*L'Altro in Italia*:

# Racial Exclusion and Italian Identity Construction through Citizenship Law

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An Honors Thesis for the
Department of International Relations

Tufts University, 2018

**Acknowledgements**

Over the course of this thesis, I received academic and personal support from various professors and scholars, including but not limited to: Cristina Pausini, Kristina Aikens, Anne Moore, Consuelo Cruz, Medhin Paolos, Lorgia García Peña, David Art, Richard Eichenberg, and Lisa Lowe. I also want to mention the friends and fellow thesis writers with whom I passed many hours in the library: Joseph Tsuboi, Henry Jani, Jack Ronan, Ian James, Francesca Kamio, and Tashi Wangchuk.

Most importantly, this thesis could not have happened without the wisdom and encouragement of Deirdre Judge. Deirdre and I met in October of my senior year, when I was struggling to make sense of what I was even trying to write about. With her guidance, I set deadlines for myself, studied critical theory, and made substantial revisions to each draft I produced. She is truly a remarkable scholar and mentor who I know will accomplish great things in her life.

And lastly, thank you to my parents, who have always supported me in every academic and personal endeavor, most of which are related in some way or another to Italy. *Grazie.*

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

My maternal grandfather, Giuseppe Gizzi, was born and raised in Ariano Irpino, Italy. In 1958, at the age of 32, he immigrated to New Jersey to continue his career as a doctor. He met an American woman, and my mother was born in 1961. Fifty years later, my mother and I discovered that we were eligible for Italian citizenship by *iure sanguinis*, since Italian "citizenship is passed on from parent to child without limitation of generation, on the condition that none of the ancestors has ever renounced their citizenship."[1] All we had to do to apply for citizenship was provide certain documentation of my grandfather's life. There was no language requirement or citizenship test. Having grown up in the United States, where citizenship is granted *ius soli* to those who are born within the national borders and there are strict requirements for citizenship for those born outside of the country, this struck me as strange. After watching the Ghanaian-Italian filmmaker Fred Kuwornu's documentary *18 Ius Soli*, I discovered that access to citizenship was much more restricted for people who had grown up in Italy without Italian parents. This inspired me to conduct a more critical inquiry into Italian citizenship laws.

Juxtaposing my own experience, the citizenship rights activist and artist Medhin Paolos was born in Italy in 1980 to Eritrean parents who had emigrated from the former Italian colony.[2] Growing up in Milan, she was always aware that she was "*non una italiana bianca, sempre riconoscibile come altro*" (not a white Italian, therefore always recognizable as the other).[3] Her father was well-informed of the rules regarding citizenship for children born to immigrants in

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[1] "Citizenship by Descent," Italian Consulate of San Francisco, accessed May 9, 2018, https://conssanfrancisco.esteri.it/consolato_sanfrancisco/en/i_servizi/per_i_cittadini/cittadinanza/citizenship-by-descent.html.

[2] Medhin Paolos, In Person, April 4, 2018.

[3] Paolos.

Italy, and when Paolos turned 18, she applied for citizenship. Two of her friends came with her as witnesses, and she recalled signing a large book that marked her entrance into the Italian citizenry. At the end of the ceremony, an immigration officer announced, "*Benvenuti in Italia*" (Welcome to Italy).[4] That phrase stuck with Paolos, who had grown up a mere three subway stops away from the office. Despite being born and raised in Italy, Paolos still had to apply for citizenship, and that was when she was welcomed legally into the country. Growing up without citizenship had limited her movement in Italy and internationally, and Paolos told me that she never really identified as Italian.[5] Most children born to foreigners in Italy face similar challenges–their legal status had limited their opportunity and involvement in education, travel, and civil society.

Citizenship is more than just a legal status–it guarantees rights and societal participation and implies belonging. The current Italian citizenship law requires that people born in Italy to non-citizens or brought to Italy at a young age cannot apply for citizenship until 18 and must prove that they have lived their entire lives in Italy legally. Meanwhile, a person of Italian descent (i.e. at least one Italian grandparent) living in Argentina can acquire citizenship simply by attaining the proper documentation. A citizenship regime that gives legal status to someone with a single Italian grandparent but denies it to child born in Italy to legal immigrants must be understood as institutionalized racism that has built upon historical legacies of exclusion.[6] The growing presence of second generation immigrants on the Italian soil has generated activism and intense debate about what it means to be Italian.

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[4] Paolos.

[5] Paolos.

[6] Lorgia García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," *Kalfou* 3, no. 2 (2016): 223, http://dx.doi.org/10.15367/kf.v3i2.102.

In this thesis, I aim to answer the following questions: How have citizenship laws in Italy constructed race and created ethnicity? How has racialization served to elaborate an Italian identity? How does citizenship function as a tool of legal and social exclusion?

To shed light on the intricate histories associated with citizenship law in Italy, I will conduct case studies of four periods in Italy history, studying the motives for and effects of citizenship law of that time period and the associated discourses surrounding race. A historical sweep of citizenship law in Italy reveals how the formation of race and ethnic citizenship are intrinsically tied to the modern nation-state. Conducting these case studies of the evolution of citizenship law and racial discourse in Italy highlights the dependency of the Italian identity upon a racialized 'Other.' This 'Other' has changed several times throughout the course of Italian history to incorporate new members into Italian whiteness.

I have divided the history of the modern state of Italy into four periods, based on sociopolitical developments and the most prominent target of racism and 'Otherization' at that time. There are certainly some continuities between these time periods; therefore, in cases of overlap, I have chosen to place certain sub-sections based on argument and relevance as opposed to year. The four periods are: Liberal Italy (1861 -1910s), Colonial and Fascist Italy (1920s - 1945), Postwar Italy (1940s - 1970s), and Contemporary Italy (1970s - present).

Each chapter studies in the detail the citizenship laws of the period, as well as laws of immigration and repatriation directly relating to citizenship. I also provide an overview of prominent discourses and ideologies of the era on race and Italian national identity. These citizenship laws legally codify what it means to be Italian and are constantly in conversation with and contribute to discourse and public opinion on belonging and material access–essentially, the non-legal aspects of being a citizen.

I will argue that citizenship laws have been used in Italy both to construct race and to discriminate upon those racial lines. Constructions of race vary based on the time period, reflecting the will of the government and of the political elite, but were consistently enacted through citizenship law and its application. The deeply engrained understanding of *italianità* as diasporic and Italy's failure to grapple with its colonial and fascist past have led to a widespread elimination of such topics from the public sphere have led to a widespread exclusion of non-Italians from the nation.

The liberal period, examined in the first chapter, consists of the unification of the Italian state, and the processes of state consolidation and nation-building, as well as the waves of emigration from Southern Italy to the Americas and northern Europe in the fifty years after 1861. I analyze the unification of Italy as a case of internal colonialism, in which the political elite of the North annexed the southern half of the peninsula, utilizing a civilizing mission and imposing statehood onto a peasantry who had never heard of 'Italy.' The very first citizenship law of the Italian nation-state, established in 1865, aimed to unite the Italian people under a single ethnicity, positing an ethnic understanding of citizenship that relied upon a patriarchal inheritance, which endures to this day.

The second chapter deals with colonial and fascist Italy as starting after in the twentieth century. Significant continuity exists between the Liberal and Fascist periods, as there was little initial change in Italian colonial policies under fascism from the previous liberal government. After 1935, there was a dramatic shift in Italian racial ideology, especially with regards to citizenship. The colonial and fascist regime fabricated new racial 'Others' through citizenship law, incorporating the Southerner into Italian whiteness while simultaneously excluding Jews

and Africans through stripping them of citizenship. These new 'Others' served to racially unify the Italian nation, which Mussolini hailed as a crowning achievement of his regime.

In the third chapter, on postwar Italy, I discuss practices of repatriation after World War II, and the consequences of northbound internal migration from Southern Italy during the economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s. The racial unity of the fascist period proved to be short-lived in the postwar period. Processes of liberation entrenched new political and ideological divides and the revival of the Italian economy and consequent internal labor migrations led to resurgent racism toward the Southerner. The failure to change the racialized citizenship laws led to a deepened institutionalized racism. The postwar period was also defined by a widespread erasure of race and colonialism from the national consciousness, even *italianità* became increasingly defined by historical 'Others.'

The final body chapter, on Contemporary Italy, studies Italy's transition into a receiving country for immigrants and the questions of nationality, citizenship and belonging raised by the presence of second-generation immigrants in Italy. Immigration upends traditional understandings of citizenship, highlighting that rights, identity, and participation may differ and compete with each other. The children of immigrants challenge the concept of citizenship even further, encapsulating multiple identities and ideas of belonging. Italy's most recent citizenship law, passed in 1992, continues to exclude second generation immigrants and people of non-Italian descent from citizenship, viewing them as foreigners until the age of 18. The failure to incorporate immigrants into the Italian nation reveals the dependence of Italian identity on having a racial 'Other' against which to define itself. I will conclude by arguing that the Italian identity is unable to accommodate racial 'Otherness,'' which is both codified in law and reinforced through everyday interaction in Italian society.

**Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks**

*Introduction*

Historical, colonial, and racial factors all play significant roles in shaping citizenship laws. In line with numerous scholars, I propose that Italy be analyzed as a postcolonial country, due to its history of both internal and external colonialism.[7] The unification of Italy in the mid-eighteenth century was an instance of the North colonizing the South. Furthermore, Italian colonization of Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea in the first half of the nineteenth century has continued to influence those regions. Many major colonial powers like Britain, France, and the Netherlands have seen a liberalization of their citizenship laws over time, while Italy's laws have only gotten stricter since becoming a recipient of postcolonial immigration. Italy's history of colonialism is largely erased from society and is barely touched upon in mandatory education. Alongside this erasure, race remains another critically understudied aspect of Italy society; for example, the Italian word for race, *razza* is used more commonly to describe a breed of animal. [8] Building upon studies of Italy's postcoloniality, I center race in this thesis as a feature of colonialism and citizenship. To properly analyze Italy's citizenship laws and their role in racial exclusion, I plan to utilize the fields of postcolonialism, citizenship studies, and whiteness studies, as well as the intersections of these various fields.

