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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **Migration, Memory and Identity: Italians and Nation-Building in Wales, 1940-2010**

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**Migration, Memory and Identity:**  
**Italians and Nation-Building in Wales, 1940-2010**

Marco Giudici

Bangor University, 2012

## Summary

Despite being a numerical minority, Italians have become one of Wales' most noticeable migrant groups, their narratives figuring prominently in Welsh popular culture and collective memory. Yet, like other ethnic minorities in Wales, they have been neglected in academic enquiry, with the history of immigration to Britain being traditionally addressed in an Anglo-centric perspective. This thesis aims to fill this academic gap and provide an original historical contribution to migration studies. In so doing, it primarily aims to disclose two under-investigated areas of investigation; firstly, small-town, rural and geographically dispersed patterns of migration and, secondly, migration to *stateless* nations. This thesis shows that, despite their numerical marginality, geographically dispersed migrants can resist assimilation and maintain distinct cultural identities. They can even culturally influence their receiving society, being incorporated in its process of *nation-building*; Italian migrant narratives have ideally served a reinforcement of Wales' tolerant and inclusive image. Thus, this thesis illustrates that, contrary to popular belief, national(istic) claims are not necessarily in contrast with immigration. It shows that stateless nations aiming to gain increasing autonomy can use their immigration history to construct and disseminate a tolerant and inclusive national image, one that aims to foster both indigenous people and migrants' sense of national belonging.

## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	III
<i>Abbreviations</i>	IV
<i>List of Places</i>	VI
<i>Maps</i>	VIII
<i>Author's Declaration</i>	X
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Patterns of Migration	31
Chapter Two: Responses, Representations and Memorialisation	99
Chapter Three: Italianness, Welshness and Everyday Life	175
Chapter Four: Italian Café-Culture and Cuisine in Wales	249
Conclusion	306
Appendices	322
Bibliography	329

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## Abbreviations

ADN	Archivio Diaristico Nazionale
ACLI	Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani
ALALFS	Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey
ASMFW	Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales
AUBTW	Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers
AVCG	Amici Val Ceno Galles
AWEMA	All Wales Ethnic Minority Association
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BME	Black Minority Ethnic
CRO	Caernarfon Record Office
CO	Cabinet Office
CDEAVT	Centro di Documentazione sulla Emigrazione Dell'Alta Val di Taro
DPIA	Displaced People in Action
ENAIIP	Ente Nazionale Acli Istruzione Professionale
EPB	Enemy POW Branch
EVW	European Volunteer Worker
FG	Foreign Office
GBGRO	Great Britain General Register Office
GC	Glamorgan Constabulary
GRO	Glamorgan Record Office
HCD	House of Commons Debates
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HO	Home Office
HTV	Harlech Television
IMW	Italian Memories in Wales
ITV	Independent Television Authority
IWM	Imperial War Museum
MFP	Ministry of Fuel and Power
MLNS	Ministry of Labour and National Service
MPO	Metropolitan Police Office
MS	Ministry of Supply
MTB	Merthyr Tydfil Borough Police
MWT	Muslim Women Talk
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NCB	National Coal Board
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NLW	National Library of Wales
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NWM	National Waterfront Museum
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
PMGS	Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme
POW	Prisoner of War
SFNHM	St. Fagans National History Museum
SJCCD	St. Joseph Catholic Church Denbigh

SNP	Scottish National Party
S4C	Sianel Pedwar Cymru
TNA	The National Archives
WAC	Welsh Affairs Committee
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WDA	Wrexham Diocese Archive
WGAS	West Glamorgan Archive Service
WLA	Women's Land Army
WO	War Office
WPSMA	Welsh Plate and Sheet Manufacturers' Association
WTB	Wales Tourist Board

## List of Places

Aberaman, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Aberdare, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Abergavenny, Monmouthshire (now Monmouthshire)  
Abertillery, Monmouthshire (now Blaenau Gwent)  
Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion)  
Ammanford, Carmarthenshire (now Carmarthenshire)  
Bala, Merionethshire (now Gwynedd)  
Bangor, Caernarvonshire (now Gwynedd)  
Bargoed, Glamorgan (now Caerphilly)  
Barry Island, Glamorgan (now Vale of Glamorgan)  
Blaenau Ffestiniog, Caernarvonshire (now Gwynedd)  
Bridgend, Glamorgan (now Bridgend)  
Briton Ferry, Glamorgan (now Neath Port Talbot)  
Bryncethin, Glamorgan (now Bridgend)  
Caernarfon, Caernarvonshire (now Gwynedd)  
Caerphilly, Glamorgan (now Caerphilly)  
Cardiff, Glamorgan (now Cardiff)  
Cardigan, Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion)  
Cerryg Y Drudion, Denbighshire (now Conwy)  
Conwy, Caernarvonshire (now Conwy)  
Deganwy, Caernarvonshire (now Conwy)  
Denbigh, Denbighshire (now Denbighshire)  
Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire (now Blaenau Gwent)  
Elan Vale, Radnorshire (now Powys)  
Fishguard, Pembrokeshire (now Pembrokeshire)  
Gorseinon, Glamorgan (now Swansea)  
Hirwaun, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Lampeter, Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion)  
Llanddarog, Carmarthenshire (now Carmarthenshire)  
Llandridnod, Radnorshire (now Powys)  
Llandudno, Caernarvonshire (now Conwy)  
Llandybie, Carmarthenshire (now Carmarthenshire)  
Llandysul, Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion)  
Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (now Carmarthenshire)  
Llangollen, Denbighshire (now Denbighshire)  
Llanharry, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Llanrwst, Caernarvonshire (now Conwy)  
Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan (now Merthyr Tydfil)  
Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire (now Pembrokeshire)  
Morrison, Glamorgan (now Swansea)  
Nantymoel, Glamorgan (now Bridgend)  
Neath, Glamorgan (now Neath Port Talbot)  
Newbridge, Monmouthshire (now Caerphilly)  
Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire (now Carmarthenshire)  
Newport, Monmouthshire (now Newport)  
Newtown, Montgomeryshire (now Powys)

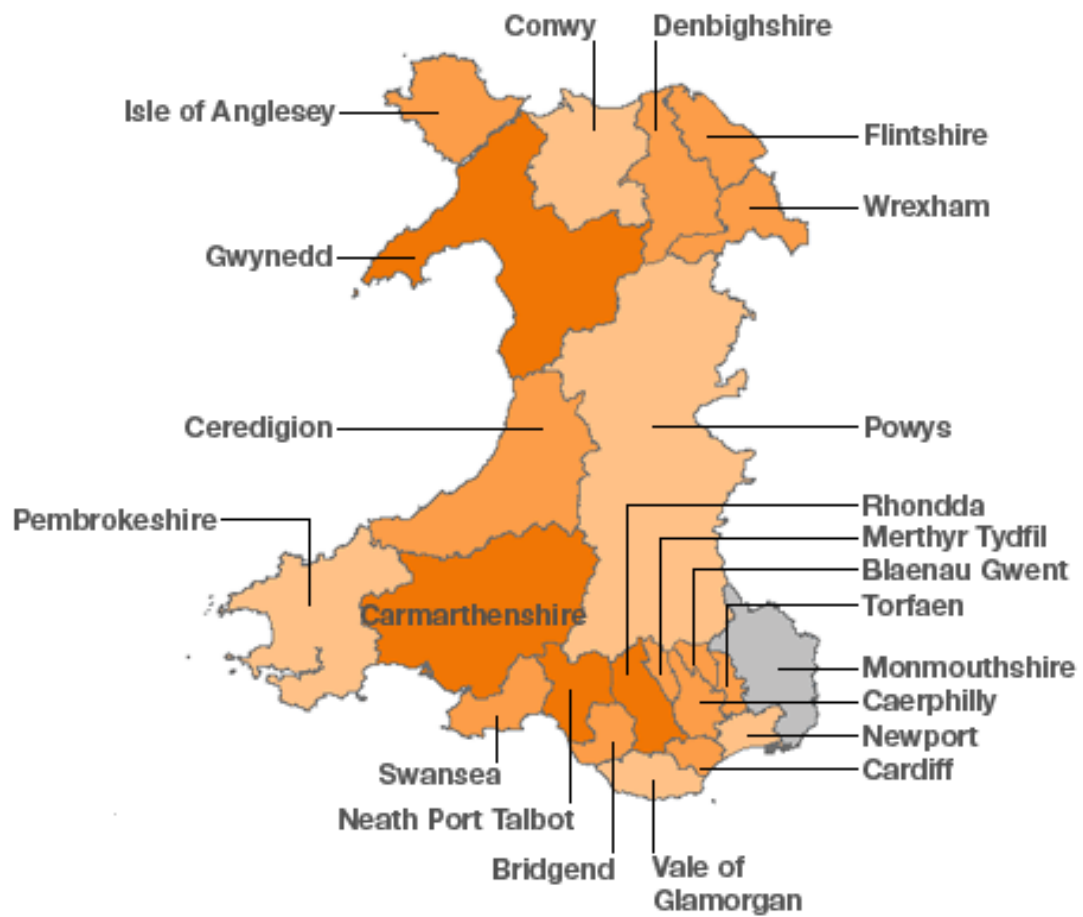


Penarth, Glamorgan (now Vale of Glamorgan)  
Pontardulais, Glamorgan (now Swansea)  
Pontycymer, Glamorgan (now Bridgend)  
Pontypool, Monmouthshire (now Torfaen)  
Pontypridd, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Port Talbot, Glamorgan (now Neath Port Talbot)  
Porth, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Porthcawl, Glamorgan (now Bridgend)  
Porthmadog, Caernarvonshire (now Gwynedd)  
Presteigne, Radnorshire (now Powys)  
Ruthin, Denbighshire (now Denbighshire)  
Rhyl, Denbighshire (now Denbighshire)  
Swansea, Glamorgan (now Swansea)  
Tenby, Pembrokeshire (now Pembrokeshire)  
Ton Pentre, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Tonypany, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Torfaen, Monmouthshire (now Torfaen)  
Tredegar, Monmouthshire (now Blaenau Gwent)  
Treherbet, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Welshpool, Montgomeryshire (now Powys)  
Wrexham, Flintshire (now Wrexham)  
Ynysybwl, Glamorgan (now Rhondda Cynon Taf)  
Ystrad Mynach, Glamorgan (now Caerphilly)

## Wales: Counties Before 1974



## Wales: Counties After 1996



# INTRODUCTION

## I

In 2001, only 3,263 people of Italian birth were to be found in Wales. Compared to other nationalities, Italians appeared to be a relatively ‘marginal’ migrant population, being outnumbered by Irish (12,718), Germans (10,136), Indians (5,448) and Chinese (4,119).<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite being a numerical minority, Italians in Wales appeared more frequently than other foreign nationalities in the media, literature and even museums. Whereas in the rest of Britain,<sup>2</sup> Italians appeared to be just one migrant group among the others,<sup>3</sup> in Wales they came to symbolise one of the dominant migrant groups; old-standing Italian cafés (the so called *Bracchi*) as well as Italian POWs during the Second World War seem to have become a noticeable feature of Welsh collective memory and popular culture in the twentieth century. Even one of the most popular Welsh cartoons (*Fireman Sam*) features an Italian café-keeper (*Bella Lasagne*) among its characters. Why, then, have patterns of Italian migration become such a prominent trait of the Welsh socio-cultural landscape? This is the key question that this thesis aims to answer. In so doing, it aims to provide an original historical contribution to the scholarly debate on *migration*, drawing on two key notions which, as Harzig, Hoerder and Gabaccia have pointed out, have often been overlooked in migration studies. Firstly, migration scholars have generally failed to acknowledge that migration ‘changes communities and societies of origin as much as those in which they decide to establish a

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<sup>1</sup> Even in terms of ‘ethnic group’ Italians in Wales (2,604) were outnumbered by Irish (17,689), Pakistanis (8,268), Indians (8,243), Chinese (6,267), White and Black Caribbean (5,996) and Bangladeshi (5,436). Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Census 2001: England and Wales* (ethnic group detailed categories provided by ONS). The number of people living in Wales (and in each county of Wales) by country of birth (based on the Census 2001 data) can be retrieved from: ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 26/04/2011.

<sup>2</sup> To a certain extent, Italians in Scotland (like those in Wales) also came to occupy a prominent position in popular culture. See, for example, W. Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’: Italian Scottish Experience in World War Two* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> According to the 2001 Census, Italians were outnumbered by other nationalities (in order Irish, Indians, Pakistanis, Germans, Bangladeshi, Jamaicans, South Africans and Kenyans). Source: ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 26/04/2011.

transitory or permanent home’.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, they have been reluctant to acknowledge that ‘receiving societies provide no single model of acculturation’.<sup>5</sup>

This project illustrates that migrations are not mono-directional phenomena, as they affect both *migrants* and *receiving communities*. Migrations have rarely been addressed as social and cultural *encounters* between groups of individuals who, as Barth has argued, ‘make stable and symbiotic adaptations to each other’.<sup>6</sup> Whereas most scholars have regarded migrations in terms of adaptation (or non-adaptation) of a minority (migrants) to a majority (receiving community), few have addressed them in terms of mutual adaptation (involving both migrants and receiving community). As Conzen and other authors have pointed out, addressing the history of immigration to the United States:

(...) negotiations between immigrant groups and the dominant ethno-culture are open-ended and ambivalent. [This] further calls into question the assumption that the host society unilaterally dictates the terms of assimilation and that change is a linear progression from ‘foreignness’ to Americanisation. Rather it envisions a dynamic process of ethnicisation, driven by multiple relationships, among various sidestream ethnicities as well as between them and the mainstream ethnicity, and resulting in *multidirectional change*. Everyone is changed in this dialectical process. (...) what is distinctively American has been itself a product of this synergistic *encounter* of multiple peoples and cultures.<sup>7</sup>

Following such an approach to migration history, this project aims to assess whether, and to what extent, migrations *influence* the social and cultural landscapes of receiving societies.

The project also highlights that, contrary to common belief, migrant-receiving states are not

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<sup>4</sup> C. Harzig, D. Hoerder with D. Gabaccia, *What is Migration History?* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009), p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Harzig et al., *What is Migration History?*, p. 102. According to Harzig, Hoerder and Gabaccia (p. 104) ‘Acculturation’ is a double process: a stepwise approach by the migrant to the new society or specific segments of it while retaining some elements of the culture of socialisation, modifying others, and discarding yet others; and an often reluctant or belated adaptation of the receiving society to the newcomers. (...) The concept of ‘acculturation’ (...) involves a continuous negotiating between views and practises acquired during the socialisation in the culture of origin and the exigencies of the receiving community in specific segments such as workplace, schools or neighbourhoods’. In this thesis, an ellipsis in brackets (...) inserted into a quotation indicates that the quotation is not complete (because parts of the original quotation which are not relevant to this thesis have not been included by the author). By contrast, an ellipsis without brackets inserted into a quotation indicates that the ellipsis appears in the original quotation or highlights a pause in an interview.

<sup>6</sup> F. Barth, ‘Introduction’, in F. Barth (ed), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organisation of Cultural Difference* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> K.N. Conzen, D.A. Gerber, E. Morawska, G.E. Pozzetta and R.J. Vecoli, ‘The Invention of Ethnicity: a Perspective from the USA.’, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (1992), 32.

homogeneous entities, but complex systems of nations, regions and communities experiencing migration in different ways. In particular, this case study aims to assess whether and to what extent *stateless* nations (within multinational states) which aim to gain increasing political autonomy (or even independence) incorporate their migrants in their processes of nation-building (through various forms of *representation*) and how migrants respond to such an incorporation.

## II

While it adopts a historical perspective, this thesis aims to engage with a broad and diverse literature across the disciplinary spectrum. In so doing, it primarily aims to contribute to the existing scholarly debate on *migration* known as *migration studies*.<sup>8</sup> Over the last fifty years, this field of investigation appears to have gained momentum, thanks to the appearance of some essential academic contributions. In the 1960s, authors including the Macdonalds and Price theorised the notion of *chain migration*,<sup>9</sup> defining it as ‘that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants’.<sup>10</sup> Such findings demonstrated that social relationships represent one of the most important migratory triggers, challenging the common belief according to which

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<sup>8</sup> For a critical definition of migration, migration studies and migration history see, for example, Harzig et al., *What is Migration History?*, pp. 3-7. According to Harzig, Hoerder and Gabaccia: ‘(...) migrations are complex, often global phenomena; migrants depart from specific places and select their destinations from among many cultures. The traditional *emigration-immigration dichotomy* does not reflect such complexity. Rather, it suggests a mono-directional one-way move from a “home” in one state to a foreign “new world” (...) it describes migrants moving either from a nation to an ethnic enclave or from a limited world to unlimited new opportunities. The term migration, by contrast, implies multiple options: mobility may be many-directional and multiple, temporary or long term, voluntary or forced. (...) Migration history looks at both ends of mobility: What does it mean for families, urban neighbourhoods and villages, or whole societies to lose members? What does it mean for societies of destination to receive “human capital”? (...) While migration studies provides background for strategic policy-making, migration history emphasizes the continuities and changes of patterns of migration over centuries and millennia’.

<sup>9</sup> J.S. Macdonald and L.D. Macdonald, ‘Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighbourhood and Social Networks’, *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 42 (1964), 82-96; C.A. Price, ‘The Study of Assimilation’, in J.A. Jackson (ed), *Migration* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 181-237.

<sup>10</sup> Macdonald and Macdonald, ‘Chain Migration’, 82.

migration is an automatic response to socio-economic crisis. The notion of chain migration has been taken further by historians such as Briggs, Baily and Moya,<sup>11</sup> who have demonstrated that chains are not rigid patterns of mobility, but constitute flexible social *networks* (with multiple destinations) which rapidly change according to a variety of socio-economic circumstances.

Over the last twenty five years, various historical monographs have contributed to take the theorisation of migration further.<sup>12</sup> As Jan and Leo Lucassen have observed, these studies have tended to highlight the fact that migration represents a social phenomenon which ‘has to be regarded as a normal and structural element of human societies throughout history. Generally, migration is no longer viewed as a sign of crisis’.<sup>13</sup> In so doing, a number of migration historians have emphasised the *longue durée* of the phenomenon of human mobility,<sup>14</sup> demonstrating that the patterns of migration which have characterised the modern world were often an expansion of long-established and structural migratory traditions, with

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<sup>11</sup> J. W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978); S.L. Baily, ‘The Village Outward Approach to the Study of Social Networks: a Case Study of the Agnonesi Diaspora Abroad, 1885-1989’, *Studi Emigrazione* 29 (1992), 43-67; J.C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Some important general studies on migration history include: K.J. Bade, *Migration in European History* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2003); D.E. Baines, *Emigration from Europe, 1815-1930* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1991); S. Castles and M. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993); R. Cohen, *Global Diasporas: an Introduction* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997); P. Corti, *Storia delle Migrazioni Internazionali* (Roma & Bari, Laterza, 2003); D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migration in the Second Millennium* (Durham & London, Duke University Press, 2002); J. Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe, 1600-1900* (London, Croon Helm, 1987); L.P. Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe Since 1650*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2003). For a general overview of migration historiography and theories see: J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen, (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (Bern, Lang, 1997); C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz and J. DeWind (eds), *The Handbook of International Migration: the American Experience* (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1999); A. Portes and J. DeWind (eds), *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2007); Harzig et al., *What is Migration History?*; M. Colucci and M. Sanfilippo, *Le Migrazioni: un'Introduzione Storica* (Roma, Carocci, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen, ‘Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives’, in Lucassen and Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History*, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Some important contributions include: J. Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe*; P.P. Viazzo, *Upland Communities: Environment, Population and Social Structure in the Alps Since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989); L. Fontaine, ‘Solidarités Familiales et Logiques Migratoires en Pays de Montagne à l'Epoque Moderne’, *Annales ESC* 45 (1990), 1433-1450; P.A. Rosental, ‘Migration de Maintien et Migration de Rupture’, *Annales ESC* 45 (1990), 1403-1431; L. Lorenzetti and R. Merzario, *Il Fuoco Acceso: Famiglie e Migrazioni Alpine nell'Italia d'Età Moderna* (Roma, Donzelli, 2005).

origins in the early modern or even late medieval period. What is most important about these studies is that they have, once and for all, demonstrated that migrations are not exceptional occurrences in response to exceptional crisis but ‘part of the general human pattern, essential for the functioning of families and crucial to the operation of the labour market’.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, some issues seem to have been overlooked by migration scholars. Firstly, post-1939 rural and small-town patterns of mobility have been overlooked, with the urban model of migration prevailing in academic enquiry. As a result, geographically dispersed and numerically small migrant settlements have been under-investigated, because scholarly attention has traditionally been paid to geographically concentrated and numerically large migrant settlements. As Briggs has observed:

The ghetto as an explanatory force has been central to much historical and contemporary analysis of urban life. (...) This ecological theory posits immigrants and their descendants huddled together in homogeneous, distinct, and separate residential areas of a city as the core of an argument linking persistently unwelcome social, economic, and psychological characteristics to entrapment in these narrow, close urban environments. (...).<sup>16</sup>

A better historical understanding of ‘peripheral’ migrant patterns is essential in order to fully appreciate contemporary phenomena of mobility (e.g. asylum seekers, EU migrant workers, etc.) which are increasingly resulting in geographically dispersed, small-town and rural settlement. While over the last decade scholars have increasingly paid attention to such changing patterns of migration,<sup>17</sup> pre-existing rural and small-town migrant settlements have largely been neglected, especially in Britain. In order to fully understand contemporary

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<sup>15</sup> Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History*, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Briggs, *An Italian passage*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, N. Chakraborti and J. Garland (eds), *Rural Racism* (Portland, Willan Publishing, 2004); A. Thompson, P. Chambers and L. Doleczek, ‘Welcome to Llaneski: Polish Migration in South West Wales’ *Contemporary Wales* 23 (2010), 1-16; P. De Lima, *Needs Not Numbers: an Exploration of Minority Ethnic Communities in Scotland* (London, Commission for Racial Equality and Community Development Foundation, 2001); S. Kyambi, *Beyond Black and White: Mapping New Immigrant Communities* (London, Institute for Public Policy Research [IPPR], 2005); L. Chappell, M. Latorre, J. Rutter and J. Shah, *Migration and Rural Economies: Assessing and Addressing Risks* (London, IPPR, 2009); C. Hedberg and R.M. Do Carmo (eds), *Translocal Ruralism: Mobility and Connectivity in European Rural Spaces* (Heidelberg, Springer, 2012).



phenomena of mobility in ‘peripheral’ areas, it is crucial to assess if and how long-established migrants living in predominantly ‘monocultural’ rural and small-town contexts have overcome their ‘social isolation’.<sup>18</sup> It is especially white migrants living in ‘peripheral’ contexts who seem to have been overlooked in academic enquiry. As De Lima has observed, there is:

A need to challenge the view that addressing issues of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘racism’ is only relevant when referring to visible minority ethnic groups. Rather, there is a need to explore ways of deconstructing ‘whiteness’ and to understand the racialised identities of ‘white people’ within rural contexts.<sup>19</sup>

Another academic downside is that migrations continue to be predominantly addressed in terms of mobility between homogeneous *nation-states*. For example, migrants are usually seen as moving to Britain or the UK (which generally speaking means England and namely its metropolitan areas) while Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland remain under-investigated. With few exceptions, migration scholars have failed to acknowledge the fact that, in most cases, migrants end up in territories which are already divided along ethnic and national lines. In particular, they have failed to answer the following questions: what does it mean/entail for a given stateless nation (which aims to gain increasing political autonomy from a given state) to receive immigration? Do stateless nations see immigration as being a *threat* to their national claims or do they see it as being an *opportunity* which can foster their national claims? What does it mean/entail for a migrant to move to a stateless nation? Is it different than migrating to another stateless nation within the same state? It is germane to raise such questions at a time when the devolution process has given Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland increasing opportunities to take autonomous policy initiatives in terms of

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<sup>18</sup> It is generally alleged that, being surrounded by ‘indigenous’ people, geographically dispersed migrants (unlike those living in ethnic neighbourhoods) are either doomed to assimilation or isolation (and racial harassment). As De Lima has pointed out: ‘maintaining self-esteem and a sense of identity in the absence of others from a similar background can be felt acutely by minority ethnic groups living in rural areas and (...) the issue is brought into sharp focus in relation to young people growing up in a (...) monocultural rural environment’. See P. De Lima, ‘John O’Groats to Land’s End: Racial Equality in Rural Britain’, in Chakraborti and Garland (eds), *Rural Racism*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> De Lima, ‘John O’Groats to Land’s End’, p. 54.

racial equality and social inclusion which can affect the lives of both migrants and receiving communities. In order to fully appreciate such political developments, it is crucial to understand how migrants and receiving communities have historically experienced migration in such countries.

Another limitation of migration studies is that they have overplayed the role of migration chains and social networks as an explanatory force. Even though the importance of such networks in the study of migrations remains beyond dispute, there exist other explanatory forces which appear to have been under-investigated. With few exceptions,<sup>20</sup> forced (e.g. war displacement) and assisted (e.g. government-sponsored recruiting schemes) patterns of mobility have been overlooked by migration historians. As Leo and Jan Lucassen have observed, migration scholars have for long tended to exclude unfree or involuntary forms of mobility from the very definition of migration.<sup>21</sup> The study of such patterns of mobility is essential in order to fully understand contemporary migratory trends, which are increasingly the result of forced (e.g. asylum seekers) and agency-led (e.g. Polish migrant workers) migrations.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Only a handful of authors have addressed the resettlement of Italian and German ex-POWs at the end of World War Two. See, for example, S. Rinauro, 'La Disoccupazione di Massa e il Contrastato Rimpatrio dei Prigionieri di Guerra', *Storia in Lombardia* 18 (1998), 549-595 and *Il Cammino della Speranza: l'Emigrazione Clandestina degli Italiani nel Secondo Dopoguerra* (Torino, Einaudi, 2009); L. Kettenacker, 'The Germans After 1945', in P. Panayi (ed), *Germans in Britain Since 1500* (London, Hambledon Press, 1996), pp. 187-208; I. Weber-Newth and J.D. Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-War Britain: an Enemy Embrace*, (London, Routledge, 2006). Some important historical contribution to the study of assisted migrations are: J.A. Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958); J. Behar, 'Diplomacy and Essential Workers: Official British Recruitment of Foreign Labour in Italy, 1945-51', *Journal of Policy History* 3 (2003), 324-340; M. Colucci, 'Chiamati, Partiti e Respinti: Minatori Italiani nella Gran Bretagna del Secondo Dopoguerra', *Studi Emigrazione* 150 (2003), 329-349 and *Lavoro in Movimento: l'Emigrazione Italiana in Europa, 1945-57* (Roma, Donzelli Editore, 2008); A. De Clementi, 'Curare il Mal di Testa con le Decapitazioni? L'Emigrazione Italiana nel Secondo Dopoguerra: i Primi Dieci Anni', '900 8-9 (2003), 11-28; A. Spire, 'Un Régime Dérogatoire pour une Immigration Convoitée', *Studi Emigrazione* 146 (2002), 309-323; R. Miles and D. Kay, *Refugees or Migrant Workers? European Volunteer Workers in Britain, 1946-1951* (London, Routledge, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History*, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> On the Welsh context see, for example, V. Robinson and H. Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype: the Lived Experience of Black and Minority Ethnic People in Rural Wales', in Chakraborti and Garland (eds), *Rural Racism*, pp. 85-107; Thompson et al., 'Welcome to Llaneski', 1-16; H. Crawley and T. Crimes, *Refugees Living*

Not only does this thesis aim to fill such academic gaps in migration studies, but it also aims to contribute to the existing literature on the *representation* and *memorialisation* of migration and ethnic diversity in different cultural arena (media, film, literature and museums). There is now a relatively rich scholarly debate on how migration and ethnicity are *represented* on TV, press and films.<sup>23</sup> Yet, such a debate appears to have predominantly focused on issues such as *racism* (rather than migration)<sup>24</sup> and has mainly addressed allegedly *visible* (e.g. black American) ethnic groups from a predominantly contemporary perspective. By contrast, the *memorialisation* and *commemoration* of migration history appears to have been overlooked. This field of investigation has only recently started to gain momentum. In particular, the study of museum-exhibitions and memorials as sites of migrant narratives and memories has recently triggered a lively and thought-provoking debate, as the recent Clermont-Ferrand-based conference *The History of Migration in Museums: Between History and Politics* has demonstrated.<sup>25</sup>

From different disciplinary angles, various authors have illustrated how museums tend to reconstruct their countries' immigrant histories in a way that suits and reinforces current political and social needs. This is particularly true for those countries which aim to present

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*in Wales: a Survey of Skills, Experiences and Barriers to Inclusion* (Swansea, Centre for Migration Policy Research, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> On the representation of migration, race and racism in the press, TV and film see, for example, M. Rosello, *Declining the Stereotype: Ethnicity and Representation in French Cultures* (Lebanon, University Press of New England, 1998); T.A. Van Dijk, *Racism and Discourse in Latin America* (Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2009); P. Gordon and D. Rosenberg, *Daily Racism: the Press and Black People in Britain* (London, the Runnymede Trust, 1989); M. Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (London, Routledge, 1995); J. Downing and C. Husband, *Representing 'Race': Racisms, Ethnicities and Media* (London, Sage, 2005); E. Shohat and R. Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York, Routledge, 1994); J. Tulloch, 'Television and Black Britons', in A. Goodwin and G. Whannel (eds), *Understanding Television* (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 141-152; G. Blumler and M. Gurevitch, 'How the Media Report Race', in M. Gurevitch (ed), *Culture, Society and the Media*, (London, Routledge, 1988), pp. 268-286; J. Davies, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in Contemporary American Film* (Edinburgh, Keele University Press, 1997); H.M. Benshoff and S. Griffin, *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Two notable exceptions to the rule are: R. King and N. Wood (eds), *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (London, Routledge, 2001); J. Ter Wal, 'The Social Representation of Immigrants: the Pantanella Issue in the Pages of *La Repubblica*', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 22 (1996), 39-66.

<sup>25</sup> *The History of Migration in Museums: Between Memory and Politics*, Université Blaise Pascal, Clermont-Ferrand (France), 17-19 November 2011.

themselves as *tolerant* and *multicultural* societies. For example, Ostow has illustrated how Canada's national immigration museum ('Pier 21') has tended to recollect the national immigrant past in a way that reinforce the country's claim to be a successful multicultural society (through apparent historical omissions).<sup>26</sup> Focusing on migration museums in France and Germany, Heintze has stressed that there is an 'interplay between political discourse and museums' which aims to 'positively change public perceptions on immigration (...) and enhance social cohesion'.<sup>27</sup> Message has similarly argued that the National Museum of Australia has represented immigration and ethnic diversity in a way which reflects the 'story of Australian multicultural policy'.<sup>28</sup> Hutchinson and Witcomb have also pointed out that Australian migration-exhibitions have tended to depict immigration in a positive way celebrating the *contribution* of various migrant groups to Australian society.<sup>29</sup> In their studies of the Scandinavian context, Goodnow and Johansson have also observed that museums tend to adopt *enhancement narratives* which emphasise the migrants contribution to society in a way that reinforces the allegedly tolerant image of the receiving country.<sup>30</sup> Of New Zealand, Sommer has also observed that the country's immigration history is positively displayed in

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<sup>26</sup> R. Ostow, 'Remembering and Forgetting at Pier 21', paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*.

<sup>27</sup> A.M. Heintze, 'The Musealisation of Immigration History in the Nexus of Academic Findings and Political Interests in France and Germany', paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*.

<sup>28</sup> K. Message, 'Culture, Citizenship and Australian Multiculturalism: the Contest Over Identity Formation at the National Museum of Australia', paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*. See also: K. Message, *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Oxford, Berg, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> M. Hutchinson and A. Witcomb, 'Desperately Seeking History: the Tension Between History and Culture in Australian Migration Exhibitions, 1986-2011', paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*. See also A. Witcomb, *Re-imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London, Routledge, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> K. Goodnow, 'Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances'. In K. Goodnow and H. Akman (eds), *Scandinavian Museums and Cultural Diversity* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 230-245; C. Johansson, 'Portraying Post-War Migration in Museums and Exhibitions: Some Swedish Case Studies', in C. Johansson and C. Hintermann (eds), *Migration and Memory: Representations of Migration in Europe since 1960* (Innsbruck, Studienverlag, 2010), pp. 182-202.

museums where migrants are seeing as contributing to society and wishing to integrate and settle down.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, it is this recent lively debate that this thesis particularly aims to contribute. However, it will not exclusively focus on museum-representations, as it also aims to contribute to the debate drawing on the media, film and literature. In particular, it aims to address an area of enquiry which has been overlooked by the current museum scholarship; the representation and memorialisation of immigration in *stateless* nations. The current debate has predominantly focused on *nation-states* overlooking the role that the representation of the immigrant past (in media, film, museums, etc.) can play in the process of nation-building of newly-born nations (in political/institutional terms) which aim to gain increasing political autonomy. As Guibernau has observed, among the main strategies generally employed by a nation in its ‘pursuit of a single national identity capable of uniting its citizens are’:

The construction and dissemination of a certain image of the ‘nation’ (...) comprising a common history, a shared culture and a demarcated territory, (...) the progressive consolidation of national education and media systems as key instruments in the dissemination of a particular ‘image of the nation’, with its symbols and rituals, values, principles, traditions and ways of life, and common enemies, and, even more crucially, a clear-cut definition of ‘good citizen’.<sup>32</sup>

This thesis aims to illustrate that stateless nations can adopt the representation and memorialisation of their immigrant past as a ‘strategy’ to construct and disseminate a particular *image of the nation*. Whereas some authors have addressed the role that inclusive policies (in terms of diversity and immigration) have played in the Welsh and Scottish

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<sup>31</sup> C. Sommer, ‘From “White” Settler Stories to a Multicultural Paradigm: the Influence of Changing Policies on the Representation of Immigration in Regional and National Museums in New Zealand’, paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*.

<sup>32</sup> M. Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007), p. 25.

devolution processes,<sup>33</sup> they have failed to address how such an inclusiveness is mirrored and reinforced by the media, museums and other ‘cultural industries’ through the construction of a tolerant and multicultural image of the nation.

This thesis also aims to engage with the existing scholarly debate on *national identity*<sup>34</sup> and *ethnicity*<sup>35</sup> as applied to migrants and people of migrant descent.<sup>36</sup> The study of migrant

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<sup>33</sup> See for example, J. Penrose and D. Howard, ‘One Scotland, Many Cultures: the Mutual Constitution of Anti-Racism and Place’, in C. Dwyer and C. Bressey (eds), *New Geographies of Race and Racism* (London, Ashgate, 2008), pp. 95-111; P. Hopkins, ‘Politics, Race and Nation: the Difference that Scotland Makes’, in Dwyer and Bressey (eds), *New Geographies of Race*, pp. 113-124; P. De Lima, ‘An Inclusive Scotland? The Scottish Executive and Racial Inequality’, in G. Mooney and G. Scott (eds), *Exploring Social Policy in the ‘New’ Scotland* (Bristol, Policy Press, 2005), pp. 135-156; C. Williams and P. De Lima, ‘Devolution, Multicultural Citizenship and Race Equality: From Laissez-Faire to Nationally Responsible Policies’, *Critical Social Policy* 26 (2006), 498-522; P. Chaney and R. Fevre, ‘Ron Davies and the Cult of “Inclusiveness”: Devolution and Participation in Wales’, *Contemporary Wales* 14 (2001), 21-49; G. Day, *Making Sense of Wales: a Sociological Perspective* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2010); C. Williams, ‘Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity and Ethnic Minorities’, in C. Williams, N. Evans and P. O’Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation? Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 220-234; C. Williams and P. Chaney, ‘Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups: Ethnic Minorities’, in P. Chaney, T. Hall and A. Pithouse (eds), *New Governance – New Democracy? Post-Devolution Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 78-101; S. Brooks, ‘The Rhetoric of Civic “Inclusivity” and the Welsh Language’, *Contemporary Wales* 22 (2009), 1-15. P. Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights: the First Decade of Devolution in Wales* (Manchester, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Smith and Gellner have both attempted to provide a general definition of national identity. According to Smith, the fundamental features of national identity are: ‘an historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common mass-public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members, a common economy with territorial mobility for members’. See: A.D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, Penguin Books, 1991), p. 14; According to Gellner: ‘two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognise* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations *maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities’. See: E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1983), pp. 6-7. See also: D. Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995). For a critical analysis of Italian national identity see, for example, E. Galli della Loggia, *L’Identità Italiana* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1998); A. Schiavone, *Italiani Senza Italia* (Torino, Einaudi, 1998); G. Calcagno (ed), *L’Identità degli Italiani* (Bari & Roma, Laterza, 1998); F. Tarrow and G. Vecchio (eds), *Gli Italiani e il Tricolore* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Ronald Cohen defines ethnicity as ‘the process of assigning persons to groups (...) carried out by self and others’. See: R. Cohen, ‘Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology’, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978), 387. Eriksen defines ethnicity as ‘an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction. It can also be defined as a social identity (...) characterised by metaphoric or fictive kinship’. See: T.H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London, Pluto Press, 1993), p. 12. Sollors defines ethnicity as ‘belonging and being perceived by others as belonging to an ethnic group’. See: W. Sollors, ‘Introduction: the Invention of Ethnicity’, in W. Sollors (ed), *The Invention of Ethnicity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989) p. xiii. See also: Barth, ‘Introduction’, pp. 9-38.

<sup>36</sup> Brubaker distinguished between ‘immigrant ethnicity’ and ‘territorial nationality’. ‘On the first model’, Brubaker argues, ‘(...) ethnic groups arise through migration and are generally territorially dispersed (...) on the second model (...) ethnic groups are indigenous (or at least make claims to be so)’. See: R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 148. Guibernau has also observed; ‘it is vital to establish a clear-cut distinction between an ethnic group and a nation (...) Scotland, Wales and England are nations within Britain, while the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi communities form distinct ethnic minorities within Britain’. See: Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, p. 60. Whereas, in academic terms, ethnicity is

ethnicity has gained momentum over the last fifty years. In the USA, various scholars have challenged previous theories of *assimilation*,<sup>37</sup> which ‘predicted the inevitable crumbling of “traditional” communities and cultures before the forces of modernisation’.<sup>38</sup> Glazer and Moynihan have argued that ethnic groups, even in their third generation, continue to resist assimilation functioning as interest groups.<sup>39</sup> Following the so called ‘ethnic revival’ of the

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normally preferred to national identity when it comes to the study of diasporic identification, this thesis largely adopts the term ‘national identity’ when dealing with the Italian migrants’ process of self-identification. One reason for this is that, as the thesis illustrates, it is *nationhood* rather than ethnicity that is the framework in which Italians generally perceive themselves. A reason for this could be that most Italians show some sort of affiliation to a (real or imaginary) *homeland* which corresponds to a precise *nation-state* (Italy). Therefore, even if they do not live in or, in some cases, have never even been to Italy, Italian migrants and their children and grandchildren tend to see themselves as (more or less) belonging to a *national group* rather than an *ethnic group*. This circumstance is also made possible by Italy’s interpretation of nationality as *ius sanguinis* and by Britain’s legislation which admits dual nationality; as a result, many Welsh-Italians of different generations are legally entitled to Italian citizenship, with a significant number of them actually holding Italian passports (including the right to vote in Italy). This adds to the frequent links that many Welsh-Italians have maintained with their homeland including visits home, summer properties in Italy and, in some case, even retirement migration. This means that, despite not living there (at least permanently), many Welsh-Italians can potentially claim a legal right to do so. This form of national identity corresponds to what Smith would term ‘non western model’ or ‘ethnic conception of the nation’, according to which ‘whether you stayed in your community or emigrated to another, you remained ineluctably, organically, a member of the community of your birth and were forever stamped by it’. This sort of nationality, Smith argues, is ‘first and foremost a community of common descent’. See: Smith, *National Identity*, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> Harzig, Hoerder and Gabaccia define assimilation as ‘a surrender of traits of traits of the culture of origin to become part of the new majority society’. See: Harzig et al., *What is Migration History?*, p. 58. Some of the major American assimilation-theorists include Park and Handlin. Park described migrants as ‘marginal men’ ‘striving to live in two different cultural groups’ (p. 881) as ‘old habits are being discarded and new ones are not yet formed’ (p. 893). In similar terms Handlin argued that ‘the immigrants lived in crisis because they were uprooted. In transplantation, while the old roots were sundered, before the new were established, the immigrants existed in an extreme situation’ (p. 6). Park and Handlin both argued that the outcome of such initial crisis would inevitably be assimilation. As Park pointed out: ‘peoples and races who live together, sharing the same economy, inevitably interbreed, and in this way if in no other, the relations which were merely co-operative and economic become social and cultural (...) assimilation is inevitable (p. 891)’. See: R.E. Park, ‘Human Migration and the Marginal Man’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (1928), 881-893; O. Handlin, *The Uprooted: the Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1951). A different argument was provided by Hansen who argued that ‘what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember’ (p. 206). See: M.L. Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant* (Rock Island, Augustana Historical Society, 1938). Yet, subsequent studies have clearly illustrated that such theory is a generalisation and does not apply to every migrant experience. For example, Gans illustrated that second generation Italian-Americans did want to ‘remember’ their parents’ cultural heritage (although in ‘symbolic’ forms). See: H.J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

<sup>38</sup> Conzen et al., ‘The Invention of Ethnicity’, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> As Glazer and Moynihan have pointed out: ‘ethnic groups then, even after distinctive language, customs, and culture are lost, as they largely were in the second generation, and even more fully in the third generation, are continually recreated by new experiences in America. (...) A man is connected to his group by ties of family and friendship. But he is also connected by ties of *interest*. The ethnic groups in New York are also *interest groups*. See: N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1963), p. 17.

late 1960s,<sup>40</sup> Novak went as far as to define Americans of European descent (namely those of southern and eastern European descent) *unmeltable* ethnics posing a ‘direct challenge to the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) conception of America’ being able to ‘structure the rules and goals and procedures of American life’.<sup>41</sup> Whereas, more recently, Gans and Alba have dismissed such an enduring ethnicity as a purely *symbolic* ‘leisure-time activity’,<sup>42</sup> other authors have continued to appreciate the resilience of various forms of ethnicity (family values, religion, etc.) in diasporic settings.<sup>43</sup> The durability of such practices has also been highlighted by Conzen and other authors who have defined ethnicity as:

(...) a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies pre-existing communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories. (...) Ethnic groups in modern settings are constantly recreating themselves, and ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both within the group

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<sup>40</sup> On ‘ethnic revival’ see, for example, J.A. Fishman (ed), *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity* (New York, Mouton publishers, 1985).

<sup>41</sup> M. Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: the New Political Force of the Seventies* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 270. According to Novak, the American ethnic revival of the late 1960s and 1970s challenged the *melting pot* theory according to which people of different ethnic backgrounds would eventually merge into a common national culture becoming undistinguishable. According to Novak: ‘identification with an ethnic group is a source of values, instincts, ideas, and perceptions that throw original light on the meaning of America. (...) millions of Americans, who for a long time tried desperately even if unconsciously to become “Americanised”, are delighted to discover that they no longer have to pay that price; are grateful that they were born among the people destiny placed them in; are pleased to discover the possibilities and the limits inherent in being who they are; and are openly happy about what heretofore they had disguised in silence’ (pp. 290-291).

<sup>42</sup> According to Gans: ‘symbolic ethnicity (...) is characterised by a nostalgic alliance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and a pride in tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour’ (p. 9). See: H.J. Gans, ‘Symbolic Ethnicity: the Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1979), 1-20. According to Alba, Italian-Americans had by the 1980s entered their ‘ethnic twilight’ as a result of intermarriage and upward social mobility. Alba argued that: ‘Italian Americans stand on the verge of the twilight of their ethnicity (...) ethnic differences remain visible but only faintly so, when ethnic form can be perceived only in a vague outline. (...) The twilight metaphor also allows for the occasional flare-ups of ethnic feelings and conflicts that give the illusion that ethnicity is reviving, but are little more than flickers in the fading light (p. 159). (...) Much of the contemporary cultural manifestation of ethnic groups is confined to a symbolic plane that comes to life only occasionally and has little meaning for everyday existence. (...) This is ethnicity as a leisure-time activity, rather than as a life-organising force (p. 160). (...) Symbolic ethnicity is vastly different from the ethnicity of the past, which was a taken-for-granted part of everyday life, communal and at the same time imposed on the individual by the very fact of being born into the group. The ethnicity that survives in the melting pot is private and voluntary. (...) the ethnicity of white Americans has moved from the status of an irrevocable fact of birth to an ingredient of lifestyle (p. 173)’. See: R.D Alba, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity* (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1985).

<sup>43</sup> Some important contributions to the study of ethnicity addressed Italian-Americans. See, for example, V. Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977); H.S. Nelli, *From Immigrants to Ethnics: the Italian Americans* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1983); R.A. Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115<sup>th</sup> Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985).



and the host society. Ethnic group boundaries, for example, must be repeatedly renegotiated, while expressive symbols of ethnicity (ethnic traditions) must be repeatedly reinterpreted.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, like Sollors,<sup>45</sup> Conzen et al. do not see ethnicity as being primordial and unchanging, but in contrast to the former (who interpreted ethnicity as a 'collective fiction'), the latter define ethnicity as a 'cultural construction accomplished over historical time'.<sup>46</sup>

Although their work has not directly or solely been concerned with migrants, Jenkins and Brubaker have more recently contributed to take such a definition of ethnicity further. Jenkins has pointed out that although 'an individual's sense of ethnic membership may (...) be internalised during early primary socialisation, along with many of the markers of ethnicity such as language, religion, non-verbal behaviour, etc. (...) ethnicity is never a primordially given attribute. As Jenkins has observed: 'although ethnicity *may* be a primary social identity, its salience, strength and manipulability are situationally contingent (...) No matter how apparently strong or inflexible it may be, ethnicity is *always* socially constructed, in the first instance and in any other'.<sup>47</sup> Simply put, ethnicity 'must mean something to individuals before it can be said to "exist" in the social world. The collective cannot be "real" without the individual'.<sup>48</sup> As Brubaker has also observed, ethnicity is not a 'thing *in* the world', it is a way of 'perceiving, interpreting, and representing the social world'.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, Brubaker has taken the discussion further introducing the notion of 'ethnicity without groups'. The study of ethnicity, Brubaker argues, has been characterised by a 'tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life (...) as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with

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<sup>44</sup> Conzen et al., 'The invention of Ethnicity', 4-5.

<sup>45</sup> Sollors, 'Introduction', pp. xi-xx.

<sup>46</sup> Conzen et al., 'The invention of Ethnicity', 4.

<sup>47</sup> R. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London, Sage, 1997), p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, p. 166.

<sup>49</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 17.

common purposes’.<sup>50</sup> In fact, as Brubaker observes, ‘bounded and solidary groups are one modality of ethnicity (...) but they are only one modality. (...) Ethnicity does not require such groupness’,<sup>51</sup> because it is ‘embodied and expressed not only in political projects and nationalist rhetoric but in everyday encounters, practical categories, commonsense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, interactional cues, discursive frames, organisational routines, social networks, and institutional forms’.<sup>52</sup> Such a definition of ethnicity recalls the notions of ‘banal nationalism’ and ‘national identity in everyday life’ which have been developed by Billig and Edensor respectively.<sup>53</sup> As Edensor has argued: ‘national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge’.<sup>54</sup>

Drawing on Billig’s and Edensor’s definitions of national identity, this thesis aims to illustrate that it is especially in the everyday and banal aspects of life that various forms of Italianness in Wales are expressed. It aims to show that ethnicity is not a primordial and static feature which exists in its own right but ‘a way of seeing and interpreting the world (...) that (...) works in and through categories and category-based commonsense knowledge’.<sup>55</sup> Although, in this thesis, Italians are frequently referred to as a *migrant group*,<sup>56</sup> such a definition does not entail any ‘groupistic’ intention as if the group was a ‘unitary collective actors with common purposes’.<sup>57</sup> Simply put, the term group is here used as a synonym of

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<sup>50</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>52</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London, Sage, 1995); T. Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford, Berg, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Edensor, *National Identity*, p. 17

<sup>55</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 21.

<sup>56</sup> In this thesis the term ‘migrant group’ defines both first generation migrants and people of migrant heritage. Although, to a certain extent, it would be more correct to define Italians in Wales as an ‘aggregate’ in Gans’ terms, some recent developments such as the 2010 Arandora Star commemoration demonstrated that Italians could still function as a ‘group’ in Glazer and Moynihan’s terms. See: Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*. Gans has argued that: ‘(...) as secondary and primary assimilation continue, and ethnic networks weaken and unravel, it may be more accurate to speak of ethnic aggregates rather than groups’. See: Gans, ‘Symbolic ethnicity’, 1-20.

<sup>57</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 8.

*population* or *aggregate* of individuals who, in most cases, do not perceive themselves as being part of an organised social group. Italians as a group are just an ‘event’ that may occasionally ‘happen’ or not happen at all. Therefore, it is especially in their *everyday* and *individual* experiences that Italians express forms of ethnicity (or national identity) which can influence their way of seeing and interpreting the world, often drawing upon stereotypical views and commonsense knowledge.

Besides ethnicity, another area of academic enquiry which this thesis aims to engage with is the study of migrations and *ethnic food*. This appears to be an academically neglected area of inquiry, with only a handful of authors assessing the extent to which migrations can influence the culinary habits of receiving societies. Within the British context, sociologist Mennell<sup>58</sup> and historians Burnett<sup>59</sup> and Panayi<sup>60</sup> have observed that immigration has historically played a prominent role in re-defining the British eating-out practices (especially after 1945). By contrast, recalling Bourdieu’s *distinction* theory,<sup>61</sup> sociologist Warde and anthropologist James have downplayed the extent to which the spread of ethnic food has actually changed British taste, with only a minority ‘elite’ of the population actively and consciously engaging with the consumption of foreign cuisines.<sup>62</sup> By contrast, some American scholars have put the remarkable spread of ethnic cuisine down to the country’s long-standing history of immigration. Migration historian Gabaccia has shown how the different culinary traditions that migrants brought to their new homeland eventually crossed the borders of ethnic

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<sup>58</sup> S. Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996).

<sup>59</sup> J. Burnett, *Plenty and Want: a Social History of Food in England from 1815 to the Present Day* (London, Routledge, 1988).

<sup>60</sup> P. Panayi, *Spicing up Britain: the Multicultural History of British Food* (London, Reaktion, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, Routledge, 1984).

<sup>62</sup> A. James, ‘How British is British Food’, in P. Caplan (ed), *Food, Health and Identity* (London, Routledge, 1997), pp 71-86.; A. Warde and L. Martens, ‘Eating Out: Experiences of Consumers in England’, in J. Germov and L. Williams (eds), *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: the Social Appetite* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 116-135; see also A. Warde, ‘Eating Globally: Cultural Flows and the Spread of Ethnic Restaurants’, in D. Kalb, M.R. Van der Land, B. Staring, B. Van Steenbergen and N. Wilterdink (eds), *The Ends of Globalization: Bringing Society Back In* (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 299-316.

enclaves, becoming part of the American 'culinary melting pot'.<sup>63</sup> Human geographer Zelinsky has highlighted the prominent role that ethnic restaurants have played in shaping the American social appetite throughout the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> The importance of ethnic food in the USA has also been discussed by Ferrero, who, drawing on a case study analysis of Mexican restaurants in Los Angeles, has argued that those 'transnational food practices and their dynamics' definable as 'foodscapes' are able to 'subvert consumer societies'.<sup>65</sup> Following the same mode of reasoning, Gabaccia has shown how, in American history, food could represent a source of empowerment, offering some migrant groups the opportunity to grow economically and, in some cases, even to take over entire sections of the food market.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, van den Berghe and Appadurai have pointed out that not only can ethnic food influence society and subvert power relations, but it can also represent a bridge across cultural boundaries.<sup>67</sup>

However, the existing debate has its limitations. For example, the representation of ethnic cuisines in the media, literature and museums has been overlooked. The extent to which and

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<sup>63</sup> D.R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 228.

<sup>64</sup> Detecting more than 26,000 ethnic restaurants in 271 major metropolitan areas in USA and Canada (in 1980), Zelinsky has pointed out that: 'the ethnic restaurant is a major component in the transnationalization of culture'. The Italian represented the second largest section (22 per cent) of the ethnic catering trade in USA (after the Chinese), with the vast majority of restaurants being concentrated in those areas that had been affected by a significant Italian immigrant flow over the previous eighty years. See: W. Zelinsky, 'The Roving Palate: North America's Ethnic Restaurant Cuisines', *Geoforum* 16 (1985), 51-72.

<sup>65</sup> S. Ferrero, 'Comida Sin Par: Consumption of Mexican Food in Los Angeles, "Foodscapes" in a Transnational Consumer Society', in W. Belasco and P. Scranton (eds), *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (New York, Routledge, 2002), p. 196. As Ferrero has observed, not only is ethnic food able to twist culinary patterns within the host society, but also 'power relations': 'as an object of consumption and as a tool of social and cultural identification, ethnic food entails forms of power that disclose themselves according to circumstances and contexts. (...) it becomes an opportunity for the ethnic "I" to acquire status and social position within a dominant (...) society' (p. 214). On 'transnationalism' see, for example, A. Portes, L.E. Guarnizo and P. Landolt, 'The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (1999), 217-226; S. Vertovec, 'Transnationalism and Identity', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27 (2001), 573-582.

<sup>66</sup> As Gabaccia has observed, food business has traditionally been relatively more open to foreigners than other social arenas like non-food industry and politics; by 1900, 21 per cent of the sector-leaders were foreign born, with Italians dominating wine making and distilling. D.R. Gabaccia, 'As American as Budweiser and Pickles? Nation-Building in American Food Industries', in Belasco and Scranton (eds), *Food Nations*, pp. 175-193.

<sup>67</sup> P.L. van den Berghe, 'Ethnic Cuisine: Culture in Nature', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7 (1984), 387-397; A. Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988), 3-24.

the reason why a given migrant ethnic cuisine (more than others) can be incorporated in the receiving society' national history and identity have also been overlooked. In addition, with few exceptions, most investigations have not adopted a historical perspective, which is essential to appreciate how food habits change and evolve over time as a result of migration.

Beside engaging with the different academic debates which have been illustrated, this thesis also aims to contribute to two more specific research areas: Italian *diaspora*-studies and history of immigration to Britain.<sup>68</sup> With over sixty five million people claiming an Italian heritage, people of Italian descent living outside Italy represent one of the biggest diasporic communities worldwide. As a result, they have been paid a considerable amount of academic attention.<sup>69</sup> Yet, as Colucci has observed, Italian diaspora-studies have predominantly addressed pre-1939 transoceanic mass-migration,<sup>70</sup> overlooking phenomena of mobility which occurred during and after the Second World War, particularly in Europe. The number of investigations of Italian migration to European countries appears to be relatively limited, if compared to the vast amount of enquiries of Italian migration to America (particularly the USA). Among the main European destinations,<sup>71</sup> Britain appears to be the one which has

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<sup>68</sup> For a critical definition of 'diaspora' see, for example, Cohen, *Global Diasporas*.

<sup>69</sup> Some important general contributions to the study of the Italian 'diaspora' include: P. Audenino and M. Tirabassi, *Migrazioni Italiane: Storia e Storie dall'Ancien Regime a Oggi* (Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2008); P. Bevilacqua, A. De Clementi and E. Franzina (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Partenze* (Roma, Donzelli, 2001) and *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Arrivi* (Roma, Donzelli, 2002); E. Franzina, *Gli Italiani al Nuovo Mondo: l'Emigrazione Italiana in America, 1492-1942* (Milano, Mondadori, 1995); D.R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2000); M. Sanfilippo and P. Corti (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Annali 24: Migrazioni* (Torino, Einaudi, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento*.

<sup>71</sup> On France see, for example, A. Bechelloni, M. Dreyfus and P. Milza (eds), *L'Intégration Italienne en France: un Siècle de Présence Italienne Dans Trois Régions Françaises, 1880-1980* (Bruxelles, Editions Complexe, 1995); M.C. Blanc-Chaleard (ed), *Les Italiens en France Depuis 1945* (Rennes-Paris, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003); P. Corti, 'L'Emigrazione Italiana in Francia: un Fenomeno di Lunga Durata', *Altretalia* 26 (2003), 4-24; E. Vial, 'In Francia', in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Arrivi*, pp. 133-146. On Germany see, for example, E. Pugliese, 'In Germania', in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Arrivi*, pp. 121-132; F. Carchedi and E. Pugliese (eds), *Andare, Restare, Tornare: 50 Anni di Emigrazione in Germania* (Isernia, Cosmo Iannone, 2006); M. Guidotti and S. Haug (eds), 'Emigrazione Italiana in Germania', *Studi Emigrazione*, Special Issue 158 (2005); M. Rieder, 'Migrazione ed Economia: l'Immigrazione Italiana Verso la Germania Occidentale Dopo la Seconda Guerra Mondiale', *Studi Emigrazione* 155 (2004), 408-418. On Switzerland see, for example, C. Allemann-Ghionda and G. Meyer-Sabino, *Donne Italiane in Svizzera* (Locarno, Dadò, 1992); G. Meyer Sabino, 'In Svizzera', in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Arrivi*, pp. 147-158; A. Halter (ed), *Gli Italiani in Svizzera: un Secolo*

been paid the smaller amount of attention by migration scholars. One reason for this could be that Italian migration to Britain has represented a quantitatively marginal phenomenon if compared to other countries.<sup>72</sup> This assumption is confirmed by the fact that, with few exceptions,<sup>73</sup> Italian-diaspora scholars have tended to ignore quantitatively small and geographically dispersed Italian migrant settlements, focusing on the large, geographically concentrated and urban ones.

Another reason for the neglect of Italian migration to Britain could be that, as the Macdonalds have suggested,<sup>74</sup> British-Italians have traditionally been regarded as an ‘invisible’ ethnic group, being white, relatively few (in numerical terms) and geographically dispersed. This adds to the fact that, being predominantly involved in the service sector, Italians have often been considered as a relatively successful and integrated migrant group, which has rarely been the target of xenophobic reactions (as if only those groups which have been racially abused are worthy of investigation). That is perhaps why British migration-scholarship has tended to focus on the allegedly ‘problematic’ post-war black and Asian Commonwealth’s migrant flow,<sup>75</sup> paying less attention to arguably ‘less problematic’ white European ethnic groups. As McDowell has observed:

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*di Emigrazione* (Bellinzona, Casagrande, 2004). On Belgium see, for example, A. Morelli, *Ça Resemble à l'Italie: Particularités de l'Habitat Italien en Wallonie et à Bruxelles* (Bruxelles, L'Incontro dei Lavoratori, 1991); A. Morelli, ‘In Belgio’, in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana – Arrivi*, pp. 159-170.

<sup>72</sup> Whereas 166,402 Italians migrated to Britain between 1946 and 1976, 381,692 went to Belgium, 1,032,758 to France, 1,110,831 to Germany and 2,330,310 to Switzerland. Source: Rinauro, *Il Cammino della Speranza*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, R.J. Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants in Rural and Small-Town America* (New York, American Italian Historical Association, 1987); P. Corti, ‘Women Were Labour Migrant Too: Tracing Late-Nineteenth-Century Female Migration from Northern Italy to France’, in D.R. Gabaccia and F. Iacovetta (eds), *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 133-159.

<sup>74</sup> J.S. Macdonald and L.D. Macdonald, *The Invisible Immigrants: a Statistical Survey of Immigration Into the United Kingdom of Workers and Dependents From Italy, Portugal and Spain* (London, Runnymede, 1972).

<sup>75</sup> Some important contributions to the history of immigration to Britain which also consider the white European immigrant groups are: C. Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988) and *A Tolerant Country? Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain* (London, Faber, 1991); P. Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain, 1815-1945* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994) and *An Immigration History of Britain: Multicultural Racism Since 1800*

The history of immigration to Britain (...) has tended to be dominated, at least since 1945, by analysis of the relationships between migration, ethnicity, skin colour and racism. In the last half century or so, the most significant countries sending migrants to the UK were (...) the Caribbean and South Asia (...) However, there is another story about immigration to the UK – that of white migrants. French Huguenots, German, French and Russian Jews, Irish, Italians, Poles, Latvians (...) were also significant among the growing UK population born elsewhere but generally overlooked in post-war analyses of the impact of migration on British society. In part, I suggest, this was because of their white skins, providing these migrants with a cloak of invisibility.<sup>76</sup>

It was not until the 1970s that British-Italians started to be academically investigated. This coincided with the second generation of the post-war migrant wave reaching adulthood. Authors including the Macdonalds, Marin, Favero, Tassello and King started to challenge the notion of ‘invisibility’ that historiography had previously referred to Italians in Britain, reclaiming the prominent role that Italian migration had played in British history.<sup>77</sup> King and the Macdonalds focused on the socio-economic dimension of the Italian migrant group, emphasising the extreme diversity of its migrant patterns, which include displacement of POWs, government-sponsored recruiting campaign of female workers and individual migrants (notably in the catering sector). What is remarkable about Marin and Tassello is that they were able to trigger a debate on the process of identity-renegotiation among second generation British-Italians. They illustrated that, whereas they were generally seen as

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(London, Pearson, 2010); T. Kushner, ‘Great Britons: Immigration, History and Memory’, in K. Burrell and P. Panayi (eds), *Histories and Memories: Migrants and Their History in Britain* (London, Tauris, 2005), pp. 18-34; K. Lunn, ‘Immigration and Reaction in Britain, 1880-1950: Rethinking the “Legacy of Empire”’, in Lucassen and Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History*, pp. 335-349; Miles and Kay, *Refugees or Migrant Workers*; J.D. Steinert and I.W. Newth (eds), *European Immigrants in Britain, 1933-1950* (München, K.G. Saur, 2003); Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*; J. Walvin, *Passage to Britain: Immigration in British History and Politics* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984); J.A. Isaac, *British Post-War Migration* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1954). On the Irish in Britain see, for example, E. Delaney, *The Irish in Post-war Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007); P. O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2000).

<sup>76</sup> L. McDowell, ‘On the Significance of Being White: European Migrant Workers in the British Economy in the 1940s and 2000s’, in C. Dwyer and C. Bressey (eds), *New Geographies of Race and Racism* (London, Ashgate, 2008), p. 51.

<sup>77</sup> L. Favero and G. Tassello, ‘La Gioventù Italo-Inglese: Alcuni Risultati di un’Inchiesta’, *Studi Emigrazione* 15 (1978), 299-324; R. King, ‘Italian Migration to Great Britain’, *Geography* 62 (1977), 176-186 and ‘Work and Residence Patterns of Italian Immigrants in Great Britain’, *International Migration* 16 (1978), 74-82; Macdonald and Macdonald, *The Invisible Immigrants*; U. Marin, *Italiani in Gran Bretagna* (Roma, CSER, 1975).

integrated and economically successful, Italians in Britain and the way in which they renegotiated their identities were worthy of further investigations.

In the 1980s and 1990s new important academic contributions were made, with several authors disclosing some neglected aspects of the Italian experience in Britain. For example, Sponza focused on the early days of Italian migration to Britain in the nineteenth century and also explored the Italian POWs and internees' experience.<sup>78</sup> Sponza also provided evidence to the existence of anti-Italian attitudes and stereotypes in British history, challenging the image of Italians being perfectly integrated into British society.<sup>79</sup> Colpi provided an initial investigation of the Italian catering trade in a historical perspective, highlighting its impact on British foodways.<sup>80</sup> Tosi focused on the linguistic dimension of British-Italians, assessing the extent to which language-transmission is related to national identity.<sup>81</sup> More recently, new important contributions were made by Colucci and Behar,<sup>82</sup> who analysed the post-war government-sponsored recruitment of Italian workers, showing the existence of resilient xenophobic attitudes in British trade unions. Ugolini provided important insights into the memorialisation of the internment-experience, particularly in Scotland,<sup>83</sup> while Baldoli explored the impact of Fascism on British-Italian communities in the 1930s.<sup>84</sup> Other authors (Fortier, Burrell, Zontini) provided a socio-anthropological perspective to the topic, focusing on the process of identity renegotiation and transmission, drawing on vast oral history

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<sup>78</sup> L. Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Realities and Images* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1988); *Divided Loyalties: Italians in Britain During the Second World War* (Bern, P. Lang, 2000) and 'The British Government and the Internment of Italians', in D. Cesarani and T. Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, Frank Cass, 1993), pp. 125-144.

<sup>79</sup> L. Sponza, 'The Anti-Italian Riots, June 1940', in P. Panayi (ed), *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, Leicester University Press, 1999), pp. 131-149 and 'Italians Immigrants in Britain: Perceptions and Self-Perceptions', in Panayi and Burrell (eds), *Histories and Memories*, pp. 58-74.

<sup>80</sup> T. Colpi, *The Italian Factor: the Italian Community of Great Britain* (Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1991).

<sup>81</sup> A. Tosi, *Immigration and Bilingual Education: a Case Study of Movement of Population, Language Change and Education Within the EEC* (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1984).

<sup>82</sup> Behar, 'Diplomacy and Essential Workers', 324-340 and Colucci, 'Chiamati, Partiti e Respinti', 329-349 and *Lavoro in Movimento*.

<sup>83</sup> W. Ugolini, 'Reinforcing Otherness? Edinburgh's Italian Community and the Impact of the Second World War', *Family and Community History* 1 (1998), 57-70 and *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*.

<sup>84</sup> C. Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism: Italian Fascists and Britain's Italians in the 1930s* (Oxford, Berg, 2003).



projects.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Girelli provided a thought-provoking account of the use of Italianness and Italian stereotypes in British cinema.<sup>86</sup>

However, the investigation of the British-Italian migrant experience maintains some apparent limitations. Firstly, although several authors have been concerned with the study of Italian ethnicity in Britain, they have either limited their enquiry to certain specific aspects of the topic (e.g. Zontini has focused on the family dimension) or specific geographical areas (e.g. Fortier on London) or they have not exclusively focused on Italians (e.g. Burrell). What has been neglected, for example, is the extent to which various forms of ethnic affiliation influence the Italians' identification with Britain in cultural, social and political terms and how Italians deal with the overlapping forms of national identity (British, English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish) that characterize the British Isles. With few exceptions,<sup>87</sup> Italians in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have been ignored.

This mirrors the fact that, it was not until the 1980s that British migration scholarship started to pay some sort of attention to the Celtic fringe.<sup>88</sup> Such a long-standing neglect of the history of migration to the Celtic nations appear to be a direct consequence of the 'quantitative bias' which has previously been illustrated. Being relatively small and geographically dispersed if

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<sup>85</sup> K. Burrell, *Moving Lives: Narratives of Nation and Migration Among Europeans in Post-War Britain* (Hampshire, Aldershot, 2006); A.M. Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (Oxford, Berg, 2000) and E. Zontini, 'Continuity and Change in Transnational Italian Families: the Caring Practices of Second-Generation Women', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33 (2007) 1103-1119.

<sup>86</sup> E. Girelli, *Beauty and the Beast: Italianness in British Cinema* (Bristol, Intellect Books, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> C. Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla: the Italian Community in South Wales* (Bridgend, Seren, 1991); D. Morris, 'Italian and East European Volunteer Workers at Swansea, 1947-1955', *Llafur* 10 (2010), 145-154; Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*.

<sup>88</sup> On Wales see, for example, C. Holmes, 'The Tredegar Riots of 1911: Anti-Jewish Disturbances in South Wales', *Welsh History Review* 11 (1982), 214-225; U. Henriques, *The Jews of South Wales: Historical Studies* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1993); Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*; N. Evans, 'Regulating the Reserve Army: Arabs, Blacks and the Local State in Cardiff, 1919-45', in K. Lunn (ed), *Race and Labour in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, Frank Cass, 1985), pp. 68-115, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales, 1840-1990: a Comparative Perspective', *Llafur* 5 (1991), 5-26 and 'Through the Prism of Ethnic Violence: Riots and Racial Attacks in Wales, 1826-2002', in Williams et al. (eds), *A Tolerant Nation?*, pp. 93-108; O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*; C. Williams, N. Evans and P. O'Leary, 'Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalisation', in Williams et al. (eds), *A Tolerant Nation?*, pp. 1-13; C. Williams, 'Race and Racism: Some Reflections on the Welsh Context', *Contemporary Wales* 8 (1995), 113-131; Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', 85-107.

compared to those in England, migrant settlements in Wales, Scotland and Ireland have largely been ignored in academic enquiry. As Abrams has argued of Scottish Jewry: 'given the high degree of geographical concentration of British Jewry into six communities (London, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham and Liverpool), the history of Jews in the United Kingdom has, in fact, primarily been the history of these centres of population'. This attitude, Abrams argues, derives from the widespread conviction that 'what happens elsewhere (...) reveals little about the main currents of Anglo-Jewish history (...) Since the number of Jews who lived in Wales and Scotland was never large (...) the histories of the Jews in Britain have largely been the histories of the Jews in England'.<sup>89</sup> As Hopkins has pointed out:

Scotland is not simply a microcosm of the UK, it is important to emphasise the danger of generalising about the British context. Unfortunately, to date, this is a highly problematic gesture adopted by many academics who seek to generalise their studies of ethnic minority communities in London and Manchester to represent the experiences of all black and minority ethnic communities in Britain (...) Overall then, the key argument (...) is that it is not possible to transpose experiences of race, racism and ethnicity in England and assume that they are the same as they would be in Scotland.<sup>90</sup>

Another aspect of British-Italian identity that has been paid a scant amount of attention is the so called 'banal nationalism' and 'national identity in everyday life' which has previously been illustrated.<sup>91</sup> The few investigations of this topic generally lack an historical perspective, which is essential to appreciate how the process of identity-renegotiation has evolved over the years. Such a downside of British-Italian historiography mirrors the larger European picture, where the number of studies addressing Italian diasporic identity and ethnicity still appear to be quite limited when compared to the vast amount of studies which

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<sup>89</sup> N. Abrams, *Caledonian Jews: a Study of Seven Small Communities in Scotland* (Jefferson, McFarland, 2009), p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Hopkins, 'Politics, Race and Nation', p. 121.

<sup>91</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*; Edensor, *National Identity*.

have appeared in North America over the last seventy years.<sup>92</sup> The latter have stimulated a prominent debate on intergenerational renegotiation and transmission of Italianness, providing different answers to the fundamental question ‘what does “being Italian” in America mean?’. Yet, with few exceptions,<sup>93</sup> the vast majority of these investigations have focused on pre-1939 large and geographically concentrated Italian settlements, neglecting the experience of the small and dispersed ones.

In other words, what the ongoing scholarly debate lacks is a European perspective, one which takes into consideration the post-1939 diaspora as well as small and geographically dispersed Italian settlements. For example, Italian POWs appear to have been substantially ignored by Italian-diaspora studies, a finding which, as noted, mirrors a broader academic bias. Although Sponza has investigated Italian POWs in Britain *during* the Second World War, he has failed to explore the aftermath of this experience, analysing how POWs who settled in Britain after the conflict have lately renegotiated and transmitted their identities. The ‘memorialisation’ of the Italian POWs’ experience has also been neglected. This reflects the fact that, with few exceptions,<sup>94</sup> the memorialisation of the broader Italian migrant experience has been substantially ignored, namely the way in which both Italians and British institutions have narrated and commemorated the history of Italian migration to Britain.

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<sup>92</sup> Some important contributions to the study of Italian-American ethnicity include: I.G. Child, *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1943); Gans, *The Urban Villagers*; C.F. Ware, *Greenwich Village 1920-1930: a Comment on American Civilisation in the Post-War Years* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1963); Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*; R.J. Vecoli, ‘Ethnicity, a Neglected Dimension of American history’, in H.J. Bass (ed), *The State of American History* (Chicago, Quadriangle Books, 1970), pp. 70-88; R. Gambino, *Blood of my Blood: the Dilemma of the Italian-Americans* (Garden City, Anchor Books, 1974); Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*; Nelli, *From Immigrants to Ethnics*; D.R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elisabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930*, (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1984); Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street*; Alba, *Italian Americans*; Conzen et al., ‘The invention of Ethnicity’, 3-41; S. Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: the Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2001).

<sup>93</sup> Vecoli (eds), *Italian Immigrants*.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’* and Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*.

One last aspect of Italian migration to Britain which deserves more attention is the impact that Italian migration has had on British food patterns. Although, as noted, Colpi has triggered a initial debate on Italianisation of British cuisine and Morris has provided some insight to the influence of Italian coffee and cafés on British society,<sup>95</sup> the ongoing debate still lacks in-depth investigations. This mirrors a broader academic gap, with Italian-diaspora scholars having largely overlooked the impact of Italian migrant food on receiving societies. This thesis aims to fill this gap providing an original perspective to the current academic debate on the meaning of Italian identity and culture around the world, which has recently been defined as *Italicity*.<sup>96</sup> In this thesis, the term has been adopted in a historical perspective and defines those forms of recreation and consumption (namely Italian cuisine and eating-out patterns) which are seen (by both migrants and indigenous population) as being ‘Italian’. This is an area of enquiry that deserves more attention as it illustrates how migration can change the cultural landscapes of receiving societies and how these can take advantage of such changes in processes of nation-building.

### III

This project focuses on the period 1940-2010. The reason for this timeline is that the Italian migrant experience in Wales over the last seventy years has been academically ignored, with the only existing monograph on the topic going as far as 1945.<sup>97</sup> Another reason why this thesis is concerned with the dates 1940 and 2010 is that, in those years, the Italian migrant

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<sup>95</sup> J. Morris, ‘Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna: il Consumo del Caffé “Stile Italiano”’, *Italia Contemporanea* 241 (2005), 540-552.

<sup>96</sup> The term ‘Italicity’ was recently discussed at the conference *From the Unity of Italians to the Unity of Italics: the Languages of Italicity Around the World*, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (USA), 15-16 April 2011. The term was coined by Italian intellectual Piero Bassetti, who defined it as: ‘a virtual meeting place, a new kind of piazza, where the 200-250 million people of Italic origin (Italians, Swiss, Dalmatians, descendants of Italians, Italophiles...) throughout the world could meet in a place that transcends formal boundaries and legal barriers. Italicity can be compared to a commonwealth of cultures, experiences, and ideals - a community that seeks to unite all those who have “Italic” roots’. Source, I-Italy, <http://www.i-italy.org/4739/italy-city-global-community>, accessed 22/10/2011.

<sup>97</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*.

group in Wales witnessed fundamental changes, which had important social, economic and cultural consequences. In 1940 Italy declared war on Britain. As a result, hundreds of Welsh-Italian men were interned as ‘enemy aliens’ and deported to various areas of the Commonwealth, with 53 of them perishing in the dramatic sinking of the *Arandora Star*. In addition, thousands of Italian POWs were deported to Wales by British authorities, with some of them settling in the country at the end of the war. This influx of new Italian migrants as well as displacement of internees were to change and diversify the occupational structure, regional provenience and size of the Italian migrant group in Wales, a process which was to be taken further by the post-1945 recruitment of Italian coal miners and tinsmith workers. In 2010, the Welsh-Italian group witnessed the first ‘official’ commemoration of the *Arandora Star* tragedy in Cardiff, where a memorial was unveiled. This ceremony had a profound cultural impact on both migrants and receiving society, reaffirming the prominent social role that Italians had played in Welsh history.

Although a historical study, this thesis adopts a contemporary content perspective. It analyses the portrayal and memorialisation of Italian migration against the notion of the ‘tolerant nation’. In its cultural and political discourse, Wales has often self-proclaimed a ‘tolerant nation’.<sup>98</sup> Such a notion has been taken further and given a sort of institutional aura by the ‘cult of inclusiveness’,<sup>99</sup> which has informed the Welsh political agenda in the post-devolution context. As noted, some authors have explored and criticised such a notion. Yet, they have focused on its social and political facets, neglecting the way in which inclusiveness has been portrayed by the Welsh media, literature, film and museum-exhibitions as part of a process of nation-building. This project aims to fill this academic gap. It assesses the extent to which the narration and commemoration of Italian migration to Wales, which has been

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<sup>98</sup> Williams, ‘Race and Racism’, 113-131

<sup>99</sup> Chaney and Fevre, ‘Ron Davies and the cult of “inclusiveness”’, 21-49.

performed by both Italian and Welsh institutions and media, aims to construct a tolerant and multicultural image of Wales which suits the current notion of inclusiveness.

This aspect links in with another important feature which highlights the originality of this case study and concerns the peculiarity of Wales as country. Wales is a stateless nation with overlapping forms of national, ethnic and linguistic identification (Welsh, English, Celtic, British), whose devolved political institutions have promoted a civic and inclusive notion of identity. This thesis aims to appreciate the different ways in which first, second, third and fourth generation Italians have renegotiated their identities within such a 'complex' framework. In particular, it assesses the extent to which 'banal' and 'everyday life' forms of national affiliation have influenced the Italians' identification with Wales. In doing so, it assesses whether and to what extent the inclusive representation of Italian migrants that the Welsh media and other institutions have provided correspond to the way in which Italians actually perceive themselves within the Welsh context.

One last important aspect which this project aims to investigate is the impact of Italian migration on Welsh food practices. This is also an original area of investigation, as it assesses the extent to which the Italian migrant group, despite its relatively small dimension and high geographical dispersion, has been able to influence the Welsh national diet and its eating-out dimension in particular. Once again, this area of enquiry highlights the role that institutions, media and Italians themselves have had in promoting a 'culturally diverse' national Welsh diet, which draws on notions of tolerance and multiculturalism.

## IV

This thesis draws upon a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative primary sources. These include both published and unpublished material, which has been collected from

archives and libraries (at both national and local levels) in Britain and Italy. Most quantitative data have been retrieved from The National Archives (TNA), Glamorgan Record Office (GRO), West Glamorgan Archive Service (WGAS), parish registers (Wrexham Diocese Archive, [WDA] and St. Joseph Catholic Church Denbigh [SJCCD]), trade directories and the British censuses (from 1931 to 2001). Most qualitative sources have been collected from TNA, Imperial War Museum (IWM), National Library of Wales (NLW), St. Fagans National History Museum (SFNHM), Archivio Diaristico Nazionale (ADN) in Pieve Santo Stefano (Province of Arezzo) and Centro di Documentazione sulla Emigrazione Dell'Alta Val di Taro (CDEAVT) in Bedonia (Province of Parma). The thesis also draws upon sixty five interviews,<sup>100</sup> including the 2008 Ente Nazionale Acli Istruzione Professionale (ENAIPI) oral history project 'Italian Memories in Wales' (IMW) and additional interviews, which were conducted by the author between 2010 and 2012.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> On oral history see, for example, P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988); A. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1991).

<sup>101</sup> Whereas IMW predominantly followed the life-story approach, the author's interviews were of the semi-structured type. IMW included fifty four interviews with first (38), second (11), third (4) and fourth generation (1) Italians. Out of thirty-eight first generation respondents, seven arrived in Wales at a very early age (between 2 and 5) and can therefore be considered as second generation *de facto*. The majority (11) of second, third and fourth generation respondents had both their parents born in Italy, the others (5) were of mixed background. The sex ratio of the sample was predominantly male (30 respondents) and its age profile appeared to be very diversified: first generation interviewees were between 61 and 90 years-old, while second, third and fourth generation were between 31 and 85 years-old. The majority of the second/third/fourth generation interviewees were the descendants of Italians who had migrated to Wales between 1946 and 1961, but in a minority of cases (7), their ancestors had settled in Wales before 1945. The respondents originated from a wide range of locations across Italy. The majority (28) of them were from southern Italy, with Sicily being the most represented region. The other respondents were from northern and central Italy, particularly from the Parma and Piacenza provinces (9) and the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, in the north east (5). Considering the geographical distribution of the respondents, the vast majority (39) resided in south Wales, with Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff being the most represented counties (11 respondents each). From a socio-occupational point of view, a significant proportion of first generation interviewees were retired miners or tinplate workers (12), others (11) were either former prisoners of war (POWs), relatives of ex-POWs or war-brides (Italian women married to Welsh soldiers fighting in Italy during WW2). The remaining respondents were involved in the catering sector. The second/third/fourth generation respondents were involved in a variety of intellectual or entrepreneurial occupations, with a significant proportion (10) being involved in the catering sector. The author conducted interviews with eleven Italians and people of Italian descent. The respondents were first (3), second (4), third (2) and fourth (2) generation Italians. Most of them (9/11) were involved in the catering sector, the others being children of Italian POWs. As a result of its occupational structure (the catering sector appears to be male-dominated), the sample was male-dominated as the main aim of the interviews was to address the Italian catering sector. In terms of geographical distribution, the respondents resided in Conwy County Borough (6), Denbighshire (2), Gwynedd (1), Carmarthenshire (1) and Cardiff (1). Three of them originated from the Parma province (in northern Italy),

The thesis is divided into four chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of the Italian migrant experience. Chapter One focuses on the socio-economic analysis of the Italian migrant group. It considers the causes and consequences of Italian migration to Wales and assesses the extent to which Italians have adjusted to the Welsh environment, interacted with the indigenous population and become socially and economically successful. In particular, it examines different migration patterns which characterised the Italian migrant wave (POWs, government-sponsored workers and individual migrants) and appreciates their numerical strength, gender ratio, geographical distribution, regional provenience, demographical characteristics, marriage practises, occupational profile and intergenerational spatial and social mobility. The chapter draws on the British censuses, Alien Registration Certificates and official reports, marriage registers, but it also makes use of oral history. The investigation of Italian POWs, miners and tinplate workers largely draws upon a variety of files which have been collected from TNA, GRO and WGAS. Several Catholic parishes' marriage-registered have also been used to appreciate marriage practices, particularly among Italian ex-POWs in north Wales (WDA and SJCCD).

Chapter Two explores Welsh responses to Italian migration and the subsequent Welsh representation and memorialisation of the Italian migrant experience. On one hand, it engages with the ongoing academic debate on 'Welsh tolerance', assessing the extent to which the narration and commemoration of the Italian migrant experience has mirrored the surrounding tolerance-myth. On the other, it provides historical evidence which challenges this myth. It also assesses the extent to which Italians (more than other migrant groups) have been incorporated in the process of Welsh nation-building through various forms of representation.

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three from the Frosinone province (in central Italy), the others being from the Naples, Crotone, Reggio Calabria and Agrigento provinces (in southern Italy) and the Pesaro Urbino province (in northern Italy). Respondents were between 47 and 83 years-old. The first generation interviewees had all migrated to Wales after the Second World War (between 1952 and 1977), the others were the descendants of both pre-WW2 (6) and post-WW2 migrants (2). As a result, these interviews contribute to make the Welsh-Italian picture more accurate whereas in the IMW project the pre-war contingent appeared to be under-represented (only 7 respondents).



The exploration of Welsh responses and representations primarily draws upon television and radio programmes (NLW), TV series, documentaries and cartoons, websites, memoirs (IWM and ADN), newspapers, literature, TNA's collection and oral history.

Chapter Three analyses the identity-renegotiation process among first, second, third and fourth generation Italians in Wales. It engages with the existing literature on Italian identity and ethnicity and highlights the originality of the Welsh-Italian case study. It assesses the extent to which various forms of 'banal' national affiliation have influenced the Italians' identification with Wales. In addition, it assesses whether the discourse of inclusiveness which has been flagged by the Welsh political institutions over the last decade has influenced the extent to which Italians identify with Wales and Welshness. It primarily draws upon oral history, but it is also based on other sources including the British censuses, migrant newspapers, migrant letters (CDEAVT) and memoirs, newspapers, television and literature.

Chapter Four focuses on the impact that Italian migration has had on Welsh lifestyle, particularly on its eating-out patterns. It assesses the extent to which the spread of different 'Italian' forms of recreation and consumption (cafés, ice-cream parlours, restaurants etc.) is a result of long-standing patterns of migration to the country. It also appreciates how and why such Italian eating-out patterns have changed over the years. It engages with the ongoing sociological and historical debate on food consumption (primarily in Britain and USA), highlighting the peculiarity of the Welsh case. It shows that Welsh institutions and media and Italians themselves have promoted a 'multicultural' Welsh cuisine which reflects the surrounding rhetoric of inclusiveness and tolerance. The chapter draws upon trade directories, migrant press, press, television and radio programmes, cookbooks, websites, literature and oral history.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Patterns of Migration

This chapter explores the economic and social features of Italian migration to Wales. Although its main focus is the analysis of the post-1940 period, this chapter extends the investigation to pre-World War Two patterns of migration. In so doing, it highlights the *longue durée* of this phenomenon of mobility, one that can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century. This chapter also highlights the extent to which the post-1940 Italian migrant experience in Wales represented an original phenomenon of mobility, if compared to other Italian migrant flows elsewhere. Firstly, Italian migration to Wales resulted from the combined action of three overlapping and completely different phenomena of mobility: forced migration (POWs in the 1940s), assisted government-sponsored migration (coal miners and tinplate workers in the 1950s) and individual migration (mainly in the catering sector before and after World War Two). A situation in which all these three categories are represented and all play a significant role in numerical terms could be not observed amongst Italian migrants elsewhere. Another reason for the peculiarity of Italian migration to Wales is that it was relatively small in numerical terms and resulted in geographically dispersed settlements. As noted in the introduction, the vast majority of Italian diaspora-studies have focused on large and geographically concentrated Italian settlements, neglecting the experience of the small and dispersed ones. Moreover, the majority of migration historians have been reluctant to consider forced migrations (e.g. POWs and

internees) as ‘proper’ migrations.<sup>1</sup> This chapter aims to challenge such a view and illustrate that ‘forced’ migrations can sometimes have similar outcomes to ‘free’ migrations.

