**THE USES OF ITALIAN IDENTITY TO ADVANCE POLITICAL AGENDAS:
HARNESSING THE MEDIA TO INFLUENCE THE PARAMETERS OF
IMMIGRATION DISCOURSE**

by

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Abstract: The State's construction of Italian identity during the Diaspora informs
the way the Italian population perceives non-Italians as incompatible with certain
elements of Italian culture, specifically Catholicism, Whiteness, and ties to the land. The
discourse of the Lega Nord has tried to capitalize on recent immigration to advance their
own agenda by using the media to promote specific aspects of this Italian identity. Lega
Nord discourse, broadcast by the media, was able to influence the parameters of the
immigration debate. This was achieved by the media constructing images of migrants as
"others within" the Italian nation through differentiating them based on certain fixed and
exclusive elements of identity emphasized in the LN's rhetoric. By stressing certain
elements of identity, the LN has created a political discourse that is hostile to migrants,
which serves their political agenda in achieving homogeneity and reinforces their stance
on Northern autonomy. However, Identity is not inherently fixed or exclusive but the
Lega Nord has emphasized the elements of Italianità that seem absolute in order to
construct migrants as others within. Since identity is not absolute, Italian identity and can
be reimagined to emphasize components that create a more inclusive discourse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this paper I examine the intersection between Italian identity, the national print media and television, and specific political actors and parties and their role regarding the perception of migrants within Italy. I argue that the State's participation in the construction of Italian identity post-Unification in 1875, and throughout the Italian diaspora until the 1920s, has informed the way the Italian population perceives non-Italians as incompatible with elements of Italian culture. Five elements of *Italianità*, or Italian identity, arose from the nation building after the diaspora: language, family, Catholicism, Whiteness, and ties to the land. All of these components have had an important role in shaping Italian identity, but the right-wing regionalist party the Lega Nord later politicized two, which were Catholicism and ties to the land. Whiteness was not an explicit identity component constructed by the State during the Diaspora, but was a tacit assumption later emphasized by the Lega Nord.

I demonstrate how Italian discourse employs symbols to construct images of migrants and refugees as invaders and "others within" the Italian nation by differentiating migrants based on these fixed and exclusive elements. Lega Nord discourse uses these perceptions of incompatibilities to influence policy that serves their agenda of achieving a homogenous and autonomous Northern Italy. The promotion of this discourse was achieved through the political alliance formed between the Lega Nord and Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's party Forza Italia, which owns and has controlled sizeable portions of the Italian media and has enabled the Lega Nord to broadcast their discourse and reach a larger audience. I argue that if Italian identity continues to be largely portrayed as being defined by these elements, specific groups of migrants can never be

considered "compatible" or completely belong within Italian mainstream society. If the Italians people are interested in changing this discourse, a more inclusive conception of Italian identity will need to be imagined.

This paper considers the construction and deconstruction of Italian identity through Benedicts Anderson's theoretical lens of the creation of the nation through communication channels, which offers a way of altering perceptions and attitudes toward immigrants in Italy. This paper is divided into three sections: Italian Identity, Migrants and the Media, and a Conclusion, which includes suggested further research. In Section 1, I answer the question "what is Italian identity?" through tracing its development in Italy beginning with the period of Italian Unification. I focus on five key elements of this identity that I see as constituting membership in the Italian community. This section serves as a foundation for Section 2 that then allows me to analyze the role of Italian identity in informing the Italian discursive portrayal of migrants in the twenty-first century and how migrants' statuses are ascribed within the nation. In Section 2, I also analyze specific political actors and parties that use notions of Italian identity to incite fear and negative attitudes towards migrants by portraying them as incompatible with these components of Italian identity. Due to the exclusive and fixed nature of these elements of Italian identity, I argue that specific migrant groups will continue to be perceived as incompatible if the media and public discourse continue to describe them as being a threat to this identity. The final section of this paper offers suggestions for further research.

I would like to emphasize a few limitations of this paper. My conception of Italian identity paints with a broad brush and does not reflect all of the regional and localized

conceptions of Italian identity. Generalizing identity in this way allows me to understand which fears or insecurities the Lega Nord have appealed to regarding Italian identity to in order to convince Italians to embrace their discourse. For the purpose of this paper I draw on crucial historical moments that have played a key role in the perception of what constitutes the general "*Italianità*", as well as the major facets of this Italianità that reappear throughout history and at regional levels. I also acknowledge that due to the nature of my paper, I will not be conducting an extremely detailed analysis of attitudes towards migrants in Italy. I do suggest a more detailed analysis in Section 3 as a logical extension of the work I have begun in this paper.

2.0 ITALIAN IDENTITY

In this section, I wish to answer the question, "What is Italian identity?" which I consider through understanding its development. I trace its formation primarily post Unification in 1875, specifically focusing on how a particular conception of Italian identity was encouraged to promote nation building and consolidation in the wake of unification and in the context of a potentially destabilizing diaspora. In the case of the Italian Diaspora, the State attempted to actively protect Italian culture abroad by building an Italian identity among its emigrants.[1] This nation building also shaped identity at home as well, as policy that targeted emigrants was created to unify the Italian people via tying them back to the land. In addition to this, many Italians who emigrated either eventually returned home or had family remain in Italy. The historical overview will be confined primarily to the time frame of the beginning of Italian unification in 1861 through the end of the Diaspora in 1916, and continuing up until the deceleration of emigration by 1975.

This section serves as a foundation by defining *Italianità*, or the characteristics of Italian identity. For the purposes of my paper, the key elements of this identity that emerged from the nation building process are language, family, Catholicism, Whiteness, and ties to the land. All of these components have an important role in shaping *Italianità*, but only four were a part of the State's nation building agenda, which were language, family, Catholicism, and ties to the land. Whiteness was not an explicit identity component constructed by the State, but was a tacit assumption and was later emphasized by the Lega Nord. These elements determine who or what is compatible within Italian

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[1] Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità*." Pg. 53.

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society and therefore impacts how migrants will be received. I begin by considering the general development of the nation and nationality following Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation as an imagined community. I reconstruct Italy's history through the lens of Anderson's model of how the nation develops. Two historical events I focus on are Italian Unification and the Diaspora, as I see these events as having the greatest impact on the formation of *Italianità*.

2.1 Historical Overview

Historically, the territory that now makes up the state of Italy was once composed of a number of city-states that were self-governing and politically independent. After the end of the Roman Empire, the cities and villages that emerged throughout the peninsula "retained a significant degree of identity, particularly because its cities sustained their character as civic and economic centers, even when they became more self-sufficient, built defensive walls, and lost their international commercial connections."[2] Urban nobility arose and established power in separate cities, intermarrying with the other leading families to maintain power. Some of these cities disappeared throughout the medieval era but their commercial character endured, and many were also administrative centers for the ruling powers of the Church.[3]

The rise of communes and city-states in Italy throughout the fifth and sixth centuries were influenced by the Roman tradition of municipal government and the early cultural and political division of the country under different spheres of influence; the

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[2] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 45.
[3] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 46-47.

Byzantine, the Lombard, and later the Franks.[4] At this time the Church began to organize

as a hierarchical structure throughout the peninsula, distinguishing the bishop of Rome as

the Pope.[5] Additionally, throughout the Middle Ages, the Church played an important

role in Italian culture via theology, sculpture, and architecture. By the eleventh century,

the central authorities of these spheres of influence had disappeared in Italy and were

replaced by bishops. At the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century, the

cities faced complex trading problems that were solved with the institution of the city-

state to establish trade relations with similar merchant communities. Struggles for power

between the local church and nobility during this time also lead to the emergence of the

popolo[6] "as a real political force," which many historians understand as the

reintroduction of representative government.[7] By the end of the twelfth century, there

were around three hundred fully functioning independent city-states throughout Italy.[8]

2.1.1 The Italian Renaissance and the Enlightenment

In Italy, the standard Italian grammar today taught in schools is based on the

Tuscan language, which derived from Latin and began as a regional spoken language

with various dialects. The classical Latin language was the written language of scholarly

works in the country and beyond since the time of the Roman Empire while the Tuscan

language only began to appear in poetic texts around the thirteenth century, later entering

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[4] Epstein, S.R. *The Rise and Decline of Italian City States*. London: London School of Economics, 1999. Pgs. 1-17

[5] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 47.

[6] "Popolo" means "the people" in Italian. The popolo arose as a group to protect the interests of the commoners against the nobility in the communes at the time.

[7] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 60.

[8] Epstein, S.R. *The Rise and Decline of Italian City States*. London: London School of Economics, 1999. Pgs. 1-17

the courts of the peninsula. Up until the thirteenth century, Italian scholars wrote exclusively in Latin despite the existence of many Italian languages and dialects since the eighth century.[9] From roughly the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Renaissance, the revered Latin language and literature were taught throughout Italian schools and played a crucial role in the creation of and the participation in Italian-Renaissance culture, which was primarily the 'culture' of the elite minority.[10] As the emergence of Latin literature and curriculum still maintained a grip within the Italian educational system.[11]

A large portion of the population at this time was not literate, thus maintaining Latin as the language of the elite nobility. The masses spoke one of a variety of distinct regional dialects. More importantly, Latin was spoken throughout Europe, meaning no one nation could truly lay claim to it as being a uniquely distinct aspect of their culture and identity. The Renaissance, or the span of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was the period that Italians began to write in a single literary language modeled after famous Italian poets such as Dante Alighieri, who produced many writings in the Florentine dialect, which contributed to the Tuscan language's popularity.[12] Later fourteenth century poets, such as the humanist Francesco Petrarca and fellow poet and friend Giovanni Boccaccio, also broke free from writing in Latin by producing sonnets written in the Tuscan vernacular, which catered to a specific educated and elite masculine audience.

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[9] Najemy, John M. *Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550.* Oxford, GB: OUP Oxford, 2004. ProQuest ebrary. Pg. 19.
[10] Black, Robert. Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century. Cambridge: New York; Cambridge University Press, 2001. Introduction: Pgs. 1-22.
[11] Black, Robert. *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*. Pgs. 225-236
[12] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pgs. 63-64.

By the fourteenth century, the Tuscan language was promoted as the standard

language of the peninsula due to the concentration of social and economic influence

throughout the Tuscan region, predominately in Florence. The introduction of the

printing press in the late fifteenth century further solidified this standardization through

distribution of literature. Within a few decades of its introduction in the West, books were

mass-produced throughout Europe. These productions of texts in the vernacular increased

as the printing press could now produce for the market of non-Latin readers, thus opening

up lines of communication between speakers. While Latin was not distinct to the territory

that would become Italy, the Italian vernacular was, and could have "true political

analogue" unlike Latin's religious authority.[13]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the period also known as the

Enlightenment, that there was a renewal of Italian culture regarding the revitalization of

civil and political fields.[14] Poets and writers producing their works in the Tuscan

vernacular were able to reach an even wider audience and women writers and poets, such

as Gaspara Stampara, began participating in the creation of literature more inclusive of

women. With the decline of the "sacred" Latin language and the rise of the Tuscan

vernacular, ideas of group membership began to open up to include a wider Italian public.

By the time Italy began unification in 1861, "Italian" existed as the primary literary

language of the nation.[15] However, to this day there co-exist various regional languages

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[13] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Pg. 41

[14] Moravia, Sergio, Breidenbach Flora, and Moravia Sergio. "An Outline of the Italian Enlightenment." *Comparative Literature Studies* 6.4 (1969): 380-409. Web.

[15] The *Accademia della Crusca* (1583-present day) is an Italian society for scholars and linguists who published dictionaries and assembled vocabularies deemed to be "Italian" (or more specifically, Florentine, which initially sparked some controversy) in the 1900s due to anxieties over comparisons with English and French dictionaries. They sought to distinguish the Italian language as having a noteworthy literary tradition through a collection of words *(Vocabolario*

and dialects throughout the country, which contributes to language separation as a barrier to achieving a fully homogenous culture and identity in a strict sense.[16]

Language was not the only facet of Italian identity taking root at this time, as Catholicism also played a role regarding the creation of national identity. Since the seventh and eighth centuries, Italian schools were characterized by predominantly Christian education and consisted of the study of religious texts written in Latin was the primary education, and later in the ninth century monastic schools were established which also incorporated Latin literature.[17] The Papal States were territories throughout the Italian Peninsula that had existed since the 8th century and were under the direct control of the Pope, who held enough power and influence in Italy that he was often able to defy the will of the Byzantine emperor during his rule.[18] While the Middle Ages were a time of faith for the Italian people, the Renaissance experienced a time of secularism and decline of Church power. "Renaissance popes became obsessed with creating a temporal state in central Italy that drew them even deeper into secular politics, thereby diminishing their spiritual credibility."[19] The papal seat was moved to Avignon in 1309 and was not returned to Rome until 1377. The political influence of the Church declined

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degli Accademici della Crusca). The *Vocabolario* "represented, for centuries, in a politically and linguistically divided Italy, the most precious collection of the common language, the strongest internal bond of the Italian community, and an indispensable tool for all those who wanted to write in good Italian." (As stated by the Academia on their site www.accademiadellacrusca.it)

[16] Many of these dialects are perceived as demarcating the 'lower-class' or are aligned with the *Lega Nord*, and therefore racism (I will discuss this further in Section 2).