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[7] Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, eds., *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Fabrizio De Donno and Neelam Srivastava, "Colonial and Postcolonial Italy," *Interventions* 8, no. 3 (November 1, 2006): 371–79, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698010600955875; Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism*, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[8] Miguel Mellino, "De-Provincializing Italy: Notes on Race, Racialization, and Italy's Coloniality," in *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, ed. Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

*Antonio Gramsci and the Southern Question*

The Southern Question (*la questione meridionale*) and the "uneven development of the Italian economy" had preoccupied Italian politics since reunification in 1861.[9] Prior to unification, the South had been part of the independent and prosperous Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.[10] After unification and the industrialization of the north, the south (including Sardinia) became "increasingly peripheral."[11] Discourses of inferiority, disease, and poverty had come to dominate the Northern view of the South, and both sides of the political spectrum were able to agree that the solution to the various problems plaguing the Mezzogiorno was increased integration with the North.[12] However, there was little success to alleviate such divisions within the economy and society. At the time of unification, many southerners had viewed it as colonization by the Kingdom of Sardinia (i.e. the Piemontese).[13] These beliefs were overshadowed by narratives of liberation and modernity created by the North. Only fifty years later would a bright young southerner named Antonio Gramsci call the relationship what it was— a colonial one.

As a Sardinian, Gramsci had first-hand experience of the discourses of Italian colonization and emigration, and he observed that the North-South relationship was a colonial one that remained in place, often with the support of the Southern ruling class. Therefore, he aimed to create an "alternative socialist model" in which progressive Northern intellectuals, communists, and proletariat could lead the South, providing "a counter-hegemony to that which

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[9] Robert J.C. Young, "Il Gramsci Meridionale," in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya, Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures 36 (New York: Routledge, 2012), 24.
[10] Young, 27.
[11] Young, 27.
[12] Young, 28.
[13] Young, 27.

had already been established by Mussolini."[14] Gramsci advocated an alliance between the

working class of the North and the peasantry of the South, hoping that this would lead to a

transformation of the Southern leadership "from conservative Southern to revolutionary North

intellectuals."[15] This would help the Southerners "abandon their folkloric beliefs–*senso*

*commune*– for a properly scientific outlook–*senso buono*."[16] Yet Gramsci's dreams of this new

cultural alliance were never realized, and he died while still in prison, in 1937.

Gramsci's studies of subalternity and power continue to influence the field of

postcolonialism. Gramsci created the idea of subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks* to refer to

marginalized groups and social strata excluded from the hegemonic political formations of the

colony and the colonial homeland.[17] The condition of subalternity intersects nation, race, and

class, and is directly related to culture and power. Gramsci understood culture to be an

elaboration of power and these theories of hegemony and subalternity have been transformed and

developed by subsequent decades of postcolonial studied.[18]

In this thesis, I aim to study to Italian subalternity and its various forms on the Italian

continent and in its colonies. However, the dominant critique of Gramsci's work is that he "never

sought to resolve the differences between North and South other than the economic ones."[19]

Urban-rural divides had traditionally characterized Italian society, but peasants were often

racialized along class lines. Race became a defining factor in discourses of identity and

nationhood. According to the northern political elite, the colonized South was both racially and

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[14] Young, 29.
[15] Young, 29.
[16] Young, 29.
[17] Young, 30.
[18] The work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is vital for understanding current subaltern studies.
[19] Young, "Il Gramsci Meridionale," 29.

economically inferior. The initial colonization of the Italian South to form a modern-nation state would be followed by colonization of East and North Africa that has since been largely erased from the Italian national consciousness. Strikingly, politicians had attempted to solve the Southern Question by colonizing Libya and promoting nationalism and war.[20] Subalternity constructed along racial lines has been a consistent part of Italian nationhood, therefore I plan to use postcolonial and racial theories to study citizenship in Italy.

*An Introduction to Postcolonialism*

Postcolonial approaches analyze the continuing impact of colonial power structures and culture in the modern-day context. The theory specifically studies ways that certain groups have been marginalized, misrepresented, and excluded due to race and ethnicity. There have been many prominent scholars who developed the field: Edward Said, a founding father who wrote of the Orient, Frantz Fanon, who studied the psychological effects of colonialism, Gayatri Spivak, who futhered subaltern studies, and Homi Bhabha, who studied "psychoanalytical concepts such as ambivalence and hybridity in the study of colonialism."[21] However, the scholar whose work is most pertinent to this thesis is Edward Said, viewed as a founding father of postcolonialism. In his book *Orientalism* (1978), Said originated the concept of "the Orient," a catch-all phrase produced through discourse that includes geographical, moral, and cultural factors.[22] This theory of Orientalism had political, economic, and cultural ramifications– it justified the "power, dominance, and hegemony" of the West over the Orient.[23] Orientalism rationalizes civilizing

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[20] Young, 28.
[21] "Postcolonialism," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, by Lisa Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n330.
[22] "Postcolonialism."
[23] "Postcolonialism."

missions and the practice of colonialism, and places all power in the hands of the colonizer. The Orient also does not only apply to Asia: the constructed 'Other' can come from anywhere. The dominating narrative is how Westerners use the image of the Orient to understand and define themselves and their country.[24] His subsequent book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) "identified the discursive strategies of debasement, domination, and the power/knowledge relationships" that articulate "a self/other binary" and are key to imperial practices.[25] Said also attempted to explore the ways that colonized people resist such stereotypes and uphold their own histories and identities. His theories are applicable to colonialism all over the world. Furthermore, the Orient does not need to be external; it can exist within the country as an internal 'Other.' This construction has become increasingly utilized due to postcolonial migrations and transnationalism. This idea of 'the Other' remains prominent in identity formation and political rhetoric today.

Italy should be considered a postcolonial country, and this postcolonialism takes on new significance given the waves of global migration to Europe in the 21st century.  In the volume *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, the editors Lombardi-Diop and Romeo begin by stating that their understanding of the postcolonial is based on "the assumption that the economic and cultural effects of colonialism are still present in many countries…predominantly in the way by which the imbalance of colonial power is reinstated in today's global world through the unjust treatment and exclusion of migrants from developing countries who are often denied access to human rights and the privilege of global citizenship.". However, they broaden the definition "to include the processes of racialization, gendering, and cultural transformations

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[24] "Postcolonialism."
[25] Tariq Jazeel, "Postcolonialism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. Nuala C. Johnson, Richard H. Schein, and Jamie Winders (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 18.

engendered within contemporary Italy by the legacy of colonialism, emigration, and global migrations".[26]

Italian colonialism defined the creation of an Italian national identity, incorporating common values and "a sense of cultural homogeneity and racial entitlement in relation to the populations that had recently fallen under Italy's colonial sovereignty."[27] Italy colonized Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya, and Albania between 1890 and 1943, but was stripped of its colonial possessions after its loss in World War II.[28] The end of Fascism and "the celebration of the Italian resistance" effectively overshadowed Italy's colonial and racist past, which in turn continued to linger.[29] Additionally, Italy maintained relations that were all but colonial in both Somalia and Libya until 1960 and 1970, respectively, propagating the idea that "colonialism was not so bad after all."[30] Unlike Great Britain or France, Italy did not grant citizenship rights to migrants from ex-colonies and "consequently, it became both a transit and destination country at a later time than other states."[31] Mass waves of immigration to Italy began in the late 1980s. Lombardi-Diop and Romeo also note the "indirect nature of Italian colonialism" due to lasting influence from the Roman Empire.[32] For example, large immigrations to Italy have occurred from Tunisia, a former Roman colony that had a large population of Italian emigrants in the 19th century. The authors extract from this an "indirect postcolonialism" that exists alongside the

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[26] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, 2.
[27] Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, "Italy's Postcolonial 'Question': Views from the Southern Frontier of Europe," *Postcolonial Studies* 18, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 368, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2015.1191983.
[28] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 368–69.
[29] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 369.
[30] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 369.
[31] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 369.
[32] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 369.

"direct postcolonial culture produced by migrants from East Africa, Libya and Albania."[33]

However, Italy has yet to confront its colonial and racist past, and I will demonstrate that its

citizenship laws reflect this.

*Theories of Race and Whiteness*

Race is a key factor in defining otherness and has been utilized by European powers for

centuries to justify and mark their superiority. The philosopher Alberto Burgio argued that

racism developed during the processes of modernization and consolidation of modern European

nation-states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was accompanied by subsequent

centuries of colonialism.[34] Emerging national identities were built on the values of shared history

and culture, and "racism became an effective ideological tool to justify discrimination and

exclusion as well as slavery through the naturalization of nationality and citizenship, and the

concomitant racialization of foreigners and colonized people."[35] Many scholars have concluded

that "the concept of race exists only in the context of communal identity," which can be based on

national and or racism.[36] This communal identity subordinates this individual to a greater united

group, and often includes myths of origin, founding movements, or beliefs in a greater destiny.[37]

Émile Durkheim argued that "the existence of social deviants is necessary to define and clarify

the boundaries of normality and good for any society."[38] A specific group in society labeled as

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[33] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, 369.

[34] Francesca Gobbo, "Racism, 'Race' and Ethnographic Research in Multicultural Italy," *Ethnography and Education* 6, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 12, https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2011.553077.

[35] Gobbo, 12.

[36] Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History 5 (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.

[37] Gillette, 4.

[38] Gillette, 4.

deviant thus becomes the "anti-model" against which the rest of society would unify.[39] This 'deviant group' is akin to the 'Orient' of Said. In the case of race, minority groups described as being of a certain race would be the foundation of a greater identity of the dominant group. Race is often a major factor used to create the 'Other.'

Racism becomes embedded in societal structures, which has been studied extensively through critical race theory and whiteness studies. Both critical race theory and whiteness studies originated in the U.S.A. Critical race theory defines racism as a structure that "systematically advantages Whites and disadvantages people of color."[40] Whiteness studies, which is a subset of critical race theory that focuses on the production and maintenance of whiteness, originated in the "cultural orbit of black America," but has since been expanded to examine collective identities "in a more nuanced way than is allowed for by hegemonic black/white, or more accurately, white/non-white paradigms."[41] This becomes necessary as countries diversify and new social groups become the racial 'Other.' Additionally, many European countries, Italy included, have yet to study and understand the racialized power relationships within their society. Whiteness studies is a necessary field that should be applied in Europe.

The power associated with whiteness takes many forms: sets of norms, resources, or a contingent hierarchy.[42] The contingent hierarchy of whiteness underlines the intersectionality of the concept–ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality all play important roles in the creation of

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[39] Gillette, 4.

[40] "Critical Race Theory," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, by Lisa Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n86.

[41] Steve Garner, "The Uses of Whiteness: What Sociologists Working on Europe Can Draw from US Research on Whiteness," *Sociology* 40, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 257–58, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506062032.