This chapter is divided into four sub-sections. The first illustrates the characteristics of Italian migration to Wales up to Italian declaration of war on Britain on 10 June 1940 (and the subsequent British internment-policy). The second sub-section analyses the post-1940 migrant flow in quantitative terms, focusing on three main categories of migrants who were to be found in Wales at the time: POWs, officially recruited workers (coal miners, foundry and tinsplate workers, stonemasons) and individual migrants. The third sub-section investigates the main characteristics of the Italian migrant flow: geographical origin, demographic features, migrant strategies, spatial mobility and marriage practices. The last sub-section focuses on Italians’ social and economic mobility.

### **Italians in Wales before 1940**

The girl went out and presently returned with the Italian. He was a short, thick, strongly-built fellow of about thirty-seven, with a swarthy face, raven-black hair, high forehead, and dark deep eyes, full of intelligence and great determination.<sup>2</sup>

This description was made by the English travel writer George Borrow while he was exploring the ‘wild’ regions of Wales in the 1850s. It testifies that Italian migration to Wales represents a long-standing phenomenon which can be traced back well before the outbreak of the Second World War. The Italian man described by Borrow worked as a cook in the *Lion Inn* in Cerrig Y Drudion and originated from Como (northern Italy). This is not surprising as a significant number of Italians living in Britain at the time hailed from that area.<sup>3</sup> However, at this time, a significant number of Italian migrants was yet to be seen in Wales. When Italy became a unified State in 1861, the vast majority of 4,608 Italians living in Britain were

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<sup>1</sup> Lucassen and Lucassen, ‘Migration, Migration History, History’, pp. 9-38.

<sup>2</sup> George Borrow, *Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery*, ed. C. Price (London, Collins, 1955), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 33.

located in England, notably in London, while just a few of them (probably less than a hundred) were to be found in Wales.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Italian population in Wales rose to 243 in 1871 and more than doubled to 580 in 1881,<sup>5</sup> it was not until the 1890s that a significant number of Italians started to be attracted to Wales,<sup>6</sup> especially to the coal mining Valleys of south Wales which,<sup>7</sup> at the time, were being affected by a dramatic industrial growth.

However, Italian migrants did not generally migrate to south Wales to work in coal industries as some might expect, with only a limited number of Italian miners being brought to Wales by a Belgian-owned company.<sup>8</sup> The vast majority of Italian migrants were involved in the service sector and, unlike Borrow's Italian cook, did not originate from Como, but from the mountainous region between Parma and Piacenza in northern Italy, notably from the town of Bardi and the surrounding Val Ceno.<sup>9</sup> Their core occupation in Wales soon became keeping cafés, fish and chip shops or ice-cream parlours, activities which were to become a feature of the Welsh-Italian stereotype in the twentieth century. The first Italian café to be found in Wales was probably set up by Giulio Bracchi in Tonypandy in 1890 and was soon followed by others across the Valleys.<sup>10</sup> As a result, Italian cafés in Wales shortly became known as *Bracchi* becoming a noticeable feature of the Welsh social and cultural landscape.

The availability of cheap energy (coal) and the relatively limited costs of premises made it possible for Italians to set up their businesses quite easily in south Wales.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the lack of a competitive service sector made it possible for Italians to establish their own ethnic

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<sup>4</sup> L. Sponza, 'Gli Italiani in Gran Bretagna: Profilo Storico', *Altreitalie* 30 (2005), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> In this thesis, the term 'Valleys' always refers to the coal mining valleys of south Wales.

<sup>8</sup> Evans, 'Immigrants and minorities in Wales', 5-26.

<sup>9</sup> For example, roughly 90 per cent of the Italians who settled in Glamorgan between 1909 and 1940 originated from Bardi, Bettola and other nearby villages located in the Parma and Piacenza provinces. Source: Merthyr Tydfil Borough Police (MTBP), 'Registration Certificates', Cardiff, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2 and Glamorgan Constabulary (GC), 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>10</sup> Colpi, *The Italian factor*, p. 61.

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*.

niche within the Welsh market and prosper.<sup>12</sup> As Evans has pointed out, mining towns, in south Wales, were the result of a rapid process of ‘primary urbanization (...) which ushered from effectively green field sites rather than from the influence of industrialization on established urban cores’.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, they represented relatively ‘new’ settlements which lacked a prominent service sector for their growing population. In other words, the Valleys were *underserved markets* which suited the entrepreneurial skills of Italian shop-keepers. As Aldrich and Waldinger have observed, the presence of ‘underserved markets’ represents one of the essential circumstances under which small ethnic enterprises can grow in the open market.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Italian shop-keepers were able to challenge indigenous potential competitors because, as Chapter Four illustrates, they could provide both ‘exotic’ Italian products (coffee, ice-cream, etc.) along with more traditional ‘British’ ones (fish and chips, English breakfasts, pastries, etc.). As Aldrich and Waldinger have noted: ‘not only do immigrants lack competitors in “exotic markets”, but they can also offer their products at relatively low prices and thereby capture a clientele priced out of the businesses run by native entrepreneurs’.<sup>15</sup> The success of this entrepreneurial strategy was fostered by the fact that, thanks to their family-based structure, Italian businesses could rely on cheap and flexible manpower and were consequently able to stay open for longer hours. As a result, they suited the shift-patterns of Welsh coal miners. In addition, the spread of Italian cafés was indirectly fostered

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<sup>12</sup> In 1891, only 5.8 per cent of the total occupied population in Wales worked in the ‘food, tobacco, drink and lodging’ sector. By 1921, the figure dropped to less than 3 per cent. By contrast, those working in heavy industries (mining, quarrying and steel industries) rose from 35 per cent to 43 per cent of the occupied male population. Source: L.J. Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics, 1770-1974* (Cardiff, Welsh Office, 1985),

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1700-1974/?lang=en>, accessed 2/07/2010.

<sup>13</sup> N. Evans, ‘Rethinking urban Wales’, *Urban History* 32 (2005), p. 126

<sup>14</sup> H.E. Aldrich and R. Waldinger, ‘Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 16 (1990), 111-135. For a critical assessment of the existing theories on ethnic entrepreneurship see: M. Zhou, ‘Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergences, Controversies and Conceptual Advancements’, in Portes and DeWind (eds), *Rethinking Migration*, pp. 219-253.

<sup>15</sup> Aldrich and Waldinger, ‘Ethnicity and entrepreneurship’, 117.

by the existence of a strong Nonconformist temperance lobby fighting against the consumption of alcoholic drinks. This campaign had led to the approval of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act (1881) which imposed the Sunday closure of public houses in Wales.<sup>16</sup> As Italian shops did not sell any alcohol,<sup>17</sup> they could stay open on Sunday and were consequently able to monopolise the local clientele.<sup>18</sup>

However, authors who have paid attention to Italian early settlers have not been able to clearly explain when, how, and why, they ended up in Wales. Every institutional or media attempt to narrate the history of Italian migration to Wales has tended to provide superficial explanations, describing the phenomenon in simplified push-pull terms.<sup>19</sup> Simply put, Welsh TV, radio as well as literature and museums have tended to argue that, toward the end of the nineteenth century, Italians left their homeland to escape poverty and were attracted to the booming south Wales, which, at the time, was ‘the Mecca, [the place] where there was employment’.<sup>20</sup> As a BBC Wales reporter stated, Italians ‘were from big families scratching a living on unproductive farming soil (...) so they left and went to Wales where the economy was booming’.<sup>21</sup> Rob Giddens’ play *Dreams of Leaving* also portrayed Italian migrants as poor peasants scratching a living in their overpopulated and unproductive homeland.<sup>22</sup> In 2009, Welsh novelist Alan Lambert followed the same mode of reasoning. In his debut *Roberto’s War* the author wrote that the Morettis (an Italian family):

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<sup>16</sup> K.O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> That is why Italian cafés soon started to be called ‘temperance bars’.

<sup>18</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*, p. 57.

<sup>19</sup> As Castles and Miller have explained: ‘push-pull theories (...) perceive the causes of migration in a combination of “push factors” impelling people to leave the areas of origin, and “pull factors”, attracting them to certain receiving countries. “Push factors” include demographic growth, low living standards, lack of economic opportunities and political repression, while “pull factors” are demand for labour, availability of land, good economic opportunities and political freedoms’. See: Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Café Cymru’, 25 September 2001, Aberystwyth, NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>21</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Arandora Star Memorial’, 1 July 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10470836>, accessed 23/09/2010.

<sup>22</sup> BBC Radio 4, ‘Playhouse: Dreams of Leaving’, 1 February 1997, NLW, Cell E123006010/02.

Had come all the way from Italy. It was very, very poor where they lived, Mr Moretti has told me once. His family had all been farmers but there wasn't enough land to go round. So Mr Moretti and his two younger brothers had sold up their little bit of land and had travelled all the way to South Wales to open up ice-cream shops and cafes in the Valleys.<sup>23</sup>

Some Italian interviewees also drew on such assumptions explaining that their ancestors had walked all the way from Italy to Wales to escape poverty. For example, fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti pointed out 'they had nothing, these people had nothing, you know, so poor...They went on and they walked to this country'.<sup>24</sup> Fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi also explained:

Prosperity was much better here than it was in Italy, you know, before the Second World War. I should imagine that, you know, where my family came from was a very very poor area, it was a big farming community and farming then wasn't a big thing, it was survival...So that's one of the reasons why they came over here.<sup>25</sup>

This way of recollecting Italian migration to Wales, to a certain extent, fell within a general tendency, among Welsh and Welsh-Italian people, to portray their country as a welcoming one, but this argument is developed further in Chapter Two. What is important to highlight here is that the push-pull model which has been provided in many recollection of Italian migration to Wales represents a superficial and misleading explanation. As Castles and Miller have observed:

It is rarely the poorest people from the least-developed countries who move to the richest countries (...) similarly a push-pull model would predict movements from densely populated areas to more sparsely peopled regions, yet in fact countries of immigration (...) are amongst the world's most densely populated. Finally a push-pull model cannot explain why a certain group of migrants goes to one country rather than another.<sup>26</sup>

As noted, Italians originated from scarcely populated mountainous areas, while south Wales represented a relatively densely populated area; such an observation is enough to challenge

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<sup>23</sup> Alan Lambert, *Roberto's War* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 2009), p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012. When not otherwise specified, the interviews quoted in this thesis were conducted by the author.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, pp. 20-21.

the push-pull model. Although economic factors did play an important role in causing Italians to leave their country, the decision to migrate to Wales resulted from a complex process, which cannot be explained in solely economic terms. As Bade has argued: ‘migrations as social processes (...) are responses to more or less complex economic, environmental, social and cultural conditions’.<sup>27</sup>

For a start, it is unlikely that Italian migrants who were to be found in Wales toward the end of the nineteenth century came directly from Italy. They probably came from England, notably from London where they had previously settled. Indeed, street performers from Parma and Piacenza mountains had migrated to London at least since the early 1820s.<sup>28</sup> As was the case for Como and other Italian mountainous areas, such valleys were characterised by long-established seasonal migrant traditions which represented a structural component of the local economy. These migrations were part of a wider long-standing phenomenon of human mobility which characterised most mountainous regions of southern Europe.<sup>29</sup> Depending on an unproductive agriculture and insufficient manufacturing industry, families living in such areas had for centuries relied on additional incomes that seasonal or temporary migration could provide; as French historian Braudel wrote, the Mediterranean mountains have for centuries been ‘*une fabrique d’hommes à l’usage d’autrui*’.<sup>30</sup> As Lucassen has observed, such old-standing migrant flows, which could be traced back to the seventeenth century, had by 1810 reached a remarkable volume. That year, 5,100 people (out of a population of 376,000) left the department of Taro (corresponding to the Parma and Piacenza

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<sup>27</sup> Bade, *Migration in European History*, p.ix.

<sup>28</sup> Sponza, ‘Gli Italiani in Gran Bretagna’, p. 5. See also M. Porcella, ‘Premesse all’Emigrazione di Massa di Età Prestatica’, in Bevilacqua et al., *Storia dell’Emigrazione Italiana - Partenze*, pp. 17-44.

<sup>29</sup> On this topic see, for example, Viazzo, *Upland Communities* and Fontaine, ‘Solidarités Familiales’, 1433-1450.

<sup>30</sup> ‘A men factory to be used by the others’. See: F. Braudel, *Le Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l’Epoque de Philippe II*, 2nd edn (Paris, A. Colin, 1966), 1: 46. To deepen Italian migrations up to the first half of the nineteenth century see, for example, G. Pizzorusso, ‘I Movimenti Migratori in Italia in Antico Regime’, in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell’Emigrazione Italiana - Partenze*, pp. 3-16 and Porcella, ‘Premesse all’Emigrazione di Massa’, pp. 17-44.



valleys) to work mainly as agricultural labourers in the Po Valley and woodcutters in Corsica.<sup>31</sup>

Over the following decades, such migration patterns progressively expanded as a peculiar category of migrants which arose in the Taro district (street entertainers) started to head north to the busiest capitals of the time: Paris and London. In London, due to the increasing hostility of British public opinion and to the approval of several laws against street performers in 1864, 1883 and 1889, these migrants gradually switched to new itinerant activities, especially chestnut and ice-cream selling, and begun to look for new markets for their products.<sup>32</sup> Some of these migrants were attracted to south Wales' fast growing economy in the second half of the nineteenth century. In an interview, Pietro Sidoli suggested that Welsh milk suppliers who were based in London at the time were likely to sell milk to Italian ice-cream sellers and, arguably, informed them about the potential opportunities that south Wales offered: a booming economy lacking a competitive service sector.<sup>33</sup>

Once they settled in the Valleys, Italians started to send for other relatives and acquaintances from their home towns and triggered a so called chain-migration. This practice resulted from the fact that, instead of employing local manpower, Italian café-keepers preferred to rely on cheap and flexible labour that they could easily import from the homeland.<sup>34</sup> In fact, more than a rigid chain migration in the Macdonalds' terms, Italian migration to Wales was a 'multitude of small family-based migration chains' which, as Briggs has observed, were often independent from each other.<sup>35</sup> Such circumstances determined, on one hand, the formation of geographically dispersed settlements and, on the other, a significant demographic increase, with the Italian-born population in Wales rising from 567 in 1891 to 926 in 1901, and again

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<sup>31</sup> Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>32</sup> Marin, *Italiani in Gran Bretagna*.

<sup>33</sup> Wales Video Gallery, 'Pietro Sidoli: Italian Welshman', 2003, NLW, V/DIG/A/15398.

<sup>34</sup> For a definition of 'chain migration' see: Macdonald and Macdonald, 'Chain Migration', 82-96.

<sup>35</sup> Briggs, *An Italian Passage*, p. 75.

to 1,295 in 1911.<sup>36</sup> The rest of Britain was also affected by the growth of the Italian migrant population, which rose from 9,342 to 19,476 in England and from 1,025 to 4,594 in Scotland between 1891 and 1911.<sup>37</sup> This increase is not surprising as the overall Italian emigration rate was peaking at the time; according to Italian official statistics, 16,630,700 Italians left their country between 1876 and 1925.<sup>38</sup> That is why historians are used to defining this dramatic population movement, which also affected the rest of Europe, as ‘mass migration’.

By contrast, in the period after the First World War, especially from the early 1920s onwards, Italian migration to Britain, as well as to the other main destinations, significantly decreased. Between 1921 and 1931, the Italian population decreased from 18,878 to 17,398 in England, from 5,654 to 5,216 in Scotland and from 1,533 to 1,394 in Wales.<sup>39</sup> This decline was due both to British immigration policy and to the Italian political institutions’ attitude towards emigration; the 1920 Aliens Order made it more difficult for Italians to migrate to Britain while the Fascist regime, which was afraid that a loss of population could weaken the country’s power, made it harder for them to leave Italy.<sup>40</sup> Being affected by little further immigration, in the 1920s and in the 1930s, the Italian population in Britain became more stable. The increasing stability of the Italian migrant group was testified by its changing gender ratio. In 1861, the Italian population was mainly characterised by single men, with women making up only 15 per cent of the total; by 1911, the latter figure had already reached 30 per cent. This means that an increasing number of stable Italian families were to be found across Britain after the First World War.<sup>41</sup> In Wales, the progressive stabilisation of the

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<sup>36</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> Commissariato Generale Dell’Emigrazione, *Annuario Statistico della Emigrazione Italiana dal 1876 al 1925: con Notizie sull’Emigrazione Negli Anni 1869-1875*, (Roma, 1926), p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 72; Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> The 1920 Alien Order required all alien migrants to obtain a work permit and forbade migrants who could not support themselves to enter Britain. See, for example, Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain*, p. 43. On the fascist emigration policy see, for example, M.R. Ostuni, ‘Leggi e Politiche di Governo nell’Italia Liberale e Fascista’, in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell’Emigrazione Italiana - Partenze*, pp. 317-319.

<sup>41</sup> Sponza, ‘Gli Italiani in Gran Bretagna’, 11.

Italian population was confirmed by the relatively high number of women and by the frequent naturalisations which took place in the 1930s.<sup>42</sup> In fact, as Baldoli has observed,<sup>43</sup> the latter were also a result of practical concerns over the pre-war international context. As the Italian Fascist regime started to endorse a pro-German foreign policy, many Italians in Britain started to fear that their country would declare war on Britain, triggering retaliations on behalf of the British population. As a result, some Italians saw the acquisition of British citizenship as an opportunity to show their commitment to their host country and avoid potential hostile reactions.

Despite the progressive worsening of British-Italian relations in the 1930s, by the outbreak of the Second World War, Italians in Wales consolidated their dominant position in the service sector and Italian cafés became ‘an institutionalised part of local life’.<sup>44</sup> According to the *Guida Generale degli Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, a trade directory edited by Italian consular authorities in Britain, at least 336 Italian-owned firms were to be found in Wales in 1939.<sup>45</sup> Such an economic expansion was also highlighted by the fact that a relevant proportion (10 per cent) of Italian entrepreneurs owned several retail activities at the same time, which were located in different areas of the same town or in different towns. For example, Italian wine dealer Frank Rabaiotti alone owned four stores in the Swansea area (two in Swansea, one in Gorseinon and one in Port Talbot). In fact, cafés (which often functioned as ice-cream parlours as well) represented the vast majority of Italian companies (76 per cent), while the remaining part included fish and chip shops, ice-cream parlours, restaurants and, to a lesser extent, hotels. In terms of geographical distribution, Italian shops were concentrated in south

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, the Alien Registration Certificates released in Glamorgan between 1920 and 1939: MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>43</sup> Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*.

<sup>44</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 76.

<sup>45</sup> *Guida Generale degli Italiani in Gran Bretagna* (London, Ercoli and Sons, 1939). According to the *Guida Generale* 479 Italian families were to be found in Wales in 1939. Yet only 310 families stated whether they ran one or more businesses. It is likely that some of the families who did not state their activities also ran business. Therefore, more than 336 Italian shops were likely to be found in Wales in 1939.

Wales, notably in the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, which together hosted 83 per cent of Italian-owned companies.<sup>46</sup> The Valleys, the heart of the Welsh coal mining community, became the natural setting of the Italian trade; virtually every mining town in south Wales hosted at least one or two Italian shops by the end of the 1930s. Cardiff, Swansea and Newport also hosted numerous Italian cafés, restaurants and fish bars. Apart from these industrialised regions, limited numbers of Italian enterprises were also to be found in the popular Welsh summer resorts of Aberystwyth, Llandudno and Rhyl.

Therefore, as the location of cafés suggest, the Italian population in Wales was geographically dispersed. Unlike the majority of Italian settlements in the rest of Britain and in other countries, the Italian migrant group in Wales was characterised by a substantial lack of ethnic neighbourhoods (the so called *Little Italy*). Such a peculiar geographical distribution, which partially mirrored that of Jews,<sup>47</sup> offered a contrast with other migrant settlements which were to be found in Wales at the time. For example, Arab, Somali and West Indian seamen were concentrated in the Butetown area of Cardiff, which, as Little observed:

Is almost literally shut in and cut off from the rest of the world by a compact barrier of docks, water, rails, fencing, and machinery. There are, in fact, only three ways of entering the area by land (...) so plentiful are dark skins in comparison with light in Loudon Square and its satellite streets that a stranger entering the district for the first time might well imagine himself in some oriental town.<sup>48</sup>

One obvious reason for this was that, unlike black seamen, market-orientated Italians (like Jews) tended not to cluster together to avoid competition. Another reason for this could be that, until the outbreak of the Second World War, Italians, who were generally not perceived as being a threat to indigenous jobs, did not face severe hostility. Thus, unlike Butetown's

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<sup>46</sup> *Guida Generale*.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Henriques, *The Jews of South Wales*. For a comparison with Jews in Scotland see, for example, Abrams, *Caledonian Jews*.

<sup>48</sup> K. Little, *Negroes in Britain: a Study of Racial Relations in British Society* (London, Routledge, 1948), pp. 67-68; on this topic see also Evans, 'Regulating the Reserve Army', pp. 68-115.

blacks and nineteenth century Irish migrants, who were initially perceived by Welsh people as being ‘a homogenous pariah group constituting a very real threat to the health, employment and values of the host society’,<sup>49</sup> Italian migrants did not feel the need to cluster together as a defensive strategy.

Nevertheless, despite their geographical dispersion, Italians (particularly those from the Parma and Piacenza valleys) were able to maintain strong ties with their homeland through in-marriage and visits home. The latter were frequent and could also last for several months or even years. For example, Andrew Rabaiotti recalled:

My father was born in Llanelli, but he was educated in Italy up to the age of fourteen because my grandfather was ill so they sold the business and went back home...He had pneumonia, so they went back home for the better climate (...) but then they came back to this country again so they spent the war years in this country.<sup>50</sup>

The owner of a café in Merthyr Tydfil went back to Bettola (Piacenza) eight times between 1921 and 1939 and stayed there for an entire year on two separate occasions. Another shop proprietor left his place of residence in Merthyr Tydfil six times between 1930 and 1937 to visit Bardi but he stayed there for no more than three weeks each time as the main reason for his journeys was ‘business’.<sup>51</sup> These frequent contacts with the homeland, which were aimed both at business and family gatherings, show that, since the early days of their migrant experience, Italians in Wales (especially those from Val Ceno) displayed a transnationalist attitude.<sup>52</sup>

In fact, the high mobility that pre-war Italians exhibited was not limited to their visits home. Changes of address were also quite common, especially among Italians living in the Valleys, who were likely to move from a town to a neighbouring one within a few years. This spatial

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<sup>49</sup> O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>51</sup> MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2

<sup>52</sup> On transnationalism see, for example, Portes et al., ‘The Study of Transnationalism’, 217-226; Vertovec, ‘Transnationalism and Identity’, 573-582.

mobility was a consequence of the occupational one, as Italians generally started their migrant experience working as shop assistants until they were able to set up their own businesses.<sup>53</sup> This obviously implied moving to a different area to find new potential markets.

For example, second generation café-owner Renato Bacchetta recalled:

My dad came [to Wales] in 1914 to work with his brothers mainly in ice-cream businesses. He worked for Mr Rabaiotti in Newbridge. He was really quick to pick up the managerial side of the business (...) he took on the business here in Porth in 1932.<sup>54</sup>

As Portes and Rumbaut have noted, ‘business-minded immigrants choose to move away from the principal areas of ethnic concentrations in quest of economic opportunities’.<sup>55</sup> In Wales, such a market-orientated behaviour was highlighted by the fact that, as competition increased as a result of a growing number of Italian businesses in south Wales, some Italians decided to head north in search of new underserved markets. For example, Nick Antoniazzi pointed out that his grandfather moved from south Wales to Bangor in the early 1930s to open a new café. Antoniazzi, who still ran the same shop (the *Penguin Café*) recalled: ‘he came here, this was an empty shop, he rented it and then eventually got enough money together to buy it...In 1934’.<sup>56</sup>

In the same period, Italians living in Wales and in the rest of Britain witnessed the rise of the Fascist regime in Italy.<sup>57</sup> Fascist ideologies initially circulated among First World War veterans who had gone back to Italy to join the army. However, they soon reached out to the majority of Italian migrants, being fuelled by Italian Consulates, the Catholic Church and *Fasci Italiani all’Estero* (the international branches of the Fascist Party), which spread across

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<sup>53</sup> Hughes, *Lime, Lemon and Sarsaparilla*, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Café Cymru’, NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>55</sup> A. Portes and R.G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: a Portrait* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996), p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*.

British cities, including Cardiff.<sup>58</sup> The *Fasci* in particular played an important role in politicising the Italian migrant population in Britain and fuelling its national pride, a circumstance which, to a certain extent, recalls the Irish nationalist experience.<sup>59</sup> When Italy occupied Ethiopia in 1936, patriotism grew among Italians. In fact, in comparison with other areas of Britain, Fascism was not very popular in south Wales. Toward the end of the 1930s, as Baldoli has observed, the Cardiff *Fascio* appeared to experience serious difficulties in reaching out to the small and dispersed Welsh-Italian group, whose members were more concerned with the management of family-businesses than with politics.<sup>60</sup> This added to the fact that Italians, whose country's relationships with Britain were rapidly worsening, feared indigenous people's retaliations. Such concerns were to turn into reality. Since the Ethiopian campaign, the British public started to feel a sense of antipathy towards Italy, which they saw as 'a nation of beggars with imperial ambitions'.<sup>61</sup>

Anti-Italian hostility peaked when Italy declared war on Britain on 10 June 1940. From then on, roughly 4,300 Italian male citizens living in Britain and aged between sixteen and seventy were put under arrest and interned as enemy aliens by British authorities, being considered a potential threat to the country.<sup>62</sup> The Welsh-Italian population was dramatically affected by the war, with the most serious occurrence taking place on 2 July 1940. That day, the *Arandora Star*, a liner deporting hundreds of German and Italian internees to Canada, was

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<sup>58</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*. The Italian institutions' attempt to reach out to Italian communities abroad recalls the way in which, since the 1850s, Irish nationalism 'embraced, and found succour from, the diaspora, particularly in Britain (...)' (p. 243). As O'Leary has observed, 'the progress of republican politics among the Irish in Britain was inextricably bound up with the National Brotherhood of St Patrick' whose 'aim was to foster a sense of Irishness by celebrating St Patrick's Day in an overtly political way' (p. 245). Furthermore, the spread of the Irish Self-Determination League (ISDL) across Britain between 1919 and 1921 aimed to 'band together the Irish residents in Great Britain, in order that they shall as a body support their compatriots in Ireland (...)' (p. 283).

<sup>60</sup> Baldoli, *Exporting fascism*.

<sup>61</sup> Sponza, 'Gli Italiani in Gran Bretagna', 13 (author's translation).

<sup>62</sup> C. Holmes, 'British Justice at Work: Internment in the Second World War', in P. Panayi, (ed), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Grouping in Britain, North America and Australia During the Two World Wars* (Oxford, Berg, 1993), pp. 150-165; Sponza, 'The British Government and the Internment', pp. 125-144.

torpedoed by a German submarine and sank. Fifty three out of the 446 Italian victims were from Wales and were almost all born in the valleys between Parma and Piacenza.<sup>63</sup> In addition to this tragedy, many Italian men living in Wales were interned and deported to the Isle of Man and, in some cases, were not released until the summer of 1944.<sup>64</sup> Only two days after Italy declared war on Britain, the *Western Mail* reported that between sixty and seventy Italians had already been placed under detention by Cardiff police, while in the county of Glamorgan the number of Italian internees was roughly 160.<sup>65</sup> In Swansea alone, sixteen Italian men between the age of sixteen and fifty-nine were arrested less than 24 hours after the declaration of war.<sup>66</sup>

There is evidence of the fact that internment had a negative impact on the Italian economy in Wales. As internees' mothers, sisters, wives and daughters had rarely experienced running a business on their own, many shops and cafés closed.<sup>67</sup> However, in other cases, women were able to keep the activities going. As an Italian ex-internee recalled in an interview: 'they [women] didn't close the business (...) they kept going (...) the community helped each other'.<sup>68</sup> As the *South Wales Echo* also reported, the day after Italy declared war on Britain, '[in the Rhondda] most of the Italian shops are open as usual today, in case where the men have been taken away, the women folk are carrying on'.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, the *Arandora Star* disaster, as well as internment, remained an essential facet of Welsh and Welsh-Italian

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<sup>63</sup> M.S. Balestracci, *Arandora Star: From Oblivion to Memory* (Parma, M.U.P., 2008), pp. 367-373.

<sup>64</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>65</sup> *Western Mail*, 12 June 1940, 'Wales Rounds up Italians'.

<sup>66</sup> HM Prisons at Swansea, Brecon and Carmarthen, 'Prison Register', 10-11 June 1940, Swansea, WGAS, D/D PRO/HMP 1/24d.

<sup>67</sup> T. Colpi, 'The Impact of the Second World War on the British Italian Community', in Cesarani and Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens*, p. 184.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with J. Servini, 28 March 1995, Cardiff, SFNHM, Track 9 8002/2.

<sup>69</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 11 June 1940, 'Big Round Up of South Wales Italians'.



collective memory, one that was to lead to a remarkable process of memorialisation (see Chapter Two).<sup>70</sup>

### **Italians in Wales after 1940: numbers, gender ratio and geographical distribution**

According to the last pre-war British census (1931), there were 1,394 people of Italian birth in Wales at the outbreak of the Second World War. The vast majority of them (1,284) lived in south Wales, while only 110 individuals were scattered across the counties of mid and north Wales. Even though they were few in numbers as they made up only 0.06 per cent of the Welsh population, they represented a comparatively significant foreign migrant group, being the second biggest non-British group after the Irish. Wales was also the region with the fifth biggest Italian population in Britain after the South East (12,235), Greater London (10,975), Scotland (5,216) and the North (2,244).<sup>71</sup>

Unlike other long-established migrant groups (Irish, Jews, blacks), Italians continued to migrate to Wales after the Second World War. According to the British census, Italians almost doubled to 2,513 from 1931 to 1951. By then, more than half of the population was still concentrated in the southern counties, notably in Glamorgan (1,271), Monmouthshire (371) and Carmarthen (190), but the western, central and northern counties (Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire), which all together hosted less than 8 per cent of Wales' Italians in 1931, were now home for more than a quarter of them. Those with significant numbers of Italians were the counties of Flint (122), Denbighshire (120) and Pembrokeshire

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Colpi, 'The Impact of the Second World War', pp. 166-187. For a comparison with Scotland see, for example, Ugolini, 'Reinforcing otherness?', 57-70 and *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*.

<sup>71</sup> Great Britain General Register Office (GBGRO), *Census of England and Wales, 1931, General Report: Regional Distribution of Foreigners* (London, HMSO, 1950), p. 179. South Wales (indicated as Wales 1) included Brecknockshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire while the rest of the country (indicated as Wales 2) included Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire.

(118). Considering other foreign groups residing in Wales in 1951, Italians were still an important minority but not as important as in 1931, being outnumbered by Irish (14,081), Poles (6,098) and Germans (3,264); Italians were, by this point, 5 per cent of the entire foreign born population in Wales.<sup>72</sup> However, despite this relative decline in prominence, the Italian demographic increase in Wales appeared to be still significant if compared to the rest of Britain. Indeed, the number of people of Italian birth in Wales rose by 80 per cent between 1931 and 1951, while in England it increased by 76 per cent<sup>73</sup> and by 0.9 per cent only in Scotland.<sup>74</sup> Such a growth could be put down to the presence of ex-POWs who remained in Wales and changed their status into civilian workers after 1945 and to the re-activation of pre-war migration patterns from the Parma and Piacenza provinces (see below).

In 1961, the Italian population in Wales peaked at 4,607 and became the second biggest non-British nationality after the Irish (as in 1931), covering the 10.8 per cent of the total foreign-born population.<sup>75</sup> Such a growth seemed to mirror the boom that Italian emigration was witnessing at the time, with almost three million Italians leaving their country between 1951 and 1960.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, the Italian demographic gain in Wales (+ 83 per cent) was once again much larger than in Scotland (+ 12 per cent), but not as dramatic as in England, where the Italian migrant community grew by 150 per cent. Wales became the eighth most popular region for Italian migrants in Britain (having been the fifth in 1931).<sup>77</sup> The significant population increase which affected Italians in Wales and in England between 1951 and 1961 was, as in the previous decade, due to resilience of long-established migration patterns but

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<sup>72</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951, County Report: Anglesey, Brecknockshire, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Glamorganshire, Merionethshire, Monmouthshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire* (London, HMSO, 1954).

<sup>73</sup> Macdonald and Macdonald, *The Invisible Immigrants*, p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 72 and p. 135.

<sup>75</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1961, County Report: Anglesey, Brecknockshire, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Glamorganshire, Merionethshire, Monmouthshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire* (London, HMSO, 1963).

<sup>76</sup> Centro Altireitalie: Statistics, <http://www.altireitalie.org/Risorse/Statistics>, accessed 23/05/2010.

<sup>77</sup> Macdonald and Macdonald, *The Invisible Immigrants*, p. 21.

also to official recruiting schemes which were mutually agreed by the British and the Italian governments (see below). Yet, such a numerical growth did not cause the geographical distribution of Italians within Wales to change significantly. The vast majority were still concentrated in Glamorgan (2,157), Monmouthshire (655) and Carmarthen (450), with those in mid and north Wales slightly increasing their proportion (28.4 per cent) of the total Italian population, with significant gains in the counties of Flint (+ 217), Pembrokeshire (+ 216) and Caernarvonshire (from 56 to 109).

In the following decade, the Italian population in Wales slightly decreased to 4,480 by 1971 and became the third biggest foreign group after Irish and Germans, without substantially changing its geographical distribution.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, 3,265 Italians (equivalent to 73 per cent of the total Italian population) still resided in south Wales (2,140 in Glamorgan and 775 in Monmouthshire).<sup>79</sup> A similar trend could be observed in Scotland where Italians decreased from 5,920 to 5,420 between 1961 and 1971 while in England they still rose but less significantly than in the previous decade (by 29 cent to 99,030).<sup>80</sup> This situation was obviously a result of a decrease in Italian emigration in the 1960s. After 1961, when more than 11,000 Italians had moved to Britain,<sup>81</sup> the inflow had progressively slowed down and in 1969, for the first time after 1945, the number of Italians leaving Britain had been more than the number of Italians entering.<sup>82</sup> This trend was in line with the Italian emigration rate. Indeed, while many Italians left their country between 1961 and 1970 (2,646,994), many (1,868,620) migrated back and in the following decade, for the first time the number of

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<sup>78</sup> Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), *Census 1971, Wales: Summary Tables* (Cardiff, HMSO, 1975), p. 28.

<sup>79</sup> OPCS, *Census of England and Wales, 1971, County Report: Anglesey, Brecknockshire, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Glamorganshire, Merionethshire, Monmouthshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire* (London, HMSO, 1973).

<sup>80</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 135.

<sup>81</sup> Istituto Centrale di Statistica, *Annuario di Statistiche del Lavoro e dell'Emigrazione* (Roma, ISTAT, 1962), p. 126.

<sup>82</sup> King, 'Italian migration to Great Britain', p. 178.

Italians going back to Italy was higher than the number of Italians leaving the country.<sup>83</sup> This trend was paralleled in Wales, where, by 1991, the Italian population dropped to 3,339, slightly decreasing further to 3,263 in 2001. This means that Italians who had migrated to Wales over the previous decades were not enough to compensate natural losses and return migration.<sup>84</sup> The latter resulted from the fact that, throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, some Italians migrated back to their home country as the areas of Wales where the catering trade had previously flourished were affected by a dramatic de-industrialisation process, which deprived many shops of their working-class clientele.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that, whereas the Italian population in Wales has progressively decreased over the last four decades, the figure does not include people of Italian heritage who were born and bred in Wales; these have not been included in the British censuses, which have only recorded people of foreign birth. As a result, it is hard to quantify the actual numerical strength of the population of Italian heritage living in Wales, which, as this chapter illustrates, included a significant proportion of people of mixed background (Welsh and Italian). According to the leading Welsh newspaper (the *Western Mail*), by 1975 Wales' Italian community appeared to be 20,000-strong,<sup>85</sup> while the Italian migrant newspaper *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles* reported that, thirteen years ahead, some 10,000 Italians were to be found in Wales.<sup>86</sup> In fact, these figures do not appear to be based on any substantive statistical evidence.

In terms of gender ratio, Italians in Wales appeared to be slightly male-dominated, with the proportion of males remaining steadily around 52 per cent of the Italian population between

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<sup>83</sup> Centro Altretalia: Statistics, <http://www.altretalia.org/Risorse/Statistics>, accessed 23/05/2010.

<sup>84</sup> OPCS, *Census 1991: Wales*, (London, OPCS, 1993); ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics, 2001, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 17/06/2010.

<sup>85</sup> *Western Mail*, 25 February 1975, 'Wales and the world'.

<sup>86</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, June 1988, n 6, '7 Maggio 1988: data memorabile per gli Italiani del Galles'.

1951 and 1971.<sup>87</sup> Male predominance among Italians in Wales was even more apparent if disaggregated. In the counties of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Montgomeryshire, Breckonshire and Monmouthshire, Italian women were less than 40 per cent in 1951 and in Radnorshire they made up only 23.5 per cent of the Italian population. Such a gender ratio appeared to be in contrast with the high proportion of women who could be observed among Italians across Britain; in 1951, women made up 61.8 per cent of Britain's Italian population.<sup>88</sup> This imbalance was a result of the 'Official Italian Scheme', a joint British-Italian government-sponsored recruiting campaign which led to immigration of some 2,000 Italian women to Britain to work in the cotton, wool, rubber and pottery industries, and in domestic employment, mainly in mental and tuberculosis hospitals.<sup>89</sup>

As a result, the high proportion of women has traditionally been interpreted as one of the most original characteristics of Italian migration to Britain, whereas Italian emigration had historically been a male-dominated phenomenon; males comprised 70.3 per cent and 74.9 per cent of Italian migrants in the decades 1951-1960 and 1961-1970 respectively.<sup>90</sup> Although it appeared to be slightly male-dominated, the Italian gender ratio in Wales was still relatively balanced when compared to other migrant groups. According to the 1971 Census, for example, Germans were almost 60 per cent women while Poles were almost 80 per cent men.<sup>91</sup> In other words, Italians in Wales appeared to be a relatively stable migrant group by the beginning of the 1970s. This was also testified by the following figures; by 1971, 77 and

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<sup>87</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951* and *Census of England and Wales, 1961*; OPCS, *Census of England and Wales, 1971*.

<sup>88</sup> Marin, *Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, p. 176.

<sup>89</sup> Isaac, *British Post-War Migration*, p. 188.

<sup>90</sup> Centro Altrettalia: Statistics, <http://www.altrettalia.org/Risorse/Statistics>, accessed 23/05/2010.

<sup>91</sup> The disproportion between the two sexes appears even more marked at a local level. For example, in Merthyr Tydfil, Germans were 75 per cent women, while Poles were almost 85 per cent men. Source: OPCS, *Census of England and Wales, 1971*.

75 per cent of Italian men and women respectively were married. By contrast, only 40 and 57 per cent of German men and women respectively were married.<sup>92</sup>

One reason for the relatively high number of Italian males was the displacement of Italian POWs in Wales during the Second World War. POWs started to be deported to Britain in the summer of 1941, following the successful British campaign in North Africa which was to lead to the victory in El Alamein. This caused the capture of a significant number of Italian soldiers; as soon as January 1941, some 59,000 Italian military personnel had already been taken captive by the British army.<sup>93</sup> Most of these POWs were soon deported to Britain to cover the dramatic labour market shortages and distributed among the 155 camps which were built across the country.<sup>94</sup> Other Italian prisoners were transferred to the British Isles from camps in India, Kenya and the Middle East afterwards.<sup>95</sup> Their number peaked at 153,233 at the end of 1944,<sup>96</sup> adding to 24,000 odd Italian civilians living in Britain at the time.<sup>97</sup> In other words, Britain had never been home (and would never be home again after the war) to so many people of Italian birth, a finding that contributes to explain why Italian POWs became so prominent in British popular culture and collective memory (see Chapter Two). This adds to the fact that most of Italian POWs were to stay in Britain for several years, as they were not repatriated until the end of 1945; on 30 June 1946, 17,101 of them were still to be found in Britain.<sup>98</sup>

Given its relatively small population, Wales hosted a significant number of Italian POWs during the war. At the end of 1944, the country was home to 7,262 out of the total 153,233

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<sup>92</sup> OPCS, *Census 1971, Wales*, p. 28.

<sup>93</sup> B. Moore, 'Turning Liabilities Into Assets: British Government Policy Towards German and Italian Prisoners of War During the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 32 (1997), 123.

<sup>94</sup> Cabinet Office (CO), 'State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1944', 31 December 1944, Kew, TNA, CAB 114/26.

<sup>95</sup> F. Conti, *I Prigionieri di Guerra Italiani, 1940-1945* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1986), p. 290.

<sup>96</sup> CO, 'State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1944', TNA, CAB 114/26.

<sup>97</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 72.

<sup>98</sup> CO, 'State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 30 June 1946', 30 June 1946, TNA, CAB 114/26.

Italian POWs in Britain. What is remarkable about the geographical distribution of these prisoners is that the vast majority of them ended up living in areas of Wales which were characterised by small or non-existing Italian migrant populations and, more in general, by relatively few migrants. This situation was the obvious result of the location of camps. These were generally located in rural or semi-rural areas of the country, POWs being since the beginning intended as an agricultural labour force. As a result, one third of the Italian POW-population was concentrated in the bordering counties of Cardiganshire (Henllan Bridge Camp) and Carmarthenshire (Llanddarog Camp). Other Italian POWs were detained in north Wales, notably in Bryn Estyn Camp near Llandudno and in Pool Park Camp near Ruthin. Other Italians were to be found in Glandulas Camp near Newtown, Greenfield Farm Camp near Presteigne and in Mardy Camps near Abergavenny.<sup>99</sup> Even though a significant number of prisoners (2,933) were accommodated in those seven camps, the majority of them either lived in hostels (2,676) or on farms (1,647). Indeed, some ‘carefully selected’ Italian prisoners had been taken outside the camps and accommodated in nearby hostels and farms across Britain since the beginning of 1942;<sup>100</sup> by the end of 1943 those living in hostels already numbered 15,731 while those in farms totalled 9,795 (2,098 and 1,062 respectively in Wales).<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> For the location list of the camps see, War Office (WO), ‘Location List of Prisoner of War Camps in the UK as at 20 February 1947 with Amendments to 6 October 1947’, 31 December 1947, TNA, WO 199/3392. For each camp population I referred to CO, ‘State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1944’, TNA, CAB 114/26. Here is a list of the camps including (in brackets) the number of POWs for each camp (the population of each camp includes POWs who actually lived in the camp but also to those living in nearby hostels and on farms): Henllan Bridge Camp n° 70 (1,318), Llandarog Camp n° 102 (1,072), Bryn Estyn Camp n° 119 (698), Pool Park Camps n° 38 (991), Glandulas Camps n° 101 (902) and Greenfield Farm Camp n° 48 (1,090 units) and Mardy Camps n° 118 (1,191). Another camp (New Inn n 677) was to be found in Pontypool, but the population does not appear to be indicated.

<sup>100</sup> Metropolitan Police Office (MPO), ‘Employment of Italian Prisoners of War on Agricultural Work’, 20 February 1942, TNA, MEPO 2/6871.

<sup>101</sup> CO, ‘State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1943’, 31 December 1943, TNA, CAB 114/26.

Regardless of whether they were housed in camps, hostels or farms, a significant proportion of Italian POWs in Britain (roughly 66,000) were employed in agriculture,<sup>102</sup> the others being involved in a variety of occupations ranging from builders to bakers.<sup>103</sup> Such a concentration of Italian POWs in the agricultural sector was even more apparent in Wales. By 1945, the percentage of Italian prisoners billeted on farms in Wales (22.7 per cent) was considerably higher than in the rest of Britain (10.6 per cent). One reason for this could be that Welsh farmers were encouraged to employ Italian labour through local newspapers. For example, on 6 October 1944, the Carmarthenshire War Agricultural Committee reported in the *Carmarthen Journal*:

Italians prisoners are now resident in the hostel at Llandovery, and will be available for work on farms in the Llandovery area, The charge for their hire will be 1s per hour from the time they enter the farm and commence work, and farmers who require their assistance should communicate with the hostel or with the Labour Officer in Carmarthen in sufficiently good time.<sup>104</sup>

Given the prominence of agriculture in the Welsh economy at the time and the dramatic manpower shortage which was affecting the sector as a result of the war,<sup>105</sup> many Welsh farmers found it extremely useful to employ Italian POWs. As a result, the significant Italian involvement in agriculture in Wales came to be more apparent than elsewhere in Britain. As the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Thomas Williams reported before the House of Commons in November 1945, 5,500 Italian POWs (75.7 per cent of the total) were employed in agriculture in Wales, those in the rest of Britain being 58,000 (39.7 per cent of the total).<sup>106</sup> However, whereas the vast majority of Italian POWs in Wales worked as agricultural

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<sup>102</sup> Home Office (HO), 'Employment of Italian Ex-Prisoners of War on Contract of Service', 29 December 1945, TNA 213/1854.

<sup>103</sup> *The Times*, 9 June 1945, 'Labour for London bakeries: 70 Soldiers to Help'.

<sup>104</sup> *Carmarthen Journal*, 6 October 1944, 'Italian prisoners available to farmers in Llandovery area'.

<sup>105</sup> In 1931, the Agricultural sector absorbed 10.6 per cent of the Welsh male occupied population. Source: Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1700-1974/?lang=en>, accessed 5/07/2010.

<sup>106</sup> T. Williams, 'Italian War Prisoners', 19 November 1945, *House of Commons Debates (HCD)*, vol. 416 c26, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1945/nov/19/italian-war-prisoners>, accessed 18/07/2010.



labourers, a minority of them were employed as lumberjacks (especially those in Presteigne Camp),<sup>107</sup> road workers and quarrymen (in Caernarvonshire).<sup>108</sup>

When Italians started to be repatriated after the end of the Second World War, a significant number of them expressed the wish to stay in Britain as civilian workers.<sup>109</sup> This postponed repatriation was also encouraged by the early post-war Italian government, which feared that an immediate return of prisoners could make the dramatic unemployment which was affecting Italy at the time even worse.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, the British government and the agricultural community maintained an interest in keeping Italians in Britain to fill in the labour shortage that still affected the sector after war mobilisation and losses. As a result, in April 1946 a Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' scheme was 'inter-departmentally agreed' and approved by the Italian government.<sup>111</sup> Because of the scheme, 1,380 of those Italians who were billeted on farms and whose employers wished 'to retain their services' were allowed to remain in Britain as agricultural labourers for an initial period of one year.<sup>112</sup> Of these, 350 were able to obtain a labour permit in Wales.<sup>113</sup> This apparently insignificant number was quite remarkable if compared to that of ex-prisoners in the rest of Britain. Indeed, those 350 Italians were 21 per cent of 1,647 prisoners who had worked on Welsh farms during the war. In contrast, only 7.5 per cent of 13,655 billettees scattered across

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<sup>107</sup> J.V. Wood to F. West, 12 July 1945, TNA, AVIA 22/1340.

<sup>108</sup> Caernarvonshire County Surveyor's Department, 'Employment of Italian Prisoners of War on Roadworks', 1943-1945, Caernarfon, Caernarfon Record Office (CRO), XC 12/2/57; Welsh Slate Quarries Association, 'Letter of the Welsh Slate Quarries Association Regarding the Employment of Prisoners of War', CRO, XPYO/ADDL/1780.

<sup>109</sup> Directorate of Prisoners of War, 'Repatriation of Italian Prisoners of War Now Employed on Agricultural Work', 19 July 1945, TNA, HO 213/1130; H.E. Chandler to H.H.C. Prestige, 3 May 1945, TNA, HO 213/1130.

<sup>110</sup> Rinauro, *Il Cammino della Speranza*, p. 34-40.

<sup>111</sup> J.C. Veysey to G.D.C. Robinson, 16 April 1946, TNA, HO 213/1854.

<sup>112</sup> HO, 'Scheme for Employment in Agriculture on Contract of Service of Italians Billeted on Farms', 16 April 1946, TNA, HO 213/1854. Similar schemes were adopted by the British government to allow 8,114 Ukrainian and 15,700 German POWs to stay in Britain as civilian workers by the end of 1949. See: Isaac, *British Post-War Migration*, p. 183.

<sup>113</sup> Ministry of Labour and National Service (MLNS), 'Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year', 21 April 1947, TNA, LAB 8/91.

England chose to become civilian workers.<sup>114</sup> Italian POWs living in Wales from the late spring of 1946 onwards were also a significant group if related to the entire population of Italian birth, amounting to almost 14 per cent of Italians residing in Wales at the time.<sup>115</sup> Ex-prisoners were generally concentrated in or by those counties where the camps had been located during the war.<sup>116</sup>

In such areas, pre-war Italian settlements as well as other foreign minorities were insignificant or non-existent. Indeed, only a handful of former prisoners were to be found in counties where the vast majority of pre-war Italian migrants were concentrated. Therefore, in regions which had only scarcely been affected by Italian migration before the war, Italian ex-POWs were responsible for triggering small-scale chain migrations. This is testified by the fact that the counties of north, mid and south west Wales (Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire, Pembrokeshire and Radnorshire), which all together had an Italian population of only 110 in 1931, rose to 651 by 1951.<sup>117</sup> Such a demographic increase cannot be explained without reference to ex-POWs and to relatives and acquaintances they sent for.

In addition, such a figure included some prisoners who were repatriated at the end of the Second World War but kept in touch with their former employers and were able to obtain labour permits to go back to Wales a few years later. In their narratives, Italians often imputed their decision to migrate back to Wales to the dramatic unemployment which affected Italy at the time. For example, former POW Raffaele Quaglia was repatriated in

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<sup>114</sup> CO, 'State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1944', TNA, CAB 114/26; MLNS, 'Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year', TNA, LAB 8/91. The number of ex-POW in Scotland is not included in this file.

<sup>115</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951*.

<sup>116</sup> The number of Italian ex-POWs for each county was as follows: Breconshire (2), Caernarvonshire (8), Cardiganshire (45), Carmarthenshire (78), Denbighshire (64), Flintshire (23), Glamorganshire (1), Merionethshire (13), Monmouthshire (8), Montgomeryshire (55), Pembrokeshire (44) and Radnorshire (9). Anglesey was not included in the list. Source: MLNS, 'Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year', TNA, LAB 8/91.

<sup>117</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951*.

1946 but, eight years after, he went back to Wales, having obtained a labour permit from the farmer who had employed him during his imprisonment. As he recalled:

When I arrived in Italy I immediately regretted not having stayed in Wales (...) In Italy there wasn't much work and they didn't pay much, they paid nothing, so I wrote a letter to the farmer I had worked for (...) and he sent me the certificate to call me over without asking me to pay a single penny (...) he even sent me (...) the train ticket from London (...) to my final destination.<sup>118</sup>

Other testimonies prove the existence of such a phenomenon of return migration but it is hard to estimate its real numerical strength. The *Bollettino Quindicinale dell'Emigrazione*, an Italian fortnightly information-bulletin about emigration, reported in January 1948 that almost 2,600 repatriated prisoners had already requested a labour permit to the *Ministero del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale* (the Italian Ministry of Labour).<sup>119</sup> According to the 1951 Census, 1,760 Italian men were employed in agriculture in England and Wales, a figure that was likely to include a significant proportion of former POWs.<sup>120</sup>

Besides ex-POWs, another war-related group of Italians who migrated to Wales and to the rest of Britain after 1945 included the so called 'war brides' (women who married British military personnel) and a limited number of people who were helped by British soldiers to secure a job in Britain after the war. According to Isaac, 841 Italian women intending to marry British men were admitted to Britain between 1946 and 1950,<sup>121</sup> while it is virtually impossible to assess how many Italians were able to secure a job in Britain thanks to British soldiers.<sup>122</sup> Similarly to ex-POWs, war brides and other British military-related migrants did

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with R. Quaglia, 16 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW (author's translation).

<sup>119</sup> Centro di Studi Sociali Della Società Umanitaria, *Bollettino Quindicinale dell'Emigrazione*, Anno 2, n° 3 (1948), p. 40. This number did not include just those who had worked as cooperators in Britain but also those who had been in Kenya and in South Africa

<sup>120</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951: Occupation Tables* (London, H.M.S.O., 1954), p. 608.

<sup>121</sup> Isaac, *British Post-War Migration*, p. 188. There does not appear to be any data on the geographical distribution of war brides. Therefore, it is impossible to know how many Italian war brides migrated to Wales after the war.

<sup>122</sup> Several testimonies seem to prove the existence of such a migrant practice in Wales. See, for example, Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW (author's translation).

not necessarily end up settling in areas of Wales where pre-war Italian migrants had previously settled.

After the war, Italian workers also migrated to Wales as a result of official schemes which were mutually agreed between the British and Italian governments from 1946 to 1957.<sup>123</sup> It is estimated that 17,736 Italians came to Britain as a result of such schemes, being just a small section of a larger recruiting campaign; 114,000 Polish ex-servicemen (the *Polish Resettlement Corps*) and relatives were permitted to stay in Britain at the end of the Second World War and some 90,000 eastern and central *European Volunteer Workers* (EVWs) were imported from displaced persons' camps in Germany and Austria by 1949.<sup>124</sup> Post-war Italian governments managed to send some 430,000 workers abroad between 1946 and 1957, after signing mutual agreements with a number of European countries including France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden.<sup>125</sup> Britain needed foreign workers to fill in the dramatic labour shortage which affected some of its key industrial sectors after the war. As Tannahill argued:

There was a backlog of neglected work from the war years; large numbers of married women and elderly persons were leaving employment which they had taken on or kept up only for the duration of the war; the number of persons of pensionable age was steadily increasing, and the raising of the school-leaving age planned for 1947 would cut the number of juveniles available for employment. (...) To make matters worse, the Dominions were anxious to receive settlers from the United Kingdom and many young and active English men were equally anxious to seek a new life abroad.<sup>126</sup>

On the Italian side, emigration was seen as a way to tackle the dramatic unemployment which affected the country after the war.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento*, p. 6.

<sup>124</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, pp. 46-49.

<sup>125</sup> Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento*, p. 6.

<sup>126</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> For a better understanding of the post-war British immigration policy see, for example, I.R.G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: the Making of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, Routledge, 1997). For the

Wales and its strategic industries were obviously affected by British-Italian schemes. Welsh coal mining, steel and tinplate industries were in need of foreign manpower to sustain the significant growth which they experienced after the war. Following the nationalisation of the mines in 1947, the National Coal Board (NCB) responded to post-war fuel shortage by working as much coal as possible.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, the steel and tinplate trade was soon boosted by the post-war boom in consumer-durable goods and by the expansion of the motor industry.<sup>129</sup> Yet, the problem was represented by chronic labour shortage which affected coal and steel industries. The initial attempt was to fill in vacancies with Polish resettlement corps, EVWs and Irish manpower. Nevertheless, such a recruiting campaign turned out to be unsuccessful, with some foreign workers soon moving to other industries and some lodges of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) refusing to employ non-British miners. As a result, coal and tinplate industries started to look for new ‘fresh sources of labour’ and soon directed their attention to Italians.<sup>130</sup> For example, the NCB was keen on recruiting up to 10,000 of those Italian experienced miners who had just been made redundant by the Belgian coal industry.<sup>131</sup>

As a result of British-Italian schemes, 2,259 Italian workers were recruited by Welsh tinplate companies between 1950 and 1956,<sup>132</sup> while 430 Italians were employed by coal and

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Italian emigration policy see, for example, Rinauro, *Il Cammino della Speranza*; De Clementi, ‘Curare il Mal di Testa con le Decapitazioni?’ and Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento*.

<sup>128</sup> D.G. Evans, *A History of Wales, 1906-2000* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 147.

<sup>129</sup> Evans, *A History of Wales*, p. 151.

<sup>130</sup> Ministry of Fuel and Power (MFP), ‘Memorandum by the Ministry of Fuel and Power’, 5 December 1950, TNA, POWE 37/233; The Tinplate Industry, ‘Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinplate Trade’, 1957, WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2. One reason for the decision to recruit Italian workers could be the ‘activism’ of the British Embassy in Rome, which informed the British government of the Italian labour reserve’ potentials. Another reason could be that the Italian Government tried to persuade the British one to recruit as many Italian unemployed people as possible. In addition, the positive experience that British authorities had had in employing Italian POWs arguably oriented British and Welsh industries attention toward Italian manpower. See, for example, Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento*, pp. 186-188.

<sup>131</sup> MFP, ‘Italians With Mining Experience’, 5 December 1950, TNA, POWE 37/233.

<sup>132</sup> The Tinplate Industry, ‘Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinplate Trade’, WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2.

ancillary industries by the end of April 1952,<sup>133</sup> being part of a scheme which attracted 2,418 Italian miners to Britain.<sup>134</sup> Before such schemes were implemented, an agreement had been signed by the Italian and British governments at the beginning of 1947 to recruit 2,800 Italians to be employed in foundries across Wales and the rest of Britain.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, the scheme turned out to be totally unsuccessful, with only 440 Italian founders being imported to Britain. In addition, 261 of these were repatriated within a year or two, with others changing their occupation very soon, not being able to adjust to British living and working conditions.<sup>136</sup> The scheme's failure was evidenced by the fact that only sixteen Italians had been recruited by Welsh foundries by the end of 1947. Besides this unsuccessful scheme, some 100 stonemasons were recruited by the Pennant Quarry Owners' Association on behalf of the Birmingham Corporation for the construction of the Claerwen dam in the Elan Valley in 1949.<sup>137</sup> Even though this was not an official scheme, governmental authorities both in Italy and Britain were closely associated with the arrangements made.<sup>138</sup> As a result, the first batch of sixteen Italian stonemasons arrived in Britain on 27 May 1949.<sup>139</sup>

Officially recruited migrants proved to be a highly volatile group. Many of them did not settle down and in some cases left within a few months of arriving. For example, of 317 Italian tinsplate workers who arrived in Wales by the end of 1950 'quite a number returned to Italy fairly quickly',<sup>140</sup> while on 12 June 1952, *The Times* reported that 102 Italian miners had left

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<sup>133</sup> 330 Italians worked in Welsh mines while 100 were employed in ancillary industries. See: MLNS, 'Italian Recruited for Coalmining: Possibility of Placing Them in Other Work, 30 April 1952, TNA, LAB 9/248; National Coal Board (NCB), 'Recruitment of Italians for Employment in Ancillary Undertakings: Reception Point Nominated by Division', 12 September 1951, TNA, COAL 26/19.

<sup>134</sup> A.J. Whitehorn to Miss Starritt, 24 January 1953, TNA, LAB 9/248.

<sup>135</sup> Foreign Office (FO), 'Recruitment of Italian Workers for Employment in Foundries in the United Kingdom', 11 January to 30 May 1947, TNA, FO 93/48/112.

<sup>136</sup> Marin, *Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, p. 93.

<sup>137</sup> MLNS, 'Note of Meeting Held in Mr Veysey's Room on 22 February 1951 to Discuss Future Policy for Recruiting Foreign Workers', 22 February 1951, TNA, LAB 9/248. See also: D. Pemberton-Pigott to Mr Gee, 11 February 1949, TNA, FO 371/79533.

<sup>138</sup> M.A. Bevan to M.B. Jacomb, 2 September 1949, TNA, FO 371/79533.

<sup>139</sup> V. Mallet, 'From Rome to Foreign Office', 25 May 1949, TNA, FO 371/79533.

<sup>140</sup> The Tinsplate Industry, 'Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinsplate Trade', WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2.

south Wales the night before.<sup>141</sup> Across Britain, of the 2,418 recruited Italian miners, 286 were repatriated, 340 were transferred to Belgian mines and 403 found another employment in Britain by the end of 1952,<sup>142</sup> with 160 of the latter group being transferred to the Welsh tinplate industry.<sup>143</sup> In terms of geographical distribution, officially recruited Italians did not necessarily settle in areas where other Italians had previously settled, one example being stonemasons working on the Claerwen dam. That is why migrations resulting from schemes are usually defined as *impersonal*; differently from chain-migrations, they are not dependant on ‘means of primary social relationships with previous migrants’ but ‘based on impersonal recruitment and assistance’.<sup>144</sup>

In fact, apart from stonemasons, impersonally recruited Italians were generally sent to the most industrialised regions of Wales, where most pre-war Italian migrants had settled. Tinplate workers begun to arrive in August 1950 following a scheme agreed by the Ministry of Labour and National Service (MLNS) and the employers’ and workmen’s officers of the Joint Industrial Council for the Welsh Tinplate Industry. This was also approved by the Italian government.<sup>145</sup> The vast majority of Italian tinplate workers were employed by plants located in the Swansea area (notably in Port Talbot, Neath, Pontarddulais and Llanelli)<sup>146</sup> and were initially housed in nearby hostels (in Morriston, Trostre [Llanelli] and Port Talbot).<sup>147</sup> The first batch of Italian miners arrived in Britain at the end of May 1951,<sup>148</sup> as a result of a scheme agreed by the British and Italian governments.<sup>149</sup> They were initially accommodated

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<sup>141</sup> *The Times*, 12 June 1952, ‘Some Italian Workers Leave Wales’.

<sup>142</sup> Whitehorn to Starritt, TNA, LAB 9/248.

<sup>143</sup> MLNS, ‘Italians Recruited for the Coalmines: Transfer to Welsh Tinplate Industry’, 13 May 1952, TNA, LAB 9/248.

<sup>144</sup> Macdonald and Macdonald, ‘Chain Migration’, 82.

<sup>145</sup> The Tinplate Industry, ‘Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinplate Trade’, WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2.

<sup>146</sup> MLNS, ‘Recruitment of Italian Workers: Allocation to Members’, 5 August 1950, TNA, LAB 26/274.

<sup>147</sup> MLNS, ‘Italians for Tinplate’, 12 November 1951, TNA, LAB 26/274.

<sup>148</sup> Mr Benton to Mr Ball, 16 May 1951, TNA, LAB 13/51.

<sup>149</sup> Coal Industry National Consultative Council, ‘Extract from Minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting’, 13 March 1951, TNA, POWE 37/233; MLNS and NCB, ‘Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

in a hostel in Maltby near Rotherham (Yorkshire), where they had to attend a ten week language training course.<sup>150</sup> After having undertaken the English language course, they were given a training period of three to four weeks in one of the mining training centres located across the mining regions of Britain and housed in nearby hostels.<sup>151</sup> Italians who were sent to Wales were first trained and housed in Aberaman and then accommodated in various hostels by the pits, in Bryncethin, Hirwaun and Pontypridd.<sup>152</sup> A few Italians who found employment in Welsh foundries were mainly scattered across south Wales (Newport, Cardiff, Pontypool, Swansea), but some were also located in the north (Wrexham).<sup>153</sup>

However, the Italian population's growth in Wales was also determined by migrants who entered the country on an individual labour permit basis.<sup>154</sup> This form of mobility begun soon after the Second World War and was, in most cases, the result of two combined migrant 'waves'. Firstly, it was generated by revival of the pre-war patterns of migration from Parma and Piacenza mountains and, secondly, it included individual migrants moving to Wales to join relatives or friends who had previously migrated as POWs or through official schemes. Women made up the majority (more than 60 per cent) of individual migrants and around 46 per cent of them originated from the same mountain areas between Parma and Piacenza were most pre-war Italians in Wales hailed from. Considering both sexes, about half of individual migrants came from the Parma and Piacenza area;<sup>155</sup> Britain represented the second and the

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<sup>150</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 24 May 1951, 'Yorkshire Pudding Greets Italian Miners', TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>151</sup> MLNS and NCB, 'Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions', TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>152</sup> GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>153</sup> Ministry of Supply (MS), 'Employment of Italian Foundry Workers at 12 November 1947', 12 November 1947, TNA, AVIA 50/45.

<sup>154</sup> The permit was issued to the employer by the MLNS. Unlike POWs and officially recruited migrants, there is not any figure reporting the number of individual foreign citizens moving to Wales. The only existing data refer to England and Wales combined. The alien registration certificates report some important personal data as sex, age, marital condition, place of birth, address and occupation which could provide us a sample picture of the Italian individual migrants in Wales. The figures reported in this sub-section draw on the alien registration certificates of the GRO: MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>155</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.



third favourite European destinations for people migrating from the Parma and Piacenza provinces respectively from 1950 onwards.<sup>156</sup> The other half of individual migrants was predominantly from southern Italy and mirrored the regional provenience of officially recruited migrants they came to join (see below).

In their Alien Registration Certificates, women from both Parma and Piacenza and from other regions were mostly referred to as ‘domestics’ (53 per cent) or ‘housewives’ (43 per cent), while men were involved in a variety of professions (mainly in the service sector). Considering those from Parma and Piacenza alone, 30.7 per cent of women were housewives and 61.5 per cent were domestic workers. These figures are also testified by the occupational structure of people leaving the Parma province between 1950 and 1953. Indeed ‘housewives’ and people attending ‘other professions’ represented the main groups (14 and 64 per cent respectively) of the entire outward population. In the same period, housewives made up 23 per cent of emigrants from the Piacenza province.<sup>157</sup> Such figures suggest that, unlike pre-war migrants, who were predominantly involved in the catering trade, post-war Italians in Wales were distributed over a wider range of occupations. In fact, women who were registered as housewives when they first arrived in Britain were actually likely to join relatives or friends originating from the same town to work in cafés or other similar shops.<sup>158</sup> For example, Angela Di Maio from Mortorserro (Piacenza province) migrated to Briton Ferry in 1948 after having been issued a permit to work as a domestic in a friend’s house. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>156</sup> Emiliano-Romagnoli nel Mondo: Statistiche Ufficiali, Governative e ISTAT, sulla Emigrazione dalla Regione Emilia-Romagna e dalle Sue Province tra il 1869 e il 2007, [http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmondo.it/wcm/emilianoromagnolinelmondo/cons\\_docum/ricerca\\_desalvo.htm](http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmondo.it/wcm/emilianoromagnolinelmondo/cons_docum/ricerca_desalvo.htm) accessed 15/09/2010.

<sup>157</sup> Emiliano-Romagnoli nel Mondo: Statistiche Ufficiali, Governative e ISTAT, sulla Emigrazione dalla Regione Emilia-Romagna e dalle Sue Province tra il 1869 e il 2007, [http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmondo.it/wcm/emilianoromagnolinelmondo/cons\\_docum/ricerca\\_desalvo.htm](http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmondo.it/wcm/emilianoromagnolinelmondo/cons_docum/ricerca_desalvo.htm) accessed 15/09/2010.

<sup>158</sup> MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, ‘Dead Section: Italian’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

woman recalled that: ‘I was in the shop because what they do is you come over, they say you’re working in the house and then they have you behind the shop’.<sup>159</sup>

Therefore, this and other narratives together with various trade directories (see Chapter Four) suggest that the catering trade still played an important role among Italian migrants who made their way to Wales after the Second World War. This is also testified by the fact that some ex-POWs and officially recruited workers also moved to the food and drink sector afterwards (see below). Such a concentration in the catering trade seemed to mirror the dramatic service sector expansion that occurred in post-war Britain; by 1967, over a million people were earning their living by providing hotel and catering services.<sup>160</sup> This growth was boosted by an economic boom which created an increasing demand for leisure goods. As a result, after 1945, ice-cream parlours and cafés still represented identification traits of the Italian migrant group in Wales. This occupational structure seemed to mirror the broader British picture; by 1951, 38 per cent of Italian men and 65 per cent of Italian women in Britain were working in the service sector.<sup>161</sup>

### **Italians in Wales after 1940: origin, migrant strategies and spatial mobility**

POWs and impersonally recruited workers led to change in the geographical origin of the Italian population in Wales. POWs did not originate from any specific Italian district or region as they virtually came from every part of the Peninsula.<sup>162</sup> Officially recruited workers also originated from almost all Italian provinces, notably from those located in the south. For example, 76 per cent of tinsplate workers who migrated to Wales were from southern and

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<sup>159</sup> Interview with A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>160</sup> National Economic Development Office, *Your Manpower: a Practical Guide to the Manpower Statistics of the Hotel and Catering Industry* (London, HMSO, 1967), p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951: Occupation Tables*, p. 608.

<sup>162</sup> The list of ex-POWs billeted on British farms does not report their place of birth/residence. Source: MLNS, ‘Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year’, TNA, LAB 8/91.

central Italy. Apulia, Campania and Molise (in the south) were the three most represented regions, followed by Abruzzi and Latium (in central Italy). At the provincial level, southern Italy was still the main emigration area. Naples (Campania), Campobasso (Molise), Lecce, Foggia and Brindisi (Apulia) were the top five sending provinces. The only northern areas which sent appreciable numbers of tinsplate workers to Wales were Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna and Veneto. Nevertheless those three regions covered only 12 per cent of Italians employed by Welsh tinsplate industries, only 2.4 per cent of migrants hailing from the Parma and Piacenza provinces. This figure suggests that, within the traditional area of migration to Wales, only a marginal number of people migrated through official schemes. Taking advantage of long-established migrant social networks, people residing in that area did not have any need to rely on recruiting agencies to migrate to Wales.<sup>163</sup>

Similar to tinsplate workers, the majority of miners who were employed by Welsh coal and ancillary industries originated from southern Italy. For example, on 24 January 1952, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that 100 Italians being employed by the South Wales Patent Fuel Works were mostly from the Naples district.<sup>164</sup> On 14 November 1951, roughly six months after the recruiting scheme started, 70 per cent of Italian miners working in Britain were from the southern regions of the Peninsula.<sup>165</sup> Sicily appeared to be the main catchment area, followed by Apulia, Campania and Molise.<sup>166</sup> None of the northern regions sent a significant

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<sup>163</sup> MLNS, 'Italian Workers for the Tinsplate Industry in South Wales, 1950-1954', TNA, LAB 26/274; MLNS, 'Italian Workers for the Tinsplate Industry in South Wales, 1955-1956', TNA, LAB 26/275. These two files report lists of Italian workers recruited by the Welsh tinsplate industry between 1950 and 1956. Nevertheless, the lists are incomplete as they report personal data (name, date of birth, place of birth and last residence in Italy) of only 1,347 workers out of the total 2,259 recruited by the Welsh tinsplate industry. The figures reported in this sub-paragraph draw on such a sample and have been collected and processed by the author.

<sup>164</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 January 1952, 'Unrest Among Italians in South Wales', TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>165</sup> MLNS, 'UK Recruitment of Coalminers: Situation Report', 14 November 1951, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>166</sup> NCB, 'Recruitment of Italian Workmen: Screenings Arrangements and Reports', January 1951-February 1952, TNA, COAL 26/17. The lists (reporting the provincial provenience of the interviewees) included in this file refer only to 1,225 candidates who were interviewed and selected by Italian and British authorities for the recruitment in British mines between June 1951 and February 1952. Nevertheless it does not say how many of them actually migrated to Britain. There does not seem to exist any detailed report concerning the regional/provincial provenience of Italian miners in Britain divided by regional mining division. It is therefore not possible to know the exact regional/provincial origin of Italian miners in Wales.

number of coal miners to Britain. At a provincial level, Agrigento (Sicily) was the main exporter of labour, followed by Brindisi (Apulia), Campobasso (Molise), Foggia (Apulia) and Siracusa (Sicily). The number of southern Italians living in Wales was boosted by relatives and friends who joined the officially recruited workers afterwards.<sup>167</sup> The changing geographical origin of the Italian migrant population in Wales after 1940 appeared to be consistent with the rest of Britain. While the majority of pre-war Italian migrants had mainly come from Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Lombardy and Piedmont (in northern Italy), the majority of the post-war ones originated from Campania, Sicily, Calabria, Basilicata, Molise and Apulia (in the south).<sup>168</sup> This regional shift was as a result of official schemes, whose catchment areas ended up being southern-dominated, despite the British authorities' wish to recruiting labour from northern Italy.

The correspondence between British bodies involved in the recruiting schemes testify that northern migrants were preferred to their counterparts from the south. Such attitudes certainly drew on old-standing stereotypes and recalled the way in which, forty years before, the US Immigration Commission had famously alleged that northern Italians were racially superior to their southern counterparts.<sup>169</sup> Wales was not immune to this form of prejudice, a finding which contributes to challenge the very notion of Welsh tolerance. For example, the chairman of the Joint Industrial Committee for the Welsh Tinplate Industry Captain Leighton Davies declared that he 'hoped to be able to recruit mainly in the north of Italy'.<sup>170</sup> Northern Italians

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<sup>167</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>168</sup> King, 'Italian Migration to Great Britain', p.182.

<sup>169</sup> As the Commission reported: 'ethnologically there are two distinct branches of the Italian race: the North and the South Italian. (...) It may be briefly said, however, that the North Italians have a large admixture of Celtic and Teutonic blood, while the South Italians are largely a mixed type in which Greek, Spanish, Saracen, and other blood is more or less prominent'. See: United States Immigration Commission, *Emigration Conditions in Europe*, serial set vol. 5870 (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 177, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/stanfordimmigrationdillingham/docDetail.action?docID=10006594&page=177>, accessed 6/02/2012.

<sup>170</sup> MLNS, 'Proposed Recruitment of Additional Italian Workers for the Tinplate Industry', 20 March 1951, TNA, LAB 26/274.

were reported to be ‘bigger in stature and generally much better dressed’<sup>171</sup> than their southern counterparts, who were generally seen as dirty and illiterate.<sup>172</sup> The NCB commission in Italy suggested to encourage northern Italian miners already in Britain to send letters to their relatives and friends in Italy to persuade them to apply for the scheme.<sup>173</sup>

Nevertheless, every attempt to recruit more Italians from the north failed. This was due to competition of other recruiting countries. In November 1951, the *Ministero del Lavoro*’s official Mr Tucci reported:

In northern Italy recruitment of miners is under way for Belgium, France and Australia. These destinations for a variety of reasons offer greater attractions [than Britain]. (...) In the South instead for the time being recruitment from Belgium is on a reduced scale, and for France completely stopped.<sup>174</sup>

According to the NCB and MLNS, the difficulties encountered by British authorities in recruiting north Italians were also determined by the competing northern Italian economy. Due to frequent delays in calling potential migrants for embarkation (after these had already been selected by the recruiting commission), northern Italians often got ‘tired of waiting to be sent to England and accepted other work’.<sup>175</sup> Apart from these considerations, the location and organisation of the *Centri di Emigrazione* (emigration centres) also caused Italian miners and tinplate workers to be mainly from the south. The recruiting schemes were advertised at a provincial level in the *Uffici del Lavoro e della Massima Occupazione* (employment centres). Applicants were first screened in such offices and then sent to the *Centri di Emigrazione* in Milan, Genoa and Naples where they were interviewed and medically examined by a mixed British-Italian commission.<sup>176</sup> The recruiting mission based in Naples turned out to be the

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<sup>171</sup> W. Perston to Miss Starritt, 14 November 1951, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>172</sup> The British Consulate General (Milan) to Miss Starritt, 3 November 1951, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>173</sup> NCB, ‘Recruitment of Italian Workers for Underground Coal Mining’, 7 December 1951, TNA, COAL 26/17.

<sup>174</sup> MLNS, ‘UK Recruitment of Coalminers: Situation Report’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>175</sup> NCB, ‘Report on Recruitment of Italians for Coalmining’, 10 June 1951, TNA, COAL 26/17.

<sup>176</sup> M. Colucci, ‘Istituzioni ed Emigrazione nell’Italia del Secondo Dopoguerra’, *Altreitalie* 36 (2008), 17-25.

most active and successful.<sup>177</sup> By contrast, the recruiting missions' failure in northern Italy was mainly due to Italian authorities' limited cooperation. As the British Consul in Milan commented: 'on our return to the Centre at Milan we had talks with the Director and I was surprised to find that he showed little interest in further recruitment for coalmining (...) it is quite obvious that the Italian policy is more or less to force the Commission to recruit only in the south'.<sup>178</sup>

Southern Italian migrants were generally single and young unskilled labourers who had not experienced working in mines or in factories. Only a minority of them had previously worked in the Sicilian sulphur mines.<sup>179</sup> As the NCB recruiting commission in Italy reported on 6 October 1951:

The men brought forward for interview were generally of a good standard, and were building trade labourers, stevedores, farm workers, unskilled fitters and blacksmiths, etc. Mainly they came from Sicily and various provinces in southern Italy, and were clean and young, even if some of them were not really well dressed. All were enthusiastic for work in British Coalmining. (...) About 80 per cent of those interviewed were single men, ranging between the age of 18 and 23.<sup>180</sup>

However, Italians migrating to Wales and the rest of Britain under official schemes were generally not described in such positive terms. According to the majority of recruiting commissions' reports, a significant number of Italian applicants, notably those from the south, were dirty, illiterate and physically unfit. By contrast, Italian POWs were generally reported to be of good physique, wiry and virile.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> A.F.A. Sutherland to E.J. Toogood, 7 October 1953, TNA, LAB 26/274; NCB, 'Report on Recruitment of Italians for Coalmining', 10 June 1951, TNA, COAL 26/17; NCB, 'Recruitment of Italian for Coalmining', 3 November 1951, TNA, COAL 26/17.

<sup>178</sup> British Consulate to Starritt, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>179</sup> NCB, 'Recruitment of Italian Workers for Underground Coal Mining', TNA, COAL 26/17.

<sup>180</sup> NCB, 'Report on the Activities of the Recruitment Commission for the National Coal Board in Italy', 7 September to 6 October 1951, TNA, COAL 26/17.

<sup>181</sup> Sponza, *Divided Loyalties*, p. 197

Italian migrants' education was generally very poor. Although those who were 'unable to read and write enough to satisfy the commission' were immediately rejected,<sup>182</sup> both tinplate workers and miners had generally only attended elementary schools without even completing them in some cases.<sup>183</sup> Northern Italians were reported to have a higher educational standard and to possess more working skills, but they still appeared to be poorly educated if compared to other migrant groups.<sup>184</sup> For example, EVWs employed within the same industries appeared to be on average better educated and skilled than their Italian counterparts, some of them being lawyers, teachers, ex-army officers and university staff members.<sup>185</sup> By contrast, Italian POWs' educational standards, like those of miners and tinplate workers, were relatively low, with 5 to 12 per cent of them being illiterate according to British authorities.<sup>186</sup>

Not only were Italian migrants poorly educated, but they often originated from extremely underdeveloped areas, where sanitary conditions were sometimes poor. Even though they were medically examined before being sent to Britain, they sometimes arrived in a poor state of health. For example, in September 1951, twelve Italian trainee-miners in Mexborough (Yorkshire) were found to be suffering from body lice (*pediculi corporis and pubis*) and six out of them were infested with bed bugs (*cimes lectularius*). They all came from the provinces of Brindisi (Apulia), Palermo and Agrigento (Sicily).<sup>187</sup> Like the officially recruited ones, most Italian migrants who came to Wales on an individual work permit basis

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<sup>182</sup> NCB, 'Report on the Activities of the Recruitment Commission for the National Coal Board in Italy', TNA, COAL 26/17. The illiterates applicants were rejected 'in order to avoid a blockage in the pipe-line of the teaching of basic English at Maltby National Training Centre, Yorkshire'.

<sup>183</sup> Interviews with M. Alzetta, 25 October 2008, G. Autiero, 11 August 2008, A. Canciani, 1 October 2008, A. Candelori, 16 September 2008; D. Cassetta, 17 June 2008, P. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008, A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008 and R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>184</sup> NCB, 'Recruitment of Italian Workers for Underground Coal Mining', TNA, COAL 26/17; MLNS, 'Recruitment of Italians for Underground Coalmining in NCB Ancillary Undertakings', 31 December 1951, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>185</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 82.

<sup>186</sup> Sponza, *Divided Loyalties*, p. 227

<sup>187</sup> MLNS, 'Italian Entrants to the Mining Industry', 28 September 1951, TNA, LAB 13/57.

were also poorly educated.<sup>188</sup> They were, on average, older than those recruited through official schemes (men were around 29 years old on average while women were around 31). Of those migrating to Wales on an individual labour permit basis, approximately 55 and 50 per cent of women and men respectively were married when they first arrived in Wales. This figure suggest that, in the majority of cases, post-war female migrants came to Wales to join their husbands. This particularly applies to ‘housewives’, as those employed as ‘domestics’ were mainly single women.<sup>189</sup>

A significant number of officially recruited migrants settled in Wales on a temporary basis only. This is in contrast with Favero and Tassello’s description of Italian migration to post-war Britain as being a family-based and stable phenomenon.<sup>190</sup> For example, on 23 August 1949, the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers’ (AUBTW) secretary Luke Fawcett reported that Italian stonemasons working on the Claerwen dam were not interested in joining the Union because they were there ‘only in a temporary capacity’.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, most Italians migrating to Wales after 1945 intended to settle for a limited amount of time. As the NCB recruiting mission in Italy reported in 1951: ‘the Italian volunteer's chief concern is the amount of money he will be able to earn when employed in British mines and, after paying his normal living expenses, how much he will be able to send home’.<sup>192</sup>

That many Italians planned to stay in Wales on a temporary basis also seems to be testified by their hesitancy in demanding British citizenship; by 1961, less than 19 per cent of them had been naturalised while, for example, almost 60 per cent of Germans had already become

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<sup>188</sup> Interviews with I. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, L. Canale, 8 June 2008, A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, M. Schiavo, 3 June 2008 and S. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>189</sup> MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, ‘Dead Section: Italian’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>190</sup> Favero and Tassello, ‘La Gioventù Italo-Inglese’, 299-234.

<sup>191</sup> L. Fawcett to H.H. Montgomerie, 23 August 1949, TNA, FO 371/79533.

<sup>192</sup> NCB, ‘Recruitment of Italian Workers for Underground Coal Mining’, TNA, COAL 26/17.



British subjects (this is discussed further in Chapter Three).<sup>193</sup> One reason for this could be that both official schemes and individual work permits encouraged a temporary form of migration. Miners and tinsplate workers were recruited for an initial period of two<sup>194</sup> and one year respectively,<sup>195</sup> while individual permits for domestics or migrants in commercial employment were usually granted for one year maximum.<sup>196</sup> British immigration policy seemed to be in line with that of other post-war European receiving countries, which intended migrants as mere 'guestworkers'.<sup>197</sup> In fact, other terms and conditions included in the migrants' contracts suggest that British policy actually encouraged foreign workers to stay in the country on a long-term basis. For example, Italian miners were compelled to attend English language and culture classes and to join trade unions. This implies that British authorities wished to permanently integrate Italians into the British job market and society. In addition, family reunifications were allowed and even facilitated. For example, married miners with two or more children were not charged any income tax.<sup>198</sup>

However, despite the British authorities' attempt to encourage integration, many Italian migrants stuck to their original temporary migration plan. As noted, a significant number of tinsplate workers and miners left Wales within a few years or sometimes even within a few months. According to the Welsh Plate and Sheet Manufacturers' Association (WPSMA), early repatriation often resulted from workers' incapability to accustom to Welsh climate, food and industrial environment.<sup>199</sup> Some narratives also prove that language, food and

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<sup>193</sup> GBGRO, *Census 1961, England and Wales: Birthplace and Nationality Tables* (London, HMSO, 1964).

<sup>194</sup> MLNS and NCB, 'Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions', TNA, LAB 13/57. Art. 3 states: 'at the end of this period (two years) it is expected that continued employment in coalmining will be available'.

<sup>195</sup> MLNS, 'Conditions for the Recruitment of Italian Workers for Employment in the Tinsplate Industry', 26 May 1950, TNA, LAB 8/1716.

<sup>196</sup> Isaac, *British Post-War Migration*, p. 167.

<sup>197</sup> R. King, 'From Guestworkers to Immigrants: Labour Migration from the Mediterranean Periphery', in D. Pinder (ed), *The New Europe: Economy, Society and Environment* (Chichester, John Wiley & Sons, 1998), p. 268.

<sup>198</sup> MLNS and NCB, 'Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions', TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>199</sup> L.D. Matthews to T.A. Munn, 5 April 1954, TNA, LAB 26/274.

weather represented major obstacles to the newly arrived migrants' settling in process.<sup>200</sup> In some cases, Italian workers also left Wales to protest against their working conditions. Some foundry workers in England and Wales, for example, complained about being paid less than their job contract suggested and about not being allowed to undertake overtime and piece work.<sup>201</sup> Some indigenous workers' xenophobia also caused many Italians to repatriate (this issue is discussed further in Chapter Two).

