

## Chapter 1

### **Italy and Australia in the twenty-first century: distant connections or close partners?**

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#### **Abstract**

Italy and Australia represent two telling case studies in the context of liberal democracies cooperating in a global order in flux. They are both highly-developed countries playing a significant role internationally, and they enjoy cordial bilateral relations which are driven by shared values and interests. However, practitioners and scholars have seldom examined these relations beyond traditional fields of interest. This chapter seeks to rectify this scholarly lacuna by reviewing the extant literature, prior to identifying its noticeable gaps. It then introduces the structure of this book, whose chapters directly address these shortcomings through a careful balance of different theories, methodologies, sources, and data. They expand the scope of analysis by examining understudied research avenues comprising bilateral history, reciprocal migration, socio-cultural ties, international relations and trade, comparative politics, and scientific cooperation. Consequently, this chapter contextualises and then encourages a broader and deeper understanding of Italian-Australian relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Introduction

In a global order in flux, marked by unprecedented power shifts and additional uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of cooperation between liberal democracies is increasingly significant, and is regarded as such by both policymakers and scholars.<sup>1</sup> Italy and Australia represent two telling case studies in this respect, for a number of reasons. First, they are both highly-developed countries that play a substantial role internationally: the former in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East;<sup>2</sup> and the latter in the Indo-Pacific, especially in the South Pacific.<sup>3</sup> Second, they actively uphold the same understanding of “rules-based” international order, centred on the prominence of the international law, cooperation, and interdependence, and with the United States (US) as the country with informal leadership within it. Third, as a consequence of their shared worldviews, they are highly embedded in the multi-layered diplomatic, security, economic, scientific, and cultural networks that support such interdependence. As members of numerous international organisations and as co-signatories of multiple agreements, they regularly cooperate in international forums, also thanks to the benefits of evolving practices in digital diplomacy. Fourth, as established nations, they face the same major challenges that are affecting the international system as a whole,<sup>4</sup> in addition to many that are specific to their regional contexts.

As a result of this, Italy and Australia have enjoyed increasingly cordial bilateral relations since the 1970s, which are currently driven by shared values and strategic interests. Such relations are set to become even stronger in the future, should a comprehensive and ambitious Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement be struck.<sup>5</sup> However, scholars and practitioners have seldom examined these relations comprehensively, or beyond specific frames such as immigration or tourism. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the available literature would provide a more than sobering image of the current state of bilateral relations, which can be exemplified with two illustrations drawn from academic and diplomatic circles. The first one is provided by Bruno

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<sup>1</sup> Hal Brands and Francis J. Gavin, eds., *COVID-19 and World Order: The Future of Conflict, Competition, and Cooperation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Elisabetta Brighi, *Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics and International Relations: The case of Italy* (London: Routledge, 2013); Gabriele Abbondanza, “The West’s Policeman? Assessing Italy’s Status in Global Peacekeeping”, *The International Spectator* 55, no. 2 (2020): 127-141.

<sup>3</sup> Allan Patience, *Australian Foreign Policy in Asia: Middle Power or Awkward Partner?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Dennis Rumley, Vivian Louis Forbes, and Christopher Griffin, eds., *Australia’s Arc of Instability: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Regional Security* (Berlin: Springer, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on global security challenges see Peter Hough, *Understanding Global Security* (London: Routledge: 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Jane Drake-Brockman and Patrick Messerlin, eds. *Potential benefits of an Australia-EU free Trade Agreement: Key issues and options* (Adelaide: Adelaide University Press, 2018).

Mascitelli, a well-known scholar in this niche field, who defined bilateral relations as essentially “made and unmade by immigration”.<sup>6</sup> The second one comes from former Australian Ambassador to Italy David Ritchie, who simply described them as “non-existent” at the end of his tenure, in December 2013.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the appointment of Anthony Albanese as the first Australian Prime Minister with Italian-Australian heritage, in May 2022, is a remarkably-significant development, although it is also a recent one and has consequently not captured yet the attention of scholars focusing on relations between the two countries.

