



**Department of Political Science: Politics, Philosophy, and
Economics**

Chair: Roberto D'Alimonte

**Have Italians Become Anti-Immigrant and Why? A
Sociological and Historical Examination of the Causes
and Trends Contributing to Anti-Immigrant Sentiment.**

Supervisor

Professor Lorenzo De Sio

Candidate

Olivia Soderini

M.N. 071622

A.A. 2015/2016

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter I: History of Italian Migration: From Emigration to Immigration	8
Section 1.1: Italy as an Emigrant Nation	8
Section 1.2: Italy as an Immigrant Nation- (Legal Immigration)	11
Section 1.3: Italy as an Immigrant Nation- (Illegal Immigration)	15
Chapter II: Historical Origins of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Discrimination in Italy	20
Section 2.1: Reception of Italian Immigrants-USA	20
Section 2.2: Reception of Italian Immigrants-Europe (Germany, Switzerland)	24
Section 2.3: Italian Internal Migration-Northern Reception of Southerners	26
Section 2.4: Colonial Racism Under Italian Fascism	29
Section 2.4.1: Fascism's Discriminatory Indoctrination	32
Chapter III: Documenting the Presence of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Italy	35
Section 3.1: Immigration as a "Problem"	35
Section 3.2: "Too Many" Immigrants	38
Section 3.3: Prevalent Displays of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment	41
Section 3.3.1: Legal vs. Illegal Immigration	41
Section 3.3.2: Places of Origin	43
Section 3.3.3: Racism and Discrimination-Terminology and Acts	45
Section 3.4: "Assimilation": Opposing "Multiculturalism"?	48
Section 3.5: Methodological Challenges	50

Section 3.6: Findings	51
Chapter IV: Explanations and Contributing Factors of Why Anti-Immigrant Sentiment Exists in Italy?	53
Section 4.1: Explanatory Theories of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment	53
Section 4.2: Fascism's Association	56
Section 4.3: Influence of Right-Wing Politics	58
Section 4.4: Manipulation by the Media	60
Section 4.5: Neglecting the Past?	63
Conclusion	65
Bibliography	68
Summary (In Italian)	75

Introduction

Anti-immigrant sentiment may be defined as, “a concrete translation of the out-group dimension of *ethnocentrism*” (ESS Education Net, n.d). *Ethnocentrism* is a “complex of two different attitudes: a loyal, uncritical, positive attitude towards one’s own social group (in-group dimension) combined with a hostile, negative attitude towards other groups (out-group dimension)¹” (Sumner, 1940).

An ethnocentric group or person refers to those that judge “out-group/s” in comparison to their own “superior” culture and values. When contextualizing ethnocentrism in a migratory circumstance, it is often manifested through: ethnic, racial, and cultural discrimination, concern and perceptions that such diversity is a threat, and social avoidance, distance, and detachment. As a result, these are all reactionary forms of anti-immigrant sentiment.

While many intellectuals and scholars sustain that anti-immigrant sentiment emanates at an individual level, this dissertation will investigate alternatively: that it is a circumstantial and consequential reaction, particularly in the case of Italy. Anti-immigrant sentiment is a multifaceted and unfortunate reality, a possible resultant of the impact of Italian history, recent turning points, as well as the influence of social and political establishments. Indeed, anti-immigrant sentiment along with other forms of discrimination has been a part of Italy’s historical past. From being targeted *victims* of “*anti-Italianism*” during the extensive phase of emigration to America and Northern Europe, to *indoctrinated* believers in racial, ethnic, and cultural centrism and discrimination during Fascism’s authoritarian regime. In addition, Italy’s relatively recent transformation into an immigrant nation and direct encounter with this *new* phenomenon may have caused *involuntary* hostile reactions to the introduction of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the fascist and nationalist inspired right-wing political

¹ See Section 4.2

parties as well as the amplification of the immigration phenomenon by the media could be critical contributors to the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. Thus, not only is it pertinent to examine the derivation of such inter-related factors but it is also vital to question if they have contributed to the re-emergence of discrimination in the form of anti-immigrant sentiment?

This dissertation will therefore explore the validity of such an inquiry by providing evidentiary and statistical support through historical and sociological lenses. In order to begin such an examination it is crucial to set the scene with factual evidence. Chapter I will recount Italy's migratory history and its transformation from an emigrant nation to one of immigration. It will demonstrate the scales of each migratory trend, but with particular attention to the scale of Italy's *new* immigration phenomenon. Of this relatively *new* phenomenon a distinction will be made between legal immigration and the most recent illegal immigration episodes. It should be noted that the statistics provided are in reference only to the *Italian context*, in which the magnitude of such phenomenon is large. Therefore, has this sudden change and new experience of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity contributed to a subconscious prejudice reaction?

Furthermore, Chapter II will continue the historical examination but only in relation to the presence of discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy's historical past. It will be a crucial tool in demonstrating the origins of racism and discrimination against ethnic and cultural diversity. The first section will convey the hostile sentiment and behavior against Italians, when they themselves were immigrants. Particular exemplary reference will be made to immigration to America and Northern European countries. In addition, the same will be illustrated during the time of Italian internal migration where Southern Italians faced much antagonism when migrating to the North. The final sections of this chapter will intricately describe fascism's ideology on race during its colonial rule and its biological origins as well as the attempted processes of diffusing such ethnocentric and mono-cultural ideas throughout society. Therefore,

such recount will emphasize the presence of discrimination in different forms throughout history.

Furthermore, Chapter III will exemplify the recent and current trends of anti-immigrant sentiment and the reactions Italians have towards immigrants. This will be done by utilizing public opinion surveys conveying Italians' views about the immigration phenomenon as well as by exhibiting acts of racism and the common usage of discriminatory terminology by not only the Italian public but also by two principal influential factors: right-wing political parties and the media. Additionally, some methodological and investigative limitations will be presented such as the lack of literature and studies performed specifically on anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. This enables a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which anti-immigrant sentiment, (expressed or internalized), is present in Italy.

Lastly, Chapter IV will provide the main interpretation in supporting the inquiry of this paper: is the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy due to the impact of and correlation between such historical, societal and political factors? In fact, this chapter will provide explanations of the causal effects that these contributing factors have had on the re-emergence of this discriminatory form. The first section will use sociological theories to explain the involuntary hostile reaction towards the *new* phenomenon of immigration, followed by an elucidation of the possible sequential impact of fascism's indoctrination of racism and ethnocentrism, as well as its ideological influence on Italy's right-wing political parties. Have Italy's right-wing politics used such inspiration to contribute to the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment? Explanations will also focus on the involvement of the media and right-wing political parties in exaggerating the immigration phenomenon. Finally, a particular rationalization of such presence will be given with the disregard and neglect of Italy's historical past and the focus of Italy's "inundation" of immigrants as a cause of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Therefore, not only does racial, ethnic, and cultural intolerance derive from an individual-level, but also this reaction is conditioned by multiple historical, social, and

political factors. The *new* nature of the immigration phenomenon, the influence of fascism's racial ideologies and its roots in right-wing political parties, combined with the dominant role of the media, may in fact be the main contributors to the emergence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy.

Chapter I: History of Italian Migration: From Emigration to Immigration

In pursuance of comprehending the veracity of anti-immigrant sentiment present in Italy today, and the extent to which historical events, have impacted its emergence, it is pertinent that such phenomenon be documented and verified, beginning with a historical and factual account of Italian migration. This chapter will provide a statistical and data based foundation in order to later reveal, the magnitude in which immigration, (legal and illegal), has affected the sociological dynamics of Italian society, namely that of anti-immigrant sentiment. Has the abrupt transformation into an immigrant nation contributed to the subconscious hostile reaction of Italian citizens towards immigrants? Section 1.1 will describe Italy as country of emigration dating back to the mid-late 1800's while section 1.2 will examine Italy's transformation from being an emigrant nation to one of immigration. This will be followed by a dedication to observing the trends of Italian immigration with specific reference to legal migration. Finally, section 1.3 will explore Italy's latest migratory phenomenon: illegal immigration. It should be noted that the data in reference to immigration are considered to be large numbers in the Italian context, as it is a country that is still moderately new to experiencing such phenomenon. (In a global context, the numbers are actually fewer).²

Section 1.1: Italy as a Emigrant Nation: Italian Diaspora and Beyond

Italy, which now finds itself facing a *new* phenomenon of mass immigration, has been considered, for over a century, a country and prominent source of mass emigration.

² In fact, the numbers are relatively small in comparison to other European countries such as Spain, which in 2010 had the largest number of foreign residents. Italy resulted twelfth after the UK and Germany. Benelli, E. (2010). *Migration discourses in Italy*. Retrieved from www.cm.revues.org: <https://cm.revues.org/1419#ftn8>

Much evidence is given on how it has transformed and affected the Italian economy, but almost no comparative correlation or critical analysis has been made on the resulting sociological and psychological development within Italian society. The extensive wave of emigration dates back to 1861 with the Unification of Italy until the mid 1970's with a grand total of over 26 million Italians settling in different countries worldwide.

Documentation of such a national migratory movement can be divided into periodical stages comprising of numerical and destitatory measures (Bonifazi, 2009). As Figure 1 demonstrates below, the Italian migratory scene is characterized by fluctuations of mostly substantial growth.

The first stage or formally known as, the Italian Diaspora, took place from 1876 until the mid-late 1920's, with a steady inclination of immigrants reaching about 17 million (Del Bocca, 2003, p.3). During the first several decades of this period, the primary destinations were within Europe such as France, Germany and Switzerland. The majority of these Italian immigrants came from Northern Italy, where easy access and shorter distances proved economically more compelling. But after 1885, transatlantic currents became evolutionary in nature as South America, namely Argentina and Brazil, but predominantly the United States, received on average 3.4 million Italian immigrants every decade. During this period a staggering total of 4,114,603 Italians arrived in the United States alone (Cavaioli, 2008, p. 214). Conversely, at the turn of the 20th century, when transoceanic emigration was at its busiest, these colossal statistics were mostly comprised of Italians from the South or *mezzogiorno*.³ A poverty stricken South due to less industrialized regions and an ongoing economic crisis, constrained mostly farm laborers and peasants or *contadini*⁴ who made up almost two thirds of the immigrant population, to emigrate. In fact, the conflicting and almost artificial nuanced theory of

³*Mezzogiorno* literally translates into 'midday', the traditional geographical term for the Southern regions of Italy. See Cavaioli, F. J. (2008), p. 214-215 for more contextual explanation.

⁴*Contadini* literally translated into 'peasant' or 'farmer', is the traditional term describing the majority of Southern emigrants. See Cavaioli, F. J. (2008), p. 214-215 for more contextual explanation.

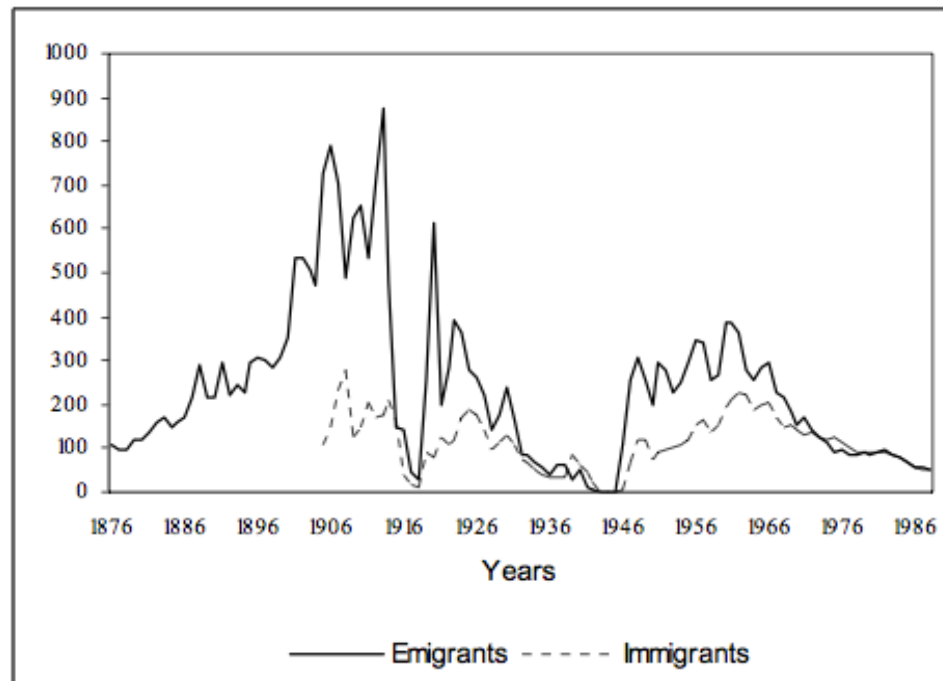
considering the United States as a “meritocracy”⁵, which still strongly exists today among young Italian immigrants, provided a highly luring effect (Cavaioli, 2008, p. 214).

A subsequent stage in Figure 1 illustrates that the start of World War I in 1914, caused major hindrances in emigration, resulting in a steep declination. But migrant movements were then reactivated and balanced by the surge of inter-continental migration, specifically to France until the late 1920’s when the Fascist government’s anti-immigration policy was established⁶ (Bonifazi, 2009, p.7). The dictatorial and authoritarian power that *conditioned* and *contracted* the movement of Italians, explains the almost non-existent or negative migration flow. However, emigration’s vivacity resurfaced, in 1946, with the end of World War II, as 300,000 to 400,000 Italians, namely laborers, immigrated to Northern European countries. But, as the graph indicates, this would be the last mass emigration wave of Italian immigrants. As Italian internal migration began to increase considerably during the mid-late 20th century and international emigration settled, it was during this last stage, that Italy began experiencing an influx of immigrants, namely from North Africa. This in fact, was Italy’s first proper encounter with what would be regarded as an “immigration crisis.”

⁵ See Cavaioli, F. J. (2008), p. 214 for an insightful explanation

⁶ See Bonifazi, C. (2009), p.7 for details.

Figure 1: Italian Emigration (in thousands) 1876-1986



Note. Bonifazi, C., Heins, F., Strozza, S., Vitiello, M., (2009). *Italian Transition from an Emigration to Immigration Country. IDEA Working Papers*, p. 6.

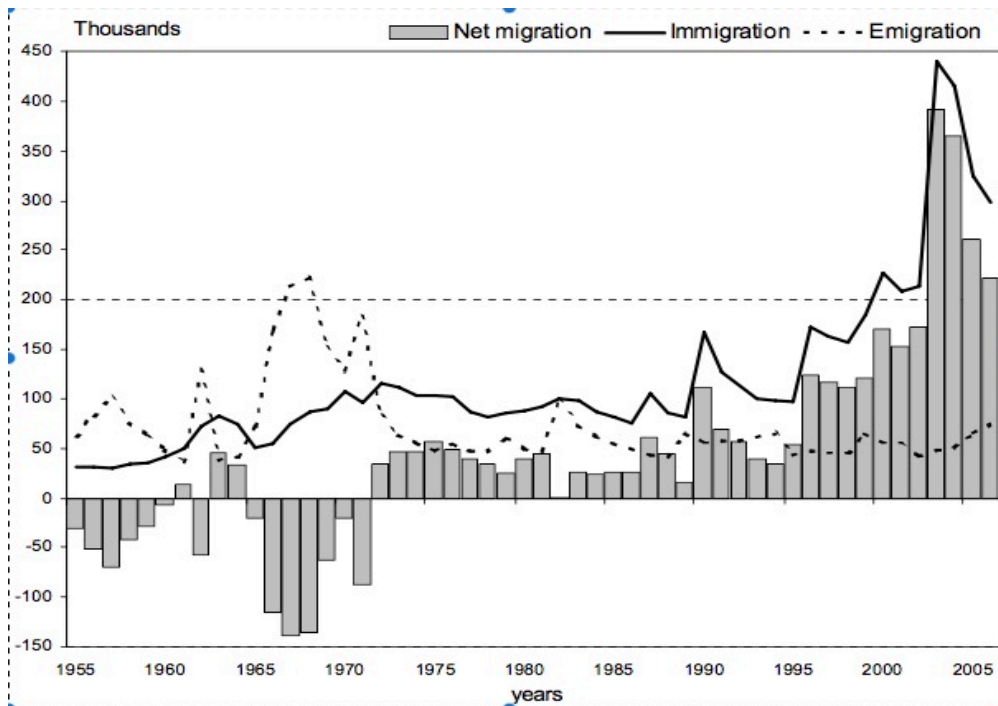
Section 1.2: Italy as an Immigrant Nation- Legal Immigration

Just as the extensive wave of Italian emigration began to settle down in the early 1970's, Italy also saw a boom in heavy immigration inflow. Italy, from this moment, would become a country of immigration with more immigrants entering than leaving. This close temporal transformation of migratory status would see immigration exponentially increase for decades to come. Below, figure 1.2 confirms that this transition began with the substantial fall in emigration from Italy and the surge of immigrants into Italy at the start of the 1970's. There was a massive drop in numbers from almost 200,000 emigrants per year to just above 50,000. As the graph demonstrates, emigration flows continued steadily around an average of 50,000 with only minor fluctuations. Simultaneously, the early 1970's saw an increase in immigration with

prolonged inflows. Although an average of 50,000 to 100,000 immigrants was maintained until the mid 1980's, there were still many more immigrants than emigrants. This divide would continue to widen as immigrants began pouring into Italy from particularly the early 1990's. Further evidence of the magnitude of the immigration phenomenon can be given as net migration would counter at the transition stage and remain positive.

The 1970's were a turning point in Italian migration history, as a *new* phenomenon emerged: immigration. However, it was only from the 21st century that immigration flows became monumental (for Italy). Again, the graph illustrates that numbers reached almost 450,000 in 2004; a difference of approximately 200,000 compared to 2003.

Figure 1.2: International migration, Italy (in thousands) 1955-2006



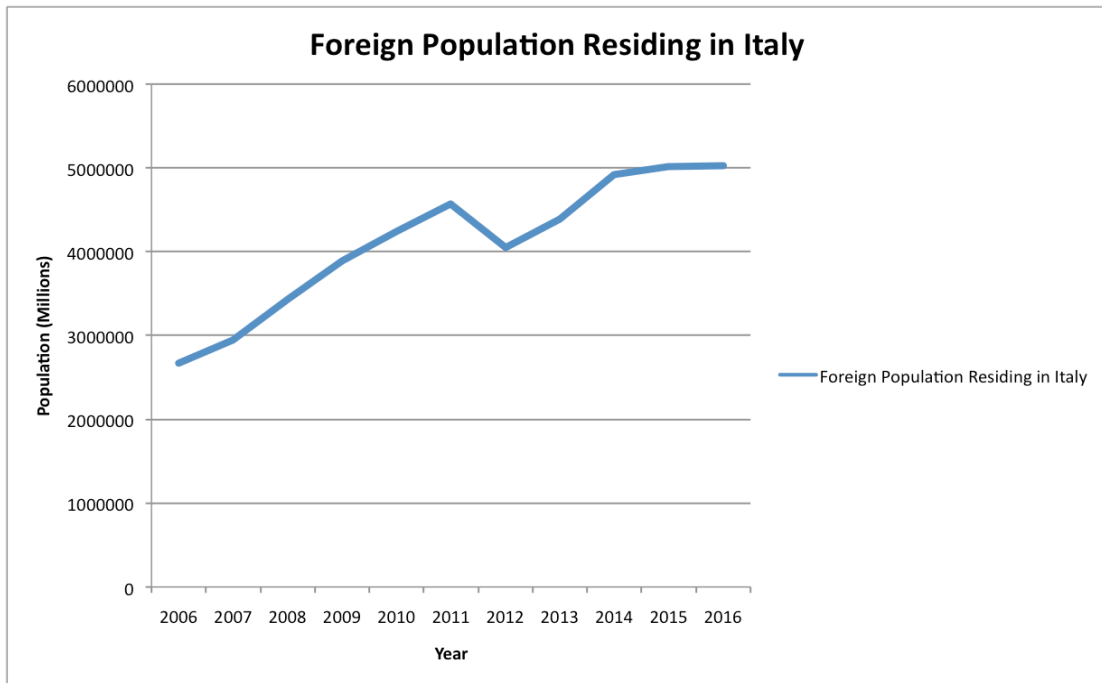
Source. Bonifazi, C., Heins, F., Strozza, S., Vitiello, M., (2009). *The Italian Transition from an Emigration to Immigration Country*. IDEA Working Papers, p. 13.