Furthermore, the instability of Italian migrants was made worse by economic crisis which cyclically affected certain industrial sectors throughout the post-war years. According to the terms and conditions of immigration-schemes, foreign workers were the first to lose their jobs in case of redundancies. For example, a trade recession caused the closure of fourteen tinsplate factories between January and May 1953. As a result, 300 Italian labourers were made redundant.<sup>202</sup> The same year, the MLNS stated that 'it is the normal policy of the Department that in the event of redundancy the [Italian] men should be repatriated'.<sup>203</sup> As King has noted, such an immigration policy was not uncommon at the time. As the author has observed: 'economists, manpower planners and employers in the more prosperous countries realised that temporarily employed foreign workers could provide a cushion for the indigenous workforce against the effects of economic cycles'.<sup>204</sup>

Whereas the officially recruited Italian workforce appeared to be volatile, individual migrants, especially those coming from the traditional sending provinces of Parma and Piacenza, were usually more stable as they could rely on long established social networks to

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<sup>200</sup> Interviews with M. Alzetta, 25 October 2008, G. Autiero, 11 August 2008, A. Canciani, 1 October 2008, A. Candelori, 16 September 2008; D. Cassetta, 17 June 2008, P. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008, A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008 and R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW. See also J.K. Chadwick-Jones, 'The Acceptance and Socialisation of Immigrant Workers in the Steel Industry', *Sociological Review* 12 (1964), 169-183.

<sup>201</sup> C. Spinelli, 'Earning and Wage Complaints', 1946, TNA, LAB 26/200.

<sup>202</sup> The Tinsplate Industry, 'Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinsplate Trade', WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2.

<sup>203</sup> MLNS, 'Recruitment of Foreign Workers Under Bulk Recruitment Schemes', 2 July 1953, TNA, LAB 13/831.

<sup>204</sup> King, 'From Guestworkers to Immigrants', p. 270.

settle in Wales. As noted, they generally migrated to those areas where pre-war Italian families already resided.<sup>205</sup> Most of them obtained individual labour permits thanks to relatives or friends who had settled in Wales before the war.<sup>206</sup> However, it is important to note that even if these migrants were generally more stable than the officially recruited ones, a significant number of the latter also decided to settle permanently in Wales. In spite of the lack of supporting social structures, tinsmith workers, miners and former POWs were able to weave their own relational webs. Firstly, some workers migrating to Wales on a scheme basis could rely on relatives or friends who had previously moved there under the same scheme and had called them over afterwards.<sup>207</sup> Secondly, some recruitment methods adopted by Welsh industries after the termination of the official schemes appeared to be similar to those used by nineteenth and early twentieth century American mining companies and sometimes encouraged the formation of small-scale chain-migrations originating from specific towns in Italy.<sup>208</sup> For example, miner Nicesio Fantini reported in an interview that the director of the mine he worked for sent him back to his home town Torrealto di Cividale (near Udine, in north-east Italy) in late 1952 to recruit other workers. Fantini claimed to have been able to bring roughly sixty men to Wales.<sup>209</sup> As noted, some ex-POWs who chose to reside permanently in Wales also triggered small-scale chain-migrations sending for their families and friends after several years.<sup>210</sup> A similar process could be observed in other areas of Britain which were affected by bulk recruitment schemes or significant concentrations of ex-

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<sup>205</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>206</sup> Interviews with A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008 and I. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>207</sup> Interviews with M. Alzetta, 25 October 2008, A. Candelori, 16 September 2008, D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, P. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008 and N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>208</sup> See: P.F. Notarianni (ed), *Carbon County, Eastern Utah's Industrialised Island* (Salt Lake City, Utah State Historical Society, 1981); R. Rudnicki, 'Patterns of Italian Immigrant Settlement', in Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants*, pp. 9-17; R.J. Vecoli, 'Italians on Minnesota's Iron Range', in Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants*, pp. 179-189; S.L. Baily, 'The village outward approach', 43-67; M. Giudici, 'Cause Economiche e Sociali dell'Emigrazione Lombarda: il Caso del Mandamento di Cuggiono, 1880-1920', *Storia in Lombardia* 2 (2011), 7-37.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>210</sup> Interviews with M.G. De Rosa, A. Di Giacomo, V. Morillo and F. Todaro, SFNHM, IMW.

POW. For example, bulk importation of Italian brick-workers into Bedford triggered chain migrations which caused the formation of a close-knit migrant settlement originating from only four southern Italian villages.<sup>211</sup> Nevertheless, as noted, in Wales such chain-migrations operated only on a small-scale basis and, as a result, nowhere could high concentrations of Italians originating from the same area be observed.

As noted, Italian workers migrating to Wales under official schemes were initially housed in hostels ‘as near as possible to the place of employment’.<sup>212</sup> Yet, most of them soon moved to private accommodation as they sought better housing conditions and more affordable rental charges.<sup>213</sup> Brown has argued that Italians in Bedford left their hostels for similar reasons and, notably, because they could not stand the food which was provided there.<sup>214</sup> EVWs employed in British industries and agriculture were characterised by a similar spatial mobility; between 1949 and 1956, the EVWs’ hostel population dropped from 50,000 to 3,000.<sup>215</sup> As Tannahill noted: ‘most hostels were for men only, with communal feeding and dormitories for from eight to twelve men. This was an unnatural life’. In addition, hostels were often located several miles away from the nearest town and their occupants were usually not accepted as part of the community by local people.<sup>216</sup> Moreover, the forced cohabitation of people of different nationalities often led to violent disputes.<sup>217</sup> For all these reasons, Italians as well as the other foreign workers moved to the private sector as soon as they could afford to. Initially, Italian workers in Wales tended to rent cheap flats or council houses or

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<sup>211</sup> J. Brown, *The Unmelting Pot: an English Town and its Immigrants* (London, Macmillan, 1970), p. 83. Italian ex-POWs and officially recruited workers in south west England also triggered small-scale chain migrations. See, for example, B. Bottignolo, *Without a Bell Tower: a Study of the Italian Immigrants in South West England* (Roma, CSER, 1985).

<sup>212</sup> MLNS and NCB, ‘Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>213</sup> *Observer*, 25 November 1951, ‘Why Miners Reject Italian Labour: a Failure in Persuasion’, TNA, LAB 13/57. The hostel rental charge was 35 shillings per week on the average. This amount was automatically deducted from the workers’ weekly pay which for a 18 year-old trainee was 77 shillings only. Workers had to pay the cost of transport to the place of employment too.

<sup>214</sup> Brown, *The Unmelting Pot*, p. 83.

<sup>215</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>216</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 85.

<sup>217</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 67.

moved into houses to be shared with the landlord. The final step, for most migrants, was to buy a house. In her study of eastern European migrants in post-war Britain, Weber-Newth has argued that owning a house ‘served as a visible expression of personal achievement and embodied financial security’.<sup>218</sup>

Being relatively few and dispersed, Italians in Wales did not tend to form national self-contained over-crowded units like their counterparts in Bedford.<sup>219</sup> While some Italians did not move far from their original work place, most of them proved themselves to be relatively mobile. In general, a slight tendency toward urbanisation could be observed. Within a few years, some Italians working in coal mines and tinplate factories in south Wales moved to nearby cities (Newport, Cardiff and Swansea). Such mobility was testified by census data. For example, the number of people of Italian birth living in Cardiff rose from 148 in 1951 to 725 in 1971 (from 5.9 to 16.2 per cent of the total Italian population in Wales).<sup>220</sup> In addition, some oral accounts suggest that some former POWs and their dependants in north east Wales moved from the farms, where they were initially accommodated, to the nearby town of Wrexham.<sup>221</sup>

This geographic mobility was often a consequence of an ‘occupational migration’ that occurred from industrial and agricultural sectors to tertiary activities. In addition, as noted, the declining Valleys, where Italian cafés had traditionally prospered, caused a significant number of Italians to close their businesses and relocate in the coastal cities. This process was once again highlighted by census data. Whereas in 1961, 53 per cent of people of Italian birth

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<sup>218</sup> I. Weber-Newth, ‘Narratives of Settlement: East Europeans in Post-War Britain’, in Panayi and Burrell (eds), *Histories and Memories*, p. 86.

<sup>219</sup> Brown, *The Unmelting Pot*.

<sup>220</sup> In Glamorgan, Cardiff Italians rose from 11.6 to 33.9 per cent of the county’s total Italian population between 1951 and 1971. The census does not report the population by country of birth in Swansea and Newport in 1951. Between 1961 and 1971, Swansea Italians slightly increased from 429 to 435 (9.7 and 19.9 per cent of the Italians in Wales and Glamorgan respectively), while those in Newport rose from 296 to 400 (8.9 and 51.6 of the Italians in Wales and Monmouthshire respectively). See: GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951*; OPCS, *Census of England and Wales, 1971*.

<sup>221</sup> Interviews with M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008 and A. Di Giacomo, 12 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire were to be found outside the three major cities of Cardiff, Swansea and Newport, ten years later their proportion dropped to 40 per cent.<sup>222</sup> By 2001, 65 per cent of people of Italian birth residing in the former counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire were to be found in Cardiff (32 per cent), Swansea (20 per cent) and Newport (13 per cent).<sup>223</sup> However, such a spatial mobility did not lead to the formation of any ethnic neighbourhood, Italians remaining as dispersed as before World War Two. For example, in Merthyr Tydfil, both before and after the Second World War, Italian migrants did not form any close-knit settlement, being distributed across various areas of the town.<sup>224</sup> As Colpi has noted: 'more than any other group of settlers, Italians in Wales became geographically dispersed'.<sup>225</sup> This was due to the fact that nowhere in Wales could a significant concentration of Italian migrants be found. In addition, the involvement of many Italians in the catering sector caused their settlements to be fundamentally market-orientated. As Vecoli has argued, occupation is the main factor in determining migrants' places of residence.<sup>226</sup>

Whereas it did not cause Italians to cluster in close-knit settlements, post-1945 mobility often caused long-established migrant patterns from Val Ceno to end up in the same areas where officially recruited Italian workers settled. For example, in Aberdare, in the early 1950s, some migrants from Bedonia and Bardi (Parma) and Bettola (Piacenza) resided in the same central streets where coal miners (and families) from the Palermo and Avellino provinces

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<sup>222</sup> GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1961 and Census of England and Wales, 1971*.

<sup>223</sup> ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend), <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 8/12/2011.

<sup>224</sup> MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>225</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 76

<sup>226</sup> R.J. Vecoli, 'The Italian Immigrants in the United States Labor Movement from 1880 to 1929', in B. Bezza (ed), *Gli Italiani Fuori d'Italia: gli Emigranti Italiani nei Movimenti Operai dei Paesi d'Adozione, 1880-1940* (Milano, Franco Angeli, 1983), pp. 258-306. Colpi has noted that Italians in Glasgow and Edinburgh, who were mainly involved in the catering trade, also tended to locate their homes and businesses on the main trunk routes and at busy crossroads locations. See: Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 75.

were located. Inter-marriages between the two parties were also reported.<sup>227</sup> As a result, contacts between the two groups became quite frequent. Some oral accounts suggest that interactions between the Val Ceno-group and post-1945 (and predominantly southern) Italian migrants were not always of a supportive nature. Those originating from the Emilia valleys were sometimes described as a distinct group by the newcomers. For example, Piedmontese Domenico Casetta commented: ‘the community from Bardi always kept to themselves (...) it’s very much an enclosed community and it’s stayed like a little Italianate, Bardi globe’.<sup>228</sup> Pre-war settlers were also seen as competitors by some post-war migrants who were able to set up private businesses after having worked as agricultural labourers, miners or tinplate workers for a few years. Sometimes they were also accused of exploiting illegal labour which they recruited from their home valleys. For example, Sicilian Armando Cugno recalled:

There was that [Italian] restaurant, it was called *Continental Restaurant*, it employed many Italians, but it paid them nothing (...) one girl (who worked there) (...) was engaged to an English boy and this English boy’s father was a solicitor and (...) he took [the restaurant] to court.<sup>229</sup>

Sometimes, social relations were not supportive even among post-war migrants themselves. This was often a result of reciprocal prejudices between northerners and southerners. For example, Elena Germain, who migrated to Wales from Venice (north Italy) to follow her husband (a coal miner), recalled in an interview: ‘there were many immigrants from Sicily and Calabria but we didn’t associate with them’.<sup>230</sup>

Nevertheless, the bulk of the evidence suggests that relations between new and old groups were generally positive. For example, Italian-owned cafés and restaurants sometimes became

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<sup>227</sup> MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, ‘Dead Section: Italian’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>229</sup> Interviews with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW (author’s translation).

<sup>230</sup> Interview with E. Germain, 6 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

social hubs for newly-arrived Italians in Wales.<sup>231</sup> Even though they were generally located in areas where Italian settlements were sparse, in some cases, POWs also got in touch with pre-war migrants.<sup>232</sup> For example, Umberto Zanna, who was held in Camp 118 near Abergavenny, wrote in his memoirs that a local Italian café was an important meeting-place for POWs who were detained in that area.<sup>233</sup> Encounters between long-established Italian shop-keepers and POWs sometimes also became of a business nature, as the former used to illegally supply chocolate, cigarettes as well as other products to the latter.<sup>234</sup> These contacts were a consequence of the freedom of movement that prisoners were gradually given by British authorities during the war. This made it easier for them to get in touch with Italian migrants but also with the Welsh civilian population. On 21 May 1943, for example, the Ministry of War's Security Executive stated that Italians who were housed both in hostels and camps could cycle to their workplace unescorted up to seven miles, and it even proposed to allow them to cycle unescorted to the nearest Roman Catholic church to attend the Sunday mass.<sup>235</sup> Restrictions were reduced further the following year when Italian prisoners were given the opportunity to cooperate 'in the common war effort'.<sup>236</sup> As former POW Raffaele Quaglia recalled:

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<sup>231</sup> See, for example, J.K. Chadwick-Jones, 'The Acceptance and Socialisation of Immigrant Workers', *Sociological Review* 12 (1964), 173; Interview with S. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>232</sup> Sponza, *Divided Loyalties*, p. 320-322.

<sup>233</sup> U. Zanni, 'Riassunto Memorie Guerra e Prigione', 1978, Pieve Santo Stefano, ADN, MG/91.

<sup>234</sup> O. Llyr, 'La Casa di Dio', 2009, NLW, Cell E1234857.

<sup>235</sup> Security Executive, 'Italian Prisoners of War: Use of Bicycles to Attend Church Unescorted on Sundays', 21 May 1943, TNA, CAB 114/26.

<sup>236</sup> HO, 'Home Office Circular n° 136/1944, Italian Prisoners of War: Employment as Co-Operators', 10 May 1944, TNA, MEPO 2/6871. As Italy had formally become a co-belligerent power on 8 September 1943, British authorities decided to give all Italian prisoners the possibility to change their status into cooperators. 114,473 prisoners out of 153,233 (almost 75 per cent of the total) chose to cooperate by the end of 1944. In Wales alone, a similar but a bit smaller (67 per cent) proportion of the Italian POW-population made the same decision. See: CO, 'State of Enemy Prisoners of War in UK as at 31 December 1944', TNA, CAB 114/26. Cooperators could benefit of more rights. For example, they were paid half of their earnings in sterling (having previously been entirely paid in token money). See MPO, 'Prisoners of War: Italian Cooperators', 19 August 1944, TNA, MEPO 2/6871.



The last farm I lived on we were three or four prisoners and at night we used to go out for a beer, as we were cooperators (...) we were allowed to go to the pub.<sup>237</sup>

After 1945, relations between pre and post-war migrants sometimes triggered new job opportunities for the post-war group, a circumstance which recalls the Italian migrant mobility in many early twentieth century American small-towns.<sup>238</sup> Some Italians migrating to Wales on a scheme basis were employed by long-established Italian-owned fish-bars, ice-cream parlours or restaurants afterwards.<sup>239</sup> For example, pre-war Italian migrant Irene Griffith, who ran an ice-cream parlour in Conwy recalled how she came to employ some Sicilian girls after the war:

There was a school here in Llandudno Junction and they had brought them over on contract for twelve months and after twelve months they were allowed to change job so of course once they got to know we were Italian they used to come and see us every day when they had a few hours off and became part of our family really...So when they were looking for another job and we were looking for staff - because we had a three storey building upstairs and we could accommodate them - so one by one they all came to work for us.<sup>240</sup>

On other occasions, Italian businessmen imported Italian labour directly from Italy. This form of impersonal recruitment was encouraged by a scheme which was arranged by the by the Caterers' Association of Great Britain in agreement with the British and the Italian governments in the late 1950s.<sup>241</sup> As Griffith's brother and business partner Joseph Parisella recalled:

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<sup>237</sup> Interview with R. Quaglia, 16 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW (author's translation).

<sup>238</sup> Rudnicki has observed that, in many early twentieth century American towns, previously established Italian migrant grocers and saloon keepers (who were often from northern Italy) often functioned as 'personal information channels' for newly arrived migrant workers. See: Rudnicki, 'Patterns of Italian Immigrant Settlement', pp. 9-17.

<sup>239</sup> Interviews with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, A. Crisaffi, 29 October 2008 and F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>240</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>241</sup> Interviews with M. Schiavo, 3 June 2008 and S. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW. The details of the scheme are included in the file: Caterers' Association of Great Britain, 'Caterers' Association: Recruitment of Italian Labour', 1958-1959, TNA, LAB 8/47. This file suggests the only one Welsh employer (Glen Usk in Llandrindod) was involved in the scheme before 1959. Nevertheless, the two interviewees (Maria and Salvatore Schiavo) were recruited (probably on the same scheme basis) by the New Continental Restaurant (Cardiff) in the early 1960s.

(...) we brought one or two [Italians] over ourselves on contract and they stayed with us for two or three years and then they could go to work for somebody else (...) one or two worked for us on contract and then they went back to Italy, brought a wife over and then they asked me 'can you help us now to buy a house and to get a mortgage' so I would help them to get a house, we compiled the forms for them, we helped them.<sup>242</sup>

As the passage above suggests, interactions between pre and post-1945 migrants often went beyond mere business terms.

Socialisation between the two groups often occurred in important meeting-places such as Roman Catholic churches, adding to a wide range of ethnic events, which were periodically arranged by Italian migrant associations. Among the most active organisers of Italian social happenings were the local section of the *Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani* (ACLI), an Italian Christian trade union which had representatives in Britain as well as in countries where significant Italian migrant groups resided. Italians from Val Ceno, who in 1976 established the migrant association *Amici Val Ceno Galles* (AVCG) also contributed to arrange ethnic events. For example, Italian tinplate worker Rino Renesto recalled that a family from Bardi (the Bernis) owned a dance hall in Neath where they used to organised Italian dances.<sup>243</sup>

These meeting-places obviously encouraged encounters between the old-standing Val Ceno-group and post-war migrants, particularly in south Wales. For example, as the *Gazzetta* reported in 1989:

The best ever attendance for the South Wales Briscola Championship was recorded at this year competition on April 16<sup>th</sup> at Treorchy Church Hall. This was without doubt due to new competitors taking up the challenge, with the younger (...) members and a number of ladies entering for the first time and putting up some very good games indeed. (...) Silvano Sidoli of Tonyrefail, playing with new partner Mario Cicigoi from Udine, is a second time winner.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>243</sup> Interview with R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>244</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'Briscola: Best Ever at Treorchy'.

As the passage above suggests, *briscola* (an Italian card-game) as well as other Italian social events involved members of both pre-war (Silvano Sidoli originated from Bardi) and post-war groups (Mario Cicigoi from Udine, Friuli Venezia Giulia). Therefore, these events functioned as essential arenas of socialisation. For example, third generation Renaldo Dallavalle, whose family originated from Val Ceno, recalled: 'I've got quite a few friends who are all Italian (...) my parents used to take us [to Italian events] and that's how I met all the other Italians I know, back in the 1970s it was, I used to go with my parents'.<sup>245</sup>

It is important to note that these events also represented an important marriage-market place. Delaney has pointed out that Irish dancehalls were also focal points for communal entertainment and functioned as a place to meet potential Irish spouses.<sup>246</sup> In Wales, up to the 1980s, a significant number of first, second and even third generation Italians met their partners in such events. This was particularly the case for descendants of the pre-war migrant group, who continued to be inclined to in-marriage after 1945.<sup>247</sup> For example, third generation Italian Mario Canale, who owned a café in Ton Pentre, recalled in an interview: 'you go to these dances specifically to see the other Italian girls'.<sup>248</sup> Whereas pre-war Italians' inclination to regional in-marriage endured up to the second and even third generation (up to the 1960s), in the 1970s and 1980s, the younger generations appeared to be more inclined to either 'inter-regional' marriages with the second generation of the post-war migrant group or out-marriages with non-Italian spouses.<sup>249</sup> For example, third generation Renaldo Dallavalle, whose grandparents were from the Parma province, married second generation Maria Gioia whose parents were from Apulia (her father came to Swansea to work

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<sup>245</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>246</sup> Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>247</sup> Interviews with M. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, M. Canale, 31 May 2008 and J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW; MTBP, 'Registration Certificates', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, 'Dead Section: Italian', GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2.

<sup>248</sup> Interview with M. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>249</sup> Interviews with L. Lesser, 4 June 2008 and A. Pockley, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW

in a tinsplate factory). As Dallavalle recalled: 'I met my wife...I was out with a group of Italian boys in a bar when I lived in Cardiff (...) And she was with a group of Italian girls and we knew one of her friends and they came over to talk and that was it'.<sup>250</sup>

Yet, according to several respondents the progressive decline of Italian cafés, out-marriage and upward social mobility contributed to fragment the Italian 'community', with the younger generations not relying on Italian social events anymore for their primary socialisation. As fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti recalled:

My generation, the fourth generation, we didn't look for Italian [spouses]...The strength of that bond had weakened (...) My wife is a Welsh girl (...) it started to then get weaker and weaker (...)<sup>251</sup>

As Mario Canale recalled:

It started fading away in the 1990s, late 1980s, 1990s, you noticed less teenagers going to these things [Italian events]...I don't know why (...) we tried to keep it going, but the teenagers started dropping out so it was just left with the older people.<sup>252</sup>

Renaldo Dallavalle also commented:

My boys don't know any other Italian boys (...) The younger generation (...) some became solicitors, some became engineers, teachers, lots moved away and don't live in south Wales now (...) Some of them married Italians some of them married Welsh people...I would say 50 per cent married Italians and another 50 per cent married Welsh people.<sup>253</sup>

Whereas the progressive decline of Italian ethnic gatherings made out-marriage more likely to occur amongst descendants of pre-war Italians, such practice had already become quite frequent among post-war migrants over the previous decades. Paradoxically, Italian events themselves fostered out-marriage. As Italian dances were not only attended by Italians but also by Welsh people, from the 1950s onwards, out-marriage became quite common amongst

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<sup>250</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>252</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>253</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2012. See also: Interviews with M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008 and D. Weyman, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

post-war Italians. Some oral accounts suggest that this practice was particularly frequent among miners and tinsmith workers.<sup>254</sup> Being young single men who initially did not have frequent contacts with other fellow-countrymen who had previously migrated to Wales, these migrants were more inclined to out-marriage than those from Parma and Piacenza, who could rely on long-standing migrant networks, which had been re-activated soon after 1945.<sup>255</sup> This trend is confirmed by census data. For example, in Swansea County Borough, which hosted a significant number of Italian tinsmith workers, in 1971, 200 out of 255 Italian men and 140 out of 180 Italian women were married. This means that a significant proportion (at least 30 per cent) of Italian men had non-Italian wives.<sup>256</sup>

Marriages with Welsh women were not rare among POWs either. From 1944 onwards, cooperators had been allowed to visit shops, post offices and cinemas within an area of five miles from their camps and could 'speak to anyone and accept invitations to private houses'.<sup>257</sup> As a result, their chances to get in touch with local civilians obviously increased. Even though, until they changed their status into civilian workers, prisoners were strictly forbidden to 'enter into relations of a sexual or amorous nature with women or girls', relationships between the two parties became frequent across Wales and the rest of Britain, with even some marriages being celebrated by Roman Catholic priests.<sup>258</sup> This fact may appear obvious as, in male-dominated minorities, migrants are more likely to find partners out of their ethnic group (one clear example being Butetown's black seamen).<sup>259</sup> This adds to the high geographical dispersion of POWs who often lived in almost entirely Welsh communities.

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<sup>254</sup> Interviews with M. Alzetta, 25 October 2008, A. Canciani, 1 October 2008, A. Candelori, 16 September 2008, M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008, D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, F. Laforges, 5 August 2008 and R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>255</sup> For a definition of migrant social network: Bailly, 'The Village Outward Approach', 43-67.

<sup>256</sup> OPCS, *Census of England and Wales, 1971*.

<sup>257</sup> MPO, 'Prisoners of War: Italian Cooperators', TNA, MEPO 2/6871.

<sup>258</sup> See the following file: HO, 'Italian Prisoners of War', 1945-1946, TNA, HO 213/847.

<sup>259</sup> See, for example, Evans, 'Regulating the Reserve Army', pp. 68-115.

Yet, as Peach has observed, geographical distribution and marriage-practices are not necessarily correlated:

(...) the relationship between residential segregation and social interaction, while necessary, is not sufficient. In Britain, one can divide ethnic groups into the patriarchal and the individualistic. In the patriarchal, concepts of control, family honour, and status dominate. (...) South Asian households in Britain fall into this patriarchal category. Marriage patterns are strongly endogamous. (...) Under such circumstances, ethnic residential patterns have little effect on social interaction. Endogamous relationships would dominate even were residences to be ethnically intermixed.<sup>260</sup>

This argument can, to a certain extent, apply to Italian POWs in Wales. As Chapter Three illustrates, even when they lived in substantially isolated rural regions, Italians were often able to retain a strong sense of Italianness, one example being the maintenance of Italian family values. This can, to a certain extent, explain why a significant number of ex-POWs in Wales preferred to rely on their home towns to find a partner. Some Italians went back to Italy to get married to their fiancées, others were able to send for them and got married in Wales afterwards.<sup>261</sup> In other cases, Italians went back home just to find themselves a wife, or they got married ‘by proxy’ to their so called picture-brides, a marriage practice that recalls the old pre-First World War mass migrations.<sup>262</sup> Even the leading British-Italian magazine (*La Voce degli Italiani*), which was edited by the Scalabrinian Congregation in London, provided instructions on how to get married by proxy. As the magazine reads: ‘the fiancé has

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<sup>260</sup> C. Peach, ‘Social Integration and Social Mobility: Spatial Segregation and Inter-marriage of the Caribbean Population in Britain’, in G.C. Loury, T. Modood and S.M. Tales (eds), *Ethnicity, Social Mobility and Public Policy: Comparing the US and the UK* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 198.

<sup>261</sup> MTBP, ‘Registration Certificates’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8/2; GC, ‘Dead Section: Italian’, GRO, GB0124, 2007/8; Liber Matrimoniorum, Denbigh, SJCCD; Wrexham Diocese, ‘Marriage Register (Parishes of Colwyn Bay, Holyhead, Holywell, Machynlleth and Rhyl)’, Wrexham, WDA.

<sup>262</sup> Interview with M.G. De Rosa, 21 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW. ‘Picture-bride’ refers to a marriage practice which was common amongst nineteenth and early twentieth century Italian migrants in USA. The migrants selected their brides from their native towns via a matchmaker, who paired bride and groom using only photographs and family recommendations of the possible candidates. On this topic see, for example, Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*.

to choose a representative in Italy who will stand in for him at the marriage which he intends to contract in Italy'.<sup>263</sup>

The fact that a significant number of ex-POWs relied on the Italian marriage-market appeared to be confirmed by the census. For example, a numerous group of Italian prisoners settled in Denbighshire after the war. As a result, some might expect the local population of Italian birth to be male dominated in the post-war years. In fact, women were reported to be the majority in 1951. Given that, apart from POWs, the county of Denbighshire did not receive any appreciable Italian migrant flow neither before nor after the war, this figure suggests that Italian women who were to be found there in 1951 were brought there by former Italian POWs.<sup>264</sup> Various Catholic marriage registers seems to confirm the existence of such a trend.<sup>265</sup>

### **Upward social mobility: a successful migrant group?**

Italians in Wales have often been portrayed as being a 'model minority', a term which in the USA has been generally associated with Asian migrants. Not only have both Italians and Asians traditionally been seen as an economically 'unthreatening' group (being predominantly involved in the service sector) but also as a hardworking group, one that actively contributes to the receiving country's society and economy. As Reed and other authors have observed:

Model minority is a term invented by the media. Each time model minority is used it's synonymous with Asians in America. (...) Which minority suffered the most, yet

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<sup>263</sup> *La Voce degli Italiani*, November 1948, 'Per i lavoratori' (author's translation).

<sup>264</sup> MLNS, 'Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year', TNA, LAB 8/91; GBGRO, Census of England and Wales, 1951.

<sup>265</sup> Liber Matrimoniorum, Denbigh, SJCCD; Wrexham Diocese, 'Marriage Register (Parishes of Colwyn Bay, Holyhead, Holywell, Machynlleth and Rhyl)', Wrexham, WDA.

achieved the most. Which minority was able to assimilate the fastest. (...) Model minorities don't cause troubles. In America silence was love.<sup>266</sup>

In Australia, Collins and other authors have also pointed out that migrants who are seen as being successfully involved in small businesses are usually regarded as a model minority by the receiving society. As the authors have observed:

Success stories (...) provide a basis for almost unquestioned support within the community for the ideology of small business. Such tales fuel the Smithian dreams of liberal economists for the resurrection of the free market: a galaxy of small enterprises, where nobody has enough economic power to set prices; a society of free producers, where there is no need for unions. Governments grasp at the dream of a solution to the human problems of restructuring and unemployment: if they lack the fiscal resources and political will to establish retraining and relocation programs for immigrant workers, they hope that a spontaneous move into small business will save the day. The small business sector also holds the best hope of creating new jobs in Australia in the 1990s.<sup>267</sup>

Several authors have observed that Italian migrants in Britain have been successful as a result of their peculiar occupational structure. Favero and Tassello have observed that, being predominantly involved in the service sector, Italians in Britain have not been affected by cyclical crisis and de-industrialisation that have affected Italians in other European countries (where they have mainly been employed in the industrial sector).<sup>268</sup>

Yet, as this chapter has already illustrated, such an argument appears to be a generalisation which does not necessarily apply to the Welsh context. Firstly, not all Italians were involved in forms of ethnic business, with a significant number of them working in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Secondly, contrary to Favero and Tassello's findings, even Italians who worked in the service sector were not immune to industrial economic cycles; Italian café-keepers in south Wales were heavily affected by the dramatic de-industrialisation process which occurred in the area. This chapter has also illustrated that Italian migrants' adaptation

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<sup>266</sup> I. Reed, S. Wong, B. Callahan and A. Hope, 'Is Ethnicity Obsolete?', in Sollors (ed), *The Invention of Ethnicity*, p. 230.

<sup>267</sup> J. Collins, K. Gibson, C. Alcorso, S. Castles and D. Tait, *Shop Full of Dreams: Ethnic Small Business in Australia* (Sydney, Pluto Press Australia, 1995), p. 7.

<sup>268</sup> Favero and Tassello, 'La Gioventù Italo-Inglese', 331.



to Welsh society was not always as unproblematic as it has been portrayed in Welsh popular culture, with a significant number of Italians not being able to settle in Wales and returning to Italy.

However, it is true that a significant number of Italians have been an economically prosperous migrant group, as the expansion of the café-trade demonstrates. To what extent then is it germane to argue that Italians in Wales have been a *successful* migrant group when it comes to upward social mobility? Before answering such a question, it is important to provide a definition of mobility. Mobility can be economic, social, self-perceived or a combination of the three. The first term defines any migrant economic achievement, the second indicates any advancement in terms of social status (e.g. educational/professional mobility) while the last is what migrants themselves class as ‘being successful’. This means that limited social mobility does not necessarily imply little economic mobility. As Brown has argued in reference to Bedford-Italians: ‘though many are confined to manual and semi-skilled work, Italians in Bedford prosper. In most families, the wife goes to work as well as her husband (...) Most families have their own bank account and own their own homes. Many also have property in Italy’.<sup>269</sup> This argument could also apply to Welsh-Italians. Although there is not any specific statistical data on Italians in Wales, various narratives suggest that, even when Italian caterers turned out to be relatively successful in economic terms, such an economic achievement did not necessarily lead to a significant upward social mobility, sometimes even in the second and third generation.

For example, within the café-trade, Italians appeared to be economically and, to a certain extent, socially mobile, rapidly switching from employees to employers. For example, Angela Di Maio (from the Piacenza province) was able to open her own café together with

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<sup>269</sup> Brown, *The Unmelting Pot*, pp. 88-89.

her husband after having worked as a waitress for two years.<sup>270</sup> As Bonacich has observed, such a rapid socio-economic advancement was fostered by the existence of long-standing migrant social networks which facilitated the access to resources such as capital and labour.<sup>271</sup> As Portes and Rumbaut have also pointed out: ‘for subsequent generations, preservation of the ethnic community, even if more widely dispersed, can also have significant advantages. Among the entrepreneurially inclined, ethnic ties translate into access to sources of working capital, protected markets and pools of labour’.<sup>272</sup> However, Italian café-keepers’ economic upgrade in Wales did not generally lead to an effective social and cultural mobility as the majority of them remained confined to the same sector up to the second or even third generation.<sup>273</sup> According to Favero and Tassello, one reason for this could be that Italian migrants’ interests and aspirations were constantly narrowed within a family perspective, as their businesses were generally family-owned.<sup>274</sup>

As a result, it was not until the 1970s or even 1980s that a remarkable upward social mobility started to occur amongst Italian café-keepers’ children. For example, fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti recalled: ‘my dad’s generation, yeah, they all went into the business: you don’t speak to many of them who are doctors [laugh]...They all ran businesses (...)’.<sup>275</sup> This trend seemed to mirror the larger British picture, according to which, in 1973, less than one per cent of Italians in Britain had reached professional occupations.<sup>276</sup> Like Italians, the vast majority of EVWs who came to Britain after the Second World War were not able to achieve professional status.<sup>277</sup> According to Tannahill, this lack of upward social mobility was due to

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<sup>270</sup> Interview with A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>271</sup> E. Bonacich, ‘A Theory of Middleman Minorities’, *American Sociological Review* 38 (1973), 583-594.

<sup>272</sup> Portes and Rumbaut, *Immigrant America*, p. 55.

<sup>273</sup> Interviews with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011, R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011 and A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012; Interviews with M. Canale, 31 May 2008 and J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>274</sup> L. Favero and G. Tassello, ‘L’Emigrazione Italiana a Londra nel Settore dei Servizi: un Inserimento Incompiuto’, *Studi Emigrazione* 58 (1980), p. 227.

<sup>275</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>276</sup> Marin, *Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, p. 185.

<sup>277</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 85.

three main factors: language difficulties, national prejudices and union or professional restrictions.<sup>278</sup> This analysis could also apply to Italian migrants in Wales. Various oral accounts suggest that, over the past seventy years, the majority of first generation Italians have not achieved significant social advancements and have remained confined to the same occupational sectors where they had been placed when they first arrived in Wales.<sup>279</sup>

A reason for this could be that, as noted, Italian migrants lacked significant professional and educational skills when they arrived in Wales. In his pioneering comparative analysis between pre-World War One Italian migrants in Buenos Aires and New York, Baily also came to the conclusion that educational and professional skills were key social and economic upgrading factors.<sup>280</sup> Another reason for the limited social mobility of Italian migrants was the language barrier. This is testified by the fact that sixty odd years after their arrival in Wales, some first generation Italians still struggled with the English language (not to mention their complete lack of any skills in Welsh).<sup>281</sup> As Brown has noted, first generation Italians in Bedford did not achieve significant social advancements either, being barely integrated into the receiving community and having difficulties in learning the English language.<sup>282</sup> Weber-Newth has also noted that for many eastern European migrants in Britain: 'language remained a problem throughout their lives and contributed largely to the restricted possibilities of economic progress'.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 81

<sup>279</sup> This finding draws on IMW's sample of interviewees.

<sup>280</sup> S.L. Baily, 'Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914', *The American Historical Review* 88 (1983), 281-305. In fact, J.A. Tannahill has argued that even the most highly educated and skilled European Volunteer Workers could generally obtain nothing but manual employment and were unable to achieve professional status. We must presume that education and working skills were not always the main factors in determining the immigrants' economic and social success. See: Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 82

<sup>281</sup> See, for example, the interviews with G. Autiero, 11 August 2008, A. Crisaffi, 20 September 2008, M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008 and S. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>282</sup> Brown, *The Unmelting Pot*, p. 85.

<sup>283</sup> Weber-Newth, 'Narratives of Settlement', p. 89.

Although it is hard to observe a direct link between language skills, ethnic affiliation and upward social mobility, it appears that, to some extent, first generation Italian migrants in Wales who were able to advance to higher occupational positions were, on average, more educated and fluent in English and less involved in the ‘Italian community’ than their ‘less successful’ counterparts.<sup>284</sup> One reason for this could be that Italians, who had only sporadic contacts with their fellow-countrymen, were more integrated into Welsh society and had more opportunities to learn English. They consequently had more chances to advance both economically and socially than those who preferred to stick to other Italians. Such a finding seems to confirm Duncan and Lieberman’s theory: ‘(...) the degree of residential segregation of a group of foreign stock at any given times is inversely related to appropriate indicators of its socioeconomic status and degree of assimilation and directly related to indicators of its’ “social distance” from the population of native stock’.<sup>285</sup> In his analysis of Italians who settled in St. Louis between the 1880s and the 1920s, Mormino also came to the conclusion that the existence of a highly concentrated and close-knit Italian neighbourhood, which tended to be separated from the host community, had slowed migrants’ upward mobility.<sup>286</sup>

Nevertheless, such an assumption has been challenged by other authors. As Price has argued: ‘sufficient numbers are necessary before migrants can form the social group necessary to meet the needs of persons lonely in a new country without home friends and home customs’.<sup>287</sup> Moreover, Kessner has noted that, in spite of their high ethnic concentration, Italians migrating to New York before the First World War were able to achieve a remarkable

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<sup>284</sup> Interviews with A. Candelori, 16 September 2008, A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, V. Morillo, 31 July 2008, R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, N. Renzi, 6 August 2008, M. Schiavo, 3 June 2008 and F. Todaro, 15 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>285</sup> O.D. Duncan and S. Lieberman, ‘Ethnic Segregation and Assimilation’, *American Journal of Sociology* 64 (1959), 364-374.

<sup>286</sup> G. R. Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982* (Chicago, Urbana, 1986).

<sup>287</sup> C.A. Price, ‘The Study of Assimilation’, p.187

social and economic progress.<sup>288</sup> More recently, Peach has also observed that ‘while the Caribbean population [in Britain] is economically disadvantaged but increasingly socially assimilated, the Indian population is generally economically advantaged but has retained its social distinctiveness’.<sup>289</sup> In Wales, this argument is highlighted by the fact that, despite being geographically dispersed and well-integrated into Welsh mining communities, some Italian miners have not achieved any significant social advancement; although they married Welsh women and rapidly became fluent in English, neither have they generally achieved significant promotions within the mines nor they have advanced to more skilled or better-paying occupations.<sup>290</sup> As the next chapter illustrates, one reason for this lack of mobility was the NUM’s reluctance to promote Italian (and more in general foreign) workers as the better jobs had to be taken by Welsh miners.<sup>291</sup> Other migrant groups were exposed to such discriminatory practices. For example, Irish migrant working in Welsh coal mines in the second half of the nineteenth century were often ‘confined to rough work above ground’, the hostile attitude of Welsh miners being ‘an important consideration in the singular absence of the immigrants from the coalface’.<sup>292</sup>

By contrast, Italian tinplate workers proved themselves to be more economically mobile than miners; by the end of 1956, 354 out of 1,054 Italians still in employment had been promoted to the higher grades.<sup>293</sup> Tinplate workers were also more socially mobile than miners, with some of them eventually changing occupation and moving to the service sector. One reason for this could be that they were, on average, better paid than miners and were

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<sup>288</sup> T. Kessner, *The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York City, 1880-1915* (New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>289</sup> Peach, ‘Social Integration and Social Mobility’, pp. 178-203.

<sup>290</sup> Interviews with M. Alzetta, 25 October 2008, A. Canciani, 1 October 2008, M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008, N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, F. Laforges, 5 August 2008 and A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>291</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 59. In fact, some Welsh ‘indigenous’ workers also had to face similar problems. For a historical background see: Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*.

<sup>292</sup> O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>293</sup> The Tinplate Industry, ‘Note on the Employment of Italians in the Tinplate Trade’, WGAS, D/D Z 53/23/2.

consequently able to save enough money to set up their own businesses within a few years.<sup>294</sup>

As Baily has suggested, Italians in Buenos Aires were able to increase their social and economic status more quickly than those in New York because they had better-paying jobs and were in a better position to save.<sup>295</sup> Baily's argument clearly applies to Italian tinsplate workers in Wales. For example, Umberto Palladino, who migrated to Wales in the early 1950s, worked in a tinsplate factory near Cardiff for three years, then managed a bar in Barry Island for seven years and eventually opened an Italian restaurant and a pizzeria in Cardiff.<sup>296</sup>

Like tinsplate workers, some former POWs were also able to achieve a fairly remarkable economic mobility. Being initially employed as agricultural labourers, some ex-POWs eventually became farm-owners.<sup>297</sup> Others were able to switch to completely different forms of employment, moving to the service sector, initially as employees, and eventually setting up their own businesses. For example, ex-POW Agostino Crisaffi, when released, worked on a farm in Carmarthenshire for four years, then moved to Swansea where he found employment in a restaurant run by the Rabaiotti family (from Bardi) and, after nine years, he eventually opened his own café.<sup>298</sup> Similarly, Francesco Todaro, who obtained a labour permit from his brother-in-law (who was an ex-POW), worked on a farm in Pembrokeshire for eight years, then moved to Milford Haven where he was employed by the local Esso refinery for nine years and eventually opened a hairdressing salon.<sup>299</sup> It is important to note that this occupational migration to the service sector was also common among other migrant groups in Britain. For example, many EVWs from eastern and central Europe opened their own businesses, notably food shops, after having been employed in the industrial sector for

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<sup>294</sup> Depending on age and position, miners received up to 6 pounds per week while tinsplate workers earned up to 8 pounds per week. Source: MLNS and NCB, 'Employment of Italian Men in Great Britain: Terms and Conditions', TNA, LAB 13/57; MLNS, 'Conditions for the Recruitment of Italian Workers for Employment in the Tinsplate Industry', TNA, LAB 8/1716.

<sup>295</sup> Baily, 'Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires', 281-305.

<sup>296</sup> ITV Wales, 'Tastes of Wales', 2 November 2004, NLW, Cell E123 015048/05.

<sup>297</sup> Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857; Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>298</sup> Interview with A. Crisaffi, 9 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>299</sup> Interview with F. Todaro, 15 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

several years.<sup>300</sup> This socio-economic mobility generally implied a migration to nearby towns or cities where more chances of economic expansion existed within the service sector.

However, despite the examples of occupational mobility which have been illustrated, the bulk of the evidence suggests that the mobility which has affected the migrant first generation has been a predominantly economic one as Italians have generally not witnessed remarkable social (professional/educational) advancements. However, as noted, it is important to observe that the actual migrants' economic and social success did not necessarily correspond to their perceived success. Some retired Italian migrants in Wales expressed a strong sense of achievement even if they had failed to achieve any significant social progress. For example, ice-cream parlour owner Pietro Sidoli declared in an interview: 'it was my dream to have an ice-cream parlour and (...), I've achieved it, thank god, I've achieved it'.<sup>301</sup> Ex-tinplate worker Paolo Cavarra also pointed out: 'me and my wife (...) we're fine, we're comfortable, our children have all grown up, (...), we've been grandparents twelve times over and great grandparents three times and life can't get better than that for me'.<sup>302</sup> As the author of an unpublished research project on Italians in south Wales has pointed out:

It is readily noticeable that interviewees have almost unanimously declared that they feel content with their life's situation. Most expressed satisfaction with outcomes, and (...) interviewees who were retired or approaching retirement, are saying that they are now enjoying the fruits of their commitment and efforts. The improvements they have made in terms of material gains and personal growth and change are very significant when considered from the perspective of their own evaluation and standards of quality of life.<sup>303</sup>

In her comparative analysis between Italian, Polish and Cypriot migrants in Leicester, Burrell has also noted that 'sacrifice becomes the recurring image of the plight of Italian migrants

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<sup>300</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, p. 81

<sup>301</sup> BBC Video Nation, 'Italian Stories: Journey to Wales', 4 October 2006, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli1?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli1?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 16/10/2011.

<sup>302</sup> Interview with P. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>303</sup> J. Gelona, *Psychological Factors in the Motivation and Achievements of Italians Migrants in South Wales* (Swansea, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 2000), p. 264.

and (...) migration is frequently presented, especially by older people, as a journey of improvement, a success story'.<sup>304</sup> This migrant behaviour is determined by a 'tremendous economic and psychological pressure to be successful and prove that migration has been a sound choice'.<sup>305</sup> In the Italian case, such an attitude has also been fuelled by various Italian institutional initiatives, one example being the awards (e.g. the title of *Cavaliere del Lavoro*)<sup>306</sup> that the Italian embassy regularly allocates to members of the British-Italian 'community' in 'recognition of their significant contribution to Italian national development through their work'.<sup>307</sup> Several Welsh-Italians, in their narratives, highlighted the fact that they had been awarded the title of *Cavaliere*.<sup>308</sup> As Fortier has pointed out: 'in Italian immigrant historicity, labour is tightly bound to suffering and sacrifice. But in these state functions, labour is valued as productive of a respectable image of Italy'.<sup>309</sup>

Whereas, as noted, the actual mobility of the first generation has mainly been an economic one, it is apparent that the younger generations have witnessed a remarkable upward social mobility. It is thanks to the relative economic stability that the older generations have been able to reach (despite their low social and cultural progress) that such a significant mobility has occurred, as the achievements of some notable Welsh-Italians in the media, art, sport and academia illustrate.<sup>310</sup> Such a social advancement became apparent in the 1970s and 1980s, at a time when the second generation of the post-war migrant flow and the third and fourth generations of the pre-war one reached adulthood. The different occupational profile of the two groups explain why many post-war migrants could advance in only two generations

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<sup>304</sup> Burrell, *Moving Lives*, p. 57.

<sup>305</sup> Burrell, *Moving Lives*, p. 58.

<sup>306</sup> 'Cavaliere del Lavoro' could be translated as 'Labour Knight'.

<sup>307</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 94.

<sup>308</sup> Interviews with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008 and N. Fantini, 25 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>309</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 94.

<sup>310</sup> Some notable Welsh-Italians include boxers Joe Calzaghe and Enzo Maccarinelli, footballers Donato and Daniel Nardiello, rugby players Robert and Peter Sidoli and Mark Perego, actor Victor Spinetti, artist Andrew Vicari, journalists Mario Basini (Western Mail), Nick Servini (BBC Wales) and Marie Claire Ceri Jones (ITV Wales) and academic Gino Bedani.



while it sometimes took three or four generations for the pre-war group to socially upgrade. Given their involvement in an economically successful niche (the café-trade), pre-war Italians' children and grandchildren had all the interest in keeping their fathers' businesses going at a time when the receiving society was yet to offer significant educational and professional alternatives.

However, from the 1970s onwards, the progressive economic decline of the café-niche and the long working hours which self-employment often entailed made family-business appear unattractive to the third and fourth generations, at a time when Welsh society was witnessing a significant professional and educational mobility.<sup>311</sup> For example, second generation Joseph Parisella pointed out that the younger generations would not carry on with their fathers' ice-cream van trade because:

The Italian families would work seven days a week, from 8 in the morning to 10 o'clock at night and for eight months of the year and willingly do it, but now the Italians, this generation of Italians now say 'we don't want to do what our ancestors have done, we want to work from 9 till 5, Monday to Friday and I want my weekends off, I want to enjoy myself' and they don't want to put the hours in.<sup>312</sup>

As fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti also commented: 'when you get to my generation (...) my cousins are medical physics, computing doctors, accountants so there wasn't the pull, there's not the pull to do it [running the café] (...) because I think the opportunities have arisen and it's a hard life, you know, it is seven days a week'.<sup>313</sup> As second generation Pietro Sidoli also pointed out: 'there are very few of us left in this type of business, I think that 80 per cent of the cafés in Wales (...) 80 per cent out of the business'.<sup>314</sup> As second generation

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<sup>311</sup> The number of people working in the professional, literary and managerial sector rose from 115,830 to 345,780 between 1971 and 1991. The number of school leavers going into higher education increased from 8,000 in 1973 to 21,000 in 1996. The number of university students per 10,000 inhabitants increased from 20.4 in 1974 to 36.6 in 1994, (in South Glamorgan from less than 33 to more than 43/10,000). Source: Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics, 1974-1996*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1974-1996/?lang=en>, accessed 2/02/2011.

<sup>312</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>313</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>314</sup> BBC Video Nation, 'Italian Stories: Wales, Journey to Wales',

Renato Bacchetta also observed: 'my son has got a Master of Science and doesn't want to come into this business (...) new generation Italians are finding new jobs'.<sup>315</sup>

Therefore, whereas it took three or four generations for the pre-war group to remarkably upgrade in social terms, the post-war group was able to advance in only two generations. One reason for this could be that post-war migrants' children, unlike the pre-war ones, did not generally have the opportunity to go into the family-business, as their fathers had, in most cases, been employed in the industrial or agricultural sectors. Another reason for this could be that post-war migrants' children had the chance to grow up at a time when the receiving society witnessed a significant educational and professional mobility and, thanks to the relative economic stability that their parents could achieve, were encouraged to go into higher education. As a result, a significant number of second and third generation Italians have obtained degrees and reached high professional positions such as, for example, accountants or university lecturers.<sup>316</sup> Italian children's success has frequently been celebrated by the migrant newspaper *Gazzetta*, which dedicated the column 'where are they now?' to academic and professional achievements of the Welsh-Italian community's younger members.<sup>317</sup> This appeared to be a result of the same self-celebratory attitude which first generation Italians showed toward their own economic achievements, which has previously been illustrated. In other words, through the *Gazzetta*, the first generation continued to celebrate its successful migrant experience, highlighting the success of its children and grandchildren. This attitude was not unique to Italians in Wales, as also in Scotland the Italian migrant newspaper *Italiani*

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[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli1?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli1?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 16/10/2011.

<sup>315</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Cafè Cymru', NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>316</sup> Interviews with S. Canale, 31 May 2008, A. Hughes, 23 October 2008, L. Lesser, 4 June 2008, A. Morelli, 1 October 2008, A. Morris, 7 October 2008 and A. Pockley, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>317</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, 1990-1996.

*in Scozia* repeatedly celebrated the academic achievements of *figli degli Italiani* (Italians' children).<sup>318</sup>

In Wales, successful second and third generation Italians seemed to have at least two characteristics in common: a Welsh partner and little involvement in the Italian 'community'. On the other hand, Italians who were born in their country and were brought to Wales when they were still children (under 12) were, more than the Welsh-born ones, involved in their ethnic group and often had Italian or Welsh-Italian partners. They have generally been less 'successful' than their Welsh-born counterparts, often encountering difficulties at school (especially in learning English and Welsh) and not reaching white-collar positions.<sup>319</sup> These findings parallel what has been argued by Sabino in Switzerland, where those who were born in Italy and joined their parents afterwards appeared to be 'maladjusted both at school and in the job market'.<sup>320</sup>

However, it is difficult to conclude that there is a direct correspondence between ethnic involvement and social achievement. There is evidence of the fact that some Italians who have been significantly involved in the Italian community have also been successful in social and economic terms. In addition, low ethnic involvement does not necessarily mean low ethnic affiliation; as Chapter Three illustrates, the majority of Italians have retained a strong Italian identity in their private sphere. Such an Italianness has often endured no matter if respondents were involved in Italian community-life or not and no matter if they had Welsh partners and achieved professional status. Thus, it can be argued that upward social mobility does not necessarily correspond to low ethnic involvement and, in most cases, does not correspond to assimilation.

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<sup>318</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, 1987-1991, 'I Figli degli Italiani'.

<sup>319</sup> Interviews with M. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, A. Schiavo, 5 June 2008, G. Schiavo, 15 June 2008, G. Vasami, 4 August 2008 and M. Williamson, 1 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>320</sup> Meyer Sabino, 'In Svizzera', pp. 147-158.

For example, in spite of its high social and cultural mobility, the second generation has proved itself to be geographically static. In many cases, second and third generation Italians in Wales resided close to their parents' houses, a phenomenon that highlights the resilience of Italian family-orientated values. As Zontini has argued, this migrant behaviour seems to be unique to Italians and results from their wish to live in close proximity to their ageing parents in order to take care of them and, at the same time, receive various forms of support from them.<sup>321</sup> Thus, whereas the Italian migrant group in Wales could be considered as relatively successful in social and economic terms, when compared to Italians in other countries (e.g. Germany, Belgium),<sup>322</sup> the nature of its social and economic achievement has many different facets. In other words, Italian success in Wales is more complex than the simplified way in which it has been depicted by the media and other cultural industries.

This chapter has investigated the social and economic features of Italian migration to Wales in the twentieth century, focusing on the post-1940 period. It has highlighted the fact that, despite its numerical marginality, Italian migration has represented one of the most prominent foreign influxes in modern Welsh history when compared with other migrant groups. This chapter has illustrated that Italian migration resulted from the combined action of three different migrant flows: a long-established influx of caterers from the Parma and Piacenza Valleys, POWs and officially recruited workers (mainly from southern Italy). It has shown that, despite their initial differences ('free', 'assisted' and 'forced' migration), these three

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<sup>321</sup> Zontini, 'Continuity and Change in Transnational Italian Families', 1103-1119. Elisabetta Zontini has argued: 'First-generation migrants often did not provide any direct care for their parents, who stayed behind in Italy (...) Most of the care was done by those siblings who were left behind, often with the migrants sending remittances to them. In spite of this, first-generation migrants tried to instil in their children the idea that the elderly should be looked after by their children at home' (p. 1112). Inter-generational caring practises among Italian immigrants seem to persist also in a transnational perspective, as it has been noted in the case of the Italians in Australia. See, for example, L. Baldassar, 'Transnational Families and Aged Care: the Mobility of Care and the Migrancy of Ageing', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33 (2007), 275-297.

<sup>322</sup> See, for example, Pugliese, 'In Germania', pp. 121-132 and Morelli, 'In Belgio', pp. 159-170.

phenomena of mobility have sometimes had similar outcomes, two example being the generation of small-scale and independent chain-migrations (resulting in geographically dispersed settlements) and an appreciable inclination to in-marriage practices (despite the male-dominated and dispersed nature of Italian settlements).

These findings contribute to challenge outdated dichotomies such as *free versus unfree* migrations. They also show that, contrary to what most scholars have suggested, the Italian diaspora is not just about numerically large and geographically concentrated urban enclaves; the study of small and dispersed settlements (such as the Welsh-Italian ones) can expand and illuminate our knowledge of Italian migration history. For a start, the Welsh-Italian case study illustrates that geographical dispersion does not necessarily mean rapid assimilation; Italians in Wales have been able to maintain a number of links with their homeland through visits home, in-marriage and ethnic gatherings. This means that large and concentrated migrant settlements are not always needed to counter assimilation. The chapter has also addressed Italian migrants' upward social and economic mobility, partially challenging the simplified assumption according to which the Italian migrant group in Wales and in the rest of Britain is a 'successful' one. Although there is evidence of the fact that Italians, particularly the second and third generation ones, have quite rapidly economically and socially advanced (when compared to other Italian migrants elsewhere), the nature of Italian success appears to be more complex than the Welsh media, institutions and museums have shown, as Chapter Two illustrates.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Responses, Representations and Memorialisation

Italians have, more than other migrant groups, been paid a significant amount of attention by the Welsh media, literature and museums, which have tended to depict Italian migration as a successful model of integration. This chapter assesses the reason why such a positive portrayal of Italian migration has figured so prominently in Welsh popular culture and public history.<sup>1</sup> It argues that narrations and commemorations of Italian migrant history have mirrored Wales' long-standing claim to be a *tolerant nation*. Whereas some authors have investigated and challenged such a myth, the representation of the notion of tolerance in Welsh popular culture and public history has been neglected in academic enquiry. This chapter contributes to fill this gap. In so doing, it provides an original interpretation of different social, cultural and political conditions which fuelled the tolerance-myth and also provides new historical evidence which challenges such a myth. After offering a brief background analysis of Wales' discourse of tolerance, it addresses four case studies which illustrate different responses that Welsh people have given to Italian migration and different ways in which such responses have been represented, recollected and commemorated by both Italian and Welsh people and institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> As Jordanova has observed, public history could be defined as those 'forms of history that are directed at non-professional audiences (...)' including documentaries, historical fiction and drama, non-specialist magazines, memorials and museums. See: L. Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London, Arnold, 2000), p. 146. On public history and memorialisation see, for example, B. Howe and E. Kemp (eds), *Public History: an Introduction* (Malabar, Krieger, 1986); R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London, Verso, 1994); S. Porter Benson, S. Brier and R. Rosenzweig, 'Introduction', in S. Porter Benson, S. Brier and R. Rosenzweig (eds), *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986), pp. xv-xxiv; J.R. Gillis, 'Introduction', in J.R. Gillis (ed), *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-24; J.E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials and Meanings* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993); T.G. Ashplant, G. Dawson and M. Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics', in T.G. Ashplant, G. Dawson and M. Roper (eds), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-85.

These four case studies acknowledge the complexity of the Welsh social and cultural landscape exploring different Welsh socio-historical contexts. The first focuses on the predominantly Welsh speaking and rural heartland of west and north Wales, while the other three are mainly concerned with the predominantly English-speaking and industrialised south Wales (notably the Valleys).<sup>2</sup> The first case study, which focuses on Italian POWs, provides evidence challenging romantic recollections of the past which have been provided by both Welsh and Italians. It stresses that such recollections were influenced by the surrounding social, cultural and political climate. The second case study explores the memorialisation of internment and Arandora Star tragedy. It illustrates that both Welsh and Italians have made use of their communal past to fulfil their current social and political needs. The third case study analyses some Welsh reactions to Italian miners who were recruited by the coal industry in the early 1950s. It challenges the tolerance-myth exploring xenophobic attitudes that arose among Welsh miners when Italians were brought to Wales. The last case study focuses on Italian cafés and explains why such a migrant experience has been depicted by the media, literature and institutions as a successful model of integration.

### **Background: a tolerant nation?**

Wales' claim to be a 'tolerant nation' is a long-standing one.<sup>3</sup> According to both Evans and Williams, such a myth originates from the concept of *gwerin*, a Welsh term that 'evokes a

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, part of the first case study of this section (which is concerned with Italian POWs) focuses on Denbighshire, which, according to Denis Balsom's three-Wales model, falls within the definition of 'British Wales' (predominantly British in terms of identity and English speaking). Yet, Balsom argued that his model referred to the 1980s and did not apply to earlier periods. During the Second World War, almost half of the population of Denbighshire still spoke Welsh fluently (Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics: 1700-1974*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1700-1974/?lang=en>, accessed 12/10/2010). D. Balsom, 'The Three-Wales Model', in J. Osmond (ed), *The National Question Again: Political Identity in the 1980s* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 1980), pp. 1-17.

<sup>3</sup> Various authors have observed that Scotland, like Wales, is also characterised by a long-standing discourse of tolerance. See, for example, R. Miles and A. Dunlop, 'The Racialization of Politics in Britain: Why Scotland is Different', *Patterns of Prejudice* 20 (1986), 23-33; Penrose and Howard, 'One Scotland, Many Cultures', pp. 95-111; Hopkins, 'Politics, Race and Nation', pp. 113-124. Holmes has pointed out that, more generally, there

supportive, cosy and genial commonality unique to Welsh people'.<sup>4</sup> The myth can also be put down to Hechter's 'internal colony' theory;<sup>5</sup> having been economically and culturally 'oppressed' by the English for centuries, Welsh people have arguably been inclined to support other 'oppressed' people, including pro-independence Irish in the 1920s, Spanish Republicans in the 1930s and, more generally, refugees and migrants.<sup>6</sup> As Evans has observed, such a supportive attitude toward victims of oppression can also be related to the alleged international socialist and proletarian solidarity of south Wales' miners.<sup>7</sup>

Over the last two decades, the tolerant image of Wales has been tackled by various authors.<sup>8</sup> Robinson and Gardner have observed that, even the rural (and arguably 'idyllic') regions of Wales were not immune to 'perpetual, taken-for-granted and low-level harassment'.<sup>9</sup> This includes the use of stereotypes, which 'are constantly being created and renewed'.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Williams has observed that the alleged tolerance of Welsh people has in fact been nothing but a long-standing 'neglect or at best complacency about issues of "race" and

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has traditionally been 'an emphasis upon Britain as a centre of liberty and toleration (...) Those observers who promote the image of a tolerant Britain are assisted by comments emanating from immigrants and refugees'. See Holmes, *A Tolerant country?*, pp. 98-99. Beside Holmes, other authors have challenged the notion of British tolerance. See, for example, Lunn (ed), *Race and Labour*; Panayi, *Immigration, ethnicity and Racism* and *An Immigration History of Britain*; R. Miles and A. Phizacklea, *White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics* (London, Pluto Press, 1984); J. Solomos, *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1989); Spencer, *British Immigration Policy*. For a critical definition of tolerance see, for example, M. Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Evans, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', 5-26 and C. Williams, 'Passports to Wales? Race, Nation and Identity', in R. Fevre and A. Thompson (eds), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives From Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1999), pp. 77-78. According to the *Welsh Companion to the Literature of Wales*, *gwerin* is: 'a term meaning either the people in general without reference to social class or else the common people in contradistinction to the gentry. The second meaning began to emerge as a result of egalitarian ideas which gained which gained a wider currency in the wake of religious and political events during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the common people came to be idealized and regarded as the main upholders of Welsh culture. This concept (was) associated with an emphasis on education, temperance and Radicalism (...)'. See: M. Stephens, *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1998), p. 294.

<sup>5</sup> R. Fevre and A. Thompson, 'Social Theory and Welsh Identities', in Fevre and Thompson (eds), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory*, pp. 3-24.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Evans, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', 5-26 and C. Williams, 'Race and Racism', 113-131.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', 5-26.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Evans, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', 5-26 and 'Through the Prism of Ethnic Violence', pp. 93-108; O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*; Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', pp. 85-107; Williams, 'Race and Racism', 113-131.

<sup>9</sup> Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant country?*, p. 100.



racism’<sup>11</sup> which adds to an ‘almost total absence of a debate on “race” and racism’.<sup>12</sup> A reason for this could be that, as Evans has observed, immigration (apart from English and, to a lesser extent, Irish immigration) has historically been a quantitatively limited phenomenon in Wales and, consequently, has generally not been perceived as a serious threat by the indigenous population.<sup>13</sup> In Scotland, Penrose and Howard have similarly pointed out that:

For most of its history, Scotland has been imagined by most ‘white’ Scots as a place that is devoid of racism. In part, this is because it has been perceived (however inaccurately) as a white country and, consequently, as one in which racism had neither purchase nor relevance. The faulty logic at work here stemmed from two assumptions: first, that the presence of visible minorities was a prerequisite to racism; and second, that the degree of racism in any given society was directly proportional to the size of its non-white community.<sup>14</sup>

The same authors have added that ‘in Scotland the “significant other” in terms of self-definition was the English, not blacks or Asians or any other visible minority group’.<sup>15</sup> This argument clearly applies to Wales.<sup>16</sup> In the rural Welsh-speaking heartland of Wales, political organisations such as Meibion Glyndŵr (Sons of Glyndŵr) have often referred to the English as ‘white settlers’ posing a threat to Welsh-speaking communities.<sup>17</sup> The existence of such a strong anti-English attitude in some areas of the country shows that Wales has seldom been immune to prejudice.

Yet, whereas some authors have investigated and challenged the tolerance-myth, very little attention, if any, has been paid to the representation of such a myth in Welsh popular culture

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<sup>11</sup> Williams, ‘Race and Racism’, 114.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, ‘Race and Racism’, 117.

<sup>13</sup> Evans, ‘Immigrants and Minorities in Wales’, 5-26. See also: Williams et al., ‘Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalisation’, pp. 1-13; R. Fevre, J. Borland and D. Denney, ‘Nation, Community and Conflict: Housing Policy and Immigration in North Wales’, in Fevre and Thompson (eds), *Nation, Identity and Social Theory*, pp. 129-148; Robinson and Gardner, ‘Unravelling a Stereotype’, pp. 85-107; Plaid Cymru, *Migration Into Wales: a Positive Response* (Cardiff, Plaid Cymru, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Penrose and Howard, ‘One Scotland, Many Cultures’, p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> Penrose and Howard, ‘One Scotland, Many Cultures’, p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Evans, ‘Immigrants and Minorities in Wales’, 5-26. See also: Williams et al., ‘Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalisation’, pp. 1-13; Fevre et. Al., ‘Nation, Community and Conflict’, pp. 129-148.

<sup>17</sup> D. Denney, J. Borland and R. Fevre, ‘The Social Construction of Nationalism: Racism and Conflict in Wales’, *Contemporary Wales* 4 (1991), 153.

and public history. As the Welsh-Italian case study illustrates, the Welsh media, literature and even museums have contributed to reinforce and popularise the welcoming image of their nation. Yet, whereas such an image has for long been nothing but a taken-for-granted stereotype, in the post-1997 devolution context it has been given a sort of institutional aura, with the Welsh political bodies arguably embracing an *inclusive* approach to multiculturalism (see Chapter Three). As the Secretary of State for Wales Paul Murphy put it soon after the opening of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) in 1999: ‘the Bangladeshi community in Swansea and the Somali community in Cardiff have the same stake in our new democratic Wales as it has for me, the great grandson of Irish immigrants (...) who crossed the Irish sea 130 years ago, looking for a better life in Wales’.<sup>18</sup> Twelve years later, the idea of an institutionally tolerant Wales was perfectly summarized by the chair of the Welsh organisation ‘Displaced People in Action’ (DPIA) Reverend Aled Edwards, who declared:

We are very much a welcoming people, we wish to define people not by their disadvantage but by their potential, that forms very much part of our politics (...) We are a diverse, modern, sophisticated people, we are used to change (...) One of the things that devolution has done is providing a space for people to come together (...) that has informed policies and that has been quite significant with issues such as migration, asylum, accepting people in a new way here and having a new dynamic, so we find very real subtle policy changes between Cardiff Bay and London.<sup>19</sup>

It was in such a post-devolution political climate that the Welsh media<sup>20</sup> and other agents of public history have increasingly emphasised the inherently tolerant nature of Welsh people. In other words, the tolerance-myth has, over the last fifteen years, come to be incorporated in a process of nation-building which aims at constructing an inclusive and multicultural image

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<sup>18</sup> As cited in Williams and Chaney, ‘Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups’, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Wales Tonight’, 1 March 2011, <http://www.itv.com/wales/wales-this-week69399/>, accessed 23/03/2011.

<sup>20</sup> Some general theoretical works on the use and interpretation of film and TV include: A. Easthope, *Contemporary Film Theory* (London, Longman, 1993); J. Richards, ‘Film and Television: the Moving Image’, in S. Barber and C.M. Peniston-Bird, *History Beyond the Text* (London, Routledge, 2009), pp. 72-88; J. Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010); R. Stam, *Film Theory: an Introduction* (Malden, Blackwell, 2000); B. Casey, N. Casey, B. Calvert, L. French and J. Lewis, *Television Studies: the Key Concepts* (London, Routledge, 2002); R.C. Allen and A. Hill (eds), *The Television Studies Reader* (London, Routledge, 2004).

of Wales.<sup>21</sup> This aims to depict the country as an inherently tolerant nation, one that now endorses autonomous diversity-orientated policies and distances itself from the dominant (and allegedly racist/imperialistic) English/British legacy.<sup>22</sup> The Welsh broadcasting services, which significantly expanded from the 1970s onwards,<sup>23</sup> have played a prominent role in shaping such an image of Wales. As Williams has observed:

Broadcasting plays a more crucial role in Wales than it does in other parts of the United Kingdom (...). Welsh television and radio are concerned with more than informing and entertaining people. They play a significant role in shaping public understanding of what is and what it means to be Welsh. Not only do they enable Welsh people to present themselves to the outside world, thereby challenging the limited stereotypes that appear in the UK media and beyond, but they are vital ingredients in the building of a sense of collective identity.<sup>24</sup>

In particular, as the Welsh-Italian case study illustrates, the Welsh media have drawn upon Italian migration history to reinforce the current inclusive image of Wales.

This confirms what various scholars have argued: that the media play a prominent role in using the past to reinforce present social and political values. As Porter Benson, Brier and Rosenzweig have pointed out, ‘historical images and messages in television docudramas, paperback potboilers, newspapers, movies’ represent ‘the most pervasive and influential in shaping popular historical consciousness (...) usually serving dominant interests or reinforcing popular prejudices’ and ‘can (...) have a profound impact on public consciousness

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<sup>21</sup> For a definition of multiculturalism see, for example, J. Rex, ‘Multiculturalism in Europe and America’, *Nations and Nationalism* 1 (1995), 243-259. See also H.K. Bhabha, ‘Culture’s in Between’, in D. Bennett (ed), *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity* (London, Routledge, 1998), pp. 29-36.

<sup>22</sup> For a critical analysis of racism in twentieth century Britain see, for example, P. Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: the Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London, Hutchinson, 1987); Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*; Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism* and *An Immigration History of Britain*; Lunn (ed), *Race and Labour*; Miles and Phizacklea, *White Man’s Country*; Solomos, *Race and Racism*; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy*. On interactions between Wales and British empire see, for example, H.V. Bowen (ed), *Wales and the British Overseas Empire: Interactions and Influences, 1650-1830* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> From the 1970s onwards, Welsh television and radio have witnessed a significant expansion, including the launch of BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru in 1977 and the establishment of S4C five years later.

<sup>24</sup> K. Williams, ‘An Uncertain Era: Welsh Television, Broadcasting Policy and the National Assembly in a Multimedia World’, *Contemporary Wales* 18 (2006), 215. On Welsh radio see, for example, D.M. Barlow, ‘Reassessing Radio: Role, Scope and Accountability’, *Contemporary Wales* 18 (2006), 140-155. On Welsh press see, for example, T. O’Malley, ‘The Newspaper Press in Wales’, *Contemporary Wales* 18 (2006), 202-213.

because of their constant repetition (...) slick and palatable presentations'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, film-theorists such as Comolli and Narboni's have argued that films tend to reflect the surrounding social, cultural and political climate. As the French authors have observed: 'what the camera in fact registers is the vague, unformulated, untheorized, unthought-out world of the dominant ideology (...) When we set out to make a film, from the very first shot, we are encumbered by the necessity of reproducing things not as they really are but as they appear when refracted through the ideology'.<sup>26</sup> As media-scholar Monaco has also pointed out, the mass media tend 'to reflect the surrounding culture – or, more accurately, the established myths of the culture [as] writers, producers, directors, and technicians [are] transferring what they had picked up in “real life” (...) the politics of film and the politics of “real life” are so closely intertwined that it is generally impossible to determine which is the cause and which is the effect'.<sup>27</sup>

As Allen and Hill have observed, every broadcasting service has an 'institutional character' as it is shaped by a 'set of institutional forces: those of government policy and political ideology'.<sup>28</sup> This observation could easily apply to the main Welsh broadcasting services (BBC Wales, ITV Wales and S4C) and the way in which they have represented political stances like the post-1997 notion of inclusiveness. The 1986 Committee on Financing the BBC (the Peacock Committee) stated that all established terrestrial television channels in Britain had the status of public service broadcaster as they shared some essential characteristics, including 'catering for minorities' (among these the 'Welsh minority') and 'catering for national identity and community'; the Welsh broadcasting services have clearly

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<sup>25</sup> Porter Benson et al., 'Introduction', pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>26</sup> J.L. Comolli and J. Narboni, 'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism', in Easthope (ed), *Contemporary Film Theory*, p. 46. This article was originally published (in French language) on *Cahiers du Cinema*, 216 (1969), 11-15.

<sup>27</sup> Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, p. 262.

<sup>28</sup> R. Collins, "Ises" and "Oughts": Public Service Broadcasting in Europe', in Allen and Hill (eds), *The Television Studies Reader*, p. 28.

represented Welshness and its related idea of tolerance.<sup>29</sup> The politically-constructed tolerant image of Wales, which has informed the media and other forms of representation, has contributed to shape ‘how the Welsh imagine themselves and the openness of their society’.<sup>30</sup> This argument applies to the way in which the Welsh have represented Italian migration in the media-arena (as well as in literature and museums), as the following case studies illustrate.

### **Case study 1: prisoners of war**

Despite their enemy status,<sup>31</sup> Italian POWs appear to have been recollected in surprisingly positive terms by Welsh people, media and literature. Such a process of recollection gained momentum from the 1980s onwards, mirroring a broader phenomenon of memorialisation of POWs in different countries.<sup>32</sup> In the Welsh context, the memory of Italian POWs came to reinforce the surrounding tolerance-myth. This was apparent in the popular Welsh-language mini-series *Joni Jones*, which was broadcast by S4C in 1982.<sup>33</sup> Based on a novel by Robert Gerallt Jones, the series was set in the Llŷn Peninsula during the Second World War and focused on the everyday adventures of a local schoolboy called Joni Jones.<sup>34</sup> In the episode *Y*

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<sup>29</sup> Collins, “‘Ises” and “oughts””, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Robinson and Gardner, ‘Unravelling a Stereotype’, p. 92

<sup>31</sup> It is important to bear in mind that, until the Italian armistice (8 September 1943), Italy was at war with Britain and even after that date, although the country officially became co-belligerent, some sections of the Italian army decided to remain loyal to Benito Mussolini and carried on fighting against the British.

<sup>32</sup> Twomey, who has focused on Australia, has argued that the growing interest in the POWs’ history could be put down to the human rights movements which expanded throughout the 1980s. See C. Twomey, ‘POWs and Popular Culture: the Aesthetics of Horror’, paper delivered at the conference *The Second World War: Popular Culture and Cultural Memory*, University of Brighton, Brighton, 13-15 July 2011. According to Ashplant and other authors the public recognition of ‘social groups suffering injustice, injury or trauma that originates in war’ was also a result of the fact that ‘the ageing of those who lived through the wars of the early and mid-twentieth century has added an urgency and poignancy to the endeavour of collecting their testimony and reflecting on its significance’. This added to the increasing number and enhanced profile of anniversary commemorations to mark the beginning and ending of wars, and their key episodes. This is one component of a wider anniversary boom, fuelled and amplified by the public communications media, which seize upon forthcoming commemorative dates to stimulate cultural production of all kinds’. See: Ashplant et al., ‘The Politics of War Memory’, pp. 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> S4C, ‘Joni Jones: Y Ffoadur’, 1982. On Welsh cinema see, for example, D. Berry, *Wales and Cinema: the First Hundred Years* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Robert Gerallt Jones, *Gwared Y Gwirion* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 1966).

*Ffoadur* (The Fugitive), Joni, whose father is away fighting the Nazis, encounters an escaped Italian POW (played by British-Italian actor Alfred Molina). The latter is being chased by local civilians and police officers, who warn the protagonist that whoever refuses to help them in capturing the POW will be punished as a traitor. Despite the war climate, not only does Joni help the fugitive to hide, but he also provides him with food, cigarettes and bandages to bind his wounds. Instead of regarding him as an enemy, the innocent schoolboy, who is immune to adults' war-related antagonism, looks at the POW as a sensitive paternal figure, who keeps a picture of his family in Italy. Therefore, the protagonist of the TV series seemed to embody the tolerance that Welsh civilians arguably showed toward Italian enemies during the Second World War. It suggested that such a tolerance was fostered by the existence of alleged similarities between the two nationalities. In particular, Welsh and Italians were represented as similar by virtue of their shared family-orientated values, which were personified on screen by Joni's loving *mam* as well as by the POW holding his family's picture.

From the broadcasting of *Joni Jones* onwards, Italian POWs appear to have become a common feature in Welsh popular culture. For example, in 1990, positive references to Italian POWs were to be found in the S4C comedy series *C'Mon Middfild*.<sup>35</sup> The series, which was based on the adventures of an amateur football club in the fictional town of Bryn Coch, in north Wales, included an episode entitled *The Italian Job*. In the episode, which is set during the *Italia 90'* World Cup, the team is invited to a football tournament in Italy by Walter Coccia, an ex-POW who was detained in Bryn Coch during the Second World War. Feeling grateful to Welsh people for the treatment that he received during his imprisonment, Coccia invites the whole team to stay at his hotel free of charge. Not only did such a representation

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<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, the series was created by television director and producer Alun Ffred Jones, who lately became a Plaid Cymru AM and, in 2008, was appointed Minister for Heritage of the WAG. This apparently trivial fact contributes to highlight how, once again, Welsh politics and media reciprocally influenced each other, reflecting the surrounding dominant ideology.

of the POWs' experience reinforce, once again, the alleged tolerance of Welsh people, but it also highlighted the historical links between Wales and Italy at a time when the Peninsula was internationally appreciated thanks to the World Cup.<sup>36</sup>

Besides television, Welsh literature has more recently also paid attention to Italian POWs. Apart from Jones' *Gwared Y Gwirion*, Angharad Price's novel *O! Tyn y Gorchudd* includes references to encounters between a family of Welsh farmers and several Italian POWs. As a passage of the book reads:

Angelo [a POW] came into our world. Soon he was part of everyday life on the farm (...) despite suffering prolonged bouts of longing for his wife and children, he gave thanks too for being allowed to spend his internment on a farm. He slept in the small room at the back of the house, and kept a picture of his family, framed in wood, by his bedside (...) he worked and ate alongside the family (...) he and Bob became friends of sort, as one learnt Italian words and the other Welsh ones, communicating happily in the no man's land between languages.<sup>37</sup>

Price's narration, which draws on her grandparents' memories, recalls many oral and written accounts, in which Italian POWs are appreciated by Welsh people for their contribution to the national economy (mainly as agricultural workers), for the friendly human relationships that they built with their employers and for their family-orientated nature. For example, Rayan Evans recalled: 'he [a POW] used to cry a lot, he had two daughters in Italy...There were ten years between them and of course my sister and I were ten years difference and that's why he was crying so much'.<sup>38</sup> Betty Blake, who was evacuated to Llanfrechfa (near Torfaen) when she was eleven, also recalled:

Some of them [POWs] were put to work on the farm and we got to know them, although we didn't speak each other's language. One or two knew a little English and

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<sup>36</sup> S4C, 'C'Mon Middfield: The Italian Job', 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Angharad Price, *The Life of Rebecca Jones* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 2010), pp. 130-132. The original Welsh-language version was first published by Gomer Press in 2002. Another novel that included references to Italian POWs is: Sian Melangell Dafydd, *Y Trydydd Peth* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 2009); References to German POWs in Wales are to be found in: Peter Ho Davies, *The Welsh Girl* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Interview with R. Evans, 4 November 2004, SFNHM, Track 16 10646.

were able to explain about their own families, especially their children. It seemed so sad that so many young people were forced to be without their parents because of war.<sup>39</sup>

In this case, the narrator went as far as to identify with POWs' children back in Italy, who, like English evacuees, were forced to live far from their families.

Besides their family-orientated nature, POWs have also been remembered by Welsh people for their stereotypically Italian artistic and craft skills. In their narratives, some Welsh witnesses recalled the small ornamental objects which POWs were able to produce by virtue of their arguably unique 'Italian' creativity. For example, Rayan Evans narrated: 'my mum gave him [a POW] a shilling and he made me a ring out of the shilling and it was beautiful'.<sup>40</sup> Such recollections have sometimes been embraced by Welsh TV, one example being, once again, the episode *Y Ffoadur* of the series *Joni Jones*; toward the end of the episode, the escaped POW gives the protagonist Joni a small handmade ship model to thank him for his help.<sup>41</sup> Price also wrote in one of her novels:

Ernesto [a POW] produced offerings for us every day: wooden spoons for the kitchen, a plate, a large bowl, a wooden boat for Evan, to be sailed in Maesglasau stream; and for Kate, his favourite, an egg cup, simply adorned, and a wooden dolly, which I clothed. Every day was Christmas day with Ernesto.<sup>42</sup>

Besides their craft-skills, Italian POWs have also been remembered by some Welsh witnesses for their singing skills. For example, Edith Baker recalled that 'the Italians sang opera every day'.<sup>43</sup> As Fortier has pointed out, the leading Italian migrant newspaper in Britain (*La Voce degli Italiani*) has also tended to remember Italian POWs 'for their architectural and artistic accomplishments, not for risking their lives for the nation (...) pride for the [Italian] nation

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<sup>39</sup> B. Blake, 'Private Papers', June 1940 to October 1943, London, IWM, 5823 96/49/1.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with R. Evans, 4 November 2004, SFNHM, Track 16 10646.

<sup>41</sup> S4C, 'Joni Jones: Y Ffoadur'.

<sup>42</sup> Price, *The Life of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 130-132.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with E.M. Baker, 9 December 2003, SFNHM, Track 2 10569.



passes through gifts of art and architecture, rather than the sacrifice of life'.<sup>44</sup> Both Welsh and Italian accounts have similarly tended to underestimate the *military* dimension of POWs and to overestimate their *human* dimension, highlighting their artistic skills. This way of looking at the past denotes a deliberate attempt to forget negative aspects of the experience (war, imprisonment, forced labour) and recollect the positive ones (POWs' art). To the Welsh media, this could serve a celebration of national tolerance, to the Italian migrant group, POWs' art could function as a commemoration of the positive impact that Italians have had on the Welsh cultural and social landscape and of the prominence that they have been able to achieve in Wales.

All the accounts which have been illustrated suggest that Italian POWs had a particularly positive experience in Wales, perhaps even more positive than elsewhere in Britain. The fact that Italians themselves appeared to look back at their imprisonment with nostalgia also suggests that the treatment which they received in Wales was particularly good. For example, in his memoirs, former POW Vittorio Bonucci repeatedly highlighted the contrast between his experience in Wales and in England during the war. As Bonucci recalled:

Towards the end of October, together with Bruno and another seven hundred POWs, I was transferred [from Wales] to Camp n 108 near Ormskirk. My heart opened to hope. I believed that new, splendid prospects were opening. Very soon they turned out to be vain. The camp was pretty much the same as the Camp [in Wales]; what was desperately lacking was the beautiful feeling of hope and peace which had hovered in that unforgettable October, two years earlier, when we arrived in Wales. On the part of the civilians, there was not human sympathy; on the part of the POWs, not the slightest desire to co-operate in harmony.<sup>45</sup>

The same author recalled that, when, a number of years after the end of the war, he met a former POW-comrade living in Sicily, the latter had kept such good memories of the time he spent in Wales that he had carved the word 'Cymru' into the stone-facade of his house. The

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<sup>44</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 92.

<sup>45</sup> Vittorio Bonucci, *POW: Quasi una Fantasia* (Sutton, International Association Friends of Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God, 1995), p. 257 (English translation of Vittorio Bonucci, *POW: Quasi una Fantasia*, Viterbo, 1985).

same ex-POW recalled that, when he was transferred from Wales to a camp near Sheffield, ‘terrible years followed, years of suffering and abuses (...) I lived through those three years with only the memory of my Welsh friends to comfort me’.<sup>46</sup> Ex-POW Dario Marzola, who worked as a lumberjack in Caernarvonshire, also recalled:

My group [of POWs] was transferred to the extreme North West Wales, in front of Ireland (...) A certain Gween (sic), who was a boy of our age as well as a real friend for me, was the one who, as soon as we gathered around the fire, invited us for a toast with a cup of tea.<sup>47</sup>

In a different passage, the same author recalled how, when he and other POWs became cooperators, ‘we expected that someone, seeing us free and not being escorted, could react against us. By contrast (...) they almost all smiled at us’.<sup>48</sup>

Such testimonies suggest that Italian POWs were warmly welcomed by the indigenous Welsh population. The positive memories that Marzola and other Italians had of their war-years in Wales might explain why the number of prisoners who decided to settle in Wales after the war was proportionally higher than in the rest of Britain. In fact, positive encounters between Italian prisoners and indigenous population have frequently been remembered also in the rest of Britain<sup>49</sup> and even in South Africa and Australia.<sup>50</sup> For example, Fitzgerald has observed that both Australian farmers and Italian POWs tended to remember their past experience in a nostalgic tone, with the former recalling the hardworking nature and family-orientated attitude of the latter. According to the author, Italians tended to recollect their work on

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<sup>46</sup> Bonucci, *POW: Quasi una Fantasia*, p. 86.