[42] Garner, 259.

whiteness and race.[43] With whiteness come resources of "economic, social and cultural capital" that remain alluring even for the constructed other.[44] For example, race has been utilized to determine voting rights since the 17th century, showing the resource and opportunity attributed to whiteness.[45] The discourses and power of whiteness are clearly recognizable in the United States in its centuries of immigration as European migrants sought to be white and gain the associated privileges.[46] Whiteness also plays a strong role in creating a racial 'Other.' It comes to embody dominant norms of "civilization, technology and force" while otherness is associated with "savagery, primitiveness and weakness."[47] Lastly, whiteness is fixed within power relationships:

> It bears repeating that whiteness has historically functioned as a racial supremacist identity, fleetingly suspending the power relationships between genders and classes within the self-identifying 'white' group in order to unite them.[48]

An example of this would be the unification of the lower, middle, and upper-class whites in the U.S.A. against blacks of any class. Race trumps other aspects of identity when creating collective groups with power. Where Gramsci fails to connect race and economics in his consideration of to unite the North workers and the South peasantry is in his failure to consider race. Whiteness studies better explain how assumptions of racial inferiority assigned to the South prevented any meaningful alliance from occurring, by allowing Northerners of all social classes and genders to unite against the Southerners in order to access resources.

Modern day racism has materialized in new forms with new targets, reflecting that racialization is not fixed by a black-white binary.[49] Accordingly, the target of racist discourse in

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[43] Garner, 264.
[44] Garner, 262.
[45] Garner, 260.
[46] Garner, 261.
[47] Garner, 261.
[48] Garner, 262.
[49] Garner, 258.

Italy and Europe has shifted over the years to discriminate against the immigrant.[50] Socio-economic indicators place immigrants in a "lower strata of the working class" below the "indigenous working class."[51] There has also been much research into the outcomes of "political action and rhetoric, news reporting and popular culture" in creating "an image of immigrants as problematic for Europe."[52] Ideologies originating in such beliefs have come to define "populist nationalist and neo-fascist parties that denounce these targeted peoples as threats to European cultural integrity, economic viability, and social peace."[53] Parties like the National Front in France and the Northern League in Italy champion such xenophobia and have transformed from fringe movements into powerful national political parties in recent years.

This racism takes many different names, called "new racism" by Barker, "neo-racism" by Balibar, and "differentialist racism" by Taguieff.[54] Such ideologies argue that the "fundamental differences and inferiority" of certain groups and immigrants justify diminished opportunity "if not outright repatriation," and tend to focus on cultural and national rhetoric over racial.[55] Yet race remains an important part of identification and marginalization of these immigrant groups, and thus must be analyzed in the context of the centuries of racism that have preceded. Sniderman's study of prejudice in Italy shows that "the new immigration into Western Europe has further underscored the idea that Others can also be white, or even members of the same

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[50] Jeffrey Cole, *The New Racism in Europe: A Sicilian Ethnography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11.

[51] Cole, 11; Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, Second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[52] Cole, *The New Racism in Europe: A Sicilian Ethnography*, 11.

[53] Cole, 11.

[54] Cole, 11; Etienne Balibar, "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991), 217–27; Martin Barker, *The New Racism* (London: Junction Books, 1981); Pierre-André Tagioeff, "The New Cultural Racism in France," *Telos* 83 (1989): 109–22.

[55] Cole, *The New Racism in Europe: A Sicilian Ethnography*, 12.

nation."[56] There has consistently been a racial 'Other' in Italy, thus requiring postcolonial and racial theories to properly analyze this history.

*Citizenship Studies*

In a general sense, citizenship refers to the legal status of a person within a nation-state. More intricately, the concept of citizenship generally has four main aspects: legal status, rights, political and societal participation, and a sense of belonging.[57] Nation-states grant citizenship and therefore legal status using one of two citizenship regimes, or more commonly, a combination of the two.[58] *Ius sanguinis* law uses familial relationships in its determination of citizenship, that is, citizenship is something that can be passed down from parent to child. Such a system emphasizes "a biological and ethnic link between citizens of a nation," and therefore would exclude migrants.[59] Alternatively, *ius soli* law grants citizenship to those born in the territory of the nation state, thus favoring a more inclusive and civic understanding of citizenship.[60]

The rights that accompany the legal aspects of citizenship involve the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the state.[61] Citizens pay taxes, obey laws, attend school and occasionally perform military duty. In return, they receive a variety of rights, including residency, health care, pensions, etc.[62] In most countries, being a citizen also means having the right to vote. Political participation strengthens the relationship between the individual and the

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[56] Garner, "The Uses of Whiteness," 258.

[57] Georgia E. Bianchi, "Italiani Nuovi o Nuova Italia? Citizenship and Attitudes towards the Second Generation in Contemporary Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 322, https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2011.565628.

[58] Bianchi, 322.

[59] Bianchi, 322.

[60] Bianchi, 322.

[61] Bianchi, 323.

[62] Bianchi, 323.

state and allows citizens to have a say in both local and national governance."[63] It is also

important to note that historically gender, race, religion, and class have provided "lines of

exclusion from political participation, regardless of citizenship status."[64]

Lastly, conceptions of national belonging, which is "tied closely to national identity and

social and cultural cohesion" strongly factor into citizenship.[65] Bianchi rightly notes that:

> This dimension of citizenship is inherently exclusionary, as there must be an in-group and an out-group in order to define who is entitled to citizenship and who is not. Immigration poses a particular challenge to this dimension of citizenship, as the presence of diverse groups contests the often mono-cultural understanding of society based on a single imagined community. Immigrants also represent an out-group present within national borders, which serves to strengthen nationalistic tendencies of the native population.[66]

The idea of citizenship as social closure was originated by Rogers Brubaker, the "true galvanizer

of the contemporary debate on citizenship and immigration."[67] This social closure can happen

along territorial lines, by limiting who can enter the state legally, or through selective

membership, in order to define the nation and decide to whom to grant benefits.[68]

In his study of nationhood in France and Germany, Brubaker posits models of civic and

ethnic citizenship, that are viewed as "idioms of nationhood."[69] France utilizes a civic

understanding of citizenship, prioritizing loyalty to the state and its ideals. Its citizenship law is

expansive and assimilationist and grants citizenship by birth, utilizing *ius soli*. In contrast, the

German state had seen competing traditions of nationhood (Prussian and German), as well as the

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[63] Bianchi, 323.
[64] Bianchi, 323.
[65] Bianchi, 323.
[66] Bianchi, 323.
[67] Christian Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship: A Comparative View," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 4 (January 1, 1999): 630, https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329323; Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992).
[68] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.
[69] Brubaker, 14.

partition of Poland and the splintering of the Holy Roman Empire.[70] This separation of nation from state led to a German understanding of nationhood as ethnocultural and of "citizenry as a community of descent."[71] The history of Italy as a nation-state is quite recent and its understanding of citizenship closely resembles that of Germany. Italy's citizenship regime has been essentially stagnant since the early 20th century. Its citizenship laws are remarkably antiquated, especially in the transnational world that has changed previous conceptions of citizenship.

Histories of colonialism and early democratization create more liberal understandings of citizenship that includes foreigners, especially from former colonies.[72] Howard argues that the connection between colonialism and citizenship is valid only for major colonial powers (i.e. the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands).[73] Italy (and Germany) are excluded from such a category, given that they were "preoccupied with internal unification at the time when the other powers were expanding their empires" and therefore settled for less desirable areas of the African continent.[74] However, the first and foremost connection that Howard makes between citizenship and colonialism is that "the colonial system helped European colonial powers to frame their own definition of national belonging by clearly distinguishing its members from the 'Other' (the colonial subjects)." [75] This statement rings true for the Italian creation of national identity, and I will argue that Italy must be conceived as a colonial power, as both internal and external colonialism have greatly affected perceptions of the Italian nation. Howard

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[70] Brubaker, 3–4.
[71] Brubaker, 14.
[72] Marc Morjé Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[73] Howard, 39.
[74] Howard, 39.
[75] Howard, 39.

then writes of the civilizing missions and subsequent humanization of colonial subjects that led

to their transformation into citizens. Although Italy certainly utilized such ideas in its early

colonial exploits, the political development of fascism led to increased exclusion of its colonized

people. The second factor that Howard studies is democratization, which Italy experienced very

little of during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[76] Democracy promotes civic and liberal

understandings of citizenship, and even when Italy finally became a republic in 1948, its

citizenship did not change.

Transnationalism and globalization have irrevocably changed the institution of

citizenship in many ways. After Brubaker conceived of citizenship as a device of exclusion,

Yasemin Soysal undertook a study of workers' rights in Europe in 1994 and concluded that

exclusionary citizenship was no longer relevant since these economic migrants were able to

achieve "safe membership status without becoming citizens."[77] Soysal perceived this as a new

form of postnational membership that was not grounded in national belonging but instead in

human rights.[78] A year later, Will Kymlicka argued for "the continued relevance of nationally

bounded citizenship," while accommodating cultural pluralism.[79] Kymlicka also sees citizenship

as imperative for integrating culturally different groups.[80] Although postnational membership

has increasingly become a part of the globalized world, I will demonstrate that citizenship still

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[76] Howard, 43.

[77] Yasemin Soysal, *Limits to Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 630.

[78] Soysal, *Limits to Citizenship*; Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 630.

[79] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 631.

[80] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*; Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 632.

remains a consequential form of social exclusion and is integral to incorporating immigrants into society.

*Conclusion*

Italy's citizenship laws merit analysis, especially in this era of postcolonial migration that has increasingly diversified a country that seems stuck in the past. As a country that has struggled to unite behind a single identity, Italy has turned to discourses of colonialism and racialization to create an 'Other' against which to define the nation. The southerner, the colonial African subject, the Jew, the postwar Southern migrant, and now the immigrant, have all been discursively and legally marginalized to uphold a model of *Italianità*, and in the present era, thousands of second-generation immigrants remain excluded from citizenship, reflecting the racially exclusive understanding of Italian citizenship. Utilizing these theories of race, postcolonialism, and citizenship, I will investigate how citizenship laws in Italy have been used as a tool of social exclusion along racial lines.

**Chapter 3: Liberal Italy**

*Introduction*

In this chapter, I argue that the Southerner was the first racial 'Other' in Italy, and discourses of race were cemented in understandings of Italian identity and citizenship. Furthermore, as the new Italian nation-state attempted to define its citizenry, race became an integral part of citizenship and belonging. The existence of modern Italy dates only to the mid-nineteenth century, when a combination of geopolitical, economic, and social factors combined to encourage the creation of an Italian state on a divided peninsula. The *Risorgimento* preached ideals of national unity and of a shared common heritage that culminated in the unification of Italy. However, I expose this process of unification as a colonial relationship, in which the will of the Northern urban, political elite was forced upon the agrarian South. Unification and the imposition of a new political regime was followed by a decade of uprising in the South that would deepen the divide in the country. Discourses of identity in the years after 1861 focused on the 'Othering' of the South as backward, primitive, and racialized, in order to define the northern half of the state as 'Italian.' The first citizenship law of Italy posited a predominantly ethnic understanding of citizenship as intrinsic to the nation, which would be cemented by decades of emigration from the struggling *Mezzogiorno*. The citizenship law of 1912 would reinforce this ethnic understanding, as well as the diasporic nature of *italianità*.

