

11. Transcribed in Isabel Laura Cárdenas, *Ramona y el robot: El servicio doméstico en barrios prestigiosos de Buenos Aires, 1895–1985* (Buenos Aires, 1986), 82–84.

12. Louis A. Pérez, ed., *Impressions of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: The Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 51.

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A History of Spanish and Italian Migration to the South Atlantic Regions of the Americas

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Contemporaries and then scholars interpreted the causes of migration of Spaniards and Italians to the countries of the Rio de la Plata at the turn of the past century in two basic ways. Statesmen, Marxists, Malthusians, neoclassicists and others, according to Fernando Devoto, believed that migration was caused either by misery (the pessimists) or by the opportunity to have a better life (the optimists). In addition, he argues, information-diffusion theory is important because it explains why immigrants did not always go where the salary differential between their old and new environments was the best. Finally, the author questions a number of common assumptions that immigrant theorists have made regarding the homogeneity of the migrants, the time frame in which they have been studied, the linear or circular nature of the migration process, and the most appropriate level of analysis (the nation-state, the region, or the village).

The search for the causes of the migration that drove millions of Spaniards and Italians to cross the Atlantic has given birth to a persistent controversy. This controversy was first posed by contemporary observers of the mass migration at the turn of the nineteenth century; these observers were polarized between those who thought that the cause of the exodus was “misery” (pessimists), and those who thought that the motive was a search for a “better life” (optimists). The controversy between the people who judged social development optimistically (that is to say, capitalism) and the pessimists who contested it (or at least contested its undesirable effects) was certainly ideological. Among those in the first group were liberal economists, who thought that emigration was an advantage for national trade and for the balance of trade, and the politicians in the countries of origin, who believed that free “colonies” were a useful instrument for cultural penetration and, eventually, for other, more

aggressive, expansionist activities. Among the pessimists were the European politicians who worried about the social question and who thought that emigration was a necessary evil, a "safety valve" that would prevent worse catastrophes; the nationalists (and demographers) who thought that emigration was draining energy from the body politic; and the Catholic conservatives who imagined that emigration carried with it a loss of faith and a weakening of traditional customs and social mores.

The polemic of these contemporaries continued among historians who, although making different points, were divided into two similar groups: those who viewed the social process with optimism and those who viewed it with pessimism. These historians, while using a more sophisticated language of "pull and push" or "attraction and expulsion," did not differ substantially from the old dichotomy that contrasted the idea of seeking a "better life" with that of escaping "misery."¹

The pessimist social scientists, who emphasized the existing situation in the migrants' country of origin as the defining cause of emigration, referred to diverse conceptual matrixes that could be schematically grouped into those with an economic orientation (predominantly Marxist) and those with a demographic mindset (in many cases very close to Malthusian stereotypes). The economists' view could be summarized as follows: the development of capitalist economic relationships in Europe carried with it the proletarianization of rural labor, which in turn provided the potential labor pool of the new urban industrial economies whose members were ready to emigrate. This was especially so in underdeveloped economies, that is, for example, in the late-developing economies of the European periphery.²

The demographic model has emphasized, instead, the problem of the pressure of population increase associated with the demographic transition that affected the European countries in the nineteenth century. The passage from a system based on high mortality and low birth rates to one of low birth and low mortality rates created a surplus of population that was not able to find enough resources to subsist in its own territory, and therefore had to seek relief in overseas destinations.³

The optimists have found support in neoclassic economic theory. Simplified, it could be defined like this: emigration is the result of the construction of a free transatlantic labor market in the nineteenth century, which is the place where surplus supply of labor and labor demand of different national markets converge. Each of these markets is first assumed to be homogeneous and then transparent in that rational individuals aspiring to maximizing their profits operate in them, with uniform access to information and perfect mobility. In that context, the key variable is salary differentials, which leads individuals to maximize their labor opportunities by emigrating. According to this theory, migrants

contributed to a relocation of the factors of production and finally to the equilibrium and the general progress of an Atlantic economic system.⁴