The extant literature is emblematic of this context and focuses predominantly on migration studies, broadly defined and chiefly understood as Italian immigration to Australia. To that end, relevant research efforts offer a substantial, multifaceted, inclusive, and decades-long scholarship on the presence of Italians in Australia, from wealthy adventurers, Catholic missionaries, and politically active émigrés and early settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>8</sup> to a broader array of emigrants, including a significant presence of working and peasant class background labourers, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> These are accounts of hardship,<sup>10</sup> racism (received and inflicted),<sup>11</sup> (geo)political antagonism,<sup>12</sup> success,<sup>13</sup> socio-cultural liminality,<sup>14</sup> and a remarkably-positive and constructive role in shaping Australia’s evolving society.<sup>15</sup> More recent research has studied the contemporary effects of the above, and has subsequently investigated issues such as Italian expatriate voting in Australia,<sup>16</sup> the attractiveness of Italian culture in Australia,<sup>17</sup> and the highly-educated and skilled

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<sup>6</sup> Bruno Mascitelli, “Italy and Australia: a relationship made and unmade by immigration”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69, no. 3 (2015): 339-355.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriele Abbondanza, “Italy and Australia: Time for a Strategic Partnership”, *IAI Commentaries* 20, no. 87 (2020): 1-5.

<sup>8</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26-50.

<sup>9</sup> Loretta V. Baldassar, “Italians in Australia”, in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, eds. M. Ember, C. R. Ember, and I. Skoggard (Berlin: Springer, 2005), 850-864.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Mascitelli, “Italian immigration to Australia: the way it was”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 34-52.

<sup>11</sup> Francesco Ricatti, *Italians in Australia: history, memory, identity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 53-74.

<sup>12</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, anti-fascism, and Italians in Australia 1922-1945* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Laura Hougaz, *Entrepreneurs in Family Business Dynasties: Stories of Italian-Australian Family Businesses Over 100 Years* (Berlin: Springer, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Simone Marino, *Intergenerational Ethnic Identity Construction and Transmission among Italian-Australians: Absence, Ambivalence and Revival* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Castles, “Italians in Australia: The Impact of a Recent Migration on the Culture and Society of a Postcolonial Nation”, *Center for Migration Studies special issues* 11, no. 3 (1994): 342-367.

<sup>16</sup> Simone Battiston, “Il voto degli italiani in Australia fra continuità e segnali di cambiamento”, in *Autopsia di un diritto politico. Il voto degli italiani all'estero nelle elezioni del 2018*, eds. S. Battiston and S. Luconi (Turin: Accademia University Press, 2018), 145-161.

<sup>17</sup> Cristiana Palmieri, *Identity trajectories of adult second language learners: learning Italian in Australia* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2019).

Italians who in recent years have made Australia home, albeit temporarily, while learning or further mastering English as a second language.<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding this rich tapestry of scholarship, such focus on migration has left other fields of study on Italian-Australian relations deficient of contributions. This edited volume seeks to rectify this substantial gap in the literature by undertaking a comprehensive and multidisciplinary review of contemporary bilateral relations. Building from previous works, it expands the scope of analysis by encompassing and critically reviewing cultural, social, migratory, political, international relations, economic, and scientific research avenues that have been understudied so far.

Subsequently, the leitmotif of this book is twofold: on the one hand the investigation of fields that – albeit overlooked in the literature – provide a remarkable contribution to the two countries’ non-official relations; on the other, a subsequent focus on how such cooperation could be strengthened and elevated to the status of formal cooperation between Italy and Australia.

With such premises, this introductory chapter provides a guide to both the volume’s rationale, means, goals, and chapters, and a review of the relevant literature. First, the next section explores the latter, and thus examines in depth the corpus of Italian-Australian scholarship, which is mostly focused on migration. While making no pretence to comprehensiveness,<sup>19</sup> we argue that a solid grounding in the extant literature is necessary not only as an essential starting point for any academic endeavour, but also to better trace the contours of the related gaps in the literature that this book seeks to address. Second, an overview of the understudied facets of Italian-Australian relations is presented. By showing the limited amount of literature that is available on specific aspects of bilateral relations – or even the absence thereof – we argue that a sufficient understanding of the scope for potential cooperation between the two countries can be achieved. In doing so, we also introduce the book’s chapters and their authors – who directly engage with the gaps in the literature that have been previously highlighted – and we outline the nature of the editorial guidance that has been applied throughout this volume. The volume’s chapters are divided into 4 sections,<sup>20</sup> with the goal of arranging together works from the same disciplines and thus enhancing the logical cohesion and readability of the whole book. Lastly, we concisely summarise this chapter’s

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<sup>18</sup> Chiara De Lazzari, “New Italian emigration globally: who they are and where they go”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 14-33.