<sup>47</sup> Marzola, ‘Il Sole col Contagocce’, ADN, MG/97 (author’s translation).

<sup>48</sup> Marzola, ‘Il Sole col Contagocce’, ADN, MG/97 (author’s translation).

<sup>49</sup> See, for example (on Scotland) ITV Scotland, ‘Scotland’s War: Programme Interviews’, 1990-1992, IWM, 43 K, Tapes 427, 432 and 434; (on England) C.G.H. Bell, ‘Private Papers’, 1942, 1943, IWM, 1773 92/13/1; E.M. Smith, ‘Private Papers’, IWM, 14625 05/51/1; *The Times*, 15 October 1943, ‘Italian Prisoners’ Future’. See also: Sponza, *Divided Loyalties*; B. Moore, ‘British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-7’, in B. Moore and B. Hatley-Broad (eds), *Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace* (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2005), pp. 25-39.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, C. Ottaviano, ‘Il Caso Sudafricano: Internati Civili, Prigionieri di Guerra e Politiche Migratorie’, in Istituto Storico della Resistenza del Piemonte, *Una Storia di Tutti: Prigionieri, Internati, Deportati Italiani nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale* (Milano, Franco Angeli, 1989), pp. 345-354; A. Fitzgerald, *The Italian Farming Soldiers: Prisoners of War in Australia, 1941-1947* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1981).

Australian farms in positive terms simply because, after having been interned and lived far from home for several years, they saw ‘the chance to work outdoors with civilians, away from the barbed-wire camps [as] the nearest thing to a normal life they had been able to lead for years’. This adds to the relatively good material conditions in which POWs generally lived, in contrast with the poor living standards that they had experienced (before being captured) as Italian soldiers in North Africa.<sup>51</sup>

In Wales, Italian POWs similarly appeared to appreciate the material conditions which they experienced on farms. For example, Vittorio Bonucci recalled:

The cooperators’ Camp n 101 was situated near the industrial town of Ormskirk. As expected, we were employed straight in workshops, often on night shifts. Materially our conditions were worse compared to those in Wales, where, by working alongside the farmers, the POWs had shown their gifts of humanity and hard work, and had been rewarded by the almost total absence of food rationing, and a merely token observance of the prohibition of fraternisation.<sup>52</sup>

According to a 1945 Foreign Office’s report based on a sample of POWs’ letters, some Italians who were detained in Wales went as far as to consider themselves better off than their relatives and friends back home. For example, POW Gallo, who worked on a farm near Abergavenny, wrote in a letter to his family in Italy: ‘on Saturday evenings the son of the boss and I go to the cinema. He pays for me. At this farm I am very well off in every way, especially for food’. POW Galimberti also wrote from Camp 70 (Cardiganshire): ‘don’t worry about me. I am well. If you were like me, I should be the happiest man in the world’.<sup>53</sup> In other words, as in the Australian case, Italian POWs tended to narrate their farming experience in Wales in positive terms because they experienced relatively enjoyable living conditions.

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<sup>51</sup> Fitzgerald, *The Italian Farming Soldiers*, p. 94

<sup>52</sup> Bonucci, *POW: Quasi una Fantasia*, p. 297.

<sup>53</sup> Enemy POW Branch (EPB), ‘Postal and Telegraph Censorship: Report on Italian Prisoners of War in Great Britain’, 23 February 1945, TNA, FO 916/1275.

Moreover, given their predominantly agricultural background, Italian POWs found it relatively easy to adjust to the rural environment in which they were displaced. For such Italians, the transition from the old to the new world was less traumatic than it was for those who were employed by coal and tinplate industries after the war.<sup>54</sup> When they turned their status into civilian workers, POWs quickly adapted to the rural context of mid and north Wales, taking advantage of both their previous agricultural skills and of work experiences they had acquired during the war. For example, as the son of a POW recalled:

We lived and worked on the farm and (...) lived off the farm, grew all our own food and (...) my father would breed pigs (...) Very self-sufficient...[My father] from when he was young in Italy he had to learn a lot...He also worked a lot in forestry (...) before he went to buy the farm..He worked for forestry companies (...) and when we bought the farm he was still doing a lot of work making fencing poles for farms and (...) that was one of his expertise, making poles...You cut down trees and he used an axe to split them and he was...With an axe he was...Really...Good eye...Every time the axe would fall in the (...) same place, every time...And he was (...) very well known locally for his work with fencing poles and things.<sup>55</sup>

As this testimony suggests, the fact that ex-POWs were, in some cases, able to set up their own farms made it possible for them to live and work in relatively similar conditions to those in their homeland. Such a non-traumatic adaptation to the receiving country contributes to explain why some Italian POWs tended to recollect their experience in positive terms. This seems to be a common theme of the migrant experience. For example, Robinson and Gardner have observed that some Bangladeshi migrants in rural Powys claimed to have chosen to live in Wales because of its similarity with family farm-life in Bangladesh.<sup>56</sup>

The allegedly successful employment of Italian POWs in Wales could also result from a simple fact; thanks to long-established patterns of migration, many Italians had already settled in Wales before the Second World War and had generally integrated well into society. Therefore, it can be argued that Welsh people had already constructed a positive image of

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<sup>54</sup> This situation recalls some Italian settlements in rural America. See: Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants*.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', p. 93.

Italians before the outbreak of the war; this image presumably encouraged them to development positive relations with POWs. Nevertheless, this fact does not explain why Welsh people, who in many cases had fathers, husbands or sons fighting against Italians or, even worse, killed by Italians during the war, could so easily overcome anti-Italian feelings that had led to mass-internment in 1940. According to Moore, the war rivalry was easily overcome because British people, both at governmental and popular level, soon started to have sympathy for Italians ‘whose hearts were not in the war and who were being driven solely by Mussolini and the Fascists’. Therefore, POWs were seen as ‘peace-loving, pleased to be out of the war and potentially useful to the British war effort’.<sup>57</sup> This attitude is confirmed by several Mass Observation surveys which showed that anti-Italian hostility was soon overcome by the British public; as Mass Observation analysts reported in 1943 ‘people no longer look upon [Italians] as dangerous enemies’.<sup>58</sup>

The fact that the threat posed by Italian enemies was not taken too seriously by British people also emerged from popular Welsh cartoonist Leslie Illingworth’s works, which regularly appeared in the *Daily Mail* throughout the Second World War. For example, on 1 December 1942, Illingworth drew a cartoon featuring an American, a British and a German man boxing in a ring while a small and dazed Italian is bruised underneath their feet (see Appendix 1); ringside, Winston Churchill is encouraging the Italian boxer to give up the fight saying ‘why not climb out Giuseppe? They’re going to get really rough soon!’<sup>59</sup> Another cartoon, which represents the British offensive in North Africa, features an Italian soldier who holds a flag displaying ‘they shall not pass’ while he runs away being chased by a Royal Marine.<sup>60</sup> The fact that Italians were not perceived as a real threat by the British public opinion may have

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<sup>57</sup> Moore, ‘British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War’, pp. 28-29.

<sup>58</sup> As cited in Sponza, ‘The Anti-Italian Riots’, p. 145.

<sup>59</sup> L.G. Illingworth, ‘Churchill Tries to Encourage the Italians to Give Up the Fight’, 1 December 1942, NLW, ILW 0405.

<sup>60</sup> L.G. Illingworth, ‘They Shall Not Pass’, 22 November 1941, NLW, ILW 0335.

influenced the government's policy. Indeed, soon after the Italian war declaration, 'docile' Italian prisoners who were being captured by the Allies started to be transported to Britain and employed as (often unescorted) agricultural workers. By contrast, allegedly 'dangerous' Germans were deported as far as possible (to Canada and Australia) and not admitted to Britain until 1944.<sup>61</sup> The existence of a widespread anti-German attitude (in contrast with the pro-Italian one) in Wales is highlighted by the way in which Emrys Bevan, a member of Ruthin Borough Council, reacted to the employment of German POWs in the area; as the councillor declared 'we don't want to desecrate the soil of Ruthin with such filthy hounds'.<sup>62</sup> Such different attitudes towards Italians and Germans arguably contribute to explain why the former seem to have figured much more prominently than the latter in Welsh popular culture and collective memory.

This was particularly the case for Italian POWs who were detained in Henllan Bridge Camp in Cardiganshire. Such POWs (unlike the German ones) seem to have been paid special attention by the media and other institutions over the last thirty years. For example, in August 1986, a local newspaper reported:

Henllan was a haven for many of the prisoners. Some stayed at the end of the war, married Welsh girls and have happily settled in the land of their enforced imprisonment. All have a lasting affection for the area. Instead of a stiff prison regime, they experienced kindness.<sup>63</sup>

Like the media, former POWs have tended to nostalgically recollect Henllan, as the following testimonies suggest:

To my surprise I was served with a lovely dinner and plenty of it (...) tea time came just before going to milk. They called me into the house, the tea was ready in the

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<sup>61</sup> Moore, 'British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War', p. 28

<sup>62</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 16 June 1945, 'Ruthin's Housing Sites: Should German Prisoners Be Employed?'. Although anti-German attitudes seemed to be widespread among the Welsh, farmers were generally keen on employing German labour. See: *Denbighshire Free Press*, 28 September 1956, 'Farmers Want German Prisoners' Help: Superior to Italians'.

<sup>63</sup> *Cardigan Tivyside Advertiser*, 1 August 1986, 'POWs Say "Diolch" With Trophy For the Eisteddfod'.

kitchen. I had a shock...A lovely big plate of bread and some cake. (...) The family who ran the farm were friendly people and had two children, Margaret and Dudley who I still know today.<sup>64</sup>

At ten, he saw her coming with a tea pot, slices of bread and blackberry jam. She was very kind! Mario was amazed by the treatment, considering that he was still an enemy (...) strange people those Welsh!<sup>65</sup>

So off we went, saying goodbye to everyone we met on the roadside, and they were all waving back. (...) I could see there were tears in some of the girls' eyes. The platform was full of people...People at the camp had made lots of friends around the area.<sup>66</sup>

That Italian POWs had a particularly positive experience in Henllan also seems to be confirmed by the significant number of them successfully settling in the area after the war.<sup>67</sup>

Henllan camp has also been remembered for the *Church of the Sacred Heart* that some prisoners set up in a barracks and particularly for the *Last Supper* fresco that was painted by prisoner Mario Ferlito on the apse of the building by using recycled material (see Appendix 2). This stereotypically Italian art-piece (that evokes the world famous *Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci) has become a physical site of Italicity in Wales, one that has been paid remarkable attention by the Welsh media and has also become an appreciable tourist attraction.<sup>68</sup> As Fortier has observed, the church and its fresco have also been celebrated by various British-Italian institutions (notably by its leading newspaper *La Voce degli Italiani*),

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<sup>64</sup> J. Sauro, 'A POW's Memories', 2009, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest/sites/ww2/pages/sauro1.shtml>, accessed 1/03/2010.

<sup>65</sup> M. Ferlito, 'Breve Storia di un Mancato Guerriero', 2002-2004, ADN, MG/05 (author's translation).

<sup>66</sup> Sauro, 'A POW's Memories', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest/sites/ww2/pages/sauro1.shtml>, accessed 1/03/2010.

<sup>67</sup> MLNS, 'Scheme for the Employment in Agriculture as Alien Civilians of Italians in Contract of Service for One Year', TNA, LAB 8/91.

<sup>68</sup> Visit Carmarthenshire, <http://www.visit.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/did-you-know/henllan-POW-camp.html>, accessed 7/03/2010. See also BBC1 Wales, 'Lucinda Lambton's Alphabet of Britain: P is for Prisoners of War', 30 January 1995, NLW, Cell E123001606/05. This TV programme showed also other examples of POW's art pieces, including a sculpture of Romulus and Remus and the wolf in Somerset, that was made by an Italian POW as a 'gift for the happy time spent in a local farm'. See also: Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857; BBC2 Wales, 'Secret Wales', 21 October 2008, NLW, llgc-id: 1089935; BBC Wales, 'Henllan POW Camp', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/mid/sites/history/henllan.shtml>, accessed 28/03/2010.

being regarded as an outstanding feature of the Italian ‘cultural legacy to the Welsh country’.<sup>69</sup>

In both Welsh and Italian narratives and commemorations, the painting has also been described as a tangible sign of Welsh-Italian brotherhood prevailing over war-motivated antagonism. As Fortier has observed such commemorations ‘cancel (...) past enmities by highlighting past and present friendship and conviviality between English (sic) and Italians: (...) praising the legacy of Italian POWs, represented as artists or labourers rather than enemy soldiers’.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the *Last Supper* has served a symbolic reinforcement of the Welsh tolerance-myth, one that emphasises the positive *contribution* of Italian POWs to the Welsh cultural landscape and deliberately downplays their enemy status. Goodnow has termed this form of memorialisation ‘enhancement narratives’ including ‘exhibitions or other cultural events that highlight what minorities *add* to a country, particularly in the form of new food, music and crafts’.<sup>71</sup>

Local institutions, notably Ferwig Primary School, played an important role in keeping the memory of Henllan Camp alive. In 1977, Ferwig’s headmaster Jon Meirion Jones decided to take a group of pupils on a school trip to the POWs’ church. Jones was so ‘amazed to discover beautiful murals painted on the walls and ceilings (...) that he decided to trace the ex-prisoner who painted them’.<sup>72</sup> The painter Mario Ferlito, together with other ex-POWs, was invited by Jones to visit Henllan Camp. In August 1977, a party of Italian ex-POWs,

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<sup>69</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 92.

<sup>70</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 92.

<sup>71</sup> Goodnow, ‘Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances’, p. 230. This attitude toward the past was paralleled in Scotland, which, as noted, also claims to be a ‘tolerant nation’. During the Second World War, an Italian POW (Domenico Chiocchetti) drew a painting on the apse of a camp’s church in the Orkneys, which has been recollected by both the Scottish media and various Italian narratives and newspapers as a symbol of Scottish-Italian brotherhood. See, for example, ITV Scotland, ‘Scotland’s War: Programme Interviews’, IWM, 43 K. Fortier has interpreted the Orkney’s Italian church as a ‘gift of reconciliation which creates a space of legitimacy in support of the recovery of the Italian presence in Scottish (and British) culture’. See: Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 92.

<sup>72</sup> *Cardigan Tivyside Advertiser*, 31 January 1986, ‘Henllan POWs Say “Thank-You” to Wales’.



including Ferlito and former camp chaplain Italo Padoan visited the POW church in Henllan, where a commemorative mass was celebrated.<sup>73</sup> Both Welsh and Welsh-Italian institutions also got involved in the event; representatives of Swansea's Italian community and of the local Carmarthen District Council and Llangeler Community Council took part in the commemoration.<sup>74</sup> In a note that could serve an ideal advertisement for Welsh tolerance, a representative of both councils wrote:

We salute the children of Ferwig, the parents and friends, and all who were concerned with the welcome for their wonderful deeds of kindness, Christianity and generosity toward the ex-prisoners of war. *They are great ambassadors for Wales.*<sup>75</sup>

After the first commemoration in 1977, ex-POWs visited the church several more times. In 1986, they symbolically donated a special 'trophy of peace' to Welsh people at the National Eisteddfod, which, that year, was held in the nearby town of Fishguard. As a local reporter wrote:

Some of the Italians, who spent four years of their young lives at Henllan POW Camp No. 70, still remember with gratitude the way the local people treated them. The trophy is a special *thank you* from all those prisoners who returned to Italy when peace was declared.<sup>76</sup>

The trophy, depicting a Celtic cross set in a round of barbed wire, appeared to perfectly symbolise the alleged Welsh-Italian brotherhood. According to Fortier, such a commemorative tone:

Speak[s] of the struggle between estrangement and alliance, where the latter wins in the end. Britain, here, is the 'host country', where even former hostages were well treated and respected (...) these remembrances are not reruns of the war; they are rather reruns of the armistice between Italy and England and the ensuing (re)integration of Italians in British society.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Jon Merion Jones, *70 POW: Peredindrod, Pilgrimage, Pellegrinaggio* (Llandysul, Jon Merion Jones, 1979).

<sup>74</sup> *Cambrian News*, 17 April 1997, 'Italian POWs Return'.

<sup>75</sup> Jones, *70 POW: Peredindrod, Pilgrimage, Pellegrinaggio*.

<sup>76</sup> *Cardigan Tivyside Advertiser*, 1 August 1986, 'POWs say "Diolch"'.

<sup>77</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 93.

Thanks to ex-POWs' visits and commemoration, Henllan Camp has received a significant coverage in local and national Welsh media, one that has increased in the post-devolution context.<sup>78</sup> The memory of Henllan has come to symbolise an ideal reinforcement of the current notion of inclusiveness. It has been used by the Welsh media and film industry to emphasise the inherent tolerance of Welsh people, who, during the war, went as far as to welcome their own enemies.

For example, in the documentary *La Casa di Dio* (The House of God),<sup>79</sup> a POW's son recalled that 'Welsh people were very welcoming when they [POWs] arrived from Italy'. He added that some Italians who settled in Henllan after the war were economically helped by indigenous farmers to set up their own farms and, in some cases, they even inherited their employers' properties. In the same documentary, Jon Merion Jones recalled: 'Gino [a POW] was a nice boy, a very friendly character, and we became great friends...To think that an Italian in a time of war came to a Welsh farm like that one, he would take the baby in the pram for a walk...Think of that: the trust they gave (...) even if it was war, there was some strange kinship'. Commenting on his documentary on BBC Radio Wales, director Owain Llŷr asserted that the Welsh 'treated the Italian POWs well' and 'looked after them'. As the director pointed out: '[it is] a war story that is actually quite a nice story [of] people who were at war, who treated the POWs well', in contrast with the war on terror and the related disputable treatment of alleged Muslim terrorists in Britain and USA after 11 September 2001.<sup>80</sup> This comment seemingly reflected the surrounding inclusive rhetoric. It alleged that the irreproachable Welsh attitude toward POWs should be taken as an example to follow to the present day. The fact that *La Casa di Dio* was shown in key national institutions such as

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<sup>78</sup> See, for example, *Cambrian News*, 17 April 1997, 'Shilling Ring From Prisoner of War'; BBC2 Wales, 'Secret Wales', NLW; llgc-id: 1089935; BBC Wales, 'Henllan POW Camp', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/mid/sites/history/henllan.shtml>, accessed 28/03/2010; S4C, 'Olion Rhyfel', 5 August 2008, NLW, Cell E123017005/04.

<sup>79</sup> Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857.

<sup>80</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'The Radio Wales Arts Show', 26 March 2009, NLW, LLGC-ID 1182653.

SFNHM and the NLW suggests that, once again, Italian migration history was used to suit the present and reinforce a romantic and nostalgic view of the past.<sup>81</sup> Simply put, the memorialisation of the Henllan experience served a reinforcement of the current process of nation-building which, as noted, largely draws upon the construction of an inclusive and tolerant image of Wales.

Not only has Henllan been portrayed as an example of national tolerance in the post-devolution context, but also as a successful case of Welsh acculturation. Various TV programmes and documentaries have highlighted that some POWs who settled in the area (and their descendants) have become fluent Welsh-speakers and passionate Welsh nationalists, one example being prominent Plaid Cymru activist Toni Schiavone.<sup>82</sup> For example, *La Casa di Dio* features interviews with several Italian POWs' children, who prove themselves to be fluent Welsh speakers and claim a Welsh identity, without denying their Italian roots. As the director himself commented in a radio interview: 'the sons of the POWs speak Welsh but they look Italian'.<sup>83</sup> This implied that, on one hand, Welsh people respected and appreciated the Italian side of POWs and their descendants, by virtue of their tolerant attitude. On the other, Italians embraced the Welsh language and culture and contributed to the receiving society, grateful for having been welcomed by Welsh people.

The narratives which have been illustrated so far suggest that the response that the Welsh indigenous population gave to Italian POWs was surprisingly positive. Yet, other accounts show that hostile attitudes arose on different occasions in Wales as well as in the rest of Britain. These were triggered by different factors, including war-related hostility, negative stereotypes and sexual jealousy. The latter was particularly widespread among British males, who, according to both police and press reports, often accused Italian cooperators of

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<sup>81</sup> Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857.

<sup>82</sup> S4C, 'Olion Rhyfel', NLW, Cell E123017005/04; Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857.

<sup>83</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'The Radio Wales Arts Show', NLW, LLGC-ID 1182653.

molesting 'their' women.<sup>84</sup> Welsh people were not immune to these kinds of hostile attitudes. As a Camp 119 (near Llandudno) diarist reported in September 1944: 'one POW transferred to Sarn Hostel following complaint concerning a girl. Complaints of this nature increasing since new concessions to cooperator POW introduced'. The same diarist added: 'reports from Anglesey of indiscipline by POWs. Cambrian Sub-District ordered investigation. Chief complaints: entering public houses and too close relation with women'. In October 1944, spreading sexual jealousy led to a violent occurrence in the area. As Camp 119 diary reads:

[Commandant] decided to change Hostel Leader at Llanrwst as anti-Italian feeling was growing in district over schoolgirl who ran away from home after associating with Hostel Leader. (...) Two POWs came into Dolgelley Hostel having been hit by Marines the worse for drink.<sup>85</sup>

On 1 September 1945, Italian prisoner Domenico D'Orfeo was attacked by two young men (one a former soldier) in Denbigh. Once arrested, Berwyn Wynne (one of the aggressors) tried to justify himself arguing: 'I don't like them [Italians], because they are always after our girls'.<sup>86</sup> Similar occurrences were also reported in the rest of Britain. For example, in January 1945, an Italian POW in England wrote in a letter to his family:

(...) if, by chance, we are found talking to girls, immediately the police chase them, telling them it would be better for them to be seen with a negro than with an Italian....I could not have spent a more miserable Christmas.<sup>87</sup>

Another Italian POW in England wrote in his memoirs:

English soldiers are very much jealous of Italians and don't like them. Going for a walk at night implies the risk of being suddenly stabbed or punched. When they [the English] are drunk (which is everyday practice), Italians become their favourite target. Beating-ups frequently occur. The police seem to be happy with that and pretend not to know and see anything.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See, for example, *The Times*, 8 February 1945, 'Italians not Welcomed'. See also: MPO, 'Italian Cooperator Prisoners of War', January 1945, TNA, MEPO 2/6871.

<sup>85</sup> P.V.A. Reid, 'War Diary of 119 POW Camp', October 1944, TNA, WO 166/16295.

<sup>86</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 1 September 1945, 'Attack on Italian Prisoner: Denbigh Youth Heavily Fined'.

<sup>87</sup> EPB, 'Postal and Telegraph Censorship', TNA, FO 916/1275.

<sup>88</sup> G. Serra, 'Dall'Equatore a Greenwich: Vale la Pena di Ricordare', 1988, ADN MG/89 (author's translation).

According to Holmes, such reactions were nothing but the typical antipathy ‘to which male-dominated immigrant and refugee groups have often been exposed’ in British history. That is why Polish in-exile-servicemen as well as German POWs were also exposed to this kind of hostility during the Second World War.<sup>89</sup>

However, in the Italian case, the existence of long-established stereotypes on Italians being a ‘race of Casanovas’ also contributed to fuel anti-Italian feelings.<sup>90</sup> As Moore has argued, such stereotypes had been ‘developed over many generations and then “refined” and built upon by cartoonists and propagandists after the war was declared in June 1940’.<sup>91</sup> As Franzina and Stella have pointed out, many Italian-related stereotypes could be traced back to travel accounts of writers such as Daniel Defoe, Ian Littlewood, Percy Shelley and Mark Twain; these as well as other writers had tended to portray Italians as ‘hot blooded’ people, solely acting on instinct.<sup>92</sup> As Holmes has argued, among these ‘historically based stereotypes, which are constantly being created and renewed’, those ‘arising from sexual relationships’ appeared to be as widespread in Wales as they were in the rest of Britain, during the Second World War.<sup>93</sup> This is illustrated by several oral testimonies. For example, John Richard Rowland, a farmer from Anglesey who employed Italian prisoners during the war, commented: ‘well the girls were after, the girls went mad (...) they were like flies around the honey pot (...) quite a few [Italian POWs] have remained in this country, married local girls...And they left a lot of stock on the island, the Italian prisoners, quite a lot of their

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<sup>89</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, p. 48. See also, C. Holmes, ‘Hostile Images of Immigrants and Refugees in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain’, in Lucassen and Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History*, pp. 317-334. On Germans POWs see, for example, *Denbighshire Free Press*, 28 June 1947, ‘War Prisoner and Girl: Amorous Relations Allegations’.

<sup>90</sup> On stereotypes that Italian migrants have traditionally been exposed to see, for example, G.A. Stella and E. Franzina, ‘Brutta Gente: il Razzismo Anti-Italiano’, in Bevilacqua et al. (eds), *Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana - Arrivi*, pp. 283-311; Sponza, ‘Italian Immigrants in Britain: Perceptions and Self-Perceptions’, pp. 58-74.

<sup>91</sup> Moore, ‘British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-7’, p. 25.

<sup>92</sup> Stella and Franzina, ‘Brutta Gente’, pp. 283-311.

<sup>93</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, p. 100.

offspring'.<sup>94</sup> Elsie Hughes, a member of the Women's Timber Corps volunteering in Carmarthenshire during the Second World War, also wrote:

I met Nicola, a charming Italian who had been a tailor (...) he embroidered me the most beautiful powder-compact case with hearts entwined with our initials. Not realising that the gift was tantamount to a betrothal gift (as a Welsh love-spoon would be), I said thank you and used it quite happily. Can you imagine my surprise and alarm when he began to talk about our wedding? Poor man!<sup>95</sup>

Similar comments on Italian POWs could be easily tracked in many POWs' and Women's Land Army (WLA) members' accounts across England and Scotland.<sup>96</sup> For example, a girl volunteering in Wiltshire (England), described two Italian POWs she worked with recalling:

The elder was handsome, mature and friendly, the younger had but one thought in mind and it concerned the Land Girls. All the time they worked on our farm, the farmer had to make sure that I was never left on my own.<sup>97</sup>

Strikingly, Italian POWs themselves sometimes contributed to sustain their womaniser reputation. For example, Abergavenny-based prisoner Umberto Zanni wrote in his memoirs:

Outside [the camp] there were many girls between 15 and 20 years old: they already knew that we Italian were 'latin lovers' and were waiting for us to make friends with them.<sup>98</sup>

The 'Italian Latin lover' stereotype was so widespread in Wales that it even became the plot of a play in Welsh language. On 23 February 1946, the *Denbighshire Free Press* reviewed the play commenting:

The plot of the play is simple. An Italian prisoner is the central figure, and his love affair, which culminates in his capture of the charming daughter of his Welsh master, a farmer, provides the conflict.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Interview with J.R. Rowland, 1 January 1993, SFNHM, Track 11 8227/2.

<sup>95</sup> E.M. Hughes, 'Private Papers', 1988, IWM, 1127 88/1/1.

<sup>96</sup> G. Ambrogetti, 'La Storia della Mia Vita', 1987, ADN, MG/88. C. Prudenza, 'La Vita di un Soldato: Ricordi della Mia Vita Militare', 1989, MG/89; Zanni, 'Riassunto Memorie Guerra e Prigionia', ADN, MG/91; Smith, 'Private Papers', IWM, 14625 05/51/1; E.G. Yebury, 'Private Papers', 1943-1946, IWM, 1403 87/21/1; E.R. Hazell, 1940-1946, IWM, 1112 88/1/1; M. Garrett, 'Private Papers', 1940-1946, IWM, 12608 03/1/1.

<sup>97</sup> G.E. May, 'Private Papers', 1940-1944, IWM, 2366 86/2/0/1.

<sup>98</sup> Zanni, 'Riassunto Memorie Guerra e Prigionia', ADN, MG/91 (author's translation).

However, the 'Latin lover' reputation was not the only negative stereotypical term in which Welsh and, in general, British people looked upon Italian POWs.

Another common label attached to Italians was laziness. As a WLA member volunteering in Inverness-shire (Scotland) wrote: 'at the first sign of rain they were under the trees, singing away very nicely while the rest of us kept on working (...)'.<sup>100</sup> Welsh attitudes did not seem to differ much from the English and Scottish ones. For example, as the Camp 119 diarist reported in September 1944: 'commandant visited Anglesey and inspected hostel there (...) Labour Officer reported that farmers were complaining that POWs left their work to gather willows for making baskets'.<sup>101</sup> Vittorio Bonucci also recalled that once, when he was working on a farm in Ceredigion:

I noticed that Jack's eyes focused angrily on me (...) I couldn't quite catch the exact sense of his words, a torrent of Welsh, English, odd words of Italian, but the gist was pretty clear. 'Wops, *mangiare* [eating], always *mangiare*, not working much' were the words I heard most often.<sup>102</sup>

Italians were also seen as 'lazy' when compared to allegedly 'hard-working' German POWs who started to be employed in Britain from the summer of 1944 onward.<sup>103</sup> For example, the Denbighshire Branch of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) was very keen on employing Germans, who, in its opinion, 'were considerably superior to the Italians in the matter of assistance on farms'.<sup>104</sup>

However, as Moore has suggested, the reason why German POWs were reported to work harder than their Italian counterparts was that the former were much 'better guarded and

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<sup>99</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 23 February 1946, 'Italian in Welsh Play: Bodfari Company at Denbigh'.

<sup>100</sup> Yebury, 'Private Papers', IWM, 1403 87/21/1.

<sup>101</sup> P.V.A. Reid, 'War Diary of 119 POW Camp', September 1944, TNA, WO 166/16295.

<sup>102</sup> Bonucci, *POW: Quasi una Fantasia*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, interview with A. Evans, 5 November 2004, track 1 10657, SFNHM.

<sup>104</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 28 September 1945, 'Farmers Want German Prisoners' Help: Superior to Italians'.

under greater coercion' than the latter.<sup>105</sup> That is why, protests, go-slows and, in a few cases, proper strikes started to occur when, after having achieved the status of cooperator in 1944, Italians begun to realise that 'there were few sanctions that the British authorities could use against them, and productivity suffered as a result'.<sup>106</sup> For example, in August 1944, 119 Camp diarist reported that: 'it appears that POWs at Four Crosses Hostel are adopting a "go slow" attitude as regards civil medical practitioners reports, increase of those reporting sick who have nothing much the matter with them'. Other cases of POWs being 'undisciplined' or 'refusing to work' were frequently reported in north west Wales between August and December 1944.<sup>107</sup> Such occurrences obviously resulted in fuelling the Italian laziness-stereotype among Welsh people. In spite of particularly positive work relations that Italians and Welsh have often recollected in their accounts, one of the few Italian POWs' strikes to be recorded in Britain during the war occurred in Wales.<sup>108</sup> In August 1944, in Pool Park Camp, near Ruthin, several squads of Italian POWs repeatedly refused to work and, eventually, fourteen 'malcontent' Italians had to be transferred to a different camp. The twenty eight days of detention that the strikers were given turned out to be a mild and scarcely effective sanction; this is highlighted by the fact that the detainees were still allowed to go to church to attend the Sunday mass.

Apart from stereotype-orientated attitudes and responses, war-antagonism obviously played an important role in fuelling some negative reactions occurring in Britain during and soon after the war. In later 1944 and early 1945, when the allied forces were engaged in fierce fighting in northern Italy, public feelings towards Italians throughout Britain worsened;<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Moore, 'British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-7', p. 36.

<sup>106</sup> Moore, 'British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War', p. 31.

<sup>107</sup> P.V.A. Reid, 'War Diary of 119 POW Camp', August to September 1944, TNA, WO 166/16295.

<sup>108</sup> D.W. Whiteside, 'War Diary of 38 POW Camp', August 1944, TNA, WO 166/16294.

<sup>109</sup> Moore, 'British Perceptions of Italian Prisoners of War', p. 35.



Wales was not immune to these kinds of negative attitude. For example, an Italian POW in Cardiganshire wrote:

A group of drunk miners came from Cardiff to go on a punitive expedition against the prisoners (...) unfortunately, a prisoner who had gone for a walk on his own was assaulted by the mob (...) they broke a bottle over his head and, in so doing, they damaged his eye.<sup>110</sup>

On a different occasion, near Ruthin, William Chrimes was reported to point a gun at a group of Italian prisoners; the man was fined for having carried a gun without licence (but not for his offence to the Italians).<sup>111</sup> In September 1944, tension between POWs and civilians arose in Bala and, as a result, two Italians had to be withdrawn from the area.<sup>112</sup>

Besides the hostile reactions which have been illustrated, several narratives show that the POWs' experience was not always as positive as it has been recollected by both the media and individual accounts. For example, ex-POW Raffaele Quaglia recalled that, when he worked on farms in rural Carmarthenshire, there were both bad and good farmers. As the interviewee pointed out: 'I was happy when the employers were good to me, but I wasn't happy when I came across employers who weren't very nice [which meant] a small amount of food, a lot of work and when it was raining they made me stay outside'.<sup>113</sup> Several POWs' children also had negative memories of their upbringing which challenged the image of Wales as a rural idyll. For example, Maria Williamson, who migrated to Newtown in 1952 with her mother (at the age of twelve) to join her father (a former POW), recalled:

When we came here (...) we didn't have anybody, we didn't have any friends, so you're all alone. The school (...) the children were a bit nasty, you know, making fun of you and I suppose we were strangers anyway and they were in their country so they're bound to.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ferlito, 'Breve Storia di un Mancato Guerriero', ADN, MG/05 (author's translation).

<sup>111</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 1 April 1944, 'A Gun Incident: Pointed at Italian Prisoners'.

<sup>112</sup> Reid, 'War Diary of 119 POW Camp', TNA, WO 166/16295.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with R. Quaglia, 16 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW (author's translation).

<sup>114</sup> Interview with M. Williamson, 1 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

Pierino Algeri, who was born to a former POW in Llanrwst in 1955 similarly recalled:

When I was young...It was...It was not a very easy childhood being the son of a POW...No...No...I would have swapped identity a thousand times...To be a Welsh local...Because of bullying in school and not fitting in, you know, you were treated a bit like an outsider, only because of my name, identity...When you're in school children can be very very cruel (...) bullying, you know, it happened a lot and my brothers and sisters as well...So we never had many friends when we grew up we were quite lonely children you know.<sup>115</sup>

Such recollections mirror more recent findings by Robison and Gardner. In their study on racism in rural Powys the authors observed that 'children and young people appeared particular targets of racism, contrary to idyllised notions of rural childhoods'.<sup>116</sup> One reason for this could be that, as Robinson and Gardner have argued, 'BME [black minority ethnic] children are so visible in otherwise white communities'.<sup>117</sup> Living in almost entirely 'Welsh' communities, Italian children were (despite their 'whiteness') easily recognizable because of their names and initial communicational difficulties (if they were not born in Wales).

The examples highlighted suggest that the POWs' experience in Wales was not always as positive as it has often been remembered by both Welsh and Italians. Hostility and stereotyping processes, which Italians in Wales were exposed to, suggest that the allegedly 'tolerant' Welsh people were, at times, no less 'prejudiced' than their English neighbours. One reason for the oblivion of negative aspects of the POWs' experience could be that, in their recollections, Italian and Welsh witnesses as well as the media, fiction and commemorations have been influenced by the surrounding social and political environment. On one hand, Italian ex-POWs have reconstructed 'the past to suit the present, to emphasise the bonds of friendship and ignore the tangled histories of the past (...) to access and subscribe to the hugely positive discourse which now surrounds the Italian (...) presence' in

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with P. Algeri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>116</sup> Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', p. 101.

<sup>117</sup> Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', p. 102.

Wales.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, Welsh people and media have reconstructed the POWs' experience in a way that suits the surrounding idea of tolerance and inclusiveness which, over the last fifteen years, has been embraced by Welsh institutions. In conclusion, as French sociologist Halbwachs wrote:

The most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten because constraints are felt only so long as they operate and because, by definition, a past constraint has ceased to be operative. (...) I believe that mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society. (...) people well know that the past no longer exists, so that they are obliged to adjust to the only real world – the one in which they now live. (...) Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess.<sup>119</sup>

As Gillis has more recently observed:

We are currently revising our memories to suit our current identities. Memories help us make sense of the world we live in; and 'memory work' is (...) embedded in complex class, gender and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom and for what end.<sup>120</sup>

## **Case study 2: internment and Arandora Star tragedy**

Besides the POWs' experience, Italian internment and the Arandora Star tragedy have also become a prominent feature of Welsh collective memory and public history. Although these dramatic occurrences have also been recalled in the rest of Britain (namely in London, Liverpool, Middlesbrough and Edinburgh),<sup>121</sup> the attention that has been paid to the event appears to have been particularly significant in Wales. Ugolini has remarked that Wales, like other areas of Britain where the Arandora Star commemorations took place, has attempted to

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<sup>118</sup> Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, pp. 4-8.

<sup>119</sup> M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. L.A. Coser (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 51.

<sup>120</sup> Gillis, 'Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> A significant number of Italian victims originated from such cities.

claim ‘the ownership of the tragedy’.<sup>122</sup> Over the last seventy years, various institutions, both in Italy and Wales, have played an important role in keeping the memory of internment and of the Arandora Star disaster alive. This was already apparent in the early post-war years. In 1948, as *La Voce degli Italiani* reported, the Italian government decided to grant the status of ‘war-widow’ to all wives of the Arandora Star’s Italian victims, who became entitled to a war-pension.<sup>123</sup> In other words, Italian authorities acknowledged that the victims of the disaster were not mere *fatalities*, but proper *war casualties*. In so doing, the Italian government was supported by the leading British-Italian magazine (*La Voce degli Italiani*), which contributed to keep the memory of internment alive among British-Italians.

Over the following decades, other commemorative initiatives were taken at a local level. For example, the Bardi council, where 48 out of 53 Welsh-Italians who died in the Arandora Star disaster originated, decided to name a street in the town after the Arandora Star’s victims (*Via Vittime Arandora Star*) and, in the 1960s, established a commemorative chapel including names and pictures of the victims.<sup>124</sup> The fiftieth anniversary of the tragedy (1990) witnessed a commemoration in Bardi involving both Italian authorities (Italian MPs Mora and Borri and the Emilia-Romagna region’s president Truffelli) and Welsh-Italian participants. As the *Gazzetta* reported:

The past time has not been able to erase the feelings of affection and sorrow which the numerous shipwrecked people of the Arandora Star, both victims and survivors, still provoke within the Bardi’s community both in Italy and abroad. Many are those who have come here are from Wales, London, Ireland and Germany (...) Renato Sidoli has read all the names of the *innocent* victims.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> W. Ugolini, ‘Untold Stories of Loss: Mourning the Enemy in World War Two Britain’, paper delivered at the conference *The Second World War: Popular Culture and Cultural Memory*.

<sup>123</sup> *La Voce degli Italiani*, November 1948, ‘Avvisi ai Connazionali’.

<sup>124</sup> Colpi, ‘The impact of the Second World War’, p. 179. An Arandora Star commemorative monument is also to be found at the Museo of the Fondazione Paolo Cresci in Lucca (Tuscany, Italy). The Lucca province was an important area of emigration to Britain (particularly to Scotland) and many of the Arandora Star disaster victims originated from that area.

<sup>125</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, December 1990, ‘Il Segno Profondo dell’Arandora Star’ (author’s translation).

As this testimony suggests, there appeared to be a slight sense of ‘bitterness’ among Welsh-Italians, as the emphasis on the term ‘innocent victims’ evokes.<sup>126</sup> However, such a feeling was to be overcome by Italians as a result of the inclusive atmosphere that Wales was to experience after 1997.

This became apparent in 2010 as the *Arandora Star* tragedy was ‘officially’ celebrated in Wales by both Welsh and Welsh-Italian people. Seventy years after the liner was torpedoed (July 1940), a commemorative event took place in Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral of St David. This was the result of the combined action of different Welsh-Italian, Italian and Welsh institutions (including Lord Mayor of Cardiff Keith Hyde), who had been involved in the organisation of the event.<sup>127</sup> In 2008, Domenico Casetta, former Italian vice-consul in Cardiff and president of the Cardiff branch of the ACLI, established the *Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales* (ASMFW), which was also joined by AVCG’s president Romeo Basini. In addition, the committee was backed by some prominent public figures, including Italian ambassador to the United Kingdom Alain Economides, Welsh-Italian actor Victor Spinetti and Welsh BBC broadcaster Roy Noble.<sup>128</sup> The ASMFW was also sponsored by the *Consulta degli Emiliano-Romagnoli nel Mondo*, an Italian governmental regional organisation, representing Italians originating from Emilia-Romagna living abroad.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ugolini has observed that ‘in many respects, the victimisation narrative which runs throughout British Italian literature addressing internment draws upon the powerful “Italiani, brava gente” [Italians good people] mythology (...) which perpetuates “the ahistorical innocence of the Italians”, underestimating their involvement in the Fascist party. See: Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’*, p. 233.

<sup>127</sup> Interestingly, this process of memorialisation was paralleled in Scotland where, according to Ugolini, the devolution of power to the Scottish parliament (and the related discourse of inclusiveness) gave boost to an ‘apology campaign’ aiming at obtaining an official commemoration of the *Arandora Star* tragedy. In May 2008, the Scottish First Minister, Alex Salmond, joined with the Archbishop of Glasgow, Mario Conti, to launch an appeal for the *Arandora Star* memorial in the form of an Italian cloister garden at Glasgow’s St. Andrew’s Cathedral. See: Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’*.

<sup>128</sup> ASMFW: Booklet,

[http://www.arandorastarwales.us/Arandora Star Memorial Fund in Wales/COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET.html](http://www.arandorastarwales.us/Arandora%20Star%20Memorial%20Fund%20in%20Wales/COMMEMORATIVE%20BOOKLET.html), accessed 16/02/2011.

<sup>129</sup> Emiliani-Romagnoli nel Mondo, [www.emilianoromagnolinelmundo.it](http://www.emilianoromagnolinelmundo.it), accessed 16/02/2011.

The involvement of both Italian governmental institutions and migrant associations in the organisation of the Arandora Star commemoration denoted an attempt to celebrate the prominence of the Italian migrant group in Wales at a time when other similar initiatives were being taken (see below). This reflected the Italian authorities' interest in reaching out to people of Italian heritage living abroad. This became apparent in 1993 after the Italian Senate approved a law which extended the voting rights to Italian citizens living abroad.<sup>130</sup> This policy was taken further by the law 459/2001 which created foreign constituencies, where Italians could elect their own representatives to the national parliament.<sup>131</sup> According to Fortier, this 'project of representation (...) remains a central concern of those Italian politicians who today support the call for renewed ties between Italy and its emigrants, and who appeal to Italian emigrants as custodians of an Italian culture'.<sup>132</sup> As has already been noted, such 'renewed ties' have constantly been reinforced by medals and honorific titles which the Italian embassy has allocated to some Italian migrants for their contribution to both the Italian community and British society.

Such a foreign policy, which recalls the activism of Italian diplomatic bodies during the Fascist era,<sup>133</sup> has clearly been embraced by Welsh-Italian institutions like ASMFw and AVCG through initiatives like the Arandora Star commemoration. In so doing, such associations aimed to celebrate the prominent social and economic status that Italians have been able to achieve in Wales and their allegedly remarkable contribution (e.g. food provision) to Welsh society. One reason for this could be that the Italian migrant group in Wales had by then become institutionalised and visible, thanks to numerous initiatives which

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<sup>130</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 71. The voting right was extended to all Italian citizens living abroad. According to Italian law, which draws on the so called *ius sanguinis*, anyone whose mother or father is an Italian citizen can claim Italian citizenship.

<sup>131</sup> Ministero dell'Interno: Presentazione delle Candidature per la Circoscrizione Estero, [http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala\\_stampa/speciali/politiche\\_2006/scheda\\_21935.html](http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stampa/speciali/politiche_2006/scheda_21935.html), accessed 4/11/2010.

<sup>132</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 71.

<sup>133</sup> Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*.

were taken by the Welsh media and cultural institutions to celebrate the old-standing history of Italians in Wales (see below). As a result, Italians did not feel the need to resent their former persecutors anymore, but had all the interest in reclaiming their important role within Welsh national history. As Sponza has observed, this positive attitude toward the past tragedy resulted from the fact that ‘self-pity was outweighed in the Italian community by the pride in what was achieved in terms of respect and well-being when the storm was over’.<sup>134</sup> Ugolini has similarly illustrated that the memory of internment reinforced the sense of Italianness of Edinburgh-Italians, which has been fostered by ‘the proliferation of Italian restaurants in Edinburgh, cheap holidays to Italy and a flood of cultural events highlighting the contribution of the Italians in Scotland’.<sup>135</sup>

According to Goodnow, the pressure on museum curators to provide positive representations of migration history comes from both the state and migrant groups. The latter, Goodnow argues, often aim to ‘please’ the majority population by providing those representations the majority is believed to appreciate. In addition, migrant groups tend to promote positive representations of their past experience in order to be accepted and not regarded as ‘ungrateful’ by the receiving society.<sup>136</sup> This argument clearly applies to Italians in Wales. Therefore, the 2010 Arandora Star commemoration illustrates that, instead of using the memorialisation of the tragedy to express their resentment toward their former persecutors, Italians took advantage of the memory of internment to reinforce their link with Welsh people. This attitude toward the past tragedy was paralleled elsewhere in Britain. As Fortier has observed ‘resentment towards Britain is strikingly absent (...) public ceremonies honour the alliance rather than the enmity between Italy and Britain’.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Sponza, ‘The Anti-Italian Riots’, p. 147.

<sup>135</sup> Ugolini, ‘Reinforcing Otherness?’, p. 67.

<sup>136</sup> Goodnow, ‘Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances’, pp. 230-245.

<sup>137</sup> Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 91.

In Wales, such a reconciling attitude was symbolised by the commemorative plaque displaying the names of the Arandora Star's Welsh-Italian victims, which was unveiled during the 2010 ceremony in Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral (see Appendix 3). The plaque had been commissioned by the ASMFw to two prominent artists: Welsh letter-carver Ieuan Rees and Welsh-Italian sculptor Susanna Ciccotti. The two materials (Welsh slate and Italian terracotta) which were used by the two artists to create the plaque were deliberately chosen by the ASMFw to highlight the Welsh-Italian bond,<sup>138</sup> a circumstance which recalls the construction of Cardiff's Irish Famine Memorial. Fashioned from Irish stone and Welsh slate, the monument aimed to celebrate the patterns of Irish migration to Wales and the friendship between Irish and Welsh people. As O'Leary has argued:

(...) the accent was on reconciliation, in an attempt to achieve closure of a difficult and painful past (...) On (...) St Patrick's Day in 1999, several hundred people gathered in Cardiff's Cathays cemetery for the event, organised by the Wales Famine Forum. It was a model of symbolic inclusiveness and inter-faith harmony.<sup>139</sup>

As was the case for Cardiff's Famine Memorial, the Welsh media and institutions got involved in the commemoration of the Arandora Star tragedy to apologize, once and for all, for the way in which Welsh people had treated their Italian 'guests' in 1940. For example, such an apologetic tone was adopted by Swansea National Waterfront Museum's (NWM) curator Ian Smith who, together with the ASMFw, organised the exhibition *Wales Breaks its Silence...From Memories to Memorial*, which followed the commemoration in Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral. As Smith declared:

We are privileged to host this very special and moving exhibition. Until three years ago I knew nothing of this tragic event and the injustice to the Welsh-Italian

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<sup>138</sup> ASMFw, 'Arandora Star: Wales Breaks its Silence...From Memories to Memorial', 2 July 2010, NLW, Cell E1235203. The Welsh-Italian bond was also reinforced by the Valleys' Cwmbach male choir which attended the Arandora Star commemoration (following an ASMFw's invitation). The choir, which performed the famous Italian opera song *Nessun Dorma*, was a clear reference to strong Welsh-Italian ties in the Valleys, which arguably draw on the passion for music that both Welsh and Italians have (for more on this see Chapter Three).

<sup>139</sup> P. O'Leary, 'Introduction-Towards Integration: the Irish in Modern Wales', in P. O'Leary (ed), *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 2.



community, brought about by the fear and panic of war. Indeed, it was only after reading the exhibition panels that I realised, as a little boy I was acquainted with one of the survivors - Mr Angelo Greco who had a cafe in the Hafod, Swansea and made the best ice cream in the world! This exhibition is a stark reminder of how quickly friends and neighbours can be turned into enemies by events far away from their own doorsteps.<sup>140</sup>

As this passage suggests, the curator apologized, on behalf of the NWM, for the ‘injustice’ which Italians in Wales fell victims of; not only did he describe Italians as innocent victims, but he also emphasised their contribution to Welsh society (‘the best ice-cream in the world’). At the same time, he distanced Welsh people from the responsibility for the tragedy, which occurred as a result of ‘events far away from their own doorsteps’. In addition, he recalled the long-standing Welsh-Italian friendship. This means that, far from seeing the Arandora Star commemoration as a source of division and reciprocal hostility, various Welsh institutions and people were able to take advantage of the internment-memory to reinforce their alleged historically-based bond with Italians.

In her study of exhibitions representing migration history in Scandinavia, Goodnow has observed that past stories of ill-treatment and abuse, rather than those of the present, tended to be highlighted. This means that, as Goodnow argues, the responsibility for such ill-treatments was placed in the past, suggesting that society has now ‘moved on’, becoming more tolerant and enlightened.<sup>141</sup> In Wales, such a way of looking at the past served a reinforcement of the present tolerant and inclusive image of the nation. It showed that, whereas Welsh people might have mistreated the Italian migrant group *in the past*, such a mistreatment was just ‘an isolated rupture in harmonious relations between Italians and the host community’.<sup>142</sup> Such a reconciliatory tone was also highlighted by the *mise-en-scène* of a play entitled *Arandora Star* which narrates the story of family of Italian café-owners

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<sup>140</sup> National Waterfront Museum: Wales Breaks its Silence...At the National Waterfront Museum, [http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/5/?article\\_id=697](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/5/?article_id=697), accessed 29/11/2010.

<sup>141</sup> Goodnow, ‘Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances’, pp. 230-245.

<sup>142</sup> Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’*, p. 23.

experiencing internment. The play, which was produced by Welsh independent company Theatr Na N'Og, aimed at reaching out to schools and colleges across Wales. It emphasised the Italian integration and contribution to Welsh society and reinforced a sense of Welsh-Italian communality, transmitting it to the younger generations. As the company's website reads: 'who can you trust? Who is the enemy? Friend or Foe? Their Story, *Our* Story, *Your* Story'.<sup>143</sup> Such a sense of shared experience was also reinforced by the play's protagonist and narrator Lina, an Italian teenage girl who the young audience could easily identify with. Thus, as Young has pointed out, it can be argued that:

Memory is never shaped in a vacuum; the motives of memory are never pure. Both the reasons given for (...) memorials and the kinds of memory they generate are as various as the sites themselves. Some are built (...) according to a government's need to explain a nation's past to itself. Where the aim of some memorials is to educate the next generation and to inculcate in it a sense of shared experience and destiny, other memorials are conceived as expiations of guilt or as self-aggrandizement. (...).<sup>144</sup>

All these features ('sense of guilt', 'need to explain a nation's past to itself' and 'inculcate a sense of shared experience in the next generation') were embedded in the Arandora Star commemoration and related initiatives, including the Welsh media-coverage of the event.

The commemoration taking place in Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral was reported, among the others, by Nick Servini (BBC Wales) and Marie Claire Ceri Jones (ITV Wales), two Welsh-Italian journalists whose great grandfathers had died in the Arandora Star tragedy.<sup>145</sup> The fact that two Welsh television channels gave them the opportunity to report the celebration could be seen as a deliberate attempt to dramatize the event and reinforce the Welsh-Italian link. It can also be seen as a celebration of Italian migrants' economic achievements and successful integration into Welsh society, symbolised by Welsh-Italian TV reporters themselves. As

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<sup>143</sup> Theatr Na N'Og: Yr Arandora Star, <http://www.theatr-nanog.co.uk/productions/Arandora-Star>, accessed 8/02/2011.

<sup>144</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>145</sup> BBC1 Wales, 'Arandora Star Memorial', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10470836>, accessed 23/09/2010; ITV1 Wales, 'Wales Tonight: Arandora Star Tragedy', 1 July 2010, <http://www.itv.com/wales/arandora-star-tragedy37796/>, accessed 25/09/2010.

Servini put it: '[Italians] were hugely successful. At the time of the Arandora Star there were more than 300 Italian cafés, shops and restaurants in south Wales alone'. Servini's report also included a visit to Bardi, his great grandfather's home town in Italy. As the correspondent commented: 'this is Bardi, a small town in the mountains of northern Italy dominated by its castle and its extraordinary link with south Wales that was never more apparent as in the tragedy of the Arandora Star'.

The report portrayed Bardi as a stereotypical Italian town with sunny hills, church bells, the *piazza*, narrow streets and old men sitting alfresco. Such a commonsense knowledge-based representation of Italy reminded Welsh people of their alleged historical connection with Italians. Such a reinforcement of the Welsh-Italian connection was taken further by Servini's encounter with his 95 year-old great aunt, who grew up in Wales and witnessed her father's internment. The woman appeared like a stereotypical old-fashioned Italian grandmother (a short lady with dark features) but retained a strong south Walian accent. In other words, she represented a 'physical' representation of Welsh-Italian ties. In addition, the woman's recollection of the day when her father was arrested by two policemen in Pontypridd, contributed to minimize the Welsh responsibility for internment. As the respondent commented: 'we knew them all [the policemen], they were customers, they were very embarrassed, really, when they came to catch my father (...) they had to do it but of course they didn't like it'.

One reason for the reconciling tone that the Welsh media and museums adopted could be that they mirrored the atmosphere of inclusiveness and tolerance which had been flagged by the Welsh political institutions over the previous decade. In so doing, the Welsh media and museums aimed at showing to the Welsh public opinion that their nation was able to reconcile with its former enemies/victims by virtue of its long-standing tolerant attitude. For

all these reasons, the Arandora Star Memorial recalls, on a small scale, some holocaust memorials in the USA which have been investigated by Young. As Young has observed, such memorials have two essential functions; firstly, they expiate the national sense of guilt for the American late response to the genocide during the Second World War and, secondly, they celebrate Jewish survivors who migrated to the United States after the war and reinforce 'America's self-idealisation as haven for the world's oppressed'.<sup>146</sup> In other words, American holocaust memorials suggest themselves 'as the ultimate triumph of America's absorption of immigrants, the integration of immigrant memory into the topographical heart of American history'.<sup>147</sup>

The Arandora Star Memorial similarly served a celebration of Wales being a welcoming nation rather than a full recognition of its past mistakes. This is highlighted by the fact that, whereas they were not hidden, the most negative aspects of internment were downplayed by the Arandora Star commemorative initiatives. For example, the anti-Italian riots which occurred in south Wales soon after Italy declared war on Britain were often underestimated. Even though they did not reach the scale of violence of previous racially-motivated disturbances in south Wales,<sup>148</sup> anti-Italian riots appeared to be nothing but hostile reactions that challenged the traditionally tolerant image of Wales. For example, on 11 June 1940, in Newport, 'a crowd of a few hundred assembled outside a restaurant at the junction of Cardiff road and Commercial Street. Missiles were thrown and windows were smashed'.<sup>149</sup> The following day in Swansea, a hostile crowd of about two hundred people rounded the shop of

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<sup>146</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 336. For a discussion on the memorialisation of the holocaust in the United States see, for example, P. Novick, *The Holocaust in American History* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999) and N.G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London, Verso, 2000).

<sup>147</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993), p. 347.

<sup>148</sup> On this topic see, for example, Holmes, 'The Tredegar Riots of 1911', 214-225; Evans, 'Through the Prism of Ethnic Violence', pp. 214-225; P. O'Leary, 'Anti Irish Riots in Wales, 1826-1882', *Llafur* 5 (1991), 26-37.

<sup>149</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 11 June 1940, 'Newport Anti-Italian scenes'.

Antonio Segadelli breaking its window.<sup>150</sup> As Mervyn Matthews also wrote in his childhood memoirs:

I rushed down to Neat Road and found an excited crowd outside the café. Somebody had already smashed Greco's windows for him, and his family had retreated upstairs, in anticipation of a siege. There was a poignant moment when one of the girls, her dark eyes blazing, leaned out of the bedroom window to address the crowd. (...) 'My father is not a spy', she yelled, in the broadest of Hafod accents, 'he lived in the Hafod with you for thirty years. Go away, you Welsh swine!'<sup>151</sup>

Writer Anita Arcari, whose novel the *Hokey Pokey Man* draws on her family's memories, also narrated, in fictional terms, the dramatic events that occurred in Swansea as soon as Italy declared war on Britain. The novel's protagonist Tino D'Abruzzo and his family are suddenly assaulted by a group of locals who break into their café, smashing everything, beating up the owner and eventually labelling the shop with the words 'go home bloody Eye-tie traitors'.<sup>152</sup> Also in Alan Lambert's *Roberto's War*, the Morettis' café is suddenly attacked by the Welsh mob shouting 'this shop belongs to us now (...) you can clear out, you Eyeties!'<sup>153</sup>

Nevertheless, in this case, the protagonist Robert (a Welsh schoolboy) and his family stay loyal to the Morettis on the ground that, as Robert's mother argues, 'the Morettis aren't our enemies! They've been living here for years. They're our friends'.<sup>154</sup> That is why, when a group of young English evacuees start to bully the Morettis, calling them 'Eyeties', Robert, together with other local kids, stands up for his Italian friends on the ground that they are as Welsh as he is.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, as Lambert's novel suggests, the recollections of the negative aspects of internment seem to have been overwhelmed by the narration of the positive ones, including the supportive attitude that some Welsh people showed towards Italians. Such an

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<sup>150</sup> *Western Mail*, 12 June 1940, 'Wales Rounds Up Italians'. A number of incidents were also reported in Aberdare, Tonypandy and Llanelli. See, for example, Evans, 'Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', pp. 5-26.

<sup>151</sup> Mervyn Matthews, *Mervyn's Lot: an Extraordinary Childhood Memoir* (Bridgend, Seren, 2002), p. 51.

<sup>152</sup> Anita Arcari, *The Hokey Pokey Man* (Y Lolfa, Talybont, 2010).

<sup>153</sup> Lambert, *Roberto's War*, p. 102.

<sup>154</sup> Lambert, *Roberto's War*, p. 101.

<sup>155</sup> Lambert, *Roberto's War*, p. 51.

attitude was already highlighted in 1940, when some Welsh newspapers compared the alleged Welsh tolerance with English anti-Italian hostility. For example, the day after Italy declared war on Britain, the *South Wales Echo* reported that, whereas elsewhere in Britain (e.g. London) ‘here and there a broken window was a reminder of last night’s anti-Italian scenes’, in the Valleys ‘there has been no disorder (...) the Italians appeared in quite cheerful spirit and it looked almost as if they were off for a day’s outing’.<sup>156</sup> Even Welsh MP Rhys Davies declared before the House of Commons that, whereas most English newspapers supported the internment policy demanding to ‘intern the lot’, ‘happily, no Welsh paper said so’.<sup>157</sup>

The supportive attitude that Welsh people arguably showed towards Italians during the war was also highlighted by some Italian witnesses. These tended to underestimate the Welsh people’s hostility and justify the British war-policy on the ground that ‘the country we now belong too was in danger’ or ‘these things do happen’.<sup>158</sup> As an internee’s son commented: ‘what happened to the Italian community in south Wales should not happen, especially the Arandora Star event, but, in retrospect, one has to remember that this country was going through a really really bad time, the Germans were round the corner’.<sup>159</sup> Pietro Sidoli, whose father was interned during the war, declared that the fear of Italian espionage in the early 1940s was comparable to the fear of Islamic terrorism today, therefore ‘at the time (interning the Italians) was the right thing to do’.<sup>160</sup> Even the popular *Western Mail* Welsh-Italian columnist Mario Basini, who has frequently condemned the internment policy and defined it as an ‘injustice’, has always remarked that everything happened ‘at the hands of the British

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<sup>156</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 11 June 1940, ‘Big round up of South Wales Italians’.

<sup>157</sup> R. Davies, ‘Internees’, *22 August 1940, HCD, vol 364 cc1475-586*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1940/aug/22/internees-1>, accessed 1/02/2011.

<sup>158</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Another Valley’, 12 July 1986, NLW, Cell E123 001961/01.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with J. Servini, SFNHM, 28 March 1995, Track 9 8002/2.

<sup>160</sup> NSSAW, ‘Pietro Sidoli: Italian Welshman’, 2003, NLW, V/DIG/A/15398.

government' (not of Welsh people).<sup>161</sup> The son of a café-owner who was interned during the Second World War, Basini also observed how not only did his father not resent Welsh people for having been interned, but 'was a Conservative whose political hero was Churchill, a fact that astonished me since it was Churchill's insistence on locking up enemy aliens that had landed him in internment camps'.<sup>162</sup> An internee's daughter reported that 'people in Pontypridd were very nice' arguing that, whereas it is true that some windows were smashed, hostility involved only a minority of the Welsh population.<sup>163</sup>

This attitude toward the past does not seem to be unique to Welsh-Italians, as German ex-internees in other parts of Britain have also tended to 'gloss over the dark side of internment', justifying the British policy; as one interviewee pointed out: 'we had to beat the Nazis...Therefore we had to stand behind whatever they [the British] did'.<sup>164</sup> One reason for such a surprisingly positive attitude toward the past internment-experience could be that it is generally those who stayed in Britain after the war and successfully settled in who have recollected it. As Holmes has observed: 'the voices are of those who survived (...) those internees who died in internment, those unfortunate souls who went down in the *Arandora Star*, those detainees who in desperation committed suicide (...) have disappeared from the sound of historical memory'.<sup>165</sup>

### **Case study 3: coal miners**

Welsh coal miners have frequently been portrayed as being a symbol of tolerance and international proletarian solidarity.<sup>166</sup> Such a portrayal was academically sustained by one of the major studies in Welsh modern social history: Francis and Smith's *The Fed: a history of*

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<sup>161</sup> *Western Mail*, 26 February 2005, 'A Lesson from the Past for Dealing With Today Terrorists'.

<sup>162</sup> Mario Basini, *Real Merthyr* (Bridgend, Seren, 2008), p. 92.

<sup>163</sup> BBC1 Wales, 'Arandora Star Memorial', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10470836>, accessed 23/09/2010.

<sup>164</sup> Holmes, 'British Justice at Work', p. 160.

<sup>165</sup> As cited in Holmes, 'British Justice at Work', p. 160.

<sup>166</sup> Evans, 'Immigrants and minorities in Wales', 5-26.

*the South Wales miners in the twentieth century*. In this book, Francis and Smith emphasised the miners' international proletarian solidarity, including their 'involvement in vigorous campaigns against fascism and reactionary regimes from post-war Greece to Chile in the 1970s (...) and constant financial support of the anti-Franco Spanish miners'.<sup>167</sup> Yet, the authors failed to acknowledge the xenophobic response that Welsh coal miners gave to Italian migrant workers in the early 1950s. When the NCB agreed with the Italian government to recruit Italian labour, many lodges of the NUM across the British mining regions (including south Wales) immediately 'expressed firm opposition to the employment of Italians' as they had previously done with Irish and Poles.<sup>168</sup> Although the NUM South Wales Area initially agreed with the NCB to import Italian manpower to south Wales, many lodges eventually rejected Italians; by the end of 1951, only seven Welsh pits had accepted Italian workers.<sup>169</sup>

Putting such a negative attitude down to their fear of Italian 'free riders' stealing their jobs, the government together with the NCB tried to reassure Welsh miners that foreign workers would have been employed at the same economic conditions as them and would have been the first to go in case of redundancies. They even appealed to the alleged miners' international solidarity by stressing that 'the Italians desperately need the work'. For example, in a meeting with Welsh representatives of the NCB in Cardiff in September 1951, the Minister of Labour and National Service Alfred Robens declared:

I say this to the National Union of Mineworkers. There are 2,500,000 people in Italy who have not got a job. It is in the interest of the working class of the world that they should be given jobs where it does not interfere with the employment of Britons.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> H. Francis and D. Smith, *The Fed: a History of the South Wales Miners in the Twentieth Century* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), p. 429.

<sup>168</sup> MFP, 'Memorandum by the Ministry of Fuel and Power', TNA, POWE 37/233.

<sup>169</sup> *Observer*, 25 November 1951, 'Why Miners Reject Italian Labour: a Failure in Persuasion', TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>170</sup> *Western Mail*, 7 September 1951, 'Minister to NUM: Let Italian Workers in'.



Nevertheless, Welsh miners (like their English counterparts) countered that foreign labour was not needed; manpower shortages amongst indigenous workers could easily be resolved by increasing their wages.<sup>171</sup> For example, on 12 February 1951, a mining instructor from Durham sent the following letter to the NCB:

It is with great dismay and annoyance that I learn that a commission is out in Italy recruiting unskilled workers for the British coal mining industry. Do the authorities not realise that there are many men, unemployed, who are quite capable of doing jobs that these Italians will be able to do with limited training? Has anyone asked how long these persons will stay in the pits? Quite frankly I believe that most of them will, in a short time, leave the pits to become ice-cream vendors. In any case, will the limited increase in coal output justify the housing and feeding of these men who will swell an already over populated country?<sup>172</sup>

This letter perfectly summarises the attitudes toward Italian migrants that were widespread among British miners at the time. There was also opposition to foreign miners on linguistic grounds. Although Italians were given an intensive English language course before being placed in the pits, some Welsh miners doubted that they could work ‘on the immediate reaction on instructions given in the industry’s colourful and vigorous English – or perhaps Welsh!’<sup>173</sup> In a letter to the newly-elected Deputy Prime Minister Anthony Eden, a colliery director suggested that Jamaicans were employed instead of Italians on the ground that they could speak English.<sup>174</sup> Soon after, the Ministry of Fuel and Power published a list of ‘suggested reasons why miners refuse to accept Italians’ including: ‘sheer xenophobia, fear that the status of the miners will be debased, fear that wages and conditions will be forced down, fear that Italians will be preferred to the Britishers for promotion, belief that higher wages will attract enough British workers, difficulties of absorbing Italians into social life and fear that Italians will cause troubles among the fair sex’.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> MFS, ‘Foreign Labour’, 12 December 1950, TNA, POWE 37/233.

<sup>172</sup> K. Richardson to J. Macdonald, 12 February 1951, TNA, POWE 37/233.

<sup>173</sup> MFS, ‘Employment of Italians in UK Coal Mines’, 29 August 1957, TNA, POWE 37/236.

<sup>174</sup> J.B. Paget to A. Eden, 29 October 1951, TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>175</sup> MFP, ‘Notes for Supplementary Questions’, 3 December 1951, TNA, POWE 37/234.

The latter reason was also highlighted by Conservative MP Victor Raikes, who declared: ‘the real objection of miners to Italian workers is not so much the danger of unemployment but that Italian workers have a certain sex appeal towards their wives and daughters’.<sup>176</sup> The Llandybie lodge of the NUM reacted to this statement demanding the MP to withdraw his insulting comment. The entire south Wales area executive council of the NUM eventually voted a resolution asking Raikes to apologize.<sup>177</sup> Yet, according to the *Labour Evening Standard*, it was true that sexual jealousy was one of the reasons why Welsh miners refused to work with Italians. As the newspaper reported:

[In south Wales] many miners’ lodges are still objecting strongly to the employment of Italians. Some of them say that the ‘Eyeties’ might cause unemployment. Other that chances of promotion will be blocked. Some miners were prisoners of war in Italy; some fear that the Italians might take their girls.<sup>178</sup>

This passage suggests that, to a certain extent, anti-Italian hostility was a gender-based phenomenon. This would explain why Italian female workers who were brought to Britain under official recruiting schemes were (in comparison) relatively well-received by the indigenous workforce of the Lancashire textile industry.<sup>179</sup> As Philipps and Abendstern have observed, women workers in post-war Britain were generally ‘liable to accept the entry of female immigrants more easily than local men were prepared to tolerate their fellow male immigrants’.<sup>180</sup>

Therefore, as was the case for Italian POWs, it appears that Italian miners were exposed to a sort of sexual jealousy which drew on long-established stereotypes. Despite being seemingly in favour of Italian immigration, the British press itself often contributed to fuel such

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<sup>176</sup> *Western Mail*, 24 January 1952, ‘Sex Appeal Objection’.

<sup>177</sup> G. Harcombe to MFP, 30 January 1952, TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>178</sup> *Labour Evening Standard*, 23 November 1951, ‘Welcome Stranger’, TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>179</sup> MLNS, ‘Welfare Arrangements for Italian Women Recruited for Textile Employment’, 1949, TNA, LAB 26/242.

<sup>180</sup> S. Phillips, M. Abendstern and C. Hallet, ‘They More or Less Blended in With Society: Changing Attitudes to European Migrant Workers in Post-War Lancashire’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 25 (2007), 54.

stereotypes. For example, the *Star* published a cartoon representing Italian miner ‘Antonio’, with a moustache and wavy hair, singing the serenade ‘if only he’d stick/to the coal with his pick/not pick up the local belle’.<sup>181</sup> Such a portrayal reflected the way in which Italians were often stereotyped on film. As Benshoff and Griffin have argued, since the early twentieth century, the typical Italian had been represented by American film industry as ‘a simple-minded, working-class man who spoke in broken English and who often wore a bushy moustache. He was always smiling and gracious’. After the success of Italian actor Rodolfo Valentino in the 1920s, Italians started to be stereotyped as Latin lovers too.<sup>182</sup> Girelli has also observed that similar stereotypes were also fuelled by some British films that were released throughout the 1950s.<sup>183</sup>

However, sexual jealousy was not the only reason why Italians were targeted by Welsh miners. On some occasions, hostility arose from pure xenophobia. For example, on 5 March 1952, in Port Talbot, 28-year-old miner Luigi Napodano complained about ‘the nasty resentments towards us on the part of many British workmen. Sometimes they act as if we were cattle’.<sup>184</sup> Similarly Francesco Laforges, who worked as a miner in Llanharry, reported that some of his Welsh colleagues used to address him saying ‘get out of here! Go back to your country!’<sup>185</sup> To a certain extent, such hostility toward Italian migrants arose from economic concerns which had little to do with nationality. This explains why other migrant groups were equally exposed to xenophobia. For example, Welsh miners refused to accept Hungarian refugees who fled their country following the repression of the 1956 uprising.<sup>186</sup> Such a reaction was not uncommon. O’Leary has illustrated that, since the 1850s, Irish migrants were repeatedly opposed by Welsh miners in the Valleys, being blamed for

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<sup>181</sup> *Star*, 24 January 1952, ‘Underminer’, TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>182</sup> Benshoff and Griffin, *America on Film*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>183</sup> Girelli, *Beauty and the Beast*.

<sup>184</sup> *Western Mail*, 5 March 1952, Deceived Italians May Quit Works.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>186</sup> *Western Mail*, 26 January 1957, ‘Give Hungarians Chance in Mines’.

undercutting wages and breaking strikes. As the author has observed ‘repeated attempts were made to exclude the Irish from the Rhondda’.<sup>187</sup> As Holmes has argued, ‘hostility arising particularly from competition for jobs’ has historically been an important trait of British industrial relations.<sup>188</sup> As Lucassen has also suggested, ‘with the emergence of the western European welfare states in the course of the twentieth century, the image that migrants are a potential threat to the welfare state as “free riders” who only receive and do not contribute has firmly taken root’.<sup>189</sup> Italian migrant workers in particular have traditionally been accused of undercutting wages and breaking strikes, thus that they have often been referred to as ‘the Chinese of Europe’.<sup>190</sup>

It is important to note that, whereas the majority of British miners opposed the introduction of Italian labour in the pits, the British press generally supported the NCB recruiting scheme and firmly condemned the workers’ hostility toward Italians. This was particularly apparent in Wales, where the Conservative *Western Mail* repeatedly stuck up for Italian miners.<sup>191</sup> For example, when 700 Welsh miners went on strike to oppose the employment of Italian manpower in a pit in Bwllfa (Aberdare), a *Western Mail*’s editor wrote:

It is shameful thing that the Coal Board and the Government have been obliged to end the recruitment of Italians for British mines. (...) no one of the reasons given by the miners can justify their action. Indeed, the very number of the excuses offered – ranging from personal unpopularity to religious prejudice – prove that the miners have a bad conscience.<sup>192</sup>

British journalists also tended to depict Italian miners in slightly paternalistic terms, often recurring to long-established stereotypes. Like POWs, smiling Italian miners, with their

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<sup>187</sup> O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 149.

<sup>188</sup> Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, p. 100. On this topic see also: Lunn (ed), *Race and Labour*.

<sup>189</sup> L. Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: the Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe Since 1850* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 15.

<sup>190</sup> Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat*, p. 15.

<sup>191</sup> One reason for this could be that the *Western Mail* was clearly anti-trade unions and pro-employers in general.

<sup>192</sup> *Western Mail*, 17 May 1952, ‘Obstinate Miners’.

moustache and dark hair/eyes, were often described as ‘docile’ labourers; good family-men who were willing to work hard to provide for their wives and children back home. For example, in September 1951, the *Daily Express* told the story of ‘Roberto with the Chaplin smile’: ‘when his daily seven hour-stint is finished (...) he writes to Maria, his sweetheart in Italy and tells her how, when they are married, they will come back to England to live – for always’.<sup>193</sup> The *Daily Herald* published a picture showing a group of Italians learning English at the Maltby training centre, being depicted like diligent school pupils staring at the blackboard.<sup>194</sup> A few months later, the *Observer* had nothing but praise for Italians working in south Wales and criticised Welsh miners’ opposition:

There can be no doubt that the Italians already in South Wales have a sensational zest for work (...) they are on piece-rates, and in the first weeks almost smashed the place up in their attempt to get more output than the machines are capable of giving (...) Whenever a visitor who speaks Italian appears, they unburden themselves of two urgent requests. One is for more spaghetti in the hostel diet, and the other that the manager should be persuaded to let them work a sixteen-hour day at least twice a week. (...) Many of the Italians are men who, driven by harshest circumstances of unemployment, have left their homes and taken work in alien surroundings to keep their family going. Welsh miners did the same during the depression. They have, therefore, a deep emotional fellow-feeling for these handsome strangers and even the most dogmatic opponents of foreign labour seem often to be struggling against it.<sup>195</sup>

In addition, some newspapers criticised Welsh miners’ anti-Italian attitude on the ground that, thanks to the introduction of foreign labour in the low-paid underground occupations, the indigenous miners could upgrade to better work positions in the coal-face.

Interestingly, the Welsh press (notably its leading newspaper the *Western Mail*) has more recently maintained the same pro-immigration attitude that they had showed toward Italian miners in the 1950s. When, roughly fifty years later, the EU enlargement caused a significant number of Polish workers to migrate to Wales, the *Western Mail* highlighted their positive

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<sup>193</sup> *Daily Express*, 13 September 1951, ‘1,2,3...Roberto (With the Chaplin Smile) Cleans Up’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>194</sup> *Daily Herald*, 20 June 1951, ‘Pit Recruits From Italy Learn the Language of the Mines’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

<sup>195</sup> *Observer*, 25 November 1951, ‘Why Miners Reject Italian Labour: a Failure in Persuasion’, TNA, LAB 13/57.

impact on the Welsh economy and society and condemned the ‘vicious and callous’ Welsh employers who exploited Polish labour.<sup>196</sup> Welsh institutions also supported Polish migrant workers. For example, the WAG and the Welsh TUC financed a ‘Polish Welsh Mutual Association’ to promote integration. Nevertheless the Polish population has remained relatively un-integrated, primarily because of language barriers.<sup>197</sup> Whereas Welsh institutions have welcomed Polish migrants, ‘the concentration of workers - particularly Poles - in some areas of the country has caused resentment among sections of the population, who feel that the new arrivals are taking advantages of opportunities to claim jobs and benefits’. Like Italians in the 1950s, Polish migrants were once again accused of being ‘free riders’ by the indigenous population while they were praised by the Welsh press and institutions for having ‘made it possible for Wales to grow’.<sup>198</sup>

Although the sets of evidence which have been illustrated so far show that the majority of Welsh miners were hostile to Italian immigration, several accounts suggest that, in a minority of cases, indigenous miners were actually keen on working with Italians. For example, Welsh and Italian miners at Bryn colliery were reported to get along very well thanks to their common love for music, a prominent stereotype in both nations.<sup>199</sup> Training officer Mr Rees commented: ‘every day (...) the Italians can be heard singing at the top of their voices. There are one or two excellent singers among them (...) much to the delight of other miners’. The presumed ‘Welsh tolerance’ of Bryn’s miners was also highlighted by a *Western Mail* reporter who commented: ‘can it be that the Welsh and English miners are different types? Reports that English miners have refused to work with Italians because they are bad workmen have puzzled the men at Bryn’.<sup>200</sup> Yet, the real reason why some miners accepted Italians was

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<sup>196</sup> *Western Mail*, 21 November 2007, ‘Polish Are Exploited by “Vicious” Employers in Wales’.

<sup>197</sup> Thompson et al., ‘Welcome to Llaneski’, 1-16.

<sup>198</sup> *Western Mail*, 13 June 2007, ‘Revealed: How Eastern Bloc Workers Are Transforming Wales’.

<sup>199</sup> For more on this see Chapter Three.

<sup>200</sup> *Western Mail*, 19 May 1952, ‘Welsh Miners Think Italians Excellent’.

not that they appreciated their singing skills, but that they had been reassured by the NCB of the fact that, with foreign workers filling the lower positions, the Welsh ones could be upgraded to the better paid jobs.<sup>201</sup>

Nevertheless, other accounts also seem to emphasize the welcoming attitude of some Welsh miners, without imputing it to merely economic reasons. Some witnesses, who experienced working both in Wales and elsewhere in Britain, even argued that Welsh miners were more welcoming than the English or Scottish ones. For example, Antonio Marchesi commented:

When I went to Scotland (...) it seemed to me that there was a little bit of hatred towards foreigners. I mean, if you went to the pub for a drink, they looked at you with a strange look, there wasn't that friendliness (...) whereas when I worked in the mine at Bryncethin and Nantymoel, the miners accepted me with open arms, they became friends immediately, they treated me well... They helped me... They tried to teach me (...) their language [Welsh].<sup>202</sup>

In fact, as the authors of a study of EVWs in post-war Lancashire have pointed out: 'memory is clearly shaped by the present and by subsequent reflections, with perspectives on levels of prejudice or hostility viewed through the prism of subsequent events'.<sup>203</sup> If the interviewee was lately able to blend in the receiving society and achieved economic stability (as it was the case for Antonio Marchesi) he would be more likely to emphasize the positive aspects of his experience and minimize the negative ones.

Therefore, what is remarkable about Italian miners is that, unlike POWs, internees and café-keepers, they have almost entirely been forgotten in Welsh popular culture and public history. One reason for this could be that their experience was largely negative and, therefore, not worth being remembered. This suggests that the Welsh media and institutions have deliberately forgotten this particular migrant experience simply because it does not suit the current tolerant and inclusive image of Wales. Whereas the 2010 exhibition *Italian Memories*

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<sup>201</sup> *Western Mail*, 30 April 1952, 'Italians Happy in Pit Jobs'.

<sup>202</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>203</sup> Phillips et al., 'They More or Less Blended In With Society', 65.

*in Wales* (see below) did include references to Italian miners, it glossed on the negative side of their migrant experience. In the pictures, Italians were depicted as happily integrated into the Welsh coalfield (see Appendix 4), an image that indirectly reinforced the alleged ‘proletarian solidarity’ of Welsh miners. Strikingly, some of the interviews on which the exhibition was based did include references to Welsh miners’ hostility.<sup>204</sup> Yet, such references were deliberately ignored.

#### **Case study 4: cafés**

Italian cafés have become a clear symbol of successful integration into Welsh society. As they became popular eating places for the indigenous population, they functioned as what anthropologist van den Berghe would define as ‘a bridge across ethnic lines’, encouraging the formation of friendly relationships between Welsh and Italians.<sup>205</sup> Italian cafés have also been depicted, by both Welsh and Italians, as essential meeting places for the Welsh working class, particularly in the Valleys. As Les Serviini wrote in his memoirs: ‘the Bracchi shop (...) was a venue, a meeting place for Valley people who hitherto had only the chapel or the club’.<sup>206</sup> Although only a few of them are still to be found across Wales, cafés have become an important trait of Welsh collective memory and popular culture. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, they have become a common feature in Welsh literature. This is testified by the appearance in the 1998 *New Companion to the Literature of Wales* of a specific entry for ‘Bracchi’, defined as ‘the Italian-run cafes found in many parts of South Wales...[which] were to become synonymous with good-quality, popular catering’.<sup>207</sup>

The popularity of Italian cafés in Welsh fiction was already apparent in the early post-war years. In 1946, for example, prominent Welsh writer Gwyn Thomas provided a vivid

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<sup>204</sup> Interviews with N. Fantini, 25 October 2008 and F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>205</sup> Van den Berghe, ‘Ethnic Cuisine’, 393.

<sup>206</sup> Les Serviini, *A Boy From Bardi* (Llanharry, Les Serviini, 1994), p. 8.

<sup>207</sup> Stephens, *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, p. 64.



description of a typical Italian café in the Rhondda Valley. In his novel *The Dark Philosophers*, Thomas, who grew up in Porth (Rhondda Valley), highlighted the central position that Italian cafés came to occupy within the south Walian social landscape; the fictional Idomeneo Ferraci's café was symbolically located near the Library and Miners' Institute, which, together with the Chapel, represented the fundamental social and cultural institutions of the Welsh mining communities.<sup>208</sup> As Thomas wrote:

For the purpose of a quiet talk among ourselves, when we felt a strange craving for that loneliness we had known so often on that brick wall during the cold years, we preferred the back room at Idomeneo's. This room was cosy and cheerful, having sawdust on the floor and a large stove in the middle, which had a complicated system of airshafts that made the layout of an ordinary man or woman look simple.<sup>209</sup>

Further on in the book, the protagonist of *The Dark Philosophers* (which is set in the 1930s) becomes suspicious when he notices a Fascist label on Idomeneo's hot water cistern. Nevertheless, as soon as he realises that Idomeneo is an anti-Fascist and that his two brothers in Italy have been jailed by the 'blackshirts' as political dissenters, the protagonist expresses all his (Welsh) proletarian solidarity with him:

From the moment of that explanation onwards we were good friends with Idomeneo, particularly after he had told us of those two brothers who were in jail. We looked on him after that as being a splendid character by our standards, and a valuable link between ourselves and all those humble brethren on the continent of Europe whose aim, as ours, was to cut down on the number of nuisances who flourish on this hearth, and to reach the grave without paying too many and too heavy charges on the way.<sup>210</sup>

According to Smith and Francis, the internationalist anti-fascist commitment that emerges from the passage above belonged to the proletarian tradition of the Welsh coalfield, which 'provided the largest regional-occupational grouping within the British Battalion of the

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<sup>208</sup> For more on this see, for example, D. Smith, *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1993).

<sup>209</sup> Gwyn Thomas, *The Dark Philosophers* (Cardiff, Parthian, 2006), p. 118. 'The Dark Philosophers' was originally published in 1946.

<sup>210</sup> Thomas, *The Dark Philosophers*, p. 120.

International Brigades' during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)'.<sup>211</sup> According to Smith and Francis' argument, Welsh people embraced Italian café-keepers by virtue of their international proletarian solidarity with all 'oppressed' people, including Italians who were 'oppressed' by the Fascist regime.

Nevertheless, despite their presumed tolerance and non-prejudiced attitude, Welsh people did not seem to be immune to some popular Italian-related stereotypes. That is why, in describing his Italian character and making him recognizable to the reader, Thomas himself fell back on long-standing stereotypes; as the 'short, thick, strongly-built fellow' described by George Borrow in the 1850s, Idomeneo is short, dark haired and sings opera 'in a baritone voice that seemed to us very deep and rich for so small a man'.<sup>212</sup> However, such stereotypes appeared to be mainly inoffensive and did not denote any serious form of prejudice. Shohat and Stam would argue that well-integrated migrant groups have 'the social power to combat and resist' stereotypes, which:

However regrettable, are not used to justify daily violence or structural oppression against these communities. The media's tendency to present all Black males as potential delinquents, in contrast, has a searing impact on the actual lives of Black people.<sup>213</sup>

Therefore, far from spoiling the Welsh-Italian collective memory, the labels that were referred to Italians by Welsh people became a symbol of friendly Welsh-Italian encounters that were fictionally represented by Thomas.

One year after the publication of the *Dark Philosophers*, Welsh writer Rhian Roberts also reinforced the positive image of Italian café-keepers in her short story *The Pattern* (1947). Set in the Rhondda Valley at the outbreak of the Second World War, the story is centred on the internment of an Italian café-keeper (Joe Bracchi) and narrated from a local schoolboy's

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<sup>211</sup> Francis and Smith, *The Fed*, p. 350.

<sup>212</sup> Thomas, *The Dark Philosophers*, p. 123.