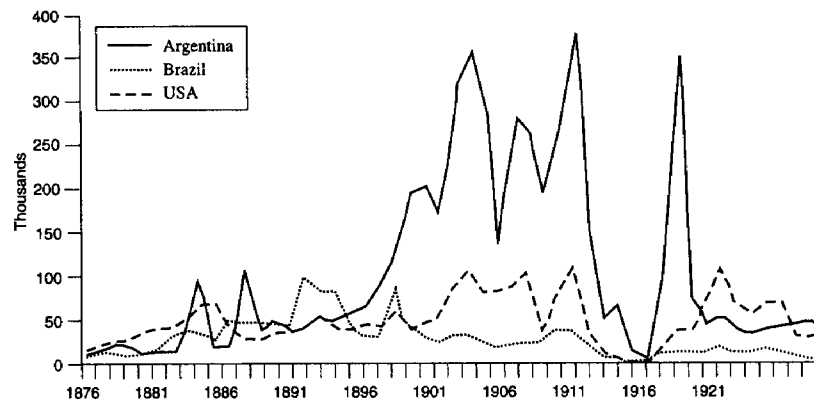
Given that one of the most critical topics in the neoclassic model concerns the access to information, other versions of the optimists' perspective focus not on the salary range or on the expectations of profit but on the diffusion of information. This analysis is dominated by an extensive and "epidemiological" idea of the expansion of information. Because of the fact that the principal agent of diffusion of information is the already migrated person, the conclusion is that a critical variable in explaining the rhythm of expansion of a migratory flow is the stock of those who have already migrated.⁵ The bigger the flow, the more information about the situation in the country of reception will reach the country of origin. This new information will encourage more people, stimulated by new expectations, to go to the new country.

All of these different perspectives have a solid theoretical base and can be supported with some empirical evidence. The Italian case provided optimists and pessimists alike with much evidence. The pessimists were able to point to the great expansion of emigration in the 1880s that coincided with a difficult situation in the Italian countryside, especially in the Po Valley. This situation developed as a consequence of the fall in agricultural prices that was the result of the influx of Russian, American, and Ottoman grains into Europe. Certainly, this correlation would have been less clear if the researchers had been able to place the expansion in a longer-term context, but national statistics of Italian emigration only began in 1876. Anyway, abundant qualitative literature provided examples about the deleterious effects of capitalist expansion on supplementary sources of income of peasant families, or the influence of rural pauperism that resulted from other processes such as the fragmentation of property or the elimination of communal properties. This same capitalist process once unleashed expanded insufficiently, in a territorially fragmented way, and at times temporarily stopped.

Studied at a macro-aggregated level and in the long term, however, the Italian example also provided solid evidence for the optimists: the immigration flow tended to grow notably over the levels of the 1880s during the first decade of the twentieth century and seemed to respond fairly rapidly to the relative changes in the economic conditions of the American receiving societies. As Graph 1 shows, an interrelationship existed between the oscillations of the Italian flow to Argentina and to Brazil through the 1880s. An especially visible moment was the Argentine economic and political crisis of 1890 during which migratory politics in Brazil "artificially" fed the influx to that country with social groups that would not have been able to migrate to other nations without the advance payment of the cost of passage. There also existed a clear interrelationship

between the flow to Argentina and the United States and the economic cycles in both countries from the end of the century up to the American Quota Law in 1921. During the second phase of this period, the flow re-oriented itself decidedly to North America, which became the primary destination. Since in the beginning of the twentieth century the Italian economy was also in a strong expansionist phase, the explanation of emigration must be related to the pull factors more than to the push. The diffusion of information and the relative differences between salaries in Argentina and the United States could explain the increased emigration and the change in the primary destination.

Graph 1. Italian Migrations to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States



Source: Ministero Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Direziones della Statistica.

If the Italian example was able to provide optimists and pessimists alike with supporting evidence, the Spanish example also raises several interesting considerations. In the first place, arguing on the pessimists' side, Spain was not following the rest of the European periphery; its migratory movement began later than the rest of the European movements and not at the time of the great depression of prices. Some authors have suggested that the Spanish delay could be explained by protective state policies (through its monetary policies) that impeded the impact of non-European agriculture on the peninsula.⁶ Other authors have said that the Spanish problem was not grains but other agricultural products such as wine, oil, or citrus fruit that were subject to different problems—epidemics such as phylloxera, or foreign markets such as those provoked by the commercial rupture with France. In reality a good argument to explain the cause of the Spanish delay might be the demographic one: Spain had

had a slower population growth during the nineteenth century than a good part of the rest of Europe.

However, the Spanish migratory movement provides us with the best argument against the optimists. Spain is the only country in Europe—together with continental Portugal, and not including the Azores⁷—whose emigrants were not attracted by the opportunities provided by the North American economy. Moreover, Spanish migrations were not only non-elastic in relation to the expansive cycle of the North American urban economy from the beginning of the century, but also were nonelastic in relation to the great agrarian expansion of Argentina in the 1880s. The only exception in the Argentine case was between 1887 and 1889, when the Argentine government offered subsidized fares in its effort to compete for immigrants with the subsidized fares offered by the state of São Paulo. These fares were an especially important enticement for Spanish immigrants to Argentina.⁸ The reason why some Spaniards, as opposed to Italians, did not head to those destinations where the salary differential was the greatest can be explained by referring to the model of information diffusion. They had considerably greater opportunities in the old Spanish-American colonies, with which they had a long-standing migratory tradition, than with the opportunities and conditions offered by the North American economy. The Spanish example therefore suggests, with relation to the North American destination, that migrants may be inclined to privilege other nonmaterialistic factors at the moment of making up their minds about where to emigrate.