[17] Black, Robert. *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* Pg. 176-178.

[18] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pgs 15-43.

[19] Najemy, John M. *Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550*. Oxford, GB: OUP Oxford, 2004. ProQuest ebrary. Pgs. 59-60.

during this time from its former feudal prestige and received a lot of criticism for

previously having had too much wealth and power.[20]

However, parishes in the countryside still had great cultural influence because

they were important social centers. "Churches were preferred sites for social display,

youthful flirtation, and business agreements," unlike in urban cities at the time, which

was attributed to the fact that priests worked in the fields alongside their parishioners

while priests in the cities were distinguished by their wealth and education.[21] Although

the absence of the papacy from Rome in the fourteenth century severely hurt Church

power in Italy, it did not completely remove its cultural presence from the territory. The

Church regained some influence during the fifteenth century when Latin religious texts

such as Psalms, Gospels, and stories of Saints were being translated into regional

vernaculars because complete editions of the Bible in Italian or Latin were very

expensive and could not be afforded by most parish clergy at the time.[22] These texts

circulated more widely and reached a larger audience once they were they were more

affordable and written in the regional vernaculars. In addition, the Church maintained

cultural influence throughout the Renaissance due to the development of religious

brotherhoods, which provided fellowship and a sense of community through hosting

religious festivals, performing acts of charity, and encouraging civic participation.[23]

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[20] Najemy, John M. *Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550*. Oxford, GB: OUP Oxford, 2004. ProQuest ebrary. Pgs. 59-60.
[21] Najemy, John M. *Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550*. Oxford, GB: OUP Oxford, 2004. ProQuest ebrary. Pg. 63.
[22] Najemy, John M. *Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550*. Oxford, GB: OUP Oxford, 2004. ProQuest ebrary. Pg. 66.
[23] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 68-69.

The Church solidified its place in Italy's Renaissance culture by sponsoring painters, sculptors, and architects to construct Cathedrals, paint murals depicting biblical stories, and carve statues of saints to name a few examples.[24] "A major reason that Italian cities of the Renaissance developed a unique place in history was the abundant patronage of art provided by the Church, private organizations, and prominent individuals."[25] Many scholars attribute much of Italy's Renaissance identity to the Church and its contributions to Italian culture during this time. However, in the sixteenth century the Catholic Church began to decline in power once again during the European Reformation and it responded with severe repression in the form of censorship and hunting for suspected heretics. In the century following the Renaissance, there were attempts to limit Church power and promote the development of agriculture by encouraging the sale of the lands, which were in a state of commercial and agricultural backwardness due to the influence of the Papal States and nobility who owned the land.[26]

2.1.2 Napoleonic Italy and the Risorgimento

The period of the *Risorgimento* ("resurgence") was the nationalist movement towards Italian Unification into a single Kingdom of Italy beginning in the early nineteenth century. By the time of the Risorgimento, Italian Romanticism[27] had begun to distinguish itself with the political involvement and struggle for Italian independence.

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[24] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 75-77.
[25] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 79.
[26] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 89-90.
[27] Romanticism was the literary, musical, and intellectual movement that began in Europe and was associated with liberalism and nationalism.

These ideological and literary movements helped to "arouse national consciousness" and resulted in a series of political events that produced territorial and political unification. The movement for independence from foreign powers also combined with Catholic doctrine during this time. For example, writers such as Alessandro Manzoni produced patriotic literary works that favored Christian subject matter and Roman Catholic doctrine. During this time, poems, historical writings, and political works were concerned with the struggle for Italian independence, such as those written by Giuseppe Mazzini.[28] The sentiments of the Italian Diaspora, which was beginning to occur at this time, were reflected in the writings produced during the Risorgimento period.

Philosopher and Tuscan statesman Niccolò Machiavelli had once yearned for a political leader who could unite Italy in his treatise *the Prince*.[29] The Risorgimento was the era of Romanticism and the nation-state and Machiavelli's treatise, which opposed foreign domination and promoted a unified Italy, was of particular interest to those seeking Italian independence.[30] The idea of a leader rising up and uniting Italy inspired a sense of national identity, however ideas of what Italy would look like after Unification created division amongst the people.[31] Leading up to Unification, French military and political leader Napoleon Bonaparte had been able to secure large portions of the Italian

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[28] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 110-111.

[29] Described in Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità.*" Pg. 52. To clarify, Machiavelli lived before this time, from 1469-1527. However, his treatise was of particular interest during the era of the nation-state. Likewise, renowned Italian poet Dante Alighieri also yearned for a leader who could unite the Italian territories after having them divided among so many foreign powers. In Dante's *Divina Commedia*, he compares Italy to a horse with an empty saddle.

[30] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 83

[31] There was debate as to whether Italy should become a monarchy or republic post-unification. Many of the revolutionary leaders, such as Giuseppe Mazzini, wanted an independent republic.

peninsula during the French Revolutionary Wars, and in 1805 he was crowned king of Italy with the Iron Crown of Lombardy. During this time, Napoleon supported the idea of unification for strategically motivated reasons. When Napoleon was defeated in 1815 and the Congress of Vienna was convened to redraw the European continent, Italy was returned to a patchwork of independent governments ruled by various European powers, predominantly Austria, prompting the Risorgimento.[32] Italian nationalist Giuseppe Garibaldi led the nationalist unification movement with the backing of France, despite strong repression by Austria.[33] The movement was successful with the Second War for Independence from 1859 to 1861, which ended with peace negotiations after the Austrian forces were defeated in the war's two costly battles.[34]

The nationalist Risorgimento movement was finalized with the fall of Rome to the Italian government and the completion of the unification process by 1871, which had been ongoing since 1861.[35] However, the final result left the country politically divided and economically weak after extensive fighting. During this period, the capital shifted three times, beginning in Turin and then moving to Florence in 1865 before finally being established in Rome by 1871.[36] There was ongoing struggle throughout the Risorgimento regarding the pope's power and the Church's place within the nationalist movement.[37] By

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[32] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web.

[33] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 110-117.

[34] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 114-115..

[35] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 119.

[36] Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità.*" Pg. 57

[37] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web.

the time of Italian Unification the pope had lost control of the Papal States. Upon Rome's selection as the nation's capital, Pope Pius IX issued the *Non Expedit* decree, which prohibited Catholics from participating in Italian national politics and put immediate stain on the newly formed Italian government.[38]

Although the Church no longer controlled territory throughout the peninsula like it once had, its cultural and political influence was still strong. The Catholics obeyed the prohibition and refused to participate in national politics in accordance with the pope's decree. In response, the government issued the Law of Papal Guarantees in 1871 in order to separate church and state, guarantee protection of the Church, and ensure the pope with privileges comparable to those of the head of state.[39] However, the Pope remained distrustful of the government and refused to accept their offer, so the prohibition continued. Despite this response, the Law of Papal Guarantees was not revoked although the issue between the Pope and the King of Italy was not officially resolved until 1929.[40] In the wake of Unification, the newly formed Italian state not only had to worry about poverty and lack of economic development, but also trying to please the formidable Church. It was during this period that various political groups had begun to rise up with different visions for the future of Italy and modest Italian emigration had begun to accelerate into a full-scale diaspora.

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[38] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 119.
[39] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pgs. 119-120.
[40] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pgs. 118-119.

2.1.3 Implications of Italy's Unification: the Diaspora

The Risorgimento nationalist movements and the unification process set the groundwork for a unified Italian identity, but social upheaval and political change prevented a homogenous identity from realization.[41] Largely, the country remained deeply divided post-Unification, but why was Unification not able to solidify a collective identity and unified state? The post-Unification period witnessed many Italians leaving the country due to a culmination of pre-existing issues and the availability of new economic opportunities elsewhere. Push factors included poverty, poor agricultural land management, technological innovations that were lagging in Italy but available abroad, and competition with grain prices. Pull factors included labor demand in North and South America that provided new economic opportunities, which were paired with open immigration policies and cheaper, more reliable steam transportation.[42]

Before Unification, Italy was composed of a variety of principalities that were controlled through proxy by various European powers until the nineteenth century. The system of city-states functioning in Italy that lasted throughout the Renaissance began to deteriorate with the rise of the modern nation-state during the early nineteenth century. Italy has been a country of mass emigration since Italian Unification in 1861 and continuing up until the 1930s.[43] In the first decade of Unification, Italian politicians were mainly preoccupied with the establishment of an Italian nation rather than focusing on foreign policy or the global processes taking place. The country had previously

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[41] Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità*." Introduction.

[42] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.

[43] Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità*."

experienced emigrations in moderate numbers due to predominantly Southern Italians leaving in search of work elsewhere since the peninsula had been in political fragments and mismanaged for centuries.[44] However, this emigration was primarily limited within Europe. In contrast, the formation of the nation-state coincided with a large scale Italian Diaspora that lasted well into the 1930s. Like the asymmetrical economic benefits of Unification, the Diaspora did not affect all regions of Italy equally.

Unification had broken down the feudal land system and the national economy briefly improved, but generations of poor land management via subdividing plots of land had left most of the farming inefficient and unable to support the population. In addition, imposed grain taxes ("*macinato*") also hurt the Southern farmers since agriculture was the leading production of the South.[45] At the time, poverty was worsening and the South began to rebel against the taxes levied by the government and the lack of land reform, which had been promised to Southern peasants during the struggle for Unification.[46] Internal discord in the South led the newly created Italian government to impose a military solution. This solution involved suspending civil liberties and seizing control in the South, which in turn contributed to the creation of the organized band of criminals known as the *mafia*.[47] The government's repressive response to internal discord did not sit well with the Southern Italians who felt that they had been targeted by the government post-Unification because of the implementation of the grain taxes and the failure to

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[44] Cited from Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*. Pg. 21.
[45] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 120.
[46] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 119.
[47] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 119-121.

provide promised subsidies for economic development of the South. "Against the rhetoric of 'Unification' contained in official accounts of the history of Italian nation-making, the 'real' history of the Italian South is one of colonisation, and 'the construction of Southerners as an ''inferior and immodifiable race'' served greatly to justify the military intervention that insured the unification of the peninsula against southern resistance in the mid-to late 1800s' (Verdicchio 1997: 191-4, quoting Ganduscio 1970)."[48] The social, political, and economic crisis occurring throughout the South instilled an image of the South as a dangerous place, in addition to its historical association with poverty.[49]

Economic divisions between the more wealthy and industrious North and the poorer rural South became more pronounced and the country specifically experienced the largest immigration from laborers and farmers leaving from the South. Initially from 1876 to 1900, emigrations were from the northern and southern regions but then from 1900 to 1920, the majority of emigrants were leaving from the South.[50] Southern Italy suffered the largest loss of laborers due to poverty driving the workers to search for work abroad. Antiquated farming tools compiled with the mismanagement of the land had resulted in insufficient farming and a physically demanding and unsustainable way of life, which fueled the disproportionate Italian emigration.[51] The increase in poverty, lagging technological development, and agricultural issues all simultaneously occurred

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[48] Cited in Mai, Nicola. "The Albanian Diaspora-In-The-Making: Media, Migration And Social Exclusion." *Journal Of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 31.3 (2005): 543-561. Academic Search Premier. Web 29 June 2016.
[49] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pgs. 119-120.
[50] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.
[51] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.

while economic opportunity elsewhere became available.[52] At the same time, North and South America were beginning to industrialize and had a high labor demand tht they tried to fill. Countries such as Argentina and the United States encouraged immigration through open immigration policies by promoting the myth of land for everyone.[53] Thus, young Italians began leaving the country in search of work and improved livelihoods.

