

Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

Faculty Information

Name: Maddalena Marinari

Department: History

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Rank: Assistant Professor

Checklist

- ✓ **Description of previous projects (and outcomes) funded by RSC grants**
- ✓ **Complete project description, including separate statements of:**
 1. **Purpose.** What are the intellectual, conceptual, or artistic issues? How does your work fit into other endeavors being done in this field?
 2. **Feasibility.** What qualifications do you bring to this project? What have you done/will you do to prepare for this project? What is the time period, i.e. summer, summer and academic year, academic year only? Is the work's scope commensurate with the time period of the project?
 3. **Project Design.** This should include a specific description of the project design and activities, including location, staff, schedules or itineraries, and desired outcomes.
- ✓ **RSC Budget Proposal Form**
- ✓ If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future faculty applications. This decision will not in any way influence the evaluation of my application. Check box to give permission.
- ☐ **Area of Focus Grant**

One RSC grant will be designated an **Area of Focus** from the Academic Strategic Plan or the Mission of the College. For the 2016-2017 grant period the Area of Focus is **Interdisciplinarity**.

Would you like your proposal to be considered for the Interdisciplinarity Area of Focus RSC? *Note:* If your proposal is not selected for the Area of Focus RSC, it will be placed in the general pool of RSC applications.

☐ Yes
✓ No

☐ **If you selected "Yes" above, please provide a short description of how your project impacts Interdisciplinarity**

Submit electronically as a PDF to cblaukat@gustavus.edu at the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.

Description of previous projects (and outcomes) funded by RSC grants

This is my first year at Gustavus Adolphus College, so this is my first application for a RSC grant.

Project Description

Overview

In 1929, Mauro Bruni left Southern Italy with just enough money to make it to the United States, but his trip to the new world was different from what many Americans would expect today. To reach the United States, Mauro surreptitiously left Italy, boarded a ship to Canada from France, and then crossed the porous Canadian border on a train to New York City. More than 80 years later, Mauro's grandson, *New York Times* journalist Frank Bruni, wrote that his grandfather "was undocumented, living off the books and outside the law" for about a decade before he tried to adjust his status. Looking for loopholes to circumvent American immigration laws that explicitly marked them as undesirable, Mauro and other Italians began entering the United States illegally at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the phrase "Italian illegal alien" might seem incongruous to many observers today, Italian "illegals" were the subject of intense debate on both sides of the Atlantic at the time. Yet little remains of this illicit migration in the histories we tell of the period and in Americans' collective imagination of the phenomenon. While undocumented immigration from Europe remains a sorely understudied topic in the U.S. and in Europe, my project proposes to reframe how we should study this phenomenon in general—regardless of where the immigrants come from—by taking into consideration the experience undocumented migrants have in transit countries as well as sending and receiving countries. At this stage, my plan is to write an article, present my findings at national conferences, and explore the possibility of expanding the article into a book. While I have already conducted research on this subject, I am eager to find out if there is enough material for a monograph since my subjects are, by definition, committed to remain invisible.

Using Italian undocumented migrants during the first half of the twentieth century as a case study, my project investigates undocumented migration as a multi-country phenomenon that, in addition to the migrants themselves, involved a network of smugglers and forgers that spanned both sides of the Atlantic and frustrated American and Italian authorities alike because they were unable to control the illegal flow in and out of their countries. Shifting away from the letter of the laws, my project focuses on the reality of immigration restriction as migrants, government actors, smugglers, and political and aid organizations experienced it. Italian migrants seeking to enter the United States illegally remained caught between two worlds and multiple bureaucracies. Many Italians left clandestinely not only because they could not afford the price of the boat ticket, failed the medical inspection required to be admitted to the U.S., or had secured a job before leaving in violation of the Foran Act, but also because Italian authorities often refused to grant exit visas to certain migrants, especially if they were women or individuals with relatives abroad. Since undocumented Italian migrants rarely went directly from Italy to the United States, my project also takes into account the role that transit countries' authorities played in Italian migrants' efforts to enter the United States. Mauro Bruni's choice to leave Europe from France was hardly a coincidence. For decades, French authorities refused to collaborate with Italian authorities to stop Italians from leaving Italy. Rather, they often encouraged the flow of Italian undocumented migrants because French businesses preferred cheap and deportable Italians to colonials from Africa. Along the way, then, the traffic in undocumented migrants shaped the economies and societies of the sending country, the receiving country, and the countries through which these migrants traveled.

