents one of the most intricate and evolving phenomena in contemporary geopolitics. It is marked by historical, cultural, and identity-driven connections, having undergone significant transformation since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

³² Shain, Yossi, and Aharon Barth. "Diasporas and International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 57, no. 3 (2003): 449–79.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594834>.

When we consider the ancient history of the Jewish and Israeli diaspora, we are discussing a population that existed without a homeland. This situation differs from that of Italy, where there was land, but it did not provide meaningful opportunities for its citizens.

According to Ben Zion Dinaburg in his article "*Israele nella diaspora*," he identifies two significant moments in the Israeli-Jewish diaspora, defined as a population without a homeland. The first moment occurs when the Jewish character of Israel begins to wane, leading to the emergence of a new national majority. The second moment arises when the nation is recognized not only as the homeland of the Jewish people but also as a place where individuals choose to reside permanently, in this historical moment the conservation of the Jewish national identity started to be particularly important. The author asserts that, despite centuries of displacement, the Jewish people's connection to their homeland has remained unbroken³³.

Today, the global Jewish population is just over 15 million people. While this represents a small fraction of the overall population, it continues to exert a significant influence in areas such as culture, economy, and politics. Recent data indicates that approximately 7 million Jews reside in Israel, 6.4 million in North America, and the remaining 2 million are primarily located in the UK, Germany, France, and Argentina. These numbers refer to those people who identify themselves as Jewish but other data consider all the people descending from someone Jewish believe that this number is around 21 million³⁴.

³³ Dinaburg, Ben Zion. "Israele Nella Diaspora." *La Rassegna Mensile Di Israel* 14, no. 1 (1948): 17–24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41276736>.

³⁴ Bacci, Massimo Livi. "Gli ebrei: Una popolazione in israele una comunità nel mondo" *Neodemos*, 21 ferrar 2023. <https://www.neodemos.info/2023/02/21/gli-ebrei-una-popolazione-in-israele-una-comunita-nel-mondo/>

According to Aviva Halamish in her paper “Immigration in Israel History, So Far,” the migration of Jews has been a fundamental aspect of their culture, serving as a crucial element in the establishment of a Jewish ethical political entity. The state of Israel has consistently maintained an open policy toward immigration, based on the belief that it is right to reunite all Jews in a single state and territory³⁵.

2.2.2 Foreign Policy and Israeli Diaspora

Israeli foreign policy has been significantly shaped by the strong Jewish identity of the state and its people. This identity has had a profound impact on their worldview, policies, and the values underpinning Israeli foreign relations. A notable example is the attention that Israeli politicians pay to citizens living abroad. So, Israel's foreign policy not only focuses on the security of its citizens living within its borders but also extends to those residing in other countries.

In 1950, David Ben-Gurion, the former Prime Minister of Israel, asserted that Israel must embrace this approach. He emphasized that as long as the Jewish diaspora exists, Israel cannot behave like other nations that focus solely on their geographic position and citizens. Instead, it has a responsibility to care for all Jewish individuals worldwide and cannot remain neutral³⁶. Consequently, Israeli politicians, when formulating policies regarding other states, consider the implications for the Jewish population living there.

³⁵ Aviva Halamish. “Immigration Is Israel’s History, So Far.” *Israel Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018): 106–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.23.3.14>.

³⁶ Waxman, Dov. “Between Isolation and Integration: The Jewish Dimension in Israeli Foreign Policy.” *Israel Studies Forum* 19, no. 1 (2003): 36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805175>.

Of course, in the event of a conflict, the interests of the state take precedence over those of the Jewish community. However, many Israeli politicians believe that ultimately, the interests of the state align with those of all Jews, as the survival of the state ensures the survival of the Jewish people³⁷.

The concept of "*Yordim*," which translates to "those who descend from," holds significant importance within Israeli society. This term specifically refers to individuals who have emigrated from Israel, as well as their descendants. Initially, these individuals were perceived as traitors and largely ignored by the Israeli state. However, changes began in the mid-1980s when Israeli diplomats started to assist emigrants in their new host countries while simultaneously informing them about the opportunities available in Israel, hoping to encourage their return.

One of the reasons behind this shift in government attitude was the improvement in the status and economic situation of the *Yordim*, making it economically advantageous for Israel to foster business and trade relationships with them. Additionally, these individuals play a crucial role for politicians, as they often provide financial support for political campaigns, serving as a reminder to Israeli politics of the significance of the diaspora³⁸.

³⁷ Aviva Haramish. "Immigration Is Israel's History, So Far." *Israel Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018): 106–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.23.3.14>.

³⁸ Gerstenfeld, Manfred. "Identities, Pluralism, And Israel-Diaspora Relations: A Pragmatic Perspective On The Jewish Public Square." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 11, no. 1/2 (1999): 23–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25834446>.

2.3 Romanian diaspora

2.3.1 Numbers and Reasons of the Diaspora

The Romanian diaspora represents one of the largest migration phenomena in Europe, with an estimated 3 to 5 million Romanians living abroad. This diaspora has developed significantly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and has had a profound impact on Romania's social, economic, and political landscape.

The post-communist transition in Romania, coupled with significant social transformations, has led to a notable increase in both unemployment and poverty levels. These socio-economic challenges are among the main reasons why many Romanians choose to seek better opportunities abroad. A significant number of individuals have engaged in emigration with the intention of obtaining temporary employment, thereby establishing themselves as temporary migrants. This phenomenon gained considerable traction in 1989 and became increasingly important between 1996 and 1997, ultimately leading to a sustained trend in temporary migration. Also, in 2002, Romania became a member of the Schengen Area, facilitating greater mobility for emigrants seeking opportunities in various countries³⁹.