On the other hand, from the South American point of view, the comparison between the Argentine and Uruguayan cases presents strong evidence against the defenders of the information-diffusion theory. Uruguay provides the clearest example. During the 1860s, Argentina had two to three times as many Italian immigrants as were in Uruguay.⁹ However, with the consolidation of the cattle-raising ranches in Uruguay from the mid-1870s, and the expansion of the agriculture and cattle-raising frontier in Argentina from the 1880s, Italian immigration increased most rapidly in Argentina. During the 1880s, the ratio between Italian migrants living in Argentina and Uruguay grew from seven to nine times as many to about thirteen times as many some twenty years later during the first decade before World War I. We can see that, even though there was a significant initial stock in Uruguay and even though the urban adjustment of the Spaniards and Italians was fairly satisfactory, this situation did not sustain a significant flow to Uruguay as compared to its great neighbor.

The Brazilian case provides an almost opposite result. The settlement of steady emigrant flows from Spain and Italy happened later than in the area of the Rio de la Plata, and at its beginning the policies of the state of

São Paulo of publicity and subsidized fares played a fundamental role. This effort coincided with a hostile campaign in Italy and Spain to discourage emigration to Brazil. Often this campaign was orchestrated by economic interests that supported alternative immigration flows like the one to Argentina, or by those who found the conditions in the São Paulo *fazendas* to be the worst possible. Yet in spite of this bad publicity and the fact that the general conditions in Paulista Brazil were probably worse than those in the Rio de la Plata, the flow continued to grow. Certainly, there were three frontiers that permitted social mobility for the peasant families who had emigrated: one concerned the coffee frontier and the potential access of immigrants to the ownership of land in the new areas of cultivation; the second was the urban frontier that would constitute the city of São Paulo with its commercial and industrial development. A third frontier was the strong movement of re-emigration from Brazil to Argentina. Finally, the Uruguayan and Brazilian cases show us how the problem of information is much more complex than neoclassical economists have considered it to be, because it implies a very opaque circuit of messages. At the same time, this circuit is multiple in its channels of transmission but also fragmented (not everyone gets all the possible information at every moment) and, as shown below, costly to its users.

Although the great interpretative lines we have discussed are diverse, they also have some characteristics in common. The first is that they view the immigrant as a homogeneous object on which a stable group of factors acts uniformly. The object is made uniform, and it is thought that it always responds the same way to these factors. The second assumption of these lines of interpretation is that these phenomena can and should be studied at the national level: because theorists see the nation-state as an area of homogenizing experiences (national market construction), because professional historians have used the nation-state as the primary unit in the last century, and because the public and statistical sources in this kind of analysis have been constructed on the basis of the nation-state. Thus, the core argument is built around emigration from Spain to Argentina or from Italy to Brazil. Regional deviations within the places of origin and destination are barely shown as variables of national cases.

The third shared assumption is the limited temporal framework of inquiry. The focus is on the long period of capitalist expansion when there was a greater flow of people and goods that triggered the Industrial Revolution in the economic field, and the extended century between the end of Napoleon's rule in 1815 and the world crisis of 1930 in the political field. The implicit assumption in this time period is that there was a close relationship between capitalist expansion, liberal public policies, and migratory flow. This relationship was perceived as necessary to avoid or minimize the possible impact of other noneconomic or demographic factors on the explanation of migratory movement. Given that most research-

ers have mainly studied the case of migration to the United States, the periodization reflects the impact of the established migration for that case. The periodization also implies an end point in the U.S. government's Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924 and a sequence of "old emigration," coming from northern and western Europe, and "new emigration," coming from eastern and southern Europe, whose members were less skilled and literate and were predominantly of rural origin.

In regard to migrations to Spanish America, the periodization is certainly different but supported by the same presumptions that underlie the case of the United States and in some regards by the historiography produced in the countries of origin. These theories regarding these migrations are also permeated by the value-loaded stereotypes of the "old" and "new" emigration sequence developed in studies of migrations to the United States. Generally, the shorter periodization proposed relates the delay in the growth of the labor force that would provoke the later capitalist expansion in Spain and Italy, with the later demand of the Spanish-American nations. This later period was dominated by the expansion of the primary exporting economy in the South American continent and by the idea of progress and the Europeanizing utopias associated with the "civilizing" role attributed to European immigration.