Purpose

Telling this story is important because many Americans closely associate immigrants of color with illegality. Many descendants of European immigrants today frankly admit that their relatives arrived in the United States illegally, but they never view such tales as part of a larger historical narrative. Instead, they regard them as quirks of family lore. By confronting the complicated history of undocumented migration from Italy, my project challenges Americans to reconsider their assumptions about illegality and think more deeply about the phenomenon of undocumented immigration in general: how does the story of undocumented Italians fit within the larger narrative of undocumented immigration to the United States? How must we revise the narrative of undocumented migration once we understand the role that both state and non-state actors play in the process? Finally, how does the history of undocumented immigration change if one looks at it as a multi-country journey? By answering these questions, my project will complicate popular memories about the country's immigrant past and challenge current assumptions about undocumented immigration.

While building on superb American and Italian scholarship, my project offers a new interpretation of undocumented immigration to the United States in two ways. First, it challenges the existing dichotomy prevalent in historical monographs of studying illegality as a phenomenon that primarily involves the governments and individuals in sending and receiving countries. I argue that the experiences, lives, and negotiations among migrants, smugglers, and immigration authorities in transit countries played a critical role in undocumented Italians' voyage to the United States. As the scholars in Tobias Brinkmann's 2013 edited book begin to uncover for Jewish migrants, this shift is critical to understand the impact that undocumented migration has on the economies and societies of all the countries involved in the traffic of undocumented migrants. Second, my work adds to recent studies that provide a broader history of illegality in the United States that precedes the spike in undocumented immigration after 1965 (Garland, Lee, Ngai, Sadowski-Smith). Like these works, my project challenges popular assumptions about who is undocumented and adds to the recent efforts to remedy "this historical amnesia" about undocumented immigration from Europe and the process through which they became the embodiment of the "up from the booth straps" myth. Lastly, it moves beyond a state-centered approach prevalent in the Italian historiography (Sanfilippo, Rinauro) and looks at the intersection of migrants, smugglers, and government authorities in Europe *and* the United States to capture how individuals, authorities, and organizations respond to policy in practice.

Feasibility

My current project builds on my dissertation, *From Unwanted to Restricted: Italian and Jewish Mobilization Against Restrictive Immigration Laws (1882-1965)*. From this work, I have published two articles in peer-reviewed journals and two essays in edited volumes in addition to presenting my findings at several national conferences. As I did research for my first project, which explores how Italian and Jewish immigration reform advocates in the United States mobilized against the passage of the restrictive immigration laws that targeted Eastern and Southern Europeans, I became increasingly interested in how regular migrants responded to restriction and realized that undocumented migration could be better understood as a multi-country, interdependent process. As a European who is fluent in Italian, French, and English, proficient in Spanish, and trained in both American and European history, I provide a unique perspective on the dynamics of Italian undocumented migration. My personal and scholarly

background informs my transnational approach to the topic and enables me to conduct research in Europe and North America.

To date, I have conducted research in the Italian Foreign Ministry Archive to examine how Italian authorities viewed and dealt with Italian immigrants who entered the United States illegally. I have also perused several personal and congressional collections at the Library of Congress and the Center for Legislative Archives in Washington, DC to document American politicians' response to Italian undocumented immigrants and determine the American public's position on the issue. Lastly, I have looked at personal collections at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota to understand how the Italian community in the United States reacted to undocumented Italians and tried to lobby on their behalf.