Emigration on such a large and disproportionate scale during this period from Unification to WWI created yet another division within the country between two distinct groups: those who questioned the loyalties of Italian emigrants abroad and those who advocated for cultivating Italian communities abroad that could assimilate while still maintaining a common standard Italian language and a unified ethnic identity.[54] Historian Elizabeth Venditto writes, "After Italian Unification, few citizens of the nation spoke standard Italian, shared liberal ideas of nationalism, or felt vested in the new state."[55] Italian Unification was a geographical unification of the territory; it did not create a unified national identity. Unification was followed by a mass emigration of Italians to Catholic or Protestant states, most notably to Argentina, Brazil, and the United States.[56] The Italian people remaining in the territory entered the twentieth century under a unified state that was suffering from a bad economy and accelerating emigration.

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[52] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.
[53] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.
[54] Cited from Choate, Mark I. "*Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità*." Pgs. 51-67
[55] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990*." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014. Pg. 27.
[56] Gabaccia, Donna R., and Fraser M. Ottanelli. *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*.

Between 1880 and 1915, around thirteen million Italians left Italy and emigrated to the Americas.[57] By 1985, this number had increased to a total estimated around 26 million reported Italians who had emigrated to other countries. This emigration resulted in what many theorize as the development of a diaspora national identity. "Late nineteenth century migrants often learned to think of themselves as Italians not in Italy but abroad."[58] The two Italies'[59] unification indirectly created a unified Italian national identity through the emigration that followed as the government tried to construct a national identity so that Italian immigrants would potentially return or would maintain and pass down their language and traditions in their new countries.[60] Furthermore, Italians who remained in Italy began to work to consolidate Italian influence abroad by encouraging separate Italian communities to form abroad in order to foster what they viewed as their identity and culture.[61] Passing down traditions and cultural markers were one effect of emigration that assisted in the creation of a national identity, which was encouraged by the State and the Catholic Church, as I will later discuss.

Such a large percentage of Italians working and residing outside of the country concerned the State by threatening loyalties with potential new identities.[62] In the case of

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[57] Cited from Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2008. Print.

[58] Cited from Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990.*" ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014. Pg. 13.

[59] The *two Italies* refers to the diasporic Italian community and the Italians who remained in the country. Nation building was undertaken to unite these two communities.

[60] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990.*" It should be noted that there are a few exceptions to this, such as in the United States where in many areas, the Italian community was discriminated against and largely stripped their children of the language in order to assimilate.

[61] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2008. Print.

[62] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Introduction.

late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Italian emigration, the State had to find a way to maintain power and control while its workforce disappeared abroad. Traditions, language, and cultural heritage were not enough to secure loyalty and economic returns to the Italian state. In other words, more measurable and visible assurances needed to be secured.[63] On one hand the State needed the physical presence of soldiers and on the other it needed economic stimulation via remittances if Italy was to remain a unified nation and keep up with nineteenth and twentieth century industrialization.

The extent to which this nationalism could be fostered also depended on the response of the receiving countries, which also had their own nationalistic agendas in mind. By the twentieth century, almost half of Buenos Aires's population was foreign born with Italian immigrants compromising almost a third of this population.[64] However, Buenos Aires is not often evoked in historical or political writing as being as ethnically diverse as often as cities such as New York are, which claimed a foreign born population far smaller than that of Buenos Aires in the late nineteenth to twentieth centuries. Despite the diversity of immigrants in Buenos Aires, the Argentine state largely treated the population as homogenous rather than as multiethnic by using rhetoric that created a sense of unity and identity, of being Argentine, or more specifically a *porteño*[65]. Many of the immigrants arriving in Argentina in the early to mid nineteenth century were coming during the civil wars that were accompanying the formation of the Argentine nation and

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[63] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Introduction.
[64] Devoto, Fernando J. "The First Elite of Buenos Aires." Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic State. Ed. Fraser M. Ottanelli. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2001.
[65] *Porteño* is the term to describe those residing in Buenos Aires, as people of the port, due to the Buenos Aires being a coastal city and the main port at the mouth of the Plata River in Argentina.

thus were there during the state's consolidation, giving them a sense of solidarity and new Argentine identity.[66] Argentine society largely viewed immigrants not as others but as homogenous amongst themselves,[67] which was not the case for Italians being received in New York or elsewhere in the United States. Accordingly Italian nationalistic sentiments did not develop uniformly abroad and measures taken by the State affected emigrants differently.

While political and economic ties via assured citizenship and remittances created material connections back to Italy, ideological apparatuses were also employed through religious education and missionary resources.[68] Although religion has been integral to the development of many nations, it has simultaneously been at odds with the State's formation and continuation.[69] Within the context of Italy, the same Catholicism used by the Papal States to maintain power over the people and later used by the Vatican to combat Unification was an essential nation-building tool in the period that followed that could be used and controlled by the State. Religious identity has played an essential role in the formation of Italian national identity, which has been historically grounded in Catholicism. The explicit expression of this link to national identity can be traced back

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[66] Devoto, Fernando J. "The First Elite of Buenos Aires." Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic State. Ed. Fraser M. Ottanelli. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2001. Pg. 41.

[67] Devoto, Fernando J. "The First Elite of Buenos Aires." Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic State. Ed. Fraser M. Ottanelli. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2001. Pgs. 41-42. This may be attributed to the fact that many of the indigenous population of Argentina suffered major reductions to their populations during the Colonial period or intermarried with European immigrants. While popular opinion in the country believes that there are few indigenous peoples remaining in the country or that they are on the verge of dying out, genetic testing and more recent studies have determined most Argentines have descended from indigenous peoples or have indigenous ancestry.

[68] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Introduction.

[69] Grosby, Steven Elliot. *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

as far as 1891, when Catholic Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini gave a speech about

Italian identity and Catholicism at an Italian conference on emigration in the city of

Genoa.[70] "However, Scalabrini's call stood out because of his insistence that "the

sentiment of nationality" was linked to Italians' Catholic faith and its loss was a threat to

Italian's continued Catholicism." [71]

Later in 1899, one of Scalabrini's close friends and fellow supporter of the

continued Catholic education of Italian emigrants, Bishop Geremia Bonomelli, echoed

Scalabrini's plea by saying "language and Religion are two of the principal means for

keeping alive and solid the ties between mother Italy and her daughter Italy, which grows

and prospers in the South American Continent."[72] While Scalabrini and Bonomelli had

the intention of encouraging Catholic Italian migrants to practice their faith abroad

throughout the time of the Italian Diaspora, these claims can also be analyzed as a part of

a larger state mission to cultivate Italian national identity: the state was able to "rely upon

culture and religion to brand emigrants as Italian."[73] Italian missionaries played an

integral role in shaping this Catholic identity abroad via collaborating with the Italian

State to send missionaries to communities of Italian emigrants and promoting the Italian

language as the official language and means of keeping their Catholic faith strong.[74]

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[70] Elizabeth Venditto traces the link between Catholicism and Italian national identity back to Bishop Scalabrini's Genoa speech in her piece "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990*."

[71] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990*." Pg. 2

[72] Choate's *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* Pg. 2. Translated from Bonomelli's "L'Emigrazione" (Turin, 1899).

[73] Choate, Mark I. *"Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità."* Pg. 53.

[74] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990*." Pg. 55.

The promotion of the Standard Italian language was also employed as a means of differentiating Italians abroad from their compatriots of their new countries whilst also unifying the Italians at home who spoke a variety of regional languages and dialects. In addition, Italian clergy and bishops founded organizations within these communities that were specifically for addressing the spiritual and material needs of the Italian emigrants. Venditto writes, "*italianità* was not incompatible or separate from Catholicism, but closely intertwined with it, and thus by strengthening *italianità* and a sense of Italian community abroad, they [the Italian priests and clergy] thought that they would also be reinforcing Catholicism."[75] Not only did the Church assist Italian emigrants after they permanently settled abroad, but it also set up organizations to assist Italians in planning their departure from Italy by helping with travel and employment information throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[76] The Catholic missionaries at the time were directly involved in Italian nation-building projects alongside the State in order to tie the emigrants closer to the Church.[77]

Kinship was also important in establishing cultural ties and connections through the Catholic Church. While kinship has been important in the development of most European countries, familism follows a slightly different pathway in Italy due to a greater distrust in the government and its institutions.[78] Italy's family structure has persisted as Mediterranean despite Northern European influence, meaning that children often live

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[75] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990.*" Pg. 57.
[76] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990.*" Pg. 78-79.
[77] Venditto, Elizabeth O'Ressa. "*Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990.*" Pg. 58.
[78] Cavalli, Alessandro. "Reflections on Political Culture and the 'Italian National Character'" Daedalus 130.3 (2013): 119-37. JSTOR. Web. Pg. 122.

with their parents well into adulthood, sometimes even after marriage.[79] The Italian

family continues to be the most important institution, or form of community, in people's

lives largely due to this distrust of outsiders and the State.[80] Despite the rise in secularism

and Italians' distrust of the State, studies have found that the level of trust between

Italians and the Catholic Church remains higher due to social networks created by the

Church, which has created a sense of community.[81] The trust in the Church might also be

attributed to the familial nature of Church celebrations and holidays that emphasizes the

loyalty and devotion to the family.

2.1.4 Late Twentieth Century and European Integration

Italy's identity did not abruptly end with its construction during the Diaspora.

Certain events in the late twentieth century also influenced this identity, such as European

integration. After the Second World War, Italy voted to eradicate the monarchy and

become a republic with the economic support of the United States via the Marshall Plan,

which went into effect in 1948 and lasted until 1952. Immediately after the war, the

country faced the challenges of building a new economic system in addition to a new

political system. The industrial and agricultural sectors had broken down and there were

housing shortages, road and railways in need of repair, and food shortages.[82] In addition,

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[79] Cavalli, Alessandro. "Reflections on Political Culture and the 'Italian National Character'"
Daedalus 130.3 (2013): 119-37. JSTOR. Web. Pg. 129.
[80] Cavalli, Alessandro. "Reflections on Political Culture and the 'Italian National Character'"
Daedalus 130.3 (2013): 119-37. JSTOR. Web. Pg. 128-130.
[81] Cavalli, Alessandro. "Reflections on Political Culture and the 'Italian National Character'"
Daedalus 130.3 (2013): 119-37. JSTOR. Web. Pg. 122.
[82] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary.
Web. Pg. 160.

the breakdown of the Fascist regime left behind a "polarized political landscape of Communists and Catholics," with the Communist Party emerging on top.[83]

Italy in the 1950s and up until the late 1960s looked very different that what it did coming out of the Second World War. With the help of the United States and the Vatican, the Christian Democrat party was able to win the republic's first election and establish itself as Italy's ruling party entering into the 50s.[84] This period of the country's history saw tremendous economic and social development that propelled it into becoming a major industrial power and the standard of living immensely improved for the majority of the population. The turnaround in part occurred because of the 1950-1953 Korean War, which created a high demand for metal and other types of manufactured products, which Italy could supply. In addition, European Integration and the creation of the European Common Market in 1957 provided further investments in Italy and its industries. This period of new capital and investment and newly improved material standard of living contributed to a gradual decrease of Italian emigration, which had been slowing since the Second World War. Deceleration continued, as poverty was no longer a push factor, until around 1975 by which time Italian emigration had slowed significantly.

Essential to Italy's development during this period was the creation of the European Union in 1993 with the formal implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht and which began with six member states: West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands. It was formed as a security measure to tie neighboring European countries together economically and politically to prevent frequent wars from

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[83] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 160-161.
[84] Killinger, Charles L. *History of Italy*. Westport, US: Greenwood Press, 2002. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 162.

continuing to occur and to secure peace. A single European currency began to replace

Italy's and other national currencies in 2002. By 2007, the European Union included a

total of twenty-seven member states, and has since reached a total of twenty-eight. From

the time of its formation, there has been a general trend of *Europeanization*, or the trend

towards national institutions being supplemented or shaped by institutions/fields at the

European level.[85] While the EU is a rather recent creation, identification with Europe was

conceived well before its official institutionalization with the gradual increase in mobility

among States in Europe. The more Europeans have been able to travel, the greater degree

to which a general identification with Europe has developed. Italian identification with

Europe also determines the out-groups, or those considered "strangers" within Italy and

other European nations. The European identity assumes Caucasian lineage, which

implicitly links Whiteness as an element of Italian identity. Race and ethnicity are not the

only indicator of this European identity, as non-Christian based identities also face great

difficulty incorporating into the European mainstream culture and identity.[86] The

conception of this European identity may vary from nation to nation within Europe but it

nonetheless informs Italian identity to some degree. While Italians considered themselves

as European well before the creation of EU institutions, the official integration into the

union solidified this conception of identity.