Finally, the fourth common assumption concerns the linear progression of the migratory process from origin to destination. This linear direction suggests a sequence of distinct and irreversible stages: expulsion-adjustment-assimilation.

The intent in the rest of this essay is to discuss these four assumptions for the purpose of re-evaluating the schematically presented argumentative lines set forth. The analysis presented is based on the idea that all of these assumptions, irrespective of the polemics and discrepancies, partially share the same conceptual scaffolding. The order of observations will be the inverse of that in which the assumptions were presented above.

Beginning with the last assumption, it seems evident that just by taking a look at the statistics, European emigration to the Americas is a circular rather than a linear process; that is to say, this migration often involved a number of trips back and forth by the same individuals rather than just one trip. Let us pay attention to the Argentine case. Taking a substantial period of time (1861–1920) into account, less than one-half of Italian immigrants returned to Italy, and 35 percent of the Spaniards did the same. In the Brazilian case, the available facts are similar. According to Spanish statistics, around 44 percent of Spaniards who had immigrated to Brazil between 1882 and 1925 returned to Spain.¹⁰ This movement not only included one-time migrants but also those who went back and forth many times during their lives. This circular movement was not confined exclusively to the well-known *golondrinas*, the agricultural

day laborers who harvested crops alternatively on one or the other continent in the same year. For many, these movements included a variable period around three years between migration and return of people who engaged in nonagricultural activities.

In reality, the idea of "birds of passage" has been pointed out as a characteristic of the "new emigration" to the United States; and in more formalized analytical models, it is indispensable to explain the functioning of a secondary labor market for emigrants, characterized by those labor-intensive activities that provide workers with unstable and low-status employment.¹¹ In this sector were immigrant workers who aspired to maximize their incomes in short periods of time and for whom the performance of certain less desirable tasks or precarious living conditions were justified by their perception of the transitory nature of the situation. In reality all of the classic linear conceptualization rested on an image of return that poses many problems for the researcher. For many years, the pessimist image emphasized the idea of return as failure and, more specifically, as the impossibility of gaining access to land, which would have been a principal motive for peasants. Even now, the historiography on the Paulista case focuses on the debate regarding the possibilities that the coffee economy offered workers the chance to acquire land. The data presented in the census of 1920 (showing that this possibility was real for many people) are important on this point but less decisive than what has been maintained. In this finding the issue is not so much about access to the land but about how much land, when individuals would get it, and where and what kind of land it was.¹²

In any case, the scheme rested on a disputable fact: that the migrants had made a definitive decision when they emigrated, and that any determination to change this decision (such as returning) was a drastic example of the impossibility of being successful in America. It was also seen as irrefutable proof of the shortcomings or the limits of the economic development model implemented by the South American countries at the end of the nineteenth century. However, any observer who today goes around the Asturo-Galician littoral in Spain or that of Liguria in Italy would immediately find the houses, or the vestiges of them, of the Americans (migrants returning from the New World) who were called—in the Spanish literature of that period and with satirical purposes—Indians. This discovery should make us ponder whether at least some of those who returned were not failures but successes. Furthermore, the great movement of money for the purpose of investment in lands, in urban properties, or in debt redemption is an indicator of the degree to which the structural investments of many immigrants were tied to the society of origin and not to the receiving society. In reality the opposite idea demonstrates the point to which preconceptions have dominated scholarly studies instead of the investigation of the attitudes of the migrants themselves.

Finally, many immigrants could expect to be landowners in the country of origin but not in the receiving country. Moreover, the idea that in economic terms it was preferable to be an owner of a smaller parcel than a tenant on a bigger one (where a more-or-less dynamic land market existed as in Argentina) has been recently challenged with persuasive evidence.¹³ Besides, to think that for strictly economic reasons property at destination was preferable to property at origin is simplistic; this argument does not consider the plans of the immigrants that could be linked to issues of prestige and social status. According to many emigrants, to be successful in America—*hacer la América*—was to make their fortune there but to show it off where it mattered socially, that is to say, in their home country in Europe.