I have already presented my preliminary findings from this research at two national conferences and given a research talk at the Immigration History Research Center and at Gustavus last fall. I have started working on a draft of an article, but I need to conduct some research in U.S. government archives before I can submit it to a journal.

Project Design

With RSC funding, I plan on conducting archival research at the National Archives in Washington, DC during the month of July, 2016. After consulting with the USCIS History Office and Library, I identified three collections that are relevant to my project: the Early Immigration Correspondence Files (1882-1912); the Immigration Policy and Correspondence Files (1906-1956); and the Central Office Subject Files (1957-1995). Migration scholars seldom use the first two sets of records because no single index exists. The Immigration Policy and Correspondence Files alone comprise almost half a million files. By reviewing exclusion and deportation appeals and INS investigations, I will have more details about undocumented Italians' stories, reconstruct the legislative history of undocumented Italian immigration, and gain insight into how immigration officials handled undocumented immigration from Italy.

Upon my return, I will spend the rest of the summer and early fall finishing my article. My goal is to submit the article to the *Journal of American History*, the preeminent journal in U.S. history, by the end of 2016. I have also had discussions with Teresa Fiore, the Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies at Montclair State University, to work on a digital project that uses history and literature to highlight the story of Italian undocumented migration, a phenomenon that is still alive and well today but continues to remain ignored. At a time when undocumented immigration is often cast in heavily charged terms, my hope is that my research can provide a fresh perspective to temper the racialized language often used when we talk about undocumented immigrants and challenge a painful case of historical amnesia.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Zolberg, Aristide. *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006.

RSC Budget

1. Enter your **Name**: Maddalena Marinari
2. Enter the **Stipend Costs**: \$ 700.00
3. Enter the Project Costs (both individual costs and **Total Project Cost**): \$1,915.00
4. Enter **Total Amount Requested** (Total Project Cost + Stipend): \$2,615.00

Name Maddalena Marinari

Stipend (Please check one box to indicate your distribution preference)

*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to 1,500 towards **Project Costs**. If your project costs will exceed this amount, you may opt to apply a portion (or all) of your stipend to cover these additional costs. If this option is your preference, please select "Partial Amount".*

- ☒ **Full Amount** (\$700- assistant professor; \$600-associate professor; \$500-full professor)
☐ **Partial Amount** (apply a portion of the full amount to project costs)

Partial Amount:

Please indicate the amount that you would like to apply towards project costs (\$_____) and the remaining stipend after this deduction (\$_____)

Project Costs: List each item individually with its cost. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

I. Equipment (e.g. transcription machine, camera, digital recorder, but not computer hardware)

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Amount _____ |
| 2. | Amount _____ |
| 3. | Amount _____ |

II. Materials (e.g. books, printing, software, lab supplies)

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Amount _____ |
| 2. | Amount _____ |
| 3. | Amount _____ |

III. Personnel (e.g. typist, transcriptionist, student assistant)

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Amount _____ |
| 2. | Amount _____ |
| 3. | Amount _____ |

IV. Travel (cannot include conference travel, allowable expenses listed at:

<http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php>)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1. Airfare: | Amount | <u>\$250.00</u> |
| 2. Mileage: Number of miles ____ @ \$0.56/mile (airport shuttle) | Amount | <u>\$65.00</u> |
| 3. Lodging: | Amount | <u>\$1,300.00</u> |
| 4. Meals: | Amount | <u>\$300.00</u> |

Total Project Cost: \$1,915.00

Total Amount Requested (Total Project Costs + Stipend) \$2,615.00

Note: The RSC grant will fund up to an amount equal to your Project Stipend + \$1500 for Project Costs.

OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, skip a, b, and c below.

a. Funding Source:

b. Amount:

c. Please explain how the Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant will be used in addition to the other funding, and (if relevant), how the RSC grant project would be impacted if external funding is not approved.