<sup>213</sup> Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, pp. 183-184.

perspective. In this case, the innocent narrator seems to be immune to anti-Italian prejudice that arises in some sections of the town's population as soon as Italy declares war on Britain. Whereas some locals start to regard the once-integrated Italian shop-keepers as a 'bloody Eyetie', the schoolboy-protagonist continues to see Mr Bracchi as the friendly and smiling Italian café-owner that everyone had always known before the war, at a time when 'the miners coming home from work called in at Mr Bracchi's shop for some cool drinks to quench their thirst'; as Mr Bracchi himself recalls before being interned: 'one day they come to my shop and buy. All of us friends then. Now everybody come here and talk as if I am one of themselves. Everybody like me now'.<sup>214</sup> Thus, the young protagonist of *The Pattern* can be seen as embodying the tolerance and solidarity which, according to the author, the majority of Welsh showed towards Italian migrants despite war-antagonism.

A very different representation of Italians living in pre-World War Two south Wales was provided by Welsh novelist John Parker in 1961. In his novel *The Alien Land*, the protagonist Angelo Fidelli, an Italian café-keeper living in the Rhondda Valley, appears to be barely integrated into the local community. Unlike Thomas' Idomeneo Ferraci and Roberts' Joe Bracchi, Parker's Angelo Fidelli can never escape his alienating dimension of stranger, which dramatically culminates in his internment and subsequent death in the *Arandora Star* tragedy. Although he is economically successful (he owns three cafés in the Rhondda Valley), the protagonist never socialises with his Welsh customers, the counter being a symbolical ethnic boundary between the migrant and receiving society:

He [Angelo Fidelli] understood instinctively that his world was the world of the shop, the kitchen hearth and his dormitory bed above the stable and he would never be part of the outer world of people who came to the counter and bought a packet of

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<sup>214</sup> Rhian Roberts, 'The Pattern', in J. Aaron (ed), *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales, 1850-1950* (South Glamorgan, Honno Classics, 1999), pp. 203-204. 'The Pattern' was originally published in 1947.

cigarettes or sweets and then went off to their pits or their homes, their chapels of their meetings (...). He would always be a foreigner to them.<sup>215</sup>

As the passage above suggests, in Parker's view, different religious and political creed that characterised Italians and Welsh represented the reason why the former could not possibly socialise with the latter. Soon after Angelo arrives in Wales, his Italian boss warns him:

Sometimes the miners get very angry and talk about their work and their poor wages and how they must fight to make things better for themselves. But you must pretend not to hear unless they ask you and then you must be careful what to say.<sup>216</sup>

As the passage above suggests, in Parker's view, politically-disengaged Italians could not mix with highly-politicised Welsh miners. In addition, being Roman Catholic, the former could not mix with the latter, who were predominantly Nonconformist. For example, when the protagonist of the novel comes across a Methodist procession, he is mocked by the participants who call him offensive names such as 'dirty Cathlik scum'.<sup>217</sup> In addition, the café-keeper is blamed by some practising Nonconformists for keeping his shop open on Sunday. As a devout Methodist character says addressing Italians: 'six days a week are not enough for them to make money. They have to pinch some of the Lord's time as well'.<sup>218</sup>

As Evans has observed, such an anti-Catholic attitude was not rare across the pre-1945 Valleys. For example, in 1913, the Free Church Council of Aberdare became concerned about the 'desecration' of the Sabbath, one facet of this being the opening of Italian shops.<sup>219</sup> O'Leary has similarly pointed out that 'anti-Catholicism played a central role in Welsh public life', Irish migrants often being the target of such hostile feelings.<sup>220</sup> Migrants were targeted

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<sup>215</sup> John Parker, *The Alien Land* (London, George Ronald, 1961), p. 42.

<sup>216</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>217</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, p. 59.

<sup>218</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, p. 47.

<sup>219</sup> N. Evans, 'Comparing Immigrant Histories: the Irish and Others in Modern Wales', in O'Leary (ed), *Irish Migrants*, pp. 156-177. This form of hostility was also recalled by some Italian respondents in their interviews. See, for example, interviews with S. Canale, 8 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>220</sup> P. O'Leary, 'When Was Anti-Catholicism? The Case of Nineteenth- and Twentieth- Century Wales', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56 (2005), 325.

on religious grounds not so much ‘because of a sectarian impulse’,<sup>221</sup> but because religion functioned as a clear symbol of otherness. As O’Leary has pointed out: ‘anti-Irish disturbances arose from workplace tensions or more diffuse community tensions in which religion did not play an obvious or documented part’.<sup>222</sup> In fictional terms, Parker similarly suggested that religion was not the only reason why Italian café-owners were exposed to hostile reactions. In his novel, anti-Italian hostility grows when Benito Mussolini takes over the government of his country. When Italy invades Ethiopia in 1935, some customers in Angelo’s café start to bother the proprietor calling him racist names such as ‘bloody wop’, which lead to a grotesque fight between the protagonist and his xenophobic clientele; Angelo tries to defend himself hitting the customers with the boiling water-jet of his coffee machine.

The difference between Parker’s and Thomas’ representations of Italian café-keepers in the Valleys could depend on the authors’ personal life-experiences. Whereas the latter was born and bred in the Valleys (and went to Oxford University thanks to a miners’ scholarship), the former was an Irish-born Catholic, who grew up in south Wales and arguably shared with Italians some sort of national and religious otherness.<sup>223</sup> In addition, the different historical contexts in which *The Dark Philosophers* and *The Alien Land* were written should be taken into account. Thomas wrote his book at a time when racism, whereas widespread, was not yet perceived as a serious issue by British public opinion. The war had just ended and the emphasis was upon the ‘national unity’ of British people coming together to rebuild their country.<sup>224</sup> As a result, Thomas highlighted the non-conflicting and supportive side of British racial relations, recalling pre-war Italian café-keepers’ positive experiences in Wales.

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<sup>221</sup> O’Leary, ‘When Was Anti-Catholicism?’, 321.

<sup>222</sup> O’Leary, ‘When Was Anti-Catholicism?’, 320.

<sup>223</sup> In his book *Immigration and Integration*, O’Leary argued that the Irish were, by then, integrated into south Wales’ communities, where anti-Catholicism did not represent a major influence anymore. Yet, *The Alien Land* denotes a sense of otherness which the author (who was born in Ireland) might have experienced in his life.

<sup>224</sup> K.O. Morgan, *Britain Since 1945: the People’s Peace* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 3.

By contrast, Parker wrote at a time when racism was perceived as a serious issue by the British public. Only three years before the publication of *The Alien Land*, Britain had been shocked by the Notting Hill race riots,<sup>225</sup> while, on a smaller scale, in the early 1950s xenophobic Welsh miners had refused to work with Italians. That is possibly why, in his novel, Parker adopted the same sympathetic tone that some British journalists had adopted toward Italian miners who were rejected by Welsh colliers. As Italian miners figuring in British newspapers, the protagonist of *The Alien Land* was represented by Parker as a good man and sensitive father, working hard to provide for his family. The Italian was depicted as an innocuous migrant, who not only does not pose a threat to the locals as he does not compete for the same jobs, but also provides an essential service to the community. As Parker wrote:

He was glad to be able to get up at five o'clock in the morning to open the shop before six and serve his first customers going to the pits; and he was glad to be open at eleven at night, midnight if necessary, to stand behind his counter selling hot pies and sauce and making hot cordials.<sup>226</sup>

As a result, just like British reporters had done with Italian miners, Parker made his Italian protagonist appear like an innocent victim of unjustifiable hostility.

However, besides *The Alien Land*, portrayals of Italian café-keepers as being racially-abused and un-integrated were a rare occurrence in Welsh fictional literature. For example, Italians were depicted as being perfectly integrated and hardworking by Catrin Collier in her series of novels. Set in Pontypridd (where the author grew up) between 1930 and 1950, these novels were centred on a family of Italian café-owners (the Ronconis). In the last book of the series (*Spoils of War*), which is set soon after World War Two, the Ronconis' perfect integration into society is contrasted with the otherness of a female German refugee, who has to face the

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<sup>225</sup> Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, p. 201.

<sup>226</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, p. 123.

war-motivated hostility of some sections of the local population.<sup>227</sup> When the young Tony Ronconi makes his mother aware of his intention to marry the German woman, the Italian lady counters: ‘I would rather die than accept a German into this family (...) she is a German and they start wars, force *us* to fight them, make *us* suffer’.<sup>228</sup> The ‘us’ that Tony’s mother emphasises here implies that Italians self-perceive and are perceived by Welsh people as being part of the community, while Germans are not. In a different section of the book, Tony’s sister (Tina) also shows her disappointment for her brother’s decision to marry a German, arguing that their father (who perished in the *Arandora Star* tragedy) was ‘killed’ by a German torpedo (not by the Welsh who interned him). Therefore, in Collier’s book, Italian integration into Welsh society is taken-for-granted and even emphasised, while the role of ‘other’ (and ‘enemy’) is given to Germans. Such a depiction of Italian café-keepers as being integrated became a common feature of Welsh fictional literature.

Following the establishment of the NAW in 1999, both Welsh publishers and authors seem to have embodied the surrounding inclusive rhetoric, using the Italian café-experience as a historical example of Welsh inclusiveness. For example, in 1999, Jane Aaron edited a collection of short stories written by Welsh women (1850-1950) which included Rhian Roberts’ *The Pattern*. As has been previously argued, this story portrayed pre-war Italians as being well-integrated into the south Walian social landscape. In 2006, the WAG funded the re-edition of *The Dark Philosophers*, which featured a cover image that was taken by world famous photographer Eugene Smith in 1950 (see Appendix 5). The picture portrays a group of Welsh philosophers/politicians (including Achie Lush, Aneurin Bevan’s friend and political agent) conversing in an Italian café in Tredegar; the Bracchi’s centrality within a cosmopolitan and tolerant Welsh society was once again emphasised. The use of this cover

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<sup>227</sup> Catrin Collier, *Spoils of War* (London, Arrow, 2000).

<sup>228</sup> Collier, *Spoils of War*, pp. 27-28.

image is not surprising as the series *Library of Wales*, which included *The Dark Philosophers*, was intended by the WAG as a means to promote awareness of the newly-devolved Welsh nation internally and internationally. As editor Dai Smith wrote in a note to the 2006 edition of Thomas' novel:

The Library of Wales is a Welsh Assembly Government project designed to ensure that all the rich and extensive literature of Wales which has been written in English will now be made available to readers in and beyond Wales. Sustaining this wider literary heritage is understood by the Welsh Assembly Government to be a key component in creating and disseminating an ongoing sense of modern Welsh culture and history for the future Wales which is now emerging from contemporary society (...) The Library of Wales has been created with that Wales in mind: a young country not afraid to remember what it might yet become.<sup>229</sup>

Therefore, regardless of its important literary value, it appears that Thomas' novel was re-published by the WAG-funded *Library of Wales* also to expand the knowledge of Wales ('in and beyond the country'), and its arguably unique history of solidarity and tolerance, one example being the successful integration of Italian shop-keepers in the Valleys. Such an editorial line did not seem to be uncommon among Welsh publishers in the newly-devolved context. Alan Lambert's *Roberto's War* was published by the largest Welsh publishing house (*Gomer Press*) in 2009 while Anita Arcari's *The Hokey Pokey Man* was published by the prominent independent publisher *Y Lolfa* in 2010.<sup>230</sup> Although, both *Roberto's War* and *The Hokey Pokey Man* include references to the dramatic internment-experience, their overall tone communicates a sense of optimism, which reinforces the image of Italian café-keepers as being embraced by the Welsh. Thus, the decision, that some Welsh publishing houses have made to include Italians (and cafés) in their series, seems to denote a willingness to represent the newly-devolved Wales as an inclusive nation that boasts a long history of tolerance and cosmopolitanism.

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<sup>229</sup> Thomas, *The Dark Philosophers*. For an interpretation of the cultural and social landscape of south Wales see, for example, Smith, *Aneurin Bevan*.

<sup>230</sup> Lambert, *Roberto's War*; Arcari, *The Hokey Pokey Man*.



Because of their prominence in Welsh fictional literature, the Bracchi have become a common feature in Welsh popular culture thus that they have even inspired a film character; the stereotypically dark-skinned and charming sergeant Bracchi (played by popular Welsh actor Ioan Gruffudd) in the Welsh film *Happy Now*.<sup>231</sup> However, it is also because of the attention that the mass media have paid to them, that Italian cafés have become prominent in Welsh popular culture. It was in the 1980s that the Welsh broadcasting services started to denote an increasing interest in the Bracchi's experience. This media attitude could be interpreted as an attempt to keep an important feature of the Welsh heritage (Italian café-trade) alive, at a time when a dramatic deindustrialisation process was devastating the social landscape of the Valleys, causing many Italian businesses to shut down. Being portrayed as a symbol of Welsh 'traditional' values (solidarity, tolerance, etc.), the Bracchi served a reinforcement of the Valleys' community spirit,<sup>232</sup> at a time when deindustrialisation abruptly generated a 'Wales without miners' and 'punctured a whole nexus of images and self-images of the Welsh (...) which seemed to have been inextricably bound up with (...) communities based on coal and a militant socialist politics'.<sup>233</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the portrayal of Italian cafés mirrored a growing concern of the Welsh political class 'with the well-being and restructuring of (...) national unit' and the media's increasing focus on Wales 'both as an audience and as a place',<sup>234</sup> at a time when 'changes in the economic base (...) led (...) to the disruption of political values and social identities'.<sup>235</sup>

For example, in 1986, BBC Wales broadcast two documentaries that highlighted the important social role that Italian café-keepers had played in twentieth-century Welsh history,

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<sup>231</sup> *Western Mail*, 22 November 2001, 'Film Festival Pushing to Join the Big Players'.

<sup>232</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*.

<sup>233</sup> As Jones has observed: 'The recession of the early 1980s prefaced an astonishing restructuring of the economic base of the country as coal and steel contracted and electronic and service industries were located in the region, a process that also recast the labour force, whose traditional male composition was radically altered as large numbers of women entered paid employment'. See R.M. Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992), 348-349.

<sup>234</sup> Jones, 'Beyond identity?', 355.

<sup>235</sup> Jones, 'Beyond Identity?', 345.

particularly in the Valleys. In *Another Valley*, the narrator pointed out: ‘the most important contribution made by the Italian cafés was the social one, quite simply they were somewhere to go, they were warm, they were respectable, they stayed open for long, they were cheap (...) [they have become] part of the social fabric’.<sup>236</sup> In *Ciao Charlie Rossi*, narrated by prominent Welsh-Italian actor Victor Spinetti, a second generation Italian shop-keeper recalled Welsh coal miners who regularly attended Italian cafés in the Valleys and commented: ‘cafés (...) were the meeting place for everybody, they were the only place they could go. They’d talk politics, religion, sport, anything...I think everything was decided in a café’.<sup>237</sup>

Yet, the most popular TV representation of Italians in the 1980s was the fictional café-keeper ‘Bella Lasagne’ in the cartoon *Fireman Sam* (see Appendix 6).<sup>238</sup> *Fireman Sam* was first released in Welsh language in 1985 and broadcast by S4C. The English version followed in 1987 on BBC1. The cartoon, which narrates the adventures of a fireman in a former mining town in south Wales (the imaginary Pontypandy), has become one of the most successful Welsh exports as it has been exported to over forty countries in the world; in March 2011, the *Daily Post* went as far as to list it among the ‘100 reasons for Welsh pride’.<sup>239</sup> In other words, *Fireman Sam* can be interpreted as an attempt to sell Welshness internationally. The cartoon portrays a modern, post-industrial and multicultural society which, at the same time, retains traditional Welsh values of tolerance and solidarity. Among the cartoon characters, Italian café-keeper Bella Lasagne is clearly based on real Bracchi-owners who settled in the Valleys. She is heavily stereotyped (she is loud, she is dramatic, she gesticulates, she speaks a heavily

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<sup>236</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Another Valley’, 12 July 1986, NLW, Cell E123 001961/01.

<sup>237</sup> BBC2 Wales, ‘Open Space Homeland: Ciao Charlie Rossi’, 25 June 1986, NLW, Cell E123000359/05.

<sup>238</sup> On the use of cartoons as historical evidence: F. Palmeri, ‘The Cartoon: the Image as Critique’, in Barber and Peniston-Bird (eds), *History Beyond the Text*, pp. 32-48.

<sup>239</sup> *Daily Post*, 1 March 2011, ‘100 reasons for Welsh pride’.

accented broken Welsh/English), but, at the same time, she is unmistakably integrated into the local community.

For example, in the episode *Lost Cat* Bella accidentally sets fire to her café in attempting to cook a ‘national’ Welsh dish.<sup>240</sup> After having been rescued by Fireman Sam, Bella is looked after by her Welsh neighbour who comments ‘a good strong cup of Welsh tea, that’s all she needs’. But a minute later, the same woman, comforting an emotional Bella, comments: ‘these Italians! So dramatic they are! They should stick to spaghetti!’ This scene evokes, on one hand, the Welsh acculturation process (‘a strong cup of Welsh tea’), on the other hand, the continuous stereotyping process (‘they should stick to spaghetti’) which marks the existence of a distinctive Welsh-Italian hybrid identity. In other words, *Fireman Sam* portrays Wales as being a multicultural and tolerant country where people of different backgrounds can integrate without denying their origins, one that, at the same time, retains its traditional sense of community.

Besides television, the press in and outside Wales has also contributed to the keep the Bracchi’s memory alive. For example, in January 1952, the *Daily Express* published the account of a south Walian man, who firmly condemned the hostile attitude which some miners showed toward the introduction of Italian manpower in the pits at the time:

The only Italian that I have ever known intimately was Joe Bracchi. He kept the ice-cream shop in my native village. He became so popular that they made him chairman of (...) our local chamber of commerce. He was the good warm-hearted neighbour. Joe finally went back to (...) Italy. Rarely has our village known such a farewell party and Joe's emotional goodbye was delivered in as fruity a Welsh accent as the Valleys could produce. (...) I wish more places had known more Joe Bracchis. We have much to be ashamed in our treatment of Italian (...) workers invited over here to help us in

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<sup>240</sup> BBC1, ‘Fireman Sam 2: Lost Cat’, 25 October 1988, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MKOezWcPNs>, accessed 6/09/2010.

our manpower problems. This is not sentiment but elementary courtesy. (...) Most of them came because of their own poverty and hopelessness.<sup>241</sup>

Such observations reinforce the image of Italian shop-keepers in the Valleys as being well integrated and committed to the local community; miners' hostility toward Italian workers was seen as 'something to be ashamed of' as it spoiled the supportive and tolerant nature that had always characterised the Valley's people. In spite of the progressive decline that characterised the café-trade from the 1970s onwards, Italian cafés have continued to be given remarkable attention by the Welsh press. In 1992, for example, Mario Basini recalled the essential social role played by the Bracchi, writing in the *New Welsh Review*:

The cafés were much more than mere sales points. They were social centres, crucibles for the forging of friendships, love affairs, marriages. They were debating chambers where the most profound questions of life and death were settled. They were political meeting houses where revolutions were dreamed up, organised and defeated in the space of an afternoon.<sup>242</sup>

After the arrival of devolution in 1997, Wales witnessed a sort of Bracchi revival, with the press fuelling, on one hand, the welcoming tradition of the nation, on the other, the positive impact of Italian migration on Welsh society. In 2007, the *South Wales Echo* greeted the opening of a new Italian café in Cardiff reporting:

The fifth generation of Cardiff's famous Rabaiotti family has kept the Italian café tradition alive and kicking by opening her own business in the city. Emma Rabaiotti, 25, celebrated the opening of her own enterprise called Café R at Eastgate House in Newport Road (...) with other family members. (...) At one stage there were many Bracchi – Italian cafes – dotted through Cardiff and the Valleys. They were as much part of the community as the chapel, pub or colliery.<sup>243</sup>

This point was echoed by Labour AM and First Minister of Wales Rhodri Morgan, who, on the occasion of a football match between Wales and Italy, wrote 'to Italian journalists to

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<sup>241</sup> *Daily Express*, 8 January 1952, 'Ice-cream Joe Could Teach the Coal Board a Thing or Two', TNA, POWE 37/234.

<sup>242</sup> *New Welsh Review*, 4/4 1992, M. Basini, 'Lime, Lemon and...Internment'.

<sup>243</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 1 November 2009, 'Italian Family Opens Café in Latest Venture'.

highlight their country's historic ties with Wales', including 'a tower at Caerphilly Castle that leans at a greater angle than the Leaning Tower of Pisa'. As Morgan declared:

The Welsh people have for many years had a warm and close relationship with Italy. A hundred or more years ago, many of your fellow citizens emigrated to South Wales and set up cafes in the industrial Valleys (...) No mining village was complete without the warm sound and taste of fresh coffee served by the Bracchi or Minoli families.<sup>244</sup>

Over the last ten years, such a nostalgic way of recollecting the Bracchi's experience has also been reinforced by Welsh television and radio. For example, in 2001, BBC Radio Wales dedicated an episode of the series *Café Cymru* to the long-standing *Bacchetta's* in Porth.<sup>245</sup> Throughout the whole programme, which was physically set in the café, both proprietors and customers highlighted the prominent social role that Italian cafés had played in the Valleys throughout the twentieth century. Recalling the owners' father, who first set up the business in 1932, a customer commented: 'he felt that it was his duty to stay open (...) he would stay open until the last [coal] train (...) because he was serving the community'. Another interviewee pointed out: 'wherever you go in the Valleys, the Italian influence has been part of the community, a big part'. Further on in the radio programme, the welcoming nature of Welsh people was once again reinforced. As a customer argued: 'the Rhondda people took them [Italians] to their hearts, they accepted them (...) there was nothing like being foreigner or something'. As one of the two brothers running the shop commented:

The community spirit was tremendous, you never locked your door in the evening (...) [in the pits] there was 'the buddy system', you had your buddy and it was your job to look out for him, he would look out for you (...) that's spread to the community, the 'buddy system', you looked out for everybody else.

This comment denoted a sort of nostalgia towards the lost sense of community of the Valleys which appeared also in other accounts. For example, Les Servini wrote:

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<sup>244</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 15 November 2002, 'Rhodri Launches Italian Campaign'.

<sup>245</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Café Cymru', NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

Now almost everyone has a car, but somehow I think we were more of a community, more neighbourly.<sup>246</sup> (...) I remember dragging an ice-cream cart (...) to sell ice-cream to the colliers coming out of Glanhafod Colliery (...) I remember each one in spite of their black faces but they were never dishonest anyhow.<sup>247</sup>

The same nostalgic tone emerged from the ITV Wales programme *Great Welsh Cafes* in 2004. In this case, the *Strinati Café* in Treherbet was represented by the Welsh TV as a site of nostalgia where the original pre-World War Two Bracchi-style atmosphere was re-created. The old miners, now replaced by ‘modern’ council street cleaners, together with the smiling Welsh-Italian family who ran the business recalled the traditional sense of community of the Valleys. In this case, the use of long-standing stereotypes about Italians (they are always loud and smiling) together with the proof of their integration (they have strong south Walian accents and they claim to feel half Italian half Welsh) reinforced the image of Italian migration to Wales as being a positive experience.<sup>248</sup> In a different episode of the same series, café-owner Simon Rabaiotti showed his commitment to the local community; he was a volunteer in Penarth lifeboat and a magistrate in Cardiff court.<sup>249</sup> In other words, TV portrayals tended to emphasise, once again, the tolerant attitude of Welsh people and Italian integration and contribution to Welsh society. They also tended to highlight the ‘community spirit’ which characterised the Valleys at the time of Italian migration. Simply put, the media representation of the Italian migrant experience aimed to reach out to both ‘indigenous’ Welsh people and migrants. In so doing, they aimed to stress that the lost ‘sense of community’ should be taken as model to follow to the present day at a time when the emphasis on inclusiveness and community cohesion informs the Welsh political agenda.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Servini, *A Boy from Bardi*, p. 47.

<sup>247</sup> Servini, *A Boy from Bardi*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>248</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Great Welsh Cafes’, NLW, Cell E123 016350/01.

<sup>249</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Great Welsh Cafes’, 12 September 2005, NLW, Cell E123 017877.

<sup>250</sup> As an example of ‘community cohesion’-orientated policy-making see: WAG, *Getting on Together: a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales* (Cardiff, WAG, 2009), <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/091130ccstratenv1.pdf>, accessed 28/02/2011. The notion of inclusiveness is discussed further in chapter three.

As Gillis has observed ‘minorities often serve as symbols of a “lost” past, nostalgically perceived and romantically constructed’.<sup>251</sup>

Both Welsh and Italian institutions have also highlighted the importance of Italian café-culture in Wales. For example, the Bracchi’s experience was central to the exhibition *Italian Memories in Wales*. This was edited by the Italian organisation ENAIP (the cultural branch of the ACLI in Britain). The exhibition featured the same sort of enhancement narratives which, as noted, were to be adopted by the Arandora Star commemoration a few months later. Drawing upon pictures, objects (an old coffee machine, a decorated ice-cream cart, etc.), explanatory panels and interview-extracts, the ENAIP clearly aimed at emphasising the fundamental *contribution* that Italian migrants and their cafés had provided to Welsh society. As the ENAIP director Lucia Bugitti explained, the interviews (on which the exhibition drew) were conducted to ‘record, collect and treasure for future generations the memories of Italian people who came to Wales’ as ‘Italian immigration has *contributed* to the economy and to the cultural growth of this country’.<sup>252</sup> Such an alleged contribution includes café-culture and, broadly speaking, an enjoyable lifestyle. In the pictures, Italians appeared to be constantly smiling, (as in the previously illustrated press representations of Italian miners) sociable and family-orientated, having picnics with their families and friends in the Welsh idyllic countryside (see Appendix 7). Their hardworking nature was also emphasised and contended the long-standing ‘lazy’ label.

The Italian migrant experience in Wales was depicted by the ENAIP as a *success story*, a story of sacrifice and improvement which, as was the case for the Arandora Star Memorial, reflected the institutional celebration of Italian migrant work-ethics which has been frequently performed by the Italian embassy in Britain. Such a desire to celebrate past

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<sup>251</sup> Gillis, ‘Introduction’, p. 11

<sup>252</sup> *Western Mail*, 3 March 2009, ‘The Shock of School Milk After Caffè Latte’.

achievements and challenge negative stereotypes was paralleled in other cases of ‘ethnic’ public history. For example, Conzen and other authors have observed how, following the so called American ethnic-revival:

Status anxieties engendered by negative stereotypes inherited from the era of peasant immigration generated intensified efforts to highlight the ‘contributions’ of Italians to the development of America. Seeking to compensate for insecurities, filopietists campaigned for the (...) recognition of exceptional immigrants (...) and erection of monuments to their overlooked notables. Such a strategy, common to all ethnic groups – indeed, often stood it on its head – by showing how the group’s values and heroes were instrumental in shaping national development.<sup>253</sup>

Stewart and Ruffins have similarly observed that ‘Afro-American presentations have emphasised the exemplary individual, the laudatory accomplishment and an ideology of success’,<sup>254</sup> and ‘Afro-American public history arose out of the desire to promote a positive racial identity among blacks, to preserve a history in danger of being lost (...)’.<sup>255</sup>

Whereas the ENAIP played an important role in the organisation of the exhibition, Welsh institutions also figured prominently in the mainstreaming of the event. This finding confirms that, as Goodnow has observed, there are at least three sets of circumstances which can influence the representation of migration and diversity in museums: firstly, political or funding influences, secondly, community influences and, thirdly, museum interests and concerns.<sup>256</sup> Between 2009 and 2010, *Italian Memories in Wales* was hosted by key political and cultural bodies such as the NAW’s Senedd and SFNHM.<sup>257</sup> The NAW mentioned the exhibition in its 2009 Annual Equality Report, defining it as one of the most important events ‘related to equality, diversity and human rights’ which were hosted by the Senedd during that

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<sup>253</sup> Conzen et al., ‘The Invention of Ethnicity’, 30.

<sup>254</sup> J.C. Stewart and F.D. Ruffins, ‘A Faithful Witness: Afro-American Public History in Historical Perspective, 1828-1984’, in Porter Benson, Brier and Rosenzweig (eds), *Presenting the Past*, p. 307.

<sup>255</sup> Stewart and Ruffins, ‘A Faithful Witness’, p. 334.

<sup>256</sup> Goodnow, ‘Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances’, pp. 230-245.

<sup>257</sup> ENAIP, [www.enaip.org.uk](http://www.enaip.org.uk), accessed 13/02/2011.



year;<sup>258</sup> in other words the commemoration of Italian cafés in Wales was instrumental in reinforcing notions of inclusiveness and multiculturalism which have been embraced by the NAW over the last decade.

Such an observation can also apply to SFNHM,<sup>259</sup> which has officially endorsed the Welsh political institutions' inclusive policy. In a 2011 booklet, the WAG-funded National Museum Wales (which includes the SFNHM) declared: 'through our outstanding collections, curatorial excellence and learning expertise, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales is ideally placed *to strengthen tolerance, citizenship and mutual respect for the diverse communities of Wales and the world.*'<sup>260</sup> As the SFNHM reported on its website in order to advertise *Italian Memories in Wales*:

Through their photographs and stories, the exhibition (...) shares their memories of living in Italy, their experiences of settling in Wales, and their *achievements* and links with their Italian roots. (...) People from all over Italy left their homeland in search of a better future. Many ended up in Wales and set up ice cream businesses, fish and chip shops and cafes. Their businesses blossomed, particularly the Italian cafes, and became a common sight (...) Most Italians were *embraced by the Welsh* and were soon followed by their family and friends. Through *perseverance and hard work*, Italians found a niche within the Welsh community. They *integrated well*, ran successful businesses and *became respected local and national figures.*<sup>261</sup>

As this extract suggests, the SFNHM's decision to host the exhibition denoted an attempt to celebrate the achievements of Italian shop-keepers in Wales and, at the same time, the tolerant attitude that Welsh people showed toward them. Furthermore, by hosting the exhibition, SFNHM assigned the Italian migrant experience a sort of official place in the tolerant and cosmopolitan history of Wales. This symbolically reinforced the WAG-promoted

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<sup>258</sup> NAW, *Annual Equality Report: 2009* (Cardiff, NAW, 2009), p. 17, [http://www.assemblywales.org/eoc\\_3\\_-\\_01-10\\_-\\_papur\\_1\\_-\\_adroddiad\\_blynddol\\_cydraddoldeb\\_2009\\_cynulliad\\_cenedlaethol\\_cymru.pdf](http://www.assemblywales.org/eoc_3_-_01-10_-_papur_1_-_adroddiad_blynddol_cydraddoldeb_2009_cynulliad_cenedlaethol_cymru.pdf), accessed 14/02/2011.

<sup>259</sup> The Museum receives its core funding through grant-in-aid from the WAG as an Assembly Government Sponsored Body.

<sup>260</sup> National Museum Wales, 'Our Vision for the Next Ten Years', 2011, [www.museumwales.ac.uk/media/1706/vision\\_booklet.en.pdf](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/media/1706/vision_booklet.en.pdf), accessed 17/02/2011.

<sup>261</sup> SFNHM, [http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/?event\\_id=4083](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/?event_id=4083), accessed 18/02/2011.

idea of inclusiveness, providing historical evidence to the accuracy of that notion. Being depicted as hardworking and willing to integrate and contribute to Wales, Italians offered an ideal ‘clear-cut definition of ‘good citizen’”<sup>262</sup> and presented a successful model of Welsh inclusiveness, which could be followed by other migrants and ethnic minority people. In addition, Italian migration history offered an ideal reinforcement of the tolerant and inclusive image of Wales, one which could enhance Welsh people’s national pride and foster their acceptance of new migrants and ethnic minority people.

Such a way of representing migrations in museum-exhibition was paralleled in Sweden, which, like Wales, has often portrayed itself as a ‘generous and fair asylum country’.<sup>263</sup> Johansson has argued that pictures and texts presented at Swedish exhibitions followed the same pattern of narration: firstly, migrants arrive in Sweden, where they are welcome, secondly, migrants rescue Swedish industry because it is in need of imported labour, thirdly, despite all the odds, most migrants manage to integrate into Swedish society. In other words, there is, as Johansson argues, a tendency ‘towards a heroization of immigrants’ and, at the same time, the receiving society is depicted as a ‘country resembling paradise’.<sup>264</sup> One reason for this could be that, as Goodnow has observed, ‘for museums and governments, the easiest route to including or supporting diversity is through what can be termed a celebratory view of diversity or “enhancement narratives”’.<sup>265</sup> As Young has pointed out: ‘memorials and museums (...) remember events according to the hue of national ideals, the cast of political dicta (...) they juxtapose, narrate, and remember events according to (...) the political needs and interests of their community, the temper of their time’.<sup>266</sup> ‘The state-sponsored memory of a national past’, Young argues, ‘aims to affirm the righteousness of a nation’s birth (...)’

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<sup>262</sup> Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, p. 25.

<sup>263</sup> Johansson, ‘Portraying Post-War Migration in Museums’, pp. 182-202.

<sup>264</sup> Johansson, ‘Portraying Post-War Migration in Museums’, p. 195.

<sup>265</sup> Goodnow, ‘Exhibition Forms and Influential Circumstances’, p. 230.

<sup>266</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. viii

official agencies are in position to shape memory explicitly as they see fit, memory that best serves a national interest'.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, being portrayed as the representatives of 'traditional' and 'positive' Italian and Welsh values (work ethic, family, community spirit, etc.), Italian café-keepers could be also seen as being a reference to the lost 'idyll', which the Welsh people should take as an example to follow in the new democratic Wales.

Besides NAW and SFNHM, the involvement of the Welsh section of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in the organisation of the exhibition should be taken into account. As HLF's manager for Wales Jennifer Stewart put it: 'this project, featuring photographs and interviews, will stir up a lot of *emotions* and tell the hidden stories of many people who have *contributed* to the cultural and economic growth of Wales'.<sup>268</sup> In other words, besides emphasising Italian café-keepers' contribution to the 'cultural and economic growth of Wales', the HLF manager also highlighted the 'emotional pull' that the exhibition entailed, one that could potentially reach out to other migrant and ethnic minorities in Wales. As Modood has observed, migrants cannot be expected to embrace the receiving country's identity if this lacks a strong 'emotional pull'.<sup>269</sup> Therefore, by emphasising the success of the Italian migrant experience, the exhibition was aimed at encouraging Wales' migrants and ethnic minority people to engage with the civic and inclusive notion of national identity which has been promoted by Welsh institutions (for more on this see Chapter Three). This notion was echoed by Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood (who, as the *Western Mail* reported, grew up in the Valleys being a regular customer of the Bracchi). As she pointed out commenting on the exhibition *Italian Memories in Wales*:

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<sup>267</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>268</sup> *Western Mail*, 23 February 2008, 'They Fled from Mussolini and Added Italian Flavour to Welsh Culture'.

<sup>269</sup> T. Modood, *Multiculturalism: a Civic Idea* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007), p. 149.

There is a deep respect for the Italians that have come to Wales. The Italians that struggled and that came during that time have much to celebrate today (...) I hope that it will act as a *new beacon of hope for future generations who come to Wales*.<sup>270</sup>

In other words, the memorialisation of Italian cafés as a successful case of integration has served a reinforcement of post-devolution Welsh inclusive policies, providing historical evidence to the righteousness of the very notion of inclusiveness. According to this view, the success of the Italian café-experience demonstrates that Welsh people have historically been welcoming toward migrants. This fact should encourage other migrants and ethnic minority people to embrace Wales as a nation and engage with its institutions.

However, despite their *inclusive* aim, the rosy portrayals of the Bracchi's experience which have been provided by the Welsh media, museums and institutions over the last decade can be seen as functioning as a *double* exclusive boundary: firstly, between Italians and other ethnic groups and, secondly, between Italians and Welsh. Italians are a white, European,<sup>271</sup> Christian migrant group, one that arguably have several cultural features in common with Welsh people. Therefore, to a certain extent, they can be seen as co-ethnic by the indigenous population or, at least, more co-ethnic than other groups (Somali Muslims, Indians, Chinese, etc.). In addition, Italians represent a 'popular' ethnic group in Wales, one that is arguably familiar to many people and appreciated for its culinary contribution to Welsh society. As a result, Welsh museums, institutions and media have paid special attention to Italians because they see the *incorporation* of their migrant experience into Welsh national history as being less problematic than the inclusion of other minority groups, which might be regarded as more 'problematic' or 'culturally distant' by the majority population. As Ugolini has also

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<sup>270</sup> *Western Mail*, 3 March 2009, 'The Shock of School Milk After Caffè Latte'.

<sup>271</sup> Ugolini has argued that 'since World War Two, with the transition into the politics of the Cold War era, Italians have been increasingly constructed and embraced within the wider notion of a shared European identity'. As Fortier has also observed, the entry of Britain into the European Economic Community in 1973 'cleared a space for Italians to claim some form of equal status in relation to Britons, on the ground of their European identity'. See: Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, pp. 12-13; Fortier, *Migrant Belongings*, p. 22.

pointed out: ‘it is perhaps only now, with domestic hostility focusing on more “visible” immigrant groups and with Italian culture universally celebrated, that Italianness can be more safely articulated’.<sup>272</sup> A similar trend has been observed by Johansson in Sweden. Most migration-related exhibitions in Sweden over the last decade have tended to pay special attention to the Finns, a white European migrant group which is generally regarded as co-ethnic by the Swedes. As Johansson has pointed out: ‘it is (...) very noticeable that in general it is immigrants who are well integrated into Swedish society that are given the opportunity to contribute to national history’.<sup>273</sup>

In other words, whereas the representation of Italian migration can evoke a reinforcement of the current notion of inclusiveness, it can also reveal the persistence of what McDowell would term ‘hierarchy of desirability’, with some migrant people (namely the white European ones) being more ‘desirable’ than others.<sup>274</sup> In Wales, such a hierarchy is evidenced by the severe hostility that black migrants have historically been exposed to when compared to white groups such as Italians. Evans has illustrated how, in the interwar period, Butetown’s blacks were often the target of racist campaigns (caused by competition for jobs, sexual jealousy and moral panic) led by the press, trade unions and police, not to mention the 1919 riots.<sup>275</sup> After the Second World War, ‘visible’ minorities (blacks and South Asians) have continued to be more exposed to racist and discriminatory practices than white migrants,<sup>276</sup> a

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<sup>272</sup> Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>273</sup> Johansson, ‘Portraying Post-War Migration in Museums’, p. 200.

<sup>274</sup> McDowell, ‘On the Significance of Being White’, pp. 51-64. McDowell has shown how from the 1940s up to the present days white European migrants ‘have been preferred by the British state as potential workers rather than economic migrants from other parts of the world’. However, McDowell argues, ‘not all Europeans are equally “white” (...) typically are ranked in a hierarchy of desirability by potential employers as well as by institutions of the state’. Spencer has illustrated how British immigration policy before and after 1945 has been aimed at preventing the settlement of Asian and black British subjects. As Spencer has pointed out: ‘the debate about immigration controls was not a debate about controls in general but only about the control of coloured “immigration”’. In fact, for a time in the 1960s and 1970s ‘immigration’ came to mean ‘coloured immigration’, as if there were no other kind’. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p. 154.

<sup>275</sup> Evans, ‘Regulating the Reserve Army’, pp. 68-115.

<sup>276</sup> See, for example, Williams, ‘Race and Racism’, 113-131. Williams observed that, by the mid 1990s, south Wales had the third-highest number of recorded racially motivated incidents in Britain. In December 1994, a 61-year-old Asian shopkeeper was severely assaulted and subsequently died in a care unit.

circumstance which is highlighted by the apparent gap separating Italians' upward social mobility from black people's economic disadvantage. In 2006, Williams and De Lima observed that unemployment amongst black groups was over double that of the white population (14 per cent as compared with 6 per cent) and amongst black males of both African and Caribbean descent running at almost 40 per cent. In addition, black groups, in terms of both absolute numbers and concentrations, lived in the most deprived wards of Cardiff.<sup>277</sup> Not only were BME people economically disadvantaged, but they were also underrepresented in political terms. Only 1 per cent of the over 600 public appointments to the 143 Welsh public bodies were from the BME population (despite that fact that these were 2 per cent of the Welsh population).<sup>278</sup> Ten years ahead, the situation did not seem to have witnessed significant improvements.<sup>279</sup>

Thus, the special attention that Italian migrants have been paid by the Welsh media and institutions suggests that Wales continues to regard itself as a fundamentally white country, confirming what as Dyer has pointed out in his volume *White*:

As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people.<sup>280</sup> (...) The equation of being white with being human secures a position of power. White people have power and believe that they think, feel and act like and for all people; (...) white people create the dominant images of the world in their own image.<sup>281</sup>

Yet, not only could the representation of Italians in Wales function as a boundary between them and other migrant groups but also between Italians and receiving society. Whereas they appear to have been incorporated into Welsh national history, Italians tend to be still depicted as a 'distinct' cultural entity. As this chapter has illustrated, the stereotypical terms in which

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<sup>277</sup> Williams and De Lima, 'Devolution, Multicultural Citizenship and Race Equality', 500.

<sup>278</sup> Williams, 'Claiming the National', p. 232.

<sup>279</sup> Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*.

<sup>280</sup> R. Dyer, *White* (London, Routledge, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>281</sup> Dyer, *White*, p. 9.

Italians have been represented by the Welsh media, museums and institutions suggest that old-standing *us/them* boundaries are yet to be crossed. As Gans has noted: ‘the mass media play a major role in enhancing the visibility of ethnicity and in communicating ethnic symbols’.<sup>282</sup> As Johansson and Hintermann have observed, enhancement narratives tend to represent migrant groups as frozen, simplified, folkloric cultures. The receiving country, on the other hand, is represented as established and homogeneous. In other words, the risk of a very stereotypical portrayal is evident, one that can potentially reinforced old prejudices.<sup>283</sup>

The existence of such a ‘risk’ was testified by several café-keepers who pointed out that, despite having been portrayed as ‘integrated’ into Welsh society, they still considered themselves to be ‘outsiders’. For example, third generation Italian Mario Canale (from the Rhondda Valley) commented:

We were always thought as Italians, even though my father was born in Morriston, I was born in the Rhondda, whenever we were talked about we would be the Italians (...) if they wanted to throw something nasty at you they would say ‘why don’t you go back to Italy’.<sup>284</sup>

In other words, as Glazer and Moynihan have argued, some Italians continued to be ‘thought of by others as members of that group with that name’.<sup>285</sup> Third generation café-owner Joe Conti also observed that, although her family had lived in Lampeter for generations, local people still tended to think her as ‘just being Italian’.<sup>286</sup> Therefore, as Modood has pointed out: ‘it is not that unusual, even for successful, integrated and respected minorities, to be strongly identified [by the receiving society] with (...) a “homeland” cause’.<sup>287</sup> As Kymlicka has also observed: ‘there are many forms of cultural exclusion (...) some members of groups

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<sup>282</sup> Gans, ‘Symbolic ethnicity’, 12.

<sup>283</sup> C. Johansson and C. Hintermann, ‘Museums, Migration and Diversity: an Introduction’, in Johansson and Hintermann (eds), *Migration and Memory*, pp. 135-144.

<sup>284</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>285</sup> Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, p. 12.

<sup>286</sup> BBC 2 Wales, ‘Secret Wales’, NLW, llgc-id: 1089935.

<sup>287</sup> Modood, *Multiculturalism*, p. 138.

still feel excluded from the “common culture”, despite possessing the common rights of citizenship’.<sup>288</sup> Whereas they aimed to reinforce the current notion of inclusiveness, the Welsh media and other cultural industries have in fact enhanced the sense of ‘otherness’ of some Italians through the adoption of stereotypical representations. As former secretary of state for Wales Ron Davies observed, it can be argued that Wales has ‘a system that is designed to be inclusive but a culture which is not’.<sup>289</sup>

This chapter has analysed the different ways in which Welsh people have reacted to Italian migration in different social and historical contexts, focusing on four different case studies. In so doing, it has primarily investigated the process of memorialisation of the Italian migrant experience which has occurred in Wales. Particularly over the last thirty years, the Welsh media, literature and institutions have increasingly paid attention to the Welsh-Italian group. This increasing attention has, to a certain extent, been determined by the growing institutionalisation and socio-economic prominence of the Welsh-Italian group, which aimed at celebrating its long-standing contribution to Welsh society and keeping its memory alive. In fact, this process of memorialisation was primarily a result of the surrounding cultural and political climate. In particular, the Welsh media, literature and institutions have tended to narrate Italian migration to Wales as a successful model of integration, reflecting the surrounding myth of national tolerance. Whereas this has for long been a taken-for-granted notion, in the post-devolution context it has become an institutionalised feature of the Welsh political agenda. It has been embraced by the media and other institutions, which have reconstructed Italian migrant stories in way that could ideally suit two nation-building purposes: firstly, reminding the Welsh people that Wales is an inherently tolerant nation (one

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<sup>288</sup> W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: a Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 180.

<sup>289</sup> Williams and Chaney, ‘Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups’, p. 79



they should be to be proud of) and, secondly, showing current migrants and ethnic minority people that Wales is an inclusive society which welcomes people who, following the Italian model, wish to integrate and contribute to society.

In other words, this chapter has attempted to provide an historical interpretation of the tolerance-myth, focusing on the Italian case study. It has also challenged such a myth, showing that, over the last seventy years, Welsh people have not been immune to different forms of anti-Italian prejudice. In particular, Italian POWs, internees and coal miners in Wales were, on several occasions, exposed to hostile reactions, ranging from riots to strikes. These actions added to a wide range of long-standing stereotypes, which have sometimes persisted to the present day. Such findings show that the presumed 'Welsh tolerance' was easily 'suspended' by the indigenous population every time Italian migrants were perceived as a social or economic threat. In addition, the chapter has challenged the tolerance-myth showing that the special attention that the Welsh media and institutions have paid to Italian migrants denote the existence of a hierarchy of desirability with some migrant groups (namely the 'unproblematic' white European ones) being more acceptable than others. The next chapter assesses if and to what extent the prominence that Italians have been given in Welsh popular culture has either enhanced their sense of belonging to Wales or fostered their Italian pride.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Italianness, Welshness and Everyday Life

This chapter illustrates how Italians and people of Italian heritage have renegotiated their identities within the Welsh framework, particularly after devolution. The chapter investigates whether such identities have influenced the extent to which Italians identify with Wales and its political institutions. In so doing, it engages with the existing debate on Welsh inclusiveness and tolerance. Drawing on the Italian case study, it assesses whether the post-devolution model of inclusive multiculturalism has influenced the way in which people of migrant heritage living in Wales renegotiate their identities. So far, a limited amount of research has been undertaken on this challenging topic,<sup>1</sup> which could illuminate our understanding of current national claims (in Britain and elsewhere),<sup>2</sup> at a time the very existence of the British state is being challenged by the Scottish National Party's (SNP) intention to hold a referendum on independence in 2014. It is crucial to grasp the extent to which migrants and ethnic minority people identify with such national claims at a time when a growing migrant and ethnic population has the power to influence future elections and referenda of Britain's devolved nations. Drawing upon the Italian case study, this chapter aims to assess whether even an allegedly unproblematic and integrated group, whose loyalty has been taken-for-granted by the media and other institutions, still finds it hard to fully identify with Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', pp. 78-101 and C. Williams, 'Claiming the National', p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> A good starting point to understand and compare some of the current national claims in Canada, Spain and Britain could be the chapter 'National Identity, Devolution and Secession' (pp. 33-57) in Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*. On the British case see, for example, T. Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Altona, Common Ground Publishing, 2003). On the Spanish context see, for example, D. Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (London, Hurst, 1997).

Drawing on a wide range of sources including oral history, media, memoirs and literature, the chapter also engages with the prominent debate on Italian ethnicity and identity which has arisen over the last forty years. In so doing, it aims to provide an European perspective to the debate, which, with few exceptions, has predominantly focused on Italians in North America. Highlighting the originality and ‘complexity’ of the Welsh case study, (a stateless nation within a larger state, internally divided along ethno-linguistic lines), it assesses whether being Italian in Wales is different than elsewhere (in Britain and in other countries) and whether being Italian in a certain area of Wales (e.g. the Valleys) is different than elsewhere in Wales.

This section is divided into five sub-sections. The first provides a brief background to the debate on Welsh inclusiveness and to the notion of Welshness. The second sub-section assesses the extent to which Italians have engaged with the post-1997 devolution process and its annexed idea of inclusiveness, while the third investigates whether and to what extent such an engagement can be imputed to the way in which Italians perceive themselves in terms of national identity. The fourth sub-section assesses the extent to which, beyond the identities which Italians claim, various forms of enduring ‘banal’ and ‘everyday’ Italianness clash with or prevail over various facets of Welshness. The fifth sub-section focuses on a specific feature of national identity (the language) and analyses different attitudes that Italians have shown toward both their vernacular and the Welsh language.

### **Welsh ‘inclusiveness’ and Welsh ‘complexity’**

In a BBC Wales programme on Italians in south Wales broadcast in 2006, third generation Italian Remo Sidoli proudly claimed a ‘Welsh-Italian’ identity:

We’re able to speak Italian and we’re able to deal with Italy on a business site, as well as a pleasure, holiday (...) on a business cause, well, we do work with Italy and it’s worked out very well with us and it’s thanks to the older generation, the first generation who came over teaching us the language, the culture, making us go back to

Italy, being involved with Italy, although (...) our life, our business, all our future is here in Wales and we will go on, we won't go away from Wales.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, the interviewee claimed to be proud of his Italian roots, but, at the same time, he expressed his loyalty to Wales. He seemed to be completely at ease with his dual identity making 'a living through continuous regular contact across national borders'.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Sidoli's interview could serve an ideal advertisement for the idea of inclusiveness that has been embraced (across the political spectrum) by the NAW and successive Welsh governments from 1999 onwards. Chaney and Fevre have observed that such an idea: 'came to signify liberal concerns about fostering democratic participation (...) reinventing a Welsh culture that is meaningful and embracing to all citizens'.<sup>5</sup> It was an attempt to reach out to the quarter<sup>6</sup> of the Welsh population that was born outside Wales as well as to people of foreign heritage who, according to former Secretary of State for Wales Ron Davies, felt 'a lack of ownership toward the National Assembly'.<sup>7</sup> As Plaid Cymru AM Lord Elis Thomas put it:

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<sup>3</sup> BBC Video Nation: 'Italian Stories: Ice-Cream Parlour', 4 October 2006, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 3/12/2010.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Portes et al., 'The study of Transnationalism', 217-226; Vertovec, 'Transnationalism and Identity', 573-582.

<sup>5</sup> Chaney and Fevre, 'Ron Davies and the Cult of "Inclusiveness"', 31.

<sup>6</sup> In 2001, 25 per cent of the Welsh population was born outside Wales. Whereas the vast majority of the non-Welsh born were from England (20 per cent) or the rest of the UK (1.8 per cent), 3.2 per cent of them were from outside the UK. In addition, 4 per cent of Welsh people claimed an ethnicity other than white British/Welsh. More recently, Wales has also attracted a significant number of migrant workers from eastern Europe (as a result of the 2004 EU enlargement) as well as asylum seekers. By 2007, over 129,000 non-UK born people were to be found in Wales (over 4 per cent of the population). Source: Crawley and Crimes, *Refugees Living in Wales* and WAG: Statistics on Migrant Workers in Wales, 2008, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090915migrantwork2008en.pdf>, accessed 6/05/2011.

<sup>7</sup> Chaney and Fevre, 'Ron Davies and the Cult of "inclusiveness"', 31. See also: Day, *Making Sense of Wales*; Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', pp. 78-101; Williams, 'Claiming the National', pp. 220-234. For a comparison between Wales and Scotland see, for example, Williams and De Lima, 'Devolution, Multicultural Citizenship and Race Equality', 498-522; Penrose and Howard, 'One Scotland, Many Cultures', pp. 95-111; Hopkins, 'Politics, Race and Nation', pp. 113-124. The fact that large sections of the Welsh population felt a 'lack of ownership toward the assembly' was highlighted by the poor polling-turnout that characterised both the 1997 referendum and 1999 Assembly election. Barely more than half of the eligible electorate took part in the 1997 Referendum, that was approved with only 6,742 votes in favour. 46 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote for the National Assembly two years later. 72 per cent of those born outside Wales and England either voted no or did not vote for the 1997 referendum. See: R.W. Jones and D. Trystan, 'The Welsh Referendum Vote', in B. Taylor and K. Thomson (eds), *Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1999), p. 76.

The Assembly is about creating a notion of citizenship of Wales. That citizenship is open to everybody who chooses to be here. It doesn't matter where you come from. It doesn't matter what language you speak.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, according to this perspective, devolution was in part concerned with promoting a new form of Welshness, one that was not culturally or ethnically-based, but civic in nature. This means that all people living in Wales, irrespective of race, creed, colour or language could base their Welsh national identity on the simple fact that they resided in Wales and they identified with its national institutions.<sup>9</sup> This notion of identity could be seen as attempt to give boost to what Modood would define as a 'multicultural citizenship and inclusive nationality', at a time when the very notion of multiculturalism was labelled as 'anti-patriotic' by various media and political parties across Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The Welsh political institutions have taken various policy-initiatives aimed at promoting equality of opportunities and civic engagement. According to Chaney, these steps mark a discontinuity with Welsh public administration before 1999 and with Westminster, one example being the creation of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, which enacts the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into secondary legislation.<sup>11</sup> In this respect, a 2008 WAG document on children's education states:

Settings/schools should (...) develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes that will enable children to participate in our multi-ethnic society in Wales. Settings/schools should develop approaches that support the ethnic and cultural identities of all children and reflect a range of perspectives, to engage children and prepare them for life as global citizen.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> As cited in Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', p. 79. See also Williams, 'Claiming the National', pp. 220-234.

<sup>9</sup> Day, *Making Sense of Wales*.

<sup>10</sup> Modood, *Multiculturalism*, p. 154. See also: R. Grillo, 'An Excess of Alterity? Debating Difference in a Multicultural Society', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30 (2007), 979-998; S. Vertovec and S. Wessendorf, 'Introduction: Assessing the Backlash Against Multiculturalism in Europe', in S. Vertovec and S. Wessendorf (eds), *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices* (London, Routledge, 2010), pp. 1-31.

<sup>11</sup> Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*. For a comparison between Wales and Scotland see, for example, Williams and De Lima, 'Devolution, Multicultural Citizenship and Race Equality', 498-522.

<sup>12</sup> As cited in Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*, p. 99.

In addition, the Welsh institutions have sponsored projects and associations aimed at fostering civic engagement amongst migrants and ethnic minority people, two examples being the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA) and the Muslim Women Talk (MWT) project.<sup>13</sup> All these initiatives suggest that the Welsh institutions have embraced a model of ‘communitarian’ or even ‘radical’ multiculturalism,<sup>14</sup> which Walzer would define as ‘a program for greater social and economic equality (...), a defence upon group differences and an attack upon class differences’.<sup>15</sup> This form of inclusiveness, which, to a certain extent, recalls the Canadian and Australian experiences,<sup>16</sup> appears to mark a discontinuity with the British model of ‘weak multiculturalism’,<sup>17</sup> according to which ‘there is official recognition of diversity but measures stop short of positive programmes to empower groups’.<sup>18</sup> The post-1997 idea of inclusiveness also seems to signify an important change from more ‘traditional’

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<sup>13</sup> Chaney and Fevre, ‘Ron Davies and the Cult of “Inclusiveness”’, 21-49; Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*.

<sup>14</sup> G. Delanty, *Community* (London, Routledge, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Walzer, *On Toleration*, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> On Canadian multiculturalism see, for example, A. Kobayashi, ‘Multiculturalism: Representing a Canadian Institution’, in J. Duncan and D. Ley (eds), *Place, Culture, Representation* (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 205-231. See also: E. Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (London, Routledge, 1999); S. Kamboureli, ‘The Technology of Ethnicity: Canadian Multiculturalism and the Language of Law’, in D. Bennett (ed), *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity* (London, Routledge, 1998), pp. 208-222. On the Australian case see, for example, J. Stratton and I. Ang, ‘Multicultural Imagined Communities: Cultural Difference and National Identity in the USA and Australia’, in Bennett (ed), *Multicultural States*, pp. 135-162.

<sup>17</sup> Grillo, ‘An Excess of Alterity?’, 987.

<sup>18</sup> Delanty, *Community*, p. 102. Although, since the 1829 Catholic Relief Act, various legislative initiatives promoting forms of multiculturalism could be observed in Britain, the country has not yet become a ‘formal’ multicultural state like Canada. See, for example, Rex, ‘Multiculturalism in Europe and America’, 243-259 and Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*. Yet, it is important to note that, the New Labour-led British government, particularly in the post 9/11 context, increasingly embraced forms of inclusive multiculturalism through ‘strategy initiatives concerned with economic and social exclusion on the one hand, and cohesion and identity on the other’. These aimed at ‘improving life chances of “black and minority ethnic” groups in education, employment, health, housing, and criminal justice together with policies to build community cohesion, ensuring that young people have a “common sense of belonging”, new immigrants integrated, diversity celebrated “through sporting and cultural opportunities”, and hatred tackled through new laws’. See Grillo, ‘An Excess of Alterity?’, 988-990. By contrast, Back and other authors have pointed out that: ‘while there have been palpable shifts and important new legislative initiatives, one of the consequences is that the project of assimilation has been reinvigorated under New Labour. This in turn leaves the normative whiteness that colonises British institutions and political life intact’. See L. Back, M. Keith, A. Khan, K. Shukra and J. Solomos, ‘The Return of Assimilationism: Race, Multiculturalism and New Labour’, *Sociological Research Online* 7 (2002), <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/2/back.html>, accessed 8/05/2011.

definitions of Welshness, which had been based on ethnic, social or cultural factors such as language, class or religion.<sup>19</sup>

However, various authors have challenged the post-1997 idea of inclusiveness, highlighting the difficulties that the Welsh institutions have encountered in reaching out to a geographically dispersed and sceptical migrant and ethnic population.<sup>20</sup> According to Chaney and Fevre, such a ‘civic disengagement’ amongst migrants and ethnic minority people can be put down to nothing but a lack of a serious institutional effort aimed at ‘nurturing a civil sense of identity’,<sup>21</sup> adding to a long-standing neglect of ‘race’ that characterised the pre-devolution Welsh institutional framework. This was a result of the fact that, apart from English (and, to a lesser extent, Irish) immigration, migration to Wales had historically been a quantitatively limited phenomenon and, consequently, had generally not been perceived as a prominent political ‘issue’. This situation led to a substantial neglect of any ‘ethnic dimension’ in Welsh history, whereas, in Welsh-speaking areas of the country, the attention was pointed at the English/Anglicising threat.<sup>22</sup>

For all these reasons, many people of migrant background continue to show a loose affiliation to Welshness, which, in their eyes, remains a fragmented and ‘complex’ identity. This complexity arises from the fact that, although Wales might be defined as a ‘nation’, it is not an independent country. As Cohen has observed, Wales is located along one of the ‘fuzzy identity boundaries’ which characterize the British Isles. A first boundary separates ‘Britishness’ and ‘Englishness’ from the so called ‘Celtic fringe’ including ‘Scottishness’, ‘Welshness’ and ‘Irishness’, while a further distinction exists between each Celtic national

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<sup>19</sup> Jones, ‘Beyond Identity?’, 330-357.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Williams and Chaney, ‘Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups’, pp. 78-101; Williams, ‘Claiming the National’, pp. 220-234; Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*.

<sup>21</sup> Chaney and Fevre, ‘Ron Davies and the Cult of “inclusiveness”’, 42.

<sup>22</sup> Williams et al., ‘Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalisation’, pp. 1-13.

identity and the others.<sup>23</sup> As a result, a Welsh person could potentially claim, at the same time, a Welsh, Celtic, British and even European identity and a 1997 survey showed that 68 per cent of the Welsh saw themselves as ‘a combination of Welsh and British’.<sup>24</sup> As Day has argued, there is:

A plurality of meanings attached to being Welsh, according to the social and class locations of those involved (...) in different contexts and for different purposes, someone may see themselves as hailing from Pontypridd and the valleys, a south Walian, Welsh, British and European, while another is self-defined as from Anglesey, a Welsh-speaker, north Walian, Welsh, European – but not British.<sup>25</sup>

As Day suggests, the complexity of Wales also arises from its linguistic patterns. Wales is a bilingual country with an English speaking majority (historically concentrated in the industrial and densely populated southern and north-eastern regions of the country) and a Welsh speaking minority (historically located in the rural and sparsely populated northern and western regions of the country). According to Balsom, the country can be divided along the lines of a ‘three-Wales model’ including a Welsh-identifying Welsh-speaking Wales or *Y Fro Gymraeg* (west Wales), a Welsh-identifying English-speaking Wales (the Valleys and part of south Wales’ coast) and a British-identifying English-speaking Wales (east Wales and south Pembrokeshire).<sup>26</sup>

Although, in 2003, ‘only’ 21.8 of the Welsh population claimed to speak Welsh fluently,<sup>27</sup> the Welsh language has historically played a prominent role within the definition of Welshness and has eventually achieved the status of ‘official’ language of Wales. Some authors, as Fevre, Borland and Denney, have suggested that, to a certain extent, the Welsh

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<sup>23</sup> R. Cohen, *Frontiers of Identity: the British and the Others* (London, Longman, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> J. Curtice, ‘Is Scotland a nation and Wales not? Why the two referendum results Were so Different’, in Taylor and Thomson (eds), *Scotland and Wales*, p. 126

<sup>25</sup> Day, *Making Sense of Wales*, pp. 242-244.

<sup>26</sup> Balsom, ‘The Three-Wales model’, pp. 1-17.

<sup>27</sup> Welsh Language Board: Number of Speakers, Summary, 2003, <http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/English/welshlanguage/Pages/WhoaretheWelshspeakersWheredotheylive.aspx>, accessed 28/10/2010.



language can be seen as creating an ‘identity divide’ in Wales, with Welsh-speaking Welsh people self-proclaiming ‘proper’ Welsh in contrast with ‘second-class’ English-speaking Welsh.<sup>28</sup> In other words, as Jones has argued: ‘Welsh people are hardly a people with a distinct, shared and immutable identity’. In similar terms, Giggs and Pattie have defined Wales as ‘a plural society’ in terms of ethnicity, language and social class<sup>29</sup> while Smith has called it ‘a singular noun but a plural experience’.<sup>30</sup> This means that identity-renegotiation processes in Wales are complicated by the absence of a definite Welsh national identity which could be easily claimed by anyone living in Wales. As noted, the devolved political institutions have tried to solve such a complexity by promoting a civic notion of Welshness which transcends the country’s ethno-linguistic divisions. The next sub-section illustrates how some Italians and people of Italian heritage have responded to devolution and its annexed idea of civic identity.

### **Italian responses to devolution**

To what extent then have Italians engaged with devolution? Have the Welsh institutions succeeded in reaching out to them, giving boost to their sense of belonging to Wales? Oral testimonies suggest that not only did a significant proportion of Italians (notably the first generation) seem to be barely involved in the new idea of Welsh civic identity, but they did not even have any precise ‘notion’ of Wales. In particular, they did not seem to regard Wales as a ‘nation’, many considering it as a ‘region’ of England. This vision of Wales still reflected the early days of the post-war Italian migrant wave; for example, in the 1940s and 1950s, Italians often wrote, in their letters home, ‘England’ instead of ‘Wales’ as their address.<sup>31</sup> Sixty years ahead, when asked about their decision to migrate to Wales, some interviewees

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<sup>28</sup> Fevre et al., ‘Nation, Community and Conflict’, pp. 129-148.

<sup>29</sup> J. Giggs and C. Pattie, ‘Wales as a Plural Society’, *Contemporary Wales* 5 (1992), 24-63.

<sup>30</sup> D. Smith, *Wales! Wales?* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> A.R. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 8 July 1958, Bedonia, CDEAVT; A.S. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 28 July 1947, CDEAVT; A.R. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 18 February 1951, CDEAVT.

argued that they did not even know what Wales was until they arrived there. This was particularly the case for Italians, who were recruited under official schemes. For example, former tinsplate worker Armando Cugno (82 years old)<sup>32</sup> recalled: ‘I didn’t choose Wales. I chose Great Britain...I didn’t even know that Wales existed’.<sup>33</sup> As Paolo Cavarra (77 years old) also pointed out: ‘in the council office [in Italy], they had these printed advertisements saying (...) England, they didn’t say (...) Wales’.<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that ignorance of Wales was not unique to Italians. In 1989, the Welsh Affairs Committee (WAC) of the House of Commons concluded that Wales had a ‘fragmented image’ to the world. The committee provided the example of the Japanese chairman of a major electronic multinational investing in Wales, who declared that Japanese people had a clear image of Scotland, but not of Wales.<sup>35</sup>

Roughly twenty years later, the image of Wales appeared to be still fragmented to some Italians, being complicated by the existence of two official languages. For example, for those Italians (the majority) who settled in predominantly English-speaking areas, it was sometimes hard to regard the local population as ‘Welsh’. For example, Armando Cugno, who lived in Cardiff, commented ‘if you’re Welsh and you don’t speak Welsh what kind of Welsh are you?’<sup>36</sup> Although he classed himself ‘Welsh’, third generation Tony Parisella (50 years old), from Llandudno, also distinguished between ‘true Welsh’ and ‘Anglo-Welsh’. For example, when asked about his feelings on Welsh independence, the respondent pointed out:

I don’t think we should ever walk away from England, I think we’ve got a lot in common, more in common than we think (...) perhaps if I was from the Llŷn peninsula I wouldn’t be saying that (...) but I’m not, I’m from Llandudno which is a big centre of population and I do have a lot in common with English people, I like the same things, you know (...) I’ve probably got more in common with the English way

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<sup>32</sup> In this chapter, the author always indicates the respondent’s age at the time of the interview.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with P. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, ‘Beyond identity?’, 332.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

of life than, perhaps, the true Welsh way of life, perhaps the farming communities (...) we don't come across as being the stereotypical Welshmen, we don't speak in Welsh accents, we don't speak the language.<sup>37</sup>

These observations tend to confirm the view that, as Williams and Chaney have argued, people of migrant or ethnic minority background, in Wales, often apply 'the formula Welsh equals Welsh-speaking'.<sup>38</sup> As a result, in their interviews, some first and even second and third generation respondents tended not to make any distinction between the terms 'English' and 'Welsh' when it came to English-speaking Welsh people. In particular, when it came to banal and everyday life features, some interviewees tended to associate the (allegedly) Anglo-Welsh way of life (e.g. family values, drinking culture, etc.) with the (allegedly) English or British one (see below).

Whereas the majority of Italian respondents did not seem to be particularly involved in the civic idea of Welshness, there is evidence of the fact that some Italians did embrace Wales in civic terms. Even before the term inclusiveness became a key component of the Welsh political agenda, some people of Italian heritage showed their civic commitment to Welsh society in different ways. For example, in 1989, Welsh-Italian Romeo Basini became business councillor for the Welsh Development Agency in the Valleys initiative area, which was aimed at promoting small firms operating in the region.<sup>39</sup> Toni Schiavone, born to an Italian POW in the rural county of Ceredigion, became chair of Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Society) and a prominent figure in Plaid Cymru. Other Italians showed their appreciation of the Welsh/British political and social system, contrasting it with the overwhelming bureaucracy, corruption and the criminality that, in their eyes, affected their homeland. This attitude was perfectly represented by a cartoon which

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups: ethnic minorities', p. 89. As noted, some Welsh speakers also tend to self-proclaim proper Welsh and dismiss the English-speaking Welsh as second-class citizens. See, for example, Fevre et al., 'Nation, Community and Conflict', pp. 129-148.

<sup>39</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'Smallfirms Service'.

appeared on the migrant newspaper *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles* in 1988. The cartoon portrayed the following dialogue between Welsh-Italian protagonist Mario and a fellow countryman who is about to go to Italy for the summer:

Friend: I'm off to Italy next week Mario: any tips?  
Mario: Go to the Bar Grande in Bardi and have a birra for me  
Friend: Ha!ha! I'm not going to Bardi, I'm going to Rome  
Mario: Make sure you get there early then, ha!ha!ha!  
Friend: Why early then?  
Mario: To catch the changing of the government!<sup>40</sup>

Beside its political framework, Italy was also criticised by some Welsh-Italians for its non-meritocratic attitudes. For example, Welsh-born Gianpiero Croci, who decided to move back to Italy, wrote in a letter to the *Gazzetta*:

I've been in Italy for six months now and I must say that it hasn't been an easy way so far. I've immediately realised that, to make progress in Italy, you need something more than a degree. [You need] luck, contacts, and, above all, an even rude attitude to capture the attention of the so called (...) big bosses.<sup>41</sup>

Several testimonies suggest that the contrast between Italian bureaucracy and Welsh efficiency became even more apparent after devolution. Some respondents claimed to be in favour of devolution. For example, first generation Mario Cicigoi (77 years old) commented: 'here [in Wales] is much better, (...) now that we have a government in Cardiff, everyone, even young people, have all medicines for free, we have free public transport, teeth, glasses'.<sup>42</sup> Some respondents who were involved in the food industry also claimed to be in favour of the Assembly as they had received financial support from it.<sup>43</sup> For example, third generation ice-cream producer Renaldo Dallavalle (53 years old) declared:

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<sup>40</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, June 1988, 'Mario Kapp'.

<sup>41</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'A Letter From...' (author's translation).

<sup>42</sup> Interview with M. Cicigoi, 1 November 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>43</sup> For more on this see Chapter Four.

We're in business and it's good for us, we get always support from the Welsh Assembly...We get financial support because we're in business (...) we do a lot with the Welsh Assembly...Exhibitions and things like that...It's good for business.<sup>44</sup>

By contrast, negative comments on the Italian system were made by some second and third generation interviewees, although they were born and bred in Wales and had not experienced living in Italy themselves. For example, second generation Anna Schiavo (51 years old) commented:

In Italy, to work, you have to know someone in that type of work. It's not like in Britain you're interviewed for a job and you're employed on your merits and it's not that you're the son or the daughter of a friend who works in the bank and that still very much goes on in Italy and it's hard.<sup>45</sup>

Second generation Angela Morelli (37 years old) also commented:

I really love it [Italy] but the bureaucracy was a nightmare [laughing] I can't imagine, I can't imagine....No, I'd love to go there more often, definitely, definitely, but (...) I quite like this country (....) the NHS and things like that, it's very important.<sup>46</sup>

However, such comments illustrate that the appreciation of the Welsh system that some Italians showed was actually a general appreciation of the British system, resulting from purely practical reasons more than from a sincere involvement into Welshness in civic terms.

These findings parallel what has been argued by Grant, who concluded that, also in Scotland, people of ethnic background tended to have merely practical 'hopes for devolution (...) not based on any notion of identity'.<sup>47</sup> As first generation Pasquale Milo (56 years old) commented:

I think that devolution (...) is a positive thing (...) because *they* have *their* own government and *they* make *their* own decisions on many things (...) it works because Wales it's a sort of distinct nation in itself (...) *they* have their own language (...) so devolution is a right thing because (...) *we* don't pay anything for medicines, they're completely free, in England they pay...Here they haven't increased the university fees,

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with A. Schiavo, 12 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with A. Morelli, 1 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>47</sup> As cited in Williams, 'Claiming the National', p. 228.

my daughter (...) would pay £ 3,000 per year, in England she would pay £ 9,000 (...) therefore, I'm in favour.<sup>48</sup>

It is perhaps worth noting that when he talked about devolution in general socio-political terms, the respondent used 'they', referring to it as a 'Welsh thing', while when it came to practical issues (free prescriptions, university fees) he used 'we', as if devolution was also an 'Italian' matter. As this comment suggests, most respondents who claimed to be in favour of Welsh devolution did so for practical reasons, without showing any strong commitment to Wales in civic terms. This attitude towards devolution could arguably be seen as a reflection of the broader Welsh society, which, so far, has not been particularly enthusiastic about devolution either.<sup>49</sup> However, some Italians and their descendants appeared to be even less passionate (than 'indigenous' Welsh people) about newly-devolved Wales and did not appear to be more civically involved than they were before 1999. This finding seems to confirm the results of other authors. For example, Williams and Chaney have observed that:

There was a noted degree of apathy amongst ethnic minority voters that was related to their having little understanding of the policy process or being unable to see how it might impact on their life.<sup>50</sup>

These findings suggests that the Welsh institutions have not succeeded in reaching out not only to disadvantaged and marginalised ethnic groups, but also to (arguably) well-integrated and 'successful' people of foreign descent like Italians, to whom Welshness remains a fragmented (or even meaningless) notion.

The apathy that some Italians showed toward newly-devolved Wales also parallels the findings of other authors.<sup>51</sup> According to Bonacich, the 'tendency to avoid involvement in

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>49</sup> Whereas the percentage of Welsh people in favour of devolution rose from 43 per cent to almost 70 per cent between 1997 and 2008, in 2008 the vast majority of Welsh people still declared to have 'a fair amount' (38 per cent), 'little' (36 per cent) or 'no' (15 per cent) interest in Welsh politics. Source: NAW: Public Attitudes 2008, [http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about\\_us-commission\\_assembly\\_administration/about\\_us-commission\\_publications/about\\_us-commission\\_other\\_publications/about\\_us-public\\_attitudes\\_2008/about\\_us-public\\_attitudes\\_2008\\_levels\\_of\\_public\\_interest.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/about_us-commission_publications/about_us-commission_other_publications/about_us-public_attitudes_2008/about_us-public_attitudes_2008_levels_of_public_interest.htm), accessed 12/09/2011.

<sup>50</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups: Ethnic Minorities', pp. 92-93.

local politics except in affairs that directly affect their group' is a typical trait of middleman minorities that have traditionally been involved in small-business activities.<sup>52</sup> Although a significant proportion of Italian migrants' children in Wales have not carried on with their parents' ethnic activities, they seem to have inherited the focus on the economic achievement that had characterised the first generation. As a survey on second generation Italians in Britain also suggests, Italian migrants' children have always been more focused on their personal economic and professional success rather than on social and political issues of the receiving society.<sup>53</sup> According to the author of a pioneering study of family and community among Italians in Buffalo (USA), the lack of a strong civic commitment was a result of a prevailing commitment to family life:

The dichotomy between a faltering institutional life and a highly articulated sense of family identity (...) has its roots in the Italian past. Deeply preoccupied with the family's (...) interests, peasants often failed to develop simultaneous commitments to (...) institutions.<sup>54</sup>

Gambino has also observed that Italian-Americans, over the years, showed 'a Realpolitik stance toward authority and power',<sup>55</sup> becoming politically engaged only when their direct family interests were at stake. For example, as the author recalled:

When in 1965 New York City announced that it would tear down some seventy homes owned by Italian-Americans to build a high school (...) the community's residents incensed. The plan (...) would have destroyed a substantial number of homes and moved their families, thereby decimating a community Italian-Americans had spent two generations in building.<sup>56</sup>

In similar terms, Orsi has argued that, in Italian Harlem, political motivations, perceptions and loyalties were based on family values. As a result, the only political campaigns which were able to win Italian support were those for better housing, which obviously entailed the

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<sup>51</sup> Favero and Tassello, 'La Gioventù Italo-Inglese', 319.

<sup>52</sup> Bonacich, 'A theory of middleman minorities', 583-594.

<sup>53</sup> Favero and Tassello, 'La Gioventù Italo-Inglese', 299-324.

<sup>54</sup> Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*.

<sup>55</sup> Gambino, *Blood of my Blood*, p. 375.

<sup>56</sup> Gambino, *Blood of my Blood*, p. 323.

defence of the family dimension.<sup>57</sup> In Wales, as will shortly be illustrated, family also represents an essential feature of Italian identity, one that could potentially influence the extent of Italians' civic engagement.

This assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that, as in the American case, political commitment, among Italians in Wales, appeared to arise only when family issues were at stake. For example, in 1989, the *Gazzetta* claimed that Italians living in the Aberdare area decided to support Plaid Cymru's candidate Denis Evans for the local council elections for three main reasons: firstly, they regarded him as a respectable family man, secondly he was married to a Welsh-Italian woman, thirdly he opposed the proposed transferral of the local maternity unit to Merthyr Tydfil (a family-sensitive issue). As the *Gazzetta* reported:

Many (...) in the Aberdare area (and elsewhere) know Denis Evans as proprietor of the 'Pop-in' cafe in Victoria Square, and also one of the regulars at [AVG] Association dances and functions. Lately he's been seen campaigning and demonstrating his support for the Plaid Cymru party in the Cynon Valley Borough local council elections, which were held on June 15 (...) Plaid Cymru's manifesto identifies several key areas of concern which Denis feels particularly strongly about. One of these is the proposed construction of a new maternity unit at the Princes Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil. Denis believes this proposal threatens the right of mothers to have their children born in Aberdare, and is further blow in reducing the services provided by the National Health Service (...) Family always plays an important supporting role in Denis' case wife Lina, and children Gabriella and Daniel.<sup>58</sup>

This testimony suggests that the commitment to family life could influence the extent to which Italians engaged with Wales in civic terms. The next two sub-sections will take this argument further illustrating the extent to which such a loose affiliation to Wales is a result of the way in which Italians perceive themselves in terms of identity.

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<sup>57</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*.

<sup>58</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'Denis Gets Our Vote'.



## National identity: Italian, Welsh or Welsh-Italian?

According to the 2001 Census, 2,604 people in Wales stated that the ‘ethnic group’ they belonged to was ‘Italian’.<sup>59</sup> Given the fact that 3,263 people of Italian birth resided in the country at the time, adding to an arguably much more significant number of people of Italian descent, the figure appeared to be surprisingly small.<sup>60</sup> Yet, the Italian ethnic group appeared to be still numerically remarkable if compared to others, being the second largest non-British European group after the Irish. In addition, it is important to note that the figure was probably lowered by the fact that many people of Italian heritage had a mixed background and, presumably, may simply have indicated either ‘other European mixed’ or ‘other mixed white’ as their ethnic group.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the fact that relatively few people in Wales claimed an Italian *ethnicity* did not necessarily mean that few people in Wales claimed an Italian *national identity*.<sup>62</sup> Ethnicity and national identity do not mean the same thing to people of migrant descent, who may find the former term more complicated and misleading than the latter; as Eriksen has observed, ‘in everyday language the word ethnicity still has a ring of “minority issues” and “race relations”’.<sup>63</sup> Thus, provided that the 2001 Census did not include any question on national identity, in order to analyse the different ways in which Italians and people of Italian descent define themselves, a combination of interviews and other qualitative sources is needed. In this respect, the vast oral history project IMW, together with other

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<sup>59</sup> ONS, *Census 2001: England and Wales* (ethnic group detailed categories provided by ONS).

<sup>60</sup> The number of people living in Wales (and in each county of Wales) by country of birth (based on the Census 2001 data) can be retrieved from: ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 26/04/2011.

<sup>61</sup> Taken together, these two categories included 17,661 claimants.

<sup>62</sup> The 2001 Census did not provide any question about national identity.

<sup>63</sup> Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 3. That is why, in 2001, only 14 per cent of the Welsh declared to be ‘Welsh’ in ethnic terms, while, just a year later, 67 per cent of them admitted to feel ‘Welsh’ in terms of identity. Presumably, the former figure was also the result of the fact that no ‘white Welsh’ tick-box was provided in the 2001 Census. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that many potential Welsh claimants did not declare to be ethnically Welsh simply because they did not have any specific box to fill in. Source: ONS, ‘Focus on Wales: Its people’, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=10920>, accessed 27/04/2011. For more on this topic see, for example, N. Coupland, H. Bishop and P. Garrett, ‘One Wales? Reassessing Diversity in Welsh Ethnolinguistic Identification’, *Contemporary Wales* 18 (2006), 1-27.

interviews and the migrant newspaper *Gazzetta*, represents an ideal starting point to appreciate the process of identity-renegotiation amongst Welsh-Italians.

IMW as well as other interviews suggest that the majority of people of Italian background in Wales claimed a predominantly Italian national identity. This sense of national pride appeared to be particularly strong among Italians residing in south Wales. This was, to a certain extent, encouraged by the combined action of Italian governmental institutions and migrant associations.<sup>64</sup> As a result, despite their geographical dispersion, south Wales' Italians could, over the years, rely on a wide range of ethnic events which fostered the maintenance of an Italian dimension in the region. This sort of ethnic revival, which paralleled similar phenomena which were taking place in other countries (notably in the USA), became apparent in the 1970s at a time when the pre-war first generation was inexorably ageing, putting the maintenance of an Italian heritage at risk. As a result, several institutional initiatives were taken by both Italian authorities and migrants to nurture their sense of Italianness. For example, in 1975, newly-appointed Italian consul in Cardiff Raffaele Iorio reactivated the pre-war Dante Alighieri Society, a cultural body which was 'dedicated to keeping interest in Italian culture alive among Wales' 20,000-strong Italian community'.<sup>65</sup> As the consul commented:

We have lots of professional people of Italian extraction in Wales and I am sure they feel the need to keep their appreciation of Italian culture alive (...) The Italians have a very well-established community in Wales and one that is completely integrated with the rest of society (...) but it does lack a certain cohesion.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> By the end of the 1980s, all the four main Italian associations in Wales (ACLI, Associazione Nazionale Alpini, Amici Val Ceno Galles and Comitati Tricolore Italiani nel Mondo) were based in south Wales, adding to the Italian vice-consulate in Cardiff. See: *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, June 1988, '7 Maggio 1988: Data Memorabile per gli Italiani del Galles'.

<sup>65</sup> *Western Mail*, 25 February 1975, 'Wales and the World'.

<sup>66</sup> *Western Mail*, 25 February 1975, 'Wales and the World'.

At the same time, a group of Italian migrants proposed the establishment of an Italian club, where ‘Italians and Welshmen of Italian descent can go and be reminded of Italy’.<sup>67</sup> As the *Western Mail* reported:

Wales’s Italian community (...) may soon have a club of their own to go to in Cardiff. A group of Italians are looking for premises to establish the club. (...) As part of their fund-raising activities the group are organising a dance at the Commodore Hotel at Penarth on February 23. Among the guests will be the Italian vice-consul in Cardiff and the Lord Major of Cardiff Mr Albert Huish.<sup>68</sup>

As the extract above suggests, the migrant first generation was particularly inclined to express its loyalty to the homeland.

This characteristic was not unique to Italians. According to the 2002 *Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey* (ALALFS), the vast majority (87.4 per cent) of people of foreign birth living in Wales claimed a national identity other than Welsh.<sup>69</sup> Although, according to IMW and other interviews, Italian national identity appeared to be stronger among first generation Italians, affiliation to Italy often persisted in the second and further generations. The strength of Italian identity is highlighted by the fact that, even when they had a mixed background (e.g. Welsh and Italian or Irish and Italian), some respondents clearly overplayed their Italian side. Some of them appeared to be interested in their Italian family history, while they hardly knew anything about the other side of the family.<sup>70</sup> Even when they termed themselves ‘Welsh’, Italians in Wales never denied their Italian background and appreciated the important role that their Italian heritage had played in their upbringing.

Although, according to IMW and other narratives, the majority of Italians claimed a predominantly Italian identity, a significant number of respondents located their sense of

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<sup>67</sup> *Western Mail*, 14 February 1975, ‘Wales and the World’.

<sup>68</sup> *Western Mail*, 14 February 1975, ‘Wales and the World’.

<sup>69</sup> ONS, ‘Focus on Wales’, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=10920>, accessed 27/04/2011.

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012 and A. Rabaïotti, 18 February 2012.

national belonging ‘in between’ Welshness and Italianness. As has been noted, this sort of hybrid Welsh-Italian identity has often been presented as ‘the norm’ by the Welsh media and literature. For example, this assumption was fictionally embraced by Alan Lambert in a scene of his novel *Roberto’s War*. When Aldo, an Italian boy who has been brought up in Wales, starts to question his Welshness self-proclaiming Italian, his mother counters ‘you’re Welsh now!’, but Aldo’s father intervenes and solves the conflict arguing: ‘no need to be hard on the boy. He’s Welsh...and Italian. Still. Half and half’.<sup>71</sup> As Aldo’s father suggests, being Welsh-Italian means feeling ‘at ease’ with both national backgrounds. Although this seemed to be the case for the majority of respondents who claimed a Welsh-Italian identity, in a minority of cases, being loyal to two countries caused migrants and their descendants to feel ‘ill-at-ease’ in terms of identity.<sup>72</sup> As first generation interviewee Maria Grazia De Rosa (77 years old) commented: ‘[I feel] foreign from here [Wales], strange from Italy’.<sup>73</sup> A similar statement was made by a young Welsh-Italian girl when interviewed by BBC Wales in 1986: ‘[in Italy] they don’t accept me as Italian, I’m English (sic) to them...It’s the same in England (sic) they see me as Italian’.<sup>74</sup>

Nevertheless, the majority of respondents seemed to feel comfortable with their dual background. The ‘at-ease version’ of Welsh-Italian identity was frequently claimed by Italians originating from the Parma and Piacenza valleys, notably from the town of Bardi and the surrounding Val Ceno.<sup>75</sup> This was already apparent in 1967, when Merthyr-based café-owner Tony Viazzani declared: ‘I came here when I was ten months old (...) Merthyr is my

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<sup>71</sup> Lambert, *Roberto’s War*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>72</sup> This situation recalls Park’s notion of ‘marginal man’. See: Park, ‘Human Migration’, 881-893.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>74</sup> BBC 2 Wales, ‘Open Space Homeland: Ciao Charlie Rossi’, NLW, Cell E123000359/05.