A significant factor driving many individuals to emigrate is the disparity in salaries between both rural and urban areas of Romania and those in other countries. This is particularly evident among doctors, especially resident physicians, who are drawn to work abroad due to better working conditions and improved access to medical equipment.

³⁹ Sandu, Dumitru. "Dynamics of Romanian Emigration after 1989: From a Macro- to a Micro-Level Approach." *International Journal of Sociology* 35, no. 3 (2005): 36–56. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20628739>.

According to data from 2013, approximately 26% of Romanian physicians were employed overseas⁴⁰.

The primary issue contributing to these challenges was the economic crisis that the country faced following the collapse of the Soviet regime, coupled with the difficult transition to a market economy during the 1990s and early 2000s. Due to the challenging economic conditions, many individuals seeking a better life opted to emigrate in search of improved quality of life, greater job opportunities, and personal development. Many individuals began to emigrate to join their families. Additionally, the opportunity for students to study abroad attracted many young people who sought to learn new languages. These emigrants often tend to remain abroad due to better job opportunities.

Following Romania's accession to the European Union, the process of emigration became increasingly accessible and affordable for both highly qualified professionals and individuals with varying skill levels. The migration trends have significantly influenced the labour market in Romania, resulting in a notable shortage of both qualified and unqualified personnel⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Dospinescu, Andrei, and Russo, Giuseppe. "Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic, Background Note, Migration." *The World Bank*, June 2018: 10.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBackgroundNoteMigration.pdf>

⁴¹ Dospinescu, Andrei, and Russo, Giuseppe. "Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic, Background Note, Migration." *The World Bank*, June 2018.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBackgroundNoteMigration.pdf>

2.3.2 Foreign Policy and Romanian Diaspora

The approach taken by Romania's government regarding migration has evolved significantly over the years. During the socialist period (1945-1989), foreign policy related to migration was characterized by strict control over international mobility. Passports were retained by the authorities and contact with citizens of other countries was heavily regulated. Despite these measures, migration was still negotiated on an international level, particularly for ethnic minorities. For instance, Jewish individuals were permitted to emigrate to Israel, and Dutch nationals could relocate to Germany. Additionally, migration for family reunification was legalized. However, illegal immigration also existed, but due to the stringent control of borders, such attempts were extremely dangerous.

Following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, the Romanian government no longer prohibited migration for its citizens. However, Western European countries began implementing regulations to restrict immigration from Eastern Europe. Notably, Germany entered into a bilateral agreement with Romania that allowed for the repatriation of Romanian migrants whose applications were denied.

Things began to change in 2000 when Romania initiated its program to join the EU, leading to a normalization of visas for Romanian citizens. Romania officially joined the EU in 2007, marking a significant milestone; and Romanians started to enjoy the right to freedom of movement within the European Union⁴².

⁴² Anghel, Remus, and Botezat, Alina, and Cosciug, Anatolie, and Manafi, Ioana, and Roman, Monica. "International Migration, Return Migration, and their Effects: A comprehensive Review on the Romanian Case." *Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)*, December 2016 <https://docs.iza.org/dp10445.pdf>

Interestingly, many Romanians emigrated to the UK after joining the EU in 2008. Following the UK's Brexit vote in 2016, the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) was established. Among all the applications received by this program, 16.3% were from Romanian citizens, this number underlines the need for cooperation between those two countries in migration terms.

In recent years, the Romanian government and the major political parties have developed several programs aimed at Romanians living abroad, recognizing their contributions both socially and financially, as well as their potential value should they choose to return. Another recent goal of the Romanian presidency is to create a network of qualified Romanian professionals residing overseas. However, this initiative has not been well received by many Romanians abroad who are not considered highly qualified, they believe that the government's focus on this network overlooks the needs of "normal" workers who wish to return to Romania⁴³.

2.4 Haitian Diaspora

2.4.1 Numbers and Reasons of the Diaspora

Although it is less known in Europe, the case of the Haitian diaspora is still very intriguing to analyse. Since the 1980s, many individuals have made the decision to leave Haiti each year. The reasons behind this choice stem from a complex web of factors, including climate change and natural disasters, as well as the country's socio-economic and political conditions. In 1986, nearly 650,000 Haitians immigrated to the United States,

⁴³ Martinescu, Adra-Lucia, and Balarchi-Lapascu, Alina. "Understanding the Romanian Diaspora." *November 2020*. <https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Understanding-the-Romanian-Diaspora-Report.pdf>

highlighting a significant wave of migration. Currently, it is estimated that approximately 500,000 Haitians reside in the Dominican Republic, where many are engaged in labour within the sugar industry. This phenomenon underscores the complex socio-economic dynamics of migration patterns in the Caribbean region⁴⁴.

One of the main reasons people are choosing to leave Haiti is due to natural disasters, and these individuals are referred to as environmental refugees. This term was coined in the late 1970s to describe those forced to relocate because of natural phenomena or declining environmental conditions. A significant event that triggered such migration in Haiti was the earthquake of 2010, which made many people unable to return to their homes, forcing them to seek refuge elsewhere. Additionally, Haiti has faced other devastating events, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. Research indicates that the number of individuals who choose to emigrate is significantly higher among those affected by these disasters (whose homes or lands were destroyed) compared to those who were not impacted by natural catastrophes.