Even though 2005 presented a decrease in number of about 250,000 immigrants, the cumulative value of foreign residents in Italy would continue to increase, as fluctuations would still contribute to positive additions. Figure 1.3 reveals that this continuous inclination subsequently reemerged in 2006. The upward sloping curve represents the total number of foreign residents or *cittadini stranieri*⁷ living in Italy per year. In 2006 there were about 2,700,000 registered immigrants and that number rose to exactly 5,026,153 in 2016, according to Istat (Istat, Stranieri residenti al 1 gennaio, 2016). Therefore, within a 10-year time frame, approximately 2,300,000 new foreigners immigrated to Italy, an astounding addition given its geographical dimension and emigratory historical background. In addition, a steep gradient from 2006 to 2011 represents the years in which most immigration occurred with a difference of some 1,840,000 foreigners. Between 2007 and 2008 almost 500,000 new immigrants were reported residing in Italy, marking the second largest yearly figure to date. However, as clearly displayed in figure 2.1, in 2012 a reduction in foreign population was reported from a total of 4,510,317 the previous year, to 4,052,081; a diminishing difference of almost 460,000 immigrants (Istat, Stranieri residenti al 1 gennaio, 2006-2016). These migratory fluctuations in which legal immigration takes place are usually dependent on the demand of labor and the efficacy of integration policies⁸ (Del Bocca, 2003). As the graph suggests, this may have effected the resurgence of foreign population in 2013 as approximately 340,000 new immigrants located to Italy. Until today, there has been a steady inclination of immigrant residency and in fact foreigners makeup 8.3% of the Italian population today whereas in 2006 it was 4.5% (Istat, Indicatori demografici, 2016). These statistics are crucial in exemplifying the enormity of this new migratory experience in the Italian context.

⁷ “cittadini stranieri” is the Italian equivalent to foreign residents. They can be briefly defined as those who are not Italian citizens but have registered Italy as their usual country of residence. tuttitalia. (2016). *Cittadini Stranieri in Italia*. Retrieved 2016, from www.tuttitalia.it: <http://www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2016/>

⁸ Some determinants of Italian Immigration may dependent on the lack of economic performance of neighboring European countries, necessity in the labor market, higher wages. See more: Del Bocca, D. &. (2003). Italian Migration. *IZA Discussion Papers*, p. 23-24.

Figure 1.3: Foreign Population that are Residents in Italy (in millions) 2006-2016



Formulated By: Olivia Soderini. Note: data from: Istat. (2006-2016). *Stranieri residenti al 1 gennaio*, Italy, http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRES1

Frurthermore, it is pertinent to indicate the areas of origin of such foreign residents in Italy because it can provide an ethnic platform to enable an explanatory correlation to anti-immigrant sentiment present in Italy.⁹ The regions of origin of most residential immigrants have been quite consistent in the past couple decades. They include the countries of the European Union, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. During the 1990's there was a particular surge in the number of immigrants from Africa and Asia but it still remained lower relative to Eastern Europeans (Del Bocca, 2003). In the early 2000's, the incidence of Eastern European immigrants namely from Romania, Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine, constituted more than 50% of the foreign residential population in Italy (Bonifazi C, 2006). Europe has in fact remained the main continent of origin, with Africa

⁹ See Section 3.3.2.

and Asia following. According to data compiled from the Ministero dell'Interno or Ministry of the Interior of Italy, the majority of foreign residents have come from Albania, Romania, and Morocco (Miccoli T. M., 2014). In the past decade the ranking and percentages of these three countries have almost changed yearly. In 2006, Albanians made up 13.1% of the foreign population followed by 12% of immigrants from Morocco and 11.1% from Romania. Most recently, 2016 resulted with both, different positionings of each country as well as percentages percentages: Romania with 22.9%, Albania with 9.3% and Morocco with 8.7 % (tuttaitalia, 2016). With the majority of foreign residents originating from mostly Eastern Europe and Morocco, this would only prove to be Italy's introduction to ethnic diversity.¹⁰ The degree to which the existence of ethnic and cultural diversity is affecting the reaction of Italian society on newcomers immigrants will be examined in chapter 3.

Section 1.3: Italy as an Immigrant Nation- Illegal Immigration

Even though Italy has become a country of immigration relatively recently, in which legal migratory inflows have been documented, (such as foreign residency), it is only in the past two decades that illegal migration to Italy has officially and publicly emerged. This migratory addition to Italy's brief history as a country of immigration immediately inundated all forms of media and information outlets, creating it an amplified and embellished issue.¹¹ It has in fact become one of the most discussed topics and issues in the past several years, affecting political, economical, and societal fields and is in most cases referred to as an "immigration crisis."

In addition to its recent surfacing, the mere fact that illegal migration¹² is illicit makes identifying, registering, and reporting all cases quite difficult. As a result, more

¹⁰ See Section 3.3

¹¹ See Section 3.3.3 and 4.3

¹² Migrants that do not have the legal permission to enter and stay in the country of destination. It is a violation of International Immigration Law.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as Government agencies are dedicated to obtaining reliable data and making it accessible. Italy's Ministry of the Interior has collected data on the influx of illegal migrants dating back to the mid-late 1990's. ISMU,¹³ an Italian organization that develops initiatives and produces studies on multi-ethnicity, was able to assemble the Ministry's data in two principal categories: first being the number of illegal migrants¹⁴ arriving on the shores of Italy by boat¹⁵ and the second being those who seek and request asylum¹⁶ (ISMU, 2016). Figure 2.2 transforms this data in a graph and illustrates an overall upward trend regarding both variables, starting with a steep increase from 1997 to 1999. The number of illegal migrants disembarking in Italy rose from 22,343 to 50,000 and those seeking asylum also increased considerably from just 2,595 to 37,318 (ISMU, 2016). After a decrease of about 6,000 immigrants from the year 2000, the figures of illegal migrants arriving in Italy have remained relatively steady, with some fluctuations until 2009. On average 22,000 immigrants have arrived every year during that time. The case of asylum seekers proves similar beginning with a reduction of nearly 3,000, but followed by a gradual declination with more or less 15,500 requests per year until 2008. The deep decline in the number of illegal migrants from 36,951 in 2008 to 9,573 in 2009 and then 4,408 in 2010 was largely due to the bilateral agreement signed between Italy and Libya in August of 2008 (Frontex, 2017). Also known as the "Treaty of Friendship, Partnership (and) Cooperation", this agreement aims to control and combat illegal immigration throughout the Mediterranean route of access

¹³ "Iniziativa e Studi Sulla Multiethnicità" (ISMU), focuses on research and social participation in an attempt to transform society as well as academic dialogue to promote fundamental rights. In addition, one of its principles is to recognize all cultures and see multiculturalism as an opportunity of growth. See ISMU. (2016). <http://www.ismu.org/chi-siamo-fondazione-ismu/>

¹⁴ According to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, migrants are people who "choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons." Therefore, illegal migrants are those who move, work and or live in another country, unlawfully. See: unhcr. (2016). *UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?* Retrieved from www.unhcr.org: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

¹⁵ Also termed sea arrivals. The regions in which illegal migrants disembark are Sicily, Calabria, Apulia, and Sardinia. They usually come from the nearest northern African ports of Tunis and Tripoli. Given Italy's geographical positioning, it is easily accessed and the first country reached in Europe.

¹⁶ According to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, asylum seekers are defined as "someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed." unhcr. (n.d.). *Asylum-Seekers*. Retrieved from www.unhcr.org: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html>

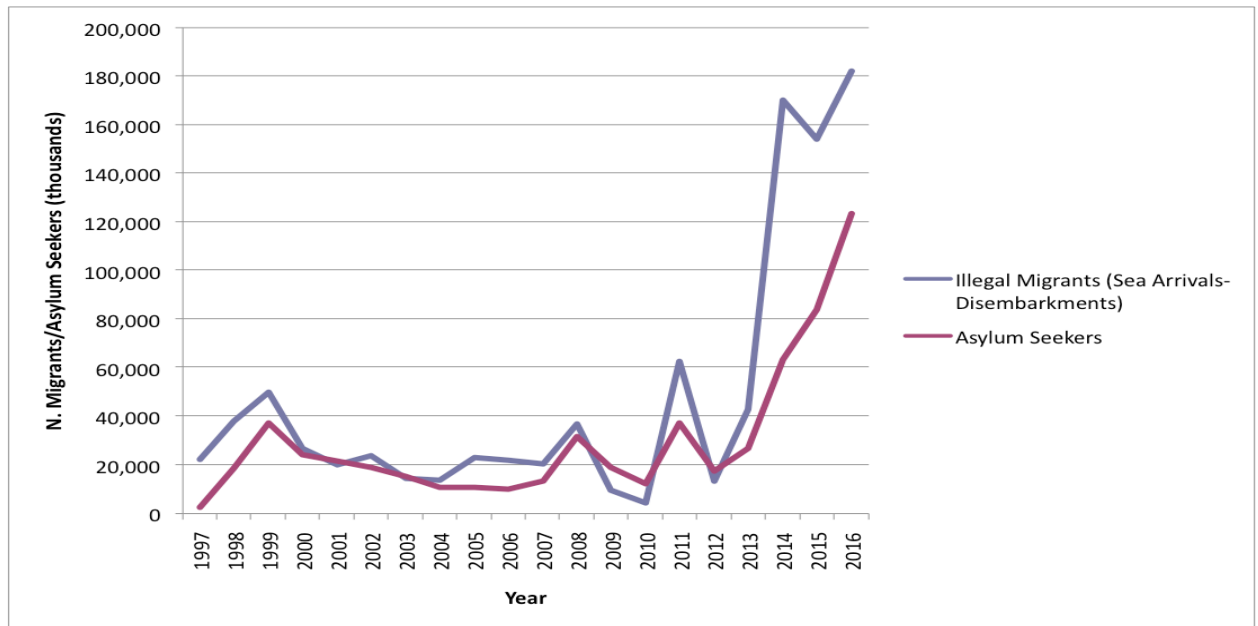
(Human Rights Watch, 2009).¹⁷ Not only did immigration almost come to a stop, but also the number of asylum seekers mirrored such noticeable reduction. In spite of this, a colossal event in late 2010 known as the Arab Spring, created immeasurable political, economic, and social instability in Tunisia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen, which infiltrated other Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Frontex, 2017). With the majority of immigrants searching for protection and economic security, the number of illegal migrants mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa and asylum seekers, shot up to 62,692 and 31,723 respectively (ISMU, 2016).

Although, the subsequent drop in 2012 resulted in nearly 50,000 immigrants less, due primarily to the collapse of Gheddafi's regime in 2011, by 2013, numbers shot back up. Thousands of immigrants ready to flee, combined with the ease at which smuggling networks¹⁸ were able to take advantage of Libya's lack of "effective law enforcement" as a failed state, implies just how intense immigration's status would become in the following years (Frontex, 2017). In fact, 2016 set both the record for the most illegal migrant disembarkments totaling at 182,126 as well as for the most asylum seekers reaching 123,482 (ISMU, 2016). Such staggering figures, in the last several years alone, indicate just how illegal migration would become one of the most intense phenomenons in Italian migratory history.

¹⁷ "The Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between the Italian Republic and Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya" was signed on August 30, 2008. Some of the terms are as follows: Libya should, "arrest and prosecute smugglers who illegally detain, extort, and abuse migrants, and prosecute law enforcement officials who engage in corrupt relations with smugglers." Italy should, "Immediately cease interdicting and summarily returning boat migrants to Libya." For more, see: hrw. (2009, Sept). *Italy-Libya Connection*. Retrieved from www.hrw.org: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/09/23/italy-libya-connection>

¹⁸ Smugglers are those who "take advantage of the large number of migrants willing to take risks in search of a better life when they cannot access legal channels of migration. Smuggled migrants are vulnerable to abuse and exploit. Their safety and even their lives are often put at risk: they may suffocate in containers, perish in deserts or drown at sea while being smuggled by profit-seeking criminals." unodec, U. N. (n.d.). *Migrant Smuggling*. Retrieved from www.unodec.org: <https://www.unodec.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>. According to UNHCR, in 2016 1,476 migrants died during the journey and 3,546 went missing. unhcr. (n.d.). *Mediterranean: Dead and Missing at Sea*. Retrieved from www.data2.unhcr.org: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/52674>.

Figure 1.4: No. Of Illegal Migrants disembarked and Asylum Seekers in Italy (in thousands), 1997-2016.



Formulated By: Olivia Soderini. Data From: Fondazione ISMU (Iniziative e Studi sulla Multietnicità), *Sbarchi e Richieste di Asilo 1997-2014*. <http://www.ismu.org/irregolari-e-sbarchi-presenze/>. Frontex (European Border and Coastguard Agency, *Central Mediterranean Route*, 2017, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/>).

Furthermore, as previously stated in section 1.2, it is extremely crucial that the countries of origin of illegal migrants¹⁹ and asylum seekers arriving upon the shores in Italy are differentiated. The Italian Ministry of the Interior has produced data reporting the continent and more specifically the country of origin of the numerous asylum seekers. Similar to the continents of origin of the reported foreign residents in Italy, both asylum seekers and illegal migrants mostly come from Africa, Asia and Europe. Since the 1990's Italy has experienced different incidences of immigrants from different places due to certain stages of migratory necessity. Between 1990 and 1994 about only 1,400 asylum seekers from Asia, namely Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, were documented whereas the 2000's produced that amount or more every year (Ministero Dell'Interno,

¹⁹ See Section 3.3

2016). After the mid 1990's, this number remained quite consistent, with just minor fluctuations. Europe, on the other hand, trended with periodically quick fluctuations, as every year the reported total of asylum seekers from Romania and Albania would change by several thousand. Africa, unlike the others, has seen an overall increase in numbers as many immigrants requesting asylum come from Ghana, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. It has become the main continent of origin since 2005 with 27,255 immigrants from Nigeria in 2016 alone (Ministero Dell'Interno, 2016). Correspondingly, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Nigeria also topped the 2016 nationality of origin list for the highest number of sea arrivals. They made up 21% of the total immigrants disembarking on the Italian shores, followed by Eritrea with 12% and Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Gambia with 7% (UNHCR, 2016). It is of utmost importance that these statistics be recognized, as it specifies the magnitude of the illegal immigratory phenomenon in Italy. Given the immensity and particularly recent nature of such illegal immigratory trends,²⁰ (in the past decade), it is documented that around that time, anti-immigrant sentiment began to publicly emerge in Italy.

Moreover, as will be discussed later in chapter 3 and 4, when referring to an immigrant's ethnic association and origin, generalization is seen as one of the ways in which many Italians convey anti-immigrant sentiment. It is almost an instinctual way of self-protection by rejecting such a recent phenomenon. Its recent nature may also be interpreted as distant, unfamiliar, and different, impacting the way immigrants are viewed and treated. As a result, valuing the place of origin of immigrants will contribute to facilitate further integration of multiculturalism in Italian society.

²⁰ See Section 3.3 for an elaboration on the lack of public distinction between legal and illegal immigrants as well as place of origin.

Chapter II: Historical Origins of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Discrimination in Italy: Emigration, Imperialism, and Fascism

Italy's intricate and delicate historical context, presents a fascinating case for examining its sociological dynamics. This chapter recounts the existence of both anti-immigrant sentiment and ethnic discrimination in Italian history; it is not a new presence. Section 2.1 will explore how Italian immigrants were viewed and treated when immigrating to the United States. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 will provide similar accounts but with reference to the reception of Italian immigrants in other European countries and the treatment of Southern Italian migrants living in the North. Finally section 2.4 will evidence the impact of fascism's ideologies on race and its sociological diffusion, both during Italy's colonial rule in Africa and direct authoritarian rule in Italy. It will explore the derivation of fascism's intolerant views on race and ethnicity, the justification of such discrimination, as well as the methods used by Mussolini in order to indoctrinate society and reinforce the fascist anti-diversity sentiment. This chapter provides the evidentiary support needed in examining the extent to which ethnocentrism and mono-culturalism was promoted on the basis of racist ideology.

Section 2.1 Reception of Italian Immigrants: the Case of USA

In the U.S, Italy's open association with any aspect of anti-immigrant sentiment is rooted during its time of mass emigration, where such a nation, in fact, fell victim to intransigent forms of prejudice and racism. This easily sprawled, reactionary intolerance came down to cultural rejection in its entirety, deriving from perceived and instilled stereotypes. For almost a decade, Italian emigrants faced invalidating scrutiny for just "being", and were targets of constant physical, emotional, and physiological harm.

As previously confirmed, during the Italian transcontinental Diaspora, the United States served as the largest receptor nation for Italian emigrants. This country of

“absorption”, as English geographer Ernest George Ravenstein coined, (Casiño 2010, p.21 cited Corbett 1885, p.167-235), serves as a primary example of exposed discrimination towards Italians. However, it must be noted that the aggressive act of stereotyping and insensitive perception, began before the 1880’s, where Italians, particularly southerners, within their homeland, were portrayed as “ragged beggars, voracious *banditi*²¹,” and lived in a land of “violent feuds” (LaGumina, 1999, p. 12). Any acknowledgment of the historical and culturally rich nation was undervalued. Not only were the vulnerable Italian immigrants subject to occupational exploitation, but also they were unprepared to be immediate victims of strong hostility and *Anti-Italianism*²² or *Italophobia*. The combinations of an economic depression in the late 19th century, the introduction of Social Darwinism, and the presence of a prominent anti-Catholic philosophy, all callously contributed to the rise of the perpetual and virulent concept of “American nativism”. According to U.S historian John Higham, “*American nativism*” can be defined as “the intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its allegedly un-American characteristics” (Higham, 1955). With the increase immigrant inflow, nativism was no longer a lingering concept of reference, but an ethnocentric justification of expressed hatred against the so-called “aliens” (LaGumina, 1999). A fragile U.S economy led to an unfounded blame game where Italian immigrants were accused of taking American jobs and decreasing occupation standards. This economic-caused antagonism was mostly facing Italian *contadini* and laborers who were labeled as “strikebreakers” and “wage-cutters” (Molnar, 2010). But these Italian workers were those immigrants that accepted low-income industrial work and often labored endlessly beside black workers. Northern European workers were typically favored, as they did not have inferior “Mediterranean” features that consisted of dark skin, dark hair, and a weaker and shorter build. Such discrimination can be further evidenced with conventional derogatory

²¹ *Banditi* literally means bandits or robbers. See LaGumina, S. J. (1999), p. 12.

²² ‘Anti-Italianism’ is a widespread term describing hostility and discrimination towards Italian people, in this case Italian immigrants. It can often be used interchangeably with ‘Italophobia’. See LaGumina, S. J. (1999) for contextualized use.

terms and remarks such as “*dagos*”²³, “non-white”, and “colored” that were not only verbally expressed but also imprinted to secure a widespread sentiment of “*anti-Italianism*” (Guglielmo, 2003). This emphasized the pure belief that Italians belonged to their own separate race.

In addition, the rise of Social Darwinism’s “survival of the fittest” during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, contributed to the widely expressed potent backlash of Americans as well as the proudly instilled “nativism” (Cavaioli, 2008, p. 216). American scholars such as Francis Leiber and George Bancroft, endorsed such an idea from Charles Darwin’s biological line of reasoning and confirmed, “through the process of natural selection, Anglo Saxon, Nordic, and Germanic people were superior to Italians...” (Cavaioli, 2008, p. 216). This pseudo- scientific belief gained impetus as a credible expound for Italians being a subordinate race. Documented records prove that Italian immigrants were categorized based on their complexion as “dark white” and their race as “Italian” (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 11). This unequivocal racial stigmatization legally composed a disintegrated and marginalized life for Italian immigrants. Along with emphasis of *Teutonic*²⁴ superiority provided by the Social Darwinism theory, it also greatly discouraged assimilation, as Italian immigrants were “beaten men from beaten races representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence” (Higham, 1955, p. 143 cited Walker, F. A., 1896, *Restriction of Immigration*). It in fact provided scientific validation for expressed racism and anti-immigrant attitudes that would stabilize ethnocentrism and nativism for years to come.

However, aggression was not only limited to verbal remarks and propaganda, as violence paved the way for further *Italophobic* demonstration. At the pinnacle of such anti-immigrant sentiment, nativism resonated with anti-catholic principles and supporters, as white supremacy spread. As a result, catholic churches were destroyed, there were

²³ *Dagos* or also spelled *dagoes*, is a ethnic discriminatory term used to label Italians when they immigrated to the United States. See Guglielmo, J. &. (2003).