 In the late twentieth century Italy also began receiving large flows of migrants.

Italy in the 1980s, which had begun seeing its transition into a country of net

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[85] The usage of term *Europeanization* as it was defined by the European Commission in "The Development of European Identity/Identities: Unfinished Business" (2013).

[86] Miller, Robert, Graham Day, and Inc ebrary. The Evolution of European Identities: Biographical Approaches. New York; Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

immigration, was already afflicted with unemployment and deep wealth disparities between regions.[87] By the second half of the 1980s, net immigration flows increased considerably. With such divisions and tensions already present, the switch to suddenly receiving large groups of migrants put further strain on an already struggling economy and people that were suffering from a lack of jobs and who had felt that their tradition and power were being challenged. Transitioning from a country of emigration to a country of net immigration during such a turbulent time presented and continues to present an interesting dilemma for Italy: how to rebuild social cohesion in a society that was once relatively homogenous but has become increasingly differentiated within the past twenty years.[88]

2.2 Benedict Anderson's Nation

There are many theories regarding the formation of national identity as well as varying definitions of what constitutes "the nation." According to Benedict Anderson, the nation itself is not an actual community; rather it is a fictional creation. In 1983, Anderson produced *Imagined Communities* and classified nationality as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" [89] where he outlines that national identity is imagined in the sense that most members will develop an imagined sense of what this community looks like without ever meeting or knowing most of their fellow-members. This community consists of a group of people who are

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[87] Ambrosini, Maurizio. "Immigration in Italy: Between Economic Acceptance and Political Rejection." pg. 176.
[88] Ambrosini, Maurizio. "Immigration in Italy: Between Economic Acceptance and Political Rejection." Journal of International Migration and Integration 14.1 (2013; 2011): pg. 175.
[89] Anderson, Benedict R. O'G, and American Council of Learned Societies. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. New York; London; Verso, 2006. Pg. 6

connected through a common idea of comradeship and fraternity. Rather than argue that

there are "true communities" and "false nations", Anderson argues that all types and sizes

of communes (excluding individual interactions involving face-to-face contact) are

imagined communities and should be classified by the ways in which they were

imagined.[90]

       This shared sense of community can slowly and implicitly develop over time or it

can be actively and politically constructed. Not only could a state construct identity, but

the mass media could also create imagined communities through creating relationships

between its audience and certain images or vernacular. In this way, nationalism and

national identity do not depend on the existence of a nation-state, but depend on the

creation of modern communication networks and individual perceptions.[91]. The nation is

a fictional human creation or means of social grouping, rather than a constructed

ideology. The implications of this model are that nations were never naturally

manifested; rather Anderson claims that the nation is a modern conception that was

created for political purposes, and can be intentionally called upon.

       Anderson maintains that three fundamental cultural conceptions allowed for the

possibility of imagining the nation to develop: the development of a specific script-

language that offered privileged access to 'ontological truth', the belief that society was

naturally organized around and under 'divine monarchs' who received access to and from

a higher cosmological power, and finally, the conception of temporality in which

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[90] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. Pg. 6
[3] Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1997. Print
[4] Bigot, Giulia, and Stefano Fella. *Immigration and Discrimination in Italy: Institutional Patterns and Political and Civil Society Responses*. University of Trenton Department of Sociology and Social Research, 2005. Print.

cosmology and history were indistinct.[92] Before national culture develops, Anderson argues that religious culture dominated societal thought and interaction until it began to decline in the seventeenth century and distinctive national cultures replaced it. Printing press capitalism enabled this transition through allowing literature to be printed and easily distributed in the vernacular, making it more accessible to a larger public. Print capitalism opened the door to the standardization of calendars, clocks, and languages. In summary, nationalism was a product of modernity and the development of communication channels and it was created with political objectives in mind. I will now apply Anderson's theory to the creation of the Italian nation.

Anderson's theory of the decline of script-language, or the exclusive classical languages such as Latin, as leading to the development of national language plays a particularly important role when analyzing language's relationship with national identity. Developing a national language is often the driving force behind national unity, as it is an indicator of a collective national identity. Anderson notes that language creates a special kind of contemporaneous community, by which words are joined to create national anthems in the forms of songs and poetry. While the words alone or the particular melody does not hold value as it stands, the sentiments that accompany it generate a feeling of being connected to those who share the same identity and territory.

During Unification, the State imposed Tuscan as the national standard language in an attempt to unify the people through one common language. The distribution and of various regional languages and dialects via printed texts allowed for new forms of identities (that were not only linked to Latin) and made the creation of the modern nation-

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[92] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Pg. 36

state possible, as it could now take on a more distinct language unique to its people and its territory.[93] Before the Tuscan language was established as the national language, Latin coexisted alongside many regional languages and dialects. However, Latin was the literary language of the elites and was not spoken or used by the masses, who were mostly illiterate at the time and lacked the education or opportunity for classical studies. The decline of Latin and the promotion of the Tuscan language during the Renaissance and its rising popularity set the groundwork for it to become the national language, although the language would continue to evolve considerably over the centuries. The establishment of a national language that could differentiate the nation from others is an important element in Anderson's theory, as his myth of the nation is seen through the development of communication channels. Later print capitalism and the distribution of the vernacular among the masses allowed the Italian peoples to better understand one another and communicate, which was previously limited to the nobility who understood script-language.

Anderson addresses the link between religion and the roots of nationalism when theorizing about the formation of the nation. Anderson claims that in 18th century Western Europe, the "dawn of nationalism" and the beginning of certain religious modes of thought came to be. The period of the Enlightenment brought with it a decline in religious thought and practice and the rise of rationalist secularism, where which "death became arbitrary" and the once faithful began to reflect on the "absurdity of salvation."[94] Such religious uncertainties meant that people needed a new continuity or permanence

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[93] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Pg. 46. Also, note that Latin was used throughout Europe, so having production of vernacular language allowed for the possibility of identities to be linked to the nation rather to just regional and local identities.
[94] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Pg. 10-11.

with which to identify, one that also provided fraternity and created new ways to be linked. Nationalism was the secular alternative to explaining and understanding human suffering, which had once been explained by religious thought. While religious power declined during Italy's Enlightenment and rationalism became the popular mode of thinking, secularism was never able to fully come to fruition in Italy like it did elsewhere in Europe. The geographical location of the Vatican within Rome and the existence of the Papal States were a physical barrier to the separation of government and religious institutions. From the eighth century until Unification, the pope was simultaneously a powerful secular and religious ruler throughout the peninsula. The presence and influence of the Church prevented the abolition of religious modes of thinking and religious forms of fraternity and community. Even during periods of decline in political or social power, the Church still endured as a cultural influence and community center, such as its role throughout the Renaissance. There was not a need for a sense of belonging through national identity when people had community through the Church and a sense of belonging to their city-state and regional identity.

It was not until the Risorgimento that the people began to experience nationalistic sentiments, but even then it was driven by economic aims and outside social influences. The Romanticism movement was circulating around Europe and instilling nationalistic attitudes, however, the movement was the weakest in Italy. The push toward Unification, while fueled by nationalistic writings at the time, was ignited by desire for economic development. Various foreign powers had ruled the territory since the fall of the Roman Empire, which prevented full economic and cultural unity. As Anderson suggested, nations and national identities are constructed imagined communities. However,

Unification did not address the issues that the Risorgimento movement had hoped for and the culmination of social, political, and economic issues led to a diaspora.

Following Anderson's theory, Italy's national identity was no accident; it was actively constructed abroad along political, cultural, and linguistic lines through international measures taken by the state.[95] The State responded to mass emigration with the further construction of the Italian identity as a way to unite its emigrants and create ties to one specific land. Anderson theorized that belonging to a nation depends more on individual perceptions than objective factors, such as borders and natural resources. The nation building that took place during the diaspora was unifying through creating relationships and community, whereas Italian Unification from 1861-1871 was merely geographical unification of the peninsula. Before Unification, Italian politician and activist Giuseppe Mazzini described the Italian people as "soldiers without a banner,"[96] but even after they were unified and gained their banner it did not initially hold any ideological value as the people did not identity with the banner. With one sixth of Italy's population residing outside of Italy's borders by 1911[97], there was a feeling of the nation as being beyond its borders. An Italian community had to be fostered abroad, creating a notion of an "expanded state"[98] that did not just rely on the sense of shared territory but rather on the sense of a shared cultural background and feeling of community. The State

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[95] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2008. Print.

[96] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* Pg. 6. Original quote translated from Mazzini's *The Duties of Man* (1907) where Mazzini claimed emigration manifested "the problems of national disunity" and described divided Italians as "soldati senza bandiera."

[97] Choate, Mark I. *"Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità"* Pg. 54.

[98] The idea of Italy as an "expanded state" or an extended state was taken from Mark Choate's *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* pg. 8.

had a political agenda when constructing this community, and as Anderson theorized, Italian identity arose from a coordinated effort by a few elites or in this case the leaders of the country. While the State initially worried about emigration, it chose to promote it in order to ease economic troubles at home. However, "for Italy to gain benefits from its emigrants, the fruits of their sacrifices would have to return home."[99] The State did this through promoting migration while assuring citizenship to all those who returned, and those who returned brought back experience and capital. For those who could not yet return or did not want to, the State collaborated with receiving countries, such as the United States, to set up channels through which remittances could be sent back to Italy.[100] In addition, the State promoted standard Italian so that migrants from different regions could communicate with each other and it promoted Catholicism to unify Italians in Protestant countries. Italian identity needed to be framed around the transnational-mobility of its people if it were to return or even endure.[101]

From Anderson's theory, it follows that if identity can be actively constructed to create and connect us through imagined communities, than it can also be altered. Large-scale immigration can lead to rapid demographic change and thus challenge notions of national identity, but if these notions were to change they would no longer be threatened by immigration.[102] As I have demonstrated, the Italian government was able to construct identity using various state apparatuses but it can also alter the way Italian identity is

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[99] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Pg. 8.
[100] During this time, remittances accumulating in the millions were sent back to Italy through the nonprofit Banco di Napoli, as noted in *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad.*
[101] Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2008. Introduction.
[102] Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Migration Policy Institute. *Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration: The Transatlantic Council on Migration*. Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012.

defined in order to foster greater inclusiveness and alter perceptions of immigrants within

the country.

3.0 MIGRANTS AND THE MEDIA IN ITALY

In this section, I begin by examining the relationship between Italian print media and national broadcast television with specific political parties and actors, primarily focusing on Silvio Berlusconi and the Lega Nord. Attitudes and assumptions towards migrants are largely influenced by what is seen and heard on the news through various media outlets. By creating powerful images and using emotionally provocative discourse, the media can influence the audience's perception of and reaction to otherness. The media's ability to shape ideas that touch our subconscious thinking becomes even more important when the majority of its audience has not come into direct contact with the 'others'.[103]

In her study of media discourse on migrants and its impact on society's tolerance, journalist and professor Denitza Kamenova describes the *cultural power* of what is produced by the mass media to unconsciously influence the audience and public opinion. According to social psychology, social learning takes place when the audience pulls messages and arguments from the content they are repeatedly exposed.[104] "Also what counts is not only the length, context, the presentation of the message and its attractiveness and authenticity, but also the level of trust and sympathy that the reader/viewer has in the source of information, in the media."[105] Kamenova emphasizes that because of their unawareness of the importance of this trust, journalists often

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[103] Kamenova, Denitza. "Media and Othering: How Media Discourse on Migrants Reflects and Affects Society's Tolerance." *Politické Vedy*, Matej Bel University, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Bratislava, 2014. Pg 171.

[104] Kamenova, Denitza. "Media and Othering: How Media Discourse on Migrants Reflects and Affects Society's Tolerance.". Kamenova cites Dr. Bolette Blaagaard as introducing the idea of cultural power within the media in her piece.

[105] Kamenova, Denitza. "Media and Othering: How Media Discourse on Migrants Reflects and Affects Society's Tolerance." Pg. 172.

underestimate their own strength and ability to influence public opinion and overlook the potential danger of their messages.