It is obvious that a counterimage without nuances should not be substituted for what we have described as a homogeneous image. It is clear that the migratory experience embraced, in relation to the linearity or circularity of the process, migrants of different kinds whose decisions to return or to go permanently abroad were hardly definitive. What we have reconstructed about the temporary or definitive commitment of a migrant (as the contemporaries who suppressed this distinction from migratory statistics knew) was that it was the product of uncertainties, marches, and countermarches and many times more the result of circumstances than the product of a firm original decision. In any case, our interest is in pointing out the heterogeneity of situations that do not imply either irreversibility or any uniform sequence of stages in the transatlantic migrations to South America.

The third assumption we have pointed out was the "short" chronological framework in which the process takes place, be it in Marxian, Malthusian, or neoclassic interpretations—and in the narrow nexus between capitalism and migrations. We have observed above that the image of the *ancien régime* European societies that were without mobility except for marginal groups has not withstood the scrutiny of more recent investigations. Mobility in the old societies was very high, even if it generally represented movements of less distance and duration than the ones at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ This latter point is of great importance because the lack of trustworthy data made it necessary to calculate movement on the basis of the comparison between the different population measurements (before official censuses were taken), and this led to the underestimation of migratory movement that occurred between those measurements.

The importance of detaching human mobility from capitalism has many argumentative implications. Certainly, the great period of expansion of a new economic system or a new mode of production implied a very radical expansion of overseas migrations to certain destinies. However, capitalism cannot be considered as the cause of international migrations,

but rather as a decisive factor of its expansion from its preceding basis. All this forces us to reject those arguments that correlate migrations and capitalism in a causal sequence, and to introduce again other kinds of notions such as culture or migratory tradition that place the problem far from all determinism and narrow economic issues. But the difficulty of establishing a causal sequence affects not only the initial stages of the migratory movement but also the whole process. A scarcely superficial observation of aggregate national data of transatlantic migrations shows that, during the first decade of this century, the percentage of emigrants per inhabitant is equivalent in both early English and late Spanish emigration.¹⁵

In the case we are studying, the limited chronology necessitates considering migrations during the colonial period as different from those of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This involves repeating the rhetoric of the progressive South American elites, when they insisted that European migration might play a significant modernizing role. However, the Spanish migratory movement to many areas of Hispanic America may be seen as continuous from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, interrupted only by the episodes of the wars for independence. This fact does not mean that only similar reasons motivated migrants of both periods, but that upon occasion it was the very same immigrants or families of these immigrants. Data from the 1855 census in the city of Buenos Aires show that some families of Spanish immigrants had members who had arrived at the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, and others who had come in the early 1830s when relationships between Spain and America started to be normalized.¹⁶

For immigrants coming from the Italian peninsula the periodization has other implications. The process of settlement in the Plata regions by Ligurian migrants from the 1830s onward is already well known, and how the initial flow (in a manner similar to the Spanish case) fed the later movement. What this last example shows, however, is that immigrants were beginning to arrive in the Rio de la Plata in large numbers in the period of Juan Manuel de Rosas's xenophobic dictatorship (1829-1852). They were certainly not attracted by his rhetoric. Rather, they were attracted by the opportunities created by the decimation of the working-age population brought about by the wars of independence and by forced recruitment of native men to supply the armies fighting in civil wars. Regarding long-term migratory patterns, no meaningful break can be made between the period before 1852, when Rosas prohibited any pro-immigration initiatives, and afterward, when a liberal elite under the slogan "To govern is to populate" encouraged immigration. Furthermore, the Athens of the Plata, which Montevideo had become for many years during the Rosas period, was not a more appealing destination for those early migrants than

was reactionary Buenos Aires. In fact, many immigrants circulated between the two cities.¹⁷

If we accept North American historiographical classifications, Spanish and Italians in the Rio de la Plata are chronologically part of the old emigration. Moreover, Spanish migration dates back further than any other European migration. As for the rest, this South American example seems to confirm that the success of these earlier groups had less to do with their specific characteristics (religious, cultural, industrial) than with their earlier arrival within the receiving country in relation to other migratory groups.

The next assumption is that migration should be studied at the national level. National scale analysis rests on the conviction that the unifying elements of economic markets and public policy are more important than other factors. This involves the overvaluation of the state's role in the judicial, administrative, and economic spheres. Furthermore, it involves the overvaluation of the homogenizing capability of the market in the allocation of the factors of production. In our cases it seems evident that the public policies had a limited role before 1930, except in the very few specific cases concerning restrictions imposed by the countries of origin. In this sense the Prinetti Decree (1902) limited Italian emigration to Brazil. The Spanish decree of 1910 restricting emigration to Brazil was much less effective. Public land policies also had a limited impact in facilitating the settlement process, except in a few specific cases of the earlier period. Also the constitutional and judicial guarantees were irrelevant because they were not supported by concrete administrative practices.