<sup>75</sup> Interviews with M. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, L. Lesser, 4 June 2008, M. Marengi, 15 July 2008, M. Moseley, 4 June 2008, J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW; Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

home now, but I still have a lot of relations in Bardi'.<sup>76</sup> As a Welsh woman originating from Bardi wrote in the *New Welsh Review* in 1992: 'most of these youngsters are born of Italo/Welsh marriages, and their mixed ancestry doesn't seem to present any problem whatsoever. They melt as easily into the background of their Bardisan roots, as that of their Welsh ones'.<sup>77</sup> Third generation Lynda Lesser (61 years old), who had one set of grandparents from Bardi, also observed:

I think that we are very lucky that we have such a rich cultural heritage; both on the Welsh side with music and poetry and the language and on the Italian side completely different culture, completely different language. Both very rich cultures. And I think we are very fortunate to have experienced both of those and that we have both of those in our genes. I really value it, and I'm very proud of it. And I think we're, we're all proud of it.<sup>78</sup>

One reason for this form of double loyalty could be that the Val Ceno group is the most long-established among Italians in Wales. Secondly, they have become an essential feature of the Welsh social and cultural landscape, with their cafés and ice-cream parlours being celebrated by the media and literature. Val Ceno-Italians came to occupy a central position within the Welsh community as their shops were physically located in the town-centres. In addition, geographical dispersion encouraged Italians from the Parma and Piacenza valleys to interact with local people. As a result, Val Ceno-Italians have, in most cases, integrated and engaged with their receiving communities.

This is highlighted by the fact that, particularly over the last twenty years, this group has taken various charitable initiatives as the establishment of the Vision Foundation which aimed at providing assistance to blind people in Wales. As the *Gazzetta* reported: '1993 was a milestone for the Vision Foundation. A year in which (...) the charity succeeded in consolidating its position and achieving an enhanced reputation as a major provider of

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<sup>76</sup> *Western Mail*, 17 August 1967, 'Back to Italy Go the Coffee Kings of Wales'.

<sup>77</sup> *New Welsh Review*, 4/4 1992, J. Servini, 'From Wales back to Wales'.

<sup>78</sup> Interviews with L. Lesser, 4 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

assistance for the visually impaired'.<sup>79</sup> This sort of social involvement appeared to be a common feature of the British-Italian migrant group, being paralleled elsewhere in the country. For example, various charitable initiatives were taken by Scottish-Italians, who, between the 1980s and the 1990s, organised marathons to raise funds to help people suffering of muscular dystrophy.<sup>80</sup> Generally, such charitable initiatives, both in Wales and Scotland, were initially a response to issues affecting members of the Italian group, but were soon extended to the entire receiving society. Such a social involvement, to a certain extent, challenged some Italians' civic disengagement which has previously been illustrated and denoted a commitment to the receiving society. As a result, the Val Ceno-group has been more inclined, than Italians originating from other regions, to claim a Welsh identity.

At the same time, the group's occupational concentration in the ethnic food sector has fostered the maintenance of an Italian identity. In addition, since their early days, Val Ceno-Italians have been able to keep in touch with Italy by paying regular visits to their home towns and by keeping economic and social relations with them.<sup>81</sup> As IMW and other narratives suggest, some Val Ceno-Italians owned properties in their home towns, in which they spent several months a year or even their entire retirement.<sup>82</sup> As fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi (47 years old), who had been to the *Festa dell'Emigrante* (Emigrant Festival) in Bardi the previous summer, recalled:

Most Italians that I know are all from that area [Bardi] (...) now the Italian connection has become so strong from Bardi (..) to Wales (...) so many people now go back and forth and you get the Welsh going to Bardi to the 'emigrant festival' (...) My mum and dad they spend six months of the year in Italy back and forth you know (...) and a lot

<sup>79</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, January 1994, 'Vision Foundation: Review of the Year'.

<sup>80</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, September-October 1988, '1,500 Sterline per i Malati di Distrofia'.

<sup>81</sup> On visits home see, for example, L. Baldassar, *Visits Home: Migration Experiences Between Italy and Australia* (Carlton South, Melbourne University Press, 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Interviews with M. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, A. Di Maio, 11 June 2008, M. Marengi, 15 July 2008, J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, A. Pockley, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW; Interviews with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011 and R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011; BBC1 Wales, 'Another Valley', NLW, Cell E123 001961/01; BBC2 Wales, 'Open Space Homeland: Ciao Charlie Rossi', NLW, Cell E123000359/05; BBC1 Wales, 'Arandora Star Memorial', 1 July 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10470836>, accessed 19/04/2011.

of Italian families have got that kind of connection (...) they go to different areas of Italy.<sup>83</sup>

This means that, as Vertovec has argued, Italian migrants from Val Ceno have negotiated their identities ‘within social worlds that span more than one place (...) claiming membership in more than one place’.<sup>84</sup> This fact was already apparent in the 1960s. As the *Western Mail* reported in 1967:

So much English and Welsh is spoken in the Italian village of Bardi that you would think you were in Tonypandy and the villagers have learnt it all from their kin (...) in Wales. Scores of café-proprietors to whom land of my fathers means Italy will be making their way there soon on the annual pilgrimage to their homeland and the families, relatives and friends that they have left behind.<sup>85</sup>

The ‘pilgrimage’ to Bardi was made possible by the fact that, even before the low-cost airlines became popular, Val Ceno-Italians had already activated a regular mini bus service Cardiff-Bardi that, during the summer, ran as often as once a week.<sup>86</sup> In addition, the *Gazzetta* featured a column which was aimed at advising Italian readers on how to get to Bardi. As the newspaper reported in 1988:

What modes of travel are there available? The choice is quite good, in fact, very good, because we have at our service air travel, trains, a mini-bus and motor cars which in turn can be put aboard a train in Boulogne and taken off in Milano, making it possible to arrive in Bardi as fresh as daisy (...) The mini-bus is very direct. An almost door-to-door service, which, when all is taken into consideration, can be very important indeed.<sup>87</sup>

By 1993, an international coach service was activated. This operated regular journeys from Port Talbot to Milan, Piacenza and Bardi over the summer.<sup>88</sup> When the low-cost airline BMI Baby decided to cancel the service between Cardiff and Milan in 2004, Val Ceno-Italians

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Vertovec, ‘Transnationalism and Identity’, 573-575.

<sup>85</sup> *Western Mail*, 17 August 1967, ‘Back to Italy Go the Coffee Kings of Wales’.

<sup>86</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Another Valley’, NLW, Cell E123 001961/01.

<sup>87</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, June 1988, ‘Mario Kapp’.

<sup>88</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, Spring 1993, ‘Advertisment’.

proved themselves to be a lobby, formally requesting the company to reactivate the service.<sup>89</sup>

This fact suggests that visits-home represented an essential feature of Val Ceno-Italians' identity, functioning as a marker of both Italianness and Welshness. As Josephine Serviini wrote in a reportage, describing the central *Piccolo Bar* of Bardi in the summer of 1992:

Here, locals and owners of fish and chip shops and every other type of Welsh valley eating place, come together to greet, embrace and to gossip. To sit here in this bar (...) sipping an iced Campari, a glass of the local vino, or thimble-full of espresso – to chat, watch the lively come-and-go, or to just listen to the mixed buzz of Rhondda accent and Bardi Italian dialect – is entertainment at its best.<sup>90</sup>

As this testimony shows, visits home represented a way of reinforcing a Welsh-Italian belonging, which was here symbolised by the coexistence of reminders of both Italy (Campari, espresso, etc.) and Wales (the Rhondda accent).

Not only has the renegotiation of a 'balanced' Welsh-Italian identity among Val Ceno-Italians been fostered by frequent visits home, but also by the Welsh media. For example, in the documentary *Another Valley*, the narrator defined Italian cafés as 'one of the most remarkable *Welsh* institutions'. In addition, the documentary represented people of Italian descent in Wales as hybrid characters, being 'stereotypically Italian' (dark features, funny gestures, loud voices), but speaking English with strong south Walian accents: in other words *Welsh-Italians*.<sup>91</sup> In another documentary, a Welsh-Italian family visiting its home town in Italy (Bardi) was portrayed having a typically British breakfast of eggs, bacon, baked beans and toast. Once in Wales, the same family, together with other Welsh-Italians, was seen as singing the Italian folk-song *Un Mazzolin di Fiori* while eating spaghetti and drinking wine.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, according to the TV programme, Welsh-Italians (particularly those from Bardi) were so comfortable with their mixed background that they could easily switch from one

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<sup>89</sup> AVCG, <http://www.amicivalcenogalles.com>, accessed 3/03/2010.

<sup>90</sup> *New Welsh Review*, 4/4 1992, J. Serviini, 'From Wales Back to Wales'.

<sup>91</sup> BBC1 Wales, 'Another Valley', NLW, Cell E123 001961/01. See also, ITV Wales, 'Great Welsh Cafés', NLW, Cell E123 016350/01.

<sup>92</sup> BBC2 Wales, 'Open Space Homeland: Ciao Charlie Rossi', NLW, Cell E123000359/05.



identity to the other. In similar terms, in a more recent radio show, second generation Italian café-owner Aldo Bacchetta confirmed the existence of a mixed Welsh-Italian identity, declaring: ‘my dad settled here, he loved to bring up his family as part of the Welsh community, we are sort of Welsh-Italians after all’.<sup>93</sup> Some institutions in Italy have also taken part in the construction of a Welsh-Italian dimension. For example, every year, on 13 August, the Bardi Council organises the summer *Festa dell’Emigrante* in which Welsh-Italians play a major role.<sup>94</sup> Welsh-Italianness has also been embraced by the leading Welsh-Italian migrant association AVCG, which stated on its website:

The Amici Val Ceno was formed in 1976 by a group of Italians and Welsh Italians living and working in Wales. The main objectives were (and remain) to organise social and cultural events, promoting contact among themselves in social settings, thus maintaining that extra dimension of both Welsh and Italian cultures.<sup>95</sup>

Yet, whereas the Welsh media and Welsh-Italian associations have tended to present Welsh-Italianness as a perfectly balanced multicultural identity, various narratives suggest that this was not necessarily the case as Italianness often appeared to apply a stronger *emotional pull* than Welshness. As Les Serviini wrote in his memoirs:

To its emigrant citizens [Bardi] is *home*, a place to meet everyone, to remind you of your *roots*. Third and fourth generations who speak but little Italian are drawn every summer to this land of their fathers (...) After seventy years (...) yet when Bardi castle comes into sight, when I walk up the little hill to Cagno, the *blood* signs, the heart beats faster: I am *home*!’<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Cafè Cymru’, NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>94</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Another Valley’, NLW, Cell E123 001961/01

<sup>95</sup> AVCG, <http://www.amicivalcenogalles.com/about-us/>, accessed 3/03/2010. Although this association aims to represent all Italians in Wales, its name evokes a strong affiliation to the well defined geographical area of Val Ceno. Indeed, identifying with a specific town, province or region of origin has traditionally been one of the main features of Italian diaspora that has been defined as *campanilismo*. *Campanilismo* is an Italian term that evokes a form of ancestral attachment to the ‘campanile’ (bell tower) that symbolises the home community. But, in spite of what the AVCG association might suggest, local or regional identities were rarely claimed by Italian respondents. The weak regional affiliation among Italians in Wales seemed to be in contrast with the strong *campanilismo* which was often shown by Italians in other parts of Britain as well as in other countries (see, for example, Burrell, *Moving Lives*, p. 88). This attitude could be explained by recalling the fact that Italians in Wales, differently from their counterparts in other countries, have always been a small and dispersed migrant group that has not clustered in powerful close-knit ethnic neighbourhoods, with people originating from the same town in Italy.

<sup>96</sup> Serviini, *A Boy from Bardi*, p. 2.

Therefore, the author's association of terms such as 'home', 'roots' and 'blood' with Italy suggest that that, when it came to an *emotional* sense of belonging, Italianness prevailed over Welshness. As Jenkins has observed 'identity is an aspect of the *emotional* and psychological constitution of individuals, it is, correspondingly, bound up with maintenance of personal integrity and security, and may be extremely resistant to change'.<sup>97</sup> As fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti (53 years old), whose ancestors were from Bardi, also explained:

Emma [his daughter] is a fifth generation *immigrant* (...) it's important, at the end of the day we're still *immigrants* to this country...Because that's our roots, you know, our *roots* are not in this country, our *roots* are in a village in the mountains in Italy...I feel a great *pull* (...) that is very important, you should never ever underestimate (...) that *pull* or that connection...Really important, really important (...) I'm born and bred in Wales but I still feel that there's a strong Italian link there (...) I still feel that that's where my family came from, you know (...) it calls to you (...) the area, the scenery, the way of life, you know (...) it seems to me that that's where I'd like to be.<sup>98</sup>

The fact that the respondent saw himself and his daughter as still 'being immigrants' despite being 'born and bred' in Wales indicate that some Italians continued to think in a migrant perspective. Simply put, they continued to see Wales as being their *host country* and Italy as being their real *home country*. This finding suggests that, not only did the majority of Italian respondents claim a predominantly Italian identity, but they also felt a stronger emotional attraction to Italy than to Wales, regardless of whether they classed themselves Welsh-Italian or simply Italian.

However, it is important to observe that a minority of respondents considered themselves to be more Welsh than Italian. These interviewees generally stated that they were perfectly integrated into Welsh society, imputing their successful settling-in process to the extremely welcoming nature of the host population. For example, Antonietta Hughes (61 years old), who was brought to Cerrig Y Drudion by her father (an ex-POW) at the age of two, recalled:

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<sup>97</sup> Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, p. 47.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

The people nearby (...) were very kind to us, very kind (...) to my parents, really, and they had all the support you know, around them. And this is why my father stayed in Wales because the Welsh people are very kind (...). He settled into the community very much so...And my mother was very good at mixing as well, I mean, she'd always want to get involved and things.<sup>99</sup>

Yet, also Italians who claimed a Welsh identity often retained forms of affiliation to their homeland. Indeed, some of them held Italian passports, brought their children up speaking Italian and had been involved in forms of ethnic business; this suggests that banal forms of identification with Italy and Welsh identity could easily coexist.<sup>100</sup> For example, Italian POW's son Toni Sarracini recalled how his family used to attend Italian Sunday-gatherings together with other ex-POWs' families living in rural Ceredigion. These appeared to be sites of nostalgia where Italians used to express their identification with their homeland, preparing traditional Italian dishes and playing folk music. Nevertheless, in spite of his Italian-orientated upbringing, Sarracini spoke Welsh fluently and claimed a Welsh identity. Born to a POW in rural Carmarthenshire, Gino Vasami was also a Welsh speaker and felt Welsh (in terms of identity), although he ran an Italian restaurant together with his son.

These findings suggest that even when they classed themselves Welsh, Italian interviewees never denied their Italianness, which they often declared to be proud of. Some Welsh-identifying Italian respondents claimed to have re-discovered their Italianness as they grew older. For example, third generation ice-cream producer Tony Parisella, from Llandudno, recalled:

Since I got into my thirties I've taken a great interest in Italy as a country. I've got into things like the cycling, the Italian football (...) I spent my honeymoon in Stresa (...) I've realised that there is a heritage and a culture there that, you know, demands more attention.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Interview with A. Hughes, 23 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>100</sup> Interviews with A. Crisaffi, 29 October 2008 and V. Morillo, 31 July 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

Whereas Parisella grew up in a relatively anglicised town, interviewees who claimed Welsh identities were likely to have grown up in predominantly Welsh-speaking and Welsh-identifying areas,<sup>102</sup> which appeared to coincide with Balsom's 'Y Fro Gymraeg'.<sup>103</sup> This finding suggests that Italians living in the rural heartland of Wales have, on the whole, tended to *assimilate* to the surrounding social and cultural landscape more fully than Italians in south Wales.

One reason for this could be that they were less numerous and even more geographically dispersed than Italians in south Wales. In Scotland, the small and dispersed Italian community of Perth was similarly reported to have lost its Italian identity as a result of isolation.<sup>104</sup> This challenges previous findings, according to which, small and dispersed Italian migrant communities located in American rural towns were more likely to keep their identity as they were less pressurised to assimilate than those living in urban settings.<sup>105</sup> However, it is important to remark that, in some cases, Italian loyalty to Wales was a mere consequence of the migrant-dimension in which Italians had grown up. As a café-keeper in Lampeter put it: 'I regard myself as Welsh, really as Welsh, I'm proud to be Welsh and my dad was. He always used to say "[Wales] gives me a living, why shouldn't I be Welsh"'.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, more than showing an affiliation to the Welsh nation, some Italians simply

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<sup>102</sup> Interviews with A. Crisaffi, 29 October 2008, D. Ferrero, 23 October 2008, A. Hughes, 23 October 2008, V. Morillo, 31 July 2008 and G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW. See also: BBC2 Wales, 'Secret Wales', NLW, Ilgc-id: 1089935; Llŷr, 'La Casa di Dio', NLW, Cell E1234857; BBC Radio Wales, 'Building On the Past', 15 June 2006, NLW, Cell E123 021109. According to the 2002 ALALFS, the highest concentration of Welsh claimants was to be found in the Welsh speaking section of the country, including Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Source: ONS, 'Focus on Wales', <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=10920>, accessed 26/08/2011.

<sup>103</sup> Balsom, 'The Three-Wales Model', pp. 1-17. Coupland, Bishop and Garrett have partially challenged Balsom's model, arguing that levels of self-reported competence in Welsh do not predict subjective Welshness. Nevertheless, the same authors have suggested that the strongest sense of affiliation to Wales was still to be found in three predominantly Welsh-speaking areas (in order Carmarthenshire, North Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion). See Coupland et al., 'One Wales?', 1-27.

<sup>104</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, June-July 1988, 'Vita in Comunità'.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, the essays included in the volume Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants*. By contrast Gans has argued that 'in small town America, where immigrants were a numerically unimportant minority, the pressure for immediate acculturation and assimilation was much greater than in cities (...)'. See: Gans, 'Symbolic Ethnicity', 1-20.

<sup>106</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Building On the Past', NLW, Cell E123 021109.

denoted gratitude toward the land that had given their ancestors the opportunity to make a living.

At the same time it is important to note that not all Italians residing in Welsh-speaking areas did necessarily claim a Welsh identity. There are examples of Italians who still claimed an Italian identity after having lived all their life in the rural heartland of Wales. For example, Nazareno Franco (81 years old), who migrated to north Wales in the early 1950s to join his father (an ex-POW) spent more than sixty years in the market town of Denbigh, married a local Welsh woman and had only sporadic contacts with other Italians in the area. Yet, when asked about his national identity, he answered, with no hesitation, ‘100 per cent Italian’.<sup>107</sup> Second generation Pierino Algieri (56 years old), the son of a POW from Llanrwst similarly commented:

People always ask ‘where is your loyalty? Where is your heart?’ (...) and I have to say my heart is with Italy (...) My *heart* always goes to Italy even though, you know, I live in Wales (...) the roots are too strong aren’t they? (...) You can’t just disregard (...) that, can you? It’s too strong, it’s too much, you know, the *blood* is too thick, too strong you can’t just forget it.<sup>108</sup>

These findings reveal that, even in predominantly Welsh-speaking and Welsh identifying settings, despite Italians being only a few in numbers and highly dispersed, Italianness could still apply a strong emotional pull which countered Welsh acculturation. This is testified by the terms that some respondents used every time they referred to Italy or to their Italian background. As has already been observed, expressions such as ‘home’, ‘blood’ and ‘heart’ all evoked an emotional attraction to the homeland. For example, fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi, from Bangor, pointed out that, although he classed himself ‘Welsh’, he (and his children) ‘know that they’ve got Italian *blood* in them’ and added:

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with N. Franco, 16 November 2010.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

I know that in my heart (...) I've got an Italian connection and I'll always have that feeling for Italy (...) I'll always feel that connection, Italy will always be in my heart cause I love going there, I love everything about Italy (...) I think for me it's a big bond.<sup>109</sup>

Some respondents claimed to have become more Italian as they grew older and imputed their ethnic revival to the receiving society's changing attitudes toward diversity. For example, Pierino Algieri recalled that, whereas as a child he would be bullied by his schoolmates for being 'different':

These days people want to be different (...) When we had our children I said to my wife 'just give them Welsh names' so not to have the problems I had in school and (now) they say 'why didn't you give us Italian names?'...Our children...They wanted to have Italian names, to be different (...) It's more fashionable today (...) people are interested (...) Now I'm very proud to be of Italian descent, very proud (...) When I go out and do lectures with my pictures, photography, I go to groups and oh they think it's wonderful to have this name (...) especially when I go to talk to groups of, you know, women they love the idea, they think it's fantastic and that makes me feel very proud (...).<sup>110</sup>

As this testimony suggests, the respondent's children went as far as to blame their father for not having given them Italian names (instead of Welsh names). This shows that, even when it came to third generation Italians, Italianness sometimes applied a stronger emotional pull than Welshness.

According to a study of Irish in England undertaken by Jackson in the 1960s, national identities turned out to be strictly related to integration. Jackson argued that Irish migrants who were married to English people, had mainly English friends and sent their children to English schools considered themselves to be 'more English than Irish', while those who were married to Irish people, had Irish friends, attended churches with predominantly Irish congregations and belonged to Irish clubs defined themselves as 'Irish'.<sup>111</sup> In the Italian case, it is more difficult to find a direct correspondence between national identity and ethnic

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, p. 205.

affiliation. Although some second generation respondents argued that they felt more Welsh than Italian because their parents had integrated very well into Welsh society and had never been much involved in Italian social activities, some Italians having Welsh partners and being not very much involved in ethnic social events felt predominantly Italian. For example, second generation Italian Maria Moseley declared to feel more Welsh than Italian, recalling that when she was a child she used to feel ashamed of her Italian parents, although she had been involved in the Italian community and used to attend Italian language classes and Italian dances.<sup>112</sup> Although it is apparent that the existence of a wide range of ethnic associations and events in south Wales has fostered the maintenance of a stronger sense of Italianness in that region, as noted, even in areas where the Italian ‘community’ appeared to be more loose, Italian identity could sometimes resist acculturation. These findings suggest that, as Brubaker has argued,<sup>113</sup> ethnicity is an individual rather than collective experience which does not necessarily depend on ‘group’ or ‘community’ life.

It is also hard to find a direct correspondence between loyalty to Italy and hesitancy in demanding British citizenship. According to Weber-Newth, who studied eastern European migrants in post-war Britain, low naturalisation rates mirrored a clear ‘loyalty to national backgrounds’.<sup>114</sup> The Welsh context is made more complicated by the fact that there is not any Welsh passport, so not demanding British citizenship does not necessary mean not claiming a Welsh identity.<sup>115</sup> Although it is true that, to some Italian interviewees, maintaining an Italian passport meant feeling Italian,<sup>116</sup> it is apparent that naturalisation rates are not always reliable identity-indicators. In regard to this, McDowell has argued that, although most Latvian migrants in Britain eventually became British citizens, they did it ‘for

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<sup>112</sup> Interviews with M. Moseley, 4 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>113</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

<sup>114</sup> Weber-Newth, ‘Narratives of Settlement’, p. 90

<sup>115</sup> The British passport can be also seen as an example of banal British nationalism. To some Welsh people, holding a British passport is a banal way of reinforcing Britishness.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

largely pragmatic reasons'. They especially did it to increase their chances to travel in Europe and wider, to participate to international Latvian festivals and visit relatives; ironically, Latvians' frequent naturalisations did not result from their wish to become 'more British', but from their contrasting wish to strengthen bonds within the Latvian diasporic community.<sup>117</sup>

Even second and third generation Italians in Wales sometimes maintained Italian passports and took advantage of their right to vote in Italy, although they did not seem to be very interested in Italian politics. As second generation Italian Nesta Wyer (43 years old) commented:

I do use my Italian vote mainly for my father and for my cousins, but I would never take it upon myself to say I am voting for this Italian candidate. I ask the people who live there or my father who's involved with the Italian government.<sup>118</sup>

Moreover, it is important to note that, even when they had a British passport, only a few Italians in Wales claimed a British identity. This figure mirrors the *Annual Population Survey* (2004), according to which only 9.3 per cent of British citizens who defined their ethnic affiliation as 'white other' identified as British; 42 per cent of them termed themselves either English, Scottish or Welsh, while 52.8 per cent of them had 'other' national identities.<sup>119</sup> As Ugolini has observed:

Whilst recalling their childhood or adolescent selves, respondents often referred to themselves as 'Italian', 'British' and 'Scottish' interchangeably reflecting the cultural pre-eminence of the concept of 'Britishness' during the wartime period. However, in present day interviews, they foregrounded their Italianness within the context of a Scottish, rather than British, identity, often describing themselves as 'Scottish-Italian'.<sup>120</sup> To some extent, this self-ascription mirrors the adopting traits of the

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<sup>117</sup> L. McDowell, 'Workers, Migrants, Aliens or Citizens? State Constructions and Discourses of Identity Among Post-War European Labour Migrants in Britain', *Political Geography* 22 (2003), 863-886.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with N. Wyer, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>119</sup> ONS, 'Focus On Identity and Ethnicity Data', <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=10991>, accessed 4/03/2011.

<sup>120</sup> Ward has observed that: 'The welfare state had been constructed around Labour's version of Britishness forged in the Second World War and afterwards. Most people were proud of the welfare state as a 'British' institution, but Thatcher who claimed to be a British patriot proclaimed her intention to make people less dependent on the state. In this circumstance there was a substantial rise in support for devolution of power and,



indigenous population: most people living nowadays in Scotland give primacy to being Scottish rather than British, a trend which began in the final decades of the twentieth century in the wake of Thatcherism, increasingly confident assertions of Scottish national identity and contested notions of Britishness (...). Overall, the use of a 'bi-cultural' self-definition underlines the centrality of Italianness to the construction of personal identity (...).<sup>121</sup>

Such findings clearly apply to Italians in Wales, where Italians seem to identify with Wales rather than Britain. The fact that, many Italians have also maintained a strong Italian identity may appear to be an unproblematic circumstance in a society which has now formally embraced a civic and inclusive notion of multiculturalism, which allows for multiple belongings. Yet, as the next sub-section illustrates, 'being Italian' entails a number of 'banal' behaviours and actions which some Italians see as being in contrast with 'being Welsh'.

### **Banal Italianness and Welshness**

So far, the focus of the chapter has been on national identities which Italians living in Wales *claimed*. In fact, various authors have demonstrated that people's national belongings often go beyond the identities that they claim. National identity is often kept and transmitted to the second and third generation through cultural and social practises that Billig, Edensor and Brubaker would define as 'banal', 'everyday' and 'commonsense knowledge-based' forms of national identity.<sup>122</sup> These authors' findings were echoed in IMW and other narratives, in which Italian respondents often described a number of behaviours, actions and attributes as being an integral part of their Italianness. Interestingly, some interviewees described some of these banal forms of identity as being 'similar' to the Welsh correspondents.

The presumed similarities between Welsh and Italians seemed to be a long-standing myth that even former Italian vice-consul in Cardiff Raffaele Iorio had contributed to sustain. As

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in some cases, for independence for Scotland and Wales'. See: P. Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London, Routledge, 2004), p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, p. 8.

<sup>122</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*; Edensor, *National Identity*; Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

the diplomat declared in 1975: ‘Welsh people [are] extrovert and very hospitable, just like the Italians: there are many similarities between the two cultures’.<sup>123</sup> Welsh-Italian journalist Mario Basini more recently wrote that ‘socially, the Italians settled into Wales very quickly, due largely, no doubt, to the temperamental similarities between them and their hosts’.<sup>124</sup> As has already been noted, the Welsh media and cultural events have fuelled such an alleged Welsh-Italian brotherhood, which has often been stressed by Italians themselves. As second generation restaurant owner Giovanni Malacrino commented: ‘there are many similarities between Wales and Italy: a strong sense of community, singing, a passionate love of sport and an unquenchable spirit’.<sup>125</sup>

Other respondents also pointed out that Italians and Welsh shared a special passion for music (especially for singing). Recalling the choir tradition in the Valleys, Pietro Sidoli pointed out: ‘I learned more about Verdi here in Wales than in Italy’.<sup>126</sup> Another alleged similarity between the two nationalities concerned the Welsh and Italian languages. The Welsh language was sometimes referred to as being familiar as, according to some respondents, some of its terms sounded similar to the Italian counterparts, by virtue of the Latin influence. For example, first generation Italian Irma Caffarelli (86 years old) explained: ‘in Welsh you say *fffenest*, in Italian we say *finestra*’.<sup>127</sup> Interestingly, some Welsh people seemed to make similar comments on the Italian language. For example, John Richard Rowland, a farmer from Anglesey who employed Italian POWs during the Second World War, recalled: ‘I picked up some Italian words...They were very similar to Welsh words!’<sup>128</sup> Some

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<sup>123</sup> *Western Mail*, 25 February 1975, ‘Wales and the world’.

<sup>124</sup> *New Welsh Review*, 4/4 1992, M. Basini, ‘Lime, Lemon and...Internment’.

<sup>125</sup> *Guardian*, 19 February 2000, ‘Italy Will Find an Extra Welcome in the Hillside as Cardiff Becomes Home from Home’.

<sup>126</sup> Wales Video Gallery, ‘Pietro Sidoli: Italian Welshman’, 2003, NLW, V/DIG/A/15398.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with I. Caffarelli, 17 September 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with J.R. Rowland, 1 January 1993, SFNHM, Track 11 8227/2.

respondents contrasted the Welsh language with the English one, perceiving the latter as an ‘alien’ idiom which they struggled with.<sup>129</sup>

In addition to claiming the existence of such linguistic similarities, some Italian respondents declared to feel ‘at home’ in Wales, because, in their eyes, its scenery reminded them of their homeland. As a significant number of Italians originated from hilly or mountainous areas, they found the hilly and mountainous regions of Wales where they settled familiar.<sup>130</sup> As first generation Domenico Casetta (78 years old) commented:

The surroundings and the valleys of Bardi are more or less like the landscape here in Wales (...). In my area as well, in Monferrato and in Langhe [in Piedmont] there are these hills, and so in terms of landscape we feel at home.<sup>131</sup>

The similarities between Welsh and Italian landscapes were also remarked by the 1986 BBC Wales documentary *Another Valley*, which, as the title itself suggests, portrayed Italians as migrating from a valley (in Italy) to another (in Wales).<sup>132</sup> Some Italian interviewees went as far as to argue that Welsh and Italian people looked physically similar, as, in their eyes, they both had predominantly dark features.<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore, some Italians also noted that Italian and Welsh cultures were similarly welcoming. As Welsh-Italian writer Anita Arcari put it recalling the encounters between Welsh and Italians: ‘a shared (...) easy-going *tolerance* bound them inextricably’.<sup>134</sup> In particular, some Italian respondents described Welsh people as being ‘more welcoming’ than the English, mirroring the old standing myth ‘oppressed people (the Welsh) cannot be

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<sup>129</sup> Interview with G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 Jun 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>132</sup> BBC1 Wales, ‘Another Valley’, NLW, Cell E123 001961/01

<sup>133</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>134</sup> *Western Mail*, 16 April 2011, ‘Author’s Note’.

oppressors (like the English)'.<sup>135</sup> For example, former miner Antonio Marchesi (85 years old), who had experienced working both in England and Wales, commented:

With the English, I found them a bit...Snobby, I found them a bit 'I know everything and you don't know anything' you see? So that's how I found the English, they think they're...What they were years ago, the rulers, they still think of themselves as the rulers (...) I found the Welsh (...), when I came here, they accepted me. So I found that I made more friends straight away in Wales, more than in England.<sup>136</sup>

First generation Fausto Galli (63 years old) also commented:

You can tell that the Welsh attitude is different to the English one...They [the Welsh] are more like the Italians, they're more like 'alright mate'...While the English is more like the Queen, colder, more distant...Yes, there is a difference.<sup>137</sup>

These passages together with other examples which have been provided suggest that Italian and Welsh identities share several cultural traits and can thus be defined as 'compatible'. As a result, Italians could potentially claim that hybrid Welsh-Italian identity that the Welsh media have frequently emphasised, mirroring the surrounding idea of multiculturalism and inclusiveness.

However, IMW and other narratives suggest that other important features of Italian identity clashed with or prevailed over Welshness, making it difficult for some Italians to fully identify with Wales. For example, Italian food represented a resilient form of Italianness which was believed by most Italian respondents to be superior to Welsh cookery. As Edensor has argued, the provision of food is a very important everyday form of national identity.<sup>138</sup> According to Gabaccia, migrants tend to stick to their national diet, because it is the only way in which they can exercise control over their mobile lives in word in which they cannot choose 'where they would live, what kind of work they would do, which language they

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<sup>135</sup> For a discussion see, for example, Williams, 'Race and racism', 113-131. Robinson and Gardner have also observed that migrants residing in Powys tended to depict Wales as being more tolerant than England. See Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', pp. 85-107.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>138</sup> Edensor, *National Identity*, p. 63.

would be required to learn to speak'.<sup>139</sup> In Wales, consuming Italian food at home was very common amongst first generation Italians, who referred to this everyday action as a way of keeping their national identity over time. Yet, Italian food habits were also frequently transmitted to the second and further generations. For example, Antonio Marchesi recalled:

Our sons have grown up and don't integrate any more in our stuff, they belong...They belong to a different community, they are married to Welsh wives (...), (but) we have taught them how to make Italian food, cause our sons all eat Italian, (...), all my daughters in law and also my grandchildren (...) like Italian food.<sup>140</sup>

In similar terms, second generation Angela Pockley (51 years old) declared that, although she classed herself 'Welsh':

There's certainly a lot of Italian in me and my interests (...) it's not a conscious decision to sort of do Italian things. It's just that...My parents always cooked Italian food.<sup>141</sup>

These oral accounts suggest that even when the second generation seemed to 'forget' its parents' identity in Hansen's terms,<sup>142</sup> some Italian patterns tended to survive.<sup>143</sup>

Apart from consuming Italian fare, some interviewees claimed to maintain and transmit their Italianness distilling wine at home or growing Mediterranean vegetables in their gardens. Such practises were particularly widespread in the early stages of the post-war migrant flow, but they have sometimes survived until the present day.<sup>144</sup> These habits have for long been a common feature of most Italian migrant communities around the world. As Gabaccia has observed, homemade food-production, was initially stimulated by the fact that certain goods (e.g. wine) were not readily-available or affordable in countries where Italians settled.

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<sup>139</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 48.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with A. Pockley, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>142</sup> Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant*.

<sup>143</sup> See, for example, Gans, *The Urban Villagers* and S. Cinotto, *Una Famiglia Che Mangia Insieme: Cibo e Etnicità Nella Comunità Italoamericana di New York, 1920-1940* (Torino, Otto Editore, 2001).

<sup>144</sup> HTV, 'Tastes of Britain', 24 August 1998, NLW, Cell E123 005641/04. See also: Servini, *A Boy From Bardi*, p. 75.

Therefore, even in urban environments such as New York, Italian migrants used to keep animals (including goats and pigs) in the tenements where they lived and, in Brooklyn, backyard gardens were the norm.<sup>145</sup> In Wales, some Italian respondents also claimed to have started growing vegetables and making wine because such products were not available when they first arrived. Such interviewees argued that Wales initially represented a sort of culinary desert, which was subsequently taken over by 'superior' Italian food.

Therefore, Italian food came to signify a marker of Italianness, which most Italians reputed 'superior' to the Welsh (or British) correspondents. For example, second generation Giuseppe Lynch (47 years old) recalled:

It's important that people (...) understand their roots and their culture, I was brought up...I was eating pasta, you know, my friends at school would never (...) I remember going to a friend's house and his mum made ravioli...She didn't make ravioli, she opened a tin of ravioli! (...) I actually ate it cause I didn't want to offend them, but it wasn't the pasta that my mum makes for me and at the end of the day you can't ignore that you were brought up in an Italian way.<sup>146</sup>

Second generation Pierino Algieri recalled how his Welsh wife's taste was taken over by his Italian cooking:

My wife never had the pasta before she met me...Never...Always gravy, lamb, beef...Now she hates lamb, she had so much at home, she can't eat lamb now (...) My wife hated parmesan - too strong - but now she eats it every time (...) and (my) children they like Italian food.<sup>147</sup>

This suggests that Italian food, like other forms of banal Italianness, applied a stronger emotional pull than its Welsh counterpart. This adds to the growing popularity of Italian cuisine in Wales (and elsewhere) which encouraged the consumption of Italian food as a

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<sup>145</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 52.

<sup>146</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>147</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

marker of Italian pride.<sup>148</sup> Commenting on the resilience of food patterns amongst Italian migrants in the USA, Gans argued:

The durability of the ethnic tradition with respect to food is probably due to the close connection of food with family and group life. Indeed, food patterns are retained longer than others because they hold the group together with a minimum of strain.<sup>149</sup>

However, whereas Gans and Alba dismissed food as purely symbolic and leisure-time ethnicity,<sup>150</sup> Italian respondents in Wales referred to it as clear and taken-for-granted marker of Italianness, one that, quoting Jenkins, is often ‘internalised during early primary socialisation along with many of the markers of ethnicity such a language, religion, non-verbal behaviour’.<sup>151</sup> Thus, Italian food can also be seen as functioning as an *us/them* ethnic boundary between Italians and Welsh.

Beside the maintenance of Italian food practices, Italian respondents frequently associated their Italianness with those (arguably) ‘Italian’ traditional family values which Orsi defined as the *domus*.<sup>152</sup> This mirrors the findings of several other authors, who have highlighted the durability of Italian family structures within diasporic environments. For example, Child defined the Italian-American family as ‘a strongly cohesive group of individuals who recognize tight bonds of mutual responsibility among the members’.<sup>153</sup> Yans-McLaughlin has also illustrated that Italian families in the USA were able to maintain ‘many of their conservative traditions (...) and most of these families also resisted outside pressures toward independence and individualisation of their members’.<sup>154</sup> According to Orsi, family values were a strong reminder of the migrants’ homeland and an essential feature of their Italianness. As the author observed:

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<sup>148</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>149</sup> Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, p. 33.

<sup>150</sup> Gans, ‘Symbolic Ethnicity’, 1-20; Alba, *Italian Americans*.

<sup>151</sup> Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, p. 47.

<sup>152</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*.

<sup>153</sup> Child, *Italian or American?*, p. 29

<sup>154</sup> Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*, p. 259

The immigrants' memories of Italy were really memories of the *domus* (...) the immigrants did not know an Italian nation, they only knew the *domus* (...) so their memories and images of Italy were memories of strict family order and discipline, of family loyalty and mutual support.<sup>155</sup>

In the USA, the maintenance of 'traditional attitudes toward marriage, women and sex' was obviously fostered by the existence of large and concentrated Italian neighbourhoods combined with resilient endogamous marriage practices (among Italians originating from the same geographical area). These factors caused Italian migrant families to be averagely more stable than their American counterparts.<sup>156</sup>

By contrast, Italians in Wales were a geographically dispersed, numerically small and relatively out-marriage-orientated migrant group. As a result, their families have naturally been more exposed to rapid acculturation than their Italian-American counterparts. Furthermore, Italian-Americans were mainly from southern Italy and, according to both Orsi and McLaughlin, were culturally more inclined than northern Italians to family life. By contrast, Italians in Wales originated from a wide range of geographical areas across the Peninsula, with a significant proportion of them (namely the pre-war group) being from northern regions. In fact, in many testimonies, people of Italian descent in Wales, no matter whether they originated from the north or from the south, stressed the importance of keeping Italian *domus* values over the generations. For example, Sardinian Antonio Marchesi declared:

With my sons (...) rules are all Italian (...) when they were young, [they had to be] at home at a certain time, not out: Italian upbringing, with strictness (...) today they are happy about the strictness that they have received, because they understand what it means.<sup>157</sup>

In his study of Bedford-Italians, Brown noted that this transmission of family values sometimes created inner tensions amongst migrants' children, notably among girls, while

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<sup>155</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*, p. 78.

<sup>156</sup> Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*, p. 260.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.



among boys, the rebellion against their parents was more overt.<sup>158</sup> Yet, this sort of identity-conflict, that recalls the one described by Child in the 1940s,<sup>159</sup> did not seem to affect second generation Italians in Wales. Italian family values were generally regarded by Italian migrants' children and grandchildren as a unique and precious moral heritage, even whereas an Italian identity was not strongly claimed. Not only did most respondents recognise the importance of maintaining Italian family values, but they also contrasted such values with the Welsh correspondents.

For example, when asked about differences between Italians and Welsh, Nesta Wyer (born in Wales to Italian father and Welsh mother) commented:

The big differences are the family aspects...The way that [Welsh] people don't sit down and have a meal together, and (...) the family isn't as tight knit [as the Italian] really. (...) The children seem a lot more 'in the way' to Welsh people as, they aren't 'in the way' to Italian people, they are part of the family whereas [in Wales] (...) a high percentage it's kind of (...) 'put the DVD on for the kids and sit them in front of the telly while us parents go and do something else' (...). When we were children (...) the children did everything with the family, you know, so *nonna's* cooking in the kitchen, the kids are there all, if they are watching a film you would do it all together, rather than 'off for my back, out off my way, keep them quiet, anything for peace' which is what you hear in this country all the time, and I think that is really sad.<sup>160</sup>

42-year-old Delia Weyman (born in Wales to Italian parents) also pointed out:

I had a lovely upbringing and (...), it gave me good family values, being Italian. You know, I'm not saying that the British families are any different but (...) there is something different, talking to friends and knowing friends of my age, the way they were brought up and growing up to the way I was brought up (...). I thought mum and dad were a bit hard, especially dad at one point, when I was younger because we weren't allowed to go out, you know, and stay out, and boyfriends and things. But then again that's another good family value and it's something that I've instilled in my own children (...) and hopefully they will understand when they're older where I am coming from.<sup>161</sup>

In this respect, Orsi has also observed that:

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<sup>158</sup> Brown, *The Unmelting Pot*, p. 92.

<sup>159</sup> Child, *Italian or American?*.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with N. Wyer, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with D. Weyman, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

[Italian-Americans] felt that their love and respect for the *domus* marked them out as a distinct and different people in American culture. And they frequently compared Italian and American family values – to the great detriment of the latter (...) there was a sense in the community, a kind of popular arrogance, that only (...) Italians knew how to raise families.<sup>162</sup>

Following the same mode of reasoning, Welsh people, who, as has already been noted, were often confused with the English, were criticized by some Italians for not being very family-orientated. For example, first generation Armando Cugno declared: ‘the English (sic) don’t have any family value, the English don’t care (...). They’re selfish; they don’t care about their fathers’.<sup>163</sup> Some Italians imputed this arguably individualistic social behaviour to the British welfare system. For example, first generation Domenico Casetta argued:

After the Second World War, the Labour government said: ‘We have to look after our workers, so we must give them unemployment benefits (...) When you are sixteen they begin giving you benefits, so you leave home, that is how they have corrupted the family. Before, almost all the families used to live within the same neighbourhood, there was the mother, the aunt, the uncle (...) there was the entire family so the neighbourhood was a ‘community’.<sup>164</sup>

In fact, the British family which Casetta describes in this passage does not actually correspond to British post-war predominant discourses. In that period, the woman was primarily seen as a mother and wife, whose natural place was the home. In this sense, the post-war ‘ideal’ British family was arguably not incompatible with the ‘ideal’ Catholic-Italian family, where the woman was also seen as a respectable mother and wife. In fact, as McDowell has argued in respect to Latvian migrants in Britain: ‘their construction first and foremost as workers, excluded them from the (...) prevalent discourse of acceptable femininity’.<sup>165</sup> This analysis can apply to Italian women in Wales as, in most cases, they were

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<sup>162</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008 SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>165</sup> McDowell, ‘Workers, Migrants, Aliens or Citizens?’, 869. See also: J. Lewis, *Women in Britain Since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992).

full-time workers.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, whereas Italian migrant women were usually employed, not only did they not deny Italian family values but they also transmitted them to the second and third generation. Although she did not claim an Italian identity, she had a degree and a full-time professional occupation, second generation Angela Pockley declared:

I think the big thing about Italy and Italian influence is the family values. I'm a firm believer that a lot of that stems round the tradition of spending hours round the table sorting out the world, chatting, gossiping; and I also find the teenagers in Italy have far more to say than the teenagers I know in this country. I just think it all stems back from time within the family.<sup>167</sup>

This statement confirms what Zontini has observed: that second generation Italian women in Britain tend to be even more family-orientated than their mothers. This behaviour has been interpreted by Zontini as a reaction to lack of maternal care that migrants' daughters experienced throughout their upbringing, at a time when their mother were full-time workers.<sup>168</sup>

Although Italians tended to contrast their family values to the Welsh ones, it can be argued that 'traditional' Welsh families, and the role that the woman played in them, resembled traditional Italian families. As Morgan has observed:

Traditionally, the Welsh woman's place was the home, taken up with menial daily toil and the upbringing of large families of noisy children – with chapel on Sunday.<sup>169</sup>

Yet, as Morgan has noted, as a result of their significant employment during the Second World War, women in post-war Wales benefited from a new sense of personal and occupational freedom, finding 'new opportunities for securing an independent income and

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<sup>166</sup> In 1951, 65 per cent of Italian women in England and Wales were occupied. See: GBGRO, *Census of England and Wales, 1951: Occupation tables*.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with A. Pockley, 11 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>168</sup> Zontini, 'Continuity and Change in Transnational Italian Families', 1103-1119.

<sup>169</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 351

enjoying an independent life outside home'.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, from the 1960s onwards, 'the casualness, even anarchy of the long-haired young (...) shocked their elders more than in most parts of Britain'.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, the post-war process of female and juvenile emancipation can be seen as clashing with traditional Italian family values, which, as noted, often persisted amongst first, second and further generation Welsh-Italians. Such a contrast also emerged from the divorce rates, which, after the approval of the Divorce Act in 1969, dramatically increased across Britain.<sup>172</sup> Italian families seemed to be persistently more stable than the Welsh ones. For example, many Italian miners, who were recruited by the Welsh coal industry in the 1950s, married Welsh girls and, as Les Servini recalled in his memoirs, 'the wonder is that these marriages are very happy and successful at a time when so many are failing'.<sup>173</sup>

The census seems to confirm that marriages involving at least one person of Italian birth were more durable than the Welsh ones; in 1971, three times the number of Welsh people was divorced (1.5 and 0.5 per cent of Welsh and Italian married people respectively). The contrast seemed to be even more marked between Welsh and Italian women: those divorced were 1.6 and 0.5 per cent of the Welsh and Italian married female population respectively.<sup>174</sup> Census data suggest that this persisting family stability was unique to Italians and could not be entirely put down to Catholicism. Indeed, other Catholic migrant groups in Wales, notably Irish and Poles, were characterised by divorce rates which were similar to or even higher than

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<sup>170</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, pp. 351-352. As Morgan has noted: 'Wales was traditionally a puritanical, Sabbatarian land, its ethos created by chapels of sepulchral austerity and by flamboyant pulpit oratory which preached hell and eternal damnation. After 1945, the impact of the chapels on social life continued to diminish, reinforced by the steady decline of the Welsh language through which most chapel services were conducted'.

<sup>171</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 356

<sup>172</sup> As Lewis has noted: 'in the long list of factors contributing to high risk of divorce, marriage at a young age and pregnancy at the time of marriage figured prominently'. See: Lewis, *Women in Britain Since 1945*, p. 46.

<sup>173</sup> Servini, *A Boy From Bardi*, p. 44.

<sup>174</sup> OPCS, *Census 1971, Wales*.

the Welsh ones.<sup>175</sup> These findings confirm what Greeley and McCready have observed in the USA. In their comparative analysis of Italian-American and Irish-American women students in the 1960s, the authors came to the conclusion that Italian women were 'more traditional on family ties' than their Irish counterparts.<sup>176</sup> In her case study of Italians in Buffalo, Yans-McLaughlin has also demonstrated that Italian divorce rates were lower than amongst Poles, a finding which highlights the enduring cohesion of Italian families.<sup>177</sup>

Although the endurance of Italian family values were not necessarily related to Catholic values, various authors have illustrated that Catholicism could also represent a resilient facet of Italian identity. Nelli has observed that, in 1972, more than half of an estimated twenty one million Italian-Americans of all generations were still active Catholics. Even when they married outside their ethnic group, Italians tended to remain within the Church choosing a Catholic partner of Irish, German or Polish background.<sup>178</sup> Orsi has also appreciated the resilience of Catholic practices among Italian-Americans in Harlem, who took part in the annual procession of the Madonna of Mount Carmel. As the author has pointed out, the procession functioned as a clear marker of Italiannees:

The statue of the Virgin, imported from the old country, was a visible link between Italy and East Harlem (...) The people urged to relive their Italian past, to reaffirm their Italian selves during the *fiesta* (...) the devotion (...) provided the younger generation with a way of proclaiming their loyalty to their parents and locating themselves in a tradition that was the inescapable basis of their identities.<sup>179</sup>

In similar terms, Parolin has highlighted the symbolic importance of the Catholic Procession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel which takes place every year in London. Through this

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<sup>175</sup> OPCS, *Census 1971, Wales*. Almost 0.9 per cent of the Irish and 2.5 per cent of Poles in Wales were divorced by 1971.

<sup>176</sup> A.M. Greeley and W.C. McCready, 'The Transmission of Cultural Heritages: the Case of the Irish and Italians', in N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 225.

<sup>177</sup> Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community*.

<sup>178</sup> Nelli, *From Immigrants to Ethnics*.

<sup>179</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*, pp. 168-170.

religious practice, Parolin has argued, otherwise ‘invisible’ Italians express their ethnic affiliation.<sup>180</sup> Thus, such religious practices can be interpreted as a display of Italian banal nationalism, one that was not uncommon among Italians in Wales.

Various testimonies suggest that some Catholic patterns have endured for generations among Italians in Wales. For example, migrants originating from the Parma valleys have regularly sent letters to the local Saint Mark sanctuary of Bedonia. These letters were generally aimed at renovating subscriptions to sanctuary’s bulletin *L’Araldo della Madonna di San Marco* (the Saint Mark Holy Mary’s Herald). This periodical played an important role in the everyday religious practice of many Val Ceno-Italians. As an Italian woman living in Aberystwyth wrote to the sanctuary rector Mons. Silvio Ferrari on 18 February 1951:

The other day I visited one of my relatives’ house where she showed me the beautiful Saint Mark Holy Mary’s calendar (...) I’d like to receive one copy for myself and one for my niece who is here with me now. Together with this letter I send you a pound (...) because Saint Mark Holy Mary always helps me.<sup>181</sup>

As the letter shows, Italians often sent religious offers together with their letters in order to take out a subscription to *L’Araldo* or to have a mass said in memory of a dead relative. These religious practices served as a banal territorial identity-reminder which reinforced the sense of belonging to the home parish. For example, on 3 December 1958, an Italian living in Pontypridd wrote a letter to the sanctuary saying: ‘*L’Araldo* is a nice memory of *our towns* and sanctuary (...)’.<sup>182</sup>

As these letters testify, it was especially amongst Val Ceno-Italians that religion appeared to be a prominent and durable marker of identity. Such an enduring Catholic practice was also fostered by the remarkable coverage which the *Gazzetta* gave to Italian religious news and by

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<sup>180</sup> G. Parolin, ‘La Processione della Madonna del Carmine e la Sagra Italiana di Londra: una Lettura Antropologica’, *Studi Emigrazione* 35 (1998), 99-125.

<sup>181</sup> A.R. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 18 February 1951, CDEAVT (author’s translation).

<sup>182</sup> Letter to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 3 December 1958, CDEAVT (author’s translation).

regular pilgrimages to Lourdes which were organised by the AVCG.<sup>183</sup> When interviewed, several respondents originating from Val Ceno also claimed that Catholicism was an important facet of their identity, one that they aimed to transmit to the younger generation.

For example, third generation Renaldo Dallavalle commented:

The boys (his children) have been altar boys ever since they were four years old, Stefano is still an altar boy now (...) They've been confirmed and everything, they have been baptised (...) My wife makes sure they always go to church (...) I was an altar boy as well so it's just been part of our life.<sup>184</sup>

Vecoli has observed that religion amongst Italian-Americans was an expression of regional/local belongings (the so called *campanilismo*).<sup>185</sup> However, to Val Ceno-Italians (as well as to Italians from other regions) it was a form of self-constructed *national* identity more than a form of *regional* affiliation. As fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti pointed out: 'I was brought up as a Roman Catholic, educated as a Roman Catholic (...) that is very strong for me (...) and (...) is part of the *Italian way*'.<sup>186</sup> As Enloe has argued: 'many individuals behave as if their ethnic affiliation and professed religion are one and the same'.<sup>187</sup> As Burrell has also noted, for the Italian community in Leicester 'religious traditions and festivities have also provided an opportunity (...) to celebrate god and nation simultaneously'.<sup>188</sup> This notion was perfectly summarised by second generation Joseph Parisella (78 years old) who commented:

My son has got three children, but they've been brought up in the Welsh mode (...) They're not Catholics, they don't go to Church and (...) I've got two daughters who are single parents, they've got two daughters and they don't go to Church, they're not Catholics, so...On my side, my family, they're not...They're not Italian any more (...) They've drifted away (...) It's very sad, but, here we are.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'AVC Lourdes trip – a Success'.

<sup>184</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>185</sup> R.J. Vecoli, 'Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church', *Journal of Social History* 2 (1969), 217-268.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>187</sup> C. Enloe, 'Religion and Ethnicity', in J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (eds), *Ethnicity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 199.

<sup>188</sup> Burrell, *Moving lives*, p. 69.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

In other words, the respondent claimed that being Catholic was a prerequisite for Italianness and that no one could claim any Italian identity without being Catholic.

Other testimonies also illustrate that the Catholic faith represented a taken-for-granted feature of Italian heritage, one that could endure over generations, just like Italian food and other banal practices. For example, fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti recalled:

(...) that's how we were brought up, we'd go to mass on Sunday (...) that's another connection there between the Italian families because they all went to the same schools, they all went to the Catholic schools, all the ones in Cardiff went to St Illtyds.<sup>190</sup>

Fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi also recalled:

When I was a child I can remember, you know, coming round to church, Catholic church, in Aberystwyth and I can remember all the Italians (...) speaking Italian [while] round the dinner table all speak English...You'd go into the cafe, I'd go to see my dad and my uncle, my grandfather and they'd all speak English to you.<sup>191</sup>

This recollection suggests that Catholic churches could sometimes function as sites of Italianness, in which Italians could express their national identities speaking their language and recreating their homeland, whereas at home and at work (the café) English would prevail. As Antoniazzi recalled, Italian was hardly spoken at home because his Welsh mother could not speak the language, while in the shop English was predominantly used for business purposes. Ugolini has also illustrated that, in Scotland, 'it became strictly "taboo" to speak Italian in the public arena of the shop where Italian families spent most of their time'.<sup>192</sup> Therefore, the church appeared to be one of the few public places where Italians could gather and express their loyalty to their homeland through the medium of Italian. Other respondents also remarked the correspondence between Italianness and Catholic faith. For example, first generation Nazareno Franco, who claimed an Italian identity, declared in an interview: 'I was

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>192</sup> Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'*, p. 34.



born Catholic and I will die Catholic'.<sup>193</sup> Second generation Giuseppe Lynch also pointed out: 'I'm Catholic, born and bred Catholic by my mother (...) I got married in a Catholic church, I still see myself as a Catholic (...) it's the Italian factor really'.<sup>194</sup> When asked about the most important Italian features that she was able to transmit to her children, second generation Marisa Cavarra also pointed out: '[My children] went (...) to a Catholic school and got married in a Catholic church so the Catholic faith is still there you know'.<sup>195</sup>

A reason for the Catholic resilience among Italians could be that Italian institutions had, since the early days of post-war migration, been involved in the organisation of religious events for the Italian community. For example, in 1950, Italian consular authorities in London, Cardiff and Liverpool, together with the Reverend of the Italian Church of London Ermete Bonomo took part in the organisation of the first Italian community's Easter celebration Britain-wide. As *La Voce degli Italiani* reported:

[In the Italian Church of London] on Holy Friday afternoon one of those devout and warm services which are traditional in (...) Italy took place (...) the procession with the dead Jesus, the orator's warm words, the solemn chants (...) deeply moved the participants and made them feel as if they were (...) in a Catholic and devout country, on a strip of their homeland.<sup>196</sup>

In addition, various religious initiatives took place on Easter day in different areas of the country, including Wales. In Cardiff, for example, the Italian vice-consul met local Italian workers and symbolically offered them Italian wine.<sup>197</sup> In other words, such a celebration represented a link between Italian food, Catholic faith and Italian institutions, which functioned as a clear marker of Italianness. Over thirty years ahead, in Scotland, the combination of religion and national identity was also still apparent. When the pope-representative archbishop Luigi Barbaro visited the Italian community in Scotland, an Italian

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with N. Franco, 16 November 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with M. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>196</sup> *La Voce degli Italiani*, May 1950, 'La Pasqua degli Italiani in Inghilterra' (author's translation).

<sup>197</sup> *La Voce degli Italiani*, May 1950, 'La Pasqua degli Italiani in Inghilterra' (author's translation).

fest involving *tricolore* flags and Italian folk music was organised to welcome the Italian churchman.<sup>198</sup>

Not only can Catholicism be seen as an important facet of Italian identity in Wales, but it can also be seen as functioning as an exclusive boundary. Since the late eighteenth century, Welsh religious life has been dominated by Nonconformity. Chambers has defined Nonconformity as:

(...) an egalitarian religious practise grounded in the local chapel and the Welsh language and culture, (...) a hegemonic cultural institution based on notions of community, respectability and resistance to the perceived threat of English cultural and linguistic domination. As such, Welsh Nonconformism in the nineteenth and into the twentieth century was ideally placed to function as a significant carrier of Welsh cultural identity.<sup>199</sup>

The industrialisation of Wales in the second half of the nineteenth century attracted significant numbers of Irish, to a much lesser extent, Italian migrants. Being predominantly Catholic, these incomers caused the Catholic Church to expand significantly. Nonconformists perceived the growing Catholic Church as an 'alien' force posing a threat to the Welsh traditional religion and, consequently, on Welsh identity<sup>200</sup> and Italians were sometimes the target of such a religious hostility in the early twentieth century. Yet, the resilience of anti-Catholicism in Wales should not be overestimated. As O'Leary has observed, 'after 1914 anti-Catholicism, like organised religions more generally, was marginalised in much of the country and had few significant resonances in most aspects of public life'.<sup>201</sup>

However, whereas anti-Catholicism has progressively faded out as a result of secularisation,<sup>202</sup> some Italian respondents continued to associate Wales with Nonconformity,

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<sup>198</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, October-November 1987, 'Due Volte Con la Comunità Italiana'.

<sup>199</sup> P. Chambers, 'Religious Diversity in Wales', in Williams et al. (eds), *A Tolerant Nation?*, p. 128.

<sup>200</sup> Chambers, 'Religious diversity in Wales', p. 128.

<sup>201</sup> O'Leary, 'When Was Anti-Catholicism?', 308-325.

<sup>202</sup> Anti-Catholic feelings have progressively faded out and a new form of ecumenicalism has been embraced by Welsh Nonconformist congregations in order to form a Christian alliance against the secular threat. Since the

which they regarded as a prerequisite for Welsh identity. This was particularly the case for several Italians living in rural and predominantly Welsh-speaking areas, where, as O’Leary has argued, anti-Catholic feelings proved to be more resilient than in urbanised areas.<sup>203</sup> For example, second generation Pierino Algieri recalled that, although he did not consider himself to be a practising Catholic anymore, his Catholic upbringing made him feel more Italian than Welsh. As the respondent pointed out:

[Me and my siblings] we didn’t have the Welsh culture like my [Welsh] wife has (...) because (...) we had no contact with Welsh we didn’t go (...) to a Welsh Chapel. My wife would go to the Welsh chapel every Sunday and go to the Welsh Sunday school but we would only go to midnight mass communion and we would go to a private services in a lady’s bungalow and we would have a Catholic service and it’d be just for our family (...) a priest would come up (...) every Sunday (...)<sup>204</sup>

As this passage suggests, despite its progressive decline, Nonconformity was still regarded by some Italians as an essential trait of Welsh culture, one that represented an exclusive boundary for Italian Catholics.

Besides religion, the involvement in ‘ethnic’ social events including dances, dinners and picnics could also function as a form of banal identity. This expression of ethnicity was not unique to Italians in Wales. For example, Burrell has noted that dances were also an Italian migrant tradition in the Leicester area.<sup>205</sup> In referring to Irish dances in post-war Britain, Delaney has argued that ‘these ballrooms of romance could be tritely dismissed as sites of nostalgia where home was re-created for a couple of hours’.<sup>206</sup> Yet, to some Italian migrants, such events were not mere sites of nostalgia, but functioned as real community-markers.<sup>207</sup>

For example, first generation Antonio Marchesi recalled: ‘we have created a community, we

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industrial revolution, Welsh society has been affected by an inexorable process of secularisation; whereas half of the population attended either church or chapel in 1851, only 9 per cent of the Welsh population attended a place of worship in 1995. See: Chambers, ‘Religious diversity in Wales’, p. 130.

<sup>203</sup> O’Leary, ‘When Was Anti-Catholicism?’, 308-325.

<sup>204</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>205</sup> Burrell, *Moving Lives*, p. 70.

<sup>206</sup> Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, p. 171.

<sup>207</sup> Interviews with M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008, A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, R. Renesto, 25 June 2008, R. Quaglia, 16 September 2008, A. Schiavo, 5 June 2008 and S. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

have created the Italian community (...)'.<sup>208</sup> Third generation Mario Canale (54 years old) also recalled:

In the 1970s the only thing the Italians started doing was having meetings at especially boxing day so you'd have the whole of south Wales community getting together – the Italian community- getting together...There'd be two or three other things they'd do in a year (...) the *Scampagnata* (...) toward mid Wales we'd all have a nice picnic together on a Sunday and have games.<sup>209</sup>

Even though the popularity of such events in south Wales started to decline in the early 1990s, social happenings like the *Scampagnata* and *Christmas Cena* have continued to take place on a yearly-basis up to the present day.<sup>210</sup> By contrast, in north and mid Wales, the lack of Italian associations and institutions, adding to a particularly small and dispersed Italian population, caused such ethnic events to disappear more rapidly. For example, Maria Grazia De Rosa recalled that Italians in Wrexham 'used to have a dancing place (...) but nobody do it any more'.<sup>211</sup> According to Cartocci, this is due to the fact that ethnic events 'make sense' to first generation migrants only, as they aim to celebrate their migrant condition.<sup>212</sup>

However, O'Leary has illustrated that, in the 1990s, people of Irish descent in Wales still supported ethnic activities, a circumstance which suggests that 'even among those people separated from their immigrant forebears by numerous generations, an awareness of a distinct cultural heritage has not been entirely extinguished by successful integration'.<sup>213</sup> In similar terms, in the 1990s, the attendance of Italian social events in south Wales appeared to be still quite popular among Italians of different generations, especially among Val Ceno Italians, who were the main organisers of these events. According to a respondent, the Val Ceno-Italians' involvement in ethnic events was a result of the fact that:

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<sup>208</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>210</sup> AVCG, <http://www.amicivalcenogalles.com/>, accessed 30/09/2010.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with M.G. De Rosa, 22 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>212</sup> P. Cartocci, 'Il Problema dell'Identità: il Punto di Vista della Comunità Italiana di Londra', *Affari Sociali Internazionali* 12 (1994), 157-173.

<sup>213</sup> O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 313.

Especially the people who came over and settled in the valley's from Bardi, they all go as families back to Bardi, practically every year. So of course their younger ones are a lot more involved.<sup>214</sup>

In fact AVCG-sponsored Italian events were also attended by Italians originating from other regions and functioned as a clear marker of Italianness, an example being the annual *Scampagnata*-picnic taking place in Hereford. As the *Gazzetta* reported in 1989:

Certainly the best attended and probably the most enjoyable to date. That was the verdict of many of the 700 or so people who travelled all the way to Hereford for *Scampagnata* '89 held for the second year running at Belmont Abbey. (...) The day's star attraction arrived in the form of four gleaming Ferrari's. The men became indistinguishable from the boys as crowds of males flocked to examine these fabulous vehicles.<sup>215</sup>

In this case, the Ferrari, a stereotypical reminder of Italy, served an ideal marker of Italianness for people attending the picnic. The *Carnevale* (an Italian traditional fancy-dress celebration) also featured forms of Italian nostalgia:

Popular singing group *Girasoli* direct from Italy topped the bill at the *Carnevale* Ball at the Grand Pavillon in Porthcawl in February. A repertoire of popular songs sung in the unique *Girasoli* style was much appreciated by the audience.<sup>216</sup>

The Christmas *Cena* (meal) also included clear references to Italy. In 1993, for example 'there was a good turnout to an event which has become one of the most popular of the year. The food was a gastronomic delight. The lasagne, to quote one satisfied individual, was the best I've ever tasted'.<sup>217</sup> Besides AVCG-sponsored events, Italian institutions were sometimes involved in the organisation of Italian social activities. For example, the Italian vice-consulate in Cardiff used to organise the so called *Colonie*, which consisted in taking groups of Welsh-Italian children on a summer vacation in Italy.<sup>218</sup> Another 'institutional'

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<sup>214</sup> Interview with N. Wyer, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>215</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'Scampagnata 89'.

<sup>216</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, Spring 1993, 'Stars come out at the Carnevale Ball'.

<sup>217</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, Spring 1993, 'Christmas Cena'.

<sup>218</sup> Interview with M. Schiavo, 3 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

form of ethnic entertainment is the previously mentioned *Festa dell'Emigrante*, which is organised every summer by the Bardi council.

However, not only were such forms of Italian 'entertainment' a banal form of Italianness, but, as it was the case for food, family and religion, they could also function as exclusive ethnic boundaries. In some oral accounts, 'Italian-style' entertainment was contrasted with the (allegedly) Welsh 'pub culture', which increased in popularity in the post-war period.<sup>219</sup> Indeed, the Nonconformist temperance movement, which had been able to achieve the Sunday Closing Act in 1881, experienced a dramatic decline after 1945 thus that only four counties in Wales (Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Merioneth and Cardiganshire) still adopted a 'dry' policy by 1968.<sup>220</sup> Some Italians seem to have resisted such a spreading 'drinking culture' by maintaining their own social events. For example, when asked about differences between Italians and Welsh, second generation Steve Canale (85 years old) commented:

We [Italians] used to part away from 'em [Welsh] because they had different systems, they always like drinking bloody beer and I don't like, I don't think I've been in a pub. I just can't stand it! (...) I can't stand the pub. If you name me a pub (...) I don't know where it is! I just don't bother, I just didn't like beer.<sup>221</sup>

Such a comment was echoed by Steve Canale's son Mario, who recalled:

(...) everybody seemed to have thing revolving perhaps around the pub (...) they would go to the pub on Saturday night and get together but it's something that I find that a lot of Italians tended not to do (...) it wasn't a very common thing with the Italians (...) the man in the street would go to work on a Monday come back on a Friday get his pay in his hand and go drinking on a Saturday (...) but the Italian community didn't (...) what we actually did was (...) get together in Cardiff (...) we'd go around (...) clubs and have a little bit to drink but you know it wouldn't be 'pub crawl' (...) but it would be another sort of regular meeting in of say twenty or thirty Italians mixed boys and girls (...) and then go to an Italian restaurant.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> On the relationship between pub culture and Welsh identity see, for example, I. Pritchard, 'Beer and Britannia: Public-House Culture and the Construction of Nineteenth Century British-Welsh Industrial Identity', *Nations and Nationalism*, 18 (2012), 326-345.

<sup>220</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 355.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with S. Canale, 8 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>222</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

Like Italian entertainment, sport could also function as a banal identity-reminder. As Morgan has argued, sport ‘contributes greatly to Welsh self- awareness’.<sup>223</sup> As Johnes has observed:

Sport has not only helped the Welsh see themselves as a nation, it has also helped others accept Welsh nationhood. Wales may not have presence on the international political stage but it does have a long history of its own national teams and associations.<sup>224</sup>

Football, boxing and notably rugby are particularly popular sports through which Welsh people have traditionally expressed their loyalty to their nation. In addition, as Evans and O’Leary have argued, sport in Wales has become ‘the archetypal symbol of an inclusive national identity with the capacity of uniting people of divergent backgrounds in an inclusive common identity’.<sup>225</sup> This is also testified by Welsh-Italians playing for the National Rugby Union Team (e.g. Mark Perego in the 1990s and Robert Sidoli in the 2000s) and notably by the international achievements of boxer Joe Calzaghe, a second generation Italian who became a Welsh pride-icon in the late 1990s. Calzaghe was often referred to as the ‘Italian Dragon’ in popular culture and was portrayed by the Welsh media as a successful example of hybrid Welsh-Italian identity. This sort of mixed national loyalty, in sport terms, was also testified by third generation Remo Sidoli, who commented:

When it comes to the rugby I don’t know what way to turn...I’ve got my second cousin Robert, Robert Sidoli, who plays for Wales, he chose to play for Wales, he could have played for Italy, but he chose to play for Wales...There I am supporting both teams, don’t know where to choose.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> P. Morgan, *Background to Wales: a Course of Studies on Modern Welsh life* (Llandybie, C. Davies, 1968), p. 75.

<sup>224</sup> M. Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2005), p. 111.

<sup>225</sup> N. Evans and P. O’Leary, ‘Playing the Game: Sport and Ethnic Minorities in Modern Wales’, in Williams et al. (eds), *A Tolerant Nation?*, p. 111.

<sup>226</sup> BBC Video Nation, ‘Italian stories: Remo’s Story’, 4 October 2006, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 8/09/2010.

In this extract, the respondent solved his personal ‘loyalty-conflict’ by saying that he supported both Italian and Welsh rugby national teams. In other words, he used sport as a reinforcement of his Welsh-Italian identity.

In fact, as Calzaghe himself stated in an interview:

I have a special relationship with the people of Wales, they have been very supportive of me throughout my career. However I've always loved Italian football. I support Juventus and always support Italy at the World Cup.<sup>227</sup>

As this testimony suggests, although some Italians expressed their loyalty to Wales through their sport achievements, the majority of their country-fellowmen living in Wales tended to be loyal to Italy when it came to football or rugby or declared to support the Welsh national team as long as it did not play Italy, which the first choice always went to. This confirms what Hobsbawn has pointed out: ‘the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people’.<sup>228</sup> Surprisingly, even second and third generation Italians also seemed to prefer Italy to Wales in sport terms. For example, second generation Delia Weyman declared: ‘when Italy is playing anything you’ve always got the Italian flag up’.<sup>229</sup> When asked ‘are there times when your Italian identity comes out?’, third generation Mario Canale also answered: ‘the World Cup, obviously, when Italy is playing (...), whenever Italy play I still support them even if they’re playing Wales’.<sup>230</sup> Even in predominantly Welsh-identifying settings and even when they classed themselves Welsh, some Italian respondents claimed to support the national football team, which, once again, functioned as a marker of Italianness. For example, Gino Vasami (61 years old), who was born in Italy but grew up in rural Carmarthenshire, commented:

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<sup>227</sup> BBC Wales,

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/halloffame/sport/joe\\_calzaghe.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/halloffame/sport/joe_calzaghe.shtml), accessed 30/09/2010.

<sup>228</sup> As cited in Johnes, *A History of Sport in Wales*, p. 109.

<sup>229</sup> Interview with D. Weyman, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>230</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.



Many people told me (...) ‘why don’t you change to Welsh nationality?’ (...) I said (...) ‘what’s the point in me changing?’...I wasn’t born in Wales, I went and do my military in Italy, I’m still, you know, being an Italian so what’s the point? (...) I do love my [Italian] nationality (...) even my children, it’s funny enough, I mean they were born in Wales but, say, you know, if there was a match on they’d always support Italy (...) and not only me even other Italians’ children and they don’t speak the language and it’s funny they still support Italy.<sup>231</sup>

As the passage above suggests, supporting the Italian football team equalled being loyal to the homeland. This shows that, like family and food, the Italian national team applied a stronger emotional pull than the Welsh counterpart did. As second generation Giuseppe Lynch recalled:

(...) A few years ago I (...) went to a football match in Cardiff, where Wales were playing Italy and, I’ve got to be honest with you, I was torn: my *head* was saying ‘I should be supporting Wales’ whereas my *heart* was saying ‘no no, you’re Italian!’<sup>232</sup>

In particular, the World Cup functioned as marker of community which encouraged Italians and people of Italian heritage to get together and reinforce their Italianness. This was testified by the *Gazzetta* which reported that during the 1994 World Cup:

Italians from throughout the Valleys gathered in the grounds of the church hall in Treorchy to watch Italy do battle against Brazil in the World Cup Final. The grounds of the Church of the Immaculate Conception was filled with red, white and green as the excited fans cheered the Azzurri on. The action was relayed via a giant television screen especially set up for the event by Rob Basini, and several of his friends.<sup>233</sup>

In this case, two forms of Italianness (the Church and football) were combined. The existence of a long-standing loyalty to Italian sport in Wales was also highlighted by the *Guardian* in 1987. When an important Italian football club (*Atalanta*) met Merthyr Tydfil in the 1987 European Cup Winners’ Cup, local Welsh-Italians saw the match as a chance to reinforce their Italianness and organised an ‘Italian week’, including ice-cream contests, a FIAT show

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<sup>231</sup> Interview with G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>232</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2008.

<sup>233</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Gallese*, January 1995, ‘Cruel and Mars Exemplary USA ‘94’.

and a fashion show. As Frank Viazzani commented: ‘Italy has come once again to the Valleys’.<sup>234</sup>

### **Language and identity: Italian and Welsh**

It is clear that languages also represent an essential marker of identity. As Fishman has argued:

Most human behaviours are language embedded and, therefore, language is an inevitable part of culture. Ceremonies, rituals, songs, stories, spells, curses, prayers, laws (not to mention conversations, requests and instructions) are all speech acts or speech events that constitute the very warp and woof of ethnic life.<sup>235</sup>

Language change, among migrants, has often been interpreted as a ‘key indicator of the transition’ from the old to the new country.<sup>236</sup> To what extent then was loyalty to Italy, which was expressed by most Italian respondents, related to the use and transmission of the native language? IMW and other narratives suggest that the majority of Italians who migrated to Wales did actually not transmit the Italian language to their children. This is not very surprising as only a minority of Italians who migrated to Wales could speak Italian as a first language. Being on the whole very poorly educated, migrants predominantly used dialects spoken in the areas where they originated, sometimes having a basic knowledge of the standard Italian language.<sup>237</sup> Several first generation Italians in Wales even stressed that they had progressively ‘forgotten’ their national mother tongue because they did not have frequent contacts with other fellow-countrymen. For example, an Italian residing in Cardigan wrote in

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<sup>234</sup> *Guardian*, 13 September 1987, ‘Valleys Warm to Italians’.

<sup>235</sup> Fishman (ed), *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival*, p. xi.

<sup>236</sup> Conzen et Al., ‘The Invention of Ethnicity’, 14.

<sup>237</sup> Italy did not become an unified country until 1861. As a result, it has retained a remarkable linguistic variety being characterised by a wide range of different dialects at regional and even local level. Despite being all based on the Italian language, such dialects can be very different to each other and, in some cases even non-intelligible.

a letter to a priest back home: ‘I apologise (...) I am not able to write (...) in Italian any more’.<sup>238</sup>

When it comes to mixed couples, where only one spouse could speak Italian (or dialect), the Italian language was obviously less likely to be transmitted to the second generation. As Nesta Wyer (Italian father and Welsh mother) explained:

One of the things (...) I’ve always said to my father is: ‘why didn’t you speak to us in Italian?’ (...) But, as he said, he was new to this country when he came, so he had to learn English, so he had to learn to think in English...So he was still so busy learning English and then when we were born (...) he found it not natural to speak Italian to us. But (...) I think he wishes he had spoken [Italian] to us.<sup>239</sup>

Pierino Algieri (Italian father and Welsh mother) also pointed out that his father was not able to pass the Italian language on to him because:

He spent so much time just working, working, working, you know, he’d work on the farm and at night he’d go to work in a factory to try and get more money so maybe he had no time (...) and you know with nine children (...) to look after (...) seven boys - a lot of work - so I’m sure that’s why (...) It’s a shame, yeah.<sup>240</sup>

As the passages above suggest, second (and further) generation Italian respondents often expressed a deep sense of disappointment for not being able to speak their parents’ language, having been deprived of an important feature of their Italian identity. As fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti also pointed out: ‘my regret is that I don’t speak Italian, because Italian wasn’t spoken at home, just English, because my mum didn’t speak Italian’.<sup>241</sup> Some first generation interviewees also regretted not having been able to pass their language on to their children. That is why some of these respondents encouraged their children to learn Italian at school or university. For example, Domenico Casetta recalled:

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<sup>238</sup> G..C. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 10 December 1946, CDEAVT (author’s translation).

<sup>239</sup> Interview with N. Wyer, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>240</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2011.

<sup>241</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

When they [my children] went to school (...) their school taught Italian integrally. I took them to Italian classes on Saturday so they started to learn Italian in primary school. Michaela has a certificate from the second year of primary school where she learnt Italian. (...) And then Nesta went to an Italian school as an adult, so they had a smattering of teaching.<sup>242</sup>

Pasquale Milo, whose children were in their early twenties, also commented ‘in my opinion they [my children] should study it [Italian], that is why they will attend classes (...) My children are willing to learn Italian, they’re definitely proud of their Italianness’.<sup>243</sup> Once again, Italian was regarded as an important marker of Italianness, that the second generation was recommended (by the first) to acquire.

Whereas out-marriage sometimes represented an obstacle to the transmission of the vernacular, when both parents originated from the same geographical area they were more likely to speak Italian to their children. This appeared to be the case for Italians originating from Val Ceno in particular. For example, fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti recalled that, although he could not speak Italian (having been born to a Welsh mother), his cousins all had ‘a good understanding of Italian’ because their parents all originated from Val Ceno and spoke Italian at home.<sup>244</sup> Yet, other narratives suggest that, more than a standard form of Italian, it was the Val Ceno dialect which was spoken and transmitted amongst Italians originating from the region. For example, third generation Joe Moruzzi (58 years old) declared that he was still fluent in the Bardi dialect, because his parents:

What they used to speak in the house was the local dialect (...) which is very French influenced and that’s what they used to speak. And they always used to speak that and when they used to sort of meet up together various families and friends [they spoke] always in the dialect, very rarely in the real Italiano.<sup>245</sup>

However, the strong ties with the homeland that Val Ceno-Italians were able to maintain over the years fostered the transmission of the standard Italian language as well. For example, on

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with D. Casetta, 17 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>243</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation).

<sup>244</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>245</sup> Interview with J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

28 January 1952 a Welsh-Italian from Bedonia (Parma) wrote a letter to the rector of the local seminary Monsignor Silvio Ferrari enquiring about the possibility of sending his twelve-year-old son there so that he could ‘learn the language well’.<sup>246</sup> As fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi also recalled: ‘my father is a Welsh-Italian, born in Bangor, but he went back to Italy to live for a while, he went to school in Italy and then he came back here’.<sup>247</sup> Andrew Rabaiotti also recalled that his father ‘was born in Llanelli, but he was educated in Italy up to the age of fourteen’.<sup>248</sup>

Strikingly, several narratives illustrate that such practices sometimes endured up to the present day. For example, third generation Renaldo Dallavalle proudly pointed out that his twins Marco and Gino (16 years old) had recently moved to Viadana (Mantua Province, near Parma) to play for the local rugby club *Aironi* and attended an international high school in Parma where they had the chance to learn Italian properly. As the respondent commented: ‘my wife likes the idea that they’re going to be learning Italian (...) Although we miss them (...) a lot, it’s such a good opportunity to go and live in Italy’.<sup>249</sup> Therefore, not only did the parents’ sense of pride for their children arise from the simple fact that they played for a professional rugby club, but also and especially from the fact that this rugby club was an Italian one and from the fact that their children had the chance to live in Italy and learn Italian. The fact that Dallavalle was proud of his children learning Italian also emerged from his claim that his eldest son Stefano (18 years old) was fluent in Italian as he held a GSCE in that language.<sup>250</sup> Although he claimed to have only a basic knowledge of the Italian language (having an Italian father and a Welsh mother), fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi also explained that he was encouraging his children to learn Italian:

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<sup>246</sup> G..C. to Mons. Silvio Ferrari, 10 December 1946, CDEAVT (author’s translation).

<sup>247</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2012.

<sup>248</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>249</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>250</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

A lot of Italians don't speak Italian, my age group (...) because of the amount of work and the amount of hours you work I think [there's no] time to learn it...I try to encourage my children to learn it and Isabella and Luca as being young they pick up quite easy.<sup>251</sup>

Among Italians originating from other geographical areas, even when there was an initial attempt to transmit the vernacular, this generally stopped as soon as the children embarked on their education. As second generation Marisa Cavarra observed:

We did try to speak Italian with them [her children] and my son, when he was born, my mother had him for four years, because I was working, so she looked after him for me and he couldn't speak a bit of English it was all Italian (...) but because they go to school as well, it was easier to speak in English.<sup>252</sup>

According to the author of a pioneering study of languages among Italians in Bedford:

After a period varying from a few months to a few years, the children who become able to use and understand English expressions at school inevitably bring them into the household (...) initially they are used with other siblings, but they are later adopted in interaction with the parents (...) they will gradually associate with the English language sharply connotative and emotional values. At this stage they have learnt to recognise its usefulness as the language of their peer group (whether in the street, school or in front of the television) as well as its importance as the sole vehicle of their education and knowledge.<sup>253</sup>

In other words, whereas some Italian parents aimed to speak their vernaculars to their children, they were 'obliged' to switch to English as soon as their children went to school. By contrast, eastern European migrants tended to follow a 'bilingual approach' and were often able to pass language and identity on to their children. This process was fostered by the existence of 'Saturday schools' which were set up by migrants themselves. For example, by 1965, there were about 5,000 children attending forty three Ukrainian schools spread over the communities in Britain and supported by a European network of Ukrainian teachers.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>252</sup> Interview with M. Cavarra, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>253</sup> Tosi, *Immigration and Bilingual Education*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>254</sup> Weber-Newth, 'Narratives of Settlement', pp. 88-89.

The fact that the majority of Italians in Wales, by contrast, did not transmit the Italian language could be related to purely numerical reasons. Fishman and Hoffman have argued that the ability of foreign migrants to preserve their native language depends on several factors including the number of claimants involved, social mobility and language popularity. Indeed, if the speakers' number drops too low:

Then formal institutions of language maintenance (press, schools, organisations) cannot be maintained (...) relatively small groups may be able to preserve themselves linguistically if they maintain geographic concentration in addition to substantial physical, economic, and cultural separation from surrounding populations.<sup>255</sup>

Therefore, due to their geographical dispersion and substantial integration into Welsh society, Italians in Wales had objective difficulties in maintaining their vernacular over the generations. Also in Scotland, as the Italian consular director reported in 1987, the maintenance of the Italian language was made difficult by the high geographical dispersion of Italians, only a minority of whom seemed to be involved in Italian migrant associations.<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, the existence of both an Italian consulate and Italian Cultural Institute in Edinburgh determined a significant institutional effort aimed at promoting the use of the Italian language in Scotland. In addition, various migrant associations, newspapers and regular masses in Italian encouraged the maintenance of the Italian language in Scotland. For example, in 1987, the Committee of the Italian Associations of Glasgow was able to raise £20,000 aimed at allocating bursaries to university students in the Italian department who intended to spend one year in Italy to improve their linguistic skills.<sup>257</sup> By contrast, only a vice-consulate was to be found in Cardiff, adding to only one (and predominantly English-speaking) migrant newspaper (the *Gazzetta*). Therefore, the Italian language was less likely to

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<sup>255</sup> J.A. Fishman, V.C. Nahirny, J.E. Hofman and R.G. Hayden, *Language Loyalty in the United States: the Maintenance of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups* (London, Mouton & Co, 1966), p. 47.

<sup>256</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, October-November 1987, 'Il Nostro Futuro Ha un Buon Presente'.

<sup>257</sup> *Italiani in Scozia*, October-November 1987, '20mila Sterline all'Università di Glasgow'.

be transmitted to the second generation than among Italians in Scotland and more numerous and compact migrant groups as Ukrainians in England.