The natural events that compel people to migrate are not solely extraordinary or unforeseen occurrences; they also include more common issues such as soil erosion and desertification. These factors are significant causes of immigration in countries like Mali and Mexico, for instance. Additionally, global warming and climate change are critical issues that contribute to the emergence of environmental migrants⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Rust, Noah. "Haitian Climate Migrants: Heralds of the United States' Unprepared Immigration System." *December 2023*.
<https://repository.law.miami.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2679&context=umial>

⁴⁵ Doran, Amanda. "Where Should Haitians Go - Why Environmental Refugees are up the Creek without a Paddle." 2011.
<https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=el>

When discussing the socio-economic factors driving Haitian emigration, it's crucial to note that Haiti is often categorized as one of the less developed countries in the Western Hemisphere. A significant portion of the population lives in extreme poverty, which is a primary reason for emigration.

Historically, despite being a valuable colony in the 17th century, Haiti's economy struggled to sustain growth following independence. The situation worsened in the early 1990s when incomes in rural areas plummeted by over 25% due to a decline in the value of their exports. Coffee, one of Haiti's main products, saw a sharp decrease in both value and volume of exports. Consequently, the already impoverished rural population faced even more dire circumstances, prompting many to seek a better life abroad.

In addition to the challenges faced in rural areas, the overall economic decline made it increasingly difficult to find good job opportunities in urban centres, further motivating people to leave the country.

Haiti has faced significant challenges in agricultural development and modernization compared to other Caribbean nations. One contributing factor is that, unlike its regional counterparts, Haiti has not received substantial foreign investment, particularly from the United States, which has historically supported innovation and development efforts in other Caribbean countries.

In addition to the environmental challenges and socio-economic factors, one of the primary reasons Haitians choose to emigrate is the overall political situation. The political history of Haiti is characterized by power struggles and governments that prioritize their

own financial gain, often resembling kleptocracies. Consequently, the government has failed to invest in agriculture or programs that could have benefited its citizens⁴⁶.

2.4.2 Foreign Policy and Haitian Diaspora

Beginning in the early 19th century, the Haitian government, under the supervision of American authorities, attempted to hinder the emigration of its citizens, but these efforts proved unsuccessful. They increased the prices of passports, regulated the activities of hiring companies, and imposed strict controls on freelance migration. In 1928, they even sought to make emigration illegal; however, this law lasted only five months due to widespread noncompliance⁴⁷. The government has largely abstained from addressing the issue of emigration, with the exception of a few extraordinary cases. Consequently, citizens have been permitted to emigrate without any form of assistance or support from the authorities.

One notable exception occurred in 1981 when the Reagan administration and the dictatorship of former president Jean-Claude Duvalier established a letter agreement that became a cornerstone of the Haitian Migrant Interdiction Program. According to this agreement, the Haitian government would assist the United States in curbing Haitian migration by sea, particularly for those attempting to reach America by boat. In exchange,

⁴⁶ Perusek, Glenn. "Haitian Emigration in the Early Twentieth Century." *The International Migration Review* 18, no. 1 (1984): 4–18.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2545999>.

⁴⁷ Perusek, Glenn. "Haitian Emigration in the Early Twentieth Century." *The International Migration Review* 18, no. 1 (1984): 4–18.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2545999>.

the United States would help the Haitian government enforce its emigration laws. The primary goal of this arrangement was to stop maritime migration from Haiti to the U.S.⁴⁸. A different scenario unfolded following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, as the United States granted temporary protective status to Haitian citizens already residing in the country, both legally and illegally. This policy was applied only to individuals already in the U.S. and did not extend to those seeking to immigrate, as the government aimed to prevent a surge of migrants arriving by boat. Additionally, Haitians who were relocated to the U.S. for medical care also received this protective status⁴⁹.

2.5 Categories

By examining these three countries, it is evident that their citizens emigrate for various reasons, and that each state has responded in distinct ways. I will analyse the countries in the order previously discussed, beginning with a brief overview of the reasons motivating individuals to leave each respective state and then continue with the creation of some “standard way” in which the states act when they are facing a diaspora.

Starting with Israel, we encounter one of the most complex cases to analyse. In contrast to Romania and Haiti, where the reasons for emigration are quite clear, the situation in Israel is more nuanced. To understand Israel's context, we must reflect on the history of the Jewish people, as they represent one of the few significant examples in history of a

⁴⁸ Smith, Jennie. “Policies of Protection: The Interdiction, Repatriation and Treatment of Haitian Refugees since the Coup d’Etat of September 1991.” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1995): 57–74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41715032>.

⁴⁹ Doran, Amanda. “Where Should Haitians Go - Why Environmental Refugees are up the Creek without a Paddle.” 2011. <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=elj>

population without a homeland. Until less than a century ago, the state of Israel did not even exist, which forced many Jews to seek refuge in other places. Consequently, Israel has maintained an open policy toward the immigration of Jews, driven by a strong belief in the aspiration to reunite all Jews in one nation.

On the other hand, the situation in Romania presents a distinct scenario. Romanians have been departing their country primarily in search of improved employment prospects, higher wages, and enhanced life opportunities. Therefore, the motivations for their emigration are predominantly economic.

The factors driving emigration from Haiti encompass economic challenges, as well as the impact of environmental disasters occurring in the country. Additionally, many emigrants felt compelled to leave due to the ineffectiveness of the political class in addressing and improving the quality of life for their citizens.

I have now attempted to create categories to classify how different states respond to diaspora and emigration. Analysing Israel's response to emigration presents a particularly complex challenge. The nation's foreign policy is profoundly shaped by the strong Jewish identity of both the state and its citizens, which emphasises the importance of the welfare of Jews living abroad to the government. Former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion famously asserted that Israel bears a responsibility to support all Jews around the world. Initially, those who emigrated from Israel were often viewed as traitors and received minimal attention from the state. However, a significant shift occurred in the mid-1980s. Israeli diplomats began to actively assist emigrants in their host countries, keeping them informed of opportunities in Israel and encouraging potential returns.