Actually, public policies seem to have been most influential in two areas: propaganda and subsidized passages. Regarding the first point, we must determine if the immigrants believed and trusted the propaganda of the agents of foreign governments. Undoubtedly, these agents were numerous; an estimate for Galicia shows the presence of over twenty consuls and vice consuls both in La Coruna and in Vigo around 1914.¹⁸ The problem lies in whether we consider these agents as key actors in the decision of individuals to emigrate or simply as instruments at their disposal to help solve migrants' practical problems. Enrico Ferri noticed that the real agents for migrants were the letters of those who had already gone abroad. These letters were read on Sundays in church after Mass. If they discouraged migration, there was not an agent who could persuade people from the village to do so.¹⁹ Within the structural limits imposed on them, we can argue that the immigrants were surely not children and could develop their own strategies.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that their information was limited. For example, the source of information the migrants considered most trust-

worthy was that provided by their primary social group and secondarily by those people with whom they had face-to-face contact. This explains the role of the migration chains in orientating with precision the migratory flow. In those cases in which we find different migratory flows from the same town, it might be due to the possible linkages among diversified social networks in the form of a "spider web." These different flows might be based on occupational skills, the requirements of the external labor market, or even on different neighborhoods within the village (a different/complementary view of what has been called the village-outward approach²⁰) the uneven circulation of information. In effect, if the information is selected by the receiver on the basis of the credibility of the sender, it is probably also distributed selectively by the sender. We are not only dealing with general information regarding the economic situation of the American nations, salaries, or the possibility of finding jobs but also in many cases with specific information about specific employment opportunities.²¹ For this reason, the migratory chains are not only a source of information but also a source of assistance in obtaining a job in the new society as well as financial aid for the cost of the passage. Only a few new studies on the Spanish case range beyond approximations; they suggest that residence clusters of immigrants are not based on the whole village but on different areas within the village,²² or on kinship obligations that led to the emergence of an intermediate level of compromise between the nuclear family and the town.

The second area in which the influence of public policy is undeniable is that of subsidized fares. For a short time (1887–1889) in the Argentine case, where government policy was initially oriented toward diversifying the flow of immigrants and only secondarily to increasing it, this government policy had a considerable impact; it successfully attracted Spaniards and limited the influx of Italians. In the case of São Paulo, the effect was always very significant for the rural areas.²³ As a whole, we should not forget those immigrants who did not use official government services, and neither should we underestimate the "spontaneous" flow to southern Brazil and to the city of São Paulo.

The subject of subsidized fares introduces the issue of the sources to finance migration, which in turn introduces the social groups involved in it. The possibilities for an individual migrant or a migrant family to set out for an overseas destination were tied, in the first place, to the possibility of the family group financing the cost of the move. This cost included the fare as well as the likelihood that one or more members of the same family would be without a job for a certain amount of time. In that case not all the family would move. These costs generally placed the poorer families outside the transatlantic migration experience. Nevertheless, some of those with lower incomes could take advantage of the second source of

financial aid—the savings of those who had already emigrated and who often paid the fares for their families, relatives, and even friends.

In any case, those who did not have the resources to migrate had three ways to increase the possibilities of improving their situation. First, there was the option of protest and open social conflict in the same place where they lived. Second, there was the option of internal or intra-European migration to an urban area. And third, the potential migrant might solicit subsidized fares offered by foreign governments such as that of São Paulo or by labor agents. The latter, well known in the North American case, were less visible and probably less important in the Argentine and Uruguayan cases. Therefore, government policies regarding subsidized fares were important in promoting the emigration of social groups that otherwise would not have been able to afford it, but they were of limited impact among the traditional migratory social groups.

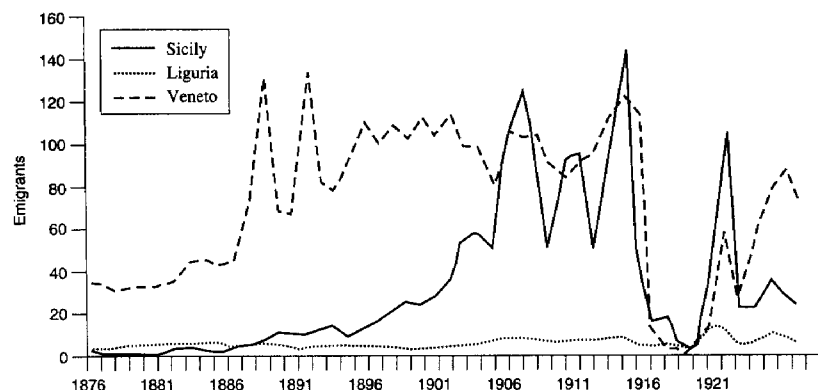
The other major argument focusing on the nation-state as the unit of analysis is the homogenizing capability of the market. Studies of economic history produced in the last twenty years have emphasized the regional disparities of economic development.²⁴ It does not take too much imagination to perceive, for example, the differences in the pace of industrialization in Liguria or Cataluna (rapid) on the one hand and in Basilicata or Extremadura (slow) on the other. These differences are not only economic but also demographic. For example, the demographic transition in the Piedmont is not only earlier but much shorter than that in Sicily.²⁵