The findings which have been illustrated suggest that the intergenerational transmission of Italianness in Wales was not strictly related to the transmission of the Italian language. If it is true that some Italians who decided to speak their vernacular to their children also claimed an Italian identity, others self-proclaimed Welsh or did not stress any particular form of national belonging. By contrast, some 'fully Italians' (in terms of identity) decided to speak English to their children. However, the fact that the intergenerational transmission of Italianness was not necessarily related to the transmission of the Italian language does not mean that the vernacular was considered unimportant by the respondents. As noted, Italians often encouraged their children to study Italian at school and sometimes sent them back to Italy so that they could receive part of their education there. In any case, Italian migrants' children in Wales did not seem to experience the identity-conflict observed by Tosi among Italians in Bedford. Recalling the classical theory expressed by Child and partially anticipated by Hansen, Tosi has argued that, in attempting to become as English as possible, second generation Bedford-Italians tended to deny their Italian identity by avoiding speaking Italian and the regional dialects that their parents had spoken to them when they were children.<sup>258</sup> By contrast, many second and third generation Italians in Wales claimed to be proud of their Italian heritage and, even when they claimed a predominantly Welsh identity, never denied their Italian background.<sup>259</sup> Even if they could not speak Italian, they often expressed the wish that their parents had thought it to them or managed to learn it afterwards at school or in university.

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<sup>258</sup> Tosi, *Immigration and Bilingual Education*; Child, *Italian or American?*; Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant*.

<sup>259</sup> BBC Video Nation, 'Italian stories: Remo's Story', 4 October 2006, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 8/09/2010.



If proficiency in the Italian language and Italian identity do not seem to be complementary, can the Welsh language then function as a marker of national identification? As has already been noted, a multicultural discourse is evident in post-devolution Wales, one that aims to transcend the country's long-standing linguistic divisions. Simply put, in the post-1997 inclusive context the Welsh language is not seen as being a precondition to the full acquisition of Welsh identity. Yet, not only has the Welsh language continued to function as a prominent marker of Welshness, but such a prominence has even gained momentum over the last thirty years, with the launch of the Welsh-medium TV channel S4C in 1982 and the passing of a new Welsh Language Act in 1993. More recently, Welsh institutions have clearly promoted the use of the Welsh language not only among 'indigenous' Welsh people but also among newly-arrived migrant workers. For example, the 2006 WAG *Welcome to Wales Pack for Migrant Workers* (translated into seventeen languages) reads:

Wales has a language of its own, of breadth we are rightly proud. The Welsh Language is spoken across the length and breadth of the country, and you will see publications and signs in both Welsh and English. We would certainly encourage you to learn Welsh, as well as English. This pack provides you with details of how you can learn and improve your knowledge of Welsh and English which will help you settle in Wales.<sup>260</sup>

Therefore, looking at attitudes that migrants and people of migrant heritage show toward the Welsh language can be useful to appreciate the extent to which such sections of the Welsh population identify with Welshness. Being one of Wales' oldest and (allegedly) most integrated migrant groups, Italians could serve an ideal case study to appreciate such trends.

For a start, IMW as well as other interviews suggest that the vast majority of Italians in Wales could not speak Welsh fluently. This circumstance could be partially explained in merely numerical terms. The majority of Italians migrated to Wales in a period in which not only did

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<sup>260</sup> WAG, *Welcome to Wales Pack for Migrant Workers* (Cardiff, WAG, 2006), <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/communitycohesion/publications/welcometowales/?skip=1&lang=en>, accessed 4/03/2012.

Welsh represent a minority language but it was also declining; less than 30 per cent of the population could speak Welsh by 1951 and this figure decreased to less than 21 per cent by 1971. Welsh was even less spoken in those areas where the majority of the Italian population settled. For example, in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, Welsh speakers decreased from 17 to less than 12 per cent and from 3.5 to 2 per cent respectively between 1951 and 1971.<sup>261</sup> As O’Leary has observed ‘by mid-century Welsh had already lost its position of dominance in ports like Cardiff and Newport, and, consequently, in those places the imperative to acquire a knowledge of Welsh was absent’.<sup>262</sup>

That is why, some Italian respondents claimed to have not been encouraged to learn Welsh, as, in their opinion, Welsh people themselves tended not to speak it. In particular, some interviewees imputed their poor linguistic skills (in Welsh) to the fact that, until 1993, Welsh did not even represent an essential school subject. For example, second generation Anna Schiavo, who grew up in Cardiff, pointed out: ‘we were taught Welsh in the first year of secondary school and then there was an option to learn French, so I chose French, because Welsh wasn’t a big thing then in the 1970s’.<sup>263</sup> Third generation Tony Parisella, from Llandudno, also commented: ‘In my school, which is an English speaking school, Welsh (...) was the subject you did if you didn’t want to do Chemistry’, implying that Welsh, at the time (1970s), was nothing but a second choice subject.<sup>264</sup> Other respondents claimed to have not been encouraged to learn Welsh by their employers. For example, first generation Antonio Marchesi recalled:

When I came to Wales the Welsh (...) told me to learn to speak Welsh, because it was their language. They were so happy to talk Welsh with me that...I was forgetting English and I was learning Welsh (...) But later the manager called me over and said

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<sup>261</sup> Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics, 1700-1974*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1700-1974/?lang=en>, accessed 2/07/2010.

<sup>262</sup> O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 307.

<sup>263</sup> Interview with A. Schiavo, 5 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>264</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

(...) ‘no no no, you have to speak English, not Welsh, because Welsh isn’t the national language, the national language is English. So I left it, I forgot Welsh and I carried on with English.’<sup>265</sup>

Several interviewees argued that they did not learn Welsh simply because the vast majority of ‘the Welsh’ themselves were not interested in learning it. As first generation Armando Cugno, from Cardiff, commented: ‘I’m not interested in learning Welsh...*They* [the Welsh] are not interested! How can I be interested in learning it?’<sup>266</sup> When asked whether his children spoke Welsh, non-Welsh speaker Paquale Milo (first generation), from Llandudno, also commented:

Stefano [his son] and my daughter Daniela have learnt it at school because it’s part of the curriculum but they don’t really speak it (...) At the end of the day the Welsh don’t speak Welsh either, apart from a minority of them.<sup>267</sup>

Some respondents went as far as to argue that they would rather see their children learn Italian than Welsh, arguing that the former was more important than the latter in terms of (potential) working skills and maintenance of an Italian heritage. As second generation Delia Weyman, from Cardiff, pointed out:

[My children have] very little Welsh, it’s not the nicest of languages to learn, and I can’t speak Welsh or understand it so there’s no Welsh [at home]...The only time I think Welsh is spoken in the house is if they’re doing their Welsh homework, you know, which is...I suppose that’s a heritage I should really be encouraging, but it’s not the nicest of languages to learn...I’d rather see them learn Italian than to learn Welsh because I think Italian would get them further.<sup>268</sup>

When asked whether he would rather see his children learning Italian or Welsh, fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti, from Penarth, answered:

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<sup>265</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>267</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation).

<sup>268</sup> Interview with D. Weyman, 10 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

[Italian] every day of the week, every day of the week (...) at the end of the day we're Welsh born and bred in Wales [but] we have Italian ancestors...Which language would you learn? Italian! More use.<sup>269</sup>

Whereas in predominantly English-speaking areas Italians rarely spoke Welsh fluently, as has already been noted, in the Welsh-speaking regions of the country cases of Welsh-speaking Italians were not rare. Even if, in these areas (e.g. Aberystwyth, Bangor), some Italian respondents could still not speak Welsh. Some second and further generation interviewees put this circumstance down to the fact that, provided that their parents could not speak Welsh, Welsh was not even thought at school, especially in the Catholic schools that Italians generally attended. For example, fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi, who lived in Bangor, but grew up in Aberystwyth, pointed out:

When I was a child there was no Welsh-speaking in school and when I went to a Catholic school there was no Welsh we had no Welsh lessons then, you know, I think that the Welsh language has become stronger in the last twenty years (...) My family down in mid Wales none of them speaks Welsh...I think it's just that they probably thought they'd never have to, you know, and (...) again my age group all went to the same school so you never picked it up and it was never spoken to you.<sup>270</sup>

As O'Leary has pointed out, 'a resistance to the teaching of Welsh' in Catholic schools could be traced back to the early twentieth century and 'was justified on the grounds of the ethnic background of the children catered for'.<sup>271</sup>

Not only could some Italians not speak Welsh, but some of them also openly criticized the Welsh language policy. For example, first generation Francesco Laforges, from Bridgend, commented:

Come on, the Welsh language is a waste of time now, I think that's a stupid thing to do...This country would spend more money on a Welsh literature, on a Welsh school than things more important, what for?<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>270</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>271</sup> O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 307.

<sup>272</sup> Interview with F. Laforges, 5 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

Fourth generation Andrew Rabaiotti also observed:

In schools now it's mandatory for Welsh to be taught...Is it better to concentrate on a language that only 20 per cent of the [Welsh] people speak or should we maybe use that time to get the basics right first of all - reading, writing and arithmetic - ? You know, I'm a great believer in the basics.<sup>273</sup>

Such an attitude confirms that, as Williams has pointed out, 'ethnic-minority communities may find a Welsh nationhood located in the Welsh language inaccessible and meaningless'.<sup>274</sup> As noted, some Italians classified Wales as a region of England. Consequently, they did not seem to fully grasp the meaning of an 'official' minority language (Welsh) within a larger country (England) where the vast majority of the population spoke a different language (English). For example, first generation Nazareno Franco commented: 'in my opinion, in one country [England?Britain?] people should all speak the same language'.<sup>275</sup> In this respect, it is important to note that such an anti-Welsh language attitude was not unique to Italians, but was also evident among non-Welsh speaking elements of the Welsh population. For example, in a letter to the *South Wales Echo*, Leonard Martin from Pontypridd wrote:

Whereas the rest of the world is adopting English as the predominant global language, some of us in Wales are vainly trying to reverse this to the detriment of us all. The cost to this nation of this bilingual approach must be astronomical when one considers all the duplication of English/Welsh on government and business literature, road markings and signs, and of course, let us not forget BBC Cymru and S4C.<sup>276</sup>

However, it is important to note that, whereas some Italian respondents (as some of their Welsh counterparts) criticised the Welsh language policy, some interviewees agreed with it. Nevertheless, such a surprisingly positive attitude toward the Welsh language policy did not entail a real engagement with the Welsh language, which was still regarded by some respondents as a cultural boundary between *us* (Italians) and *them* (Welsh). This means that,

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<sup>273</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>274</sup> Williams, 'Passports to Wales?', p. 86.

<sup>275</sup> Interview with N. Franco, 16 November 2010.

<sup>276</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 1 June 2006, 'A Tolerant Society? So, where's the tolerance?'.

although they appreciated the Welsh efforts in preserving their vernacular, Italian respondents tended to consider those efforts as a ‘Welsh matter’ which did not have anything to do with them. That is why some interviewees were rarely interested in learning Welsh, which they looked at as an unimportant language which was only spoken by a minority of the Welsh population. For example, first generation Pasquale Milo commented:

I don’t think [Welsh] is important because you don’t need it anywhere...It’s just *their* tradition (...) which is something that should be appreciated because it’s *their* language and *they* want to maintain it (...) but it’s not important (...) nobody speaks it anywhere in the world (...) it’s not important, it’s important for *them*, for the Welsh as a sort of tradition (...) but for *us* outsiders it’s not worth learning it at all.<sup>277</sup>

First generation Fausto Galli, from Deganwy, also commented:

I’m not learning it because I’m not interested (...) at home we all speak English...English is important (...) I think that Welsh is important (...) *for the Welsh*, for Wales (...) as a cultural thing and as a matter of pride (...) but abroad, outside Wales, not at all...Let’s say you have to visit some businessmen in Milan, you have an interview with Armani, are you going to speak English or Welsh? You speak English, don’t you? Because everybody speaks English (...) The thing is that if you speak Welsh you do it just for those farmers who live in the mountains and work as shepherds.<sup>278</sup>

The passages above suggest that, whereas they agreed with the linguistic policy, some Italians did not learn Welsh as they considered it an irrelevant language, which was not spoken anywhere outside Wales and, even in Wales, was only spoken by a minority of ‘shepherds’.

Other respondents claimed that, although they did learn Welsh and recognise the importance of the Welsh language, they did not feel engaged with it and continued to reason within an *us/them* framework. This was even the case for some second generation Italians residing in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas. For example, Pierino Algieri from Llanrwst commented:

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<sup>277</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation).

<sup>278</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation).

Everybody through the school should learn and speak Welsh (...) I would never like to see the Welsh language dying out...It goes back to Celts, very very old, you know...But I'm not, I don't have that passion (...) that *the Welsh people* have.<sup>279</sup>

Algieri imputed his lack of passion for the Welsh language to the fact that, although he learnt Welsh as an adult, he was not brought up through the medium of Welsh:

I was brought up [by an] Italian father and spoke English at home so we had no Welsh we didn't have the Welsh culture like my wife has (...) she recognises she can speak and sing all the hymns and everything, all the phrases, everything that *Welsh people* understand, I don't understand them, even today, even though I speak Welsh now, I have learnt Welsh, you know, *I don't recognise the same things as the Welsh people* (...) <sup>280</sup>

By contrast, Llandysul-based Gino Vasami, who learnt Welsh as a child, argued that his linguistic skills had helped him to fully integrate into Welsh society. Yet, as the passage below suggests, Vasami also adopted an *us/them* framework:

I have to say, you know, it would have been hard for me being all my life, you know, in Wales and not knowing the language. I mean, I'd never mixed up with *them* like I am now. I mean, *they*'d say 'look you've been so many years in Wales how come you don't speak our own language?' And I have to say, you know, when I have *Welsh people* coming (...) at home (...) it's hard for my wife cause she can't speak the language but for me it's easy (...) *they* love you more and I don't blame them because you know we all stick for our own languages.<sup>281</sup>

Therefore, whereas he was fluent in Welsh, Vasami, like the majority of other respondents, acknowledged that the Welsh language was a clear marker of Welshness, one that functioned as an exclusive *us/them* boundary, which could hardly be crossed; his wife could not fully integrate because she could not speak Welsh.

However, although the majority of Italian respondents of all generations claimed not to be fluent in Welsh, some interviewees appeared to recognise the 'practical' importance of the Welsh language when it came to career opportunities in Wales. Some authors have argued

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<sup>279</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2008.

<sup>280</sup> Interview with P. Algieri, 27 October 2008.

<sup>281</sup> Interview with G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

that the Welsh language policy can be seen as creating a sort of social and economic divide; particularly in predominantly English speaking areas, the Welsh speaking minority seems to be advantaged in achieving better professional status as the best job positions, notably in the public sector, often require linguistic skills both in English and Welsh.<sup>282</sup> Several oral accounts suggest that some Welsh-Italian families have started to respond to these changing opportunities choosing a fully or partially Welsh-medium education for their children, to advantage them in their future career in Wales. For example, third generation Tony Parisella pointed out:

My children go to a Welsh school in Llandudno where Welsh is quite heavily taught and their Welsh is much better than mine (...) my eldest daughter (...) is doing very well in Welsh (...) being in Wales, if you want to stay in Wales, I think it's getting more and more important to have a good grasp of the language, for opportunities here, especially in local government, this kind of things, teaching (...)<sup>283</sup>

Fourth generation Nick Antoniazzi also commented:

My son and my daughter speak fluent Welsh...They go to a Welsh-medium school (...) The school they go to it's something like 85 per cent Welsh spoken so they've got no choice, they have to learn Welsh (...) because if you stay in Wales, you apply for jobs and you don't speak Welsh you're not going to get a job are you? Especially for the councils.<sup>284</sup>

To other respondents Welsh-medium education served a reinforcement of the family's upward social mobility. In other words it was a way of celebrating their migrant condition through the narration of success stories. Highlighting the children's academic success though the medium of Welsh was a way of emphasising their ability to achieve outstanding results. In other words, going through Welsh-medium education was regarded by some Italians as being more remarkable than simply attending an English-medium school. For example, third generation Renaldo Dallavalle commented: 'Stefano [one of his sons] is very bright (...) Stefano did all his subjects in Welsh, he had fifteen GSECs, he had nine A-stars and six As,

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<sup>282</sup> Giggs and Pattie, 'Wales as a Plural Society', 24-63.

<sup>283</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

<sup>284</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.



which is quite good, all in Welsh'.<sup>285</sup> Once again, such an enthusiastic appreciation of Welsh-medium education did not entail a real engagement with the Welsh language. As Dallavalle pointed out:

The only reason [to learn Welsh] - job wise - is that, for example, if Stefano got a proper job in Wales (...) if he joined one of the banks, he'd only become head of - say - Barclays Wales if he was Welsh speaking...So....I know he probably won't use it but...He's fluent in Welsh.<sup>286</sup>

In other words, according to the interviewee, the only reason why his son should learn Welsh was to achieve a leading job position in Wales, although he would hardly use the language in everyday life. Such a migrant behaviour was not unique to Italians and recalls the Irish experience in nineteenth century Wales. As O'Leary has observed that, since the 1850s:

In those places where it was necessary to speak Welsh in order to co-operate in the workplace, the Irish, like the early English incomers, soon acquired a functional understanding of the language (...) That this occurred should not be surprising for language – whether English or Welsh – was one of the skills migrants were compelled to acquire in order to obtain employment and to perform satisfactory the duties expected of them in the workplace.<sup>287</sup>

As one third generation Italian declared: 'there's something unique in being Italian and in another country and going back [to Italy] and feeling part of that country'.<sup>288</sup> This comment perfectly summarises the extent to which Italianness has endured in Wales. This chapter has shown that, to a certain extent, the endurance of Italian identity depended on both geographical distribution and regional provenance. In predominantly Welsh-speaking and Welsh-identifying areas, Italians appeared to be more inclined to speak Welsh and claim a Welsh identity. In the predominantly English-speaking south Wales, the old-standing group from Val Ceno appeared to be more inclined to claim a hybrid Welsh-Italian identity, while

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<sup>285</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011

<sup>286</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>287</sup> O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 306.

<sup>288</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

Italians originating from other regions appeared to be more inclined to term themselves 'Italian'. However, this chapter has shown that, regardless of their geographical distribution and regional origin, the vast majority of Italians and people of Italian heritage have maintained a resilient and emotionally-connoted sense of Italianness through *banal* and *everyday* behaviours and routines. These were often seen by respondents as clashing with or being preferable to what they class 'Welsh' (e.g. Welsh language). One reason for such a resilient Italian identity could be that Italians have never been 'forced' to assimilate by the receiving society, which, over the last decade, has politically embraced an inclusive notion of multiculturalism.

Yet, despite not expecting migrants to give up their national background, the Welsh political institutions have attempted to nurture a new civic sense of Welshness which demands the *loyalty* of migrants and ethnic minority people. The majority of Italian respondents seemed to show a loose affiliation to such a sense of Welshness, continuing to see it as a culturally connoted identity, one that is not always compatible with Italianness. One reason for this could be that, as other authors have also suggested,<sup>289</sup> the Welsh institutions have in fact not made any serious effort to reach out to people of migrant and ethnic descent living in Wales. One reason for this could be that, as the establishment of the AWEMA suggests, the Welsh institutions have tended to interpret migrants and ethnic minority people as bounded and homogenous *groups/minorities*, as if they were 'unitary collective actors with common purposes'.<sup>290</sup> Yet, this chapter has illustrated that it is generally through their *individual*, *commonsense knowledge-based* and *everyday* interactions that migrants and people of migrant origin shape their identities and sense of belonging to Wales. Therefore, as Vertovec has pointed out, it can be argued that:

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<sup>289</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', pp. 78-101; Williams, 'Claiming the National: nation, national identity and ethnic minorities', pp. 220-234; P. Chaney, *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights*.

<sup>290</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p. 8.

(...)‘civil culture’ includes competence in conventions and norms of civility. These can be learned by immigrants formally, but they are probably best inculcated informally through *daily practice* (since many of the principles [...] become routinized into non-conscious acts). (...) integration and cohesion cannot be fostered merely by instilling knowledge (of rules, rights, customs, etc.); *daily interaction is what civil-integration is about* (...) cohesion cannot be manufactured from the top down, or simply stimulated by putting people into the same places with scripted roles and behaviours. Norms of civility must be enacted in a wide variety of contexts and public spaces, automatically as it were, and this comes through wholly *through experience and practice*.<sup>291</sup>

This argument applies to Italians, whose affiliation to Welshness has clearly been taken-for-granted and overestimated by the Welsh institutions and media. These, as noted (Chapter Two), have tended to depict Italians as perfectly integrated and loyal to the receiving society, in the attempt to reinforce the notion of inclusiveness. Yet, Italians have maintained a distinct identity which challenges such a notion.<sup>292</sup>

It can be argued that the maintenance of such a distinct Italian identity has been fostered by the prominence of Italian cuisine in Wales, Italian cafés and restaurants functioning as a reinforcement of Italian banal nationalism. Simply put, Italians have not had to *adapt* to the Welsh because the latter have arguably *adapted* to the former, assimilating Italian cuisine into their national identity. The next chapter assesses the extent to which such an assumption corresponds to reality or whether the alleged Italian culinary contribution to Welsh society has, once again, been exaggerated by the media and other institutions.

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<sup>291</sup> S. Vertovec, *New Complexities of Cohesion in Britain: Super-Diversity, Transnationalism and Civil-Integration* (Oxford, COMPAS, 2007), pp. 32-33.

<sup>292</sup> Williams and De Lima have argued that the allegedly ‘civic’ nature of the post-devolution idea of Welsh denotes clear limitations. As the authors have pointed out: ‘In Wales, the issue is made more complex by the politics of the Welsh language and the desire in the words of the First Minister to reconcile “the Celtic essence” which he defines as Wales’ “cultural integrity as maintained through its Language” and its increasing diversity. (...) devolution has helped to develop a more civic rather than ethnic Welsh identity, it is yet to be tested how far this applies to minority groups. Political speeches in Wales remain largely devoid of references to race and ethnicity and the low visibility of ethnic politics beyond media coverage of racial attacks or the asylum issue makes the idea of a national dialogue redundant’. See: Williams and De Lima, ‘Devolution, Multicultural Citizenship and Race Equality’, 515.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Italian Café-Culture and Cuisine in Wales

In 2011, a popular travel guide listed the long-standing *Sidoli's* ice-cream parlour (in Ebbw Vale) at the top of the 'ten essentials'-list of the Valleys; the list was based on a survey that had previously been conducted among 4,500 people living in south Wales.<sup>1</sup> As this anecdote suggests, the influence that Italian migration has had on Wales' culinary landscape appears to be beyond dispute; as Chapter One and Two have illustrated, Italian cafés and ice-cream parlours have historically been one of the country's most noticeable sights. Yet, is it germane to argue that Italian migration has *changed* Welsh food habits? Is the current popularity of Italian cuisine a consequence of Wales' long-standing patterns of Italian migration? Or is it rather a consequence of globalisation?<sup>2</sup> This chapter aims to answer such questions and investigate whether and to what extent the phenomenon that sociologist Germov has termed 'social appetite' has been modified by forms of 'Italian' recreation and consumption.<sup>3</sup> In so doing, the chapter focuses on a very important aspect of food consumption: the 'eating out' experience. As Zelinski has observed, restaurants, cafés as well as other ethnic venues deserve a particular attention as 'by examining [their] identity, number and location (...) we can begin to explore (...) changing food preferences' within a given society.<sup>4</sup> This chapter

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<sup>1</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'The Radio Wales Phone-In', 14 March 2011; *Wales Online*, 'Italian Ice-Cream Is Favourite South Wales Experience', 14 March 2011, <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/2011/03/14/italian-ice-cream-is-favourite-south-wales-experience-91466-28329771/>, accessed 15/03/2011.

<sup>2</sup> A good literature-review on the impact of globalisation on food-habits is in: B. Ashley, J. Hollows, S. Jones and B. Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies* (London, Routledge, 2004), pp. 91-104.

<sup>3</sup> For a critical interpretation of the term 'consumption' in a historical perspective see, for example, F. Trentmann, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption', *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004), 373-401 and J. Brewer and F. Trentmann, 'Introduction: Space, Time and Value in Consuming Cultures', in J. Brewer and F. Trentmann (eds), *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, (Oxford, Berg, 2006), pp. 1-17.

<sup>4</sup> Zelinsky, 'The Roving Palate', 51.

assesses if and to what extent Italian restaurants, cafés and ice-cream parlours in Wales could be seen as indicators of a changing culinary lifestyle of Welsh people.

The chapter is structured into three main sub-sections. The first explores different forms of Italian eating out patterns that could be found in Wales up to the 1980s. Based on a wide range of sources, including interviews, media and fiction, the sub-section assesses the extent to which Italian cafés, ice-cream parlours and restaurants have influenced Welsh food consumption patterns. The second sub-section explores the changing marketing-behaviour of Italian caterers over the last two decades. It argues that Italian caterers have increasingly emphasised their Italianness to meet a growing demand for authentic ethnic food. The third sub-section aims to expand what has been argued in Chapter Two and investigates the media and museum portrayal of Italian cuisine, particularly in the post-devolution context. Drawing on the remarkable coverage that Italian food has received on the Welsh media, this section argues that the emphasis upon Italian food, that became apparent in the second half of the 1990s, could be related to the surrounding political and cultural climate; Italian ice-cream, cafés (and so on) served as an ideal advertisement for new inclusive Wales.

### **Italian migration and eating-out patterns: from *Bracchi* to *trattorie*, 1940-1980**

It can be argued that, by the outbreak of the Second World War, Italian migration had already had an impact on Welsh consumption patterns, with Italian cafés becoming a prominent feature of south Wales' social landscape. According to Francis and Smith, by the 1920s, the extent of the influence of Italian ice-cream parlours and cafés on Welsh coal miners' diet had already become apparent as 'so desperate was the craving for sugared balm that a sole Welsh-owned shop (...) managed to survive all this Latin competition'.<sup>5</sup> Various narratives also suggest that, by 1939, Italians had already had a deep impact on the Welsh culinary

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<sup>5</sup> Francis and Smith, *The Fed*, p. 156.

landscape, introducing products (ice-cream and coffee) and meeting places (cafés) which Welsh customers would unmistakably class ‘Italian’. In other words, Italian shops were already regarded by Welsh people as a sort of exotic experience, by virtue of the new smells and tastes that they introduced. As Lambert, who grew up in the Merthyr Valley, put it in his novel *Roberto’s War*:

The bell above the door tinkled as we piled into the shop. The smell hit me as it always did. A lovely smell of sweets and chocolates and ice-cream and coffee.<sup>6</sup>

As Parker wrote in one of his novels, ice-cream carts that circulated across the Valleys at the time were also regarded by Welsh customers as attractive exotic objects:

Angelo thought the cart was the most beautiful object he had seen in his life. It was a flamboyant structure with red and silver wheels, a vivid blue wooden canopy supported on red and white barber poles overhanging the driver’s seat and in florid red lettering the name ‘G. Mari and Sons’ emblazoned on the sides and tailboard.<sup>7</sup>

In various oral history testimonies, ice-cream was described as being an authentic Italian invention which Italian migrants introduced to Wales. For example, Pietro Sidoli, who ran several coffee shops and ice-cream parlours in Porthcawl, recalled: ‘[Welsh] miners had never had a delicacy like ice-cream before the Italians came’.<sup>8</sup> Aldo Bacchetta, whose father established a café in Porth in 1932, commented: ‘the ice-cream (...) was such a popular dish, even in those days, to have coffee and ice-cream, that was such a successful thing to have in the shop’.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lambert, *Roberto’s War*, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Wales Video Gallery, ‘Pietro Sidoli: Italian Welshman’, 2003, NLW, V/DIG/A/15398.

<sup>9</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Café Cymru’, NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

While after 1945 the Italian café-trade in south Wales did not appear to be as prominent as before the war, various trade directories illustrate that the Bracchi still remained numerous across the Valleys up to the 1960s.<sup>10</sup> As Rhondda-based café-owner Mario Canale recalled:

There was a lot of things going on in the old days (...) café-life was a big thing in the Rhondda (...) in Treorchy alone there was (sic) a least six cafés in a very small area and everyone of them were usually busy in the 1950s and 1960s very busy then (...) and some of the cafés used to stay open until two o'clock in the morning (...) it was a buzzing area.<sup>11</sup>

Other respondents suggested that cafés and ice-cream parlours in Welsh holiday resorts were also booming at the time. For example, ice-cream parlour-owner David Forte recalled:

Llandudno was then incredibly busy, all the hotels and guesthouses were heaving (...) I remember as a small boy the Manx Ferry docking around 11pm and my grandfather selling them ice cream when the passengers were disembarking.<sup>12</sup>

Andrew Rabaiotti recalled that, in 1959, his father decided to relocate his business from Cardiff to Penarth to meet a growing holidaymakers-led demand for cafés:

(...) my dad went to Penarth and opened a café, Rabaiotti's Café, then he ended up with five businesses in one block (...) in those days in this country you didn't have package-holidays (...) so people stayed, there was the 'holiday at home' type of thing and a lot of people would go to Penarth because there's a beautiful esplanade (...), a pier and it was a very good site to open his café in 1959.<sup>13</sup>

The *South Wales Echo* also reported that, in the 1950s, the south Wales coast's businesses were booming, with ice-cream being one of the most requested goods:

These are golden days at Barry Island, million pound playground of South Wales. The sun shines, the money rolls...In ten brief, busy weeks – the life of a seaside season – more than two million day trippers visit the Island, trainloads from Cardiff and the Valleys, busloads from Birmingham and the Midlands. The turnover in buckets and spades, ice-cream, rubber bells, papers hats, bottles of pop, fish and chips and paste

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<sup>10</sup> *Wales Trades' Directory, 1958-1959*, 54<sup>th</sup> edn (Trades' Directory Limited, Edinburgh, 1959); *Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and District Trades' Directory, 1965-1966* (Edinburgh, Town and County Directories Limited, 1966); *Classified Trade Directory: Wales* (London, Classified Directories LTD, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> Interview with M. Canale, 31 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>12</sup> *North Wales Weekly News*, 18 February 2010, 'Three Generations of Italian Style'.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

jewellery is vast. (...) money clinks melodiously into the tills of one hundred shops, cafes and ice-cream parlours.<sup>14</sup>

Other newspapers also reported that demand for ice-cream witnessed a remarkable expansion in post-war Wales, Italian retailers being the protagonist of such a growth. In September 1950, the *Western Mail* reported that: ‘ice-cream today has become almost a standard diet. There is more of it eaten now in hotels and elsewhere than ever before’.<sup>15</sup> In 1956, the *Guardian* went as far as to list ‘Italian ice-cream parlours’ as one of the distinctive traits of the ‘cosmopolitan’ social landscape of the county of Glamorgan.<sup>16</sup> In 1967, the *Western Mail* defined Italians in south Wales as ‘the kings of ice-cream, coffee and chips’.<sup>17</sup> By 1979, Fecci’s ice-cream parlour in Caerphilly was reported to sell ‘110 gallons of ice-cream and 17 gallons of fresh cream together with many large catering portions of fruit’ on a normal busy day.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1980s, Italian ice-cream had become so widespread in Wales that, during the hot summer of 1981, the *Western Mail* reported:

Demand for ice-cream products rocketed, production was stepped up and overtime came in. At Ebbw Vale (24 degrees C, 75 degrees F) the Sidoli factory worked on into the evening producing 1,000 gallons of ice-cream and 25,000 ice lollies for the panting public.<sup>19</sup>

The post-war expansive trend of ice-cream industry was fostered by a number of factors. Several interviewees testified that, in some summer resorts, such a growth was primarily led by an initial relative lack of competition. As ice-cream producer Tony Parisella recalled:

[My grandfather] came to Conwy [in 1949], set up the *Continental* ice-cream parlour, which was a totally new idea then, it was an ice-cream parlour in the centre of Conwy (...) If the Italians hadn’t come over the British wouldn’t be eating the quality of ice-cream they’re eating now.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 21 July 1955, ‘Barry Playground of South Wales’.

<sup>15</sup> *Western Mail*, 2 September 1950, ‘113 Samples of Ice-Cream Fail Test’.

<sup>16</sup> *Guardian*, 6 August 1956, ‘Birth of Welsh Repertory?’.

<sup>17</sup> *Western Mail*, 17 August 1967, ‘Back to Italy Go the Coffee Kings of Wales’.

<sup>18</sup> *Western Mail*, 10 September 1979, ‘And for My Next Ice-Cream...’.

<sup>19</sup> *Western Mail*, 23 June 1981, ‘Ice-Cream Men Happy as June Hots Up’.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.



However, the prominence of ice-cream was also the result of investment in modern means of production. As Llandudno-based ice-cream producer David Forte recalled:

We (...) supplied all the hotels and guesthouses with ice-cream in the area, which we still do. We even sold Forte's ice cream in little tubs in the local cinemas (...) The machinery Forte's used in the 1950s to make ice cream was the most advanced you could find at the time.<sup>21</sup>

As former ice-cream producer Irene Griffith, from Conwy, also recalled: 'we had vans in the past that used to go to Anglesey, all the way to Blaenau Ffestiniog, Porthmadog, we had a good business'.<sup>22</sup> Griffith's brother and business partner Joseph Parisella also recalled the spread of ice-cream vans in the 1950s and 1960s pointing out: 'at one time, all the Italians throughout the whole country they were in ice-cream and it was the mobiles the vans and (...) in the big cities there were Italian families with over a hundred vans (...) and there were literally thousands of vans all over the country'.<sup>23</sup>

At the time, the boom of Italian ice-cream production was paralleled elsewhere in Britain. For example, *La Voce degli Italiani* reported in 1950 that the Warrington-based Manfredi family had 'the monopoly of ice-cream industry, with factories and ultra-modern and expensive machinery and luxury vans which are expressly equipped for retail (...) in the ice-cream production and retail, the entire Lancashire is controlled by Italians'.<sup>24</sup> South Wales-based Italian producers also started to invest in new means of production and retail. Whereas, before 1945, Italians used to sell ice-cream either in their shops or pushing old-fashioned carts, in the 1950s several ice-cream parlours started to grow and began to use motorised vans. In some cases, the expansion was fostered by the fact that many Italian cafés decided to stop producing home-made ice-cream triggering a demand for ice-cream manufacturing on a larger scale. As Ammanford-based ice-cream producer Renaldo Dallavalle recalled:

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<sup>21</sup> *North Wales Weekly News*, 18 February 2010, 'Three Generations of Italian Style'.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>24</sup> *La Voce degli Italiani*, April 1950, 'Italiani a Warrington' (author's translation).

My grandfather started the business back in the 1920s...Making ice-cream behind the shop, going around the streets with a cart (...) In the 1950s my father and my uncle Ben used to go out with a van around the streets selling cornets (...) from the van and then in the 1960s a lot of Italian cafes similar to our one stopped making the ice-cream because the equipment became expensive and (...) they were busy doing other things so they asked us to supply them with ice-cream so that's how we started then supplying a lot of the local Italian cafes around our area and that went on then.<sup>25</sup>

In other cases, early investment in ice-cream vans determined a sort of 'first-mover advantage' which resulted in a remarkable business expansion. As Swansea-based Steve Canale recalled:

That must have been about 1945, 1946. So then after that, as time went on, I was, as far as I know, one of the first blokes in south Wales to have a soft machine of his own bought by me (...) So we started off with that...I bought the van up in (...) Crewe (...) and it cost me £ 2,400. That was a soft machine (...) So then, my brother Brian (...) we bought another one for him. So we now had two soft vans around the Valleys here. And we were very, very good, we were really selling well, this was the best part of our life (...) There was nobody around here with a soft van (...) And we did very, very well. (...) In the end we finished up with nearly thirty vehicles. We were very, very popular (...) because we were so strong.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, ice-cream had, since the early days, become a distinctive trait of the Italian presence in Wales. However, various narratives suggest that, besides ice-cream, Italians had, since the early days, introduced to Wales new forms of 'Italian' recreation and consumption, including Italian fare, objects and ambience. As café-owner Nick Antoniazzi pointed out:

It think it was something different, I think they brought something different to the area...They brought Italian food, they brought coffee, you know, they brought *atmosphere* they brought somewhere for people to go and meet, you know, and they did become very very popular, more popular in south Wales because of the mining industry and I think people wanted hot drinks you know sit down and talk instead of being at home.<sup>27</sup>

A similar sort of statement was made by popular ice-cream producer *Joe's Ice Cream* on its website, which read:

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with S. Canale, 8 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

Back in 1898, Luigi Cascarini [the founder of Joe's] came over to Swansea from the Abruzzi Mountains in Italy. In the midst of the industrial era, Mr. Cascarini was shocked to find that there were no cafés open to accommodate the early miners and dock workers of the Swansea valley. Luigi decided that he would serve them coffee early in the mornings and stay open for them until they returned home late at night. He worked every hour of the day serving rich roast coffee. His café was such a success that he soon opened another and another.<sup>28</sup>

Once again, the passage highlighted the pioneering role of Italian café-keepers. A regular customer of an Italian café pointed out that 'steam pies' were also an important Italian culinary invention, which Italians 'knew how to do'.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, some Welsh-Italians argued that old-style coffee machines, which have for long been a common feature of every Italian coffee shop in Wales, could make a good espresso way before Gaggia machines were introduced to Britain in the 1950s.<sup>30</sup> This is confirmed by the Italian consular trade directory *Guida Generale degli Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, according to which, at least three salesmen of Italian 'espresso-makers' were already to be found in Wales before the Second World War. In Pontypridd there was a retailer (Ghisoni) of 'a vast collection of machines to toast and ground coffee', in Pontypool the Quadrelli Bros worked as 'agents for express coffee machines and accessories', while in Swansea F. Rabaiotti was exclusive agent for the espresso machine brand 'La Pavoni' which was advertised as 'the best espresso coffee machine in the world'. In addition, a number of cafés in south Wales (at least eight) clearly claimed to provide 'express coffee' in their adverts.<sup>31</sup>

The fact that, by then, coffee machines were already regarded as signs of *Italicity* by both Welsh and Italians was highlighted by Welsh-Italian journalist Mario Basini who defined

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<sup>28</sup> Joe's Ice-Cream, <http://www.joes-icecream.co.uk/our-story>, accessed 7/04/2011.

<sup>29</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Cafè Cymru', NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>30</sup> Wales Video Gallery, 'Pietro Sidoli: Italian Welshman', 2003, NLW, V/DIG/A/15398.

<sup>31</sup> *Guida Generale*.

them 'one of the outstanding achievements of twentieth century Italian design'.<sup>32</sup> Third generation café-owner Joe Moruzzi also recalled that in the early days:

The machines were from Italy, the famous coffee machines, the big sort of cylindrical machines, that sort of a steam and water coming out and made this wonderful noises that sort of make coffees, teas, steam pies, steam soups, they would do everything really.<sup>33</sup>

In his novel *The Alien Land*, Parker perfectly expressed, in fictional terms, the appeal that Italian coffee makers held for Welsh customers in the 1920s:

The novelty espresso machines (...) attracted great attention (...) being handsome, chromium-plated models with a variety of gadgets that seemed sufficient to do everything except roast the Sunday joint. They heated pies, made coffee, provided constant hot water for drinks (...) so Angelo sold more coffee and, in the process, assisted in the growth of a new and fashionable national taste.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, it is apparent that, although Welsh-Italian shop-keepers did not probably make a conscious use of Italicity for marketing purposes, they made use of objects and products that Welsh customers would regard as 'exotic', 'new' and, above all, 'Italian'. As Aldo Bacchetta pointed out: 'I think it was the style (...) the old ambience in the shop itself (...) the fittings, the sweets, the chocolate, the smell, the beautiful aroma of coffee and Italian food (...) it was like a magnet, it would draw them [the customers] into the shop'.<sup>35</sup> Such an exotic ambience was immortalised by photographer Mo Wilson in the pictures that she took in 1989 across the Valleys.<sup>36</sup> In her fifteen portraits of some long-standing Bracchi-shops, Wilson showed that Italians had introduced to Wales a new type of entertainment, which had nothing to do with public houses and other 'traditionally' British meeting places. For example, the *Cresci's* in Ynysybwl featured small squared wooden tables, which marked the introduction of a typically 'Italian' form of recreation which entails actions such as conversing in front of a

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<sup>32</sup> Basini, *Real Merthyr*, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with J. Moruzzi, 8 October 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>34</sup> Parker, *The Alien Land*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>35</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Cafê Cymru', NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

<sup>36</sup> M. Wilson, 'Italian Cafes in South Wales', 1989, NLW, 123 D.

cup of coffee and playing cards (rather than consuming pints of beer). Inside the *Express Café* in Abertillery, chocolate and sweet jars, an old coffee machine and an old-fashioned scale on the bar were all essential traits of a typical Italian café, which could not be found in British public houses.

Popular culture has more recently contributed to keep the memory of the Bracchi's ambience alive, one example being Welsh production *Very Annie Mary* (2001).<sup>37</sup> The film was partially set in an old-standing café (the *Station Café*) in Pontycymer. Although the two fictional café-keepers were not Italian, all the symbols of the Bracchi's ambience (old-fashioned counter, coffee machine and sweet jars) were easily recognizable. Therefore, the Italian café as being an essential feature of the south Walian landscape was once again reinforced. Drawing on her Italian grandparents' memories, Welsh-Italian novelist Anita Arcari also highlighted, in fictional terms, the essential features of the Bracchi-shops' ambience, one that Welsh customers would identify as Italian. As the author wrote:

A huge mirror dominated the area behind the counter, and rows of glass shelves held bottles of cordials and other soft drinks, dandelion and burdock, homemade lemonade and sarsaparilla, popular favourites along with the ubiquitous ice-cream sodas. Colourful jars of sweets and bars of chocolate of every description filled every space on the shelves (...) Big boxes of chocolates, tied up with shiny coloured ribbon, were arranged cunningly to catch the eye of the young man who strolled in with their sweethearts.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, it seems that what attracted Welsh customers to Italian cafés was not so much their culinary offer, but their (allegedly) Italian *atmosphere*. Gabaccia has also observed that what attracted non-Italian customers to Italian eating places in USA was their friendly and pleasant Italian atmosphere. Italian restaurants, as Gabaccia has pointed out, were popular among Americans because they featured waiters, cooks and musicians who 'spoke, thought and acted "Italian"' and offered 'a simple, Latin variety of hedonism (...) New tastes, new sounds,

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<sup>37</sup> S. Sugarman, 'Very Annie Mary', 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Arcari, *The Hokey Pokey Man*, p. 312.

new scents (...) new colours'.<sup>39</sup> In other words: 'Italian restaurants consciously marketed a dining "experience", not just ethnic food'.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it appeared that customers, on both sides of the Atlantic, liked to dine at Italian eating places in order to experience what Zelinsky would call 'exotic vacations without airports or baggage'.<sup>41</sup> This was to become a common feature of British customers' behaviour over the following decades; a survey showed that, by the mid-1990s, more than 90 per cent of British people declared that the venue's 'atmosphere' was still one of the most important aspects of their eating-out experience.<sup>42</sup>

The evidence which has been illustrated suggests that the Welsh catering sector was a vacant market, where Italian shop-keepers were able to establish an ethnic niche, providing 'exotic' products and ambience. This implies that ice-cream as well as other Italian products fundamentally changed the Welsh national diet and re-invigorated the Welsh palate. Such an assumption also emerges from a number of migrant narratives. In particular, some Italian respondents argued that, when they first arrived in Wales, the local cuisine was a sort of 'culinary desert', which was progressively taken over by Italian taste. For example, Armando Cugno commented:

When I first came here (...) nobody sold wine, nobody sold lemons (...), peppers, parsley (...) pizza (...) now everyone eats pizza. Our nickname used to be spaghetti, they used to call us Italian spaghetti (...) now this is the nation that eats more spaghetti, they eat more spaghetti than we [Italians] do!<sup>43</sup>

Steve Canale also pointed out:

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<sup>39</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 102.

<sup>41</sup> Zelinsky, 'The Roving Palate', 53.

<sup>42</sup> Warde, 'Eating Out', p. 130.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with A. Cugno, 1 May 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

There was nobody selling....Olive oil! Don't mention it, you can't find it, you couldn't find it anywhere! Nobody knew (...) They really thought oil, olive oil was medicine and now look at it. They caught on and they know it's good.<sup>44</sup>

Antonio Marchesi recalled:

When I arrived, you only found olive oil in a pharmacy, in fifty three. (...) Then, naturally (...) we settled in well with the Welsh people, and they got used to us, they wanted to know everything about our culture, they were interested in...They wanted to taste our food, spaghetti (...) They started to learn how to make sauces, how to cook spaghetti. Now the Welsh eat more spaghetti than we do. Because they realised that it was a very healthy way of eating, healthier than eating...Eggs with butter or with lard, they're tastier with oil. They started to appreciate the taste of oil; they started to appreciate Mediterranean cooking.<sup>45</sup>

Such attitudes toward Italian food have sometimes been transmitted to the second generation.

For example, Italian journalist Mario Basini, whose parents ran a café in Merthyr Tydfil, wrote in his memoirs:

My parents' combined culinary skills triggered an eating revolution among their discerning Merthyr public. They had the materials. Every month or so a big van would call from an Italian wholesaler in Cardiff to deliver a cornucopia of foodstuff which are now a commonplace of supermarket shelves, but which were then as rare as caviar. There was every type of pasta, Arborio rice, Parmesan cheese, dried mushrooms, salamis, cooking sausages, Parma ham, huge tins of olive oil and tomato puree. (...) I remember the howls of complaint as I packed down in school rugby scrums the day after one of my parents' wonderful meals. 'Who's been eating bloody garlic?' now it would be impossible to find a scrum which did not stink of garlic.<sup>46</sup>

The accounts above testify that Wales witnessed a fundamental cultural change. Whereas Italian food (spaghetti, olive oil, garlic, etc.) was originally seen by some Welsh people as being a marker of otherness, it was to become a marker of inclusiveness, symbolising the integration of Italians into Welsh society.<sup>47</sup> Italian cafés and restaurants in Wales functioned

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with S. Canale, 8 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with A. Marchesi, 24 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>46</sup> Basini, *Real Merthyr*, p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, as Ashley and other authors have observed: 'We should not subscribe too enthusiastically to any version which presents British food as uniformly in the process of becoming a cosmopolitan cuisine. Old prejudices die hard, and it would be inappropriate to underestimate the continuing role of xenophobic attitudes in expressions of national feeling'. For example, the 'foreign joke', is still very much alive in British popular culture and frequently focuses on food. See: Ashley et al., *Food and Cultural Studies*, p. 83.

as what Appadurai would define ‘arenas for the transcendence of ethnic difference and for the exploration of the culinary other’.<sup>48</sup>

According to some Italian respondents, not only did Italian cuisine cross its ethnic boundaries to become part of the Welsh national diet, but it also improved it. This assumption draws upon long-standing negative stereotypes concerning British food. As George Orwell famously wrote: ‘it is commonly said, even by the English (sic) themselves, that English (sic) cooking is the worst in the world’.<sup>49</sup> The existence of such negative perceptions among Italians is demonstrated by the fact that, as already noted, some migrant workers who were recruited by coal and tinsplate industries initially found it very difficult to adapt to Welsh taste, food being one of the main reasons of their complaints. For example, as emerges from a meeting between the MLNS and Welsh Tinsplate Industry in 1951:

There was a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the Italians resident at the Morriston Hostel regarding the type of food supplied and the method of cooking. The Industry thought that it might be an advantage if an Italian cook could be appointed. (...) The National Service Hostels Corporation were (...) prepared to appoint an Italian cook, and would endeavour to obtain one in this country.<sup>50</sup>

Such an attitude toward British food was paralleled in other areas of the country. In particular, those migrant nationalities with (arguably) well-established culinary traditions (Indian, Chinese, Italian, etc.) appeared to be more inclined to criticize the receiving country’s cuisine. For example, an Indian restaurateur in London recalled: ‘in terms of food Britain was a total vacuum’ and ‘anyone who came from overseas could fill it up’.<sup>51</sup>

The narratives which have been used so far suggest that, by the early 1950s, Italian food had already left its mark on the Welsh culinary landscape. Yet, there is evidence of the fact that,

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<sup>48</sup> Appadurai, ‘How to make a national cuisine’, 9.

<sup>49</sup> George Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. D. Orwell and I. Angus, (London, Secker & Warburg, 1968), 3: 38.

<sup>50</sup> MLNS, ‘Proposed Recruitment of Additional Italian Workers for the Tinsplate Industry’, TNA, LAB 26/274.

<sup>51</sup> Ashley et al., *Food and Cultural Studies*, p. 78.



apart from ice-cream and espresso coffee, it was not until the 1960s or even 1970s that recognizable Italian products (e.g. pasta, pizza, etc.) started to become popular in Wales. The *Guida Generale* shows that, before 1939, virtually all Italian cafés and shops in Wales did not claim to provide any recognisably 'Italian' fare. In most adverts Italian café-keepers simply claimed to sell 'confectionery, cigarettes and refreshments' without making any reference to the Italianness of their products.<sup>52</sup> As Colpi and Morris have argued, selling Italicity was not the main purpose of old-style Italian cafés, which, since their early days, provided predominantly British products to their customers.<sup>53</sup> As Panayi has also pointed out, 'even though a few Italian restaurants had emerged before 1945, only a handful of these served the post-1945 conception of Italian food, especially pasta'.<sup>54</sup>

This marketing strategy was the obvious result of merely demographic conditions. Unlike countries like the USA, where the boom of Italian food provision was initially triggered by existence of a large Italian population willing to consume Italian products, Wales (and more in general Britain) hosted a relatively small and dispersed Italian minority that was simply not big enough to sustain any demand for Italian cuisine.<sup>55</sup> As a result, Bracchi-owners had to adapt to local taste, as Welsh workers represented the vast majority of their clientele.<sup>56</sup> According to Morris, it was not until the 1950s that, thanks to the spread of Gaggia coffee machines, some British coffee shops started to make a real market-orientated use of Italicity. Nevertheless, these Italianate cafés were not to be found in large numbers in Wales, as they were mainly located in London and were often not even run by people of Italian descent.<sup>57</sup> Andrew Rabaiotti recalled how, even in the 1960s and 1970s, the café which his father used

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<sup>52</sup> *Guida Generale*.

<sup>53</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 141; Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', 540-552.

<sup>54</sup> Panayi, *Spicing Up Britain*, p. 117.

<sup>55</sup> In USA, in 1938, some 10,000 groceries still catered exclusively to Italians and an equal number to Jews. See: Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 75.

<sup>56</sup> For a sociological analysis of taste as a class marker see, for example, Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

<sup>57</sup> Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', 540-552.

to run in Penarth would still provide a predominantly ‘British’ menu (‘fish and chips and cakes and toast, tea and coffee’) one that could appeal local holidaymakers.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, there seemed to be hardly any sign of Italicity in Italian cafés in Wales; contrary to popular myth, some did not even display recognizable ‘Italian’ names.<sup>59</sup>

Although the Bracchi had for long been appreciated by the Welsh for their Italian atmosphere, it was not until the 1960s that a market-orientated use of Italicity started to spread around Wales following a broader British trend. This sort of Italianisation of the British catering sector was boosted by the proliferation, initially in London, of the so called *trattorie*, a new type of low-cost Italian restaurant that, as Colpi has observed, were able to offer ‘a high standard of cooking at modest prices’.<sup>60</sup> The rise of the Italian restaurant-sector was part of a broader increasing popularity that various ethnic cuisines (especially Indian and Chinese) were experiencing at the time; by 1977, Britain was home to some 1,500 Italian restaurants, adding to thousands of Chinese (between 1,600 and 1,800) and Indian (1,950) eating-places.<sup>61</sup> According to the 1966 survey *British Eating Out*, more than half of respondents declared to have visited a foreign restaurant at least once in their life.<sup>62</sup> The internationalisation of British taste was the result of a simple fact: an increasing number of people in Britain could afford to eat out as a consequence of spreading prosperity that the country was experiencing at the time.<sup>63</sup> British weekly expenditure on meals consumed outside the home grew from less than 10 per cent of the total household expenditure on food in 1959 to almost 14 per cent in 1970 and to 17 per cent in 1980.<sup>64</sup> In addition, more and more people in Britain could afford to go on holiday abroad; by 1983, 62 per cent of the

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>59</sup> See: *Guida Generale; Wales Trades’ Directory, 1958-1959*.

<sup>60</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 141; Morris, ‘Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna’, 540-542.

<sup>61</sup> Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>62</sup> J. Burnett, *England Eats Out: a Social History of Eating Out in England from 1830 to the Present* (London, Pearson, 2004), p. 282.

<sup>63</sup> Morgan, *Britain Since 1945*, p. 566.

<sup>64</sup> Warde and Martens, ‘Eating Out’, p. 122.

Britons had experienced at least one holiday abroad at some time.<sup>65</sup> As a result, a growing number of people in Britain begun to appreciate both cuisine and atmosphere of foreign eating places.

Therefore, the *trattorie* represented a response to a growing demand for ethnic (and often Italian) food in Britain. Thanks to their exotic image, these establishments became very successful among British customers, as both ambience and cuisine of the *trattorie* clearly recalled the romantic Mediterranean atmosphere that an increasing number of people in Britain had experienced during their holidays in southern Europe.<sup>66</sup> The international prominence that Italian cinema was experiencing at the time thanks to outstanding films such as Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960) as well as Hollywood productions featuring Italian film stars or settings also contributed to popularise Italian cuisine in Britain.<sup>67</sup> As Colpi has observed, 'chequered table-clothes, a *Chianti* bottle on each table with a candle stuck on it, crudely painted scenes of Italy on the walls (...) and (...) simple pasta dishes (...) with mandolin strumming in the background' soon became the distinctive traits of these popular Italian restaurants.<sup>68</sup> Not only were these Italian eating-places attended by newly-urban affluent classes but also by young sections of the population - the so called *mod* culture - who, as a reaction against Americanisation of the British cultural landscape, chose continental (and often Italian) products, two examples being espresso coffee and *Vespa* scooters.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Burnett, *Plenty and Want*, p. 312.

<sup>66</sup> The number of holidays abroad rose from two to seven millions between 1951 and 1971. In 1966, Italy was the second favourite destination of British holiday-makers, covering 17 per cent of British holidays abroad. See: Burnett, *England Eats Out*, p. 269.

<sup>67</sup> Girelli, *Beauty and the Beast*; see also P. Bondanella, *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to Present* (New York, Continuum, 1983).

<sup>68</sup> Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, p. 141.

<sup>69</sup> Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', 540-552; A. Arvidsson, 'From Counterculture to Consumer Culture: Vespa and the Italian Youth Market', *Journal of Consumer Culture* 1 (2001), 47-71.

Throughout the 1960s, some areas of Wales were also affected by a growing consumer-led affluence and witnessed an appreciable growth of the Italian catering trade, particularly in Cardiff and, to a lesser extent, Swansea and Newport.<sup>70</sup> According to the *Kelly's Western Mail Directory*, for example, the number of Italian eating places in the Welsh capital grew from ten in 1952 to sixteen in 1970.<sup>71</sup> By then, for the first time, these restaurants displayed 'evocative' Italian names, such as *La Dolce Vita* and *Club Roma*, and provided typically Italian fare that denoted a clear attempt to sell Italicity to Welsh customers. The reason why the growth of the Italian catering trade seemed to affect just urban areas of the country was that there was a 'growing concentration of economic activity and of employment opportunities in a narrower and narrower segment' of Wales (traditionally seen as the 'M4 corridor').<sup>72</sup> In other words, the new prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s was predominantly affecting urban areas of the country, which witnessed a remarkable growth of service-employment (those employed in white-collar occupations doubled between 1945 and 1968) thanks to governmental investment-orientated policies which attracted private companies to south Wales and to the transferral of public bodies (e.g. the DVLA in Swansea) to southern Welsh towns and cities.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, it was in these areas (not in the declining Valleys) that the new Italian catering trade could attract a rising affluent clientele, one that was willing to experience exotic fare.

However, the spread of Italian cuisine in Wales should not be overestimated. If it is true that Cardiff and, to a lesser extent, other Welsh cities and summer resorts experienced a growth of the Italian catering sector, large sections of the country remained substantially unfamiliar with such developments. In addition, as already noted, a significant share of demand for

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<sup>70</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, pp. 345-347. As Morgan has observed, between the 1950s and the 1960s, Wales witnessed 'a sharp rise in the private ownership of cars, in the sales of consumer durables such as washing machines, in the spread of televisions'.

<sup>71</sup> *Kelly's Western Mail directory of Cardiff* (London, Kelly's Directory Ltd, 1952 and 1970).

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 322.

<sup>73</sup> Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, pp. 313-317.

Italian ice-cream and coffee was not even Welsh-led, being largely sustained by English holidaymakers. Some respondents argued that it was not until the 1970s or even 1980s that Italian cuisine actually started to become ‘popular’ in Wales. According to several interviewees, even some popular summer resorts did not become familiar with Italian cuisine (beside coffee and ice-cream) until the 1980s. Although, as early as 1961, *Alfredo’s* restaurant in Conwy advertised his ‘special Italian dishes’ in a local newspaper,<sup>74</sup> restaurateur Fausto Galli recalled that when he opened his first Italian restaurant in nearby Llandudno in 1982: ‘people would come up to me asking “are spaghetti a plant? Where do they grow?” (...) they really needed to be educated’.<sup>75</sup> Galli and his colleague Pasquale Milo also claimed to have been the first to open a ‘proper’ Italian restaurant in Llandudno. As Milo recalled: ‘before us there had been a few small pizzerias but not a proper Italian restaurant’.<sup>76</sup> Llandudno-based Tony Parisella also recalled that it was not until the 1970s that ‘pizza houses started popping up everywhere (...) they [Italy] won the World Cup in 82’ (...) and things like Pavarotti and all these guys, it’s cool to be Italian then’.<sup>77</sup> Several local newspapers also suggest that the north Wales summer resorts witnessed a certain expansion of the Italian restaurant sector throughout the 1980s, which mirrored a more general ethnicisation of the catering trade. For example, in 1985, the *North Wales Pioneer* reported that the *Pizzeria Napoli* in Llandudno offered a ‘warm, friendly atmosphere and good food’<sup>78</sup> while *Nino’s* Italian restaurant, which had been set up five years before in Rhos-On-Sea,

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<sup>74</sup> *North Wales Weekly News*, 18 May 1961, ‘Alfredo’s Restaurant (Advertisement)’.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation). Galli’s statement recalls the BBC programme *Panorama* which, on 1 April 1957, fooled the British public broadcasting a spoof documentary about the ‘spaghetti crops’ in Ticino (the Italian-speaking section of Switzerland). See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid\\_2819000/2819261.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid_2819000/2819261.stm), accessed 28/04/2011.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author’s translation).

<sup>77</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

<sup>78</sup> *North Wales Pioneer*, 30 March 1985, ‘Pizzeria Napoli’.

had ‘an authentic Italian look’ and covered ‘a wide range of meals’ including ‘ice-creams’ and ‘pizzas’.<sup>79</sup>

### **‘Authentic’ Italian restaurants and *Bracchi* revival, 1990-2010**

From the 1990s onwards, Italian cuisine appears to have increased its popularity among Welsh people. According to a 1991 survey, Welsh people seemed to appreciate Italian cuisine even more than their English and Scottish counterparts. Not only was the percentage of respondents who declared to have eaten in an Italian restaurant at least once over the previous twelve months slightly higher than British average (17 per cent versus 16 per cent), but the proportion of those who asserted to be regular customers (at least once a month) appeared to be the highest in Britain.<sup>80</sup> By 2011, the Welsh capital hosted at least twenty nine Italian restaurants (roughly one Italian restaurant per 10,000 inhabitants), not including popular Italianate food and coffee shop-chains as Costa and Nero.<sup>81</sup> This growth seemed to mirror the broader steady and sustained expansion of the British catering trade; between 1980 and 1990, the number of food-related businesses rose from 109,500 to almost 125,000.<sup>82</sup> The Italian ice-cream sector also witnessed an expansive trend. By 2011 *D&B Business Register* reported that four out of twelve main ice-cream and frozen desserts producers in Wales were of Italian heritage; *Cresci’s* and *Frank’s Ice-Cream* in Ammanford, *Joe’s Ice-Cream* in Swansea and *Sidoli & Sons* in Welshpool.<sup>83</sup> As *Frank’s* manager Renaldo Dallavalle pointed out:

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<sup>79</sup> *North Wales Pioneer*, 2 February 1985, ‘Like Mamma Used to Make’.

<sup>80</sup> M. Payne and B. Payne, *Eating Out in the UK: Market Structure, Consumer Attitudes and Prospects for the 1990s. Economist Intelligence Unit Special Report n 2169* (London, Economist Intelligence Unit and Business International, 1993), p. 85.

<sup>81</sup> D&B, *Business register 2011-2012: Cardiff & Swansea* (London, Gap Books, 2011), pp. 499-500.

<sup>82</sup> Payne and Payne, *Eating Out in the UK*, p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> D&B, *Business register 2011-2012: Cardiff & Swansea*, p. 442; *Business register 2011-2012: rest of Wales*, (London, Gap Books, 2011), p. 364.

In the mid 1980s we won a contract then to supply Sainsbury, the supermarket, and we were the first Welsh company really to go nationally in the supermarkets (...) Then in 2003 (...) we won a contract to supply all the hospitals in the UK (...) and Morrisons then took it on (...) and now we supply all the major supermarkets in the UK and Ireland (...) we're probably the fourth biggest ice-cream producer in the UK now (...) we employ thirty people.<sup>84</sup>

As Morris has observed, such an expansion of the Italian food sector was fostered by a renewed positive image of Italy among the British, that was fostered by the strengthening of Italian fashion brands, the 1990 World Cup (held in Italy) and, lately, the spread of low-cost flights to Italy thanks to companies including Ryanair.<sup>85</sup> In Wales, such an Italy-orientated attitude boomed when, in 1996, world-famous Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti performed at the *International Music Eisteddfod* in Llangollen. An HTV journalist reporting the event recalled how a young Pavarotti had already sung at the *Eisteddfod* forty years before and 'it was that event that helped [him] to decide to devote his life to singing'; the special relationship between Wales and Italy was once again reinforced.<sup>86</sup> Opera as a symbol of Italy was also central to 2001 Welsh production *Very Annie Mary*, which features a character (known to all as 'the Voice of the Valleys') who sings in the local Chapel seeing himself as a sort of Welsh Pavarotti. In addition, the frustrated protagonist, whose dream is becoming a soprano, sings several Italian opera songs throughout the film.

Besides Pavarotti and opera, the popularity of Italian cuisine in Wales was also boosted by the proliferation of TV programmes addressing Italian food. Several respondents pointed to television chefs and the internet as two of the main reasons for the spread of Italian cuisine over the last decade. For example, café-keeper Nick Antoniazzi commented: 'I think Italian [food] is a very trendy kind of thing (...) A lot of these top chefs top restaurants all doing Italian food, [like] Jamie Oliver...Most of the food that he does and all his television

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>85</sup> Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', pp. 540-552.

<sup>86</sup> HTV, 'Pavarotti in Llangollen', 7 April 1996, NLW, Cell E123002765/02.

programmes are all about Italian food, he's always talking about Italian food'.<sup>87</sup> Restaurateur Giuseppe Lynch also pointed out: '[customers] are more educated because of TV chefs, books you can buy, the internet (...) you can access so many recipes on the internet (...) more people are more adventurous at home now at cooking and I think it's due to all the TV programmes and celebrity chefs'.<sup>88</sup> Restaurateur Fausto Galli also commented: 'television shows all those English chefs who have learnt how to cook Italian food, like the famous Jamie Oliver, Ramsey, who have learnt from Italian chefs'.<sup>89</sup> Besides the British media, Welsh TV and newspapers also contributed to popularise Italian cuisine, praising the allegedly 'unique' ambience and authenticity of Welsh-Italian eating places (see below).

It is to meet such a growing demand for Italian cuisine that, over the last two decades, Welsh-Italian restaurateurs and ice-cream makers seem to have increasingly emphasised their Italianness. As Llandudno-based restaurateur Pasquale Milo pointed out:

People obviously as time went by have acquired a broader knowledge of Italian cuisine (...) We have tried and follow the newest things in Italy and transfer them here on our menu because (...) our Welsh or, more in general, British customers, travelling more, especially abroad, they have more knowledge and appreciate more the *authentic* stuff.<sup>90</sup>

As this testimony suggests, 'authentic' has become the key word of the Italian catering trade, one that, by 2010, was highlighted by most Italian restaurants' websites. For example, Llandudno-based *Romeo* stated on its website: 'we can provide you with excellent, *authentic* Italian cuisine in a relaxing, friendly Italian atmosphere'.<sup>91</sup> Another Italian restaurant in Llandudno (*Mamma Rosa*) also claimed: 'our food is homemade and truly *authentic* with the fresh flavours, colours, and textures of Italy'.<sup>92</sup> In Cardiff, *Valentino* also declared to 'create

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>90</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>91</sup> Ristorante Romeo, [www.ristoranteromeo.com](http://www.ristoranteromeo.com), accessed 15/05/2011.

<sup>92</sup> Ristorante Mamma Rosa, [www.italian-restaurant-llandudno.co.uk](http://www.italian-restaurant-llandudno.co.uk), accessed 15/05/2011.



superb Italian cuisine which captures the essential flavours of traditional Italian food'.<sup>93</sup> *La Boheme* (in Cardiff) also claimed: 'our extensive menu incorporates many different flavours using only the best ingredients imported directly from Italy, ensuring the best quality cuisine always'.<sup>94</sup>

Like restaurateurs, ice-cream producers also started to emphasise the authenticity of their produce. For example, ice-cream manufacturer Joseph Parisella claimed:

All the ingredients come from Italy, you know, the flavours (...) the flavours are Italian flavours and in Italy, it's common there isn't it? - the Italian *gelato* - and we make that now and it goes very very well (...) if you picked up a gallon of our ice-cream you'd say 'oh that's heavy' and you pick up a gallon of the mass-produced ice cream...The wind would blow it off the wall, there's no weight in it because basically they've got a liquid and they've blown it up and froze it, it's frost and there's no weight in it.<sup>95</sup>

Such an emphasis on the authenticity of the product appeared to be a reaction to mass-produced ice-cream. As Steve Canale also pointed out:

[In the past] the quality was outstanding. It was cream, and that's why they call it ice-cream. Today they call it ice-cream but is not cream, you don't know what they put in it any more (...) The ice-cream has been killed by the supermarkets, some people buying gallons of what they call ice-cream which is not. And they just buy it because it's dead cheap.<sup>96</sup>

Even some owners of old-standing Bracchi started to claim that their products were 'authentic', whether Italian or not. For example, some Italian shop-keepers started to claim that their 'fish and chips' were the best to be found Britain-wide.<sup>97</sup> For example, in 1988, the *Gazzetta* reported:

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<sup>93</sup> Ristorante Valentino, [www.valentinocardiff.co.uk](http://www.valentinocardiff.co.uk), accessed 15/05/2011.

<sup>94</sup> Ristorante La Boheme, [www.labohemecardiff.co.uk](http://www.labohemecardiff.co.uk), accessed 15/05/2011.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with S. Canale, 8 June 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>97</sup> It is important to note that, as Panayi has observed, 'fish and chips', which is usually regarded as a British staple product had actually French and Jewish origins. See: Panayi, *Spicing Up Britain*.

Distressing news from Wimbledon. A Chinese restaurant is planning to serve Chinese fish n' chips as well as the normal junk food (...) This presents a grave threat to a fine institution. Everyone knows that the best English (sic) chip shops are all Italian.<sup>98</sup>

Six years later, the same newspaper added:

The rest of Wales has finally acknowledged what most fish fryers already knew – that the best chips are made by Italians! Or Roma 2000 in High Street, Gorseinon to be precise. The award presented to owner Frank Romanello - was made in a contest run by the Sea Fish Industry in association with the Potato Marketing Board. Roma 2000 beat two other Welsh restaurants to win the award, and now goes into the UK-wide contest.<sup>99</sup>

Having seen its shop voted best fish and chip in south Wales in a national competition organised by the Sea Fish Industry Authority in 1996, the manager Anthony Rossi also commented: 'one of the most satisfying things about winning this award is that it is proof that in the day and age of oriental takeaways, the industry recognises that Italians still do it best!'<sup>100</sup>

Other Italian shopkeepers claimed that not only their cuisine, but their cafés themselves were authentic, at a time when the old-standing Bracchi in the Valleys were inexorably declining and *Starbucks* and other standardised coffee shop chains were conversely eroding the Welsh-Italian market. As a café-owner in the Rhondda Valley commented: 'our cafes are being taken over by these new *Nero's*, *Starbucks*, but in small communities like this there will always be a shop like this'. This statement implied that the new coffee shops could not take over the Valley-community's spirit that only the authentic Bracchi had been able to embody in over one hundred years of activity.<sup>101</sup> Fourth generation café-owner Andrew Rabaiotti also pointed out:

(...) I don't think that [coffee chains] could give what a family [could give]...Your *heritage*...Because that's what they're buying as well when they're buying a cup of

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<sup>98</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, June 1988, 'News'.

<sup>99</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, January 1994, 'Italian Make Tastiest Chips'.

<sup>100</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, January 1996, 'Rossi's Is Voted Best in South Wales!'.

<sup>101</sup> ITV Wales, 'Great Welsh Cafes', NLW, Cell E123 016350/01.

coffee they're buying the heritage (...) I don't think we would be able to franchise this unit because we just don't think like that, because the customer is so important (...) we will always be small, we will always be hands-on (...) it is part of the customer service and I think that's (...) the *Italian way* (...) to (...) make you feel part of the family (...) people appreciate the family-environment they're coming into.<sup>102</sup>

Simply put, some respondents suggested that coffee chains could not provide that sort of authentic café-experience that only Italian family-own businesses (like his) could provide.

Therefore, it seems that Italian café-owners, ice-cream producers and restaurateurs have attempted to react to that process that van Der Berghe would term de-ethnicisation. As the anthropologist has observed, 'ethnic food can fall victim to its success'; the growing popularity of ethnic products could cause them to lose their value as ethnic markers and thus to become 'de-ethnicised'.<sup>103</sup> As Warde has similarly argued, some foreign dishes can become 'domesticated' as a part of a more general process of 'routinization of the exotic'.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, this process of de-ethnicisation could pose a threat to the Welsh-Italian catering trade, as de-Italianising Italian cuisine (or ambience) means depriving Italian caterers of their *raison d'être*. Consequently, Italian chefs (in Wales and elsewhere), ice-cream producers and café-owners have increasingly tended to claim authenticity as a reaction against that process of homogenisation of the catering scene that Morris would term 'Starbuckisation of the British high streets'.<sup>105</sup> As restaurateur Fausto Galli pointed out:

Here [in this restaurant] all the stuff comes from Italy, every eatery, all the tomatoes, all the wines (...) a lot of Italian restaurants have been opened (...) The problem is that there are many Italian restaurants that are not run by Italians...This is the problem (...) Most of them are people – Chinese, Egyptians, Pakistanis – who come up with an Italian restaurant where actually nothing is Italian...There's one there [in Llandudno] which is run by Pakistanis, you walk up the stairs and you smell a smell of curry, of cumin and you think 'this is not an Italian restaurant' (...) it doesn't provide the *authenticity* of an Italian restaurant.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Van der Berghe, 'Ethnic Cuisine', 394.

<sup>104</sup> Warde, 'Eating Globally', p. 302.

<sup>105</sup> Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', 540-552.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

As restaurateur Gino Vasami also pointed out:

We get the produce from an Italian company from Cardiff and it gets it all from Calabria (...) we get the salamis, we get tomato sauce, we get mortadella everything you know what we use (...) all fresh as well. (...) In Wales, like pizzas and pastas, people they sell it say in restaurants but if it's not made by an Italian, I'm sorry to say, it's not the proper... And we've seen this while we've started with the Italian restaurant... People they say 'Mr Vasami, we've been in so many restaurants (...) we've never tasted this kind of pasta (...)'<sup>107</sup>

As Giuseppe Lynch observed:

(...) I'm from an Italian background so I do actually know what I'm talking about when it comes to Italian food (...) the fact that I do have an Italian background definitely helps and I think people know that. We put that on our website just to give people a little bit of history (...) cause I want people to know that I'm Italian (...) cause I don't want them to think that they're coming in an Italian restaurant that is not Italian.<sup>108</sup>

As the passages above suggest, claiming the use of authentic Italian products together with the assurance that the restaurant was run by 'authentic' Italian people represented a response to the proliferation of 'fake' Italian restaurants, which, being run by non-Italian people, could not claim such 'authenticity'. Such a defensive behaviour is not unusual among ethnic entrepreneurs. For example, as Ferrero has observed, some 'Mexican people claim authenticity for their food and culinary practises and warn about the Mexican restaurants in other areas of Los Angeles', which, in their opinion, cannot claim to serve real Mexican food.<sup>109</sup>

Not only did some Italian restaurateurs highlight the difference between authentic Italian-owned restaurants and the fake ones, but also emphasised the uniqueness and quality of Italian cuisine in comparison with other ethnic cuisines, which were generally associated with fast-food culture. For example, Giuseppe Lynch pointed out:

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>109</sup> Ferrero, 'Comida Sin Par', p. 205.

When you compare [Italian cuisine] to other styles of cooking like Indian food, for me, I like Indian food but there's a time and a place for me...Generally Indian food, in my opinion, is, you know, you go out for a few drinks with your friends and at the end of the evening you end up having an Indian...You would never do that and go to an Italian restaurant at midnight (...) to me it's a completely different mentality toward...It's more of a sort of take-away mentality than actually coming out to an Italian restaurant (...) and spending the evening there.<sup>110</sup>

As Pasquale Milo also commented: 'in my opinion, Italian cuisine is regarded more as being a quality-cuisine if compared with the Chinese and Indian ones (...) For me Italian cuisine is at the top of the list in terms of quality'.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, as it was the case for Italian café-owners, Italian restaurateurs tended to consider Italian cuisine superior to other styles of cooking, expressing that sort of food-based banal nationalism which has previously been illustrated.

That is why, like restaurateurs, some owners of long-established Italian cafès, which, as noted, had traditionally provided a predominantly British cuisine, also attempted to Italianise (and update) their menus and premises. This strategy aimed to achieve two results: firstly, it aimed to make Italian cafés appear more authentic than fake Italianate coffee-chains and, secondly, keep up with them, responding to a growing demand for 'trendy' coffee culture. Some proprietors attempted to renovate the image of their cafés, displaying evocative Italian names such as *Gelateria Capri*, *Café di Napoli*<sup>112</sup> or *La Gondola*.<sup>113</sup> For example, Nick Antoniazzi explained that he intended to restore the original name of his café (*Antoniazzi*), which had been changed into the anglicised *Penguin*, as a result of anti-Italian hostility during World War Two. As the interviewee pointed out:

Italian food again started to make a huge come back here and Italian coffee again you know - all these coffee bars, these big companies - (...) They're not Italian, but they're all serving Italian coffee, they're all serving Italian biscuits – *biscotti* - and everything like that, you know, that's how it is...So yeah, I think that it's a case of...Yeah

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<sup>110</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with P. Milo, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>112</sup> D&B, *Business Register 2011-2012: Cardiff & Swansea*, pp. 499-502.

<sup>113</sup> *Guardian*, 11 July 1992, 'Where Caff Meets Café'.

changing the name might be a good idea (...) I think that people do realize that there is an Italian connection here.<sup>114</sup>

In other words, the respondent claimed that the re-acquisition of the original Italian name served a reinforcement of the authenticity of his shop, one that could appeal to the clientele and compete with Italianate coffee-chains.

Besides making their names more Italian, some Italian café-owners also attempted to provide more genuinely 'Italian' products. For example, in 1991, the *Gazzetta* reported that the *Continental Cafe* in Commercial Street, Bargoed:

Was set up by Pio [Strinati] and run mainly as a café serving shoppers and local inhabitants. The delicatessen was a later addition providing a much needed outlet in the Valleys. The shop stocks a full range of Italian foods, including Barilla pasta, Parmesan cheese, sauces and a wide selection of salami and cured meats. The new and completely refurbished premises contain ample seating and offers much the same sort of extensive menu which has proved extremely popular over the years. The move marks a watershed for the business as Pio's sons have taken over full time running of the new premises.<sup>115</sup>

As the *Guardian* also reported in 1992:

(...) the way to survive is to become more of a restaurant than a café. John and Maria's restaurant in Pontypridd is one such example. Here the menu is a mix of traditional British food (...) and Italian dishes. Veal is the house speciality, with an excellent Veal Milanese (...) The wine list is long and strong, with plenty of *chiantis* and *frascatis*.<sup>116</sup>

As Nick Antoniazzi also pointed out:

[Coffee-chains] still can't make coffee like the Italians, I'm afraid they can't...A 'pint of coffee'! (...) I distinguish myself on good authentic [food]...I do good authentic Italian pizzas, I do good authentic Italian coffee...My coffee that I use is (..) roasted in Italy, you know, I use *Lavazza* coffee that's probably one of the best coffees in the world.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>115</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno*, Winter 1991-1992, 'Upmarket Image for Continental Café'.

<sup>116</sup> *Guardian*, 11 July 1992, 'Where Caff Meets Café'.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

As Andrew Rabaiotti, whose café was equipped with an authentic Italian coffee machine, also commented ‘it takes longer to make coffee with that machine than it probably does to make it with a different type of machine (...) why? Because it’s done properly, that’s why (...) people appreciate [it]’.<sup>118</sup>

Other Italian shop-keepers also tried and renew the outdated ambience of their businesses. For example, Porthcawl-based café-owner Remo Sidoli commented: ‘with all our establishments we get renovated, refurbished all the counters, the fittings, the Italian fitters, the marble comes all over from Italy, transported over and fitted on site’.<sup>119</sup> This was, once again, a response to changing needs of customers, who appreciated the modern and trendy design of coffee-chains, but, at the same time, looked for a more authentic Italian feel. For example, Andrew Rabaiotti recently closed his old-fashioned family-café in Penarth and opened a new one in Cardiff Bay together with his daughter Emma. He explained that he made sure that his newly-opened *Cafe R* featured brand new made-in-Italy furniture, which was transported from Italy and fitted on site by Italian contractors (coming all the way from Rome). This suggests that the owner clearly wanted to recreate an actual site of Italicity in Wales, one that would be familiar to many customers who had been to Italy on holiday. Strikingly the café appeared to be exactly like a modern bar/gelateria which could be easily found in Italy at that time (see Appendix 11). As the owner pointed out:

It is not the cheapest way to put a café together but (...) it’s the style, it’s everything, people come in and go ‘wow’ and that in itself shows that you care about your business (...) you can’t beat this, this unit will look this good in twelve years time (...) This is the future of the Italian Bracchi (...) this is a new phase (...) the customer is more discerning, the customer knows far more about coffee, has travelled, they have experienced, you know, they have been to Italy, they have had the real thing (...) they

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>119</sup> BBC Video Nation, ‘Italian Stories: Remo’s Story’, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 30/05/2011 and ‘Italian Stories: Ice-cream Parlour’, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 30/05/2011.

have walked into a small café in a small village (...) I think that now people are expecting more, they want the proper thing.<sup>120</sup>

According to the *Gazzetta*, the success of Rossi's fish and chip shop was also to be put down to a recent renovation:

It's official. Rossi's Original fish and chip shop in Swansea is the best. Only two years after opening a brand new fish and chip shop takeaway and restaurant in Landore, Swansea, the business owned by Gianni Rossi has been named best fish and chip shop in South Wales (...) To open this exciting new venture, Gianni converted a disused car sales garage into a 50 seater restaurant, with five serving points for the take away trade.<sup>121</sup>

In 2006, a second generation Welsh-Italian from Lampeter also imputed the increased popularity of his café to a recent refurbishment, thanks to which, the shop became more attractive to a wider range of customers.<sup>122</sup> Pietro Sidoli also pointed out that the Bracchi, in order to survive, needed to be updated. He claimed that his café, which had been recently renovated, appeared like 'the Italy of today', whereas traditional cafés mirrored 'the Italy of the past'.<sup>123</sup> As former café-owner Les Servini had already observed in 1986:

Italian cafés are 'old fashion', the village shop is a thing of the past, (...) Italian shops today have to be a restaurant, a steakhouse, a spaghetti house (...) you have to have the latest catering equipment, you have to employ people, you have to employ cooks (...) Italian trade is still flourishing, there are still thousands of Italians in this business, but not what Giulio Bracchi would have recognized at all.<sup>124</sup>

Nick Antoniazzi also pointed out:

I took over here fourteen years ago...It was just after we refurbished here, made it bigger, you know, because it was only a small (...) Italian café...You have to change your ways, don't you? (...) You'd find that a lot of the original Italian cafés had nets on the windows, it was much darker, you know, and I think things like that were caused probably because Italy is a much warmer country, so it was to keep the place

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>121</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, January 1996, 'Rossi's Is Voted Best in South Wales!'.

<sup>122</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Building on the Past', NLW, Cell E123 021109.

<sup>123</sup> BBC Video Nation, 'Italian Stories: Ice-cream Parlour', [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbra m=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbra m=1&bbram=1), accessed 30/05/2011.

<sup>124</sup> BBC1 Wales, 'Another Valley', Cell E123 001961/01.



cool, to stop the sun from coming in (...) but now, like I've said, everything has changed.<sup>125</sup>

Mo Wilson's pictures also show that, although they maintained old-style features, Italian cafés in south Wales had already started to renew their image by the end of the 1980s. Some of the cafés which were portrayed by Wilson looked exactly like a typical Italian small-town bar of that time.<sup>126</sup> For example, the *Bracchi's Café* in Ystrad Mynach displayed a vast amount of sweet and cigarette packages on the shelves behind the counter, recalling a typical small-town Italian café of the late 1980s. As the *Guardian* also reported in 1992:

*Bracchi's* café, as you might hope, is a typical South Wales Italian café (...). What catches the eye (...) is the bank of sweet jars, boxes of chocolates and packets of biscuits on and behind the counter. Also prominent is a fridge containing ice-cream (...) No other sort of café has ever had such a stylish display of sweet things to persuade children to part with their pocket money.<sup>127</sup>

The marble bar in the *Express Café* in Abertillery (see Appendix 8) also represented a clear reminder of Italy, imitating a typical small-town Italian bar of that time. This suggests that, thanks to their enduring links with Italy, Italian café-keepers could replicate the provincial café-ambience which they actually experienced during their visits home in Val Ceno. It is therefore clear that some Welsh-Italians have attempted to modernise their 'old-fashioned' cafés in order to attract a wider range of clients, whose palate has become more sophisticated than that of colliers a hundred years before. As Les Serviini wrote in his memoirs: 'the Italians survive, they know how to adapt, they have modernised, gone are the Oxo from the kettle and twist tobacco for the colliers, replaced by (...) Bolognese'.<sup>128</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the Italian claim for authenticity was a response to a growing demand for authenticity which characterised some sections of the population. This process

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>126</sup> M. Wilson, 'Italian Cafes in South Wales', NLW, 123 D.

<sup>127</sup> *Guardian*, 11 July 1992, 'Where Caff Meets Café'.

<sup>128</sup> Serviini, *A Boy from Bardi*, p. 69. The 'oxo' was a sort of warm stock that appeared to be popular among the miners in the early days of the Bracchi experience.

was paralleled in the USA. According to Gabaccia, the increasing demand for authenticity originated from two social categories: hippies and political activists of the 1960s-1970s generation and young urban professionals (yuppies) of the 1980s.<sup>129</sup> In USA, hippies saw ethnic cooking as being a ‘protest against American cultural imperialism around the globe’, while educated and high-income yuppies saw it as being a hedonist search for the real genuine fare that they had experienced during their holidays abroad.<sup>130</sup> Gabaccia’s argument could also apply to the British context. As both Payne and Warde have shown through their surveys, Italian restaurants as well as other ethnic eating places were mainly attended by urban, educated, middle and upper class customers.<sup>131</sup> As James has argued, the widely available ‘foodie’ magazines, which from the 1980s onwards constantly featured foreign recipes, were also mainly addressed to ‘an upper middle-class readership, with the time, money and aspirations to indulge in such fantasies’.<sup>132</sup>

In Wales, as noted, the development of an ‘authentic’ Italian catering trade has also mainly affected urban areas of the country, where they have served a predominantly educated, professional, middle-class clientele. This observation draws upon various figures suggesting that, between the 1970s and the 1990s, Wales was affected by a significant growth of its educated, professional and urban population.<sup>133</sup> This is also testified by the strategic location of some Italian restaurants in professional and relatively affluent catchment areas. For example, Rabaiotti’s *Cafè R* was strategically placed in a business area of Cardiff Bay, the

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<sup>129</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 210.

<sup>130</sup> Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, p. 213.

<sup>131</sup> Payne and Payne, *Eating Out in the UK*, p. 85; A. Warde, ‘Eating Globally’, pp. 309-310.