<sup>19</sup> For additional sources on Italians in Australia, see Matteo Pretelli, “Gli Italiani in Australia: lo stato dei lavori”, *Studi Emigrazione* 46, no. 176 (2009): 779-792, and Francesco Ricatti, *Italians in Australia: history, memory, identity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). For Australian perspectives on Italy at the end of the 1980s, see Camilla Bettoni and Joseph Lo Bianco, eds., *Understanding Italy: language, culture, commerce: an Australian perspective* (Sydney: Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> They are: 1) introduction; 2) history, migration, and culture; 3) international relations, politics, trade, and science; and 4) conclusion.

premises, goals, and findings, which are then revisited in Chapter 11 in the light of the insights from the rest of the volume.<sup>21</sup>

### **The literature on Italian-Australian relations: a critique**

As mentioned previously, a large proportion of the extant literature focuses on migration studies, understood as Italian migration to Australia, generally divided into five distinct periods of time by scholars. During the first one – ranging from early British settlement to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Italians who reached Australia were explorers, naturalists, wealthy adventurers, artists, missionaries, and both professional and unskilled workers.<sup>22</sup> With reference to the latter, and specifically during the second migration period (first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), authors such as Langfield, Andreoni, and Dewhirst recount the attitudes to European migration in Australia, tracing the relative ease with which migrants from Northern and Central Italy were accepted into the Australian society due to their “whiteness”, and the wariness or openly-racist attitudes faced by Southern Italians on account of their “olive” complexion.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, while Ricatti emphasises the struggles of many Italians due to racial prejudice, he also points out that Italians themselves were not immune from such behaviours – it is appropriate to remind that Italy remained a *de facto* colonial power until 1960<sup>24</sup> – and therefore engaged in racial discrimination too, especially with Indigenous Australians and other minorities.<sup>25</sup>

Exploring the events that took place in those years, scholars draw attention to the social, cultural, and political heritage that all migrants bring with them, and explain that the chasm between fascists and anti-fascists eventually reached Australia because of this.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, at a time when fascist propaganda was being systematically employed in Australia and was able to allure a number of Australians,<sup>27</sup> fascist Italy successfully gathered strategic information on the country’s

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<sup>21</sup> Simone Battiston and Gabriele Abbondanza, “Where to from here? The need for a long-term strategy in Italian-Australian relations”, in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>22</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26-50.

<sup>23</sup> Michele Langfield, “Attitudes to European immigration to Australia in the early twentieth century”, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1991): 1-15; Helen Andreoni, “Olive or white? The colour of Italians in Australia”, *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 77 (2003): 81-92; Catherine Dewhirst, “Collaborating on whiteness: representing Italians in early White Australia”, *Journal of Australian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2008): 33-49.

<sup>24</sup> Mohamed Aden, “Italy: cultural identity and spatial opportunism from a postcolonial perspective”, in *Revisioning Italy: national identity and global culture*, eds. B. Allen and M. Russo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 101-115.

<sup>25</sup> Francesco Ricatti, *Italians in Australia: history, memory, identity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 53-74.

<sup>26</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, anti-fascism, and Italians in Australia 1922-1945* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Richard J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini’s Italy: life under the dictatorship* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 317.

military weaknesses,<sup>28</sup> however it did not succeed in exploiting Italian migrants' communities for colonial purposes.<sup>29</sup> Closely related, the difficult issue of Italian prisoners of war – mostly captured by the Allies during the African campaigns in World War II – further nuanced the image of Italians in Australia. Specifically, Borrie, Moore and Fedorowich remind us that their good behaviour and hard-working attitude led them to be better accepted than their German and Japanese counterparts, and were therefore often free to wander during the day.<sup>30</sup>

A significant part of the literature on Italian-Australian relations investigates the 1950s and 1960s (the third migration period), which is not surprising given that these were the years of European mass immigration to Australia. Like many other European countries, Italy too encouraged emigration as a means with which to control unemployment while rebuilding its war-crippled economy,<sup>31</sup> to such an extent that between 1947 and 1974 almost 360,000 Italians settled in Australia, second only to the British who amounted to almost four times that.<sup>32</sup> Bosworth's vivid description of Italian migrants' extremely diverse cultural heritages – strongly linked to their regions, provinces, cities, and towns of origin<sup>33</sup> – is an effective reminder of the complex process with which they inadvertently spurred a socio-cultural transformation of the Australian society, until then still heavily influenced by older British and Irish roots. Battiston underlines that such process also had political implications, which led to a direct interaction between Italian and Australian communist parties.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Cresciani provides a compelling account of the disparate and diverse situations involving Italians in Australia in those years. On the one hand, many suffered from legal and political problems, as well as from the wariness of numerous Australians. On the other, however, stories of economic success, social integration, and newfound Australian interest in Italian culture were increasingly common, and Cresciani highlights the substantial Italian contribution to the development of the Australian society as a whole, as a result of these evolving social dynamics.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gerardo Papalia, "Mussolini's Australian campaign of 1935-1936", in *Italy and Australia: an asymmetrical relationship*, eds. G. Cresciani and B. Mascitelli (Ballarat: Connor Court Publishing, 2014), 145-176; Gianfranco Cresciani, "Refractory Migrants. Fascist Surveillance on Italians in Australia, 1922-1943", *Altreitalia* 28 (2004): 6-47.