Actually, how can we not admit that in so many cases national data distort the reality? The larger the regional disparities, as in Spain and Italy as well as in the great receiving countries, the more arbitrary are the aggregate data. The situation is artificially homogenized by the manipulation of the quantitative public sources.

If there are differences in most demographic and economic variables, it is not surprising that disparities exist in the different regional migratory flows. Graph 2 shows the Italian case, in which we can easily observe that the disparities are huge. What system of causes can explain simultaneously migrations from Sicily, Liguria, and the Veneto? Let us commence with the case of emigration from Liguria. Clearly it constitutes a regional movement that reaches its peak before the emigration produced by the integration of the peninsula into the world market and by the great depression of agricultural prices. In spite of the early and successful settlement of Ligurian immigrants in the regions of the Rio de la Plata, the stock of established immigrants maintained only a weak movement between Italy and the South American countries. In this case, higher wages in Argentina first and in the United States second were not enough to sustain and increase migration toward these countries. It is well known

that the industrialization in Genoa was remarkable and served to attract migrants from other regions of Italy, thus turning it into an area of simultaneous emigration and immigration. The problem of generalization is thus made even more difficult.

Graph 2. International Emigration from Three Italian Regions, 1876–1924



Source: Ministero Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Direzione della Statistica.

Sicily presents the opposite case. It responds to the demand for immigrants quite late, after the end of what is known as the great depression of European agricultural prices (1873–1896). Its migratory movements seem to be influenced by the irresistible appeal of existing conditions in countries overseas during the decade before World War I. Undoubtedly we could argue that it was due to the late beginning of the demographic transition, or to the fact that farm production in Sicily suffered less from the foreign competition that earlier affected grain production in the Po Valley. It would also be due to the late impact on Sicily of the economic transformations that affected other parts of Italy and delayed its economic integration into the rest of the nation. The point is that it is necessary to construct specific regional models of interaction among the different variables, because it is the regional space that permits us to see the simultaneous operation of distinct variables and to develop typologies of immigration that are less arbitrary.

The third case, the Veneto, certainly follows more closely the explanations given for the rest of Italy than do the other two. This finding suggests that in many cases national types are simply a projection of a regional case that may be numerically dominant or that may have received the earliest and most attention from historians.

Regional disparities also influence arguments about receiving countries. A good example is the idea that the Argentine case is an exception among the receiving countries in the Atlantic context. Using the percentage of immigrants in the total population as a point of comparison, some note that Argentine immigration was double or triple that of other nations such as the United States or Brazil. On this basis they have drawn various conclusions about transformations in the respective societies.²⁶ This comparison was certainly arbitrary. What perhaps should have been compared was the percentage of European immigrants in the total population in states such as São Paulo or New York or in the province of Buenos Aires rather than in entire countries. This procedure is important because the immigrants were not evenly distributed throughout the receiving countries.

Regional analyses present a number of problems. Do the regions to be studied coincide with historical regions, with intra- or transnational entities, or with smaller, more restricted units such as provinces? Studies of the Galician case show a provincial rather than a regional specialization in the flow to Cuba, Brazil, or Buenos Aires.²⁷ On the other hand, after analyzing Italian historical regions more globally we can discern a major orientation toward certain national destinations. For example, during the 1880s most Venetians went to Brazil, whereas most from the Piedmont went to Argentina and Lombards dominated the flow to Uruguay.²⁸ These regions, however, were not static. The River Plate region, for example, changed radically during the midnineteenth century when the configuration of the economy was structured around the circulation of men and goods along the area's rivers to later, when new political divisions and the railroad restructured economic activity. The problem, as we mentioned above, is that all these models presuppose one migrant type who reacts in the same way to similar stimuli.

