

# **An Alliance Of Women: Immigration And The Politics Of Race**

Heather Merrill

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In the 1980s, Italy transformed from a country of emigration to one of immigration. Italians are now faced daily with the presence of migrants from all over Africa, parts of South and Central America, the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe. While much attention has been paid to the impact on Italians, few studies have focused on the agency of migrants themselves. In *An Alliance of Women*, Heather Merrill investigates how migrants and Italians struggle over meanings and negotiate social and cultural identities.

Taking as a starting point the Italian crisis over immigration in the early 1990s, Merrill examines grassroots interethnic spatial politics among female migrants and Turin feminists in Northern Italy. Using rich ethnographic material, she traces the emergence of Alma Mater—an anti-racist organization formed to address problems encountered by migrant women. Through this analysis, Merrill reveals the dynamics of an alliance consisting of women from many countries of origin and religious and class backgrounds.

Highlighting an interdisciplinary approach to migration and the instability of group identities in contemporary Italy, *An Alliance of Women* presents migrants grappling with spatialized boundaries amid growing nativist and anti-immigrant sentiment in Western Europe.

Heather Merrill is assistant professor of geography and anthropology at Dickinson College.



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