The Romanian government's approach to migration has undergone significant changes over time. During the socialist period from 1945 to 1989, the foreign policy governing

migration was marked by stringent controls on international mobility. Following the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Romania relaxed its restrictions on emigration. Conversely, many Western European nations imposed limitations that impacted Romanian migrants.

In the early 2000s, as Romania began its EU accession process, there was a notable improvement in visa procedures. Romania's formal accession to the European Union in 2007 was a pivotal moment, granting Romanian citizens the right to free movement within the EU.

In recent years, the Romanian government, in collaboration with key political parties, has launched various initiatives to engage with Romanians living abroad. These programs acknowledge the social and economic contributions of the diaspora and their potential value should they decide to return. A contemporary initiative aims to establish a network of highly skilled professionals residing outside the country.

The Haitian government's approach to emigration has historically fluctuated between restrictions and periods of ignorance. Historical records show that in the early 19th century, during American oversight, the Haitian government sought to limit emigration. In 1928, there was even an attempt to criminalise the act of leaving the country.

Overall, the government has predominantly overlooked the issue of emigration, with only a few notable exceptions. Consequently, citizens have largely been free to emigrate without any form of official support or assistance, and they have not faced significant obstacles imposed by the government either.

From these examples, we can categorise how states have historically responded to emigration into several distinct approaches: restriction and control, disengagement or abstention, change in attitude, and interest-driven engagement and diaspora support.

The category of restriction and control encompasses active measures taken by states to limit or prohibit the emigration of their citizens. This approach was notably employed by Romania during its socialist era, as well as in Haiti's historical efforts to restrict migration to the United States.

Disengagement or abstention refers to a lack of management regarding migratory flows by the states themselves. This has characterized Haiti's approach for much of its recent history.

Change in attitude and interest-driven engagement describes a transition wherein a state shifts from nursing negative sentiments towards emigrants to adopting a stance of active support. This shift is often prompted by economic, political, or national identity considerations. A prime example of this is Israel, which has evolved from viewing emigrants as traitors to actively supporting them and cultivating closer ties for mutual benefit.

To conclude, there is diaspora support, which encompasses scenarios in which the state facilitates emigration, often framed within international agreements or for strategic reasons, and develops policies aimed at protecting and assisting its citizens abroad. This approach recognizes the value of the diaspora and encourages the potential for return migration. Israel serves as a prime example of this with its open immigration policy and its commitment to the global Jewish diaspora. Similarly, Romania, particularly after its accession to the European Union, has made efforts to facilitate legal migration and has recently established programs to engage its citizens who have emigrated.

Restriction And Control	The state creates measures to prohibit or limit the migrations of its citizens.
Disengagement Or Abstention	The state chooses to ignore and not take care of its emigrants.
Change In Attitude	The state is in a transition moment, from ignoring or limiting emigrants to starting to support them.
Interest-Driven Engagement And Diaspora Support	The state helps the emigrants often thru international agreements or for strategic reasons.

These categories help understand the varying ways in which states respond to diasporas, influenced by the historical, social, and political contexts in which they exist.

In the next chapter, I will analyse the specific case of the Italian diaspora and explore which categories the Italian state might fall into.

Chapter 3: The Italian Case

3.1 Numbers and History of the Italian Diaspora

The aim of this paragraph is to examine how the Italian state addressed migration during various historical and political periods.

When discussing the Italian diaspora, I will concentrate on the migration flows that occurred from roughly 1860 to around 1960. The Italian migration abroad represents one of the largest migratory movements in Europe. According to the census of 1861, nearly 100,000 Italians were already registered as living abroad. It is estimated that no fewer than 26 million Italians ultimately emigrated.

To analyse this phenomenon, we should divide it into periods. The first period spans from the unification of Italy until around 1900, during which nearly 7 million Italians emigrated. This migration was predominantly individual, with two-thirds of the emigrants originating from northern Italy, many of whom moved to other European countries.

The second period can be identified from 1900 until the onset of World War I in 1915. During these years, approximately 9 million people emigrated, with migrants from the south outnumbering those from the north for the first time. Most emigrants began to move overseas to the Americas, rather than to European countries. It was also during this time that the first immigration laws were introduced, with the initial legislation enacted in 1901⁵⁰. During World War I, the number of migrants decreased significantly, falling to around 100,000 per year compared to nearly 600,000 before the war. Most individuals

⁵⁰ Monticelli, Giuseppe Lucrezio. "Italian Emigration: Basic Characteristic and Trends with Special Reference to the Last Twenty Years." *The International Migration Review* 1, no. 3 (1967): 10–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3002737>.

choose to migrate to other European countries. Between the two wars, but prior to the rise of the fascist regime, migration numbers grew exponentially. However, this trend changed with the establishment of the fascist regime, which imposed stricter regulations on migration. During the regime, fewer than 100,000 people emigrated from Italy each year, with returns exceeding expectations by nearly 70%. Most migrants came from the northern regions, and their primary destinations were European countries. During this time, the regime only permitted its supporters to emigrate, aiming to export fascist ideas abroad. During World War II, the situation mirrored that of World War I; people were not leaving Italy due to the overall circumstances, rather than any specific policy. Following the end of the war period, emigration numbers began to rise again. Between 1946 and 1965, approximately 5,650,000 people emigrated, with around 2,900,000 establishing permanent residency abroad. Most of these migrants originated from central and southern Italy, with a significant portion heading to European countries, particularly Switzerland and those within the European Economic Community (EEC). Migration to the Americas decreased during this time, especially as fewer individuals opted to move to South America. Initially, the movement within EEC member countries was predominantly towards France; however, as time went on, the number of people migrating to France declined while the number heading to Germany increased. The emigration of Italians within Europe has been characterized as temporary.