<sup>29</sup> Catherine Dewhirst, "Colonising Italians: Italian Imperialism and Agricultural 'Colonies' in Australia, 1881-1914", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44, no. 1 (2016): 23-47.

<sup>30</sup> Wilfrid D. Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia: a study of assimilation* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1954); Bob Moore and Kent Fedorowich, *The British Empire and its Italian Prisoners of War, 1940-1947* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's many diasporas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Loretta V. Baldassar, "Italians in Australia", in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, eds. M. Ember, C. R. Ember, and I. Skoggard (Berlin: Springer, 2005), 850-864.

<sup>33</sup> Richard J. B. Bosworth, *Italy and the wider world 1860-1960* (London: Routledge, 1996), 137-158.

<sup>34</sup> Simone Battiston, "Migrants, Identity and Radical Politics: Meaning and Ramifications of the Visits of Italian Communist Party Officials to Australia", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 2 (2017): 187-205.

<sup>35</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 119-150.

The process of integration of Italian settlers into Australia's society – however generally considered successful – was neither easy nor swift, as it also challenged the regional cultures and identities of migrants and their offspring. Rubino, for instance, provides an apt description of the intersectional role of language and dialect with regards to Sicilian migrants, explaining that the original Italian-Sicilian bilingualism had to evolve into an unusual trilingualism (Italian-Sicilian-English) once in Australia, which adds to the complexity of adapting to new environments abroad and cater for intergenerational needs.<sup>36</sup> Kinder and Scotellaro emphasise that comparable instances of linguistic intersectionality concerned a large number of Italians, although this was more marked in the past compared to recent years.<sup>37</sup> As Marino attests, older first-generation (overseas-born) migrants tended to feel often undesired in Australia, whilst their Australian-born sons and daughters felt the indescribable tensions of a liminal identity. Yet, so-called third-generation Australians of Italian heritage are visibly proud of their ancestry in modern-day Australia, thus tracing the evolution of multi-layered identities through multiple generations, as affected by the changing nature of the Australian society.<sup>38</sup>

Despite these difficulties, what is usually identified as the fourth migration period (1970s-1990s) represented a watershed in the history of Italians in Australia, for a number of reasons. Firstly, Italians and Australian-Italians were enjoying the fruits of hard labour and inventive entrepreneurship: indeed, many of them had become well off, and some had established thriving enterprises of national and international relevance, as Hougaz reminds us, which reinforced the collective imagery of Italians as productive and beneficial members of the Australian society.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, in the early 1970s migration trends shifted, and Italy became a migrant-receiving rather than a migrant-sending country.<sup>40</sup> Thirdly, by virtue of its post-war “economic miracle”, Italy had become an industrial powerhouse and the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, with strategic, political, and cultural influence to match. Such a transformation – from the war-torn country of the two previous decades – could not go unnoticed, and Italian-Australian relations evolved accordingly.

The renewed climate of friendship and cooperation between the two countries is perhaps best illustrated by former Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who in his “Italian notebook”

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<sup>36</sup> Antonia Rubino, *Trilingual Talk in Sicilian-Australian Migrant Families: Playing Out Identities through Language Alternation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>37</sup> John J. Kinder and Grazia Scotellaro, *A Linguistic History of Italy: Storia Linguistica d'Italia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2020)

<sup>38</sup> Simone Marino, *Intergenerational Ethnic Identity Construction and Transmission among Italian-Australians: Absence, Ambivalence and Revival* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

<sup>39</sup> Laura Hougaz, *Entrepreneurs in Family Business Dynasties: Stories of Italian-Australian Family Businesses Over 100 Years* (Berlin: Springer, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> Gabriele Abbondanza, “Italy's Migration Policies Combating Irregular Immigration: from the Early Days to the Present Times”, *The International Spectator* 52, no. 4 (2017): 76-92.

wrote not only of his fascination with Italy, but also the country's "new" standing in Australia once its post-war economic recovery had been achieved. In one passage, he recalls a ceremonial speech he made during his tenure as Leader of the Opposition. Despite the somewhat emphatic tone, it shows that bilateral relations could benefit from the steady cooperation between like-minded politicians:

"What people in all history have contributed so much to civilisation over so many centuries and from so many cities and in so many fields? Rome established law and order around the Mediterranean and as far as the North Sea and the Black Sea. Rome transmitted Christianity throughout Western Europe and to the European possessions across the seas. Italy pioneered navigation, revived the arts and set the forms of drama and poetry. Italian, the most musical of languages, became the language of music. Today, Italy leads in fashion and films, in electrical and highway engineering, and helps to found the new Europe through the Treaties of Rome".<sup>41</sup>

Reflecting the broad migration trends that have been mentioned previously, Baldassar and Pesman note that throughout the 1980s and the 1990s the number of Italian-born residents in Australia kept declining, although second and third-generation Australian-Italians increased in number.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, thanks to the internet, new communication technologies, and advancements in the travel industry, Baldassar applies the concept of "circularity" to Italian migrants in Australia, arguing that it supports a continuing connection between the two countries, a condition that helps transnational caregiving.<sup>43</sup> Despite a decrease in Italian migration to Australia – and an unavoidable demographic decline – Cresciani writes of a "cultural renewal" concerning Italian-Australian relations. He mentions the many official visits paid by both governments, the ongoing impact of Italian culture in every major Australian city – including film festivals, university departments of Italian Studies, Italian Cultural Institutes, Dante Alighieri Societies, cultural associations, and major Italian construction projects – and both the Italians' and the Australians' fascination with each other's country, as attested by the growing number of two-way tourist flows.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the solid cultural interactions of these years were unwaveringly supported by the Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, active between 1976 and 1999, which organised a long series of

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<sup>41</sup> Gough Whitlam, *My Italian notebook* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2002): 5-6.

<sup>42</sup> Loretta Baldassar and Ros Pesman, *From paesani to global Italians: Veneto migrants in Australia* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Loretta Baldassar, "Italian migrants in Australia and their relationship to Italy: return visits, transnational caregiving and the second generation", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 2 (2011): 255-282.

<sup>44</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, "The Italians in Sydney", *Sydney Journal* 1, no. 1 (2008): 73-79.

high-profile initiatives.<sup>45</sup> The broader, far-reaching but less explicit role of the Italians in Australia is effectively summarised by Castles, who writes:

“Mass immigration of Italians and other Europeans undermined Anglo-Australian narrowness, showing not only that there were other ways of doing things, but also that these ways were often more successful, dynamic and rewarding. [...] the Italians who migrated to the Pacific Rim not only helped to open Australia to a greater diversity of European cultures, but they also paved the way for Anglo-Australian awareness of new geo-political realities, and in the long run for the opening to Asia”.<sup>46</sup>

As the official data collated by Cavallaro show, at the end of the 1990s the Italian community in Australia was well-integrated and “comfortably well of”, as the home-ownership rate among Italian-Australians was “the highest of all the ethnic groups in Australia”.<sup>47</sup> However, the Italian community was ageing and started declining in the same years, a downward trend that scholars also detected in the use of the Italian language by Australians with Italian heritage.<sup>48</sup> The decline in Italian immigration to Australia continued up until the fifth and ongoing migration period, starting in 2004 and partially due to the many negative repercussions of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. On this, Mascitelli aptly writes that “Much has been said about the Italian immigration of the 1950s and 1960s but little is known or understood of the new, young, skilled and educated migrants of the current period”.<sup>49</sup> De Lazzari further clarifies that younger generations of Italians show a globalist attitude and tend to temporarily relocate abroad once their studies are completed, both to learn English as a second language and to make a formative international experience.<sup>50</sup> Armillei refutes the idea of a “new wave” of Italian migration to Australia through the use of official statistics, which show that Italy does not figure in the top-10 list of net migration source countries, and that even when Working Holiday Visas (WHV, the most popular option for citizens of industrialised countries) are concerned, the number of Italian migrants is smaller than that of Canadians, Japanese, Taiwanese, French, Irish, Germans, South Koreans, and British (in

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<sup>45</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, “Italo-Australian Cultural Relations after the Second World War: The Case of Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies”, in *Italy and Australia: and asymmetrical relationship*, eds. G. Cresciani and B. Mascitelli (Ballarat: Connor Court Publishing, 2014), 39-80.

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Castles, “Italians in Australia: The Impact of a Recent Migration on the Culture and Society of a Postcolonial Nation”, *Center for Migration Studies special issues* 11, no. 3 (1994): 342-367.

<sup>47</sup> Francesco Cavallaro, “Italians in Australia: Migration and Profile”, *Altreitalia* 26 (2003): 65-90.

