



Università di Palermo – Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e delle Relazioni Internazionali

Università di Cagliari – Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali

Italy and the Post-colonial world: Cooperation and mobility between decolonization and the Cold-War (1960-1989)

**SISSCO (Società Italiana per lo Studio della Storia Contemporanea) Research Seminar
Supported by the ASMI (Association for the Study of Modern Italy)**

SEMINAR 1: COOPERATION AND MOBILITY

University of Palermo, 19-20 November 2021

This past year has witnessed the resurgence of global protest, aimed at tackling both material and cultural traces of the colonial period. In particular, protestors highlighted the problematic and partially unacknowledged presence of those colonial legacies in Western societies. In Italy, these protests of 2020 coincided with some significant anniversaries. First, in July 1960, the ten-year Italian trusteeship of Somalia (AFIS) ending, concluding Italy's formal presence in the now former colony. Second, another anniversary includes 1970, when the last remaining Italian settlers were forcibly expelled from Gaddafi's Libya. Those events happened when the history of Italian colonialism seemed to be largely forgotten, whereas the interest of political and economic forces turned towards a new interest in the former colonial world. Law n. 1222 (1971) provided the first legal framework concerning the projects of developmental cooperation managed by Italian Foreign Office. That same year, the launch of the *Istituto per le relazioni tra l'Italia e i Paesi dell'Africa, America Latina e Medio Oriente* is further evidence of certain political actions, which aimed to establish new political, economic, and cultural relationships with newly independent countries. These political practices and relationships developed against the backdrop of significant processes, such as the Cold War, the European integration, and increasing influxes of migrants coming from the former colonial world.

Historiography has already focussed on specific events and processes related to migratory flows, the new projection of post-war Italy in the former colonial war, with specific focus on the establishment of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation policies (against the backdrop of the constant tension and distrust between the Atlantic and Soviet blocs), on the beginning of new economic relations (e. g. the case of ENI, in Africa and Asia), and of political and cultural agreements with recently independent states.

Our goal, however, is to explore these different processes within a single methodological framework. More specifically, Seminar 1 aims to shed light on the possible interconnections between Italy and the post-colonial world in terms of political and economic relationships, mobility processes and cultural relations. The chronological span ranges from 1960 – the “year of Africa” but also the one in which the formal relationship between Italy and Somalia ended – and 1989, which marked the end of the polarized system that characterized the Cold War. In so doing, we foster multidisciplinary and transnational dialogues around the theme of the new relationships Italy established with the formerly colonized world and with people migrating from those countries.

We seek contributions dealing with political negotiations, themes, and processes concerning the implementation of aid and development cooperation programs (food, energy, infrastructural and military fields); migratory flows of people with different expertise to and from recently independent countries (such as the circulation of students or personnel with technical expertise such as architects and engineers as part of political-diplomatic strategies); the establishment of Italian schools abroad and, more generally, education paths between newly independent countries and Italy. In analysing such topics, we seek to foster a reflection on the extent to which the missing critique of Italy’s colonial past may influence the new political, economic, and cultural projection of Italy in the former colonial countries as well as the perception of incoming migrant fluxes, which have increased since the 1970s.

We invite contributions (individual papers or pre-arranged panels) dealing with (but not exclusively to):

- **The passage from colonialism to developmental cooperation:** military, political and economic relations (bi- and / or multilateral) with newly independent countries; the contribution of Italy to international programs and events like the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 1964); Italy's relations with non-aligned countries (Belgrade, 1961).
- **Cultural diplomacy:** Italian schools and cultural institutes in the former colonial world; education paths between newly independent countries and Italy; the role of universities in encouraging the mobility from/to the newly independent countries; missionary and philanthropic activities that can be framed within development cooperation projects; debates and reception of these activities.
- **Mobility:** flows of people to Italy and from Italy to the newly independent countries (e. g. the *Italconsult* technicians, working both for international agencies and for national governments).
- Diplomatic relationship and political agreements between Italy and former colonies about the **management of migratory flows**.
- Reconstructions of **formal and informal international migration networks**, which have encouraged migratory flows between Italy and the former colonies.
- Representations, collective organizations, and activities of **post-colonial diasporas in Italy**.
- **Biographical trajectories** of migrant people, families and groups related to post-colonial flows.

The event will take place on 19 and 20 November 2021 at the University of Palermo.

Please send abstracts of max. 300 words and a short bio (with current affiliation) of max. 100 words to italiapostcoloniale.sissco@gmail.com by **15 September 2021**. To submit a proposal for a pre-arranged session (up to four speakers), please send to italiapostcoloniale.sissco@gmail.com the title of the session and its brief description (300 words), together with the titles of the individual papers, a short abstract for each of them (100 words), and the biographical profile of the speakers (100 words for each speaker).

Selected papers will be announced on 1 October 2021; the final programme will be announced by 15 October 2021.

The SISCO offers **a limited number of travel grants (up to 150€)** to support unwaged scholars as well as unaffiliated scholars who are under the age of 40. Those intending to apply for the travel grants are required to send a statement (200 words) explaining their reasons for applying for support. The statement must be attached, as a separate file, in the same mail of the abstract.

The organizers are strongly committed to promote gender balance among speakers as well as diversity representation and inclusion among participants.

Organizing Committee: Donato Di Sanzo (Università di Palermo), Beatrice Falcucci (American Academy in Rome), Gianmarco Mancosu (Università di Cagliari)

Scientific Committee: Tommaso Baris (Università di Palermo), Paolo Bertella Farnetti (Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia), Paolo Borruso (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), Luca Castagna (Università di Salerno), Valeria Deplano (Università di Cagliari), Cecilia Novelli (Università di Cagliari), Maria Stella Rognoni (Università di Firenze), Alessandro Pes (Università di Cagliari), Neelam Srivastava (University of Newcastle), Annalisa Urbano (Università di Milano).