<sup>132</sup> James, ‘How British is British Food’, p. 77.

<sup>133</sup> For example, the number of people working in the professional, literary and managerial sector rose from 115,830 to 345,780 between 1971 and 1991. The number of school leavers going into higher education increased from 8,000 in 1973 to 21,000 in 1996. The number of university students per 10,000 inhabitants increased from 20.4 in 1974 to 36.6 in 1994, (in South Glamorgan from less than 33 to more than 43/10,000). Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics, 1974-1996*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/dwhs1974-1996/?lang=en>, accessed 1/06/2011.

National Assembly being just across the road.<sup>134</sup> Various narratives suggest that even the few Italian restaurants which were to be found outside the urban areas of the country tended to cater for a predominantly middle-to-upper class clientele. For example, Giuseppe Lynch, who ran an Italian restaurant in Denbigh, explained: ‘there’s a lot of residential areas around the restaurant and that’s why we’re in a very strong position as long as we deliver the standard people keep coming back’.<sup>135</sup> Gino Vasami, who owned a restaurant and pizzeria in Newcastle Emlyn, pointed out that his clientele mainly included ‘from doctors to solicitors from all parts of Wales’.<sup>136</sup>

According to several respondents, the demand for authenticity has also been led by a parallel demand for healthy food, which has arisen across the country over the last decades. As Jamal has observed, by 1996, 40 per cent of the Britons were ‘consciously trying to eat more healthily and cutting down on red meat consumption. Since traditional English food is inevitably based on meat, participants were attracted to the consumption of more ethnic foods’.<sup>137</sup> As Nick Antoniazzi pointed out:

Food wise, [Italian cuisine] has become very popular because I think that the way the Italians are and the health of eating, the long life they have - much longer life in Italy - and I think it’s all to do with the Mediterranean diet and people think ‘well, the Italians can live longer by eating food we can do the same’.<sup>138</sup>

As Giuseppe Lynch also commented: ‘[Italian food] is seen as being very very healthy, I mean they seem to live forever the Italians don’t they?’.<sup>139</sup> As the *Gazzetta* also reported:

Big expansions plans could be on the cards for the Amman Valley firm of *Frank’s Ice Cream Ltd* following the company’s winning of a major contract with CRS stores. (...) The firm prides itself on the quality of its ice-cream. ‘We only use fresh milk and

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with A. Rabaiotti, 18 February 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with G. Vasami, 4 August 2008, SFNHM, IMW.

<sup>137</sup> A. Jamal, ‘Acculturation: the Symbolism of Ethnic Eating among Contemporary British Consumers’, *British Food Journal* 98 (1996), 12-26.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with N. Antoniazzi, 14 November 2011.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

fresh cream and you cannot get anything better than a natural product', said Mr Dellavalle, who also believes that people are looking for a better quality and nutritious ice-cream. As is common with most Italian style ice-cream makers there are secret ingredients, and of course that special technique which has been handed down from generation to generation.<sup>140</sup>

In other words, the growing demand for healthy produce explains why Frank's ice-cream, thanks to its innovative ice-cream for diabetics, was able to secure a two-year contract to supply all NHS hospitals in Britain, adding to a number of major supermarket chains including Tesco, Morrisons, Asda, Holland & Barrett, Tesco Ireland and Waitrose.<sup>141</sup> As Frank's manager Renaldo Dallavalle explained: 'we've been lucky, we've had a niche market, in diabetic, which is our brand, we're the market-leader in the UK'.<sup>142</sup>

However, as the respondent clearly explained, the economic success of Frank's was not only sustained by Welsh demand, but by the overall British one. As Dallavalle pointed out: 'I wouldn't say that [ice-cream] is more popular in Wales than anywhere else...We're now a national supplier we don't rely on regional anymore'.<sup>143</sup> In other words, it is apparent that the 'Italianisation' of Welsh foodways, so far, has only affected limited areas of the country (namely Cardiff), whereas, in most cases, the expansion of the Italian food sector has been led by a predominantly professional, middle-class Welsh (or even non-Welsh) demand. Some respondents claimed that, in some areas of the country, a significant percentage of the Italian restaurants' clientele was represented by English holidaymakers, whereas Welsh people did not seem to engage much with Italian cuisine. In Llandudno, for example, as Fausto Galli explained:

We have got [Italian] friends in England who own restaurants (...) in Cheshire where – they call it the 'brokers' belt' - live all those people who work in finance, lawyers,

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<sup>140</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, July 1989, 'Joe's Got it Licked!'.  
<sup>141</sup> WAG: Local Carmarthenshire Business to Provide Ice-cream Treats for Welsh Patients,  
<http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2010/100326franksicecream/?lang=en>,  
accessed 15/06/2011.

<sup>142</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

stock brokers and (...) champagne and wine everywhere because they've got the money (...) Here it's mostly villages...For example you go to Bangor or Caernarfon, up there (...) they're just farmers (...) My father-in-law (...) always used to tell me 'the Welsh people don't spend £50 on a bottle of wine'...By contrast, the Englishman does, the Englishman who has got the money comes here and asks for a bottle of *amarone* or champagne, because he wants to eat and drink well...a Welshman (...) perhaps with £50 buys a sheep (...) they're different people, they have different principles.<sup>144</sup>

As Joseph Parisella also pointed out the growing demand for authentic quality Italian ice-cream was predominantly sustained by English holidaymakers coming to Conwy. As Parisella explained:

In the old days we made Italian style ice-cream and then (...) we went on to the English way of making ice-cream, with the modern machinery, with what we called the continuous freezers, where it wasn't proper ice-cream (...) Now the trend has gone back, there is the worse type of ice-cream, mass-produced, and there's demand for it, but now there's more of a demand for our type of ice-cream and we find that where we are now, in our locations, *the English holidaymakers* are coming back every year and they're coming back and they're looking for our ice-cream, the Italian ice-cream.<sup>145</sup>

### **How to make a multiethnic national cuisine: the media and ice-cream industry**

As Anderson has pointed out, nations are 'cultural artefacts'.<sup>146</sup> Being an important aspect of culture, food plays a prominent role in constructing national identities. As Ashley and other authors have observed: 'national foods are shifting, in a continuous state of flux and transformation (...) the nation is a fluid cultural construct and food is one among many agencies which participate in its construction and the continuing processes of its redefinition'.<sup>147</sup> Food can function as a negative marker of nationhood, distancing a given

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<sup>144</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>145</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>146</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London, Verso, 2006), p.4.

<sup>147</sup> Ashley et al., *Food and Cultural Studies*, p. 89.

people from another being characterised by a different diet. Yet, it can also represent a bridge across cultural boundaries.<sup>148</sup> As van den Berghe has argued:

Ethnic cuisine is the easiest and most pleasant way to cross ethnic boundaries. As eating together is perhaps the most basic expression of human sociality, ethnic cuisine could well be the ultimate reconciliation between a diversity we cherish and a common humanity we must recognize if we are to live amicably together.<sup>149</sup>

Such an argument applies to the way in which the Welsh media have looked at the Italian catering sector over the last thirty years. From the 1980s onwards, the Welsh media have paid increasing attention to Italian cuisine in Wales, highlighting its pioneering incidence on the country's cultural landscape. In particular, television, radio and press started to claim that some 'Italian' recipes and products had crossed their ethnic boundaries to become part of the Welsh national heritage. In so doing, they implied that both the former and the latter had benefitted from their cross-cultural encounter, making Welsh cookery unique.

Up to 1997, the representation of Italian food patterns (namely the Bracchi) mirrored a taken-for-granted assumption ('the Welsh are tolerant towards migrants and their cultures') rather than fulfilling a clear nation-building purpose; besides some TV programmes and cookbooks recalling the Bracchi's experience, the media paid a scant amount of attention to Wales' ethnic cuisines. For example, in 1990, the BBC Wales programme *Tastes of Wales* was still almost entirely concerned with authentic 'Welsh' food as if ethnic cuisines did not belong to the national culinary heritage.<sup>150</sup> By contrast, the post-devolution media have been increasingly concerned with Wales' culinary diversity mirroring the surrounding inclusive rhetoric. For example, in 2004, ITV Wales' *Tastes of Wales* (contrary to the 1990 homonymous programme) was entirely concerned with ethnic food (Italian, Indian, Greek,

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<sup>148</sup> See, for example, Van den Berghe, 'Ethnic Cuisine', 387-397; Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine', 3-24.

<sup>149</sup> Van den Berghe, 'Ethnic Cuisine', 396.

<sup>150</sup> BBC Wales, 'Tastes of Wales', 1990, NLW, Cell E123 001964/05, Cell E123 001955/02, Cell E123 001952/04 and Cell E123 001948/01.

etc.) as if Welsh cuisine was an inherently diverse one.<sup>151</sup> In particular, it is Italian food which seems to have been paid an increasing amount of attention by the media. After devolution, Italian cuisine has become a symbol of the *contribution* that Italian migrants have made to Welsh society. Through the adoption of enhancement narratives the Welsh media have tended to present Italian culinary patterns in a way that suits the current notion of inclusiveness.<sup>152</sup>

The 1980s witnessed the broadcasting of various TV and radio programmes focusing on Welsh-Italian cafés. These were characterised by the same nostalgic tone that, as noted, Italian café-keepers showed, at a time when their businesses were being undermined by the dramatic decline of those Valleys where they had once prospered. Therefore, disappearing Italian cafés were being nostalgically celebrated by the Welsh media for their essential contribution to Welsh society. For example, *The Brachis (sic) of Bardi*, which was broadcast by BBC Radio Wales in 1980, stressed that Italian café-keepers had been the first to introduce products such as ice-cream, espresso and lemonade to Wales. This served a reinforcement of the pioneering culinary role of the Bracchi, which was highlighted by the ‘friendly sound of a coffee machine’, which could be heard since the very beginning of the programme.<sup>153</sup> Being a familiar object to many Welsh people (at least in south Wales), the coffee machine represented an easily identifiable feature of Italian cafés, one that was to become a common stereotype in Welsh popular culture. One reason for this could be that such a recognisable object applied an ‘emotional pull’,<sup>154</sup> one that could potentially reach out to both Welsh and Welsh-Italians and remind them of their shared experience of mutual support, tolerance and community spirit. In other words, it served an ideal reinforcement of

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<sup>151</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Tastes of Wales’, NLW, Cell E123 015048/05 and ‘Tastes of Wales’, 14 September 2004, NLW, Cell E123 015954/01.

<sup>152</sup> Appadurai, ‘How to Make a National Cuisine’, 20.

<sup>153</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Archive Half an Hour: the Brachis of Bardi’, 19 December 1999 (first broadcast in 1980), NLW, Cell E123 012270/11.

<sup>154</sup> Modood, *Multiculturalism*, p. 149.

notions such of tolerance and communitarism, at a time when Welshness was being re-shaped as a result of dramatic economic changes.<sup>155</sup>

This was confirmed by the broadcasting, a few years later, of another clear reference to Italian influences in the Valleys: the cartoon *Fireman Sam*. Bella's Café, with its noticeable ice-cream cones, coffee-machine and sweet-jars, clearly recalled the ambience of a typical Bracchi-shop. In so doing, the cartoon aimed at creating awareness among the younger generations of the important social role of long-standing Italian cafés being an essential and traditional feature of south Walian communities, at a time when these were being undermined by dramatic social and economic changes. In fact, despite its seeming nostalgic tone, *Fireman Sam* was actually aimed at providing a positive depiction of the Valleys becoming a modern and cosmopolitan environment, being open to new social trends without denying its traditional community spirit. This purpose was apparent in the episode *Home from Rome*,<sup>156</sup> when Bella temporarily turns her shop into an Italian restaurant, which she names *Trattoria di Napoli*. This was a clear reference to the new Italian catering trade that was expanding at the time. That is why, Bella's *trattoria*, featuring checked table-clothes, spaghetti dishes and the café-owner singing the traditional Italian song *O Sole Mio*, recalled Italian restaurants that were to be found across Britain at the time. In the same episode, one of *Fireman Sam*'s characters has just returned from a holiday in the Italian seaside resort of Rimini; a reference to Italy becoming a popular destination among the British in the 1980s.<sup>157</sup> Such references could be seen as aiming to depict the Valleys as a region that is open to modernisation and internationalisation (holidays abroad and café turned into a *trattoria*) without denying its past community spirit, which is here symbolised by Bella's café.

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<sup>155</sup> Jones, 'Beyond Identity?', 330-357.

<sup>156</sup> BBC1, 'Fireman Sam 4: Home from Rome', 21 October 1994, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fjmtfqg8LCo>, accessed 19/96/2011.

<sup>157</sup> Morris, 'Imprenditoria Italiana in Gran Bretagna', 540-552.



HTV's series *Nites Bites* also included references to Italian cafés. One episode of the series was centred on the exhibition *Italian Cafés*. Hosted by the Swansea Museum, the event aimed to celebrate Italian food and catering tradition in Wales, notably the Bracchi. As one of the curators declared: 'the Italian shops have become part of the social scene of the area'. In order to recreate the café-atmosphere, throughout the whole episode both presenter and the exhibition-curators sat at a table drinking a cup of coffee. In addition, the exhibition featured one of those old coffee machines that could be found in many Welsh-Italian cafés.<sup>158</sup> On one hand, such an emotionally-connoted object served a reinforcement of the Italian contribution to Welsh society. On the other, it served a reinforcement of the alleged tolerance and openness towards other cultures of Welsh people. That is why, as it will be shortly illustrated, sixteen years ahead the same object was to be found in the exhibition *Italian Memories in Wales* together with a decorated ice-cream cart.

Several Welsh cookbooks also paid a tribute to the Italian café-heritage. For example, in 1989, the Wales Tourist Board (WTB) and *Taste of Wales* co-published a volume, which included clear references to Italian culinary influences in Wales. The book indicated Italian products such as ice-cream as being part of the Welsh food-heritage. For example, in the south Wales' section of the volume, the authors wrote:

Ice-cream is especially good in this region, thanks mainly to the Italians who arrived to cater for the mining communities at the turn of the century. They set up ice-cream parlours in the valleys, and since diversified into wholesale ice-cream production and importing Italian delicacies. Look out for Franks, Sidoli, and Thayer for a really creamy taste.<sup>159</sup>

In the section 'where to shop in South Wales', the authors also recommended the Cardiff-based Italian shop *Berni's*, which 'will satisfy your pangs for fresh pasta and homemade

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<sup>158</sup> HTV, 'Nites Bites', 19 January 1994, NLW, Cell E123000675/03.

<sup>159</sup> Richard Binns, Gilli Davies and Brenda Parry, *A Taste of Wales: Good Food, Recipes...A Guide to Cooking and Travel* (Taste of Wales and The Wales Tourist Board, 1989), p. 21.

pesto sauce. This small delicatessen sells an extensive range of Italian specialities'.<sup>160</sup> The book also highlighted the outstanding cultural diversity of Welsh cuisine, reporting:

South Wales has an *enormous* immigrant population, and the Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, West Indian, Italian, Asian, Greek, Polish, and even Egyptians bring a diversity to the diet here. Shops and supermarkets now stock a variety of exotic ingredients, and you can find restaurants offering dishes from all over the world.<sup>161</sup>

As the passage above suggests, this book, as was the case for the cartoon *Fireman Sam*, was aimed at promoting a tolerant, multicultural and 'exotic' image of Wales, one that could potentially attract new tourists. One year after the Wales Tourist Board published this volume, another cookbook was released, one which also praised the Italian influence on Welsh cuisine. The book included the recipe 'Franco Taruschio's Welsh lamb with wild mushrooms and polenta', which, as the name itself suggests, represented a perfect combination of Italian and Welsh ingredients and flavours. As the author wrote:

No one has won more accolades for good food in Wales than Franco Taruschio at the Walnut Tree Inn near Abergavenny (...) Franco and his wife Ann opened the Walnut Tree while on their honeymoon (...) offering honest fresh local food with an Italian flavour (...) Franco has combined Welsh lamb with leeks, Parma ham, polenta and wild mushrooms.<sup>162</sup>

The use of both Italian (polenta and Parma ham) and Welsh (Welsh lamb and leeks) ingredients symbolically represented the assimilation of Italian cuisine into the Welsh heritage, which, as noted, was being promoted by the Welsh media at the time.

This positive attitude towards foreign cultural influences seemed to reflect the Welsh Development Agency's effort in attracting foreign investment,<sup>163</sup> which included Italian companies. This is highlighted by the fact that, by 1988, eight Italian-owned companies had

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<sup>160</sup> Binns et al., *A Taste of Wales*, p. 22.

<sup>161</sup> Binns et al., *A Taste of Wales*, p. 20.

<sup>162</sup> Gilli Davies, *Tastes of Wales* (London, BBC Books, 1990), p. 86.

<sup>163</sup> On foreign investment in Wales see, for example, K. George and L. Mainwaring, 'The Welsh Economy in the 1980s', *Contemporary Wales* 1 (1987), 7-37; A. Roberts, 'The Causes and Consequences of Inward Investment: the Welsh Experience', *Contemporary Wales* 6 (1994), 73-86.

already established production units in Wales.<sup>164</sup> Taken together, these enterprises employed 1,800 people, the equivalent to 3.6 per cent of the total workforce engaged in foreign-owned units; Italy represented one of the major contributing EC countries together with France and Germany.<sup>165</sup> By 1997, three new Italian companies had been established in Wales, including the leading tyre-producer Pirelli.<sup>166</sup> One year later, south Wales alone hosted twelve companies with Italian associations.<sup>167</sup> These figures suggest that Italian companies made a quite significant contribution to the Welsh economy throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Whereas the 1980s experienced a growing interest in the history of Italian cafés, it was from the second half of the 1990s onwards that Wales witnessed a proliferation of media-representations of ‘Italian cuisine’ in a broader sense. In 1996, a tribute to Italian catering in Wales was to be found in the programme *Under the Dragon’s Wing: the Italian Community* (HTV), reporting the annual ‘Welsh-Italian restaurateurs’ football tournament’ in Cardiff. As was the case for Bella Lasagne’s café as well as for most British *trattorie* since the 1960s, Italian restaurants in this TV programme featured recognizable stereotypes, including checked table-clothes with candle-flasks in the middle as well as harmonium-players, which functioned as clear markers of Italianness. Using emotionally-connoted features that, in the producers’ opinion, would be highly familiar to Welsh people, HTV made Wales appear like a tolerant country welcoming ‘other’ cultures. This was demonstrated by Italian chefs claiming to ‘feel at home’ in Wales, thanks to the welcoming nature of Welsh people, who were described as being temperamentally ‘similar’ to Italians. As one restaurateur commented: ‘the main factor that I like about Wales is the people (...) they are very similar,

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<sup>164</sup> *Wales Business Directory*, 1991, p. 34.

<sup>165</sup> Welsh Office, *Welsh economic trends*, n° 12 (Cardiff, Welsh Office, 1990), p. 75.

<sup>166</sup> *Wales Business Directory*, 1997, p. 24.

<sup>167</sup> South Wales Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *The Directory of the South Wales Chamber of Commerce and Industry*, (Cardiff, South Wales Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1998), p. 38.

the culture, the Welsh and the Italians’.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, Italian cuisine was used by the Welsh media as a symbol of the successful integration of Italians in Wales, one that was fostered by the welcoming nature of Welsh people. This could be seen as functioning as a reinforcement of the notion of inclusiveness, which begun to permeate the Welsh political discourse at the time.<sup>169</sup> In other words, the programme could be seen as aiming to reach out to both ‘indigenous’ and ‘migrant’ people. The former were reminded of the tolerant and multicultural nature of their nation while the latter were invited to integrate, embrace Welshness and *contribute* to Welsh society, following the Italian example.

Two years after *Under the Dragon’s Wing* was broadcast, another tribute to Italian cuisine was paid by the HTV programme *Tastes of Britain*.<sup>170</sup> The show focused on a range of Italian sites in south Wales: a long-standing ice-cream parlour in Porthcawl, a modern café-restaurant in central Cardiff (serving home-grown vegetables), a small-scale wine distiller and a first class restaurant (*The Walnut Tree*) who served Italian-style dishes with Welsh products (mussels instead of *vongole*, mackerel cooked in a Mediterranean sauce, etc.). Italian restaurateurs and café-keepers were depicted as being stereotypically friendly and sociable people who not only did integrate but actively took part in their receiving society’s life, providing an essential cultural contribution (food) to the Welsh social landscape. In other words, Italian migration was represented as successful case of integration, one that confirmed the rightness of the very definition of inclusiveness; being portrayed as willing to integrate and contribute to Welsh society, Italians served a model for other migrants in Wales, encouraging them to get involved in the host country’s life.

In 2004, the ITV Wales programme *Tastes of Wales* also paid tribute to Italian cuisine, the recurrent storyline being, once again: firstly, Italians migrate to Wales in search of a better

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<sup>168</sup> HTV, ‘Under the Dragon’s Wing: the Italian Community’, 14 March 1996, NLW, Cell E123 002693/04.

<sup>169</sup> Chaney and Fevre, ‘Ron Davies and the Cult of “Inclusiveness”’, 21-49.

<sup>170</sup> HTV, ‘Tastes of Britain’, 24 August 1998, NLW, Cell E123 005641/04.

life, secondly, they are warmly welcomed by ‘indigenous’ Welsh people, thirdly, in return, they work hard to integrate and contribute to the receiving society and, finally, they successfully settle in Wales. In one episode of the series, the presenter paid a visit to an Italian restaurant in Cardiff, where the owner recalled how he migrated to Wales in the early 1950s hoping for a better life. He worked hard (in a foundry) for a number of years until he was able to set up his own restaurant and eventually became very successful. He integrated into society, married a Welsh woman and contributed to Wales providing authentic Italian dishes to Welsh people. Further on in the programme, the owner also taught the presenter how to prepare several Italian dishes. He emphasised the extreme simplicity of Italian cuisine recalling how, in Italy, people would have to make the most of few vegetarian ingredients as ‘people couldn’t afford the meat’. In other words, the programme seemed to imply that, though perseverance and dedication, Wales’ migrant people can achieve outstanding results and contribute to society (just like the Italians have done).<sup>171</sup>

In a different episode of the series *Tastes of Wales* the owners of an Italian bakery in Newport recalled: ‘a few years ago me and my twin brother we came to study here (...) to improve our English (...) we met some really nice people here (...) Welsh friends and we decided to stay (...) the future for us is here’. Simply put, the Italian twins were depicted as being grateful to Welsh people for having welcomed them and given them the chance to succeed with their business. In return, they contributed to Welsh society creating outstanding creolised cakes which combined Italian creativity with Welsh ingredients.<sup>172</sup> Therefore, this episode seemed to emphasise the existence of a hybrid (or *creol*) Welsh national cuisine, whose uniqueness derived from the combined use of a diverse culinary heritage.<sup>173</sup> Such a process of

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<sup>171</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Tastes of Wales’, NLW, Cell E123 015048/05.

<sup>172</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Tastes of Wales’, NLW, Cell E123 015954/01.

<sup>173</sup> This process could be defined as ‘food creolization – a form of cultural blending in which a mix of ingredients, styles and influences come together in single meal’. As cited in Ashley et al., *Food and Cultural Studies*, p. 88.

creolisation also served a reinforcement of the surrounding notion of inclusiveness. On one hand it demonstrated that Italian migration had a positive impact on Welsh society. On the other, it showed that Wales was able to nurture its migrants' skills, fostering their integration and contribution to society.

Interestingly, such a positive attitude towards creolisation was also embraced by some cookbooks which were being published at the time in Wales. These tended to highlight the cultural diversity of Welsh cuisine, seen as combining a multicultural culinary heritage with outstanding Welsh ingredients. Italian dishes figured prominently in such volumes. For example, in 2001 *From Portmeirion to Penllŷn* chef Melfyn Thomas, who claimed to be 'a great believer in using Welsh produce', recommended a 'breakfast pizza' with 'sausage, bacon, mushrooms and tomatoes on a bread base, topped with a fried egg', adding to a 'twice backed potato with pesto'.<sup>174</sup> S4C's chef Ena Thomas, in her book, also suggested a pizza with 'Carmarthen ham and leek', stating 'you can be as traditional or as adventurous as you like when choosing toppings for your pizza'.<sup>175</sup> In his book, chef Ken Goody also claimed to be particularly devoted to Italian food:

Italy, I must confess, has a paramount place in my heart. (...) I think I have had more memorable simple meals in Italy than anywhere else. (...) wonderful, diverse, earthy food is found throughout the country. (...) I am sure it is the simplicity and freshness that I love about Italian food.<sup>176</sup>

In other words, both the media and cookbooks tended to present Italian food as being particularly suitable for the Welsh culinary landscape as if Italianness and Welshness were compatible national identities (at least in food terms).

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<sup>174</sup> Melfyn Thomas, *From Portmeirion to Penllŷn: a Collection of Special Recipes* (Llandybïe, Hafan, 2001), p. 45.

<sup>175</sup> Ena Thomas, *Cooking with Ena* (Llandybïe, Hughes, 1996), p. 99.

<sup>176</sup> Ken Goody, *From Rags to Ragout* (Llandysul, Gomer Press, 1996), pp. 88-89.

Following the same mode of reasoning, some Welsh reporters went as far as to suggest that, being home to an old-established and well-integrated Italian migrant group, Wales boasted better Italian restaurants than the rest of Britain and other European countries. For example, a *Western Mail* reporter eating at *Scalini's* (Cardiff) commented:

The food served up in any number of Italian restaurants around the UK is more often than not a bland and lazy imitation of what you'd actually be given within a thousand miles of the Mediterranean, with restaurants merrily trading on the genre - and perhaps the ignorance of the supermarket generation - rather than the taste. Consider *Scalini's* the total opposite of those places, a family-run restaurant that is nothing short of brilliant [with] a menu which appears to be designed to the philosophy that the best ingredients properly cooked don't need to be overwhelmed by masses of cheese or thick red tomatoey goo.<sup>177</sup>

A *South Wales Echo* reporter reviewing *Topo Gigio* restaurant in Cardiff, also pointed out:

It was while I was on holiday in Spain that I became fully aware of just how *lucky we are in Cardiff* with regards to Italian food. All we wanted was an informal meal, nothing complicated, just some carbohydrates to see us through the rest of the day. Pizza seemed like a good idea. So we visited a restaurant serving Italian food and the pizza was truly awful, not a patch on those I'm used to eating in Cardiff. And *that's down to South Wales' large Italian community*.<sup>178</sup>

In other words, some Welsh reporters tended to present the existence of arguably authentic Italian restaurants as being a consequence of the country's long-standing and successfully-integrated patterns of Italian migration. In so doing, the reporters, once again, emphasised the Italian migrant contribution to Welsh society implying that Italian migration had had a positive impact on the national socio-cultural landscape.

Not only did Welsh journalists repeatedly celebrate the authenticity and quality of Italian food but they also praised the ambience of Italian restaurants. This was also seen as being a positive contribution to Welsh lifestyle. For example, a *Western Mail* journalist wrote that *La Lupa* in Cardiff 'is small and intimate but not cramped and there is a great ambience which

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<sup>177</sup> *Western Mail*, 17 May 2008, 'Serving Up an Italian Feast'.

<sup>178</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 17 May 2003, 'Eating Out: Lads Who Lunch'.

you pick up as soon as you walk through the door. I'm not a fan of bright restaurants and this one is dimly lit with candles on each table, giving it a cosy - and very Italian - feel'.<sup>179</sup> The *South Wales Echo* reported that the *Bella Capri* in Caerphilly, was 'a return to the old-style traditional Italian eatery, but with a twist of Mediterranean ambience'. As the proprietor, who originated from the Italian isle of Capri, pointed out: 'I have wonderful memories of Capri, and I have tried to incorporate some of the magic of the island into the way I run the restaurant. I also wanted to *give* the people of Caerphilly what they have been asking for - an authentic, relaxed little restaurant'.<sup>180</sup> A popular radio presenter, asserting to be a regular customer of the *Bella Italia* in Cardiff Bay, also commented in the *Western Mail*:

The thing that I most liked about Bella when I first visited was the atmosphere. It is always buzzing with families, couples and mates having a catch up over a big meal Italian style. The restaurant has a really relaxed (...). The decor is traditional and authentic, I feel like I have actually jumped on a plane and landed in Italy when I visit.<sup>181</sup>

Moreover, the TV programme *Tastes of Britain* suggested that the positive influence that Italians had on Welsh lifestyle also included an outdoor and relaxed approach to lifestyle, which could be termed *café* or *alfresco* culture. After having served a colourful dish of spaghetti to the presenter (sitting outdoors), second generation Giovanni Malacrino, who ran a trendy bistro in Cardiff, proudly pointed out to be one of the first restaurateurs to have introduced an alfresco culture in Wales, placing tables outdoors. 'When we first put tables out in Cardiff', Malacrino argued, 'the council just took them away'.

Nevertheless, outdoor-café's have ever since spread across the capital becoming one of its distinctive traits.<sup>182</sup> One year after *Tastes of Britain* was broadcast, the *Guardian* featured an

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<sup>179</sup> *Western Mail*, 21 October 2006, 'For Authentic Italian Try'.

<sup>180</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 10 July 2010, 'Gianluca Serves Up Med magic'.

<sup>181</sup> *Western Mail*, 12 January 2008, 'Clare Lloyd, Red Dragon FM Presenter and Flirty at 10.30's Matchmaker, Tells Us Why She's a Regular at Bella Italia at the Red Dragon Centre in Cardiff Bay'.

<sup>182</sup> Frost and other authors have observed the similar trends were underway in Melbourne: 'some cities have "place luck"; historical buildings or spectacular natural settings that attract strong flows of tourists. By contrast,



article on the proliferation of al fresco restaurants and bars in Cardiff. As reporter Chris Arnot wrote: ‘in the summer months there are probably more alfresco tables and umbrellas per square yard of Mill Lane, Cardiff, than in any side street of Milan’.<sup>183</sup> Four years ahead, a *Western Mail* opinion poll seemed to confirm the existence of an expanding Welsh alfresco culture. As the leading Welsh newspapers reported:

Of those interviewed 56 per cent said they are dining alfresco more than they did ten years ago. And more than six out of ten said that their barbecue meals are increasing in sophistication. Wine is now the most popular drink to accompany food that is often a world away from beef burgers, the survey report said.<sup>184</sup>

The *South Wales Echo* also emphasised the spread of alfresco Italian restaurants in the Welsh capital:

Cardiff has a real Little Italy in the heart of the city centre where a number of popular Italian restaurants vie with each other for business in the shadow of St John’s Church. And in good weather the continental atmosphere increases when outdoor tables filled with people enjoying a leisurely lunch spill out onto the pedestrianised area.<sup>185</sup>

Seven years later, the same newspaper reported, ‘Cowbridge High Street and Cardiff’s trendy Mill Lane have been named as two of Britain’s coolest roads’ by the *Google Street View Award*. As the chairman of Cowbridge Chamber of Trade, Alun John commented, one of the reasons why these streets were considered to be ‘cool’, was that they had ‘lots of nice restaurants and places where people can sit outside if the weather is nice’.<sup>186</sup>

Whereas the *Guardian* dismissed Cardiff’s alfresco eating-out patterns as a mere reflection of a growing European café-culture, the Welsh media saw it as an authentically *Welsh*

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cities that lie outside this orbit must take steps to transform themselves into tourism sites. Melbourne belongs to this latter group. (...)since the 1990s, Melbourne’s destination marketing has increasingly focused on culture, cuisine, popular culture, fashion and lifestyle – a sophisticated modern city rather than one with one or two tangible icons. A high-quality coffee culture is seen as a keystone of this sophisticated image and one of the main destination attributes of Melbourne and its surrounding region’. W. Frost, J. Lang, F. Wheeler and K. Reeves, ‘Coffee Culture, Heritage and Destination Image: Melbourne and the Italian Model’, in L. Jolliffe (ed), *Coffee Culture, Destinations and Tourism* (Bristol, Channel View, 2010), pp. 99-111.

<sup>183</sup> *Guardian*, 23 April 1999, ‘Le Café Est Arrive!’.

<sup>184</sup> *Western Mail*, 16 August 2003, ‘More Diners Go Alfresco’.

<sup>185</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 7 October 2006, ‘A Taste of Italy’.

<sup>186</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 6 May 2011, ‘Cool Cymru’s Back in Town’.

phenomenon and put it down to old-standing patterns of Italian migration to Wales.<sup>187</sup> In other words, what the Welsh media tended to imply was that, despite not featuring outdoor tables, the Bracchi had already brought to Wales new forms of recreation and consumption, which Welsh customers would regard as café-culture. As Giovanni Malacrino pointed out, new bars and restaurants represented a ‘modern version of the Bracchi’.<sup>188</sup> As the *Western Mail* also reported in 2010, café-culture in Wales has

(...) been engendered in our culture by the establishment over the past century of Italian-run cafes and ice-cream parlours in communities across the country (...) Italian cafes sprang up all over the South Wales Valleys in the first half of the twentieth century, bringing good quality coffee to Wales long before the emergence of the chain outlets.<sup>189</sup>

Therefore, it was to highlight the link between old and new forms of Welsh-Italian catering that, over the last ten years, the Welsh media have continued to emphasise the important influence of the Bracchi on the country’s lifestyle and social appetite.

In 2006, for example, Malcom Parry, the presenter of the radio programme *Building on the Past*, paid a visit to *Conti’s* café in Lampeter, arguing that Italian ice-cream parlours and cafés represented ‘something totally peculiar to Welsh towns’ and adding that ‘there’s always somewhere a (...) café in a Welsh valley-town’.<sup>190</sup> ITV Wales’ programme *Great Welsh Cafes* also paid attention to Italian cafés in the Valleys, dedicating one episode to the *Strinati Café* in Treherbet;<sup>191</sup> the presenter went as far as to quote the sentence (which he attributed to Dylan Thomas) ‘thank god for the Italians, without them where would we Welsh be’, while a customer claimed to be a regular customer of the shop because ‘it’s here and you know that

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<sup>187</sup> Frost and other authors have observed that also Melbourne, whose coffee-culture has recently become the city’s most popular touristic attraction, ‘in the popular imagination (...) acquired its cafe culture as part of the cultural baggage of Italian migrants’. See: Frost et al., ‘Coffee Culture’, pp. 99-111.

<sup>188</sup> *Guardian*, 23 April 1999, ‘Le Café Est Arrive!’.

<sup>189</sup> *Western Mail*, 16 July 2010, ‘From Luxury Lattes to Marvelous Mochas, Wales is Taking to Coffee More Than the Rest.

<sup>190</sup> BBC Radio Wales, ‘Building on the Past’, NLW, Cell E123 021109.

<sup>191</sup> ITV Wales, ‘Great Welsh Cafes’, NLW, Cell E123 016350/01.

it's going to be open every day'. Another customer asserted that the café served 'the best cup of coffee in the Rhondda'. In 2006 BBC Wales interviewed the Porthcawl-based café-owner Remo Sidoli, who claimed to serve his customers a cappuccino *come si deve* (the way it should be done).<sup>192</sup> Five years before, BBC Radio Wales had dedicated part of the series *Cafê Cymru* to the long-standing *Bacchetta's* in Porth; throughout the whole programme, which was physically set in the café, the sound of a coffee machine in the background represented a clear reminder of the Bracchi (just like in the 1980 programme the *Brachis of Bardi*).<sup>193</sup> Simply put, once again, all these programmes emphasised the cultural and social *contribution* that Italians had made to Welsh society introducing good quality products and essential meeting places.

Such an approach to the Italian café-trade history was also embraced by the exhibition *Italian Memories in Wales*, which displayed an authentic old-style Italian coffee machine (see Appendix 9) together with a decorated ice-cream cart. Featuring objects such as a coffee machine and ice-cream cart meant displaying highly recognizable features which the older generations would certainly be familiar and emotionally engaged with. In addition, the objects served a way to educate the younger generations making them aware of the long-standing diversity of their nation. The use of such enhancement narratives in this sort of exhibitions was paralleled in other European countries, which also drew on notions of tolerance and multiculturalism. For example, the Netherlands Open Air Museum has, over the last decade, increasingly featured exhibitions which showed how migration affects everyday life and highlighted the alleged similarities between Dutch and migrant everyday cultures (e.g. Dutch and Moroccan cuisines). Among the other things, the museum hosted

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<sup>192</sup> BBC Video Nation, 'Italian Stories: Remo's Story', [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli2?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 30/05/2011 and 'Italian Stories: Ice-cream Parlour', [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk\\_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/videonation/media/ram/u/uk_sidoli3?size=4x3&bgc=FF3300&nbram=1&bbram=1), accessed 30/05/2011.

<sup>193</sup> BBC Radio Wales, 'Cafê Cymru', NLW, Cell E123 14118/05.

replicas of a Chinese restaurant and of an Italian ice-cream parlour.<sup>194</sup> Strikingly, the SFNHM also opened an Italianate café and named it *Bardi* to emphasise the contribution of Italians on Welsh society (See Appendix 10).<sup>195</sup>

Like the media and museum exhibitions, some leading Welsh ice-cream producers, who claimed an Italian heritage, have played a prominent role in the re-construction of Welsh cuisine in multicultural terms. These manufacturers have contributed to make ice-cream appear as a Welsh national product, claiming that their products were Welsh and Italian at the same time. Whereas it became prominent in the post-devolution period, this attitude toward ice-cream was already apparent, in symbolic terms, in 1979 when the Tenby-based ice-cream maker Jim Fecci designed a special type of ice-cream reproducing the town's medieval Five Arches. As the *Western Mail* reported:

Tenby-born Mr Fecci, aged 55, who has an ice-cream parlour in St. George's Street, has gained a world reputation for producing out-of-the-ordinary designs using ice-cream, cream, fruit and wafers (...) Now he is looking for someone who can make a mould of the Five Arches so that thousands of holidaymakers can sample a piece of local history.<sup>196</sup>

In other words, Fecci's ice-cream symbolically represented the hybrid Welsh-Italian identity as being an Italian product which portrayed a recognizable feature of the Welsh historic landscape. The idea of an Italian ice-cream becoming a Welsh national product was taken further in 1990, when *Frank's Ice-Cream* won the 'International Ice Cream Competition' in Rimini (Italy). As the *Gazzetta* reported:

Contrary to popular belief the best ice-cream is no longer made by Italians, instead one must now look to the Amman Valley in West Wales as the mecca for ice-cream making. (...) Frank's Ice Cream Ltd, from the village of Garnant scooped this top award against formidable competition from all over Europe. (...) The recipe for the

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<sup>194</sup> H. Dibbits, 'Histories of Migrants and Migration in the Netherlands Open Air Museum: Reflections on the Recent Repositioning of a Museum About Dutch Daily Life', paper delivered at the conference *The History of Migration in Museums*.

<sup>195</sup> SFNHM, <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/752/>, accessed 2/07/2011.

<sup>196</sup> *Western Mail*, 10 September 1979, 'And for My Next Ice-Cream...'.

winning ice-cream was brought over from Italy in the 1920s by Joe's Italian-born father. Over the years the recipe has been refined and perfected but the secret lies in the unique blend of ingredients. Joe added (...) 'For us in Wales to have received such a prestigious and distinguished honour from Italy is a wonderful achievement'.<sup>197</sup>

As the passage above suggests, ice-cream which was produced in Wales was presented by the leading Welsh-Italian newspaper as being 'unique' because it was 'Welsh' and 'Italian' at the same time. It was 'Welsh', because it was produced in Wales by Welsh ingredients ('a unique blend of ingredients'), but it was also 'Italian', because it was made according to Italian traditional recipes.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, such a combination of Welsh and Italian features was to become the official marketing policy of most Italian ice-cream manufacturers across Wales, one that was clearly displayed by most companies' websites. These generally emphasised the migrant origins of the companies' owners, who, after migrating to Wales to escape poverty, prospered thanks to their hardworking nature and, above all, their inherited skills. On their websites, ice-cream manufacturers often claimed to produce their ice-cream according to traditional recipes that their ancestors brought from their homeland. They also claimed to make use of the finest Welsh ingredients, producing an authentic *Welsh-Italian* ice-cream. For example, as Ebbw Vale-based producer *Sidoli's* reported on its website, which featured both an Italian and Welsh flag as a logo: 'producing the high quality ice cream from fresh local produce, *Sidoli's* has an unrivalled taste to its real dairy ice cream'.<sup>198</sup> Similar statements appeared on *Joe's Ice-Cream's* website, which read:

Following a secret recipe from his home in Italy, he [the founder's son Joe Cascarini] sourced the finest ingredients in Wales and introduced to Swansea the most unique tasting, luxury, Italian ice cream (...) We experiment with our aromas, bringing to all of our Joe's fans, a mix of Welsh and Italian fancy flavours, but our ingredients will always be of the finest quality.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> *Gazzetta Amici Val Ceno Galles*, April 1990, 'Joe Scoops Best in Europe Award'.

<sup>198</sup> *Sidoli's Ice-Cream*, <http://www.sidolis-icecream.co.uk/company.htm>, accessed 8/07/2011.

<sup>199</sup> *Joe's Ice-Cream*, <http://www.joes-icecream.co.uk/our-story>, accessed 8/07/2011.

*Frank's Ice-Cream* also stated that its main aim was 'adding a touch of Italian flair and passion to the art of making delicious ice-cream, with traditional recipes and some of the finest Welsh ingredients to create a taste you'll never forget'.<sup>200</sup>

Two are the key concepts which define such marketing policies: authenticity and creolization. Although these terms may appear contradictory, they were actually complementary, as most Welsh-Italian producers claimed to make ice-cream combining traditional Italian recipes (authenticity) and Welsh ingredients (creolization). Therefore, drawing on Appadurai's findings on the making of a national cuisine in contemporary India, it can be argued that the Welsh-Italian ice-cream manufacturers' behaviour fell within a broader process of construction of a Welsh national cuisine, which built on long-standing culinary traditions of the country (Italian, Welsh and other ethnic cuisines) to 'invent and codify new, overarching categories which make sense only from a cosmopolitan perspective'.<sup>201</sup> As a result of this process, over the last decade, the Welsh media have also increasingly described ice-cream as being a 'Welsh product'. For example, the *South Wales Echo* reported in August 2009 that *Frank's ice-cream* together with *Brain's Brewery*, *Peter's Pies* and *Colliers Cheese* was one of the leading 'Welsh products' that were hosted by the Tesco-sponsored producers' market in Cardiff.<sup>202</sup>

Such an emphasis upon the use of 'local' Welsh ingredients on one hand and Italian recipes on the other was, to a certain extent, fostered by the WAG's action plan. In 2007, the WAG published a 'Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Dairy Industry' which indicated ice-cream as being a 'potential growth area'.<sup>203</sup> As a result, the government took policy-initiatives

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<sup>200</sup> Frank's Ice-Cream, <http://www.franksicecream.co.uk/index.html>, accessed 8/07/2011.

<sup>201</sup> Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine', 16.

<sup>202</sup> *South Wales Echo*, 5 August 2009, 'Tesco Pushes Local Produce'.

<sup>203</sup> WAG, *Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Dairy Industry* (Cardiff, WAG, 2007), p. 28, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/foodandfisheries/foodpolicyandstrategy/?lang=en>, accessed 14/07/2011.

aimed at promoting Welsh agri-food manufacturers (including ice-cream producers), one example being the ‘Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme’ (PMGS).<sup>204</sup> The PMGS represents a form of financial assistance aimed at investing in those medium size and small ‘new, innovative, added value’ food companies, which ‘need support for market development if they are to grow and make a significant contribution to the country’s economy’. In the dairy sector, the PMGS is intended as a way of developing ‘higher value dairy products’.<sup>205</sup>

For example, as Joseph Parisella commented:

The Assembly has been very good to us, you know, when we decided to go back into this *gelato* [quality] ice-cream they encouraged us to do this sort of thing and they said we ‘will give you grants’ if you go down that road (...) they said ‘we’ll support you’ and we had to put a business plan (...) and then they said ‘ok we will back you on this, up to a certain point, we’ll give at one stage 40 per cent grant’ (...) tax free and then we did that and then we decided to go back again, we could see the potentials and we wanted to expand a bit (...) and this time they gave us a 50 per cent grant to establish this old style recipe again (...) we couldn’t really do it as quickly without their support.<sup>206</sup>

In 2007, Frank’s Ice-Cream was also awarded a £140,000 grant (funded by both WAG and EU).<sup>207</sup> According to the WAG, companies which aim to be eligible for financial support, have to ‘encourage greater collaboration between producers and the rest of the supply chain’.<sup>208</sup> This means that grant-awarded ice-cream producers have to purchase milk from local Welsh farmers. As ice-cream producer Tony Parisella pointed out: ‘it’s one of the conditions of our grant, we’ve got to support the economy...We do that by buying milk and

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<sup>204</sup> WAG: Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/axis1/documents/090216processmarketgrantoverview/?lang=en>, accessed 14/07/2011.

<sup>205</sup> WAG: Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/axis1/documents/090216processmarketgrantoverview/?lang=en>, accessed 14/07/2011.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with J. Parisella and I. Griffith, 21 September 2011.

<sup>207</sup> WAG: Local Carmarthenshire Business to Provide Ice-cream Treats for Welsh Patients, <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2010/100326franksicecream/?lang=en>, accessed 15/07/2011.

<sup>208</sup> WAG: Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/axis1/documents/090216processmarketgrantoverview/?lang=en>, accessed 14/07/2011.

cream’.<sup>209</sup> As a result, Italian ice-cream makers have been encouraged to emphasise the Welshness of their products in their marketing strategies. Yet, they have also been encouraged to develop high-quality products. As a result, they have also highlighted the Italianness of their products, as it is generally associated with ‘quality’ by customers.

However, several narratives suggest that the emphasis upon Welsh ingredients and Italian recipes did not entail any actual engagement with Welshness or Italianness, being a result of market-orientated strategies. In other words, neither was the proclaimed ‘Welsh-Italianness’ of ice-cream aimed at expressing a sense of ‘hybrid’ national pride nor they intended to reinforce the inclusive and multicultural image of Wales. It was in fact aimed at reaching out to customers who, in some cases, were not even Welsh. When asked whether *Frank’s* ice-cream was produced according to authentic Italian recipes, Renaldo Dallavalle commented:

The press like to hear that (...) my father back in 1962 (...) was one of the first persons (...) to gain a diploma in ice-cream technology (...) we won a cup again this year for the best ice cream in the UK, we have now won it ten times, so (...) we know how to make a good quality ice-cream [but]...I wouldn’t say it’s Italian (...) Italian ice-cream is a lot colder than ours.<sup>210</sup>

This passage suggests that the use of an ‘Italian’ label on the company’s website did not actually entail a recognition of the authenticity of the product. It represented a marketing strategy aimed at reaching out to customers all over Britain, not just in Wales. In other words, Italian ice-cream did not represent an exclusively Welsh phenomenon as it was at the time of the Bracchi. As Dallavalle clearly pointed out:

Back in the 1950s and 1960s it was much more regional, every Italian shop made their own ice-cream or bought Italian ice-cream like from ourselves (...) there are hardly any Italian cafés left now (...) it’s due to supermarkets being the major suppliers.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

<sup>210</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.



Even the use of Welsh ingredients was a result of economic more than nationalistic considerations. As Dallavalle explained: ‘we feel that the milk [in Wales] and cream is better than it is outside [Wales] and that’s why I think we’ve been so successful in competitions: our cream and milk is a lot more creamier than in other parts of the UK’.<sup>212</sup> Tony Parisella also commented:

People are looking for the quality and Italian ice-cream is generally seen as the best (...) so, it’s important for us to show, one, that the ice-cream is Italian (...) and, two, that is locally made as well, cause people love that ‘locally-made’ (...) I do think that people like to see things in context so, I mean, if you come to Conwy you like to see that it’s made in Conwy (...) I think what attract people in this country is that a lot of people are here in Wales on their holidays and they’re buying a locally-made Italian ice-cream, so there’s two sort of cultures clashing I mean Italian food, Welsh ingredients, Welsh holidays, this is the whole package, it seems to work (...) Perhaps people coming here on holiday (...) they get away from big cities, the pressure and the strain, they come here - caravan park or whatever - and they come down on the quay for an ice-cream, they see ‘Parisella Italian ice-cream’, in Wales, they associate these things with positive things in their life, good food, good holiday.<sup>213</sup>

Therefore, also in this case, the emphasis on both ‘local’ ingredients and ‘Italian’ recipes was the result of practical economic considerations. As was case for some Italian restaurants, the costumers at whom products was mainly aimed were not Welsh people, but English holidaymakers.

The marketing-strategies which have been illustrated were often paralleled in the restaurant-sector. Over the last two decades Italian restaurateurs have emphasised the freshness and locality of their food. This was often the case for Italian restaurants’ websites which claimed to provide authentic Italian cuisine by local ingredients. For example, *Valentino* in Llandudno claimed on its website that its Italian chef ‘fell in love with Llandudno and its people and decided to stay here. He trained *locally* as chef; gaining his experience *locally* (...) All his

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<sup>212</sup> Interview with R. Dallavalle, 12 December 2011.

<sup>213</sup> Interview with T. Parisella, 17 July 2011.

food is fresh and where possible sourced *locally*'.<sup>214</sup> *Casanova* in Cardiff also reported on its website:

In order to fulfil the finest quality we check and choose fresh meat and fish everyday sourced from Cardiff city centre market. J.T. Morgan supplies us (...) Welsh Salt Mash Lamb allegedly known as the best in the world.<sup>215</sup>

However, as was the case for ice-cream producers, neither did Italian restaurateurs appear to choose local products to express a sense of Welsh pride or engagement with Wales in cultural or social terms nor they aimed at promoting the construction of a multicultural Welsh diet. They simply aimed at meeting a growing demand for locally-made food. As restaurateur Fausto Galli clearly pointed out:

Our stuff is all local (...) we use meat from Conwy's butcher (...) fish is all fresh from the sea here (...) vegetables (...) milk, cream, butter...Because you need fresh stuff (...) We believe in fresh stuff, it's very important...People come here, eat a nice Welsh fillet, Welsh fish, yes, it works.<sup>216</sup>

Giuseppe Lynch explained that providing locally sourced Welsh produce aimed at gaining 'respect' amongst local customers. As the restaurateur pointed out:

We wanted to make sure that we support local businesses (...) in terms of all our dairy produce, all our meat, so we do the best as we can to try and keep our spending within the north Wales area (...) You're supporting local businesses and helping them thriving, making the area thrive and, you know, making it a bit more affluent and keeping the money within the area and then you get respected for that by customers who then come in because they appreciate that.<sup>217</sup>

This chapter has assessed the extent to which Italian migration has influenced the Welsh foodways, focusing on eating-out practices. It has shown that Italian forms of recreation and consumption have represented a long-standing feature of the Welsh social landscape, as the

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<sup>214</sup> Ristorante Valentino, [www.valentinorestaurant.co.uk](http://www.valentinorestaurant.co.uk), accessed 9/07/2011.

<sup>215</sup> Ristorante Casanova, [www.casanovaonlinestore.com](http://www.casanovaonlinestore.com), accessed 9/07/2011.

<sup>216</sup> Interview with F. Galli, 14 November 2011 (author's translation).

<sup>217</sup> Interview with G. Lynch, 13 February 2012.

Bracchi demonstrate. In addition, after 1945, Italian ice-cream and cuisine have witnessed a remarkable expansion with the opening of Italian restaurants and the strengthening of several ice-cream firms. However, as this chapter has shown, the extent to which Italian cuisine has permeated Welsh foodscapes should not be overestimated. Although it is true that the more urbanised, affluent and educated sections of the country have witnessed a remarkable expansion of the Italian catering trade, the majority of Welsh people have remained substantially unfamiliar with Italian cuisine. As James has pointed out:

The enthusiastic acceptance of creolised foreign food aimed at a mass market represents, I suggest, a continuity, rather than a diminution, of the Britishness of the British food tradition, for in the take-away of pre-prepared products aimed at the mass food market these quintessentially British attitudes are but thinly veiled. A spoonful of pesto, a packet of pasta, or a bottle of cooking-sauce can be seen as simply one way to spice up plain British mince, rather than as registering a desire to cook authentic Italian food.<sup>218</sup>

Commenting a survey that he undertook in the mid-1990s, Warde also concluded:

There is a sufficiently high level of abstention from foreign foods and (...) an enduring popularity of the English public house, especially in the provinces, to suggest that the ecumenical effects of learning exotic tastes (...) are still far from thoroughly diffused among the British population (...) It would be dangerous to generalize too far about changing popular taste on the basis of the distinctive consumer behaviour of the educated, metropolitan, salaried middle classes.<sup>219</sup>

Moreover, this chapter has illustrated that the expansion that the Italian catering trade has experienced in certain areas of the country (namely summer resorts) and in certain sectors (namely ice-cream production) has not been led by a predominantly Welsh demand. Whereas the Bracchi did represent a uniquely ‘Welsh’ phenomenon (granted that they were limited to a specific area of Wales), the subsequent growth of the Italian catering sector appeared to be a mere refraction of a broader British picture. Therefore, this chapter has demonstrated that the Welsh media and the Italian ice-cream producers and restaurateurs, over the past thirty years,

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<sup>218</sup> James, ‘How British is British Food’, pp. 83-84.

<sup>219</sup> Warde, ‘Eating Globally’, pp. 309-310.

have deliberately ‘overestimated’ the prominence and uniqueness of Italian cuisine in Wales. In so doing, the former have attempted to reinforce an inclusive and tolerant image of Wales, which has been embraced by the Welsh political discourse, while the latter have simply tried and meet a growing demand for ‘authenticity’ and ‘locality’ which, once again, have been led by either an urban and educated Welsh ‘minority’ or by English customers.

# CONCLUSION

## I

This thesis has explored the Italian migrant experience in Wales. Such a case study has been chosen in order to illustrate the extent to which migrations can influence the cultural and social landscapes of receiving societies. Most studies have been concerned with the adaptations that migrants make *to* their countries of settlement. This study has illustrated not only that migrants can adapt to them but also influence them. The Italian experience in Wales has primarily shown that even numerically small and geographically dispersed migrant groups can have a profound impact on their receiving society introducing new patterns of recreation and consumption, which can become part of the country's popular culture and collective memory. In so doing, this study has illustrated how and why a given migrant history can be incorporated in the national history of the host country and subsequently used for nation-building purposes. Finally, the study has also shown how even an allegedly 'integrated' and 'successful' migrant group can resist such an attempted incorporation maintaining a distinct identity.

This thesis has focused on a case of migration involving a *stateless* receiving nation. In so doing, it has shown that, contrary to common belief, migrations are not linear movements occurring between homogeneous nation-states, but complex phenomena affecting territories which, in most cases, are internally divided along various *boundaries* (ethnic, institutional, geographical, etc.).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this case study has shown that, in order to study migrations, it is necessary to take different national, regional and local contexts into account. Whereas, in academic enquiry, migrants have traditionally been seen as moving to the UK or Britain

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<sup>1</sup> For a critical definition of boundary see, for example, Barth, 'Introduction', pp. 9-38.

(which generally speaking means the main English metropolitan areas), this study has illustrated that migrant experiences can vary according to different national, regional and local contexts.

The decision to focus on a case of migration involving a *stateless* nation appears to be particularly germane. The post-devolution British political framework provides an ideal vantage point to appreciate how newly-born nations (in political/institutional terms) which aim to gain an increasing political autonomy (or even independence) can make use of their past for nation-building purposes. In particular, this thesis has illustrated that such nations can memorialise their history of immigration to forge a (more or less) *tolerant* image of their past, one that could suit their current political aims.

## II

Chapter One analysed some of the main social and economic features of Italian migration to Wales in the twentieth century. It illustrated that, despite being a numerical minority, Italians have come to represent a comparatively prominent migrant group in a country where immigration (with the exception of English and, to a lesser extent, Irish) has seldom been a quantitatively significant phenomenon. As a result of their occupational structure and geographical distribution, Italians have become a popular migrant group across Wales; they have tended to be perceived by the ‘indigenous’ population as a *model minority*, being socially integrated and economically successful. Yet, Chapter One illustrated that such an alleged *integration* and *success* has often been a more complex phenomenon than commonsense knowledge would suggest. Firstly, despite being socially integrated and geographically dispersed, Italians have been able to maintain a distinct identity, being fostered by regular visits home and ethnic gatherings. Secondly, their alleged upward mobility has been economic but not necessarily social (professional, educational, etc.).

However, as Chapter Two has illustrated, Italians have continued to be portrayed as being integrated and successful in Welsh popular culture and collective memory. They have, more than other migrant groups, figured prominently in the Welsh media, literature and museum-exhibitions. These have tended to recollect and narrate Italian migration as a success story, forgetting anti-Italian feelings and behaviours which arose in Wales in different historical contexts. While before devolution such a process of narration and memorialisation was the expression of a taken-for-granted belief (the Welsh are inherently tolerant people towards migrants), after devolution, Italian migrant narratives have served a reinforcement of the notion of inclusiveness that the Welsh institutions have embraced. The reason why Italians have been more represented than other migrant groups by the media, literature and museums is that they are generally seen by Welsh people as being a model minority which has successfully integrated and actively *contributed* to Welsh society. Thus, their story ideally serves two nation-building purposes. Firstly, it nurtures an inclusive notion of Welshness, showing to ‘indigenous’ Welsh people that Wales is an inherently tolerant nation which has historically welcomed migrants and minorities. Secondly, it shows to Wales’ migrants and ethnic minority people that their receiving country is an inclusive nation which anyone, irrespective of its background, can be part of, on the condition that he/she works hard and integrates like Italians have previously done.

Such an argument is also supported by the Welsh Government’s Refugee Inclusion Strategy Action Plan, which reads ‘we want refugees to become *full and active members of our society*, making a *full contribution* to Welsh life and culture’.<sup>2</sup> Wales is currently home to an increasingly diverse population. By 2001, 3.2 per cent of the Welsh population was born outside the UK, a figure which added to a even larger percentage (4 per cent) of people who

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (WG), *Refugee Inclusion Strategy Action Plan* (Cardiff, WG, 2011), <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/110722action.pdf>, accessed 8/02/2012. The WAG changed its name into WG in 2011.

claimed a background other than white British/English/Welsh.<sup>3</sup> In addition, over the last decade, Wales has experienced a significant influx of eastern European migrant workers as well as asylum seekers;<sup>4</sup> by 2007, over 129,000 non-UK born people were to be found in Wales (over 4 per cent of the population).<sup>5</sup> Whereas it may appear to be still quantitatively marginal, such a growing migrant population will have an increasing impact on the future of Wales as a political/institutional nation. For instance, it will potentially be able to influence future elections and referenda; in a country where, so far, electoral turnouts have been poor, even a relatively ‘small’ amount of votes can make the difference.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is germane to argue that the Welsh political institutions, with the backing of media and museums, have increasingly been trying to reach out to such a migrant population to nurture its civic engagement and sense of belonging to Wales. At the same time, such institutions have been trying to reach out to the non-migrant majority population to nurture a civic notion of Welshness which entails the inclusion of anyone who, irrespective of his/her cultural background, chooses to live in Wales. One way of achieving such a result has been to narrate the Italian migrant history in such a positive way that could suit the present.

Chapter Three focused on Italian migrant identities in Wales. Whereas it is possible to observe regional variations, the chapter demonstrated that, in the majority of cases, the resilience of various forms of migrant belonging prevailed over geographical factors. It can be argued that, despite being generally integrated and occupying a prominent position in Welsh society, the majority of Italians have maintained a distinct identity. This in most cases is a hybrid identity mixing elements of Italianness and Welshness. This may appear to be an

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<sup>3</sup> ONS, *Census 2001: England and Wales* (ethnic group detailed categories provided by ONS). The number of people of people of foreign birth living in Wales (and in each county of Wales) by country of birth (based on the Census 2001 data) can be retrieved from: ONS: Neighbourhood Statistics, <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>, accessed 26/04/2011.

<sup>4</sup> Crawley and Crimes, *Refugees Living in Wales*; WAG, *Statistics on Migrant Workers*, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090915migrantwork2008en.pdf>, accessed 27/04/2011.

<sup>5</sup> WAG, *Statistics on Migrant Workers*, <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090915migrantwork2008en.pdf>, accessed 27/04/2011.

<sup>6</sup> See: Jones and Trystan, ‘The Welsh Referendum Vote’, 65-93.



unproblematic circumstance in a society which has now formally embraced a civic and inclusive notion of multiculturalism which allows anyone to identify with Wales without denying its cultural background. Yet, the majority of Italians continue to associate the allegedly civic and inclusive Wales with cultural connotations which they see as clashing with or being inferior to the Italian correspondents. Simply put, in most cases, Italianness seems to prevail over Welshness even amongst third or fourth generation Italians, no matter if they have a mixed (Italian and Welsh) family background.

One reason for this could be that Italianness appears to apply a stronger ‘emotional pull’ than Welshness; Italy continues to be regarded by most migrants as their ‘homeland’. This adds to the fact that such a homeland has increasingly become an internationally appreciated country (cuisine, fashion, holidays, football, etc.); consequently ‘being Italian’ is now seen by some Welsh-Italians as ‘cool’ or, at least, ‘cooler’ than ‘being Welsh’. On the other hand, one reason for such a strong Italian ‘emotional pull’ could simply be the converse weaker emotional pull which Wales seems to apply, being a relatively new and yet-to-be consolidated ‘nation’ (in political/institutional terms), one which remains a *stateless* nation within a larger state.<sup>7</sup> Such a constitutional framework may appear confusing or meaningless to migrant people who may ask themselves if it is worth making an effort (in terms of civic engagement with Wales) as long as Westminster remains the only (and real) source of citizenship (and related rights/duties). This is particularly true for first generation Italian migrants who grew up in Italy during the fascist regime at a time when there were no doubts

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<sup>7</sup> Whereas Wales, formally, is still a nation without a state, it can be argued that, given its devolutionary experience, Wales is not completely stateless anymore. It can also be argued that the very definition of ‘state’ does not fully apply to European nation-states which have delegated part of their sovereignty to the EU. For a discussion, see, for example, C. Harvie, *The Rise of Regional Europe* (London, Routledge, 1994) and B. Eberhard and N. Evans (eds), *Networking Europe: Essays on Regionalism and Social Democracy* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000).

about nation and state being the very same thing;<sup>8</sup> to such people Britain remains the only, real and significant ‘nation’, not matter if they show some sort of affiliation to Wales.

This adds to the fact that, despite having now become an inclusive and civic nation, Wales remains an ethnic and culturally-connoted nation to the majority of Italians. The most obvious reason for this is the institutional prominence that the Welsh language has progressively acquired. Whereas, on one hand, the Welsh institutions have embraced a civic notion of identity which transcends Wales’ long-standing linguistic divisions, on the other they have clearly promoted the use of the Welsh language not only among ‘indigenous’ Welsh people but also among migrants. Most Italians (as well as other migrants) continue to regard the Welsh language as being a marker of Welshness, an ethnic boundary that they cannot or do not want to cross. Whereas some Italians have learnt Welsh they have, in most cases, done it for practical reasons without feeling emotionally engaged with it.

These findings suggest that the Welsh institutions still have a long way to go if they seriously aim to reach out to and include their migrants and ethnic minorities. Whereas a number of policy initiatives have been taken in order to promote equality and civic engagement, the Italian case study demonstrates that reality is often more complex than the Welsh institutions may think; if even a long-established and arguably integrated and successful migrant group like Italians find it hard to fully identify with Wales, it is germane to ask how can more recently-established and (arguably) less integrated migrants possibly claim to be Welsh.<sup>9</sup> One faulty logic at work here could be continuing to interpret migrants and ethnic people as homogenous ‘groups’, as if a ‘group’ (or its representatives) could speak for every single individual.<sup>10</sup> As the Italian case demonstrates, many migrant people (possibly the majority)

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<sup>8</sup> Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*; Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the ‘Enemy Other’*.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, ‘Claiming the National’, pp. 220-234; Williams and Chaney, ‘Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups: ethnic minorities’, pp. 78-101.

<sup>10</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

do not see themselves as being part of an organised group at all. The only ‘official’ Welsh-Italian association is the AVCG which, despite aiming to ‘represent’ all Italians in Wales, actually ‘represents’ only a minority of those from Val Ceno in particular, who only occasionally ‘happen’ to get together as a group. The majority of Italians (certainly those living in mid and north Wales) are individuals who rarely (or never) gather with other fellow-countrymen and do not have anything to do with the AVCG or do not even know about the very existence of the association. It is rather in commonsense knowledge-based and banal aspects of everyday life that Italian migrants appear to shape their identities.

Chapter Four explored the impact that patterns of Italian migration have had on the Welsh socio-cultural landscape focusing on the eating-out dimension. It showed that since the early days of their migrant experience, Italians introduced innovative eating-out patterns to Wales, particularly in the coal mining communities across the Valleys. This could be seen as a peculiar and uniquely Welsh experience, which could not be observed elsewhere. Whereas large numbers of Italian-owned shops were also to be found elsewhere in Britain (e.g. in Scotland) nowhere do Italians seem to have had such a profound impact on the indigenous lifestyle as in south Wales; in both popular culture and collective memory, Italian cafés have often been referred to as a taken-for-granted institutionalised feature of the Welsh (namely south Walian) socio-cultural landscape as much as chapels, miners’ institutes and rugby.

The progressive decline of Italian cafés has been countered by the rise of new Italian restaurants, coffee shops and ice-cream producers, which have, over the last two decades, tended to emphasise the authenticity of their products and ambience. However, unlike the Bracchi’s experience, such an expansion of an arguably authentic Italian catering trade is not a peculiar Welsh phenomenon anymore but a mere replica of a general British (or even global) picture. In addition, it has only affected some areas of the country and it has predominantly been led by an educated and affluent minority of the Welsh population. This

means that the influence that Italian eating-out patterns have had on post-war Welsh society should not be overestimated. Yet, Chapter Four illustrated that the Welsh media, museums and institutions have tended to overplay the impact that Italian restaurants, ice-cream parlours and cafés have had on Welsh society. They have adopted ‘enhancement narratives’ which emphasise the *positive contribution* of Italian migration to Welsh society. Before devolution, the emphasis on the Italian café-connection primarily mirrored a taken-for-granted tolerant and cosmopolitan image of Wales. By contrast, after 1997 the Welsh media and other institutions have used Italian eating-out patterns to reinforce the current notion of inclusiveness and multiculturalism.

### III

Focusing on a largely unexplored case study, the thesis has primarily aimed to contribute to migration history. Whereas it has adopted a historical perspective, it has also engaged with the broader academic debate on migration, ethnicity and identity across the disciplinary spectrum (sociology, anthropology, media and museum studies, etc.) namely in three areas of enquiry: firstly, Italian diaspora, secondly, Welsh identity and, thirdly, immigration and ethnicity in Britain. In so doing, the thesis has aimed to illuminate a number of under-investigated fields of investigation. Firstly, most migration studies (namely those addressing the Italian diaspora as well as those addressing immigration to Britain) have, with few exceptions, focused on quantitatively large and geographically concentrated migrant settlements as if the small and dispersed ones were not worthy of investigation. This thesis has illustrated that even numerically marginal patterns of migration are worthy of investigation as they can have a profound impact on the socio-cultural landscape of the receiving society.

This thesis has also demonstrated that, contrary to popular belief, ethnic contiguity and size of migrant populations do not necessarily play a major role in processes of identity-renegotiation. Firstly, migrants living in ethnic neighbourhoods do not necessarily maintain their migrant heritage longer than those who are scattered across small-town and rural settings. Secondly, geographically isolated migrants do not necessarily assimilate more rapidly than those living in ethnic neighbourhoods. Despite being a numerically small and geographically dispersed migrant group, Italians have often maintained a number of links with their migrant heritage and homeland, thus they claim a predominantly Italian national identity. As a result, despite being socially and economically integrated into Welsh society, some Italians still find it hard to fully identify with Wales and Welshness. By contrast, the relatively numerous and (for long) geographically concentrated Butetown's black community seems to have, in most cases, lost touch with its migrant heritage and homelands. Being a long-established and out-marriage-orientated minority, some black people 'may describe themselves both territorially and in terms of identity as "black Welsh"'.<sup>11</sup> Yet, despite expressing 'a sense of attachment to things Welsh and to Welsh identity', (unlike Italians) they are not yet fully integrated into society in socio-economic terms.<sup>12</sup> However, like Italians, they denote a 'loose affiliation to dominant definitions of Welshness and Welsh society'.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Italian experience suggests that, more than size and contiguity, it is factors such as the durability of migration, transnationalism, the 'visibility' of the country of origin and, particularly, banal nationalism which seem to foster the maintenance of migrant identities. As Williams has also observed, 'minority communities mobilise their ethnic identification in complex patterns, referencing country of origin, country of settlement, country of onward

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<sup>11</sup> Williams, 'Race and Racism', 7.

<sup>12</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', p. 88.

settlement as well as cultural distinctiveness'.<sup>14</sup> When compared to Italians, Cardiff's blacks did not receive substantial immigration after the war and were generally not inclined to transnational practices. Unlike Italians, they originate from a range of countries, a circumstance which makes it more difficult for them to identify with a specific homeland. By contrast, Italians all hail from a well-defined nation-state, one that has become internationally popular. In addition, Italians did receive further immigration after the Second World War, a circumstance which reinforced their links with their homeland. This adds to enduring transnationalist practices, not to mention the popularity of Italian cuisine (and Italy as a country) in and beyond Wales. It can be argued that the special attention that the media and other institutions have paid to Italians has also enhanced their Italian pride, rather than foster their sense of belonging to Wales.

Finally, the Italian experience demonstrates that it is also (and especially) banal and everyday forms of national identification which seems to foster the maintenance and transmission of migrant belongings, which often seem apply a stronger emotional pull than the receiving society could possibly do. This confirms that, as other authors have observed in other Italian diasporic settings, Italianness denotes a particular resilience; the Welsh-Italian case study illustrates that not only is Italianness resilient in geographically concentrated and numerically prominent migrant settings, but also in the relatively marginal, dispersed, small-town and rural ones.<sup>15</sup> In so doing, this case study has also contributed to challenge the supporters of the so called 'ethnic twilight' (Alba, Gans); the study has shown that even in the third or fourth generation, despite upward social and spatial mobility, ethnicity is not a mere voluntary 'leisure-time activity' but a taken-for-granted sense of belonging; it can function as a boundary-maker and influence migrants' affiliation to the receiving society.

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<sup>14</sup> Williams, 'Claiming the National', p. 230.

<sup>15</sup> This seems to confirm previous findings. See, for example, Vecoli (ed), *Italian Immigrants*.

The Welsh-Italian case study has also challenged another common misconception; that racism is a predominantly urban phenomenon which is directly proportional to either the 'size' of the 'visibility' of migrant groups. Despite not having been exposed to the same amount of racism as 'segregated' and 'visible' minorities, numerically marginal and white migrants have also been the target of prejudice and hostility, even in allegedly 'idyllic' rural or small-town settings.<sup>16</sup> This means that factors such as competition for jobs, sexual jealousy and cultural stereotypes can sometimes play a more important role than migrants' number or skin colour. Addressing small-town and rural patterns of migration in a historical perspective appears to be particularly germane at a time when phenomena of mobility such as asylum dispersals and immigration from eastern Europe have increasingly resulted in geographically dispersed, rural and small-town settlements, namely in Wales.<sup>17</sup> If the Welsh institutions want to include migrants and ethnic minority people they will have to acknowledge the dispersed and rural nature of their settlements. As Williams and Chaney have argued, one of the main obstacles to the election of BME people in the Assembly has been the existence of a geographically dispersed ethnic population and the absence of substantial ethnic enclaves where BME candidate can catalyse their votes.<sup>18</sup>

Another appreciable result of this thesis has been to illustrate that migrant patterns differ according to national and regional contexts. Whereas most academic contributions have tended to investigate receiving societies as homogeneous nation-states (e.g. the UK) this thesis has demonstrated that Italian migrant experiences in Wales have not necessarily been the same as those elsewhere in Britain. The way in which Welsh institutions and people have responded to Italian migration has not been the same as elsewhere in Britain. In particular, the special attention that the Welsh media, literature, museums and institutions have paid to

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<sup>16</sup> On this topic see, for example, Chakraborti and Garland (eds), *Rural Racism*.

<sup>17</sup> Robinson and Gardner, 'Unravelling a Stereotype', pp. 85-107; Thompson et al., 'Welcome to Llaneski', 1-16; Crawley and Crimes, *Refugees Living in Wales*.

<sup>18</sup> Williams and Chaney, 'Inclusive Government for Excluded Groups', pp. 78-101.

the Italian migrant experience appears to be a distinctively Welsh experience, which cannot be observed elsewhere in Britain or even in other countries. This finding allows for another important result; national(istic) claims are not necessarily in contrast with immigration, the formula being ‘nationalism equals racism’.<sup>19</sup> The Welsh-Italian experience illustrates that stateless nations which aim to gain increasing political autonomy can show an allegedly positive approach to immigration. They can narrate and recollect their immigrant past to construct a tolerant and welcoming national identity and to distance themselves from the legacy of the dominant state they are part of (in this case Britain/UK). This thesis has illustrated that such a result can be achieved through the adoption of enhancement narratives which emphasise what migrants have *added* to the receiving society. For example, Welsh institutions, media and museums have tended to highlight the culinary contribution that Italians have offered to Welsh society. This finding also offers a new perspective to the study of ethnic food which has previously been overlooked in academic enquiry.

Part of this thesis has also been concerned with the Italian POWs’ experience in Wales. This has aimed to overcome old dichotomies such as forced migration/free migration showing that phenomena of displacement can lead to similar outcomes as allegedly ‘voluntary’ patterns of mobility.<sup>20</sup> During the war, Italian POWs often had the opportunity to work unescorted, were granted a certain freedom of movement and could interact with the surrounding community; in some ways, their experience was not different (or in a way even more positive) than that of Italian coal miners who were brought to Wales after the war. After the end of the war, a significant percentage of POWs voluntarily chose to stay in Wales as civilians or to migrate back a few years after their repatriation. It is germane to assume that many more ex-POWs

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, P. Chaney and R. Fevre, ‘Welsh Nationalism and the Challenge of “Inclusive” Politics’, *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 23 (2001), 227-254. For a comparison with Scotland see, for example, Hopkins, ‘Politics, Race and Nation’, pp. 113-124. On the relationship between British nationalism and racism see, for example, Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* and Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*.

<sup>20</sup> Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History*, pp. 9-38.



would have stayed in Wales if they had had the chance to (only those who were employed on farms had the opportunity to stay). This circumstance suggests that POWs were not very different to tinsplate workers and miners who migrated to Wales under governmental schemes. Like POWs, these migrants simply took advantage of job opportunities that the Welsh market offered at the time; simply put, whereas their initial circumstances (military displacements/governmental recruitment) may have been different, the outcomes of these two phenomena of migration were similar. The study of such forms of ‘assisted’ migration appears germane at a time when the role of governments and job agencies appear to play a major role in triggering phenomena of mobility. This allows for the understanding of current asylum seeker-dispersals and intra-EU mobility. Whereas, with few exceptions, migrations have traditionally been interpreted in terms of chains or social networks, Italian migration to Wales was at the forefront of a sort of mobility which was to become commonplace in post-war Europe: a strictly regulated and agency-led immigration which aims to selectively fill the market’s manpower shortages.<sup>21</sup>

#### IV

Having been concerned with a substantially unexplored area of research, this thesis could not possibly cover all the aspects of the topic and has inevitably overlooked several issues which will hopefully be the object of future investigations. In terms of data collection, a substantial lack of relevant sources has not allowed the author to provide a complete picture of the demographic features of the Welsh-Italian population. As the census only indicates the number of people who were *born in Italy*, it has been impossible to appreciate the real quantitative strength of the population *of Italian descent* in Wales (the census’ ‘ethnicity question’ has not been very helpful in this sense). Due to a lack of surveys and quantitative

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<sup>21</sup> On this topic see, for example, Bade, *Migration in European History*; Colucci, *Lavoro in Movimento* and S. Sassen, *Guests and Aliens* (London, Tauris, 1999).

analysis and the existence of sparse and incomplete archival material, the author has predominantly drawn on case-studies (alien registration certificates and parish registers from a number of selected archives) as well as oral history.

The oral history-based testimony which this thesis has drawn upon also has its limitations. Although the author was able to draw on a vast and diverse (in terms of age, gender and geographical distribution) sample of interviewees (mixing both secondary and primary interviews), it was virtually impossible to build a completely balanced and representative sample. One major obstacle has been the recruitment of interviewees as, when asked, many Welsh-Italians refused to be interviewed. One reason for this could be the over-exposition of the Italian community in Wales; having already been interviewed by the Welsh TV, radio or newspapers on several occasions, some respondents felt that they did not have anything to add and refused to be interviewed as a result. Another reason could be that some Italians preferred not to talk about their experience as they had negative memories of their upbringing (for example, the son of a POW refused to be interviewed for this reason); a finding that contributes to tackle the ubiquitous *success* of the Italian experience in Wales. For all these reasons, it was virtually impossible to accurately select interviewees. As a result, the interviewed sample (both secondary and primary) denotes the following limitations: it is male-dominated, it is first generation-dominated, it under-represents the descendants of the pre-war section of the community (notably the Val Ceno-group) and lacks ‘young’ (under 30) respondents.

Another oral history-related problem concerns the use of exclusively contemporary data. This is obviously due to the fact that it is over the last few years that interviews have become available; the substantial lack of oral history projects and surveys dating back to previous decades has made the adoption of a temporal comparative analysis practically impossible. Yet, the adoption of a contemporary perspective has its advantages. Firstly, it allows for a

*longue durée* intergenerational perspective as, in most cases, Italians in Wales have now reached their third (or even fourth and fifth) generation; this allows for different ways in which identities have been renegotiated and transmitted over a significantly long period of time. Secondly, it is in the current post-devolution context that identity has become a sensible political issue, one that raises questions of citizenship and belonging; Italians have offered an ideal benchmark to appreciate the extent to which long-established and allegedly integrated migrant groups identify with post-devolution Wales.

In terms of content analysis, whereas the thesis has allowed for the comparison of the Italian experience in Wales with other Italian (and non-Italian) migrant experiences elsewhere (e.g. in Scotland, England, USA, etc.), it would have been useful to take such a analysis-approach further. Given the similarities between Welsh and Scottish contexts, It would have been particularly interesting to take the comparison between Welsh-Italians and Scottish-Italians further. It would have also been challenging to compare the Welsh-Italian experience with other migrant experiences in other *stateless* and *bilingual* nations such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Quebec (etc.) to appreciate how national(istic) movements deal with the ‘immigrant issue’ in different contexts. Yet, comparing Wales with other stateless nations was not the aim of this thesis and will hopefully be the object of future investigations.

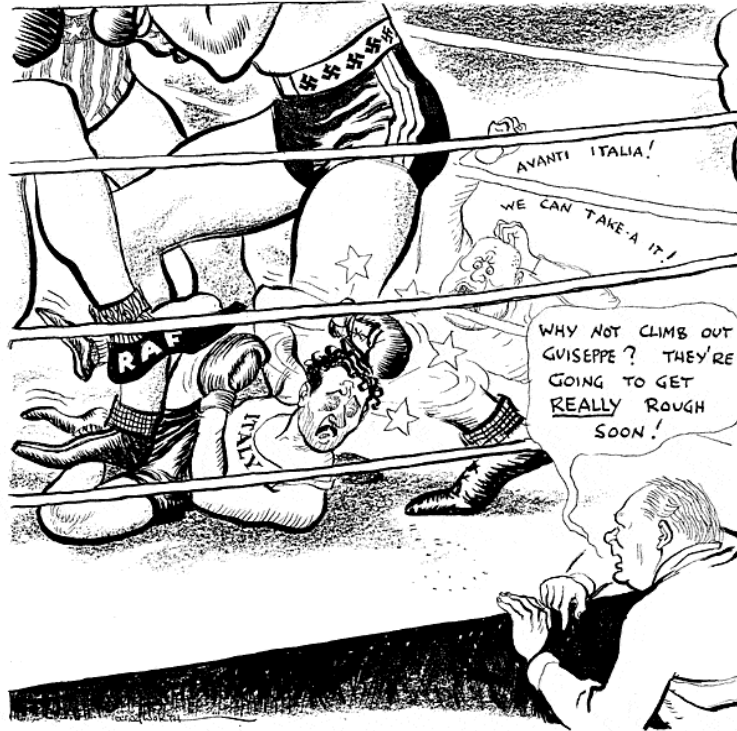
These considerations also apply to the analysis of the media and other forms of representation. It would have been useful to conduct interviews with TV authors, museum curators, film directors (etc.) and a more in-depth analysis of policy documents which could highlight the links between the Welsh political institutions and the media, museums and publishers. The substantial lack of literature on the topic and the highly contemporary nature of such issues (no access to archive material) has also made it difficult to take this aspect of the research further. However, this topic was not the main (and only) concern of this thesis and therefore remains open for future investigation. Once again, a comparative analysis of the

Welsh context and other stateless nations (e.g. Scotland, Northern Ireland, Basque Country, etc.) would have been illuminating.

Such an argument also applies to the identity issue. The absence of significant data and literature addressing migrant and ethnic identities in Wales has made the adoption of a comparative analysis-approach almost impossible. In particular, the absence of data divided by nationality made it unlikely to adopt a comparative perspective. Such an approach would have illuminated the role that national identity plays in the process of identity renegotiation in Wales (e.g. is Italian identity more resilient than the Polish one? etc.). When published, the 2011 Census, which for the first time features an 'identity question' (as well as a 'Welsh' tick box in the ethnicity question) will hopefully provide illuminating answers to this topic.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1



Source: NLW.

## Appendix 2



Source: BBC Wales.

### Appendix 3



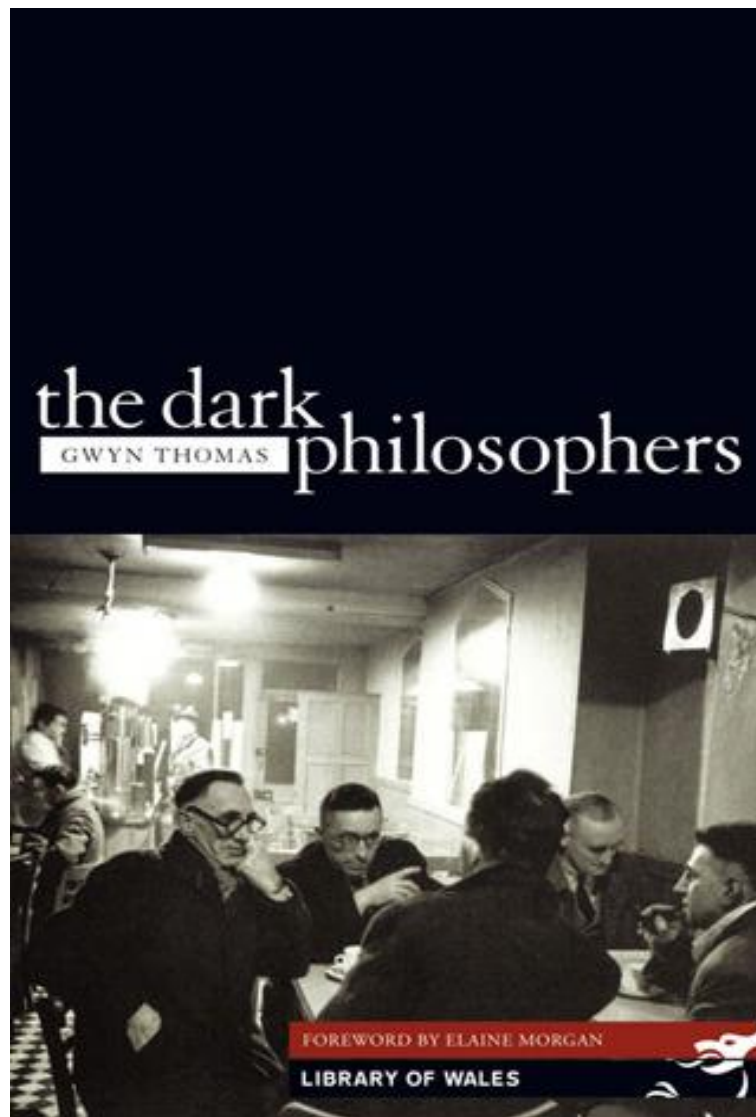
Source: ASMFV.

### Appendix 4



Source: ENAIP.

## Appendix 5



Source: Library of Wales.



## Appendix 6



Source: [firemansam.wikia.com](http://firemansam.wikia.com).

## Appendix 7



Source: ENAIP.

## Appendix 8



Source: Classic Cafes ([www.classiccafes.co.uk](http://www.classiccafes.co.uk)).

## Appendix 9



Source: Author.

## Appendix 10



Source: SFNHM.

## Appendix 11



Source: Cardiff Waterside.

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LAB 8/47

LAB 8/91

LAB 8/1716

LAB 9/248

LAB 13/57

LAB 13/831

LAB 26/200

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