In Italy, the Lega Nord is able to promote a specific notion of Italian identity that serves its political agenda of forming a homogenous, autonomous North through its alliance with Berlusconi's political party Forza Italia. Berlusconi's media ownership and control enabled the Lega Nord to manipulate the media and create a narrative around immigration that portrays migrants as threats to specific aspects of Italian identity, which have been emphasized by the Lega. In this section I consider the ways the past is used to impact current migration policy by analyzing the way Italian identity has been used by the Italian media to construct images of immigrants as threatening cultural values. I demonstrate how Italian discourse employs symbols to construct images of migrants and refugees as invaders and "others within" the Italian nation through differentiating migrants based on the elements of identity I identified in the first section (Catholic, Whiteness, and ties to the land). Due to the exclusive and fixed nature of the elements of Italian identity, I argue that specific migrant groups will continue to be perceived as incompatible if the discourse of the political parties and actors are perpetuated by the media, which continues to describe them as being a threat to these elements of identity.

3.1 Context: Recent Migration into Italy

Within the past decade or so, migrants have been steadily coming to Italy and much of the European Union, and there is a growing presence of second-generation migrants in the country. "Southern European countries have become a major destination for international migration in the last 20 years," which has been due to their porous

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boundaries, geographical proximity, and economic demand.[106] Beginning in the 1990s

and continuing up until today, many undocumented migrants from Africa have been

crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Italy. Simultaneously, the 2015 Refugee Crisis

resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East streaming into

Europe.[107] Political upheaval in the Middle East has transformed migration patterns to

Europe, beginning with the Arab Spring in Libya in 2011 and continuing to the Syrian

refugee crisis that began in 2015.[108] According to the Council on Foreign Relations, "The

Central Mediterranean passage connecting Libya to Italy was the most trafficked route

for Europe-bound migrants in 2014; Frontex reported more than 170,000 illegal border

crossings into Italy."[109] These numbers of migrants crossing into Italy have remained this

high throughout 2015 and into 2016 as well. Due to a lack of budget and resources,

Mediterranean countries such as Italy have been unable to keep up with the demands and

needs of the refugees arriving.[110]

3.2 Political Actors and Media Strategy

Before addressing current portrayals of migrants in the Italian media, I begin by

explaining the function of the media in Italy and its history of migrant portrayal in order

to understand the relationship between national news media and political actors. The

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[106] Ambrosini, Maurizio. "Immigration in Italy: Between Economic Acceptance and Political Rejection." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14.1 (2013; 2011): 175-94. Web. Pg. 176.
[107] Park, Jeanne. "Europe's Migration Crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 23 September 2015. Web. 9 August 2016.
[108] Park, Jeanne. "Europe's Migration Crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 23 September 2015. Web. 9 August 2016.
[109] Park, Jeanne. "Europe's Migration Crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 23 September 2015. Web. 9 August 2016.
[110] Park, Jeanne. "Europe's Migration Crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 23 September 2015. Web. 9 August 2016.

characterization of Italian identity as encompassing Catholicism, Whiteness, and ties to the land are perpetuated by the media due to the Lega Nord's relationship with Silvio Berlusconi, a media tycoon who was also prime minister and therefore could influence the media's agenda and propagate ideas and perceptions that advanced the coalition's political ends. This influence of the media is because there is a dependent economic-political relationship in Italy between 'business empires' and 'political powers,' where the four largest national newspapers "all are dependent upon large financial groups which are all, in turn, deeply involved in politics." [111]

In this section, I demonstrate how the discourse of the Lega Nord has tried to capitalize on recent immigration to serve their own agenda of creating a homogenous, autonomous Northern Italy by harnessing the media to promote specific aspects of *Italianità* in order to depict migrants as outsiders and threats. This depiction serves the Lega Nord's agenda of creating a homogenous, autonomous North while the alliance allows Berlusconi and his party Forza Italia to remain in control of the government. Consequently Lega Nord discourse, broadcast by the media, was able to influence the parameters of the immigration debate and affect policy. In her research on media representations of immigrants in Italy, historian Giovanna Campani identities three periods of distinct media reactions towards immigrants in Italian media that followed this shift in net immigration, which I identify and speak of in this section in relation to the rise of the Lega Nord.

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[111] Giovanna Campani's section "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 52.

3.2.1 Phase One

When the first wave of immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America initially began entering the country in the 1980s, the news outlets reflected the public's overall curiosity, tolerance, and mild fear towards the immigrants. There was no observable alarm regarding immigration in the first half of the decade as it seemed to be overshadowed by other conflicts in political discourse.[112] One reason for this acceptance could be attributed to the fact that the immigration numbers were small and the duration of their stay in the country was unclear. A second and more significant explanation could be that the Lega Nord political party did not yet exist or elicit the media to do its specific political work.

The *Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania*, or the Lega Nord ("Northern League), is the regionalist political party in Italy that promotes special rights for the Northern region of the country and was founded in 1991 with the intention of transforming Italy into a federalist state.[113] Much of the party's discourse focuses on "Italian" pride and resentment towards the South and mobilizes against immigration and multiculturalism. Like other more extreme right-wing parties, "their program is directed toward strengthening the nation by making it more ethnically homogenous and by

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[112] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pgs. 73-75.
[113] Before the emergence of the Lega Nord, between 1979 and 1989 a number of leagues were formed that sought regional autonomy from the central state. Due to structural disorganization and a lack of resources, these parties were never able to collect enough signatures to put forward their candidates for election, although their emergence "laid down the conditions for the formation of the Lega Nord" (71). These early leagues relied traditional media communications such as wall graffiti, pamphlets, and public rallies to disseminate their ideology to the public. In 1989 the then much smaller and early version of the Lega Nord won nearly half a million votes in Lombardy. Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003.

returning to traditional values."[114] The party exploits negative attitudes and resentment against undocumented immigrants and is particularly tough on immigration from Muslim countries, as they are not viewed as protecting or promoting the Italian Christian identity. However, the Lega Nord was not formed until the end of this phase.

By the mid to late 1980s, fear, intolerance, and some acts of racist violence accompanied these new demographic changes although reactions and attitudes among Italians varied across the spectrum. "In the first phase, the leftist parties defend the notion of the multicultural society (which is quite a vague concept in Italy at the time); the Christian Democrats are fearful of irritating the Catholic Church, which sees the immigrants as the 'new poor' of the world; and the Socialists, including the law-maker Martelli, insist on the fact that Italy is an economically powerful country which needs immigrants."[115] By the 1990s, immigration from outside the European Union became noticeable, although still limited, and concern grew as the media devoted more attention to immigration.[116] In this phase, the typical non-EU migrant was a black male from sub-Saharan Africa, and so the media portrayed a 'racialization' regarding the representation of immigrants. The identification of the ethnicity of the criminals "contributed to the imprinting on the public imagination of a stereotyped image of immigration."[117] Darker skin became associated with danger and crime, as the ethnic, national, or racial

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[114] Originally quoted from Jens Rydgren's article, "The Sociology of the Radical Right" in the *Annual Review of Sociology 33* (2007): 242-243. Cited from page 158 of Monica Colombo's article, "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy: The production and reproduction of ethnic dominance and exclusion" in the *Journal of Language and Politics* (2013).

[115] Giovanna Campani's section "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 44

[116] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003.

[117] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 77.

backgrounds of the migrants were always mentioned or depicted in the media when reporting on infraction or criminal offenses committed by migrants. The 1990s were categorized by public fear of "the putative social effects of non-EU immigration; they felt their living spaces were being invaded" which created the ideal conditions for the rise of the political party Lega Nord.[118]

During this phase, the leading daily newspapers almost always supported the party in government due to this financial dependence, and there have been few instances of support for the opposition.[119] Public television networks Rai 1, Rai 2, and Rai 3 are also under the influence of these political forces. This relationship created a situation that is found more in Italian media than in other Western countries, which is the lack of 'autonomous journalism' or "that is to say a journalism based above all on the quality of the information and on the objective of trying to obtain the support of the audience through the quality of information provided."[120] Historically, the traditional dependence of the Italian media on party ideology was the major factor limiting its capacity to exercise autonomous reporting to the public.[121] This situation persisted into the 1980s until the Italian media underwent transformations that resulted in the introduction of private television channels and an increase in the concentration of media ownership.

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[118] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 77.
[119] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. The authors also note that, "Independent newspapers are almost nonexistent" (74) In Italy due to this financial dependence.
[120] Autonomous Journalism as defined by Giovanna Campani's section "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 51-52.
[121] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pgs. 73-75.

This stage of immigration into Italy also included Cape Verdean and Filipino women who migrated to Italy for employment as domestic helpers, particularly as live-in maids. Campani notes, "and because of the nature of this specific activity – caring, helping, based in the home, etc. – the image of migrant women (most of whom, incidentally, came from Catholic countries) was reassuring, compared to the media image of men at this stage, who were, as we have seen, largely portrayed as black-faced exotic strangers from Africa."[122] Migrant women were initially perceived as being compatible with Italian culture, as their religious identities were also Catholic and the nature of their work involved family care. Black African men, on the other hand, were perceived as being incompatible with Italian culture because they could not be as easily linked to family involvement and child care, an important feature of Italian culture. This image of the typical female migrant would change within the coming years, as Islamic women and women trafficked for prostitution into Italy would also invoke charged images of slavery, sex, and criminality. The religious and cultural elements that made the female migrants appear harmless and compatible with Italian society no longer marked their identities.

3.2.2 Phase Two

The second wave of immigration to Italy featured a change in the origin of the immigrants, beginning with Albanians in 1991 as well as others coming from territories in the Balkan region, such as those involved in the break up of former Yugoslavia and the collapse of Eastern European Communist regimes.[123] The image of the migrant was thus

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[122] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 60

[123] Colombo, Monica. "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy." *Journal of Language and Politics, vol.* 12, 2013. Pg. 162.

no longer dominated by images of African males, as this category now included Eastern European men and women. Campani notes that media portrayal of the migrants within this phase are more "marked" and described that they are wild people fleeing a war torn land. "The migrant is an Albanian or a Slav, sometimes even a Slavonic Albanian (*sic*). This Italian media display[ed] a comprehensive ignorance of the complex ethnic relations of the Balkan region."[124] In particular, the Romani people received the harshest media depictions, being portrayed not only as wild people, but also as "dangerous and prone to theft and violence."[125] The Romani remain the most discriminated group to this day, partly due to historic prejudice reinforced by negative media depictions.[126]

Initially during this phase, the majority of the Italian public responded with empathy towards the Albanian refugees, but as the immigration steadily continued, "by the early 1990s Albanians and people from the former Yugoslavia (especially Roma) become the main victims of intolerance and racism (Lapov, 1998)."[127] Increasingly, the Albanians became associated with Italian Southerners, "the primordial order against which Italian national identity was articulated historically."[128] Albanian migrants, much like Southern Italians, began to be perceived as "the other" and thus as incompatible with Italian identity. Albanian immigration in smaller numbers did not initially appear threatening to most of the public because small-scale immigration did not elicit the social

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[124] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg. 58.

[125] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg. 59.

[126] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg. 59.

[127] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg. 55.

[128] Mai, Nicola. "The Albanian Diaspora-In-The-Making: Media, Migraiton and Social Exclusion. Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies 31.3 (2005): 543-561.

changes that tend to accompany large-scale immigration, such as demographic changes or perceived job competition with immigrants. Power structures may not have appeared to have been challenged or threatened until large-scale immigration took place.

During this time, many Albanian migrants accused the media of portraying them as the 'constitutive other' through stereotyping and "fabricating a de-humanised Albanian, monster, connotation backwardness, ferociousness, immorality and abject poverty" which resulted in their social exclusion and marginalization.[129] "Unwittingly, they [Albanian migrants] found themselves trapped in a discursive field magnetized by the opposition between a cultural construction of the North as civilized, efficient and 'European' and a symmetrical cultural construction of the South as uncivilized, inefficient and 'African'."[130] Albanian migrants, while initially discursively being grouped with Southern Italians due to perceived links such as poverty and complexion, were now being further subdivided into their own category linked to specific ethnic stereotypes and images produced by the media.[131] Accordingly, a nation or groups within a nation define themselves in relation to the differences within its borders. Large-scale immigration altered the perception of "other" from Southern Italians to the immigrants themselves.