²⁴ The term ‘Teutonic’ refers to those having Germanic or northern European physical characteristics. As explained in LaGumina, S. J. (1999), p. 15, the “Teutonic race was superior to all others.”

increasingly brutal attacks made on Italians, and the Ku Klux Klan's membership rose (Library of Congress: Immigration, n.d). The manifested hostility, with xenophobic roots, can be revealed in a repellent account of the largest lynching episode in U.S History. In 1891, in New Orleans, after being found not guilty for killing a New Orleans Police Chief, nine Sicilian Italians, in addition to two others tried for unrelated purposes, were hauled from jail and lynched by an organized anti-Italian mob. But the following reactions and ramifications would be the most astonishing. The United States hinted a general approval of the acts, which was nationalistically transmitted in the New York Times as the victims of such horrendous violence were referred to as, "sneaking and cowardly Sicilians, the descendants of bandits and assassins" (Falco, 2012). The definitive corroboration of a melded source of racism and anti-Italian sentiment could be pronounced with the words of one lynch mob organizer, "[Italians are] just a little worse than the Negro, being if anything filthier in [their] habits, lawless, and treacherous" (Falco, 2012). Such verbal and physical sadism revealed the extent to which "revolutionary culture" and "racialized criminalization," dictated the lives and treatment of hard working Italian immigrants (Guglielmo, 2003, p.10).

In spite of the repulsive treatment of Italian emigrants in the past, it is important to acknowledge its transformative nature. After World War II, Italian and Italian-American struggles were eased, as they were recognized for being hard workers and major contributors to the economy (Serra, 2009, p. 87,113). Once they began gaining social legitimacy and validation by the American public, anti-Italianism along with the tired use of racist terminology, faded away into an almost non-existent state. From the mid 20th century, Italians have become reputable members of society and their role in American culture has flourished in musical, culinary, fashion, and automobile sectors. Although stereotypes about Italians, such as those with criminal associations or the "mafia" still pervade American society, monumental improvements have been made (Serra, 2009. p.88).

Section 2.2: Reception of Italian Immigrants: the Case of Europe (Germany and Switzerland)

With the fall of Italian Fascism and the end of World War II in 1945, Italian transoceanic emigration declined while outflows to European countries, namely Germany and Switzerland saw a sharp increase. This could be commended due to the newly established bilateral concords for pursued labor interests and occupational incentives. Such agreements and establishments such as the European Economic Community (EEC) facilitated transnational mobility and the free movement of persons, ultimately allowing for modernized immigrant statuses such as the flexible *guest worker*²⁵ or “*Gastarbeiter*”²⁶ (Brogani, 2014). Even though institutional, political and economic unity within Europe supposedly began to prosper, social harmony, the source of living without injustices and prejudices, was far behind.

As previously confirmed, Italian immigrants, most of which hailed from the South, were in desperate search for opportunity and stability. The perceived racial dichotomy between Teutonic or Germanic peoples and Southern Italians, greatly contributed to the development of anti-immigrant sentiment in other European countries. Germany, a common destination among Italian immigrants, had secured a *forza lavoro* recruitment treaty based on “*Rotationsprinzip*”, the principle of rotation in the employment sector (Brogani, 2014). Although it may seem that Italian immigrants were given the chance of a more prosperous life, these short-term policies that only allowed temporary permanence in Germany, resulted in greater social inequality. This confirmed the impossibility to integrate in social and economic sectors and therefore, highlighted a life of constant marginalization and reclusion. The German government could have been seen as responsible for paving the way for the unforeseeable future of Italian immigrants and instigating a reserved kind of worker discrimination. Their provisional and unstable

²⁵ The “Guest worker” as described in Bonifazi, C. H. (2009) p. 7 was a migrant worker, in this case Italian, “who stayed for short periods” of time in a foreign country, to then return to their native land. This is also known as ‘return migration.’

²⁶ ‘Gastarbeiter’ is the German word for ‘guest worker’. See Brogani, A. (2014, July 16), para. 5.

position in society facilitated and to an extent encouraged widespread anti-Italian sentiment among German nationals.

Given that Italians were discriminated against based on instilled stereotypes pertaining to an inferior race, hostility and exclusion was manifested in private and public life. This can be best exemplified with literature recounting experiences and historical episodes of Italian treatment in Switzerland. Just like in Germany, reactionary discrimination arose from a perceived invasive migratory movement by Italians. But Swiss nationals disregarded Italian sacrifice and the economic motivation as the main cause of Italian dispersion. Instead, Italians were called “*ritals*”²⁷, just like they were referred to as “*wops*”²⁸ by American nationals in an attempt to prolong any assimilation. Direct racial and ethnic discriminatory assertions were diffused and common amongst Northern Europeans. In fact one of the harshest verbal portrayals of clear rejection was with the following phrase, “*vietato ai cani e agli italiani*” or “dogs and Italians forbidden”, written on signs on shop doors in Germany and Switzerland, prohibiting Italians to enter (Mariani, 2010). This evidently associates Italians with animals, specifically placing them on the same socially degrading level as dogs (who were considered filthy pets). Dissemination of xenophobia against Italians was aided with the pronounced influence of right-wing Swiss politicians, such as James Schwarzenbach, who favored fascist and nationalist ideologies (Skenderovic, 2009, p. 58). In an attempt to combat and resolve the “overforeignization”²⁹ of Switzerland and reduce the foreign population, the Schwarzenbach initiative³⁰ was called for a vote in 1970 (Skenderovic, 2009, pp. 57, 65). Even if his initiative was not enacted, such conviction was displayed with Schwarzenbach’s own words:

²⁷ ‘*Rital*’ is the equivalent French word to *dago*, used to describe Italian emigrants in a pejorative sense. See Mariani, D. (2010, July 2).

²⁸ ‘Wop’ is a discriminatory slur used to describe those of Italian descent. It was most commonly used by American natives in reference to Italian immigrants. See: LaGumina, S. J. (1999). *WOP!: A Documentary History of Anti-Italian Discrimination in the United States*. Toronto : Guernica Editions Inc.

²⁹ ‘Overforeignization’ is translated German term used in political discourse to describe an overflow of immigration. For further historical context see chapter 3 of: Skenderovic, D. (2009).

³⁰ This Initiative, proposed by the Swiss NA party, aimed to combat *Overforeignization* by restricting and limiting the number foreign workers present in Switzerland. See Skenderovic, D. (2009), p. 65.

“[those Italian immigrants] that threaten...the welfare of Swiss citizens. We need to liberate ourselves from this burden. Above all, we need to reject those immigrants from our community... [As they] take the most comfortable positions, they study, they become intelligent: they even put in peril the tranquility of the average Swiss worker” (Bevilacqua, 2002, p. 306).

This public attack on Italian immigrants not only discredited the hard working nature of the Italian worker, suppressing their self-built value, but it also enabled a full indoctrination of anti-Italian sentiment for the Swiss public. As a result of such harsh racial categorization, Italian immigrants were left only to forcefully accept the fixed mindset.

However, similar to the American case, over time, fundamental improvements and developments were made in the treatment of Italians. In fact, there was a trend in subordinating the discriminatory implication of the term “Überfremdung” or *over-foreignization*. In the late 1980’s, the word was not utilized in the economic sector, and later crowned as one of the most xenophobic terms in Germany (Gunkel, 2011). In addition, even if the “guest worker” or *Gastarbeiter*” policy is no longer accurate today due to the statistical fact that most “guest workers” in reference have not yet returned to their country of origin, the EU has continued establish programs facilitating the free movement of workers (Brogani, A., 2014). As just evidenced, derogatory terms are no longer used in quotidian discourse when referring to Italians, but just like in all countries, stereotypes do still exist.

Section 2.3: Italian Internal Migration: Northern Reception of Southern Migrants

When evaluating the abstract nature of anti-immigrant sentiment and racist derivatives, not much emphasis has been placed on the discriminatory clash that Italians, namely Southern Italians, faced, within their own country. This occurred during the 1950’s and 1960’s when internal migration from Southern Italy to the Northern regions boomed. In the subsequent decades after the end of WWII, approximately 2 million Italians left the underdeveloped and rural South in search for a more promising life. The

primary regions of dispersion were Calabria and Basilicata with almost 500,000 emigrants while the region receiving the most immigrants was Piedmont with about 700,000. As previously stated, almost all migrants from the South known as *meridionali* were peasants and farmers, who left their rural regions in pursuance of an industrial career (Capussotti, 2010, p. 17). Although these interregional Southern migrants undoubtedly contributed to the constructive transformation of Italian society during its time as “economic miracle” (Capussotti, 2010, p.1), they would soon fall victim to anti-southern sentiment subjection (Capussotti, 2010, p. 5).

But where might this intra-national discrimination have originated? How could nationals become racist amongst each other? The amplified separation of Italy in two distinct parts, the North and the South, allowed for an easy stereotyping process that would effect the constitution of the stringent Italian mentality regarding diversity. Given their close proximity to North Africa and Mediterranean geographical positioning, Southerners were racially categorized as “other” by the Northern Italian bourgeoisie. The racial purity of Southern people was brought into question due to such geographical divides. According to stereotypes present in the North, they pertained to an inferior race, one of dark complexion, and an uncultured nature full of primordial routines, rebellion and economic deficiency (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). A famous assertion, still prevalent today, reveals the impact of Italy’s geographical layout on the formation such a rigid and prejudice state of mind: “Europe ends at Naples. Calabria, Sicily and all the rest belong to Africa” (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). This association was emphasized particularly during the time of Italian Unification in 1861, as the Northern ruling class used historical models of nationalism dating back to the Roman Empire and Renaissance, to subjugate and control the uncivilized South. Similar to the reliance Americans would have on Social Darwinism as a scientific justification for discrimination; Italian anthropologists were taken for their word when speciously explaining that the racial subordination of a dark Southerner was because “they possessed ‘inferior African blood’” (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). As a result, anti-southern sentiment should be considered a severe form of racism and

not just interpreted as an element of *orientalism* or ethnocentrism (Capussotti, 2010, p. 18).

Although persistently existing in undercurrents, the most prominent phase of interregional migration ignited the resurfacing of Southern Italian hostility and rejection. Italy would again become geographically distinct based on pseudo-historical beliefs and “subaltern politics”³¹ (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 8). During this time, the concept of the “other” emerged and inhabited a dogmatic and influential presence of its own that became integrated in everyday speech. In fact, reference to Southern Italians as “others” or associating their characteristics such as dialects to “otherness” and foreignness became quotidian. Such terminology was inevitably approved in Northern cities such as Torino and was used regularly in newspaper articles. In the mid 1950’s, the *Gazzetta del Popolo*, used the expression “*I torinesi e gli altri*”; translated as “People from Turin and the others”, to purposefully isolate Southern Italians (Capussotti, 2010, p.6). Southern emigrants or “*meridionali*” felt additional verbal coercion as their migration was constantly depicted as a military-like invasion or “ondata” (Capussotti, 2010, p. 10). Furthermore, their reason to migrate was undermined as they were often accused of being “*ladri di lavoro*” or jobs stealers. Concurrently, Northerners’ inability to recognize the Southern workers’ contribution to the Italian economy manifested itself in views of a passive south and much grumbled objection of paying higher taxes and fees in order to sustain Southern migrants in “their” cities. The ubiquitous permeation of obdurate anti-southern sentiment amongst Northern Italians stemmed from the pseudo-scientific and historically based notion that Southern Italians were their own “inherently inferior race” (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). This discernible phase of expressed hostility even between nationals portrayed Italians to be victims as well as culprits.

³¹ For further information on “Subaltern Politics” please explore: Louai, E. H., (2012). *Retracing the concept of the subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical developments and new applications. African Journal of History and Culture (AJHC)*, 4-8.

This peculiar case in which Southern Italians were targets of anti-immigrant sentiment and racial discrimination by their own Northern neighbors, continued to be widely propelled by political parties of the far right such as the Italian Social Movement (MSI) and the Northern League. In the 1990's, these right-wing parties, not only "maintained an implicitly racist attitude towards immigrants [but also] southerners alike" (Horowitz, 2010, p.432). Such discriminatory attitudes derived from a desire to protect the Northern economy. The Northern League particularly wanted to free "the wealthy north from subsidizing southern Italy's poorer regions" (Horowitz, 2010, p.432).

Although hostile sentiments still remain, progress in limiting such behavior has been made, particularly in the economic sector. Given the more diversified economy that exists in Italy today, the perception that Southerners "steal" the jobs of the Northerners has vanished. As a result, almost no hostility has been reported in the workplace. Although prejudiced terms such as referencing Southern Italians to be "*terroni*", ("of the south"), are still widely present public discourse, the extent to which and manner in which they are used has changed. In fact, they are often utilized in comedy, to depict the so-called cultural differences between Northerners and Southerners. As a result, more consideration is given when using such terms.

Section 2.4: Colonial Racism Under Italian Fascism

The institution of Italian Fascism under the rule of Benito Mussolini proved to be the main ideological source of racist temperament towards natives of the colonized territories in Africa. With such an authoritarian system, Italy, during the rule of Fascism from 1922 to 1943, was forcefully portrayed as the epitome of a unified nation, with increasing nationalist and patriotic sentiment. In an ideologically instinctive attempt of revitalizing the Italian state from past conditions, Mussolini not only established political and social reforms of fascist conformism, but he took advantage of weak east African colonies for militarist based imperial expansion. The eternal desire to solidify an "*Italian*

race” was evident in the official rule of distinct and inferior territories and the pure desire to control another race (Sòrgoni, 2002). Indoctrination of such programs amplified the fascist notions of collectivity, nationalism, and anti-individualism.

Fascism’s general racist undertone was surely awakened with the official colonization of Libya in 1934, and Ethiopia and Somalia in 1936. Eritrea, however, having been Italy’s first colony since 1890 during the ‘Scramble of Africa’, was already experiencing the effects of social changes that primarily intended to separate colonial natives from Italians. Such intention was manifested in policies restricting “Italian citizenship, intermarriage, education, and [intensifying] penal justice” (Sòrgoni, 2002, p.1). Social separation implied a pseudo ideological commandment of disintegration and anti-assimilation, which was validated with the common belief that Eritrean natives belonged to a lower level civilization. Any assimilation by natives would result in the contamination of the superior Italian civilization. Consequently, only those Eritreans of Christian derivation³² could qualify for “small citizenship” which applied civil rights personally but would never transform into authentic citizenship (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 2). This presented a paradoxical intent of containment: civilizing and humanizing Eritreans while separating them from Italian nationals. In a further attempt to maintain this status quo, education was restricted for natives as only rudimentary instruction was provided. Indigenous men became peasants while women, servants for the whites (Sòrgoni, 2002, p.3). Judicial penalties such as corporate punishment were also introduced as way to maintain order, inflict vigilance, and build power. Supported by “anthropological discourse”³³ on racial classification and origin, the acceptance of institutionalized racial

³² “It was widely assumed that the Eritreans were...quick to absorb the superior civilization imported by the colonizers, especially because the natives were mostly Christians. It was therefore held that those natives who were shown to have reached a higher level of civilization could have access to Italian citizenship” Sòrgoni, B. (2002), pp.2. Racist discourses and practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism . In & J. R. Grillo, *he Politics of Recognizing Difference. Multiculturalism Italian-style* (pp. 41-58). Aldershot, Uk: Ashagate.

³³ “Both the Ethiopians and the Egyptians were believed to belong to the Hamitic race of biblical descent because of their supposed superior civilisation and lighter skin colour, compared to the “rest” of the Africans... At the same time, though, Italian anthropologists underlined the fact that the Hamites had been, from their origins, a coloured race, thus stressing the different racial classification of the Aryan Europeans and the Hamitic Ethiopians” Sòrgoni, B. (2002), pp.2. Racist discourses and practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism . In & J. R. Grillo, *he Politics of Recognizing Difference. Multiculturalism Italian-style* (pp. 41-58). Aldershot, Uk: Ashagate.

prejudice seemed to synchronize with the subsequent colonies during the fascist period (Sòrgoni, 2002, p.1).

As fascist indoctrination was underway, Mussolini highlighted the importance of his colonial empire by protracting “racial consciousness” in order to acknowledge the superiority of the “Italian race” (Todd, 2011, p. 56). This was exemplified in the 1938 ten-point Charter of Race or “*Manifesto della Razza*”, prepared by Mussolini himself. It aimed at providing scientific guarantee that the “pure Italian race” belonged to that of the Aryan race, one of biological superiority and purity (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 4). With the aid of rhetoric and resilient cult of personality, his detestation for the African race, as it was believed to be biologically inferior, helped fascism gain momentous credibility. The exportation of “fascist consciousness” to Italian colonies was progressing (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 6).

The formal colonial acquisition of Ethiopia in 1936, gave way to numerous multi-colonially applied fascist policies that would legalize racism and fulfill aims of a complete “segregationist environment within [that] colonial territory” (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 1). This was demonstrated in the building upon and outlawing of previously established policies (such as those in Eritrea). Not only was a decree implemented to prohibit natives the possibility of acquiring Italian citizenship, but a 1937 regulation would also ban the marital union and “*madamismo*” (or sexual relations) between colonizers and natives specifically of Italian men and African women (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 3). The “Italian race” needed to sustain its purity and so “contaminating marriages with people from other ‘races’ [was] no longer valid...” (Smith D. M., 1997, p. 396). The future supremacy of Italian Fascism was ostensibly taken into consideration as such laws of racial division were purposefully established to prevent the existence of mixed-race children (Sòrgoni, 2002, p 6). Predictably, in 1940, Mussolini legally categorized mixed-race progeny as

natives and any legitimate relation to an Italian parent was banished. Additional action in congealing segregation and preventing “racial contact” was taken publicly, as natives’ daily lives became evermore controlled and marginalized (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 6). In fact, they were denied the right to attend and use the same bars, movie theaters, and transportation modes, as Italians.

These expressed forms of racism, dating back to Italy’s initial experience with colonial rule, confirmed the active presence of racial intolerance in promulgating fascist ideology. In maintaining a racially pure environment, in which white supremacy prevailed, assimilation of colonial natives was prohibited and considered a threat to the “Italian race”. In fact it “had to be kept pure from corruption by ‘inferior elements’” (Smith D. M., 1997, p. 396). Italian colonialism is another historical period, in which Italy, due to the fascist rule, can be considered a time of expressed oppressive racism. Furthermore, Italian imperialism also provides another example of Italy as nation of two-way racism; received and dispatched.

Section 2.4.1: Fascism’s Discriminatory Indoctrination

Although not much literature can be found on pressing and direct discriminatory authority, it is pertinent to consider how racist imperialism and Fascism’s authoritarian regime reinforced such discriminatory sentiment (Collotti, 2006). Its ideologies of nationalism, ethnocentrism, and white supremacy resulted in a sentimentally based opposition to racial and ethnic diversity.

Mussolini’s indoctrination began with the “*Fascistizzazione*” of Italian society including culture, politics, economy, and most critically, beliefs. It was the process in which he consolidated the transformation of Italy into a Fascist state in order to create a uniform society (Gentile, 2005). Mussolini referred to such a procedure and expansion as the “reformation of the character of Italians’ [in order] to make [them] a race of conquerors and rulers” (Griffin, 2004, p. 19). It was implemented through “*leggi fasciste*” or “Fascist laws” that: legalized discrimination, prohibited strikes and demonstrations of sindacalism, abolished all other political parties, made communism illegal, reintroduced

the death penalty, re-wrote the curriculum in schools, reinforced gender division, made mandatory the participation in Fascist youth movements known as the “*Opera Nazionale Balilla*”, and most relevantly emphasized the belief of biological racism (Gentile, 2005); (Collotti, 2006). These laws were reinforced through: intimidation, terror, convincing propaganda such as films, posters, and mass rallies, and by means of Mussolini’s rhetoric. Such process was aimed not only at solidifying Fascism’s centralized power but also at creating a long-lasting dictatorship, implied by the intentional influence of its ideologies on the young generation.