*The Risorgimento and the Creation of the Italian State*

In the nineteenth century, the Italian peninsula experienced a widespread cultural, social and economic transformation as it expelled foreign rulers from the peninsula, and united in a

single country.[81] Prior to unification, the Italian peninsula was divided into seven states: the

Kingdom of Sardinia (ruled from Piedmont), the Austrian kingdom of Lombardy-Venezia, the

Duchy of Modena, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Papal State and Legations, and the

Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.[82] Each kingdom had its own subjects, civil codes, and legislation,

and a citizen of one kingdom would be considered a foreigner in another one. This was further

complicated by the fact that the larger regional governments at the time ruled over areas that

included multitudes of various dialects, traditions, and histories. After several centuries of a

divided peninsula, many factors combined to lead to the creation of the unified state, most

importantly: "dynastic ambitions, competitive pressures from the international system, the

economic benefits of a larger internal market, the weak social foundations of pre-unity states,

and the spread of nationalist values and ideas." [83] Yet these nationalist messages of unity were

tangible in only a territorial sense. The peninsula was divided along lines of language, culture,

and history.

This call for the awakening of an Italian national consciousness was largely limited to the

educated elites. In the 1830s and 1840s, many historical works appeared by Romantic writers

such as Alessandro Manzoni and Ugo Foscolo, advocating the same message: "these regions

were part of Italy and Italy had fought successfully against foreign invaders in the past."[84]

National movements and secret societies existed all over the peninsula, but they were limited in

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[81] Martin Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento*, Seminar Series in History (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998), 1.
[82] Sabina Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861-1950* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 17.
[83] Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, "National and European Citizenship: The Italian Case in Historical Perspective," *Citizenship Studies* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 88, https://doi.org/10.1080/1362102032000048710.
[84] Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento*, 41.

their scope and message, as was largely typical of European nationalism at the time. Giuseppe Mazzini, perhaps the most prominent Italian nationalist activist, epitomized the elitist culture of the national movement. He "took for granted that an Italian nation existed, based on a common (literary) culture;" however, this literary history was organized around northern figures like Virgil and Dante, whose work only the educated elite studied.[85] Mazzini saw no place for dual nationality, believing that one could only identify with one nation. Even though most residents of the peninsula had never heard of Italy, regional and alternate national identities should be suppressed. He argued for an exclusive citizenship passed down through blood that would maintain the bridge between the homeland and its individuals.[86] Mazzini's ideas overlooked the illiterate masses, in line with a larger trend of nationalist thinking. These visions of Italy were accessible only by the educated, urban people, highlighting a dynamic that would continue to shape the process of unification.

Piedmont emerged as the leader of the patriotic movement, marking the beginning of a colonial dynamic as it aimed to bring its constitution and ideals southward under King Victor Emmanuel II.[87] Political maneuvering under the Northern leaders Massimo D'Azeglio and Camillo Benso di Cavour consolidated Piedmontese power through treaties with foreign states, while a group of political exiles formed the Italian National Society and aimed to support democratic uprising all over Italy for the cause of Italian independence under Piedmont.[88] These insurgencies gave the impression that the common people were ardently behind the idea of a unified Italian state, but in reality, much of the process of state creation consisted of an

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[85] Clark, 38.
[86] Luca Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," *Advances in Historical Studies* 5 (2016): 149.
[87] Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento*, 61.
[88] Clark, 69.

imposition of new borders upon unknowing peasants. Most of the illiterate population likely had very little active choice or education in the matter, and popular votes that occurred were influenced to show that the plebiscite favored Piedmontese annexation.[89] This internal colonization would become even more pronounced in the so-called 'liberation' of the South.

The South remained the final frontier. Giuseppe Garibaldi, a military man and prominent supporter of the Italian National Society, sailed to Palermo with a mere thousand volunteers and was able to overthrow Bourbon rule with the help of the rebellious Sicilian population.[90] Prime Minister Cavour, initially doubtful of the expedition, threw his support behind Garibaldi, who from there continued onward to the Southern mainland. The South voted yes in favor of "One Italy Victor Emmanuel," even though a majority of the voting population was illiterate and likely did not know what they were voting for.[91] The Piedmontese annexation of the South was simply another foreign power conquering the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which had experienced many regime changes in its recent history. What was different about this new Italy? Most peasants saw no distinction and they remained largely uninformed of the massive geopolitical events that were happening only a few hundred miles north of them. On March 17, 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed from Turin, its first capital under King Victor Emanuel II. With the addition of Venice and Rome in 1866 and 1870 respectively, the borders of the newly defined Italian state extended from the Alps to the southern coasts of Sicily.

The dream of an Italian state had been realized, but the state continued to lack a nation. Within the newly defined borders existed people who for centuries had identified differently, speaking dialects and prioritizing their regional histories and culture. The fact that the urban,

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[89] Clark, 79.
[90] Clark, 80.
[91] Clark, 83.

educated elite of the North had championed the unification of the peninsula did not help to spread national sentiment. In many cases, Italian patriots wanted independence and freedom from foreign rule more than they wanted unity.[92] Common themes like the Roman Empire and the Renaissance could be utilized as propaganda, but the most powerful message of the nationalist movement was literary and linguistic. Dante was exalted as the national poet, and his Tuscan dialect in which he had written in the fourteenth century was to become Italian, despite the fact that only around 2.5 percent of the population spoke the language.[93] The peasants and the illiterate were ostensibly left out of such fervor. As Clark argues, the patriots "failed to investigate or glorify the folk culture or popular traditions of the Italian countryside… elsewhere the peasants were ignored, or feared: they spoke no Italian, they were irredeemably superstitious, and they had never heard of 'Italy.'"[94] The nationalist and patriotic movements in the decades leading up to unification failed to include the majority of the country. Therefore, the Italian government was forced to seek alternative methods to unify the country and encourage the common people to identify as Italian.

*The Southern Question*

Immediately after unification, orientialist discourses began to circulate about the *Mezzogiorno*, revealing the innate tensions of the country concerning difference. The new government was dismayed by the political system in the South. The "oligarchical nature of the southern aristocracy," who feared losing their power from popular uprisings, upheld strong opposition to any sort of political assimilation or democratization.[95] Additionally, after the initial

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[92] Clark, 41.
[93] Clark, 41.
[94] Clark, 42.
[95] Aliza S. Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911: Meridionalism, Empire, and Disapora* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 16.

glories of unification, debates arose about the nature of the 'Southern liberation'– "some argued

that 'liberation had never been realized in the south and that political unity was achieved through

northern conquest and hegemony over the south."[96]This colonial relationship would continue to

be reinforced in discourse and permeate through society. Wong summarizes the growing divide:

> If for some northerners unification with the south represented a perilous alliance with a primitive and barbaric partner, southerners, after initial enthusiasm for Piedmontese intervention, were disillusioned and resentful of being treated as a conquered people by politicians who laid claim to the glory of the liberation of the south.[97]

Furthermore, for southerners, life had not improved after the liberation from Bourbon rule. The

north had imposed many new, hated policies: a tax on milling grain, the international free trade

policy, and the military service requirement, which the government framed as "an obligation of

citizenship."[98] The contemporaneous transformation of public or Catholic lands into private

property uprooted the lives of Southerners, and imported goods destroyed the local artisan

economy. Many of those conscripted for military service did not feel like citizens and eschewed

any sort of new controls from a government that they did not feel was representing their

interests. The subsequent rebellion, called brigandage, would disrupt and impede processes of

nation-building and reveal the colonial relationships at play in the new nation-state.

The decade of brigandage exposed the colonialism of the weak legal state, as well as the

violent social divides in the country. The war on southern brigandage was essentially civil war,

which lasted for a decade after unification and required two-fifths of the Italian army at its peak

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[96] Wong, 16.
[97] Wong, 17.
[98] Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 53.

in 1863.[99] It cost more lives than all the other battles of unification totaled.[100] Between 1861 and 1864, large bands, often possessing hundreds of members and with varying levels of legitimate support and motivations, "attempted to spark popular uprising."[101] Any sort of community or political organizations aimed at improving living conditions were categorized as "seditious" and banned by the government.[102] Due to new property laws, many peasants attempting to grow or hunt for food became criminals in the eyes of the state. The images of southern brigandage, in which "peasants attacked tax collectors" and or "fled the draft into the mountains," remained firmly planted in the southern consciousness, reflecting a different history and identity.[103] Instead of addressing the conditions that led to rebellion, Italy's leaders placed the South under martial law. This ignorance of local culture and customs was indicative of the northern government's disregard for the southern half of the country. The army became essentially a surrogate state, and "its supposed role in moralizing the local population and spreading the gospel of national unity was often invoked: the army had to make the 'southern peoples understand the national idea.'"[104] This imposition of statehood by the military explicitly reveals the colonial nature of the Italian state.

By criminalizing resistance, the government created an image of an uncivilized southern rebel that served as a compelling "Other" to the idea of *italianità*. During the anti-brigand campaign, the government and the army conceptualized their opponent as the negative end of numerous hierarchical binary oppositions, such as between "civilization and barbarism, reason

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[99] John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 25.
[100] Dickie, 25.
[101] Dickie, 25.
[102] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 53.
[103] Gabaccia, 53.
[104] Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 35.

and violence, [and] social order and crime."[105] Dickie summarizes the characteristics: "Banditry has the entire repertoire of ethnocentric imagery deployed against it by the officers of the Italian army: bandits are black, animal, feminine, primitive, deceitful, evil, perverse, irrational."[106] Racial inferiority became an explicit part of the Southern identity, as assigned by the North, and positivist criminologists like Cesare Lombroso would attempt to support this claim with scientific data. This representation of the South was key in the creation of Italian identity. The construction of brigandage as the Other, set in the broader frame of imaginative geography, allowed the Italian nation to perceive itself as the opposite of its South.[107]

The wars of brigandage, reflected past ethnocultural discourses of difference and shaped perceptions of the South as backward and inferior that would endure for years to come. Moralizing and civilizing discourses dominated the political arena.[108] Race became a socially constructed ethnicity as organized as geography. The South was a colony and southerners were represented as a disease or in exotic or racial terms.[109] With the South cast as a "submissive partner in the new nation," the North perpetuated stereotypes of moral and racial superiority in order to justify their decision to impose statehood.[110] The North-South divide would remain a key aspect of the Italian nation-state.