<sup>48</sup> Antonia Rubino, “Immigrant minorities: Australia”, in *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*, eds. M. Hellinger and A. Pauwels (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 87-122.

<sup>49</sup> Bruno Mascitelli, “A new exodus of Italians to Australia?”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 1-13.

<sup>50</sup> Chiara De Lazzari, “New Italian emigration globally: who they are and where they go”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 14-33.

ascending order).<sup>51</sup> Moreover, recent data show that WHV applications keep declining due to a number of reasons, including the lack of an appropriate mechanism for the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills.<sup>52</sup> Lastly, Mares contributes to this discussion by shedding light on “Australia’s permanent shift to temporary migration”, which affects migrants of all nationalities through a series of progressively-restrictive migration policies making permanent migration unattainable for most of them.<sup>53</sup>

It should be noted that there are additional insights expanding this niche of migration studies, such as Pascoe’s and Caffarella’s sociological understanding of contemporary Italian migrants as “globalisti” (globetrotters);<sup>54</sup> Davis’ research on their use of social media to gather information on Australia and form realistic expectations;<sup>55</sup> Battiston’s political analysis of Italian expatriate voting;<sup>56</sup> Jupp’s and Pietsch’s acknowledgement that older, first-generation Italians in Australia still form a “pro-Labor bloc” and engage in a range of social activities that also comprise political debates;<sup>57</sup> and Palmieri’s account of why Australians are attracted to Italy – its culture, lifestyle, land, people – which helps explaining why “Italian is one of the most widely studied languages at all educational levels” in Australia.<sup>58</sup> In essence, however, as can be seen from this review of the literature on Italian-Australian relations, much of the existing scholarship is focused exclusively on Italian migration to Australia over time. A few authors have provided interesting but sporadic investigations that address different topics and thus engage in different fields, and some of these publications are reviewed in the following section, which outlines what aspects of Italian-Australian relations have been neglected so far, or, alternatively, only partially dealt with.

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<sup>51</sup> Riccardo Armillei, “A statistical analysis of the ‘new Italian migration’ to Australia: redressing recent overstatements”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 53-78.

<sup>52</sup> Bruno Mascitelli and Riccardo Armillei, “Nuovi sviluppi, riflessioni e scoperte sugli italiani che migrano in Australia”, in *Gli italiani in Australia Memoria storica e nuovi modelli di mobilità*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Perugia Stranieri University Press, 2018), 253-281.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Mares, “Australia’s permanent shift to temporary migration”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 110-135.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Pascoe and Caterina Cafarella, “The latest wave of Italians in Australia”, *Altreitalia* 59 (2019): 101-117.

<sup>55</sup> Catherine Davis, “New Italian migrants’ on Facebook groups: the role of social media”, in *Australia’s new wave of Italian migration: paradise or illusion?*, eds. B. Mascitelli and R. Armillei (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017), 136-161.

<sup>56</sup> Simone Battiston, “Il voto degli italiani in Australia fra continuità e segnali di cambiamento”, in *Autopsia di un diritto politico. Il voto degli italiani all'estero nelle elezioni del 2018*, eds. S. Battiston and S. Luconi (Turin: Accademia University Press, 2018), 145-161.

<sup>57</sup> James Jupp and Juliet Pietsch, “Migrant and Ethnic Politics in the 2016 Election”, in *Double disillusion: the 2016 Australian federal election*, eds. Anika Gauja, Peter Chen, Jennifer Curtin, and Juliet Pietsch (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2018), 668.

<sup>58</sup> Cristiana Palmieri, *Identity trajectories of adult second language learners: learning Italian in Australia* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2019), 2. There are additional reasons for the steady interest in the Italian language in Australia, including different curriculum priorities in Australian states and territories, and the number of Australians with Italian heritage.

## **The gaps in the literature and the structure of this book**

As mentioned previously, while this chapter's literature review on Italian-Australian relations makes no pretence to comprehensiveness, it is arguably sufficient to depict both the main strength and weakness of this niche field. The former is certainly a well-focused and multifaceted approach to Italian migration to Australia, and the latter is its highly-circumscribed dimension, which very rarely operates outside the boundaries of migration studies. Consequently, this deficiency also emphasises the gaps in the available scholarship, which we believe concern a number of facets of Italian-Australian relations, including: history, migration (more broadly understood), culture, politics, international relations, trade, and science. After all, even children's books hint at the multiple benefits in the fields of "business, culture, food, and government" when Italy and Australia are concerned, but these are not appropriately explored in the scholarship on bilateral relations.<sup>59</sup> The paucity – or absence – of literature in these seven fields therefore provides the rationale behind this book, which we have structured to directly address such issues.