In addition, the process of becoming a consolidated Dictatorial Fascist state, included the dogmatization of creating an “Italian Race”; one of racial superiority and perfection that was biologically justified in Mussolini’s Racial Manifesto. Biological racism, a decriminalized form of discrimination, was contingent on its pseudo-scientific justification (Gillette, 2001, p. 306). It was deemed acceptable and became a sentiment and act of normality. This is evidenced through Mussolini’s enactment of the “*Leggi Razziali*” or “Racial Laws” in 1938 originally directed to “Italian” Jews through *anti-Semitism*, and African natives under colonial rule, slowly extending to include persons of any ethnic, racial, or cultural diversity (Collotti, 2006). Although slow in the process of ratification, the impact of such laws was quite direct as it was reinforced during Italy’s alliance with Nazi Germany. As previously described, these Racial Laws limited and controlled the extent to which Italian Jews and those of racial, ethnic, and political difference, could exercise their (civil and human) rights. In fact, such emphasis was provided by the first official fascist report on racism called “*Il Fascismo e I Problemi Della Razza*” or “Fascism and the Problems of Race” published anonymously in the “*Giornale D’Italia*” (Newspaper of Italy) of 1938 (Israel, 2007). Not only did it explicitly encourage discrimination but it identified races different to the “Italian one” as biologically inferior and hierarchically subordinate (Israel, 2007). As a result, while such diversity was rejected on the basis of pseudo-scientific reasons, ethnocentrism and cultural uniformity was stressed (Gregor, 1969).

In causal corroboration with racial and ethnic discrimination during fascism, could this provide an involuntary and uncovered explanation for anti-immigrant sentiment taking place in Italy today? Do the extreme-right wing political parties derive their ideology from that of the fascist one? ³⁴

³⁴ See Section 4.2- 4.3

Chapter III: Documenting the Presence of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Italy: Trends and Evidence.

The sudden transformation to becoming an immigrant nation along with the abundant inflow of immigrants entering Italy, (as statistics have evidenced), has interrupted the migratory *status quo* of society and consequentially influenced the social, political, institutional and economic conditions. Such effect has trickled down into Italian society, shaping the permeating reactions of native citizens. As will be shown, many Italians manifest their reactions, often *involuntarily* through strict and hostile public opinions about immigration, the use of xenophobic and prejudiced terms as well as discriminatory actions against immigrants, which are all expressionist forms of anti-immigrant sentiment. This chapter will examine the most recent and current trends of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italian society. Each section will present a distinctive, yet inter-related way in which anti-immigrant sentiment is expressed. A reminder should be given that what Italians consider to be a large number of immigrants is actually much fewer when considering the *global context*. Due to the sudden change in becoming an immigration nation, even a relatively small number is perceived to be much larger, in the *Italian context*. Such overestimations are also due to other factors such as the influence of the media and right-wing political parties in inflating such a phenomenon and presenting it in a negative light as something to be fought and controlled. Therefore, the following statistics are only relative to Italy's migratory history.

Section 3.1: Immigration as a “Problem”

Public opinion is a crucial method in obtaining a general understanding of how a society views certain matters. Data is usually gathered through surveys in which the public is asked to give their reactions. Relative to examining the extent to which anti-immigrant sentiment exists in Italy, its presence is initially dependent on the results of

Italian public opinion on immigration. Depending on the extremity of results, public opinion can become a reserved and *masked* form of discrimination, which in this case is known as anti-immigrant sentiment.

The immediate turn of events in which Italy has become an immigrant country combined with a heavy inflow of immigrants, mostly entering in the last two decades, has spurred an automatic reactionary view amongst the majority of Italians that immigration is “problem.” The Pew Research center on Global Attitudes and Trends conducted a survey in 2007 in which natives were questioned if and to what degree immigration was a problem. 94% or approximately nine-in-ten Italians viewed immigration to be a “big problem” and 64% specifically indicated that it was a “*very* big problem” (Horowitz, 2010). A further inquiry based on the region of origin of those surveyed was performed. 54% living in the South considered immigration to be a “very big problem” compared to 74% living in the Northern regions (Horowitz, 2010). This large divergence can be in part due to Italy’s historical internal-migratory discrimination³⁵ and today’s regional political affiliation. Similarly, when questioned about the impact of immigrants on Italian society, the majority with 73% insisted it was negative compared to only 17% that believed it was positive (Horowitz, 2010). In addition to Italy’s historical context, actual pervasive factors such as the influence of the media contribute to such a strict viewpoint.³⁶

Further results sustaining the high percentages of popular discontent about immigration, are presented by the 2011 Transatlantic Trends Report on Immigration.³⁷ It highlights that from 2008 to 2011, public opinion opposing immigration was consistent, around 40%, as displayed in figure 3. In 2011, 48% of Italians viewed immigration as a

³⁵ See Section 2.3 on Italian Internal Migration

³⁶ See Chapter 4 for causative factors

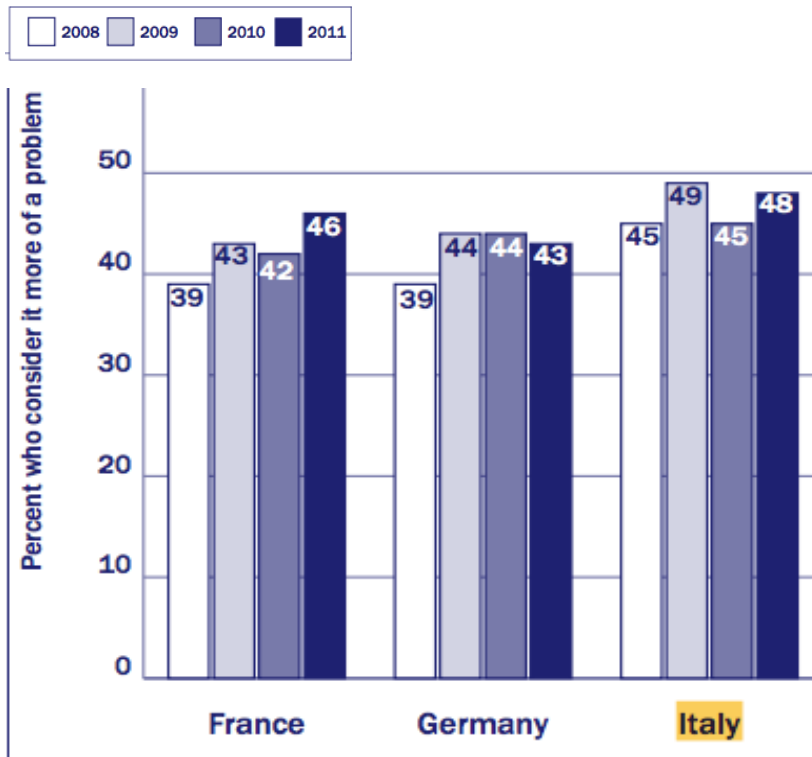
³⁷ Transatlantic Trends: Immigration (TTP), is “a public opinion survey focused on immigration and integration attitudes and policy preferences”. See Berstein, H. (2012). *Transatlantic Public Opinion on Immigration: Important Lessons for Policymakers*. Retrieved from www.gmfus.org: <http://www.gmfus.org/commentary/transatlantic-public-opinion-immigration-important-lessons-policymakers>

problem in comparison to 28% who considered it an opportunity and 18% who saw it as both (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011).

Most recently, Doxa, an independent Italian research company, gathered from a 2015 survey, that 62% of natives considered immigration of foreign workers entirely negative. This was followed by an elucidatory statement of why Italians oppose immigration: “oggi vince la paura dell’*altro*” which translates into “today fear of the other wins” (Doxa, 2016). “*Altro*” or “the other”, a term coined by the late Edward Said, implies the diversity of people regarding their origin, race, culture, and social status. In this case, “the other” refers to those of a different ethnicity. Therefore, as implied, Italians tend to be resistant to immigration because they fear the incoming of different people, especially in large numbers. They fear that it will interfere and change their society (Rustenbach, 2009). This fear is evidently expressed as anti-immigrant sentiment.

It must be noted that the change in percentages between these three sources may be largely due to the way in which the surveys were conducted. These factors need to be taken into account when examining such data.

Figure 3: Immigration is more of a problem rather than an opportunity (%)



Source: *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011*, p.8.

Section 3.2: “Too many” Immigrants?

Specifically causative to the feeling that immigration is more of a problem, is the perception that there are “too many” immigrants in Italy. Such observation can be dated back to the late 1980’s in order to establish a trend in anti-immigrant sentiment. Table 3.1 shows an overall substantial increase in the number of Italians who believe there are too many foreigners present in Italy. The largest jump from 49.7 % in 1987-88 to 71.3% in 1991 reflects the period in which immigration began to increase (Bonifazi, C., 2006). In spite of a decrease in percentage in the following years to 60.9 % in 1997, public opinions remain quite consistent. As conveyed in the table, more Italians had disapproving views than not. This consistent trend can be supported by even more recent data from the 2011 Transatlantic Trends report on Immigration. From 2008 to 2011,

percentages averaged around 50% with only minor variations (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011, p.8). These statistics show that even from the start of the immigration phenomenon, Italians perceived the number of immigrants to be too many. In fact, with this continuous belief, in 2009, 83% of Italians agreed that additional restrictive policies were needed, compared to 15% who disagreed (Horowitz, 2010). It is therefore vital to question and subsequently verify the basis of these anti-immigrant judgments. What propels them to make these kinds of sociological decisions?

Table 3.1: Public opinion about how many foreigners live in Italy (%)

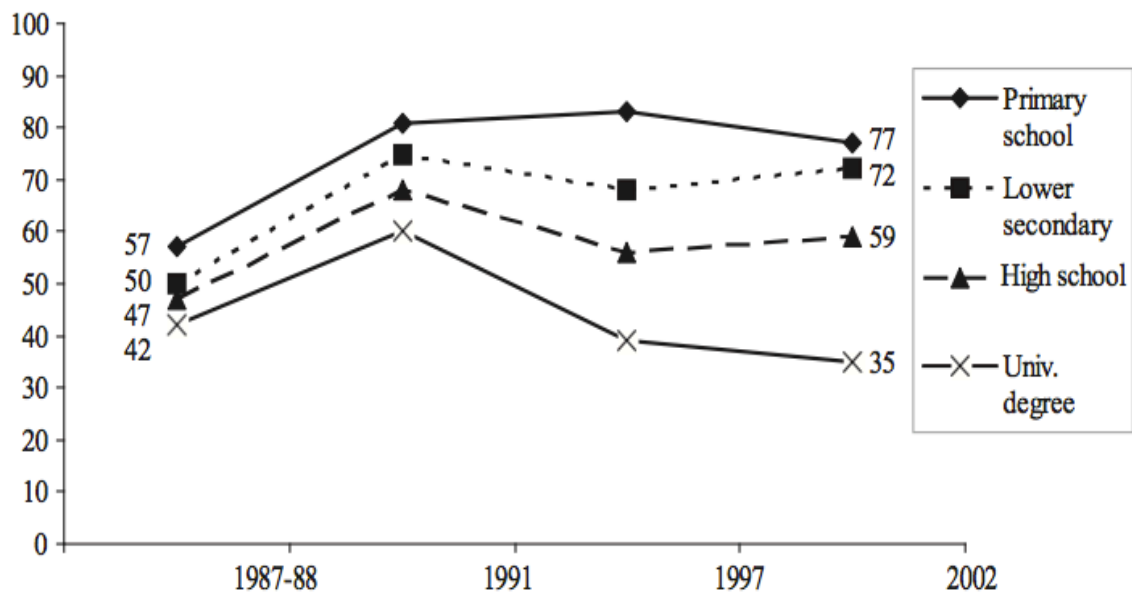
Opinion	1987–88	1991	1997	2002
Too many	49,7	71,3	60,9	60,0
Neither too many nor few	35,7	22	32,1	35,3
Few	1,7	1,4	1,3	2,9
Don't know	12,8	5,3	5,7	1,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Bonifazi, C., (2006), *Italians and Foreign Immigration*, The Finnish Yearbook of Population Research 42, p. 96.

An immediate reasoning behind such discriminatory attitude is correlated to the degree in which the public is informed on matters relating to immigration. In 2002, a study was performed in order to investigate the impact of education level on expressed opinions about immigration. A clear association was discovered: the higher the level of education, the fewer opinions that there are too many immigrants present in Italy. As evident in figure 3.2, there has been a general increase in the percentage of people who believe that there are too many immigrants, among those with a basic education, and an overall reduction with those possessing a high school and or university degree. In fact, the gap in anti-immigrant views between those with a basic education and university degree, rose from 15 percent in 1987-1988, to 21% in 1991, to 44% in 1997, and finally

42% in 2002 (Bonifazi C. , 2006, p. 97). As previously indicated, the considerable increase during the 1990's was due to the large inflow of immigrants. Although more recent data is not found specifically on how education level influences the popular views on immigration, the fact that today many Italians believe it is an immense issue, provides a secure indication that such anti-immigrant sentiment derives from a lack of proper knowledge and interest about the topic (and therefore political participation), unawareness, and ignorance (Rustenbach, 2009); (Bonifazi C. , 2006). However, it is important to acknowledge that education level is correlated to socio-economic factors and is often conditioned by income, gender, and the education level of family members (Lareau, 2003). Thus, the negative views on immigrants are also compelled by one's background.

Figure 3.2: Negative Views on Immigration based on education level (%)



Source: Bonifazi C. , *Italians and Foreign Immigration*, (2006), *The Finnish Yearbook of Population Research* 42, p. 97.

Section 3.3: Prevalent Displays of anti-immigrant sentiment

The implication of ignorance is also exposed with the general categorization regarding immigration: the disregard for the importance of distinguishing between types of immigrants, their origin, and the use of prejudiced terms that create stereotypes. Evidently these persistent opinions are based on pure sentiment rather than knowledge of the matter (Rustenbach, 2009).

Section 3.3.1: Legal vs. Illegal Immigrant

Following the misconception that there are “too many” immigrants present in Italy, there is also a false impression of high illegal immigration. A 2014 global study conducted by Ipsos Mori, found Italians to believe that 30% of the population was made up of immigrants while statistics prove it was only 7% (Ipsos Mori, 2014).³⁸ However, according to a survey conducted by Transatlantic Trends, as of 2009, 66% of Italians believed that the majority of immigrants in Italy are illegal, the highest percentage by far compared to other European countries such as Spain (55%), France (24%), and Germany (16%) (Transatlantic Trends: Mobility, Migration, and Integration, 2014, p.17). Such sociological stance can be reinforced with widespread apprehension of illegal immigration. In fact, in 2011 a reported 80% of Italians expressed pure worry about illegal immigration, a sentiment exceeding that of legal immigration. Italy produced the highest percentage compared to the European average of 67%³⁹ (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011, p.7). The sociological implication that illegal immigrants are more often than not, associated with being unemployed, further supports such data. Many Italians therefore feel as though illegal immigration poses a threat to their economic wellbeing. A 2011 study on labor migration questioned the Italian public about a particular trade-off preference: “a highly educated immigrant with no job offer or a lower

³⁸ See Section 1.2 and 1.3 for statistics on the number of legal and illegal immigrants in present in Italy.

³⁹ Italy was closely followed by Spain with 74% and the United Kingdom with 71% of the public worrying more about illegal immigration than legal immigration. France and Germany had substantially lower percentages of 59% and 56% respectively. See Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011, p.7.

educated immigrant with a job offer” (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 201, p.1). A high majority favored those who were lower educated implying a lower skilled level but with a job. This decision, not only associates illegal immigrants with having little education, but such discrimination infers that Italians will feel more economically protected as the loss jobs would be less of a threat.⁴⁰ Due to economic hardships that Italy has experienced with the recession, many view immigration as an invasive threat (Hatton, T. J., 2016). This is also a sociological implication that those interviewed do not care to be informed about important matters permeating their society, leaving their opinions to be dependent on personal perception.

However, an additional study by Transatlantic Trends corroborated this perception by demonstrating that many Italians fail to distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants when referring to their impact on society. The high level of concern of the presence of illegal immigrants combined with the misconceptions associated with this group, such as criminalization (often presented by the media)⁴¹, and the fact that immigrants are ethnically different, contributes to the presence of categorization. As figure 3.3 confirms, many Italians do not differentiate between legal and illegal immigrants and the “perception gap is *very* narrow” (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2010, p.23). The first two indicators only show a 2% and 1% difference respectively proving that the majority of Italians, in 2009, believed that both legal and illegal immigrants had nearly the same burden on social services and also increased the crime rate in society. According to the ESS, (European Social Survey),⁴² “Italy scored the strongest support for expelling immigrants involved in any sort of offence against the law” as well as driving out those unemployed, both with a majority of 70% (Herrera, 2004). Conversely, it must also be noted that although little distinction was made, there

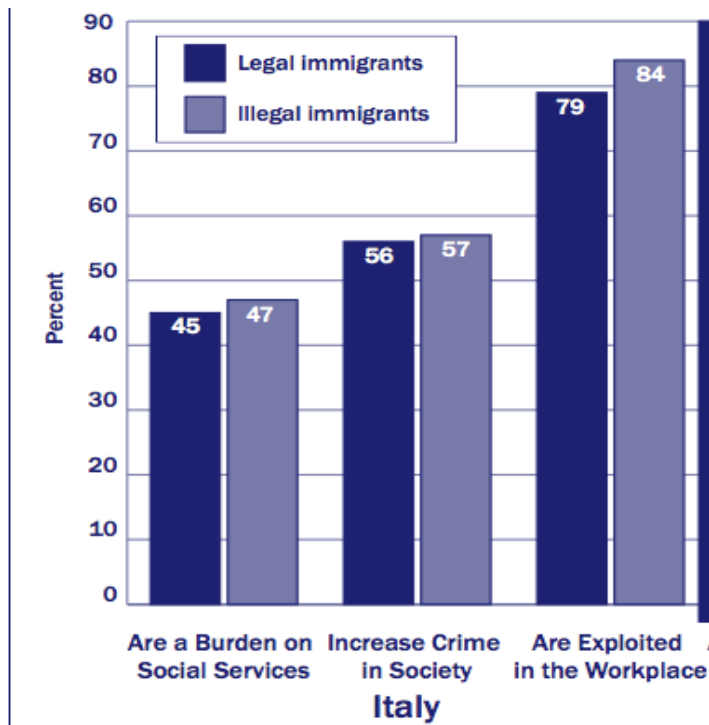
⁴⁰ See Section 4.3.2

⁴¹ See Section 4.3.1

⁴² The European Social Survey (ESS) is “an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2001...that measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations” through surveys conducted every-two years. *About ESS*. (2001). Retrieved from [www.europeansocialsurvey.org: http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/)

was some recognition about the existence of exploitation of immigrants in the Italian workplace. This implies some positive outlook in public opinion. But again, the majority of opinions derive from personal sentiment rather than knowledge about the matter.

Figure 3.3: Little distinction between legal and illegal immigrants (%)



Source: *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2010*, p.24

Section 3.3.2: Place of Origin

Moreover, the hostile reactions of Italian citizens' in accepting the presence of immigrants is often associated with "who" they (the immigrants) are, and "where" they come from. Many generalize and fail to differentiate between an immigrant's country of origin based on common physical traits such as "dark skin". Due to a recent increase in the number of illegal immigrants originating from Africa, namely Sub-Saharan Africa, that tend to have a darker skin color, many Italians assume that all immigrants (including those that are legal), who have this racial diversity, are not only illegal, but from Africa.