*Resistance to State Formation and Nation-Building*

The political elite faced both opposition and competition to their state and nation-building projects from the Catholic Church and the growing labor movements in the country, which

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[105] Dickie, 33.
[106] Dickie, 33.
[107] Dickie, 35.
[108] Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911: Meridionalism, Empire, and Disapora*, 18.
[109] Wong, 21.
[110] Wong, 21.

competed for power and legitimacy and complicated nation-building and consolidation of state power. At the time of the creation of the *Regno D'Italia*, the new country existed mostly as a territorial concept. There were neither state institutions nor any sort of loyalty to the kingdom. In contrast, many other European states had already been in existence for decades or even centuries and had stabilized state power as well as an idea of nationhood. Therefore, the Italian government was stuck trying to prove its legitimacy as international pressures mounted.

Stein Rokkan theorized that there were four main phases of political development for modern European nation-states: state formation, nation-building, democratization, and development of the welfare state. State formation is the establishment of a modernized state apparatus, whereas nation-building involves the "spreading a sense of political and cultural belonging, inculcating a sense of allegiance and a democratic "competence" into the masses, and integrating the modern state in an industrialized society."[111] States like France, England, and Germany had experienced these phases in more separate time periods, yet Italy attempted to undergo both state formation and nation-building at the same time in the years following 1861, making the consolidation of state power and national identity increasingly difficult.  In the mid-1800s, as the European continent began to industrialize, Italian political elites were attempting to simultaneously build a state, create a nation, modernize economically and handle various religious interests, as well as the rise of a working class. [112] There were few, if any, consolidated state structures or institutions, and much social and economic development to be done.[113]

The new government faced strong opposition from the Catholic Church, which objected to the separation of church and state and feared losing its power in the country. The Catholic

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[111] Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 18.
[112] Koenig-Archibugi, "National and European Citizenship," 90.
[113] Koenig-Archibugi, 88.

presence had been strong in Italy for centuries, and the importance of religion was a common theme in the country. Many of the residents of the state would sooner identify as Catholics than Italians, complicating the belonging and loyalty that the government was trying to entrench. Pope Pius IX, "deprived of his territorial authority," forbade Catholics to participate in elections in any capacity (as voters or candidates) and called for their rejection of the 'godless state.'[114,115] This decree remained in place until 1905, preventing observant Catholics from participating in democratic or civil state processes, detracting from state building.  During that time period, the Catholic church built expansive social networks that influenced charities, local governments and schools, creating dependency on these institutions that in turn undermined the state. [116] Meanwhile, the civil state was attempting to 'make Italians' "through millions of birth, death, and marriage certificates" using the newly established civil registries.[117] Yet many of these new Italians "saw the Catholic church, and not the new government, as the most important moral [and legal] arbiter."[118] The formation of government bureaucracy was confusing to many, and raised important questions about who had power and where loyalties should lie, disrupting the integration of a nation identity.

The growing labor movements also posed serious challenges to state formation and nation-building through their support of the lower classes. Local urban and rural proletariat groups soon became a part of the "emerging socialist movement" that was the "main political representative of the working class after the 1880s."[119] The socialists built widespread social

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[114] Koenig-Archibugi, 91.
[115] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 53.
[116] Koenig-Archibugi, "National and European Citizenship," 91.
[117] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 53.
[118] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 53.
[119] Koenig-Archibugi, "National and European Citizenship," 91.

networks aimed at helping the lower classes, leading to their success in local governments. The socialist movements mounted a strong challenge to the more moderate Savoy rulers and would prove to be a consistent presence in Italy for years to come. Similar to the church presence, the influence of the socialist labor movements complicated loyalties and made unclear the role of the state. The social structures established by the Catholics and socialists "[ran] parallel to official institutions" and deepened rifts concerning belonging.[120] Catholic and socialist institutions undermined the nation-building that the new state was trying to enact.

Such resistance to nation-building and an increasingly divided peninsula changed the goals of the northern political elite, who initially wanted to establish a "societal model of citizenship, based on civil liberties, market economy, and local self-governance."[121] However, as Giuliana Zincone argues, after seeing the 'primitive' conditions in southern Italy, the new Italian government moved towards a more statist model of citizenship, favoring centralized state power.[122] Incorporating the South into the modern state would supposedly bring civilization and modernity to a backwards society, and this became part of political propaganda to convince disgruntled northerners that this colonization was justified. This discourse is typical in rationalizing colonialism.[123] The creation of a unified set of laws and codes, especially those applying to citizenship, became more pressing as the first government faced the deep divisions that separated the regions of Italy, underlined by the various civil codes in existence. Official discourse advocated for the creation of a single civil code as connected to the political unification, with the hope that peninsula-wide citizenship laws would unite the Italian people.[124]

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[120] Koenig-Archibugi, 92.
[121] Koenig-Archibugi, 92.
[122] Koenig-Archibugi, 92.
[123] Jazeel, "Postcolonialism."
[124] Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861-1950*, 25.

*The First Citizenship Law*

The *Civil Code of the Kingdom of Italy*, published in 1865, demonstrates the ethnic nature

of Italian citizenship, and arguably creates the idea that Italian is an ethnicity. Utilizing the

models of Brubaker, the Italian understanding of citizenship is ethnic. The main premise of the

citizenship law enshrined in the civil code is: "*È cittadino il figlio di padre cittadino*." [A citizen

is the child of a father who is a citizen.] Female citizens were excluded from passing down

citizenship, unless the father was unknown (Article 1(7)).[125] Interestingly, the rules for foreign

residents were not incredibly restrictive–if a foreigner had lived in Italy for ten years

uninterrupted for reasons other than commerce, then his child was a citizen unless he chose to

declare otherwise (Article 1(8)). Foreign women could acquire citizenship by marrying a male

citizen (Article 1(9)). Citizenship could only be applied *ius soli* if both parents of a child were

unknown, to prevent statelessness. The familial nucleus was an important idea in the creation of

the Italian nation, and women had to have the same citizenship as their husbands.[126] Gender

dynamics were an important aspect of citizenship law in Italy up until the late twentieth century,

when females finally gained the right to pass down citizenship (1983) and not lose it if they

married a foreigner (1975).[127] The 'Other' – in this case, the South – in Italy had been assigned

traits of blackness and femininity. The limitations of the 1865 citizenship law based on gender

and ethnicity demonstrate its aspects of racial exclusion.

Another significant aspect of the first citizenship law dealt with various types of

citizenship, which Bussotti describes as citizenship "acquired by law" or "by royal decree" and

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[125] *Codice Civile Del Regno d'Italia* (Torino: Stamperia Reale, 1865),
http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044021189675.
[126] Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," 148.
[127] Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861-1950*, 156.

citizenship acquired "by choice."[128] Citizens "by choice," who had declared their intent to join the Italian state, did not enjoy political rights.[129] This hierarchy of citizenship shows another aspect of citizenship and its usage as social closure.

These initial citizenship laws demonstrate the importance of ethnic Italians in the constructions of the nation. This ethnic citizenship implies that the creators of the law were envisioning the longevity of the Italian state, kept alive by bloodline. Italian citizenship was exclusive across various intersections of gender and ethnicity, and this new understanding of citizenship was further complicated by the internal racial divisions within the country. From the very beginnings of newly formed state, colonialist and racial discourse dominated the way that northerners came to view their Southern counterparts.

*The Failures of Italian Citizenship*

In the years after 1865, the middle and upper classes continued to Italianize (i.e. identify as Italian and become part of the mainstream culture), aided by their common language and culture. The most important factor in the cohesion of the classes was the state system of patronage and power, which was designed for their benefit and that, in turn, increased the sense of community and belonging they felt.[130] The middle and upper classes understood and identified with the patriotic ideology of the new state, and thus were able to utilize its benefits. This cemented the government as a regular and respected part of society.[131] Race played a strong role in determining who the state was being built to protect; thus, the situation in the south stood in stark contrast to such northern allegiance. As the Italian government consolidated its power in

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[128] Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," 148.
[129] Bussotti, 148.
[130] Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 17.
[131] Dickie, 17.

the North, the South devolved into chaos and rebellion, which further propagated stereotypes about the *Mezzogiorno* and the politicians preferred to analyze the issue as one of race and gender, ignoring the structures of poverty and inequality that were origins of Southern dissent.

Official governmental discourse turned the southerners and the rebels fighting for their livelihood into criminals, thieves, and brigands, and effeminate people.[132] The supposedly racially inferior southern brigands came to represent the South in its entirety. By disregarding poverty and emphasizing race and gender, the northern political elite utilized colonial discourse, highlighting a mission of bringing civilization to the south. This moral and civil mission is typical of colonial powers when justifying their colonies abroad. Said emphasized that ideologies of orientalism vindicate colonial acts both in advance and afterwards.[133] Italian nationalists had argued that northerners needed to civilize the southerners and bring the unified nation to greatness. After unification, the Italian government continued to preach ideals of modernity in the South but struggled to implement any real change and incorporate southerners into the nation. The moderate government's main solutions to the 'Southern Question' were universal military service and mandatory schooling as requirements of citizenship, which were met with further dissent.[134] Illiteracy was extremely high in the South, and peasants were unwilling to lose labor by sending their children to school.[135] Additionally, southern elites saw education as a threat to their power, raising further obstacles to universal education. In contrast, Piedmont had introduced mandatory schooling two decades prior in 1848, leading to a sharp decrease in illiteracy rates.[136] The institutions of citizenship in the South were failing on all fronts.

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[132] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 54.
[133] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).
[134] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 54.
[135] Gabaccia, 54.
[136] Gabaccia, 54.

*Racial Sciences and Italian Eugenics*

The racism directed toward Southern Italians was rationalized by eugenics, adding more weight and complexity to the divisions existing within the country. Said writes that in the nineteenth century, theories of oriental backwardness and degeneracy came to be associated with biological bases of racial inequality.[137] In the Italian context, the 'Othering' of the Southerner would become legitimated by science through the work of numerous scholars. The pioneer of this field of racial science was Cesare Lombroso. He was part of the positivist school of criminology, which became "the most important national tradition of biological determinism and racial thinking."[138] Positivists believed that any rational phenomenon could be proved by science, and Lombroso studied the "hereditary transmission of physical and psychological traits and linked them to criminal behavior."[139] By studying the skull of a southern Italian criminal, he concluded that some people were born criminals based on their cranial features. Lombroso's work prompted a new generation of racial scientists focused on the supposed differences between North and South Italy. Even though in the early twentieth century, Lombroso's ideas came under fire for lack of scientific accuracy, their legacy would remain and legitimate racism towards the Southerner into the twentieth century.