During the century in question, many Italians emigrated primarily for economic reasons, seeking better job opportunities and higher wages. Additionally, migration for family reunification was quite prevalent, particularly between 1953 and 1958, when the

Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) actively promoted such initiatives⁵¹.

Between the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s, many people chose to leave Italy for social reasons. The country was experiencing widespread poverty, with limited opportunities for impoverished families to improve their living conditions. This situation became particularly pronounced after the reunification of Italy in 1861, especially in the southern regions, which were less developed and lacked government support. There was also a significant shortage of jobs, particularly in the agricultural sector, leaving many farmers and labourers without work and prompting them to seek opportunities abroad. Additionally, the impact of two world wars and environmental disasters, such as the 1908 earthquake, exacerbated the dire circumstances. The increasing burden of taxation further motivated many to leave Italy. The notion of America as a land of prosperity fueled this migration, as many began to realise that the job market in America and other European countries was more dynamic, making it easier to find work. For Italians, America became the “promised land” for a better future, with abundant job opportunities, especially in industries such as mining, railroads, and construction⁵².

⁵¹ Monticelli, Giuseppe Lucrezio. “Italian Emigration: Basic Characteristic and Trends with Special Reference to the Last Twenty Years.” *The International Migration Review* 1, no. 3 (1967): 10–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3002737>.

⁵² “Harnessing the power of the global italian diaspora how to strategically manage a valuable asset for the country-system.” *The European House, Ambrosetti*. (2023) https://www.ambrosetti.eu/site/get-media/?type=doc&id=18635&doc_player=1

3.2 Foreign Policies and Italian Diaspora

At the beginning of its history as a unified state in 1861, Italy employed migration policies as a means to strengthen its national foreign policy. Migration was perceived as a strategy for the newly formed Italian state to foster relationships with other countries.

The sentiment towards migration persisted until the 1920s. During this period, Italy faced two significant internal issues that influenced the Italian diaspora: the situation in the South and the Roman question. The first issue concerned the disparity in development between Northern and Southern Italy, with the North being significantly more advanced while the South remained predominantly rural. Initially, Southern landlords opposed emigration, believing it destabilized social relations, increased labour costs, and gave their workers the impression that they had the freedom to relocate. Initially, migration began to be perceived as a potential driver of economic and social development, largely due to the increase in American remittances. This growth facilitated negotiations between proponents and opponents of migration. The influx of remittances particularly supported migration in the southern regions, as it generated capital and provided a robust means to address the significant class struggles arising from the political instability⁵³.

The Roman Problem pertained to the relationship between the Italian state and the Roman Catholic Church following Italy's unification, particularly after the conquest of the Papal States and Rome in 1870. After this event, the Pope refused to acknowledge the unification of Italy and prohibited Catholics from participating in political life. This created a challenging situation, as a democratic country cannot function effectively

⁵³ Smith, Robert C. "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases." *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037755>.

without the active participation of its citizens. In response, Bishop Scalabrini sought to enhance the relationship between the Church and the Italian state by founding the Pious Society, which aimed to foster this connection. He also established a new order of priests, known as the Scalabrini, whose mission was to support migrants. Their efforts extended beyond their immediate church community, with the goal of assisting migrants in their host countries.

The key policies enacted by the Italian state during this historical period include the Emigration Act of 1901, the promotion of openly diasporic policies towards the Americas, the establishment of the *Bollettino dell'emigrazione*, and the advocacy for dual citizenship.

The 1901 Emigration Act established a general commission on emigration, operating under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This commission provided a framework for the relationship between Italy and its diaspora for approximately 25 years, primarily addressing the needs of migrants who were already living abroad and were unlikely to return⁵⁴. Although the Italian state did not directly organize its migrants in the United States through consular channels, it did subsidize many associations (primarily social and Catholic ones, especially before World War II) that worked directly with Italian migrants in the Americas. This support aimed to maintain connections, promote the circulation of migrants, and extend Italian influence abroad. The Foreign Policy Minister also established the *Bollettino dell'emigrazione* (1902-1927), which documented the activities of Italians abroad and their relationship with the Italian state. This initiative played a significant role in fostering a sense of connection between the diaspora and the national

⁵⁴ Smith, Robert C. "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases." *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037755>.

community. During this period, Italians often identified themselves more by their city of origin (such as *Romani*, *Milanesi*, or *Napoletani*) rather than as simply Italians. Additionally, the Italian state made it easier and more affordable for citizens to regain their Italian citizenship after losing it in favour of that of their host country⁵⁵.

This perspective shifted significantly during the fascist regime. Under this regime, the diaspora was still viewed as a means to reinforce national identity and pursue foreign policy objectives, but the strategies and goals associated with this phenomenon underwent substantial changes. The relationship between the state and the diaspora evolved as well; the regime sought to control the autonomous organizations working with Italians abroad through foreign policy laws, aiming to promote its new colonial policies. In 1927, the fascists dissolved the General Commission on Emigration and established the General Bureau of Italians Abroad in its place. Additionally, the term "migrant" was replaced with "citizen abroad," reflecting the ideology that wherever an Italian may be, they are first and foremost an Italian. The fascists also began to view the Scalabrinians as a means not only to maintain connections and assist citizens abroad but primarily to propagate their ideas and establish a fascist presence internationally. The Scalabrinians, in turn, regarded this situation as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the state and the church, in line with the vision of their founder.