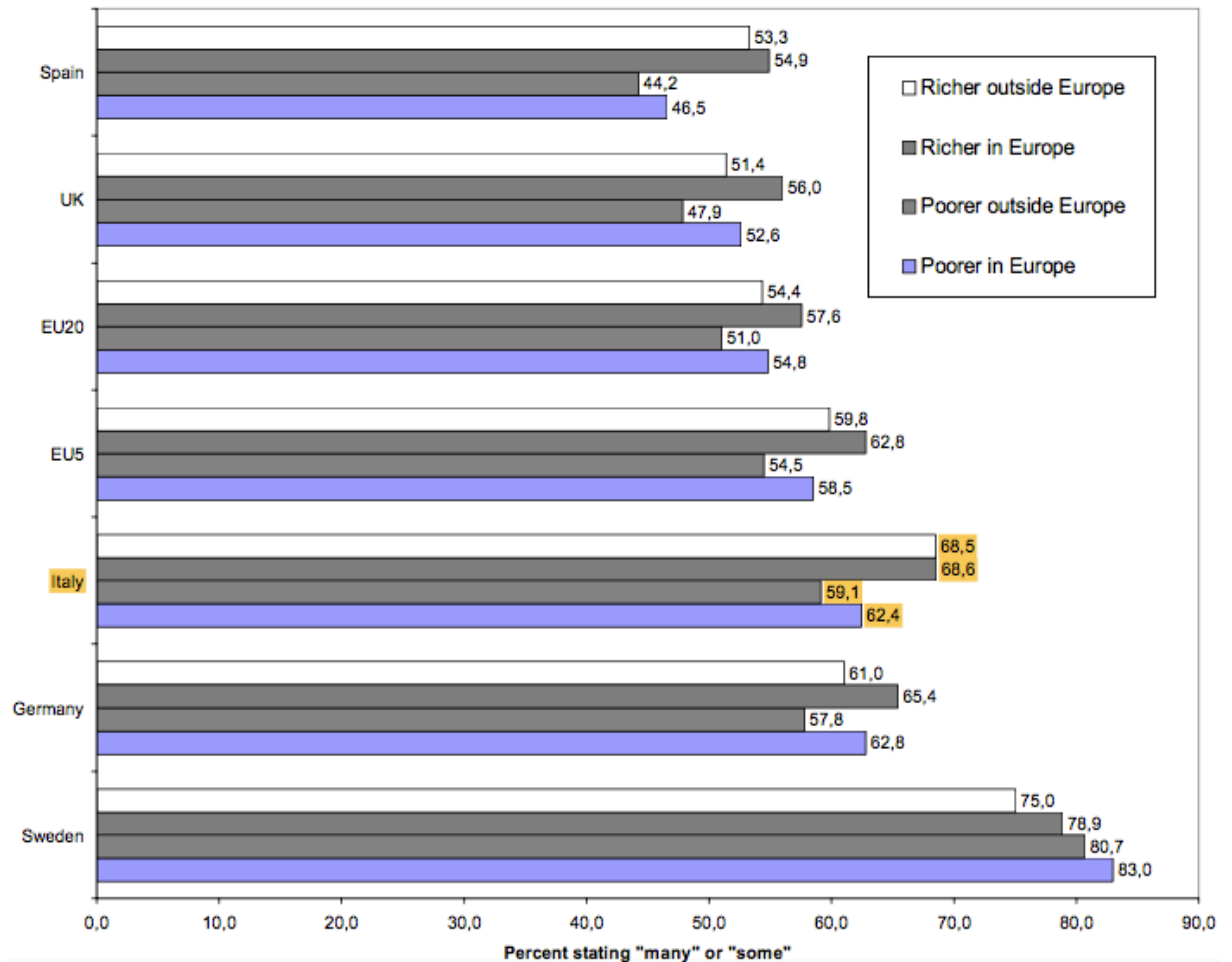
The assumption of origin based on *skin color* is a *racist* form of anti-immigrant sentiment.

As reported by Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Senior Researcher for the Pew Global Attitudes Project, in 2007, 67% of Italians considered immigration from North Africa and the Middle East (as well as from Eastern European countries), a “bad thing” (Horowitz, 2010). On the other hand, only one in five deemed it “good” (Horowitz, 2010). But why is this association and strict assumption so persistent? Is it due to the fear that ethnic diversity is “invasive”, an instinctual defensive and protective reaction, and feeling that there are “too many” immigrants? These rationalizations may be interpreted in figure 3.4. Data has been compiled from the ESS, showing the percentage of Italians favoring a certain degree of admittance of immigrants depending on the type of country they come from. In this case, the “type” of country is measured in terms of wealth. It was concluded that immigrants originating from richer countries whether in or outside of Europe, were preferred, as percentages were extremely close with only .1% difference. On the other hand, immigrants from poorer countries, especially outside of Europe (with 59.1%), would not receive such a warm reception.

As a result, public opinion about immigrants continues to be negative. This graph in particular, reveals an inter-related correlation between country of origin, race, diversity, and social status. In the Italian context,⁴³ immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe entail an African origin. The poverty stricken African continent, in which all countries are either underdeveloped or developing, involuntarily labels immigrants from these countries as socially and economically disadvantaged. It can therefore be bluntly deducted that many Italians do not welcome immigrants from poor countries, particularly from Africa and the Middle East, as their diversity is most observed and their social status produces an undermining effect.

⁴³ Here, the “Italian context” refers to the fact in the past decade and even more recently, the past five years, the majority of immigrants have come from African countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan. See Sections 1.2 and 1.3 for statistics.

Figure 3.4: Feelings towards immigrants depending on their country of origin (%)



Source: Herrera, E. M., Moualhi, D., *Public Opinion and Immigration Policies in Five EU Countries: Accounting for (In) Consistency between Immigrants Selection and Integration Policies and Citizens' Attitudes*, (2004), European University Institute, Florence, p. 6

Section 3.3.3: Racism and Discrimination: Terminology and Acts

Furthermore, in order to examine the degree to which anti-immigrant sentiment is present in Italy, it is crucial to identify the specific derogatory terminology used when referring to immigrants. Just as linguistic displays of “anti-Italianism” were prevalent

when numerous Italians immigrated to the United States,⁴⁴ expressions that contain the same degree of discriminatory insinuation are in fact widely present in Italy today. The preponderance and proliferation of xenophobic, prejudiced, and racist public discourse is principally due to the influential nature of both the media and right-wing politics⁴⁵ (Colombo, 2013). The overuse of these terms in political affairs and in the media communicates to society that it is *acceptable* and *normal* to use them in daily speech. As a result, anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy becomes a prevalent phenomenon in itself (Reisigl, 2000, p. 275).

Discriminatory phrases and terms such as “*Vu cumprá*” motivate much categorization. “*Vu cumprá*” short for “*vuole comprare*” or in English, “would you like to buy?” is now collectively utilized in referring to sub-Saharan African immigrant street vendors (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p.352). The intent behind altering the phrase is to replicate the way in which immigrants speak: with an accent. Not only is it a popular quotidian phrase, but also one used by the media, particular in newspaper articles, to condition anti-immigrant sentiments. For example, an article from La Repubblica, (an Italian daily newspaper), recounting a speech made by former Italian Prime-minister Silvio Berlusconi, quoted him saying “Italian society should focus attention on the fight against prostitution and the “*vu cumprá*” who disturb regular commerce” (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p. 352). Such usage of the term was made not only in an attempt to sway public opinion and to gain political support but also to incite national anti-immigrant sentiment by inferring that immigrants disrupt and negatively impact the Italian economy. Relating to the public on a personal level by insinuating that Italian lives are affected by immigration, is a form of inferential rhetoric used by many right-wing political parties such as that of Lega Nord (the Northern League).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Section 2.1 for historical evidence and further elaboration.

⁴⁵ See Section 4.3

⁴⁶ See Section 4.3 on further information of the impact of the media on Italians

In addition, terms such as “*extracomunitario*” or “non-EU nationals”, “clandestine”, and generally referring to colored immigrants as “*marocchini*” or “Moroccans”, are used as *uni-characterization* of “the others” or those of different ethnicity (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p.352). These words along with those of transgressional meaning such as “killed”, “arrested”, “police”, “thief” “drugs”, “*sporchi*” or “dirty” are habitually seen in media and newspaper article titles, resulting in a complete *criminalization* of immigrants (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p.352); (Colombo, 2013). Incidences or petty crimes committed by an immigrant are exaggerated by the media with the use of such terms and are used as political rhetoric by radical right-wing political parties (Colombo, 2013). For example, as horrendous and intolerable, the 2015 killing of an elderly couple in Sicily by a young Ivorian immigrant, resulted in the media discussing and portraying the incident for months on end at top priority. However, equally heinous crimes committed by native Italian citizens are *chatted*⁴⁷ about briefly. This inevitably results in many believing that most immigrants are criminals, leading the public to continuously use discriminatory language. In fact, they are mostly associated with “uncleanliness, moral degeneration, smuggling, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and theft” (Pacella, J. M., 2011, p. 352).

The responsibility of the media and right-wing political parties in conditioning public opinion, has also led to violent physical and verbal attacks as well as racist episodes against immigrants. A racist group particularly prevalent in the 1990’s known as “*teste rasate*” or “skinheads” often committed violent acts against foreigners, of which many have been against African women due to the “perception that many migrant women are prostitutes” (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p. 353). Other extremist individuals that are present in football “ultra” groups have take it upon himself or herself to chant blatant racist phrases against players of color, particularly in the last several years. In addition, in 2009 in Naples, an Italian of Eritrean origin, “was beaten by two men...to shouts of ‘negro di

⁴⁷ “Chatted” in this context means briefly touched upon; discussed less.

merda”⁴⁸ followed by an attack in 2010 in Rome on a bar owned by two Bangladeshi brothers, “by a group of fifteen to twenty people” (Sunderland, 2012). Most recently, in the summer of 2016, a Nigerian man was killed in Fermo by an football “ultra” fan, after attempting to defend his partner from racial abuse⁴⁹ (Italy migrants: Nigerian killed in Fermo race attack, 2016).

Violent and racist attacks are also evident within the political sphere. The former Northern League Leader, Umberto Bossi, repulsively exhibited his aversion for immigrants remarking, “boats carrying illegal immigrants should be fired at by cannons” (Pacella, J.M., 2011, p.353). Such hostile anti-immigrant sentiment is quite common within the Northern League, as it is used in political oratory. Another notorious politician and current leader of the Northern League, Matteo Salvini, recently targeted immigrants stating that Italy needs to “clean the streets by ridding them of immigrants” followed by a shocking statement: “lets get a truck, fill it with immigrants, and then leave them in the forest 200 km away” (Pucciarelli, 2016). Another instance took place in 2013, when Italy’s first black minister, Cécile Kyenge, was referred to as an “orang-utan” by Northern League member Roberto Calderoli in an attempt to devalue her status not only as a woman but as a politician (Racism in Italy: Educating Cecile, 2013).

The overuse of these terms in political affairs and in the media communicates to society that it is *acceptable* and *normal* to use them in daily speech. As a result, anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy becomes a prevalent phenomenon in itself (Reisigl, 2000).

Section 3.4: “Assimilation”: Opposing “multiculturalism”?

Discriminatory sentiment against immigrants may additionally be demonstrated with public views pertaining to the acceptance of multiculturalism. The new immigration

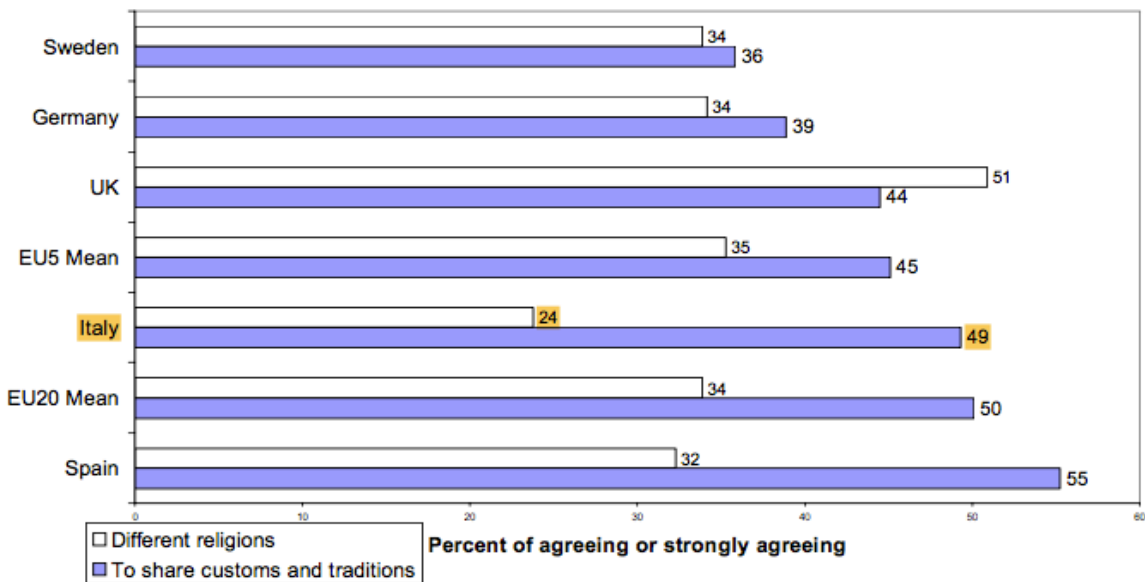
⁴⁸ “negro di merda” translates into “shitty negro”

⁴⁹ It must be noted that after this incident there was an outpour of sympathy and solidarity from Italians. n.a. (2016). Italy migrants: Nigerian killed in Fermo race attack. *BBC*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36733575>

phenomenon implies an automatic inflow of multiculturalism for the host nation, yet, as previously indicated such diversity seems to be rejected in Italy. The often-involuntary hostile attitudes by Italian citizens are also a defensive attempt in preserving their culture and tradition (Ambrosini, 2013, p.175,176,179). As a result, this refutation prevents the positive integration of immigrants within all aspects of society, and instead promotes marginalization, ethnocentrism, and mono-culturalism, an indirect form of anti-immigrant sentiment (Rustenbach, 2009).

According to an ESS study, when questioned about the application of specific selective criteria in allowing immigrants to remain in Italy, the majority of Italians with 72% agreed that immigrants must adapt to the Italian “way of life” (Herrera, 2004, p.9). This intransigent sensitivity may be an attempt to preserve and protect their tradition and culture. Such sociological behavior may be examined through two variations of the polysemous term, integration: “assimilation” and “multiculturalism”. Assimilation occurs when “immigrants give up their original cultures to adopt the dominant culture in the host society” while multiculturalism allows “immigrants [to] keep and develop their different cultural backgrounds without being segregated from the majoritarian society” (Herrera, 2004, p.11). Following such description, the ESS conducted a study in 2003, with an aim at determining whether Europeans, (in which Italy is included), were more “assimilationist”, which believe that it is better for a single country to “share customs and tradition”, or “multiculturalist”, which approve of ethnic and religious diversity (Herrera, 2004, p.12). Clearly shown in figure 3.5, 50% of the European population (EU20 mean) and the majority of the population (45%) in the five selected European countries (EU5mean), share the “assimilationist” opinion (Herrera, 2004, p.12). Nonetheless, Italy emerges as above average (along with Spain), with 49% of the public adopting an assimilationist outlook; indicating a significant presence of anti-immigrant sentiment (Herrera, 2004, p.12).

Figure 3.5: Citizens' opinions on assimilation vs. multiculturalism



Source: Herrera, E. M., Moualhi, D., *Public Opinion and Immigration Policies in Five EU Countries: Accounting for (In) Consistency between Immigrants Selection and Integration Policies and Citizens' Attitudes*, (2004), European University Institute, Florence, p. 6

Section 3.5: Methodological Challenge: Sufficiency of Literature

Even though extensive evidence can be given on the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy today, there are still some restrictions with regard to the literature. Firstly, not much literature or data purposely referring to anti-immigrant views in Italy have been published in the last five years, a period in which immigration, particular illegal immigration, has increased and as a result, discrimination by Italians. In fact, according to sociologist Alessandro Del Lago, little research of *Italian* racism has been carried out because, “the problem of racism in the Italian context is almost universally understood as one of immigration which, in turn is seen as being the local translation of a global-level object of study: migration” (Dal Lago, 1999). Secondly, there is a lack of specificity and in fact, most surveys investigating public opinion present general topics and questions for evaluation. Direct inquiries about forms of anti-immigrant sentiment such as racism are not included. This is the case with particular reference to the Transatlantic Trends on Immigration reports. Additionally, it is possible that some

comparative sources be somewhat unreliable, as the number of total people surveyed is not provided. This could cause certain discrepancies in research⁵⁰. Finally, not much adequate data was found about discrimination in certain sectors such as the workplace and schools, implying that a wide range of different literature on this topic does not exist. This could result from a lack of public recognition and acknowledgement by important institutions and influential figures, (politicians mainly), that anti-immigrant sentiment is present as well as the failure to treat it as an issue to be tackled. Thus, the shortage of detailed information adds to the difficulty in documenting trends. A lack of specific data implies a lack of importance and recognition.

Section 3.6: Findings

Furthermore, after documenting the presence and trends of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy, it can be concluded that it is in fact widespread throughout the nation. It is also a sentiment present and commonly expressed in nations worldwide, but to different degrees. It is statistically known that the larger, more economically prosperous, and conflict free countries receive the most immigrants. According to Transatlantic Trends 2011, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom all scored in the high percentile of people believing immigration is more of a problem than an opportunity (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011, p. 5). However, it must be noted that Italy, compared to these countries is extremely *new* to immigration and therefore, has an increased level of diffused anti-immigrant sentiment.

Such verification is supported by the fact that from the beginning of the immigration phenomenon to present day, there has been little variation in Italian public opinion. While the statistics do demonstrate periods of a negative sentiment against immigrants lessening, these fluctuations are minor and have often been followed by large increases. The different ways in which anti-immigrant sentiment was and is continuing to

⁵⁰ See section 3.1

be displayed, from public opinion survey results to acts of racism and discriminatory discourse in private and public sectors, reflects negatively upon Italian society. Also, the public resistance to multiculturalism and ethnic diversity serves as an indicator of social detachment between Italians and immigrants⁵¹ (Rustenbach, 2009). Could this be a re-surfacing of the desire to maintain an ethnocentric and mono-cultural society? The inter-related nature of the rationalizations behind the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment will be discussed in the following chapter. Explanations will be provided in order to elucidate the sources of such attitude.

⁵¹ See section 3.4

Chapter IV: Explanations and Contributing Factors: Why does Anti-Immigrant Sentiment Exist in Italy?

The research and evidence collected in Chapter 3 about the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy will enable the explanation of such widespread existence through the examination of multiple sequential and inter-related factors. Section 4.1 will introduce a variety of sociological theories to correlate the transformation of Italy into an immigrant nation and its associated multicultural implication with the hostile reactions and behaviors of Italians towards immigrants. Section 4.2 will attempt to explore how fascism's racist and discriminatory ideologies impacted the subsequent emergence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy today. Is it seen through the ideological basis of right-wing political parties and the way they choose to use it? Section 4.3 will therefore explain the correlation between fascist and right-wing political ideology and investigate their impact on anti-immigrant sentiment today. Section 4.4 will similarly examine the role and affect of the media in shaping Italian sentiment towards immigrants. Finally, Section 4.4 will provide an alternative explanation of what continues to nourish anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy.

Section 4.1: Explanatory Theories of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

The rejection of a *new* social composition, expressed in the form of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy, can be directly explained with a variety of sociological theories (researched by the ESS). These theories analyze the reaction of citizens to the presence of individuals and entities pertaining to *different* races, ethnicities, and cultures. It is a sociological explanation of the hostile responses that Italian natives have towards immigration. The transition from an emigrant nation to one of immigration and the magnitude in which it is still occurring, (in the Italian context), as well as the intrinsic

implication of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, has incited anti-immigrant sentiment.

The *Cultural Marginality Theory* suggests, “people will be more likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes when they [are unable to] relate to the culture of immigrants” (Rustenbach, 2009). This is because there are no cultural similarities that could create a common ground such as an ethnic origin. According to Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations”, as presented in Rustenbach’s paper, countries from “different historical civilizations are more likely to be in conflict with each other” due to the fact that each nation’s identity is different (Rustenbach, 2009, p. 4). They are formed from different historical backgrounds, religious affiliations, languages, and traditions.

The *Social Attachment Theory* associates detachment among individuals with a lack of trust. In fact it was affirmed, “inter-personal trust... tends to be lower in more ethnically diverse communities” (Rustenbach, 2009, p. 6). In addition to the historical construction of Italian society and outlook, there are supporting factors such as the decisive role of the media and right-wing politics in conditioning Italians’ lack of trust in immigrants. Rather than being a direct expressed form of anti-immigrant sentiment, it is a consequential reaction.

Associatively, the *Contact Theory* explains when people casually “come in contact with immigrants... over time...without really developing relationships, they [instead] develop suspicion and hostility...”(Rustenbach, 2009, p.7). This theory is complemented by another, known as the *Group Position Theory*, proposing that as dominant groups of society “develop their sense of...identity and [social] position in opposition to minority groups”, (in this case immigrants), they also “develop prejudice toward...” that minority group (Rustenbach, 2009, p. 7). The rationalization behind such congregational behavior derives from the sense of feeling threatened by dissimilarity and the continuous inflow of immigrants, which is often exaggerated by the media. This theory may also be supported by a 2010 study conducted by Transatlantic Trends questioning the Italian public if and how many foreign friends they had. Only 8% of those surveyed responded that they had “many” foreign friends, while 48% had few and

38% had none (Pogliano, 2011, p. 10). The lack of “contact” between Italian natives and immigrants not only implies fear of the unknown and the diverse, but a resistance to cultural integration.