Lombroso's successors categorized Northern and Southern Italians into two separate races, creating inconsistencies with the Italian citizenship law that attempted to join all Italians under a single ethnicity. One of his most famous students, Alfredo Niceforo, was "the last and most explicit ideologue of the doctrine of the 'the two Italies' that sought to explain the

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[137] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

[138] Angelo Matteo Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," *European History Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (2017): 463.

[139] Caglioti, 463.

differences between Northern and Southern Italians through their racial composition."[140]  As

essentially a traitor to his native Sicily, his text *L'Italia barbara contemporanea* (Contemporary

Barbarian Italy), published in 1898, embodied the prejudices against Southern Italians that had

dominated the previous forty years.[141] Niceforo believed that government in the *Mezzogiorno*

should be authoritarian to compensate for the seeming? lack of social organization and described

Southern Italy as an "internal colony to be civilized."[142] The book concluded that "the

backwardness of the South [was] in part determined by the fact that its population of

'Mediterraneans' [was] a different from the 'Aryans' of the North.'"[143] Niceforo borrowed these

ideas from Giuseppe Sergi (another Sicilian anthropologist), who had originated the idea of a

"Mediterranean race" after concluding that the "distinctive cranial form of Southern Italians"

was proof of their inferiority.[144] The origins of Sergi and Niceforo highlight the intersections

between race and class in Italy. As scientists of Southern origin, Sergi and Niceforo most

certainly felt pressure to differentiate themselves from the stereotype of the Southern man as an

uneducated peasant through their scholarship.

The introduction of science into fields of racial discourse confirmed what the Northern

Italians had been articulating for years–Italy was composed of two races. The South was

composed of a Mediterranean race, and the North was of an Aryan race. This dichotomy of two

races united under a single citizenship created many contradictions and underlined the

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[140] Caglioti, 463.

[141] Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 2.

[142] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 465.

[143] Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 3.

[144] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 465; Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*, 3.

importance of race in determining citizenship. This set a precedent for citizenship being applied differentially based on race.

*The Jacini Commission*

The divides in Italian society endured despite governmental recognition and documentation of inequality. In 1876, an alliance of leftward-leaning republicans gained power of the national government and overturned the policies of free trade and the grain tax, uniting the interests of "Northern industrialists and Southern landowners."[145] They also commissioned a scientific study into the rural disorder that was plaguing the country, led by Stefano Jacini. The fifteen-volume report was "the clearest possible evidence of the political, economic, and social weaknesses of a state that lacked a nation."[146] The projects of nation-building undertaken in the 1860s had failed. The Jacini Commission put onto paper the widespread contempt that urban Italians felt for their rural counterparts, as exemplified through uses of language.

Regional dialect was one of the most commonly used indicators of Southernness, and the nuances of conversation revealed discrimination at the interpersonal level of Italian society. Other markings of difference included phenotypical coloring and clothing, which would reveal class status. Commissioners documented how urban residents used the informal *tu* form to talk to peasants, who used the formal *Lei* in response. Being called a *cafone* or *terrone* (an insult for southerners and peasants and a play on the word *terra,* meaning land) was highly derogatory. Northerners and city dwellers saw Southerners and peasants as ignorant, primitive, and unable to improve their conditions, and the commissioners often did little to dispel such stereotypes.[147] Italian whiteness was not all-encompassing of all white people, which in turn bolstered Northern

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[145] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 55.
[146] Gabaccia, 55.
[147] Gabaccia, 55–56.

Italian whiteness by making it more exclusive. These intersections of racism, classism, and geography produced the postcolonial 'Other.'

The Jacini commission made various recommendations for government action to address the divided state, ranging from "colonization of empty lands in North Africa to increased investment in roads and agricultural schools.[148] Many commissioners also supported more education, to teach the peasants 'morality' and ensure that those participating in compulsory military service returned home with new standards of "cleanliness and order."[149] The persistence of this civilizing rhetoric demonstrates how colonialism was deeply ingrained in Italian nationhood. Lastly, the report discussed the government's responsibility to "protect its migrating citizens," mentioning seasonal migrants as well as those from the South and from Venice.[150] Yet most of advice was wholly ignored, and in the next decades, Italy would experience emigration as never before. The stereotypes that Italy's bourgeois elite had attached to much of their citizens would persist across the oceans. These "racially inferior, rebellious criminals" would become the "workers of the world," in subsequent emigration, showing the failure of the state to incorporate its Southern half into the nation.[151]

*Emigration Nation*

The decades of emigration that the Italian nation-state experienced would further reinforce the ethnic understanding of citizenship encapsulated in the 1865 civil code. After unification, while railways were being built to connect the major cities of the North, the agricultural South remained impoverished and stuck in a feudal land system. Food was scarce

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[148] Gabaccia, 56.
[149] Gabaccia, 56.
[150] Gabaccia, 56.
[151] Gabaccia, 57.

and approximately half of the children born did not reach the age of five.[152] Between 1876 and

1914, approximately 14 million Italians left the country in search of a better life, with

destinations ranging from other parts of Europe, to North and South America, and Australia.[153]

The mass movement of emigrants, the majority of whom were from the *Mezzogiorno*, revealed

the dire situation in the South while allowing the continuation of existing orientalist discourses

on nationhood, ethnicity, and identity that alienated the Southern migrant.

The hordes of Italians leaving their country illuminated both "the gravity of a domestic

situation that could not provide for the needs of its citizenry" and the marginalization of

southerners, who were continually blamed for the situation of poverty in which they found

themselves.[154] Emigration policies shifted to reflect the new Southern origins of the migrants,

since Italian emigrants prior to the late eighteenth century traditionally been from the North.

According to the state, emigrants were defined as those who specifically left the country with a

passport seeking work. However, passports were costly, meaning that many southerners were

unable to obtain legal status simply because they did not have the funds, thus creating flows of

undocumented emigration. Wong states:

> The policy of determining the official status of Italians abroad reflected the
> overwhelming concern on southern emigration. Categories defining emigrants were based
> on a hierarchical system in which the South's social and economic standing within the
> nation were clearly exposed and in which the perceived advantages of certain types of
> emigration were delineated.[155]

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[152] Helene Stapinski, "When America Barred Italians," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2017, sec. Opinion, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/02/opinion/illegal-immigration-italian-americans.html.

[153] Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911: Meridionalism, Empire, and Disapora*, 112.

[154] Wong, 114.

[155] Wong, 114.

This stratification of emigrant status again placed the South at the bottom, highlighting that the government valued Northern citizens more than those from the South. Emigration was also a gendered phenomenon, as the majority of emigrants were male. Some sent money home with the raised many questions about the patrilineal inheritance of citizenship. Men abroad could theoretically father children who would be born in another country as Italian citizens, illuminating the need to specify how citizenship would transfer outside of the Italian territory and who should be recognized as a citizen. The disruptions in the traditional family structure and the questions of new allegiances provoked new discussions on citizenship and the duties of the nation-state.

These legal questions would be complicated by derogatory sentiment toward emigrants of Southern origin. Northerners capitalized upon the phenomenon of the male emigrant to disseminate more negative stereotypes about the South. Discourses on emigration and on the *Mezzogiorno* intertwined to create an image of an uneducated, impoverished, and uncivilized individual who abandoned his family and country.[156] This imagery would have a direct impact on the lives of southerners- in 1924, the United States government would drastically limit Italian immigration in response to the racial 'Othering' of the *Mezzogiorno*. This forced many emigrants to find ways to enter the US without documentation, compounding their "illegal" status.

The mass exodus from the South caused the government to adopt a more international outlook that would influence citizenship law. Many politicians saw these emigration trends as having created "colonies" in the Americas, thus highlighting the colonial aspirations of Italy. Italy was struggling to keep up with the colonial projects of other European powers, showing its fragility as a nation-state. Interpreting growing communities across the globe as unofficial

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[156] Wong, 115.

colonies reflects the rationalization of such distressing emigration trends, and also the global purview of the Italian government. As more and more citizens moved abroad, the Italian government reckoned with various legal questions on citizenship and belonging as new Italian communities were created outside the borders of the state.

*The Citizenship Law of 1912*

Emigration placed new pressures on the Italian state to redefine citizenship and the new law of 1912 reaffirmed the ethnic understanding of citizenship that had been set forward half a century prior. As the first "organic law of Italian citizenship," *Legge no.555/1912* contained few changes from the Civil Code of 1865.[157] The law contained more clear and concise definitions of how citizenship is attained and revoked. It explicitly mentions "*il godimento dei diritti politici*" (the enjoyment of political rights) as an entitlement of citizenship, exemplifying the relationship between the state and the citizen.[158] It also eliminated any stratification of different types of citizenship, granting political rights to all citizens, regardless of how citizenship was attained.[159] However, women were still disenfranchised as citizens, reflecting the intersectionality of citizenship law. Despite providing paths to citizenships for foreigners who had resided in the country for at least ten years, much of these options were combined with the obligations of citizenship. The bureaucratic obstacles that foreigners face in attaining legal status, and the limited rights of female citizens show the hierarchical nature of Italian citizenship. While

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[157] Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," 145.

[158] "Sulla cittadinanza italiana," Pub. L. No. 555 (1912), http://www.amblima.esteri.it/resource/2007/03/12736_f_amb61Legge13giugno1912n_555sullacittadinanzaitaliana.htm.

[159] Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," 154.

reaffirming the preference for ethnic Italians, the citizenship law of 1912 protected the whiteness of ethnically Italian men.

The law also discussed the loss and reacquisition of citizenship in the case of an Italian citizen becoming a citizen of another country. In order to retain the citizens that it was losing to emigration, Article 8 of the new law declared that a citizen would lose their Italian citizenship only if they had acquired a foreign citizenship "of their own accord" or had renounced Italian citizenship.[160] Thus, Italian citizens born in countries that assigned citizenship *ius soli* would remain Italian citizens unless they explicitly revoked it. The provisions of citizenship as set forward in 1865 focused on the ethnic purity of its citizens, and the 1912 law continued this trend. Italians abroad favored dual nationality, which was strongly rejected by the government.[161] However, if a former Italian citizen returned from living abroad, they had to reside in the country for only two years before reacquiring the Italian citizenship. The new law laid out very clear paths to the reacquisition of citizenship, with the hope that emigrants would return. The ease with which they were able to reacquire citizenship in contrast to other paths to citizenship once again demonstrated the preference for "pure" Italians. Article 15 of the new law also recognized the colonial expansion of the Italian state, stating that colonial territory was equal to that of the kingdom with regard to the inheritance and attainment of citizenship.[162] The citizenship law of 1912 reflected the diaspora of the Italian nation, while still excluding members of society based on ethnicity and gender.

