

WIDOWS IN WHITE:
MIGRATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF RURAL ITALIAN WOMEN, SICILY,
1880-1920

The transnational migrations of the early twentieth century had a profound impact on the lives of many people, not least those who were left behind. In this lively interdisciplinary study, Linda Reeder examines how the lives of rural Sicilian women changed as a result of male migration to the United States.

Reeder uses a wide variety of primary sources, including birth and death records, government documents, novels, and newspapers, to trace the changing notions of female and male in rural Sicily, and to explore the impact of industrialization on motherhood, family, wage work, and female civic identity. She also shows how the processes of migration, globalization, and nation formation are deeply gendered. Reeder uses the methods and theories of social history, women's history, anthropology, and cultural studies to explain how migration altered women's identities. The choices these women made regarding family, work, schooling, and material wealth redefined the boundaries of community and nation and helped them claim a central place in the rapidly expanding global economy.

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STUDIES IN GENDER AND HISTORY

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Widows in White

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To David and Ana Ruth

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