Furthermore, the theory of *Neighborhood safety* suggests, “immigrants introduce an element of uncertainty into society by which many of society’s ills *may* be attributed to their presence”(Rustenbach, 2009, p. 7). The principal factor causing much uncertainty among natives and therefore anti-immigrant attitudes is the negative portrayal of immigrants in the media. Immigrants are often criminalized and through such categorization, pinpointed as the main contributors of violence in Italy.⁵² As a result, Italians obtain a false sense of insecurity and vulnerability in their neighborhoods, leading them to react discriminatorily, with much unnecessary caution and resentment.

Lastly, the *Human Capital Theory*, one of crucial importance, propositions that “natives with less education will be more likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes” (Rustenbach, 2009, p .4-5)⁵³. Obtaining little education also implies a level of *ignorance* that could result from a personal preference, or most likely a socioeconomic, historical, and or political condition (Lareau, 2003). In addition, lower education levels not only involve a lack of exposure to diverse cultures, but an insufficient degree of social and political participation (Rustenbach, 2009). As a result, such unawareness increases the extent to which people, in this case Italians, generalize and are easily manipulated by the media. The lack of distinction between the different motives for immigrating and status’ of immigrants such as legal, illegal, refugees,⁵⁴ and asylum seekers, as well as between countries of origin, unjustly categorizes them as “others.”⁵⁵

⁵² See Section 3.3.3

⁵³ See Section 3.2 (figure 3.2 and associated explanation)

⁵⁴ UNHCR defines refugees as “people fleeing conflict or persecution. They are defined and protected in international law, and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk.” unhr. (2016). *UNHCR viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ – Which is right?* Retrieved from www.unhcr.org: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>

⁵⁵ See Section 1.2-1.3

Section 4.2: Fascism's Association

As revealed in chapter 2, discrimination in different forms has been part of Italy's historical past. From targeted victims of anti-Italianism during the extensive phase of emigration to America and Northern Europe,⁵⁶ to *conditioned* believers of racism due to the fascist indoctrination of Italian citizens,⁵⁷ (particularly in the North). Ethnic and racial discrimination was justified pseudo-scientifically on the basis that the "Italian race" was one of biological superiority. Such an ideology, diminishing the value of humanity by marginalizing those of color, (particularly from the colonized countries in Africa), was stressed in several ways. It was accomplished through the process of *Fascistizzazione*, the imposing conversion of the Italian nation into a fascist state. Such transformation involved changes in Italian culture, society, politics, and beliefs, (an improvement of Italy according to Mussolini).⁵⁸ In addition, the implementation, although slow, of Racial Laws consolidated fascism's ideology on race. The official declaration of racism, provided by an article entitled, "Fascism and the Problems of Race" encouraged discrimination and the intentional detachment from those that did not pertain to the pure "Italian race." As a result, Fascism's authoritarian regime *convinced* Italians to believe that those racially diverse were forever subordinate. Correspondingly, ethnic diversity was rejected while *ethnocentric-monoculturalism*⁵⁹ was sociologically implanted (Gregor, 1969). In fact, it is crucial to consider that scholars specializing in research on fascism, such as Anthony James Gregor, acknowledged its intent to create an

⁵⁶ See Section 2.2. Similar to Fascism's racist ideologies, Nazism promoted the Aryan race. Hitler's Nazi regime composed a society void of any diversity, whether religious, racial, or political. As result, Germans and Swiss natives, who were forced to accept such ideas, thus leading to discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment against Italian immigrants.

⁵⁷ See Section 2.4

⁵⁸ See Section 2.4 for a detailed fact explanation of the methods used to accomplish the *Fascistizzazione* of Italy.

⁵⁹ *Ethnocentric* can be defined as the "valuing of one's own ethnic/cultural group over others." *Monoculturalism* can be defined as, "the belief in one 'right' culture." Together *ethnocentric-monoculturalism* can be defined as, "unconscious or conscious overvaluation of one's cultural beliefs and practices, and simultaneous invalidation of other cultural worldviews. In application, [it] posits the individual's culture as normal and valid [while] other cultures are viewed as abnormal, inferior, or pathological, with corresponding differential treatment." Jackson. Y. (2006). *Encyclopedia of Multicultural Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc, p. 203.

ethnocentric society. With the nationalistic desire for ethnic, racial, and cultural uniformity, came “a particular expression of in-group amity and out-group enmity”, which today translates into anti-immigrant sentiment (Gregor, 2006, p. 32).

Fascism’s discriminatory beliefs and promotion of a self-sufficing society, (dominant particularly during Italian colonialism), subsequently impacted the emergence of a racial culture, often viewed as anti-immigrant sentiment (Smith, E., 2014). This is first evident post-WWII, with the occurrence of Italian internal migration from the South to the North.⁶⁰ Not only did fascism’s ideology that southern races were biologically inferior⁶¹ promote racism towards Africans of color, but it also encouraged internal discrimination with the exclusive pseudo-scientific notion that Southern Italians were their own “inherently inferior race” (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). Although accepted as a part of society, due to the “darker” skin color of Southern Italians, they were discriminated against and exploited by Northerners, especially in the work place (Capussotti, 2010, p.10). This can be seen as a form dualism known as “*negative ethnicity*”⁶² which is “not only a matter of one community feeling better and superior to another; [but concurrently] it also applies to one community feeling worse and inferior to another” (wa Wamwere, 2003, p.23). In Italy’s case, even within the same country, the Northern “community” maintained conviction of their racial and cultural superiority against that of the Southern “community.”

Furthermore, fascism’s indoctrination of maintaining a homogenous society without ethnic diversity, combined with the subsequent time frame of Italian internal migration, evidences that the authoritarian regime has had an enduring effect; it has “generated a racial culture due to their connections with this historical state divide” (Smith,E., 2014). In fact, a 2007 study measuring the level of “national pride” in Italy,

⁶⁰ See Section 2.3

⁶¹ See Section 2.4

⁶² In this instance, *negative ethnicity* “indicates ethnic hatred and bias.” It is manifested when individuals or entities “begin to imagine that [they] are superior to others because [their] religion, food, language, songs, culture, or even looks, are better. “ wa Wamwere, K. (2003). *Negative Ethnicity: From Bias to Genocide*. New York: Seven Stories Press; p.22.

found that 68% or about two out of three Italians believed in their culture's superiority in regard to others' (Wike, 2008). On the other hand, other countries' sentiment of national pride resulted lower. In Sweden 21% agreed that their culture was superior and 72% disagreed, while in France 32% agreed and 68% opposed (Wike, 2008). Such indirect form of discrimination shows a potential effect of how fascism shaped the psychological nature of Italian society and thus, contributed to multi-cultural and ethnic rejection. As a result, when Italy transformed into a nation of immigration, the mere sight of diversity incited a hostile response by Italians: a *defensive mechanism* to maintain their (previous) ethnically uniform society. In fact, "Italians tend to deny [the reality of multiculturalism]. They do not want multi-ethnic [environments]" (Ambrosini, 2013).

However, would that short term impact stop there or would it linger into additional post-fascist phases? Has it been transferred into the discriminatory nature of extreme right-wing political parties?

Section 4.3: The Influence of Right-Wing Political Parties

The ideologically nationalist and Fascist inspired extreme right-wing political parties sustain the lingering impact of fascism's dogma. They have used fascism's ideology on race and discrimination and inserted it into their political rhetoric. As a result, racial discrimination in the form of anti-immigrant sentiment has re-emerged. In response to the verification of such a correlation, Chiara Volpato, a social psychologist, confirmed after extensive research "In Italy today, racist stereotypes of fascism have re-emerged. The Italian mentality derives from 'words and images' that come from the racist repertoire of fascism" (Volpato, 2011). The reactionary nature of anti-immigrant sentiment, as previously explained through the examination of sociological theories, is also maintained by the negative role of right-wing political discourse.

Italian right-wing politics, with their powerful rhetoric and fascist roots, produce almost parallel behavioral effects. They contribute to the maintenance of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italian society by targeting the vulnerable, or as referred to in this particular

case, “the ignorant” or those with a “provincial” mentality. According to a study conducted by the ESS, those who are interested and informed about politics tend to have a higher education level (Rustenbach, 2009, p.5). As result, there is a higher probability that these individuals will not be subject to political rhetoric and propaganda. Instead, they will cross-examine different sources of information in order to develop their own *valid* opinion. In 2013, Istat provided statistics of political participation by Italian citizens and showed that only about 10,8% of the population manifested such involvement, while the rest claimed association in an “invisible way” or through the media (Istat, Statistiche Report: La Partecipazione Politica in Italia, 2013). Obtaining information in this way also implies a deep political influence that contributes to maintaining a false interpretation of what is actually occurring. The *Political Affiliation Theory* supports such effect by proposing, “people who are alienated politically may be looking for others to blame and consequently, may be more negative toward immigrants” (Rustenbach, 2009, p.5).

Moreover, just as the media intentionally uses discriminatory terminology to portray immigrants in a negative way, politicians pertaining to extreme right-wing parties such as Lega Nord (the Northern League), La Destra (The Right), and Forza Nuova (the New Force), do the same. As evidenced in chapter 3, the same vernacular is repeated from the media, but racist statements are made to produce a persuasive effect and create a false depiction of reality regarding the number of immigrants in Italy. In fact, they “are strongly committed to promoting xenophobic messages” (Pogliano, 2011, p.6). Further insinuations are often made regarding the economic situation in Italy. Right-wing parties not only present immigration as a grave “problem” that should be “stopped” or “*fermato*”, but as an “economic challenge” which enables the “marginalization of racism” (Lentin, 2004, p.175). Although it is confirmed that the economic downturn and hardships created a worried Italian society, accusing immigrants of contributing to that depressed state is an overstatement. Right-wing political parties have often proposed to “block the entrance [of immigrants] and stop the multi-ethnic transformation of society” (Ambrosini, 2013).

Due to the portrayal by right-wing political parties along with the media, that most immigrants are illegal and poor, the concern about competition in the labor market permeates throughout Italian society (Hatton, 2016). As a result, anti-immigrant sentiment is ignited. Italian natives, often of a lower education and skill level are persuaded to believe that their jobs will be “stolen” by immigrants. It must be noted that such particular explanation of why anti-immigration sentiment permeates, is common in many immigrant countries. The Republican party in the United States, now more than ever, has contributed to the widespread negative view of immigration. For example, it is believed that undocumented and thus illegal immigrants, “take” jobs from American natives. According to a public survey in 2015, “51%...believe illegal immigrants are taking jobs away from U.S. citizens...while 39% disagree (Pulse Opinion Research, 2015).

In making such insinuations, exaggerations, and presenting a largely false image of immigrants, the extreme-right political parties, whose ideologies derive from fascist and nationalistic ones, attempt to maintain the ignorant and passive *status quo* thus detonating anti-immigrant sentiment among Italian natives. In fact, according to Chiara Volpato, “the discriminatory manners used during fascism towards Jews and the colonial population are the same that are used against foreign immigrants in Italy today” (Volpato, 2011). Upon researching she also confirmed that, “racist stereotypes are growing...as the topic of immigration is placed at the center of political discourse and activity” (Volpato, 2011).

Section 4.4: Manipulation by the Media

The use of media today, entails the mass communication of social matters in the public sphere via the Internet, social media, televised news programs, and newspaper articles. The mass media, also known as the “*fourth power*”, plays a dominant and often insidious role in shaping public opinion about immigration in Italy. The damaging way in which these media outlets *articulate* matters of immigration undoubtedly contributes to the molding of hostile and discriminatory sentiments towards immigrants (Gattino, 2015).

Along with globalization comes immigration, which intrinsically spreads diversity and multiculturalism, but Italian “propaganda portrays immigrants in a different light than they really are, inferior...and if they are seen in that way, they are also treated in that way...which may incite the view that they are less than human” (Volpato, 2011).

These methods principally involve the exaggeration of the immigration phenomenon, particularly regarding statistics, as well as the use of derogatory and racist terminology.⁶³ With the treatment of immigration as a “problem”, an “invasion” and a “threat” as well as a phenomenon to be “fought”, “combated”, and “stopped”, provides a great level of insecurity and fear among the public. Italians therefore feel as though immigrants have inundated their nation and their culture plagued by ethnic diversity; a reality that they still cannot accept (Naletto, 2014). In fact, Italy “finds it difficult to redefine itself as a multi-ethnic nation” (Ambrosini, 2013, p.179).

In addition, discriminatory terms used by media outlets, (that have been specifically identified in chapter 3), cause the public to categorize immigrants as illegal and as criminals. For example, the word “*extracomunitario*” legally meaning a non-European Citizen, is rarely used in its appropriate context and mostly refers to an illegal immigrant and a minority group, who is ethnically diverse and not integrated into society. However, it is “never employed to point out a Japanese tourist or an American one” (Benelli, 2010). Not only does the media and therefore the public, use this word discriminatorily, but it is even used improperly in an academic setting. Enrico Pugliese, a renowned Italian sociologist, stated that he did not regard *extracomunitario* as an offensive term and found the “obsession” of the term to be “wrong”, since it only implies someone who has difficulty entering a country, in this case Italy (Lanni, 2016).⁶⁴ However, defining it in such a minimal way downplays discrimination. The fact that even

⁶³ See Section 3.3.3

⁶⁴ The fact that this article is from “Open Migration”, “an open... informative project on migration... [that] is not founded prejudices and stereotypes...”, paradoxically brings into question the its intention and legitimacy of such a pro-migration source. Migration, O. (n.d.). *Missione*. Retrieved from [www.openmigration.org](http://openmigration.org): <http://openmigration.org/missione/>. Article in reference: Lanni, A. (2016). *Come è cambiata in 50 anni l'immigrazione in Italia?* Retrieved from [www.openmigration.org](http://openmigration.org): <http://openmigration.org/analisi/come-e-cambiata-in-50-anni-limmigrazione-in-italia/>

intellectuals and politicians, through media outlets, use the word ordinarily, gives the public “artificial” permission to use it to categorize immigrants. The “false” meanings of such terms become instilled in society, venting into anti-immigrant sentiment.

Furthermore, the exaggerated criminalization of immigrants by the media is not only associated with community violence, but today more than ever, with global terrorism and Islam. Instead of differentiating between culture, race, and religion, the word “Muslim” is often used as a “synonym” for “foreigner” and “immigrant”, particularly “illegal immigrant” (Pacella. J. M., 2011, p.354). Due to the global scale of terrorism in the last several years, pertaining to the Islamic State, immigrants of color are often referred to as “Muslim”, implying that they are associated with the terrorist group. A sign that refugees of the residency building *Palazzo Curtatone* in the center of Rome, wrote, could illustrate a prime example of the effect the quotidian use of this term has on immigrants. It states, “*Siamo Rifugiati non Terroristi*” or in English, “We are refugees, not terrorists” (Curridori, 2016). As a result, the level of expressed anti-immigrant sentiment, propelled by the media, has produced a just defense by immigrants.

Moreover, the cyclical impact of the media on the Italian public and subsequently anti-immigrant sentiment may be emphasized with the following statistics: In 2011, a staggering 80.9% of Italians informed themselves through television news programs (Censis, 2016). Although this number did decrease in 2016 to 63%, (a 17.9% declination), it still constitutes the majority of the population (Censis, 2016). However, the real concern develops when those that depend solely on this form of acquired knowledge, convincingly believe, internalize, and regurgitate the often amplified and falsified news in social settings. Such a cycle is damaging to a society as it contributes to a false sense of reality, and most perturbing, the perpetuation of a high level of *ignorance* and *status quo*. This social condition is yet again, utilized by the media to “perpetuate the perceived threat to national identity by tapping into anti-immigrant sentiments” (Gattino, 2015, p. 47).

Section 4.5: Neglecting the Past?

Another factor contributing to the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in society is the intentional disregard for Italy's historical past and its often-inaccurate depiction. Italy is a nation that has "lived through tragic experiences of racism" all of which in different forms (Lentin, 2004, p. 203). From victims of anti-Italianism to "convinced" supporters of colonial racism, it is evident that it has existed. However, both forms fail to be acknowledged in present day.

The reactionary racist sentiment that Italians were faced with when immigrating to America and Northern European countries is not something to be forgotten. It was indeed an excruciating experience, but its acknowledgement could stop the "externalization of racism" by sentimentally reminding the public of such harsh acts (Lentin, 2004, p.169). In addition, the lack of discussion and "comprehensive academic... [works about] the memory of Italian colonialism and fascism, encourages the idea that what happened after 1945 has redeemed the nation from its 'backwardness'" (Picker, 2013). Instead, the nationalistic phrase "*Italiani Brava Gente*" or "Italians, the good people"⁶⁵ developed during colonialism and has been utilized as a sociological tool to intentionally forget the fascist past (Favero. P., 2010, p. 138). Deliberately failing to acknowledge such a decisive period in Italian history has consequentially maintained the "racial culture" that fascism created, thus leading to the presence of anti-immigrant sentiment. In fact, there is a "recurring theme of the repeated denial of an existence of racism, not just in the country itself, but also with regards to its treatment during colonialism" (Smith, E., 2014).

In the process of disassociating Italy with a past in which racism was diversely present, the *falsification* of history plays a crucial role. It involves substituting and

⁶⁵ "*Italiani Brava Gente*" or "Italians, the good people", is a self-representative "image claiming the intrinsic goodness of the Italian people." Favero. P. (2010). Italians, the "Good People": Reflections on National Self-Representation in Contemporary Italian Debates on Xenophobia and War . *Outlines. Critical Practice Studies*; p. 140.

altering the historical truth. Italy has become globally famous for its culinary and cinematic culture as well as its relaxed ways and traditional values, such as the importance of family. However, these are also stereotypes that only depict Italy in a flattering manner as a “result of a strategic and cruel re-writing of history” (Favero, 2010). Such suppression of the past now leads to the denial of taking responsibility for the presence of discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy today.

Conclusion

The factual presentation of Italy's historical and sociological association to ethnic discrimination and racism, along with the subsequent examinations of such trends, has provided a crucial platform in explaining the causes of anti-immigrant sentiment present today. Such causes have been identified as: the relatively recent transformation from an emigration nation to one of immigration, the presence of discrimination in Italian history, (particularly during fascism), the manipulative roles of both extreme right-wing political parties and the media, as well as the denial of Italy's historical experiences pertaining to ethnic and racial discrimination. It has been the extensive historical reality of a mono-cultural, traditional, and ethnocentric society that has incited mostly involuntary hostile reactions to immigration and therefore the intrinsic presence of diversity. This attitude has been maintained and amplified by the fascist and nationalistic inspired right wing as well as by the exaggeration of the immigration phenomenon by the media.

In examining these origins of anti-immigrant sentiment, a principal source may be identified; fascism's indoctrination of Italian society. Mussolini's "*Fascistizzazione*", Manifesto on Race, implementation of Racial Laws, and emphasis on the importance of creating a pure "Italian Race", not only compelled Italian citizens to believe in the biological justifications of racism but it could have confined Italian society as a single culture and tradition. Through such *pluri-ethnic* resistance, the rejection of "the other" was encouraged and *ethnocentric-monoculturalism* was implanted. This evidentiary part of Italian history, leads to further questionable interpretations. Did the effect of such an authoritarian regime only last until fascism's cessation or did it linger and continue to permeate through Italian society? Has fascism's emphasis on creating a unified yet exclusive national reality, shape the mentality of many Italians? Most importantly, is it the root cause of the re-embryonic nature of discrimination and *involuntary* presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy today?

Even with such categorical and impending explanations for the prevalent existence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy today, numerous concerns remain. If it is a common sentiment and attitude within Italian society, why is it rarely discussed publically as an issue to combat? Why is it that the effort to “*combat*” immigration *exceeds* that of *fighting* racism and discrimination?

Moreover, immigration is an inevitable derivative of globalization that cannot be rejected. With its implied expansion of diversity, it should be regarded as a tool and opportunity to improve social dynamics, build upon social cohesion, and most importantly decrease discrimination through integration. However, the widespread presence of anti-immigrant sentiment, disintegrates, marginalizes, and divides society.

Furthermore, racism and discrimination are not innate, but rather learned and a result of societal authorities’ influence; for instance politics and the media. Thus, there needs to be a dynamic reversal of such a cycle. Instead of purposely keeping society ignorant through the falsification of information, the exaggeration of the immigration phenomenon, and the disregard for Italy’s historical past, authorities need to inform the public with the actuality of events. This can be accomplished through the adoption of *cultural relativism* and expansion of cultural and historical knowledge, in order to “engender a greater degree of tolerance [and apprehension, especially] among the new generation...[and create] the conditions for intercultural dialogue” and cooperation (Lentin, 2004, p. 80-81). This involves the inclusion of a more diverse academic curriculum, of more publicized multiethnic and cultural events, and the public acknowledgement and increased distribution of information about organizations that *do* attempt to fight racism.