*Conclusion*

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[160] Sulla cittadinanza italiana.

[161] Bussotti, "A History of Italian Citizenship Laws during the Era of the Monarchy (1861-1946)," 145.

[162] Sulla cittadinanza italiana.

In the half-century after unification, the Italian nation-state had established an ethnic understanding of its citizenry while racially excluding the Southern region of the country. These contradictions of ethnicity and race revealed the power attributed to Northern Italian whiteness. The colonial relationships of power established during the process of unification had shaped the South as an internal 'Other' that was utilized to construct a unified Italian North. The Southerner was racially inferior, criminal, and primitive, and the Northern government made little substantial effort to reconcile the divide, while still being painfully aware of its existence. The supposed solution to the problem of national identity would come with a new period of Italian colonialism, and later, Fascism, which would allow the Italian state to locate a new 'Other' both outside and inside the Italian borders. Yet the processes of internal colonization and racialization remained fundamental to the framework of Italian nationhood.

**Chapter 4: Colonial and Fascist Italy**

*Introduction*

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Italian government pursued

colonial aspirations, annexing Libya and establishing colonies in Somalia and Eritrea. In the

colonies, many Italian men had indigenous mistresses, pushing the government to elaborate

citizenship laws with regard to mixed-race children, reaffirming patrilineal descent and creating

a new class of Italian citizenry. There was little change in the colonies in the first ten years of the

fascist regime. Mussolini's initial views on race were erratic, but he came to champion the usage

of eugenics as a way to further the missions of his regime. In the mid-1930s, after establishing an

empire in East Africa, the fascist regime dramatically shifted its racial platform, and stripped

African-Italians and Jews of citizenship, transforming them into the new 'Other.' By subjugating

Africans and Jews, the fascists were able to grant privileges of whiteness to Southerners in an

attempt to unify the country. I will demonstrate in this chapter how the Fascist regime equated

racial and citizenship status by utilizing the African colonial subjects and the Jewish peoples as

both external and internal 'Others.'

*Early Fascist Discourse on Race*

Mussolini's early discourse on race during the early period of fascism lacked consistent

ideas, varying in its articulation to support the platform of the political regime. This lack of a

constant idea made the racial discourse of the early period of Fascism a continuation of that of

late Liberal Italy and sharply distinguished it from that of the later period of Fascism.[163]

Mussolini's ideas of race were heavily influenced by Italian nationalists, who believed that race

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[163] Gaia Giuliani, "L'Italiano Negro," *Interventions* 16, no. 4 (July 4, 2014): 572–87,
https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2013.851828; Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*.

was a "living organism [that transcended generations]." This would allow Mussolini to claim that

the current Italian nation was connected to the glorious ancient Roman Empire. Scholars like

Tommaso Filippo Marinetti argued that the Latin race living on the Italian peninsula needed to

be militarized and modernized to re-achieve greatness.[164] The prominent Italian nationalist

Enrico Corradini wrote that "…the race carries the spiritual seeds that form the spirit of the

nation:"

> The nation is a physical, ethnic, historical, spiritual and political entity. Above all it has a body. It has a people [razza] and a territory. It is not a pure, natural race, but a historic, mixed race…The historic Italian race still presents the spectacles of numerous different regional races.[165]

Nationalist belief articulated that the Italian nation encapsulated the Italians of both the past and

the present. These ideas of continuity in the bloodline of the Italian race align very closely with

the citizenship laws that favor *ius sanguinis*. Mussolini began to invoke these principles in his

speeches, calling the Italian race "old but always young" and declaring the fascist period as the

"springtime of our race" in 1923.[166] Mussolini always emphasized the long history of the Italian

people and strongly believed that it was his duty to usher in a new period of greatness.

Race was always an important part of his political propaganda and intrinsic to

Mussolini's dreams of grandeur, regardless of his lack of consistency. As a dictator, Mussolini

was able to have complete power over the racial platform of Italy, which he manipulated often to

serve his purposes. He declared in 1921 that the Italian race was both Aryan and Mediterranean,

aiming to fuse the two regions of the country which had been previously defined along racial

lines. In 1932 he stated that race did not exist according to the German understanding of it,

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[164] Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 38.

[165] Enrico Corradini, *L'unità e La Potenza Delle Nazioni* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1922), 44, 113; Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 38.

[166] Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 39.

which was called Nordic racism and criticized Italians as a more Southern and therefore inferior.[167] Mussolini's patterns of thought regarding race were clearly errant at the beginning of his rule, showing its potential to be used as a political tool. In the final decade of his rule, Mussolini would utilize race and citizenship together to advance his political agenda, as I will explicate later in this chapter.

One of Mussolini's main goals became to reinvigorate the Italian race and lead it to new glory  through the usage of eugenics and social and cultural modernization.[168] Paired with his generational understanding of race, seeing the Italian nation as related to the Romans, the myth of "national resurgence and regeneration" became a defining aspect of the Fascist platform.[169] The Fascist regime ardently supported programs to improve overall health and encouraged women to have more children, hoping for a robust army to defend *la patria*. Yet, the birth rate continued to decline, and Mussolini's fear of non-white races climbed.[170]

In the 1930s, with the help of Doctor Nicola Pende, Mussolini began to speak on the uniqueness of the Italian race. Pende was close with Niceforo and utilized eugenics and modernity to champion the idea of a new type of Italian, which became a key component of fascist ideology.  Pende and Mussolini argued that Italians were a Mediterranean race and were strongly linked to Roman culture, furthering ideas of a unique ethnicity with a common history. East Africans were incorporated into this racial idea, giving Mussolini reason to boast about his superior "Mediterranean" colonies. Pende stated in a speech that the "true destiny" of the Mediterranean peoples was to recreate the "Latin Mediterranean spiritual unity," i.e. the great

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[167] Gillette, 40, 42.
[168] Gillette, 40.
[169] Gillette, 40.
[170] Gillette, 44.

ancient civilizations that spanned the Mediterranean Sea.[171]  The idea of a grand destiny

explicitly connected to race penetrated the public sphere, and Mussolini would position race as a

key part of his goals for the Italian people, connecting racial progress and its associated programs

to citizenship and duty to the nation. While initially inclusive of a larger Mediterranean race,

Mussolini's racial philosophy would radically shift after Italy cemented its alliance with

Germany in 1936, and further entwine race and citizenship.

*Colonialism to Imperialism*

Italy's colonial project allowed it to locate the racial 'Other' outside the national borders,

in a new attempt to unify the country. Italy's colonial regime developed over several decades,

colonizing Tripoli in 1883, becoming the protector of Somalia in 1889, and annexing Eritrea in

1890. These acquisitions received great support from southern landowners "who saw

[colonization] as an alternative to underemployment and emigration for southern peasants. This

initial colonial period temporarily ended for a decade after the Italian defeat by Ethiopian troops

at Adwa in 1896, but colonial ambitions remained. As this period of colonization occurred mere

decades after the unification of Italy, a case of internal colonialism itself, colonialism became

"central to the construction of nationhood" through the 'Othering' of the colonized.[172] In 1906,

the *Istituto Coloniale Italiano* (Italian Colonial Institute) was founded in Rome, signifying the

political and national importance of the colonies. Italy officially declared Somalia as a colony in

1908, and after the annexation of Libya in 1911, a formal Ministry of the Colonies was created in

1912. In 1922, when the Fascists gained control of the government, Italy had colonies in East

Africa (Eritrea, Somalia) and in North Africa (Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, later to be combined

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[171] Gillette, 48.

[172] Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, *Italian Colonialism*, 1.

into Libya). As the regime matured and Mussolini developed his understandings of race, the vision of a unified Italian empire that would recreate the glories of ancient Rome became increasingly desirable. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, proclaimed the Italian Empire, and united Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia into a single colony. Italian colonial Africa was administered through racial hierarchies that laid the groundwork for later discrimination codified in citizenship law.

The Italian colonial enterprise chose to administer its colonies with plans of demographic colonization and settlement that demanded the subjugation of its indigenous black subjects. After decades of emigration that had shaped a more international Italian outlook, in 1927 the Ministry of Colonies spearheaded the transfer of almost three hundred thousand unemployed Italians to Libya in the decades to follow, ignoring indigenous society to pursue their own ends.[173] The Italian government hoped to redirect emigration to Africa, so that migrants would contribute to an internal market that would nourish the Italian industry.[174] Coupled with this plan was "the usage of mass population transfers [of indigenous peoples], forced marches, and mass detention in concentration camps" in Cyrenaica, one of the most cruel and outrageous parts of the Italian colonial project.[175] Similar resettlement plans were crafted for Ethiopia, as well as Eritrea and Somalia, which had longer histories of Italian settlement. While this horrendous level of cruelty would leave horrific legacies in the former Italian colonies, it was easily hidden from or

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[173] Federico Cresti, "The Early Years of the Agency of the Colonization of Cyrenaica (1932-1935)," in *Italian Colonialism*, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 74.

[174] Haile Larebo, "Empire Building and Its Limitations: Ethiopia (1935-1941)," in *Italian Colonialism*, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 83.

[175] Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, *Italian Colonialism*, 4.

forgotten by mainland Italy, who only knew its colonies through the augmented whiteness that came with them.

With these plans of resettlement and internment, the government was also able to add a new level at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Indigenous peoples of the colonies were "relegated to the most demeaning jobs and explicitly excluded from any sector of the economy where they might compete with Italians."[176] Most colonial administrators were able to agree "the transplantation of Italian peasants and their way of life was the best means of guaranteeing Italian sovereignty, civilizing the indigenous population, and developing colonial economy."[177] Thus, workers would be educated in an imperialist mentality on the "prestige of the white race" and racial segregation was strictly enforced, with semblance to an apartheid state.[178] This was especially attractive to Southern peasants, who would be at the top of the racial hierarchy in colonial society, in contrast to mainland Italy. Southern Italians were able to access the privilege associated with whiteness in colonial Africa, in contrast with their experiences on the Italian mainland.

Italy's plans for colonial greatness were generally thwarted by a variety of factors, including the lack of efficiency, ignorance towards local cultures and customs, and conflicting interests and opinions.[179] Yet its presence in the Italian national consciousness would not be forgotten. The colonizing and civilizing discourse that had once dominated the Italian state's actions in the south was used once again, this time to describe North and East Africa. Ideas and

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[176] Larebo, "Empire Building and Its Limitations: Ethiopia (1935-1941)," 84.
[177] Larebo, 88.
[178] Larebo, 87.
[179] Larebo, 88.

images of race remained in the center of Italian society, but this time the "Other" was outside the national borders.