International migrations included very diverse social types, and this fact posed a problem to contemporary experts of mass emigration regarding who should be considered an emigrant. The various national laws did not agree on this point. Thus, Italian legislation in 1901 and Spanish legislation in 1907 considered an emigrant a person who traveled in third class; Argentine legislation in 1876 and Uruguayan legislation in 1891 considered an immigrant someone who traveled in second and third class. Nevertheless, it is clear that those who traveled in second class were very different socially from those we generally imagine to be an indistinct mass of peasants and farm laborers in third class. However, there was among third-class passengers a variety of occupations. The percentages among the different occupations varied significantly, as did the relative proportion between the sexes. In any case, the migrant stereotype—a young male adult of rural origin—does little to help us understand the phenomenon. Two points have been made. They concern, first, the variety of occupations

that individuals perform throughout their lifetime, making it arbitrary to assign a label at any one specific time; and second, the same occupational definition implies or may imply extraordinary differences in skills according to the specific context of the region of origin. If immigrants are so diverse or to a certain degree show diversity, how can we consider that all the causes of immigration operate uniformly? Consequently, a farm crisis may affect in a different way a small landowner, a tenant, or a settler from the same region.

However, rather than explore these diversities in this paper, let us focus on another point. It is said that migrants are not individuals who decide to emigrate by themselves. They find themselves tied with or compromised by other persons. In the first place they belong to a family that greatly influences all emigrant decisions. This decision making is also oriented by custom, for lack of a better word; by a specific migratory culture that is no more than the reproduction of certain social relationships over time; and/or by the specific economic situation in which migration takes place.

More schematically, we might argue that migrations can present themselves in three kinds of movements: migration of families that do so together, migration of families step by step, or migration of adult male individuals alone. The first two presume potentially greater permanence, while the third may be more temporary. The following table is part of a preliminary investigation of family types in regional Spanish migrations to Argentina (the data are based on passenger lists from 1910).²⁹ We can observe how these variables present themselves in a regional context. Emigrants from Pontevedra, Salamanca, and Vizcaya are certainly very different, and this finding suggests that they can respond flexibly to the situation. It also suggests that the three migratory movements occur at different points in the respective regional cycles. And, finally, we see that they have different traditions and are influenced in different ways by the changes in the macro-structural conditions.

First, let us look at a Galician provincial example (Pontevedra): it is mainly about males who emigrate alone (although it could be the first phase of a migration chain) who might have high expectations of returning. They were oriented in the manner of "birds of passage" to give priority to such conditions as salary differentials in order to earn as much as possible and to channel their savings to their society of origin. The reasons that allow us to presume that this is a migration of male members of a family group are backed up by qualitative sources that point to a long-term migratory cycle rooted in the colonial period; for some regions of Galicia as well as for the neighboring region in northern Portugal, it was the "men who emigrated and the women who stayed behind."³⁰ Undoubtedly, we might remember that this does not mean that the temporary migration of men alone could not later become family emigration. But we

can assume it to be a typical supplementary immigration of insufficient structural resources and therefore more inelastic to the economic cycle.

Family Characteristics of Migrant Groups from Pontevedra, Salamanca, and Vizcaya (1910)

	<i>Pontevedra</i>	<i>Salamanca</i>	<i>Vizcaya</i>
With or Without Family			
Migrants without families	77%	46%	44%
Migrants with primary family	23%	54%	56%
Total	100% (N=241)	100% (N=197)	100% (N=176)
Of Those With Family			
<i>Married</i>	23%	54%	56%
Married without children	3%	28%	18%
Married with children		(2)	(9)
Married with children and other relatives		(5)	(33)
		(0)	(14)
		(9)	(9)
<i>Single Parent with Child(ren)</i>	17%	20%	35%
Father with child(ren)		(12)	(10)
Father with child(ren) and other relatives		(0)	(0)
Mother with child(ren)		(23)	(24)
Mother with child(ren) and other relatives		(6)	(5)
Brothers	3%	6%	3%

Source: Archivo Dirección de Migraciones (Argentina), Partes Consulares (1910).

A second example, opposite to the first one, is Salamanca. Here we do not have a long migratory tradition. Because of the lack of a long migratory tradition, the period in which it happens, and the dominant type of agricultural production, and because of the drastic change it implies for a family group to launch itself into such a radical adventure as to expatriate itself completely, we infer that the causes at work are of another type. This radical emigration of whole families combined with the characteristics of this grain-producing region imply that these groups were being pushed off the land as a consequence of the agricultural crisis brought about by the fall of the protective barrier of Spanish agriculture.

The third case, Vizcaya, an area of long-standing emigration to Argentina, is a more classic model. It is a deferred-family emigration in which the migrants find themselves in the third phase of the chain migration conceptualized by the MacDonalds, which is to say the women and children are reunited in the foreign destination with the male members of