With the goal of providing a comprehensive account of Italian-Australian relations in the twenty-first century – thus addressing the aforementioned gaps in the literature – this volume relies on a combination of Italian, Australian, and international sources, written both in English and Italian. Additionally, mindful of the wide scope and multidisciplinary nature of this innovative research, the editors oversee a careful balance of both different theoretical and methodological approaches and qualitative and quantitative data, in accordance with the conventions of each discipline employed in this volume. These premises grant the volume's authors latitude in terms of their research, though they interpret and engage with the key themes raised in this document throughout, and they all provide an innovative contribution to a new, more comprehensive understanding of Italian-Australian bilateral relations and cooperation in the twenty-first century. Each contributor has been chosen on the basis of his/her expertise in the proposed topic they work on, experience in producing high-quality research publications, and capacity to provide original insights on understudied facets of bilateral relations, broadly defined.

With reference to the history of Italian-Australian bilateral relations, the works by Steele and Mascitelli provide a solid foundation, although both were published some time ago and therefore do not cover more recent developments.<sup>60</sup> In Chapter 2, Robert Pascoe addresses this shortcoming by outlining a comprehensive and up-to-date review of diplomatic bilateral relations. He outlines the

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<sup>59</sup> See Carmen Reilly, *Finding a place: Italian migration to Australia* (Melbourne: Cengage Australia, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Rory Steele, "Twentieth-century diplomatic and trade relations", in *Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions*, eds. B. Kent, R. Pesman, and C. Troup (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2008), 2.1-2.7; Bruno Mascitelli, "Italy and Australia: different origins – different strategies", in *Italy and Australia: and asymmetrical relationship*, eds. G. Cresciani and B. Mascitelli (Ballarat: Connor Court Publishing, 2014), 1-38.

key moments in Italian-Australian from the 1940s to the present day, and argues that recent waves of temporary migration and increased defence and trade links do not appear to be able to compensate a lack of “ballast” in bilateral relations.<sup>61</sup> Academic discussions concerning migration, on the other hand, are abundant and deal with a number of aspects that have been discussed in the previous section. Yet more can be said about the current flow of skilled, educated, and temporary Italian migrants in Australia, a task that Simone Battiston undertakes in Chapter 3. His account engages with different data sets as well as the recent scholarship in order to provide a nuanced picture of Italians in twenty-first century Australia.<sup>62</sup> The opposite phenomenon of Australian migration to Italy, however, remains little-known in the study of bilateral relations, and has so far been examined only by two interesting volumes, both of which published more than 10 years ago.<sup>63</sup> Giulia Marchetti and Loretta Baldassar shed light on this interesting but understudied topic in Chapter 4, where they present an overview of research and writing on Australians in Italy, and identify the main types of migration and mobility that characterise the contemporary Australian diaspora in Italy.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the scholarship’s substantial focus on migration, related cultural implications remain surprisingly and largely understudied. Italian relations with Indigenous Australians represent one such aspect, and Francesco Ricatti and Matteo Dutto draw from the very limited literature on this<sup>65</sup> to investigate past and present issues in Chapter 5. They first provide a historical overview of such relations, and then suggest a number of ways to further promote decolonial and transcultural relations between Italy and Indigenous Australia.<sup>66</sup> In Chapter 6, Cristiana Palmieri expands on her previous works to provide a study on why and how Italians learn English in Australia, and why and how Australians choose to learn Italian. In doing so, she focuses on the role played by language in

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<sup>61</sup> Robert Pascoe, “A historical overview of Italian-Australian bilateral relations”, in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>62</sup> Simone Battiston, “Italians in Australia in the twenty-first century”, in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>63</sup> Bill Kent, Ros Pesman, and Cynthia Troup, eds. *Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2008); Roberta Trapè, *Imaging Italy Through the Eyes of Contemporary Australian Travellers (1990-2010)* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

<sup>64</sup> Giulia Marchetti and Loretta Baldassar, “Australians in Italy in the 21st century”, in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>65</sup> See Francesco Ricatti, “Forum. Towards a decolonial history of Italian migration to Australia: Introduction”, *Altreitalie* 59 (2019): 8-15. See also the other five contributions published Open Source in the Forum section of *Altreitalie* 59.