Another instrument used by the regime to exert control over the diaspora, migrants, and citizens abroad was the consulates. The regime managed these consulates and sought to transform migrants from the diaspora into unofficial ambassadors of fascist ideology. This was achieved by encouraging the emigration of fascists and censoring those migrants

⁵⁵ Smith, Robert C. "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases." *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037755>.

who opposed the regime. Additionally, they absorbed private organizations that were assisting migrants to gain further control. For example, Vice Consul Ungarelli, who worked in Detroit, distributed fascist literature and organised trips to Italy for young Italian-Americans to promote fascist ideology.

The objectives of these changes were to strengthen identification with Italy and foster a sense of national community among Italians abroad, with the ambitious aim of enabling them to influence American politics. However, not all reactions to these actions were positive. For instance, Vice Consul Ungarelli faced significant criticism for his actions, which led to intervention by the American government and a promise from Mussolini to limit future “cultural contacts.”⁵⁶

During the World War II period, economic emigration was nearly non-existent, and the number of expatriates was significantly lower than that of returning migrants. This situation arose due to the wartime context rather than any specific policy limiting emigration, even though fascist-era restrictions were still in place. Following the war, migration flows resumed, and plans for assisted migration began to emerge. For instance, in Latin America, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) developed programs focused on family reunification. While these policies were promoted by the ICEM, Italian authorities actively supported and facilitated these initiatives at a bureaucratic level to aid their operations⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Smith, Robert C. “Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases.” *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037755>.

⁵⁷ Monticelli, Giuseppe Lucrezio. “Italian Emigration: Basic Characteristic and Trends with Special Reference to the Last Twenty Years.” *The International Migration Review* 1, no. 3 (1967): 10–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3002737>.

Between the end of World War II and 1973, it is estimated that around 3 million people left Italy. The Italian government assisted this movement by establishing bilateral and multilateral agreements with various countries, including France and Switzerland, to facilitate the mobility of its workers. France, for example, was one of the primary destinations for Italian emigrants until 1958. After that, the Federal Republic of Germany became the preferred location, while Switzerland remained a significant host country throughout this period. Italy made several bilateral agreements with these nations, and multilateral agreements were typically negotiated with international organizations to support the movement of workers. Some of the most notable organizations involved during this time included the United Nations, the Organization for European Development and Cooperation, the Council of Europe, and the International Labour Organisation⁵⁸. Because of these agreements, the main destinations of Italian migrants started to be in Europe.

3.3 Categories applied to the Italian Case

The Italian diaspora can be divided into seven distinct periods as discussed in this chapter: From Unification to approximately 1900, From 1900 to the Outset of World War I, During World War I, Between the Two World Wars (Prior to the Fascist Regime), During the Fascist Regime, and the Post-War Period.

From Unification to approximately 1900, this era witnessed the emigration of nearly 7 million Italians and falls under the category of Interest-Driven Engagement and Diaspora

⁵⁸ Birindelli, Anna Maria. "The Post-War Italian Emigration To Europe, In Particular To The Eec Member Countries." *Genus* 32, No. 1/2 (1976): 179–93.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/29788119>.

Support. Since the inception of its national history in 1861, Italy has utilised migration policies as a means to improve its foreign policy and foster relationships with other nations. The state offered financial support to various associations that worked directly with migrants.

From 1900 to the Beginning of World War I, this phase also aligns with the Interest-Driven Engagement and Diaspora Support category. The understanding of migration as a tool for foreign policy continued during this period. Notably, the first immigration laws were introduced, with initial legislation enacted in 1901. The Emigration Law of 1901 established a General Commission for Emigration under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, laying a framework for diaspora relations that lasted for approximately 25 years.

During World War I, migration rates experienced a dramatic decline. This drop because of the war situation, not because of specific legislation. Consequently, this period serves as an anomaly influenced by external circumstances and cannot be classified according to the categories created in chapter 2.

Between the two World Wars (prior to the rise of the Fascist regime), emigration figures saw a significant increase. The perception of migration as a strategic tool remained prevalent throughout the 1920s, reflecting a continuity of support and engagement policies inherited from the previous era. This short pre-Fascist period is characterised by Interest-Driven Engagement and Diaspora Support, preceding the subsequent drastic changes.

During the Fascist regime, migration policies were clearly defined by the Restriction and Control framework. The regime imposed stringent migration regulations, permitting emigration solely for supporters with the intent of exporting fascist ideology abroad. Migration management became centralised and ideologically motivated.

During World War II, much like in the First World War, economic emigration was almost non-existent due to the wartime context. While the decrease in migration flows was primarily attributed to the war, it is important to note that restrictions imposed during the fascist era remained in effect. As a result, the government's political stance towards migration continued to be characterised by Restriction and Control, despite the war being the main factor influencing migration numbers.

In the post-war period, there was a notable shift towards a support-oriented approach, which aligns with Interest-Driven Engagement and Diaspora Support. Emigration rates began to rise once more, as the government actively facilitated migratory flows through bilateral and multilateral agreements with countries such as Switzerland, France, and West Germany to promote labour mobility. Initiatives aimed at assisted migration, including family reunification, received support from the Italian authorities.

In conclusion, the relationship between the Italian state and its emigrants and diaspora has always been through phases of support and interest-driven engagement, except for the period of restriction and control, during the Fascist regime.

