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I am working on a research project over Italian emigrants' involvement in the First World War. In my MA dissertation, I intend to study the dimensions, the characteristics and the motivations lying behind the repatriation of nearly 300.000 men, sometimes together with their families, during the '15-'18 war. This underestimated phenomenon influenced to a great extent Italian mass culture and has been subject to a significant public use of history during the Fascist *ventennio*. The subject involves a truly transnational and global inquiry over the key-themes of migration and citizenship that could be developed more in depth during a PhD program: Italian emigrants were at the same time actors and audience of propaganda during the conflict and, after that, contributed to the rise of Fascism popularity abroad. Furthermore, they were to play a central role both in the Fascist public discourse on the Great War and in key policies such as colonialism.

I am using different kinds of sources: documents from State archives (mainly from *Archivio Centrale di Stato* and *Archivio Storico-Diplomatico* - Rome); newspapers and magazines (such as *Corriere della Sera* and *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione*); private sources (mainly from *Fondazione Paolo Cresci* - Lucca).

The METIS Summer School 2018 *Mass Culture: New Approaches, New Issues (19th and 20th centuries)* consisted in a fruitful discussion over a series of high-level presentations by senior and PhD researchers. It offered several insights in different key-areas of international cultural historiography and gave me the opportunity to engage in a thorough reflection over both methodological and substantive issues regarding my research.

This experience allowed me to share and discuss my research project together with all the other participants, so as to get a series of stimulating feedbacks. It helped me in circumscribing and defining more my research question and made me reflect on the relations existing between my research, the other presentations and the key-themes tackled during the entire week of studies. For example, I considered the opportunity of investigating the production of popular novels on migration and its role in shaping the image of the emigrants in Italian culture. Some of the presentations of this Summer School focused on the pivotal role of compulsory public education, children's literature and school-texts in shaping a shared cultural and political public sphere for national communities. It got me thinking about the importance of the network of Italian schools abroad and the role of children's education as key-tools for the needs of Italian propaganda. Furthermore, all the different presentations focused on the problem of reception and consumption of different media and mass-culture products, both in a quantitative and qualitative sense. It gave me the chance to engage myself in a discussion over the complexity of any research on propaganda-related subjects and made me more aware of the characteristics of reception

in a communication cycle, with a particular focus on the chain of appropriation and reworking of media and messages in a multi-level dimension, characterised by intermediality and multiple sources of interpretation and meaning.

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