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[129] This image of Albanian migrants as they perceived themselves (based off of media descriptions and images) was concluded from fieldwork interviews of about 200 Albanian migrants conducted and collected by Nicola Mai between 1998-2001. The interviews she conducted asked Albanian migrants about situations in their everyday lives where they felt they had been unjustly treated. "The Albanian Diaspora-In-The-Making: Media, Migration and Social Exclusion. Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies 31.3 (2005): 543-561.

[130] Mai, Nicola. "The Albanian Diaspora-In-The-Making: Media, Migration and Social Exclusion." *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 31.3 (2005): pg. 554.

[131] Mai, Nicola. "The Albanian Diaspora-In-The-Making: Media, Migration and Social Exclusion." *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 31.3 (2005): pg. 551.

Campani notes that while the previous period initially viewed the refugee and migrant with a certain degree of pity and victimhood, the second phase saw the increased anxiety surrounding migrants and the production of the invasion metaphor. The government began the expulsion of Albanians as the media reiterated the danger of immigration, which could only be prevented by stopping it altogether. National news confused ethnic identities of Eastern Europeans when reporting on immigration and reports of some Albanian involvement in human trafficking led to an association of Albanian immigrants with both human and drug trafficking, an association with criminality which endures today.

Simultaneously during this phase, the move of "media practitioners to high-level politicians" was happening, which was the case for both Giovanni Spadolini, the editor of *Il Corriere della Sera* who became the leader of the Republican Party before becoming Prime Minister, and Silvio Berlusconi, who also made a similar move from media mogul to Prime Minister.[132] During this time, particular government actors and political parties benefited or forwarded their agenda by exploiting this relationship. Campani writes, "this engagement in politics is often an instrument to obtain material economic benefits for the industrial group in question. The Berlusconi group owns *Il Giornale*[133], the weekly review Panorama and three television stations – Italia Uno, Canale Cinque and Retequattro" (52).[134] The problematic relationship where major news media is financially

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[132] As noted on pages 202-203 of Marco Briziarelli's, "Hide and Seek: Neoliberalizing the State and "Stating" the Neoliberal in the Italian Media System." (2014).

[133] The four leading national newspapers, which have the largest circulations, are *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, *La Stampa* and *Il Giornale*.

[134] An exception to these relationships is *Il manifesto* which is a left-wing newspaper that receives funding from the State and donations from its readers rather than relying on support from a political party or large economic group, and thus pays its journalists lower wages but they are able to practice 'autonomous journalism' free from political influence comparable to that of other

dependent on political parties or specific political actors is most clearly revealed in the

actions of three actors: Silvio Berlusconi and his political party Forza Italia, as well as the

Lega Nord.

Berlusconi dominated Italian politics for two decades as the third-longest serving

Prime Minister of Italy since Unification, in addition to being a media tycoon who owns

Mediaset S.p.A. (or Gruppo Mediaset), the largest commercial broadcaster in Italy. This

direct involvement in national media allowed Berlusconi to launch massive campaigns

via electoral advertisements on his three TV networks. After initially being elected in

1994, he was forced to resign but later ran and won again in 2001. "Even though his

government lasted only for six months and had little impact on public policy, it made the

issue of Berlusconi's conflict of interests already extremely salient: it was considered

highly problematic that a prime minister could lead a country while retaining ownership

of half of the television market (Mediaset) and indirect control over the remaining half

(Rai[135])."[136] Eventually Berlusconi would run and win two more times in 2008 and 2013,

enabling his political allies the Lega Nord to extract demands on policy and rhetoric

around migrants. Berlusconi owned media companies would then promote to serve the

electoral interests of the Lega Nord. Throughout his time as Prime Minister, Berlusconi

was able to promote his party's ideology through the various media channels controlled

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Western countries. *Il Fatto Quotidiano* newspaper does not even receive funding from the State
and currently has a much larger circulation than Il manifesto.

[135] Radiotelevisione Italiana S.p.A., or Rai, is an Italian national broadcasting company that is
owned by the Ministry of Economy and Finances, essentially, it is owned by the Italian
government. During Berlusconi's time as Prime Minister, he also maintained control over RAI as
well as his personal ownership of Mediaset, which controls the three most important commercial
TV networks.

[136]Briziarelli, Marco "Hide and Seek: Neoliberalizing the State and "Stating" the Neoliberal in
the Italian Media System." Published in *Commuication and Critical Cultural Studies* 11.3 (2014).

by him and his party. Campani writes, "The extreme case is that of Berlusconi, where it is possible to speak of a sort of soft totalitarianism through the media, using the media to promote a political career and to hide the scandals (the biggest of which is of course the ownership of the country's largest private media empire by a powerful politician who at one time was prime minister)."[137] Once Berlusconi and the Lega Nord created an alliance, the Lega were also able to capitalize on Berlusconi's media advantage.

However, the Lega Nord's impact on policymaking occurred during the second of Silvio Berlusconi's terms as Prime Minister in 2001. The Lega Nord has had a complicated relationship with the Italian media, as the media has at separate times persecuted them and endorsed their political messages. Likewise, "the Lega Nord has also adopted innovative, even transgressive, communication strategies, succeeding in both attacking the dominant logic of the media system and activating a new media logic to ensure its own visibility in the various phases of development."[138] These communication strategies have included using attention-grabbing statements or actions and asserting 'issue ownership' over key themes, which have become associated with the Lega in the media and with voters.[139] During the 1980s and 90s, the Lega used any hostile media coverage of their party to their advantage by using it to promote their propaganda. However, after the party's regional electoral success in the 1990s, a number of journalists and business leaders began to openly support the Lega Nord and their

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[137] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 41.
[138] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 71.
[139] Albertazzi, Daniele and McDonnell, Duncan. "The Lega Nord Back in Government." *West European Politics*, 33.6 (2010). Pg. 1329-30.

policies, and media coverage of the party became more frequent and positive.[140] Their

success in gaining the public's and media's attention has been attributed to the Lega's

ability to put forth a convincing narrative about the party's success in government to its

members and supporters and by continually proposing new policies on high-profile topics

in Italian politics, such as security and immigration.[141] In addition, "many political

commentators considered the Lega Nord to be an alternative to the old party system and

to the typical Rome-centered politics."[142] The media soon began to legitimize the Lega

Nord by defending their achievements and their policy stances, noting that they were

based on real problems existing in the Northern regions. The Lega Nord became a

symbolic instrument for combating traditional party power and soon specific journalists

and newspapers took up positions that favored the Lega. [143] The Lega was able to gain

traction by capitalizing on already existing fears and issues and establishing their place in

Italian politics as the alternative party.

By 1993, much of the media provided indirect support to the Lega Nord via

heavily criticizing other more traditional parties. "The public television networks (Rai)

openly took up a position in defense of the country's unity and identity and in several

programs assumed an active role in seeking to frame the Italian national identity."[144] The

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[140] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 79.
[141] Albertazzi, Daniele and McDonnell, Duncan. "The Lega Nord Back in Government." *West European Politics*, 33.6 (2010). Pg. 1322.
[142] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 80.
[143] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 80.
[144] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 83. It was also note that, "A study commissioned by Rai in the spring of 1993 revealed that questions of national unity and identity and the related issue of North/South differences were widely discussed on television (Survey "*Italia Italie* by Grossi 1994)."

Rai channels and Mediaset network portrayed questions surrounding national identity and unity as a crisis in the country and gave voice to doubts and discourses, all of which were put forward by the Lega Nord.[145] Conservative commentators and leading Italian dailies were in full support of the Lega Nord and their movement and presented them in a favorable way. Not surprisingly, during this time league policies matched up with those of major industrial, financial, and television interests.[146]

Then in 1994, Berlusconi, in a strategic move to prevent the left and the Lega Nord from gaining more electoral ground, created and funded the *Forza Italia* party. At this time Berlusconi was the owner of the television network Mediaset. "A political movement thus arose from inside the media system," Italian political communication researcher Roberto Biorcio writes. "Berlusconi exploited to the full the emotional attachment his media empire had established with his audience, as a substitute for the affective relations with voters that the traditional parties had built up in the past."[147] Berlusconi's party Forza Italia quickly formed an alliance with the Lega Nord, as well as *Alleanza Nazionale*, and the coalition won the 1994 general elections. However, shortly after, the Lega's leader Umberto Bossi broke away from Berlusconi and radicalized the party further by abandoning federalism and calling for full northern independence in order to preserve the party's voter base and prevent more votes from being lost to Forza Italia in the future. "In order to overcome its marginal political position, the Lega Nord's

[145] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 83.
[146] Many interviews and surveys conducted during this time highlighted the similarities between the Lega Nord and the television and industrial interests. Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 84.
[147] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 85.

policy was now to agitate for the establishment of the "Padana Nation," by means of the predictable recourse to symbols, rituals, and myths that is part of inventing tradition (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983)."[148] The party's radicalization resulted in further isolation and a return to negative press coverage.

3.2.3 Phase Three

The 1996 Dini Decree marks the third phase of immigration, as it was the first effort to implement immigration policy since the Martelli Law of 1990. The Martelli law was the first successful attempt at creating migration policy.[149] The previous decade had been characterized by migration to Italy without a legal framework. The Martelli law created reception centers and tried to regularize immigration by setting a quota and reforming deportation procedures to narrow the flow.[150] However, after the Martelli law, refugees continued to come from Albania and the former Yugoslavia, as well as a continuous flow from Somalia, and immigration in Italy was being redefined as an emergency. The Dini Decree was passed in November of 1996 and allowed for the regularization of almost 300,000 undocumented immigrants and introduced more severe measures against smuggling and trafficking.[151] This period consisted of the creation of contradictory immigration processes implemented by the government following the Dini Decree. The first Berlusconi government was an assortment of different stances toward

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[148] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 86.

[149] Italy was trying to meet the membership requirements for the Schengen Agreement, which they also signed in 1990. In addition to the growing public concern surrounding immigration, the country was also facing pressure to assure other European members they could block the entry of unwanted immigrants into the EU space.

[150] Colombo, Monica. "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy." *Journal of Language and Politics, vol*. 12, 2013. Pg. 162.

[151] Colombo, Monica. "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy." *Journal of Language and Politics, vol*. 12, 2013. Pg. 162.

migration, but with the later influence of the Lega Nord, it adopted the Dini Decree, a more radical and hardline approach towards migration.

While this phase of media reactions to immigrants does not focus on one particular regional or ethnic group of migrants like the other two phases did, it was characterized by a distinct public discourse about migrants and how the reactions towards their presence produced legal consequences. National newspapers presented the immigration situation as potentially beneficial to the economy, which needed more workers in specific sectors, but also as dangerous due to the presence of a significant number of undocumented migrants in the country. "The media point of view on migration – useful if well-controlled but otherwise dangerous – seldom considers the structural aspects of the Italian system that produce favorable conditions for illegal immigration. Hence readers and listeners hear little about the huge informal labor market in Italy; about the long established system of crime in Italy which exploits immigrants and involves them in trafficking; about the corruption of parts of the police about visa-selling scams at Italian embassies and consulates abroad […]"[152] In this way, the media painted a picture of immigration that did not include revealing the ways the immigration system failed and produced the conditions for undocumented migration. Rather, by ignoring this narrative and stressing the incompatibility of the migrants with certain Italian identity elements, the media promoted a specific agenda that served the platform of the Lega Nord.

After years of isolation, Bossi formed a new pact with Berlusconi in 1999 and the alliance restored the Lega Nord's political importance within Italy once again. The Lega

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[152] Giovanna Campani's "The Italian Case" in *Media and Migration: Constructions of Mobility and Difference* (2013) Pg 57.

Nord participated in the 2001-2006 government due to this alliance formed with then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's party Forza Italia. "Having lasted less than a year in the first Berlusconi-led coalition in 1994, the Lega not only managed to survive for four years in the second Berlusconi government, but succeeded in presenting itself simultaneously as both 'the opposition within government' and a driving force behind high-profile areas of government policy."[153] Doing so allowed the party to have a say in the creation of an immigration policy reflective of their ideology and assumptions towards immigrants and their role in Italian society.