3.4 Contemporary Emigration Trends and the Relation between State and Diaspora Communities

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, the Italian diaspora between 1860 and 1960 was a significant phenomenon involving millions of Italian citizens who relocated to various countries. During this period, the Italian state developed increasingly structured policies to address emigration, at times promoting it to support its citizens abroad, and at other times (such as during the fascist regime) using it to export an ideology. Today, more than 150 years since the onset of these migration flows, it is appropriate to reflect on how the

relationship between the Italian state and the host countries has evolved. In this paragraph, I will analyse the contemporary state of these relations, focusing on the normative changes that are redefining the concept of Italian citizenship for the historical diaspora. Today, the contemporary data clearly indicate that migration remains a fundamental topic for Italy. According to statistics from ISTAT (National Statistical Institute) as of December 31, 2022, nearly 6 million Italians (5,940,107 to be exact) reside abroad. The majority of these expatriates live in Europe (54.7%) and the Americas (40.1%). It is noteworthy that among Italians living overseas, only 31.6% were born in Italy; this percentage drops to between 3% and 10% in countries within South America. In 2022, 99,510 Italian citizens chose to emigrate, while 74,490 returned to Italy, resulting in a positive migration balance. The countries from which migrants are returning to Italy vary, and it is often the case that Italian citizens returning home possess a lower level of education compared to those who remain abroad. Interestingly, in countries with a historical migration presence, such as Argentina, the USA, and Brazil, there is a phenomenon where descendants of those who emigrated to South America during the diaspora return to Italy to obtain citizenship through *ius sanguinis* and then return to South America⁵⁹.

It is interesting to observe how the profile of the Italian citizen moving abroad has drastically changed over the past 150 years. In the past, Italians who emigrated were often among the less educated, seeking better opportunities. Today, however, the typical Italian expatriate is usually a highly educated young person. Yet, despite this shift, the underlying motivation for emigration remains the same: the pursuit of a better life, opportunity, job, and salary.

⁵⁹ ISTAT, 31 December 2022, <https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Italiani-residenti-allestero.pdf>

Returning to the topic of descendants of Italian migrants seeking Italian citizenship, a new law, Law 36/2025, enacted on March 28, 2025, has introduced significant changes to the citizenship transmission system. Prior to this law, Italian descendants could apply for citizenship without restrictions on how distant their Italian ancestor was; for example, individuals could claim citizenship even if their great-great-grandfather was Italian.

With the recent changes, the criteria have been revised, especially for those who already hold another citizenship. Under the new law, an individual can only acquire Italian citizenship if they have an Italian parent or adoptive parent born in Italy, or if they have an Italian parent or adoptive parent who has resided in Italy for at least two consecutive years before the birth of the person applying for citizenship. Additionally, individuals may qualify if they have Italian grandparents or great-grandparents.

To summarise, the first two generations can obtain Italian citizenship, while third-generation descendants and those beyond may only qualify if they were born on Italian soil or if one of their parents legally lived in Italy for at least two consecutive years before their birth. A notable exception to this law applies to individuals who would otherwise become stateless if they were denied Italian citizenship; in such cases, the previous criteria do not apply⁶⁰.

The issue arising from this law is that many descendants of Italians who emigrated during the diaspora do not meet the requirements, and so they can not apply for citizenship. In countries like Brazil, Argentina, and the United States, the number of Italian descendants

⁶⁰ Law 36/25, March 28, 2025,
<https://www.normattiva.it/atto/caricaDettaglioAtto?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2025-03-28&atto.codiceRedazionale=25G00049&atto.articolo.numero=0&atto.articolo.sottoArticolo=1&atto.articolo.sottoArticolo1=0&qId=dc08c4b8-13af-4950-9bf0-7c0ef81a5313&tabID=0.12412697912505977&title=lbl.dettaglioAtto>

is approximately 70 million. In Argentina alone, this number is huge, with estimates suggesting that at least 25 million individuals claim Italian ancestry, accounting for more than 50% of the local population⁶¹. Prior to the implementation of law 36/25, all of these individuals could have technically sought Italian citizenship.

According to Argentinian journalist Adriana Santagati, writing for the newspaper Clarín, many Argentinians view the new law as unfavourable. Numerous Argentinians currently residing in Italy, who are either seeking citizenship or have already obtained it, are organising protests against this legislation. This reaction stems largely from the fact that many Argentinians do not meet the requirements and were planning to acquire citizenship solely through the principle of *ius sanguinis*. The article also notes that while the exact number of Argentinians eligible for citizenship before this law is unclear, estimates suggest it could be in the thousands. In fact, in 2024 alone, 30,000 Italian citizenships were recognised for Argentinians⁶².

Currently, the only option for individuals of Italian descent who do not meet the requirements for citizenship is to reside in Italy for at least two years. During this time, they must obtain a residence permit, work legally, and pay taxes in Italy for the full two years. Only after completing this period can they begin the process of applying for citizenship. However, this approach can be very expensive, especially considering how low the wages in Italy are for people coming here without high qualifications.

⁶¹ “Harnessing the power of the global Italian diaspora how to strategically manage a valuable asset for the country-system.” *The European House, Ambrosetti*. (2023) https://www.ambrosetti.eu/site/get-media/?type=doc&id=18635&doc_player=1

⁶² Santagati Adriana. “Ciudadanía italiana: cómo van a poder tramitarla ahora los bisnietos argentinos.” *Clarín*, 25 May 2025. https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/ciudadania-italiana-van-poder-tramitarla-ahora-bisnietos-argentinos_0_286WZ6SFbF.html

The Italian government's decision to implement stricter rules regarding citizenship eligibility stems from a significant increase in requests for Italian citizenship, particularly from Latin American countries such as Argentina and Brazil. This surge has overwhelmed Italian courts and civil registries, which have been inundated with claims from individuals trying to prove their Italian ancestry, even by going back to the mid-1800s. Many of these applicants lack linguistic or cultural ties to Italy; they have never lived or worked in the country and have not paid taxes there.