<sup>66</sup> Francesco Ricatti and Matteo Dutto, “Italians’ relations with Indigenous Australia”, in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

fostering closer bilateral relations, and therefore interprets linguistic, societal, and emotional elements in an innovative manner.<sup>67</sup>

The following four contributions focus on the fields of international relations, politics, trade, and science, which have seldom analysed Italy and Australia together.<sup>68</sup> In Chapter 7, Gabriele Abbondanza builds on previous calls for greater bilateral cooperation and undertakes a theoretical analysis of both countries' global status and behaviour.<sup>69</sup> This complements his subsequent empirical analysis concerning how a strategic partnership would benefit Italian-Australian cooperation in a number of fields, including international relations and trade, while also arguing that digital diplomacy and the Prime Ministership of Anthony Albanese could further reinvigorate relations between Rome and Canberra.<sup>70</sup> In Chapter 8, Andrea Benvenuti examines Italy's and Australia's economic and strategic interests in each other's regions, thus focusing on how Italy could promote Australian interests in the European Union, and how Australia could support Italian interests in the Asia/Indo-Pacific.<sup>71</sup> In Chapter 9, Kurt Sengul and Francesco Bailo provide the first comparative analysis of populism and political instability in Italy and Australia. They investigate the interaction between different forces – the media system, the party and electoral system, and long-term decline in political trust – to explain why the expression of populism in Australia has been remarkably different from that of Italy.<sup>72</sup> In Chapter 10, Ilaria Stefania Pagani and Tiziana Torresi further nuance the image of bilateral cooperation this volume seeks to update. They explore how closer bilateral relations can be fostered through significant scientific cooperation, and then outline the impressive list of scientific projects currently pioneered by both Italy and Australia.<sup>73</sup> Lastly, Chapter 11 assesses the multifaceted nature of Italian-Australian relations in the twenty-first

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<sup>67</sup> Cristiana Palmieri, "Connecting Australia and Italy through language", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>68</sup> For a rare exception, specifically focusing on seaborne asylum seekers, see Irial Glynn, *Asylum Policy, Boat People and Political Discourse: Boats, Votes and Asylum in Australia and Italy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>69</sup> For a discussion on the two countries' complicated global status, with migration policies as case studies, see Gabriele Abbondanza, "A sea of difference? Australian and Italian approaches to irregular migration and seaborne asylum seekers", *Contemporary Politics* 29, no. 1 (2023): 93-113.

<sup>70</sup> Gabriele Abbondanza, "Time for a strategic partnership: the scope for international cooperation between Italy and Australia", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>71</sup> Andrea Benvenuti, "The Australian interest in the European Union, and the Italian interest in the Indo-Pacific", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>72</sup> Kurt Sengul and Francesco Bailo, "Twenty-first century populism in Australia and in Italy: a comparative analysis", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>73</sup> In this respect, the Association for Research between Italy and Australasia (ARIA) represents an innovative new platform for bilateral scientific cooperation. See Ilaria S. Pagani and Tiziana Torresi, "Italian-Australian scientific and research cooperation", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

century in the light of this volume's chapters, and summarises the objectives and findings of the whole book.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

This volume seeks to provide a broader and more comprehensive understanding of Italian-Australian relations in the twenty-first century, with a focus on bilateral cooperation. Reviewing and drawing from the abundant scholarship on Italian migration to Australia, it acknowledges that contemporary relations are more multifaceted and complex, and thus identifies several aspects of them that have been understudied or neglected over the years. These gaps in the literature concern history, migration (more broadly understood), culture, politics, international relations, trade, and science, which have shaped the very structure of the book that seeks to address them.<sup>75</sup> The latter's contributors are experts in a variety of fields that are relevant to this endeavour, and are therefore instrumental in reaching these ambitious goals. Given its purpose, this volume engages with a wide range of topics and disciplines, while pursuing an equally-wide scope of research methods and traditions, as well as a combination of Italian, Australian, and international sources, written in both English and Italian. This versatile approach reflects the multidisciplinary rationale of this book, and is carefully overseen by the editors. With such premises, we present the following chapters which provide a diverse and yet cohesive set of innovative contributions, whose aspiration is to produce a long-overdue and comprehensive image of Italian-Australian relations in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>74</sup> Simone Battiston and Gabriele Abbondanza, "Where to from here? The need for a long-term strategy in Italian-Australian relations", in *Italy and Australia: redefining bilateral relations for the twenty-first century*, eds. Gabriele Abbondanza and Simone Battiston (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxx-xxx.

<sup>75</sup> There are additional under-examined elements that would benefit from novel research, including the two countries' media systems, their environmental policies, and their attitudes and policies concerning religion, ethnicity, and irregular migration. These significant but understudied aspects of Italian-Australian relations are therefore left for future research.

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