Throughout his time as Prime Minister, Berlusconi's government made efforts to limit illegal immigration via the Bossi-Fini law in 2002, named in part after Lega Nord leader Umberto Bossi, which ordered the arrest of undocumented immigrants and their confinement to detention centers as they awaited their identification and expulsion made possible by a series of bilateral agreements with Italy and its surrounding neighbor countries. "The salience of immigration reflected Bossi's demand to make it a key issue in the CdL's [Casa delle Libertà][154] formal electoral pact signed with Berlusconi in exchange for the LN's [Lega Nord] guarantee of full support for the government (*Corriere della Sera*, 2001a). This formal electoral pact ensured that the CdL was formally bound to Bossi's electoral priorities and that Berlusconi could be held

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[153]Albertazzi, Daniele, and Duncan Mcdonell, "The Lega Nord in the Second Berlusconi Government: In a League of its Own." *West European Politics* 28.5 (2005: 952-72. Academia.edu.

[154]The CdL is an abbreviation for the *Casa delle libertà* (House of Freedoms), the coalition that formed initially in 2000 until 2006 and then again in 2006 until 2008 as a center-right political and electoral alliance. The alliance was between Berlusconi and his party Forza Italia, the Lega Nord, and Alleanza Nazionle, as well as a number of other smaller similarly aligned parties.

accountable throughout the term (*Corriere della Sera*, 2001b)."[155] The law, although

designed to solve the problem of immigration after repeated accusations that the

government was too lenient and tolerant toward illegal immigration, was severely

criticized for being too harsh and restrictive.[156] One of its greatest critiques resulted from

the new ability to return immigrants found in international waters back to their previous

country, which was a power granted that formerly fell outside of the patrolling duties of

the Italian Navy. Its harsh nature and criminalizing policies were attributed to the law

incorporating the Lega Nord's restrictive approach to immigration. After Berlusconi won

again in 2006, the alliance was able to affect immigration policy once more by passing a

controversial bill in 2008 that made illegal immigration a punishable offense.[157] During

this time, the Lega Nord made significant gains in policy on "la sicurezza," which

translates to "security" and encompasses both immigration and law and order, by

claiming that the Italian people are under attack.[158]

The Lega Nord's concern with immigration also extended to suggesting measures

monitoring Muslims in the name of security. In 2008 a "security practice" was introduced

that dealt with a number of security issues such as various punishments for different

offenses such as 'the crime of illegal immigration.' The Lega proposed a number of

resolutions to this package, which included making it compulsory for Muslims to hold

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[155]Carvalho, Joao. "Extremism and Democracy: Impact of Extreme Right Parties on Immigration Policy : Comparing Britain, France and Italy." London, GB: Routledge, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 30 June 2016. Pg. 134.

[156] Colombo, Asher, Sciortino Giuseppe, and Craveri Elisa. "The Bossi-Fini Law: Explicit Fanaticism, Implicit Moderation, and Poisoned Fruits." *Italian Politics* 18 (2002): 162-79.

[157] Colombo, Asher, Sciortino Giuseppe, and Craveri Elisa. "The Bossi-Fini Law: Explicit Fanaticism, Implicit Moderation, and Poisoned Fruits." *Italian Politics* 18 (2002): 164.

[158] Albertazzi, Daniele and McDonnell, Duncan. "The Lega Nord Back in Government." *West European Politics*, 33.6 (2010). Pg. 1319.

religious gatherings and celebrate rites in Italian, restricting granting of permits to build mosques only following local referendums, and granting mayors the command to deport illegal immigrants.[159] Although these resolutions were never realized, they reflect the Lega's commitment to implementing policy that helps them get the North closer to homogeneity and independence.

In summary, after forming a coalition with Berlusconi and his party Forza Italia, the discourse of the Lega Nord was able to influence the parameters of the immigration debate. "Similarly to what happened in other European countries, in Italy it was the extreme right, notably the Lega Nord (since its first electoral success at the beginning of the '90s), that put immigration at the centre of the political agenda and defined the terms of the debate under the heading of populist slogans."[160] The Lega's ability to reach a larger audience was an effect of forming an alliance with Berlusconi, which increased their available media platform. Since Berlusconi's government, the Lega Nord has gone through phases of waning and rising popularity.[161] In 2013, European Parliament member Matteo Salvini replaced Bossi as the new leader of the Lega Nord. Salvini's leadership has resulted in the Lega Nord embracing a very critical view of the European Union and a very strong anti-immigration stance, among the party's most notable policy stance changes. While the party experienced some fluctuations with voters and their popularity has lessened significantly after Berlusconi's second cabinet, it made large gains once again in 2015 following the immigration crisis in Italy with the influx of refugees and the

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[159] Albertazzi, Daniele and McDonnell, Duncan. "The Lega Nord Back in Government." *West European Politics*, 33.6 (2010). Pg. 1327-28.
[160] "National Policy Responses to Urban Challenges in Europe". Abingdon, GB: Ashgate, 2012. ProQuest ebrary. Pg. 165.
[161] Mazzoleni, GianPietro, Julianne Stewart, and Bruce Horsfield. *The media and neo-populism: a contemporary comparative analysis*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2003. Pg. 88.

party has continued to make gains in Italian elections since Salvini was elected president of the Lega.

3.3 Current Media Portrayals and Political Discourse

Italy is becoming more multi-ethnic "in terms of the number of residents, participation in the labor market, transition to self-employment, mixed marriages, and the origin of students in schools."[162] However, the predominant opinions throughout the country do not reflect the growing multiethnic makeup, and popular opinion "rejects the idea of giving a place to immigration in the nation's social organization, and this position is strengthened by political forces and by media that reflect and exacerbate the reaction."[163] Studies have shown that "given that members of the public primarily learn about politics via mass media – the news and information they convey – the credibility and legitimacy of news media are of utmost importance"[164] in regards to their ability to shape public perceptions.

In addition, government actors and political parties use perceptions of others to promote their agenda, gain public support, and influence policy that can actively work against the best interests of undocumented migrants and refugees in Italy. In Italy, like many European countries, immigration is commonly referred to as an invasion and threat. "The Italian political elites and media have played a crucial role in the spreading and legitimating of both overt and covert forms of xenophobia and racist discourse over

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[162] Ambrosini page 191
[163] Ambrosini pages 191-192.
[164] Arceneaux, Kevin, and Martin Johnson. "How Does Media Choice Affect Hostile Media Perceptions? Evidence from Participant Preference Experiments." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, Washington, 2015. Pg. 12.

time."[165] This is largely done through the *othering* process that occurs, which is the tendency of certain individual or groups to be mentally categorized as 'not one of us'.[166] Studies have found that, "there is considerable evidence of a normalization of "othering" in political discourse, and there is much to indicate that this is also occurring at all levels of discourse, ranging from the media, political parties, and institutions to everyday life."[167] Since political actors and parties, such as Berlusconi and the Lega Nord, are interested in maintaining the current power structure and can influence the narratives produced by the mass media, they therefore have a say in how public debate surrounding certain issues is shaped. "The media are in essence a contested space in which the most powerful groups can establish the dominance of specific messages."[168] These messages can lead the public to certain political conclusions about immigration and the groups of people entering the country. While this discourse may begin in the media or stem from individual actors or political parties, it can quickly diffuse and integrate into society. So how are migrants in Italy described in national news and political discourse and in what ways are they differentiated or constructed as the 'other'?

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[165] Colombo, Asher, Sciortino Giuseppe, and Craveri Elisa. "The Bossi-Fini Law: Explicit Fanaticism, Implicit Moderation, and Poisoned Fruits." *Italian Politics* 18 (2002): 164.

[166] Kamenova, Denitza. "Media and Othering: How Media Discourse on Migrants Reflects and Affects Society's Tolerance." *Politické Vedy*, Matej Bel University, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Bratislava, 2014.

[167] Originally quoted from Michael Kryzanowski and Ruth Wodak's piece, "The Politics of Exclusion: Debating Migration in Austria" (2009): 1-2. Cited from page 159 of Monica Colombo's article, "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy: The production and reproduction of ethnic dominance and exclusion" in the *Journal of Language and Politics* (2013).

[168] Happer, Catherine, and Greg Philo. "The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change." *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*. Glasgow University Media Group, 2013. Pg. 333.They additionally found that, "Across these studies, we found that a number of factors including direct experience, knowledge from other sources, logic and the generation of fear or anger contributed to the degree to which audiences accepted or rejected the media message" (328).

The Lega Nord promotes the idea that immigrants are not compatible with Italian

identity using the framework of particular economic and social issues that concern the

public.[169] As previously mentioned, the party and its leadership are well known for

evoking the image of an "immigrant invasion" where the immigrant is implied to be

coming to take jobs away from hardworking citizens and to drain state resources. The

party often links these fears to Italian cultural identity as well, describing them as threats

to economic and social issues as well as threatening to the Christian identity, for example.

The perceived threat imposed by Muslim immigrants challenges the religious identity of

the nation that is grounded in Catholicism. "In general, the Lega has employed an ethno-

populist discourse in relation to the immigration theme, using the 'invasion' metaphor

and presenting immigrants as a threat to local and national identity (particularly Muslim

immigrants), as a threat to national security and responsible for rising crime, a drain on

economic resources (unfairly receiving preferential access to welfare resources) and

illegitimate competitors in the job market."[170] Their invasion is presented as a threat to

the Italian people on multiple fronts as cultural, religious, security and economic threats.

In particular, Lega Nord leader Matteo Salvini often refers to this immigrant

invasion metaphor. During an interview with radio station RTL[171] last September, Salvini

was quoted as saying, "I do not believe in a refugee emergency. We are faced with a

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[169] Much of the Lega-Nord's discourse could be found in *La Padania*, a pro-Lega Nord daily
newpaper that was established in 1997 and founded by Umberto Bossi. Due to financial
difficulties, the newspaper has been suspended as of December 2014. "Other media owned by the
Lega Nord, the television station Telepadania and the radio station Radio Padania Libera also
contribute further to the ongoing negative discourses about immigrants" (231). Andizzoni,
Michela, and Chiara Ferrari. Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media.
Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010.

[170] *Immigration and Discrimination in Italy: Institutional Patterns and Political and Civil Society
Responses.* Pg. 5.

[171] RTL102.5 (Radio Transmissioni Lombarde) is a private Italian radio station.

planned, financed and organized mass invasion. The aim of this strategy is to replace the

Europeans with other nations to have masses of new workers who can be exploited for

three euros per hour."[172] Not only does Salvini describe the immigration as an invasion,

but he also emphasizes that it is premeditated and calculated, which does not evoke the

image of a refugee fleeing their home in search of safety. Rather, his description is meant

to elicit the image of large numbers of undocumented migrants entering the country in

order to exploit its resources and take jobs away from citizens.

Regional and national identities are being challenged by race in Italy, as the

country has experienced mass immigration from impoverished African nations. Being

'black' has become the primary demarcation of 'other' or difference in Italy. "In Italy

where regional identity is intertwined with racialized thinking and structural racism,

Southern Italians have been categorized in distinction from lighter skinned Northern

Italians and discriminated against in northern cities. But in the contemporary context of

neoliberal globalization and the influx of immigrants beginning in the late 1980s,

Southern Italians are now in a position of greater privilege as citizen insiders vis à vis

"blacks" ("Neri" and "Marrochino")."[173] These attitudes reflect the traditional regional

North-South distinction based on complexion that have historically marginalized

Southern Italians. Due to this distinction these attitudes are often harnessed by the Lega

Nord which uses race to subtly construct the Black migrant as a threat and as an outsider.

This construction of the Black migrant reinforces the Lega's stance towards Northern

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[172] "Lega Nord: "Migrationswelle Ist Organisierte Invasion" DiePresse.com N.P., 2015. Web. 18 July 2016.
[173] Merill, Heather. "Migration and Surplus Populations: Race and Deindustrialization in Northern Italy." *Antipode*. Pg 1543

independence and historic exclusion of Southerners, which is now used in their rhetoric to exclude Black migrants.

Governor of the northern region of Veneto and member of the Lega Nord Luca Zaia linked African migrants to economic decline when he proclaimed that the sight of African migrants begging throughout the city would have a "devastating effect" on the tourism industry. Zaia rose to power in Veneto in 2010 and has especially gained public support and approval during the massive immigration to Italy in 2015 due to refugee crises. While he is well liked and considered "less extreme" than most of his fellow Lega Nord members, Zaia's discourse has reflected the Lega Nord ideology toward immigration: restrictive and unwelcoming. "But Zaia's rise in politics has included episodes that reveal his opposition to things deemed "too foreign" for Italy. As minister of agriculture in the government of Berlusconi, he defended authorities in Lucca and Milan when they began cracking down on restaurants that served non-Italian food, saying ethnic restaurants that served kebabs, sushi and Chinese food should "stop importing container loads of meat and fish from who knows where" and use only Italian ingredients."[174] Zaia's statements reflect the Lega's agenda of an autonomous North that attempts to protect northern farmers (primarily against EU interference) by championing the use of traditional Italian food products.