The issue arises from Italy's recognition of citizenship based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*. Prior to Law 36/25, anyone able to demonstrate descent from even one Italian ancestor from as far back as the 1800s was eligible for citizenship. It is estimated that there are between 60 to 80 million people worldwide who could potentially claim this citizenship based on these criteria. The steady increase in demand for Italian citizenship since the 2000s is not primarily driven by a desire to reside in Italy, but rather by the benefits it provides, including an Italian passport, which grants free movement within the European Union and easier access to the United States⁶³.

In conclusion, the new law 36/25, enacted on March 28, 2025, introduced significant changes to the citizenship transmission system. These changes have had a profound impact on many descendants of Italians who emigrated during the diaspora, making it considerably more difficult and costly for them to obtain citizenship, and in some cases, rendering it nearly impossible.

63 Dall'Asén Massimiliano Jattoni. "Cittadinanza, la stretta: i discendenti dei nostri emigranti l'avranno solo se un genitore o il nonno sono nati in Italia." Corriere Della Sera, 16 May 2025.

https://www.corriere.it/economia/finanza/25_maggio_16/cittadinanza-la-stretta-i-discendenti-degli-emigranti-l-avranno-solo-se-un-genitore-o-un-nonno-sono-nati-in-italia-ff7aaae6-72ba-4ff0-a140-777351310xlk.shtml?refresh_ce

Conclusion

This work has examined the intricate dynamics of migration and its relationship with the foreign policies of both home and host countries, with a particular focus on the Italian context. Through the analysis of historical waves of migration and specific case studies (notably Israel, Romania, and Haiti), it becomes evident that migration encompasses more than merely the movement of people; it also plays a significant role in shaping policies and political landscapes.

It is undeniable that diasporas exert significant influence over the foreign policies of their countries of origin. The cases examined demonstrate that this influence manifests in various ways. For instance, Israel considers the well-being of its diaspora members a fundamental aspect of its foreign policy. The country shares a strong identity bond with its citizens living abroad, as well as with Jews residing outside of Israel more broadly. Since joining the EU, Romania has implemented programs to engage its diaspora, recognising their economic and social contributions while fostering potential connections for return. In contrast, Haiti has tended to disregard its emigrant population, only addressing the issue in isolated cases, typically when external pressure necessitates intervention. These differing national responses to emigration can be put into some categories: restriction and control, disengagement or abstention, change in attitude, and interest-driven engagement and diaspora support. This highlights the diverse strategies adopted by countries in various social and political contexts.

The management of migration through diplomatic channels is a crucial element in relations between states. Bilateral agreements, such as the one between New Zealand and Australia for free movement, as well as broader agreements like Schengen and Dublin, exemplify how diplomacy can effectively address migratory flows and the associated

challenges. However, these policies tend to have limited influence on migrants, who are often driven by social, economic, or even environmental factors, as seen in the case of Haiti. So, policies primarily shape the characteristics of migration and the pathways for integration that migrants must navigate in their new countries.

There is a disparity between policy intentions and actual results, often attributed to misalignments between public sentiment and political elites, the delegation of authority to various agents (including international organisations and bureaucracies), and the interplay between national policies and international norms. Furthermore, international cooperation has become increasingly vital, with entities like the UNHCR playing a significant role.

This work focuses on the Italian case, showcasing a migration history of immense scale, with an estimated 26 million Italians having emigrated between 1860 and 1960. The Italian government's attitude toward its emigrants has undergone various phases. Even today, Italy remains a country from which people continue to migrate. Recent data reveals that nearly 6 million Italian citizens currently reside abroad as of December 2022. Notably, only a minority of these Italians abroad (approximately 31.6%) were born in Italy, highlighting the extensive history of emigration and the significant number of descendants born in their destination countries.

The relationship between the Italian state and its diaspora descendants is currently undergoing significant changes, particularly due to the introduction of the new citizenship law (Law 36/25), which took effect on March 28, 2025. Historically, Italy has permitted the acquisition of citizenship through *ius sanguinis* without generational limits. However, the new law imposes restrictions on third-generation descendants and beyond, making it more challenging for individuals who already hold another citizenship to obtain Italian

citizenship, unless certain conditions related to birth in Italy or parental residence are fulfilled. The new law has sparked discontent and protests among descendants, particularly in countries such as Argentina, where there is a large population of Italian origin. By significantly limiting opportunities for millions of descendants to acquire citizenship, this law marks a turning point in the historical relationship between Italy and its more distant diaspora.

So, studying diasporas and migration is crucial for understanding not only the history of population movements but also the complex interactions between states and the roles that individuals and non-state groups (such as the diasporas themselves) play on the international stage. Migrations have a profound impact on the demographics, economies, internal and external policies of nations, and the relationships between them. Diasporas act as influential entities, leveraging their collective identity to impact the policies of their countries of origin from their host nations.

Given their enduring presence and increasing significance in today's world, further emphasised by ongoing Italian migration and the evolving challenges of citizenship legislation, it is vital to continue studying and exploring these topics. Only through these continued studies is possible to fully understand the true influence of diasporas on national policies and the wider international landscape, allowing us to better address the challenges and opportunities that arise from human mobility.

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