In addition, public attention must be brought to the pervasive presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. Studies and articles do exist on this complex issue, but most fail to specify its relativity to Italy, and in particular to its influential historical past. On the contrary, most research that exists refers to more general contexts. Not only is there little research carried out, but also anti-immigrant sentiment is not publically discussed or

for that matter, denounced. Media outlets, authorities, and political figures continue to disregard the issue and fail to mention discrimination against immigrants in public discourse. Given that most Italians receive their information via different media sources, such as television platforms, publicly discussing such a subject would contribute to creating an informed society. Why shouldn't the Italian public be knowledgeable about the truth? Why do authorities need to encourage the maintenance of status quo, by means of manipulating news outlets?

Concurrently, not only does multiculturalism need to be utilized as a tool to oppose anti-immigrant sentiment and its discriminatory associations but Italy's historical past, complete with burdens, pain, and sensitivity, should be acknowledged and integrated into public discourse. By remembering the past, it can aid the declination of anti-immigrant sentiment. It should be a learning process. Not only did Fascism's regime spur dynamism to support racism, but the fact that Italians themselves were faced with anti-immigrant sentiment, should also spark a realization that immigrants entering and living in Italy today, are experiencing the same discrimination. With such historical acceptance, public action promoting anti-racism, anti-ethnic discrimination, and immigrant integration, should take place much more. As poet Giacomo Leopardi stated, "historical progress must bring humanity from nature to reason" (Picker, 2013).

Accordingly, the harm of anti-immigrant sentiment on a social and individual level needs to be recognized. The longer it lingers, the more difficult it will be to face. Such resistance and rejection of diversity can be considered a *negative* gentrification of race, ethnicity, and culture.

Bibliography

Books:

- Bevilacqua, P. D. (2002). *Storia Del Emigrazione Italiana* (Vol. 2). Rome: Donzelli Editore.
- Choate, M. (2008). *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Collotti, E. (2006). *Il fascismo e gli ebrei: Le leggi razziali in Italia*. Roma: Laterza & Figli Spa.
- Dal Lago, A. (1999). *Non-Persone. L'Esclusione dei Migranti in una Società Globale*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Gentile, E. (2005). *Fascismo: Storia e interpretazione*. Bari: Laterza & Figli Spa.
- Gregor, A. J. (1969). *The ideology of fascism: the rationale of totalitarianism*. Free Press.
- Gregor, A. J. (2006). *The Search for Neofascism: The Use and Abuse of Social Science*. Cambridge University Press.
- Griffin, R. F. (2004). *Fascism: Critical Conceptions in Political Science* (Vol. IV). London: Routledge .
- Guglielmo, J. &. (2003). *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*. New York: Routledge.
- Higham, J. (1955). *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick: Rutgers Univeristy Press.
- Hitchcock, W. I. (2003). *The Struggle For Europe: The Turbulent History of A Divided Continent, 1945 to the Present*. New York : Anchor Books.
- Jackson. Y. (2006). *Encyclopedia of Multicultural Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- LaGumina, S. J. (1999). *WOP!: A Documentary History of Anti-Italian Discrimination in the United States*. Toronto : Guernica Editions Inc.
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. California: University of California Press.
- Lentin, A. (2004). *Racism and Anti-Racism in Europe*. London: Pluto Press.

Reisigl, M. W. (2000). *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism*. Taylor & Francis.

Serra, I. (2009). *The Imagined Immigrant: Images of Italian Emigration to the United States between 1890 and 1924*. New Jersey: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp.

Skenderovic, D. (2009). *The Radical Right in Switzerland: Continuity & Change, 1945-2000*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Smith, D. M. (1997). *Modern Italy: A Political History*. University of Michigan Press.

Sòrgoni, B. (2002). Racist discourses and practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism . In & J. R. Grillo, *he Politics of Recognizing Difference. Multiculturalism Italian-style* (pp. 41-58). Aldershot, Uk: Ashagate.

Sumner, W. G. (1940). *Folkways: a study of the sociological importance of usages, manners, customs, mores and morals*. New York: Ginn and Company.

Todd, A. (2011). *Mussolini and Italy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

wa Wamwere, K. (2003). *Negative Ethnicity: From Bias to Genocide*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Journal Articles:

Ambrosini, M. (2013). Immigration in Italy: Between Economic Acceptance and Political Rejection . *Int. Migration & Integration* , 175–194 .

Bonifazi, C. H. (2009). The Italian Transition from an Emigration to Immigration Country. *IDEA Working Papers* .

Bonifazi, C. (2006). Italians and Foreign Immigration. *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research* 42 , 93-112.

Capussotti, E. (2010). Nordisti contro Sudisti Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Europe: 1950s and 1960s. . *Italian Culture* , 28, 121-138.

Casiño, T. C. (2010). Why People move: A prolegomenon to Diaspora Missiology. *Torch Trinity Journal* , 19-44.

Cavaioli, F. J. (2008). Patterns of Italian Immigration to the United States. *The Catholic Social Science Review* , 1-19.

Chiodo, S. (2014). Migranti e media: tra scoop e denuncia . *Cronache di ordinario razzismo* , 106-114.

Colombo, M. (2013). Discourse and Politics of Migration in Italy. *Journal of Language and Politics* , 157–179 .

Del Bocca, D. &. (2003). Italian Migration. *IZA Discussion Papers*.

di Duccio, Z. (2014). Il Papa va a Lampedusa . *Cronache di ordinario razzismo* , 140-143.

Favero, P. (2010). Italians, the “Good People”: Reflections on National Self-Representation in Contemporary Italian Debates on Xenophobia and War . *Outlines. Critical Practice Studies* , 138-153 .

Gattino, S. T. (2015). The effect of television viewing on ethnic prejudice against immigrants: A study in the Italian context . *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* , 44, 46–52 .

Gillette, A. (2001). The origins of the manifesto of racial scientists. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* .

Hatton, T. J. (2016). Immigration, public opinion and the recession in Europe. *Migration and Public Opinion* , 207-246.

Israel, G. (2007). "Il Document 'Il Fascismo E I Problemi Della Razza' Del Luglio 1938". *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 73 (2), 103-118.

Naletto, G. (2014). Gli spazi plurimi e infiniti del razzismo . *Cronache di ordinario razzismo*, 162-180.

Pacella, J. M. (2011). Welcome the Unwanted: Italy's Response to the Immigration Phenomenon and European Involvement. p. 341-358.

Sciortino, G. C. (2004). The Flows and the Flood: The Public Discourse on Immigration in Italy, 1969-2001. 94-113.

Reports & Papers:

Herrera, E. M. (2004). Public Opinion and Immigration Policies in Five EU Countries. *Accounting for (In)Consistency between Immigrants Selection and Integration Policies and Citizens' Attitudes*. . Florence: European University Institute. .

Micoli, M. P. (2014). *Dati Statistici Sull'Immigrazione in Italia dal 2008 al 2013*. Ministero Dell'Interno, Le Politiche del Personale Dell'Amministrazione Civile e Per Le Risorse Strumentali. Rome: Ministero Dell'Interno.

Pogliano, A. V. (2011). *Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership* . Turin: AMICALL.

Rustenbach, E. (2009). *Sources of Negative Attitudes Towards Immigrants: A Multi-level Analysis*. The Pennsylvania State University.

Smith, E. (2014). *Racism in Italy*. CERS.

(2010). *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*. Transatlantic Trends.

(2011). *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*. Transatlantic Trends.

(2014). *Transatlantic Trends: Mobility, Migration, and Integration*. Transatlantic Trends.

Websites:

Benelli, E. (2010). *Migration discourses in Italy*. Retrieved from www.cm.revues.org:
<https://cm.revues.org/1419#ftn8>

Berstein, H. (2012). *Transatlantic Public Opinion on Immigration: Important Lessons for Policymakers*. Retrieved from www.gmfus.org:
<http://www.gmfus.org/commentary/transatlantic-public-opinion-immigration-important-lessons-policymakers>

Censis. (2016). *Comunicazione e media* . Retrieved from www.censis.it:
http://www.censis.it/7?shadow_comunicato_stampa=121093

Doxa. (2016). *News: Immigrazione*. Retrieved from www.doxa.it:
<http://www.doxa.it/news/immigrazione-doxa70/>

European Social Survey. (2001). *About ESS*. Retrieved from www.europeansocialsurvey.org: <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/>

ESS EduNet. *What are 'anti-immigration attitudes'?* Retrieved from www.essedunet.nsd.uib.no:
<http://essedunet.nsd.uib.no/cms/topics/immigration/1/1.html#refSum60>

Frontex. (2017). *Central Mediterranean Route*. Retrieved from www.frontex.europa.eu:
<http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/>

Horowitz, J. M. (2010, January 12). *Widespread Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Italy*. Retrieved 2016, from www.pewglobal.org:
<http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/01/12/widespread-anti-immigrant-sentiment-in-italy/>

Human Rights Watch. (2009, Sept). *Italy-Libya Connection*. Retrieved from www.hrw.org: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/09/23/italy-libya-connection>

- Ipsos-Mori. (2014). *Perceptions are not reality: Things the world gets wrong*. Retrieved from [www.ipsos-mori.com: https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-10-things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx](https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-10-things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx)
- ISMU. (2016). *Irregolari e Sbarchi in Europa e in Italia- Presenze*. Retrieved from [www.ismu.org: http://www.ismu.org/irregolari-e-sbarchi-presenze/](http://www.ismu.org/irregolari-e-sbarchi-presenze/)
- Istat. (2016). *Indicatori Demografici*. Retrieved from [www.istat.it: https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/180494](https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/180494)
- Istat. (2013). *Statistiche Report: La Partecipazione Politica in Italia*. Retrieved from [www.istat.it: http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/136808](http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/136808)
- Istat. (2006-2016). *Stranieri Residenti al 1 Gennaio*. Retrieved 2017, from [www.dati.istat.it: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRRES1#](http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRRES1#)
- Lanni, A. (2016). *Come è cambiata in 50 anni l'immigrazione in Italia?* Retrieved from [www.openmigration.org: http://openmigration.org/analisi/come-e-cambiata-in-50-anni-immigrazione-in-italia/](http://openmigration.org/analisi/come-e-cambiata-in-50-anni-immigrazione-in-italia/)
- Library of Congress: Immigration*. (n.d). Retrieved from [www.loc.gov: https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/italian8.html](https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/italian8.html)
- Ministero Dell'Interno. (2016). *i numeri dell'asilo*. Retrieved from [www.interno.gov.it: http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/i-numeri-dellasil](http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/i-numeri-dellasil)
- Molnar, A. (2010, December 19). *History of Italian Immigration*. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from [www.mtholyoke.edu: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~molna22a/classweb/politics/Italianhistory.html#facing](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~molna22a/classweb/politics/Italianhistory.html#facing)
- Open Migration. (n.d.). *Missione*. Retrieved from [www.openmigration.org: http://openmigration.org/missione/](http://openmigration.org/missione/)
- Picker, G. (2013). *A ghost of ignorance? Race and racism in contemporary Italy*. Retrieved from [www.opendemocracy.net: https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/giovanni-picker/ghost-of-ignorance-race-and-racism-in-contemporary-italy](https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/giovanni-picker/ghost-of-ignorance-race-and-racism-in-contemporary-italy)
- Pulse Opinion Research, L. (2015). *Americans Think Illegals Are Taking Their Jobs*. (R. Reports, Producer) Retrieved from [www.rasmussenreports.com: http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/business/general_business/august_2015/americans_think_illegals_are_taking_their_jobs](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/business/general_business/august_2015/americans_think_illegals_are_taking_their_jobs)
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (1997). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from [www.plato.stanford.edu: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/popper/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/popper/)

Sunderland, J. (2012). *Italy: racism and risk*. Retrieved from [www.opendemocracy.net: http://www.opendemocracy.net/judith-sunderland/italy-racism-and-risk](http://www.opendemocracy.net/judith-sunderland/italy-racism-and-risk)

tuttaitalia. (2016). *Cittadini Stranieri in Italia*. Retrieved 2016, from [www.tuttaitalia.it: http://www.tuttaitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2016/](http://www.tuttaitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri-2016/)

UNHCR. (n.d.). *Asylum-Seekers*. Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c137.html)

UNHCR. (n.d.). *Mediterranean: Dead and Missing at Sea*. Retrieved from [www.data2.unhcr.org: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/52674](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/52674)

UNHCR. (2016). *Refugees/Migrants Response - Mediterranean*. Retrieved from [www.data.unhcr.org: http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=105](http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=105)

UNHCR. (2016). *UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?* Retrieved from [www.unhcr.org: http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html](http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html)

UNODC, U. N. (n.d.). *Migrant Smuggling*. Retrieved from [www.unodc.org: http://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html](http://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html)

Wike, R. (2008). *Italy's Malaise: La Vita Non È Così Dolce*. Retrieved from [www.pewglobal.org: http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/01/17/italys-malaise/](http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/01/17/italys-malaise/)

Newspaper Articles & Interviews:

Bartolini, S. (2016). “Allarmi son fascisti!” *L'insostenibile futuro del nazionalismo*. Micromega. Retrieved from <http://temi.repubblica.it/micromega-online/“allarmi-son-fascisti”-l-insostenibile-futuro-del-nazionalismo/>

Brogani, A. (2014, July 16). *Italiani in Germania: storia di una generazione di migranti*. Il Mitte Berlino. Retrieved from <http://www.ilmitte.com/italiani-germania-storia-generazione/>

Curridori, F. (2016). *Dentro il palazzo ostaggio dei profughi nel centro di Roma*. Retrieved from [www.ilgiornale.it: http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/palazzo-ostaggio-dei-profughi-nel-centro-roma-1300068.html](http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/palazzo-ostaggio-dei-profughi-nel-centro-roma-1300068.html)

Falco, E. (2012, July 10). *When Italian Immigrants Were 'the other'*. Retrieved from [www.edition.cnn.com http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/10/opinion/falco-italian-immigrants/](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/10/opinion/falco-italian-immigrants/)

Gunkel, C. (2011). *Ein Jahr, ein (Un-)Wort!* Spiegel Online. Retrieved from <http://www.spiegel.de/einestages/deutsche-sprachpreise-a-947377.html#featuredEntry>

n.a. *Italy migrants: Nigerian killed in Fermo race attack*. (2016). *BBC* . Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36733575>

Mariani, D. (2010, July 2). "Vietato ai Cani e agli Italiani". *Swissinfo.ch* Retrieved from http://www.swissinfo.ch/ita/immigrazione-da-sud_-_vietato-ai-cani-e-agli-italiani--/8959576

Pucciarelli, M. (2016). *Salvini: "Ripuliamo le città dagli immigrati"*. *stranieriinitalia*. Retrieved from <http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/attualita/attualita/attualita-sp-754/salvini-ripuliamo-le-citta-dagli-immigrati.html>

n.a. *Racism in Italy: Educating Cecile*. (2013). *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21584376-italys-first-black-minister-has-had-tough-political-baptism-educating-c-cile>

Volpato, C. (2011). *Stiamo Tornando al Razzismo Fascista*. (E. Tebano, Interviewer) *Infosannio*. Retrieved from <https://infosannio.wordpress.com/2011/01/14/stiamo-tornando-al-razzismo-fascista/>

Summary (In Italian)

Introduzione

Il *sentimento anti-immigrati* potrebbe essere definito come: “una traduzione concreta di una dimensione di un gruppo emarginato dall’*etnocentrismo*” (ESS Education Net, n.d). Infatti l’*etnocentrismo* è un “complesso di due diversi atteggiamenti: una fedele con attitudine acritica e positiva verso il proprio gruppo insieme ad un attitudine ostile e negativo verso gli altri gruppi” (Sumner, 1940).

Un gruppo o una persona etnocentrista si riferisce a coloro i quali giudicano quelli fuori dal gruppo, gli emarginati, in netto contrasto con i valori culturali “superiori” del proprio gruppo d’appartenenza. Perciò quando si contestualizza l’*etnocentrismo* nel fenomeno emigratorio, lo si evidenzia attraverso la presenza etnica, razziale e discriminante che creano preoccupazioni e inaccurate percezioni delle diversità esistenti sul territorio. Queste possono essere concepite come una minaccia concreta perchè viste come una componente sociale atipica che genera distanze fisiche e separazioni. Il risultato è una forma di reazione negativa che può, nel caso specifico degli immigrati, produrre un sentimento opposto; ossia contrario, definito anti-immigrati.

Quantunque, numerosi intellettuali e studiosi sostengono che i sentimenti anti-immigrati si esprimono al livello individuale. Questa disserzione, intende esaminare una possibile variabile alternativa basata sulle circostanze e le condizioni esistenti, come nel caso Italiano. Perciò sarà esaminato e valutato le cause dell’emergere del sentimento anti-immigrati, come una spiacevole realtà ed una possibile connotazione anche ideologica e metodologica, con il periodo storico dell’Italia durante il fascismo. Infatti, in questo periodo, si cercò di organizzare una società basata sul centrismo culturale con una politica razzista ed etnocentrista. Dunque, è possibile esserci un reale riferimento che ha potuto trasmettere e condizionare nell’Italia contemporanea quei sentimenti di pregiudizio e di razzismo contro gli immigrati che sono state riprese e adottate dalle forze politiche conservatrici e di destra? Pertanto, questa disserzione cercherà, attraverso un esame storico sociologico con il supporto di dati statistici, la validità dell’indagine.

Capitolo I: Storia dell'Emigrazione Italiana: Dall'Emigrazione all'Immigrazione

Per comprendere meglio il sentimento anti-immigrati nell'attuale società Italiana in rapporto alla sua storia, è necessario che questo atteggiamento sia esaminato e supportato dai dati statistici e documenti disponibili. Questi dati, inoltre, tendono a dimostrare la magnitudine del fenomeno immigratorio (legale e illegale), che ha condizionato la dinamica sociale della società Italiana. Perciò, rimane utile porsi domande come, fino a che punto l'improvvisa trasformazione dell'Italia in un paese d'immigrazione ha contribuito a costruire un atteggiamento inconsapevole dei cittadini Italiani verso il sentimento anti-immigrati?

Per iniziare tale ricerca è cruciale esaminarla con reali evidenze. Nel primo capitolo sono raccolte le fasi più rilevanti della storia dell'emigrazione Italiana che aveva conosciuto questo fenomeno con la perdita di forze lavoro e di capitale umano che dal Sud si trasferivano nel Nord dell'Italia industrializzata. Contemporaneamente, questo fenomeno vedeva migliaia di cittadini recarsi in Nord Europa e varcare gli oceani per cercare lavoro negli USA, Sud America, e Australia. Saranno dimostrati le fasi di ogni processo emigratorio, con una particolare attenzione verso il fenomeno immigratorio che si va sviluppando in Italia. Questo fenomeno, relativamente nuovo, comprenderà una particolare distinzione, tra l'immigrazione legale, e quella dei più recenti episodi dell'immigrazione illegale. Inoltre, da notare, che le statistiche disponibili si riferiscono solamente al contesto Italiano; per il quale la magnitudine di tale fenomeno può essere indubbiamente considerato ampio.

È necessario, per costruire anche una memoria storica, comprendere a fondo le cause e gli effetti delle grandi risorse umane di cui l'Italia si è dovuta privare nell'arco di un secolo. Indicherò in questo capitolo come tale trasformazione ha avuto un effetto sull'economia Italiana. Occorre, comunque sottolineare che non risultano studi avanzati per una correlazione comparativa o per una analisi critica sugli effetti psicologici e sociologici che hanno influenzato la società Italiana. Nei periodi che vanno dal 1861 fino

agli anni 70, oltre 26,000,000 d'Italians svuotarono interi paesi e territori per cercare di costruirsi un futuro migliore; come da Figura 1 (Bonifazi, 2009). Colpirono soprattutto i territori più lontani dalle aree industrializzate. Come indicato, ebbero ricollegarsi alle prime emigrazioni che avvennero prima dal Nord-est verso la Francia, Svizzera e Germania, poi, verso le Americhe. Una emigrazione transoceanica che ha indubbiamente influenzato la cultura italiana come pure ha contribuito allo sviluppo ed il miglioramento dei territori e villaggi da cui molte famiglie provenivano; per esempio, le rimesse. Da notare che durante il periodo Fascista l'emigrazione sia interna, che oltre i confini italiani, fu molto limitata. Comunque, la ripresa dell'emigrazione ebbe un suo slancio dopo la II Guerra Mondiale.