In major national news sources, such as *La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale*, the othering process follows a similar pattern, although somewhat less hostile than the discourse employed by the Lega Nord. Through disaster and invasion metaphors, the

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[174] Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. "Clear out African Migrants, Lega Nord Governor Orders in Stand-off with Rome." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 13 June 2015. Web July 2016.

migrant is implied to be a threat to the nation and its unity.[175] Headlines such as "The army of African refugees poorest among the new recruits" ("L'esercito dei poveri profughi dell'Africa tra le nuove reclute"[176]) and "The invasion of immigrants costs us 55 million per month" ("L'invasione degli immigrati ci costa 55 milioni al mese[177]") immediately produce threatening images of the migrant by describing them as an army, as invaders, as recruits, and as impoverished.

In *Il Giornale*, the theme of immigrant invasion is reiterated in articles such as "Another 3,700 immigrants landed: the invasion by sea resumes" ("Sbarcati altri 3.700 immigrati: riprende l'invasione via mare"[178]), where the opening sentence states "The invasion has never stopped," before going on to describe the increase in immigration due to the arrival of Syrian refugees. Immigrants have also been compared with destruction when the sudden arrival of thousands and thousands of refugees was described as "a bomb explosion" in the article "The bomb of immigrants in Italy: In 2015 at least 200 thousand arrivals" (La bomba immigrati sull'Italia: nel 2015 almeno 200 mila arrivi"[179]). Another article titled, "There are too many Christian symbols here!" Migrants strike in Lucca" ("Qui troppi simboli cristiani!" Migranti scioperano a Lucca"[180]) describes Pakistani immigrants who were striking because they were subject to too many Christian

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[175] Choate, Mark I. "Italy at Home and Abroad After 150 Years: The Legacy of Emigration and the Future of Italianità." Introduction.

[176] "L'esercito dei poveri profughi dell'Africa tra le nuove reclute." *La Repubblica*. July 10, 2016.

[177] Indini, Domenico Ferrara Andrea. "L'invasione Degli Immigrati Ci Costa 55 Milioni Al Mese." IlGiornale.it. *Il Giornale*, 15 Nov. 2014. Web 20 May 2016.

[178] Rame, Sergio. "Sbarcati Altri 3.700 Immigrati: Riprende L'invasione via Mare." IlGiornale.it. *Il Giornale*, 30 March 2016. Web. 15 July 2016.

[179] Indini, Andrea. "La bomba immigrati sull'Italia: nel 2015 almeno 200 mila arrivi." IlGiornale.it. Il Giornale, 21 July 2015. Web 17 June 2016

[180] Bertocchi, Gabriele. ""Qui Troppi Simboli Cristiani!". Migranti Scioperano a Lucca." IlGiornale.it. *Il Giornale*, 19 July 2016. Web 20 July 2016.

religious symbols at work, according to the author and the Italian witnesses questioned. In the article, the migrants are described as "la banda di stranieri" (a band of outsiders), repeatedly referred to as "gli stranieri" (the foreigners), and their protest is described as "ammutinarsi" (a mutiny). At no point are the immigrants interviewed or questioned about the reasoning behind their strike, rather the article relies on speculation and the testimonies of native born Italian witnesses. The author of the article closes with deliberating about the fate of the migrants, "Or maybe, more likely, they are not going to live in a Christian country." Italy is often defined as a Catholic State in many of these articles, suggesting non-Christian immigrants must embrace this identity or go elsewhere.

While not all national newspapers describe immigration along these lines, there is a general trend of media rhetoric employing these symbols and discursive patterns. It should be noted that the moderate daily newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera* does not quite follow this pattern of employing invasion and disaster metaphors. The news source publishes articles with both positive and negative stories linked to migrants and avoids using sensationized headlines, generally stating only the facts and using politically correct rather than emotionally charged terms. However, this newspaper has often been critical of figures such as Berlusconi, as he is not one of their major shareholders.

3.4 Perceptions of Compatibility

Due to the exclusive and fixed nature of the elements of Italian identity that I identified in the first section and demonstrated in this section (Catholic, Whiteness, and ties to the land), it is easier for the media to portray some migrants as "others" by emphasizing these traits opposed to other more inclusive aspects. As long as these elements are portrayed as being threatened by the media and within public discourse of

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political parties and their leaders, specific migrant groups will continue to be perceived as incompatible with Italian culture. That is to say, as long as these elements are continually linked to "Italianess" and described as being "under attack", they will continue to serve the Lega's interests of creating a homogenous, independent Northern Italy.

The discourse and media portrayal of immigration can reflect the government's policies and project these attitudes to the public. The Lega Nord does not choose to cite language as a cultural element threatened by the presence of migrants because doing so would not best serve their political ends of a homogenous Italian society in the North, although they do promote the use of the Northern regional dialect. While language has been a huge part of their platform for regional independence, language is not called upon as a major part of the immigration discussion because it is not mutually exclusive; migrants can learn the Italian language while still knowing and speaking their own. However, race can serve these ends because it is fixed and therefore exclusive. An African migrant cannot change his skin complexion.

The racism propagated by public discourse and media involves the covert negative opinions and attitudes that produce subtle actions and conditions of discrimination towards minorities. This is known as cultural racism, which is not based on biology and hierarchy, but on culture and difference and seemingly incompatible differences between culturally defined ethnic groups, which are described in cultural terms rather than by race.[181] Cultural racism can draw on some elements of Italianità and

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[181] Page 159 of Monica Colombo's article, "Discourse and politics of migration in Italy: The production and reproduction of ethnic dominance and exclusion" in the *Journal of Language and Politics* (2013). While Colombo defines racism based on cultural differences and ethnic groups as a "new form of racism," I do not intend on arguing whether cultural racism is a new phenomenon. Rather, I want to distinguish it from racism that is solely based on race or skin complexion by

exclude others in accordance with the Lega agenda, such as excluding language from their discussion of immigration, as it does not serve their political purposes. Specific political parties such as the Lega Nord make more explicit links by mentioning the race of the migrants in question, such as linking African migrants to decreased tourism. While they do not specifically say the African migrant is inferior due to complexion, they list cultural reasons that are not viewed as being incompatible with Italian identity, and therefore unfit to be part of Italian society.

A similar exclusivity dilemma exists for the religious facet of Italian identity because having a religious identity grounded specifically in Roman Catholicism is less inclusive than a more general religious identity that is based on a belief in one God. Additionally, specific religions can be viewed as more or less compatible based on their similarity to Roman Catholicism. Other Christian religions will be viewed more favorably than Islam for instance because they are all based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the New Testament, whereas Islam follows the Qur'an which was written by the prophet Muhammad.

Immigrants from Muslim countries are often subject to prejudice and stereotyping due to the association between Islam and terrorism put forth by the media. "These communities are often in the news due to anti-Islamic feelings constantly being whipped up by the Lega Nord and other center-right forced alongside sections of the Catholic Church."[182] There is also constant opposition to the building of mosques in the country due to media coverage describing "Islamic invasions." In 2000, Cardinal Giacomo

saying that there are certain attributes that characterize this type of racism, such as cultural differences eliciting exclusion and discrimination.

[182] Andizzoni, Michela, and Chiara Ferrari. *Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010. Pg. 232.

Biffi[183] made a public statement about Muslims, the same time the Lega Nord was opposing the building of a mosque in Lodi, which was covered by the national public service news broadcast Tg1.[184] Biffi said, "Muslims are strangers to our humanity. Catholicism remains our historic religion and we need not worry about our national identity."[185] The same year, Biffi also issued a public statement recommending that Italy give Christian immigrants preference over Muslim immigrants in order to avoid a profound change in European and Italian culture.[186] Biffi's comments designate Catholicism as being the state religion and suggest that Muslims differ from the rest of humanity. Much of the discourse in the media surrounding Islam has been shaped by a cultural fear of what could happen to the national identity and culture of the country.[187] Based on the combination of these perceptions, African born Muslim men will face the greatest difficulties regarding being perceived as compatible within Italian society, or belonging within society.

By stressing certain aspects of Italian identity, the Lega Nord has created a political discourse that is hostile to migrants, especially to those from outside Europe because they lack historical and cultural similarities. This serves their agenda of creating a homogenous Northern society by promoting the fixed and exclusive aspects of Italianità that once served the purpose of differentiating Italian emigrants from their compatriots

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[183] Biffi was the Archbishop of Bologna before his death in July of 2015.

[184] Andizzoni, Michela, and Chiara Ferrari. *Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010.

[185] Andizzoni, Michela, and Chiara Ferrari. *Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media*. Lanham, MD: :exington, 2010. Pg. 233.

[186] 2000, 12:00AM BST 02 Oct, "News in Brief." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group, 2 Oct. 2000. Web. 20 July 2016.

[187] Islam as a cultural threat was a prominent narrative in much of Europe and especially Italy for the first decade of the twenty first century. However, the rise of radical Islam within the last five or more years has since overshadowed that narrative.

and unifying the Italy's during the diaspora. However, Identity is not inherently fixed or exclusive but the Lega Nord has emphasized the elements of Italianità that seem absolute in order to construct migrants as others within.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The State's construction of Italian identity during the Italian diaspora informed the way the Italian population perceives non-Italians as incompatible. The discourse of political parties, such as the Lega Nord and Forza Italia, has tried to capitalize on recent immigration to advance their own agenda by using the media to promote specific aspects of Italian identity. Researcher Waddick Doyle, when discussing Italian identity, describes it as "an aspirational identity" that "was created by a narrative of heading toward a national future."[188] The nation building during the Italian Diaspora created a narrative of Italian identity that pulled from the people's cultural past but was clearly aspirational in that it was constructed with the hopes of uniting the people and tying the emigrants to the land. The Lega Nord has been successful with their discussion of immigration because they appeal to the insecurity of disunity and lack of belonging that have historically plagued Italy since Unification and the nation-building that attempted to construct a national identity.

The Lega Nord has created a political discourse that is hostile to migrants in order to achieve their goal of homogeneity and autonomy of the North. Their alliance with Forza Italia and Berlusconi during his times as Prime Minister has enabled the Lega to harness the media in order to reach a larger audience and influence the parameters of the immigration debate. The salience of their message has increased with recent refugee crises in Italy, which have further increased security concerns and fear of the other.

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[188] Vogt, Roland, Cristaudo, Wayne, and Leutzsch, Andreas, eds. *European National Identities: Elements, Transitions, Conflicts* (1). Piscataway, US: Transaction Publishers, 2014. ProQuest ebrary. Web. Pg. 114.

4.1 Future Research

If I were continuing this research, I would theorize which of the other components of Italianità could be emphasized to create a more inclusive identity. As Anderson suggested, nations and national identities are constructed imagined communities. From this theory, it follows that if identity can be actively constructed to create and connect us through imagined communities, then it can also be altered. The unifying elements of Italian identity that I have discussed in this paper offer a way to envision a collective Italian identity according to a few elements or themes that appear throughout most of the country and are most often called upon in national Italian news during the 'othering' process. As I have demonstrated in the previous section, various political actors actively constructed the Italian identity and parties who have chosen to emphasize exclusive and fixed aspects of this identity, which they were able to broadcast and perpetuate through the media. However, what constitutes the Italian identity is much more unclear and fragmentary when it is not being evoked by media to pin the citizens against a common enemy such as the immigrant. The Italian identity can be reimagined to foster greater inclusiveness and alter perceptions of immigrants within the country, if this is a preferred outcome or discourse to those that are currently taking place within the country. Additional research could investigate how other available components of Italianità could be emphasized to alter perceptions of Italian identity. Additional research in this area could also include considering the political obstacles that would need to be overcome to achieve this alternative identity discourse.

Further research could involve a more extensive analysis of the language employed by national daily newspaper publications, such as *Il Giornale* and *La*

Repubblica. This extension would also include analyzing publications from *La Padania*, which was the official daily newspaper of the Lega Nord that was suspended in December of 2014 because of financial difficulties. I believe these supplementary extensions to my research would offer useful additions and more depth to this area of research.

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