Inoltre, il fenomeno emigratorio ebbe un suo arresto negli anni 70 ed iniziò invece un percorso inverso con quello dell'immigrazione. Infatti, è stato questo periodo un punto di svolta della storia dell'immigrazione in Italia. È emerso così, un nuovo fenomeno con oltre 200,000 immigrati per ogni anno, fino a raggiungere, successivamente un graduale declino fino a 50.000 (Figura 1.2) (Bonifazi, 2009). Tale esodo ebbe una sua forte ripresa negli anni 90 e poi nel 2004 con una nuova riemersione nel 2006. I dati dimostrano che nel 2006 erano registrati in Italia 2.700.000 immigrati fino a diventare 5.026.153 nel 2016 (Istat, Stranieri residenti al 1 gennaio, 2016).

Oggi, gli immigrati in Italia costituiscono 8.3% dell'intera popolazione (Istat, Indicatori demografici, 2016). La loro provenienza è varia: inizialmente dai paesi balcanici soprattutto dall'Albania, Romania, Moldavia e dall'Ucraina che insieme avevano raggiunto il 50% dei residenti stranieri. Seguirono, negli ultimi 20 anni, quelli provenienti dai paesi dell'Est Europa e poi dall'Africa e dall'Asia. Pertanto, l'Italia diventa ufficialmente un paese "inondato" dal fenomeno migratorio che ha prodotto una tensione nuova tra i cittadini italiani corroborata da informazioni amplificate, unilaterali e di cronache negative. Ciò ha contribuito a far diventare un argomento tipico della società italiana con effetti di carattere politico, economico e sociale che hanno trovato un loro riferimento nella denominazione "crisi immigrazione." Tra questi ci sono alcuni

fattori che hanno causato una confusione nel distinguere i clandestini e quelli legali come pure i rifugiati politici. I dati sono stati prevalentemente forniti dai NGO e più recentemente dal Ministero Italiano dell'Interno. Queste ricerche e statistiche hanno contribuito a decifrare e distinguere le varie componenti dell'immigrazione e così anche identificare le loro origini e ancora più specifico gli stati di provenienza. Dai paesi già indicati si devono aggiungere quelli dalla crisi del Nord Africa, definito come un evento colossale del 2010 e noto come la Primavera Araba. Tunisia, Libia poi Iraq, Siria e Yemen, hanno contribuito al numero di immigrati richiedenti asilo politico. Ma le ondate degli immigrati che sbarcano sulle coste Italiane, secondo l'agenzia UNHCR provengono per la gran parte dalla Nigeria che costituiscono oltre il 21% di coloro che sono stati individuati con gli sbarchi. L'importanza di questi dati statistici rimangono rilevanti ed essenziali per comprendere meglio l'impatto sociale che è avvenuto e "colpito" il cittadino Italiano. Ed è possibile dedurre che proprio in questo periodo e con l'arrivo degli immigrati, i sentimenti anti-immigrati hanno iniziato ad emergere.

Inoltre, come sarà discusso successivamente, l'attenzione posta in riferimento all'identità etnica e alla loro origine, ha prodotto tra gli italiani un'opinione generica dell'immigrato. Come un'istitutiva forma di protezione, di distinzione sociale, in cui il diverso, lo sconosciuto, o la figura fuori dal familiare, ha contribuito a far risorgere il seme della discriminazione. Perché il seme? Nel corso dell'introduzione è stato sottolineato la legge razziale che ha colpito strati sociali ed etnie, ma anche in modo specifico gli emarginati.

Capitolo II: Origini dei Sentimenti Anti-Immigrati e Discriminazione nella Storia d'Italia: Emigrazione, Imperialismo e Fascismo.

Nel tracciare l'esame storico, ma solo in relazione alla presenza della discriminazione e dei sentimenti anti-immigrati, che si è forgiato lungo il percorso del passato storico dell'Italia. Sarà dimostrato le origini del razzismo e le discriminazioni contro le etnie e le diversità culturali. La prima parte intende dimostrare l'esistenza dei

sentimenti e comportamenti contro gli Italiani che furono costretti ad emigrare. In modo particolare, sarà indicato l'emigrazione in America (USA) e nel Nord d'Europa come pure saranno illustrati alcuni aspetti dell'emigrazione interna dal Sud al Nord durante la quale molti Italiani meridionali furono vittime delle ostilità dai cittadini del Nord.

Ci sono voluti anni di privazioni e anche lotte per affermare i propri valori che hanno contribuito a trasformare anche gli ospitanti. Alcuni termini dispregiativi erano racchiuse nelle espressioni come, "Italiani Banditi" e "Mendicanti" che si usavano nella vita reale insieme alle forme di sfruttamento sul lavoro. Condizioni che s'aggravavano e trovavano una maggiore espressione durante le crisi economiche degli anni 20 e 50 con l'applicazione del concetto del Social Darwinism e la sua giustificazione etnocentrica (LaGumina, 1999). Alcuni episodi di rilevanza storica si possono ricercare nei fatti di New Orleans o gli attacchi ad opera del Ku Klux Klan che definivano gli Italiani [come] "peggiori dei neri" (Library of Congress: Immigration, n.d). Ma gli Italiani negli USA sono, dopo molti anni, riusciti in gran parte ad integrarsi in una società multi-etnica e multiculturale che ha valorizzato la musica, l'arte culinaria, la moda e le capacità imprenditoriali.

Ma più vicino all'Italia, tali atteggiamenti di puro razzismo si verificarono nella vicina Svizzera e in Germania. Lì, avvennero fatti di pura discriminazione sui luoghi di lavoro e nella vita sociale con l'obiettivo di isolare e trattare come inferiori gli immigrati e le loro famiglie. Infatti, gli Italiani in Europa erano rinchiusi in una forma stereotipata. Scritte come "vietato ai cani e agli Italiani" apparivano davanti ai locali pubblici (Mariani, 2010). Ma come nel caso Americano, anche nel resto d'Europa gli Italiani sono riusciti a trovare le loro forme d'integrazione che hanno avuto un impatto sulla componente commerciale ma anche in quella intellettuale. È un bene fare memoria anche delle forme discriminatorie che si verificavano nel corso dell'emigrazione interna. Oltre due milioni d'Italiani si trasferirono al Nord per lavoro provenienti da un Sud abbandonato e sottosviluppato per decenni (Capussotti 2010 p. 17). La netta separazione tra Sud e Nord ha contribuito al sorgere di forme discriminatorie basate anche dalla

mancanza di rapporti, chiusi e limitati per anni, tra le varie aree del paese. Quindi il non poter comunicare generava distorsioni culturali e sociali. Infatti I meridionali venivano facilmente etichettati come “gli altri”. Una distinzione ancora tutt’ora esistente, anche se in modo minore (Guglielmo, 2003, p. 9). Ma come, da dove è originata l’esistenza e la provenienza di una intra-discriminazione tra gli Italiani?

Un altro aspetto rilevante si sofferma sul periodo Fascista durante il quale l’ideologia è adoperata come strumento di separazione e discriminazione razziale; per esempio nel caso dell’occupazione dell’Etiopia e della Somalia. Questa parte intende esaminare e spiegare che i germi del razzismo si erano diffuse durante il periodo Fascista. L’avventura nell’Africa per una conquista coloniale durante la quale viene imposta la politica della “razza Italiana” contribuì ad espandere l’idea della razza pura. Anche perchè, le ideologie basate sul nazionalismo e le scelte legate alle politiche restrittive, sui matrimoni, istruzione, e separazione razziale, hanno inculcato un modo di pensare nella maggior parte del popolo Italiano. Per esempio, l’adozione di tali ideologie erano poi applicate nei paesi occupati come gli abitanti originari dell’Eritrea i quali erano considerati inferiori. In questo paese vennero applicati forti limitazioni dei propri diritti civili. Il Manifesto della Razza e la coscienza di razza erano idee molto influenti nel determinare la superiorità di questa ;che si esprimeva nel regolamento del “*madamismo*” ossia vietare il rapporto sessuale tra i colonizzatori e i cittadini nativi (Sòrgoni, 2002, p. 3). Queste espressioni di razzismo presenti e adottate nel passato, confermano uno stadio d’intolleranza molto significativa, anche dal punto di vista culturale.

Capitolo III: Documentazione della la Presenza del Sentimento Anti-immigrati in Italia: Andamenti ed Evidenze.

Si esaminerà la comprensione dell’attuale tendenza del sentimento diffuso anti-immigrati e le conseguenti reazioni contro di essi. Questa tendenza verrà supportata dai dati disponibili che dimostrano le opinioni espresse degli Italiani verso il nuovo fenomeno dell’immigrazione. I dati e i fatti raccolti, testimoniano gli atti di razzismo e

l'uso degli atteggiamenti discriminatori adottati nella vita pubblica degli Italiani e delle forze politiche conservatrici di destra e da parte dei mass media.

Inoltre, verranno considerati alcuni metodi e indagini con letteratura e gli studi disponibili sul tema del sentimento anti-immigrati. Ciò è importante per comprendere fino a che punto questo sentimento anti-immigrati è presente sul territorio Italiano e tra gli Italiani dove la questione immigrazione è un tema molto sentito e discusso ma non dispone di sufficienti dati. L'immigrazione va comunque, inserita anche nel contesto globale, poichè l'Italia assorbe un numero inferiore dell'immigrazione rispetto agli altri paesi industrializzati. Infatti, i dati disponibili indicano che questa sopravvalutazione è spesso utilizzata dalle forze politiche per provocare reazioni anti-immigrati. Questo può essere verificato da Pew Research Center nello studio condotto nel 2007 e dallo studioso Horowitz e dalla più recente indagine, Doxa del 2015 che dimostra una opinione negativa degli Italiani (62%) sulla presenza degli immigrati in Italia.

Un altro rilevante elemento che va analizzato è quello della falsa concezione sul numero e la categoria data agli immigrati; ossia quelli legali e quelli invece illegali. Una generalizzazione che riserva confusione e poca comprensione; le cui diversità, se meglio spiegate, potrebbero determinare una diversa concezione dell'immigrato. Questo, invece, potrebbe essere visto come un soggetto che crea opportunità per una reale integrazione. Avverso, contro l'illegalità che spesso proviene da paesi in stato di guerra o di coloro i quali posseggono un basso livello d'istruzione. La questione diventa un ulteriore problema quando non si riesce a trasmettere e chiarire queste differenze che potrebbero essere un elemento per mitigare le tensioni e i conflitti sociali.

Per esaminare in Italia, il livello dell'uso del sentimento anti-immigrati, diventa cruciale identificare l'uso della terminologia derogatoria in riferimento agli immigrati. Questa era una forma linguistica usata prevalentemente per gli italiani negli Stati Uniti d'America. Tali espressioni che servono per caratterizzare in termini negativi vengono oggi usati in Italia. La preponderanza e la proliferazione exnofobica, il pregiudizio e il discorso pubblico sugli immigrati è fortemente condizionato da due specifici fattori:

quello politico rappresentato dai partiti di destra e quello dei media. Per esempio i termini “*vu cumprà*”, “*extracomunitario*”, “*marocchino*”, “*drogati*” e “*sporchi*” sono oramai parte di un linguaggio comune (Pacella. J. M., 2011). Perfino negli stadi di calcio, certi termini vengono ampiamente usati contro i calciatori di colore. Fatti, che spesso raggiungono forme di violenza come nella città di Fermo o ancora prima verso l’autorità politica come l’On.le, Cecile Kyenge, ministro della Repubblica Italiana che fu catalogata come “*orang-utan*” (Racism in Italy: Educating Cecile, 2013).

La nozione del multiculturalismo pur essendo ampiamente diffuso in altri paesi, sembra non essere ben accettata in Italia. Questa idea che valorizza le diversità culturali come precedentemente esaminato, è stato ostacolato anche dal corso storico durante il quale si promuoveva il monoculturalismo causando paure, sospetti e apprensioni. Tale atteggiamento è esaminato e dimostrato nello studio condotto dal ESS da cui si deduce che la maggioranza degli Italiani sostengono che gli immigrati devono assimilarsi alla cultura Italiana (Herrera, 2004, p. 9).

Capitolo IV: Spiegazioni e Fattori Contribuenti: Perché il Sentimento Anti-Immigrati Esiste in Italia?

Nell’utilizzare le evidenze accumulate nel corso della ricerca, circa la presenza del sentimento anti-immigrati in Italia; hanno fornito le spiegazioni di questo fenomeno diffuso che è supportato dall’esame di una sequenza di fattori multipli e interrelati.

Un fattore rilevante è l’emarginazione sociale come sostenuta dalla *Teoria Culturale della Emarginazione* che asserisce che “le persone tendono a possedere una predisposizione anti immigranti quando non riescono a costruire un legame con loro” (Rustenbach, 2009, p. 4). Tale concetto è stato dibattuto anche nella nota tesi (Scontro di Civiltà) di Samuel Huntington dove sostiene che una maggiore probabilità del conflitto può “avvenire quando non si riconoscono le diversità culturali e religiose” (Rustenbach, 2009). Altre teorie come quella del *Contact Theory*, quando avviene un contatto casuale senza sviluppare una relazione sociale, “contribuisce alla teoria del sospetto e

dell'ostilità" (Rustenbach, 2009, p. 7). Occorre aggiungere altre forme di ricerche basate sul rapporto con il vicinato quando l'immigrato introduce un elemento d'incertità o quando avviene un fatto negativo e lo si attribuisce all'immigrato. Questi fattori prevalgono ed emergono con maggiore evidenza tra gli abitanti di una società meno istruita ed informata.

Inoltre, in questo capitolo sarà valorizzato l'impatto del regime Fascista nella società Italiana. In particolare, la diffusione dell'ideologia sulla discriminazione razzista come una delle potenziali cause che ha origine nel sistema che si è prolungato fino ai tempi d'oggi. Anche la nozione a sostegno della Razza Ariana definita biologicamente superiore, ha contribuito alla pratica negativa sul valore universale dell'umanità, marginalizzando la gente di colore e degli "altri". Inoltre, sono evidenti i sintomi d'intolleranza razziale anche tra gli Italiani come nel rapporto tra Nord e Sud con distinzioni marcate, come "inferiori" o di "pelle scura" (Guglielmo 2003, p. 9) che si trasferiva anche sui posti di lavoro (Capussotti, 2010, p.10). La nozione dell'etnicità non è una teoria innata e radicata in un popolo ma, come sostiene wa Wamwere, noto scrittore Kenyano è un dualismo per far crescere il concetto delle superiorità e inferiorità (wa Wamwere, 2003). Così nel caso italiano si è maturata questa idea di superiorità del Cittadino del Nord nei confronti del Cittadino del Sud.

A questi atteggiamenti ha contribuito anche la presenza di un approccio pseudo-scientifico tale da incoraggiare l'uso dell'etnocentrismo come forma discriminante che andava diffondendosi in Italia. Perciò, la premessa inserita nella ricerca, è anche basata su una considerazione di tipo storico-sociologico le cui condizioni di vita divennero stringenti, con privazioni delle proprie libertà individuali.

Nel corso di tale periodo storico, le condizioni di vita e di libertà divennero stringenti e per cui è imperativo porsi una domanda: come e perchè è riemersa la discriminazione e l'involontaria presenza del sentimento anti-immigrati sul territorio Italiano? Inoltre, è necessario chiedersi: quali sono stati gli effetti della politica razziale del regime Fascista che ha influenzato le attuali forze conservatrici e i partiti di destra in

Italia? Esiste un legame tra quella dottrina politica, per cui le radici razziste sono riaffiorite e usate per esprimere il sentimento anti-immigrati? Anche alcuni docenti più recenti hanno sostenuto ed indicato tali condizionamenti. Chiara Volpato, psicologa sociale sostiene che:

“Oggi, difficilmente qualcuno oserebbe sostenere apertamente una supposta inferiorità di altri popoli come facevano i nazisti e i Fascisti nei confronti di ebrei e neri. Eppure nel dibattito pubblico e politico si usano senza pudore le stesse ‘strategie di deligitimazione’ come si dice in termini scientifici. Soprattutto nei confronti degli immigrati...oggi tutte le ricerche scientifiche mostrano che in Italia sono in aumento gli ‘steriotipi razzisti’, insieme a quelli omofobi e sessisti...abbiamo analizzato tutti i numeri della difesa della razza, la rivista con cui il regime faceva propaganda razziale – era distribuita anche nelle scuole. E abbiamo paragonato le sue illustrazioni con i manifesti della Lega Nord” (Volpato, 2011).

Un’altra affermazione del Professore Stefano Bartolini in un suo articolo, sostiene, citando lo storico Polanyi, che “Le forme nazionaliste hanno molto aumentato il loro peso politico in tanti paesi. Si rivela una similitudine culturale: I nazionalismi degli anni 30 e quelli odierni sono entrambi basati su un richiamo identitario spesso condito con venature di autoritarismo e di razzismo” (Bartolini, S., 2016). In effetti è possibile che il regime abbia creato l’effetto “*trickle*” di una ripresa del fenomeno razzista che si è sviluppato nel corso della storia fino ai tempi più recenti?

Un ulteriore fattore, che sarà valorizzato, è quello dell’ideologia Fascista che ha trasmesso e condizionato l’ambiente dove i politici più conservatori e i media cercano di trarre vantaggi individuali e d’interesse di parte. Il legame che si crea tra le forze politiche conservatrici Italiane e il sentimento anti-immigrati è alimentato spesso giudizi arrangiati, occasionali, speculativi ma quasi mai esplicativi. Rimane un fattore da esaminare: in considerazione alle credibilità che in modo positivo l’Italia si è conquistata anche grazie al sacrificio degli emigrati, nel valorizzare prodotti ma anche idee innovative. Quindi sarebbe necessario costruire una memoria obbiettiva, assumendosi responsabilità che si confrontano con la realtà per mitigare il sentimento anti-immigrati; e

creare i presupposti necessary, fornendo le giuste opportunità per una loro graduale integrazione.

Conclusione

La reale presentazione della storia d'Italia e quella di formulare una associazione sociologica che determina la discriminazione e il sentimento anti-immigrati, supportata da un esame costruito con dati e statistiche. Questi diventano determinanti affinché si possa costituire una piattaforma che tende a spiegare gli effetti e il legame della dottrina Fascista basata sull' etnocentrismo e monoculturalismo che si è conservata ed è coltivata nella mentalità e nella cultura di numerosi Italiani. Un embrione che si va sviluppando con l'espressione sempre più acuta verso il sentimento anti-immigrati. Questo può contribuire a diminuire i valori del pluralismo culturale che potenzialmente può esprimersi nelle diversità che si vanno formando in un'Italia diversa dal passato. La presenza di milioni di immigrati pone certamente una domanda cruciale: quale Italia per il futuro?

L'esperienza dell'esodo Italiano dell'emigrazione potrà essere un utile strumento di confronto con l'attuale fenomeno dell'immigrazione che, secondo i dati, non è destinata a frenarsi. Infatti è ampiamente confermato come un fenomeno di livello globale. L'Italia, perciò è chiamata a confrontarsi con i cambiamenti scoprendo e valorizzando quelle diversità culturali che possono essere una grossa opportunità per il rinnovo della società Italiana. È indubbio che le forze conservatrici devono modificare le proprie posizioni oltranziste e discriminatorie che insieme alle altre forze politiche più aperte e progressiste debbono mirare al bene collettivo. Sono perciò importanti le conoscenze storiche culturali dei diversi nella forma e nello scambio reciproco. Questo, e un mezzo efficace, come dimostrato da altri paesi industrializzati, è il dialogo interculturale. Questo deve diffondersi nelle scuole e nelle università con curriculum innovativi e corrispondenti alla nuova realtà Italiana. Da qui potrebbe aver inizio la

costruzione di una forma di multiculturalismo Italiano che potrebbe sostituire quegli atteggiamenti anti-immigrati. È appropriato citare la voce di un grande poeta italiano, Giacomo Leopardi: “il progresso storico deve condurre l’umanità dalla natura alla ragione” (Picker, 2013).

Pertanto, il danno negativo nell’adozione e diffusione del sentimento anti-immigranti a livello sociale ed individuale deve essere riconosciuto dalla società e dalle istituzioni. Poichè più si protrae questo problema più sarà difficile affrontarlo in futuro. Anche perchè una resistenza su questa questione, nel rigettare le diversità culturali può generare una gentrificazione razziale etnica e culturale.