*Race in the Colonies*

In the first several decades of Italian colonial rule, Eastern Africans were included in the racial idea of Mediterraneanness, leading to a new generation of citizens hailing from outside the Italian peninsula. In much colonial discourse, "the idea of Mediterranean unity created a rhetoric of inclusion between Italians and the African peoples of the Horn, including Eritreans, Somalians, and Ethiopians, in the light of their common origins."[180] These peoples were viewed as the African form of the Mediterranean race, and mixing between Italians and East Africans was not discouraged. In colonial Eritrea, "the practice of *madamato* (according to which an Italian man establish a temporary domestic and sexual relationship with an Eritrean woman, the *madama*…) brought about an increase in births and abandonment of mixed-race children."[181] Such demographic trends caused Italian colonial administrators to codify rules of interracial relations and resulting citizenships.

After producing the *Disegno di codice civile per l'Eritrea* (Outline of Civil Code for Eritrea), the colonial administration then finalized the code with the publishing of *Codice civile per la colonia Eritrea* (Civil Code for the Colony of Eritrea) in 1909.[182] This code elaborated an anthropological basis that dictated when to grant citizenship, especially in the cases of mixed-race children. Given that most mixed-race children were fathered by Italian citizens, their path to

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[180] Fabrizio De Donno, "La Razza Ario-Mediterranea," *Interventions* 8, no. 3 (November 1, 2006): 401, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698010600955958.
[181] De Donno, 400.
[182] De Donno, 400.

citizenship was clear. If the parents were unknown, citizenship could be decided based on the "child's racial features."[183] However, the code prohibited marriage between an Eritrean man and an Italian woman, since an Italian woman would lose her citizenship through such a union and her children would not be considered citizens regardless of marriage. Therefore, there existed an internal racial hierarchy based on gender.

Although many Italian men acknowledged their children legally and raised them as Italian citizens, many others abandoned them.[184] The main factor in determining this reaction was length of stay in the colony – men who viewed Eritrea as their permanent home were more likely to acknowledge their Italian-Eritrean children.[185] Colonial officials were more likely to abandon their children after their "African adventure," but in many cases would still provide for their child and attempt to guarantee an "Italian upbringing."[186] The bishop of a Catholic boarding school for "mixed-race" children received many letters from fathers who had abandoned their children. Barrera says:

> The letters they wrote to the bishop betray both masculine arrogance and racial prejudices, but they also convey the view that the children of Italian men were unlike Eritrean children and should grow up as Italians. This idea appeared consistently in texts concerning "mixed-race" children up through 1935: many Italians simultaneously claimed that Italo-Eritreans were Italian and yet inferior to Italians. Thus they deemed it inappropriate for an Italian man's child to live as Eritreans did, and yet they would not accept an Italo-Eritrean among their ranks.[187]

The introduction of Italian-Eritreans into the Italian citizenry created a new category of sorts–citizens that were too black to be Italian but too white to be Eritrean. The paternal supremacy

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[183] De Donno, 401.

[184] Giulia Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," in *Italian Colonialism*, Italian and Italian American Studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 99.

[185] Barrera, 100.

[186] Barrera, 100.

[187] Barrera, 100.

that reigned in determining citizenship was never questioned, and it remained fundamental to the social order, gender hierarchy and masculine identity.[188]

However, the gender hierarchy was more extreme in the colonies. Many Italian men had a legal wife back in Italy, so marriage between Italians and Eritreans were extremely rare, and the Eritrean woman was excluded from any legal recognition beyond being the mother of the child. The system of paternal descent "incorporated the children fully into the paternal family, all while marginalizing the children's mothers."[189] Eritrean women encouraged their children to Italianize, and especially those who had been abandoned by their fathers. In fact, when a Milanese agronomist named Idelfonso Stanga visited Eritrea in 1912 and 1913, he marveled at how Italian-Eritreans displayed "an Italian-ness even greater than [his] own."[190] This sheds light on the subjugation of Eritrean culture to Italian society. This erasure of indigenous culture is a common aspect of colonialism and relates to the civilizing mission that so many colonial powers preached.[191] Italian culture became synonymous with civilization, despite the gendered and racial dynamics of their colonial and citizenship policy. Italian colonization solely represented the interests of Italian men and illuminated the continuation of a patriarchal understanding of citizenship that is passed down through the blood of the father.

Even in the later years, the colonial administration continued to provide paths to citizenship. A new law passed in 1933 created pathways to citizenship for "mixed-race" children who had been unacknowledged by their fathers.[192] In Libya, a law was passed in 1934 "to grant

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[188] Barrera, 101.
[189] Barrera, 102.
[190] Barrera, 104.
[191] Said, *Orientalism*.
[192] Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," 97.

special Italian citizenship to all Muslim subjects."[193]  The colonial project had created citizens

who did not look traditionally Italian, but nevertheless displayed great loyalty to their colonial

mainland. It was quite difficult for African-Italians to actually make their way to Italy, but the

laws in place gave legal force to the assimilation of these new Italians into the already existing

community of international Italian citizens. All this was to change after the end of the first fascist

period. With the invasion of Ethiopia and the declaration of the Italian Empire, fascist Italy

turned infinitely more racist by limiting citizenship to only those who were ethnically Italian.

*The Racial Laws of 1938*

The Fascist Party changed course in the late 1930s, codifying racism in law and

excluding Jews and Africans from Italian citizenship in order to claim equality with its European

counterparts.  After Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, verbal attacks of pro-

Nordic and anti-Italian sentiment would continually bombard the Italian nation.[194] Mussolini was

defensive but disavowed only German racism towards the Italian state, while continuing to

utilize racism in his own policies. He claimed that Hitler's racism was biased and untrue but

continued to use racial rhetoric in his own propaganda. However, after the Axis alliance between

Germany and Italy was formalized in 1936, Mussolini's racial policy notably changed. There

were complex reasons for such a dramatic shift in policy, but all were racially motivated. Gillette

posits that the shift in Mussolini's policies was due to his frustration with the lack of progress

that his eugenic campaign had brought about.[195] With racism, *Il Duce* believed he could achieve

more radical success and create the *uomo fascista*.[196] He vigorously promoted the racial myth of

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[193] Barrera, 404.
[194] Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 44.
[195] Gillette, 52.
[196] Gillette, 53.

*Romanità*, clearly related to his project of empire, but the more shocking turn in this propaganda was its fusion with the ides of Nordic racism, which idealized the Aryan and supposedly presented a more motivating racial myth.[197]

Nordic racism was enshrined in the *Manifesto della Razza* in 1938. Caglioti sees the 1938 Manifesto as a logical step in the development of Italian eugenics and scientific racism, which had started in the nineteenth century with the positivist thinker Cesare Lombroso.[198] The crucial factor in such progressions was "Italy's 'internal orientalism,' namely its insecurity over the racial status of the Italian South in the European hierarchy of a colonial world."[199] Gillette agrees, highlighting Mussolini's "low esteem for Southern Italians, [who were] the most indisputably 'Mediterranean' element of Italy."[200] Mussolini, himself a Northerner from Romagna, stated that "southerners in general… were not willing to do anything to be Italians."[201] Thus, after securing partnership with Germany in 1936, Mussolini declared that he was Nordic, and replaced Mediterraneanism with Aryanism in fascist propaganda.[202]

The 'Manifesto of Racial Scientists' encapsulated and legitimized this change in Mussolini's racial platform and had wider consequences for the Italian Empire. The Manifesto consisted of ten propositions on race, of which points four and six stated respectively that "'the population of Italy [was] Aryan' and that there existed a pure 'Italian race.'"[203] Point seven

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[197] Gillette, 54–55.

[198] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 462.

[199] Caglioti, 462.

[200] Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 56.

[201] Sem Benelli, *Schiavitù* (Milan: Arnaldo Mondadori, 1945), 54; Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 56.

[202] Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, 56.

[203] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 475.

required that Italian racial ideas needed to be aligned with Aryan-Nordic orientation and point eight clearly separated the 'Italian race' from other Mediterranean races in Africa.[204] This idea of purity would define who was to be excluded from citizenship. Non-Aryans were seen to be impure and dirty, and any sort of racial mixing would taint Italian blood. In the context of postcolonial history, this explicitly excludes people of mixed descent and those who were not ethnically Italian.

This change in rhetoric had clear consequences for Italy's African colonies. Law n. 822 of May 13, 1940, titled "Norms Concerning Children of Mixed Race" explicitly "prohibited Italians from acknowledging the children they had had with African and from helping to support them."[205] Debates on race and miscegenation between whites and non-whites had been in existence since the turn of the twentieth century, but never before had Italy so clearly codified whiteness in citizenship law.[206] The children lost their citizenship and the rights associated with it, and instead received the inferior juridical status of colonial subject, which gave them no claim to Italian nationality.[207] Once included in the racial idea of Mediterraneanness, the subjects of Italian African colonies were subsequently excluded. By "locating blackness outside the national borders" and thus separating Italian and African Mediterraneanness, the fascist regime was able to combine "all the supposed Italian racial differences into a single and national racial identity" that was ethnically pure.[208] Race and citizenship became equated to incorporate the Southern Italian population into whiteness.

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[204] Caglioti, 475.

[205] Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," 97.

[206] De Donno, "La Razza Ario-Mediterranea," 399.

[207] Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," 97.

[208] Giuliani, "L'Italiano Negro," 574.

Point nine of the 'Manifesto' declared that Jews did not belong to the Italian race, reflecting an anti-Semitic shift in fascist policy that would contribute to the genocide of the Holocaust. The hatred directed toward the Jewish people placed them at the bottom of society, where they would be utilized as the internal 'Other' to define *Italianità*. On November 17, 1938, new laws were passed sanctioning discrimination against Jewish people and "introducing the Aryan idea of race to define Italian citizenship in the legal discourse."[209] These "Laws for the Defense of the Race" made illegal marriages between 'Aryans' and 'non-Aryans' (Article 1) and forbade Jews from performing military service (Article 10a) or working for the state (Article 10c), among countless other restrictions.[210] Additionally, Italian citizenship granted to Jews after 1919 was revoked (Article 23), and all foreign Jews (excepting those over age 65 or married to Italian citizens) were ordered to leave the country.[211] Jewish people continued to be banned from professions, public schools, and almost all aspects of society, showing how race was used as a tool of exclusion from citizenship under fascism. Brubaker's theory of citizenship as social closure encompasses both legal and societal exclusion, as Italian Jews were barred from the basic elements of social participation.[212] It also demonstrates how whiteness is socially constructed based on exclusion. Stripping Italian Jews of whiteness (despite the phenotypical association as white) led to the conceptualization of a racially inferior Jewish race both legally and discursively. This intersection of citizenship and whiteness studies ultimately led to their exclusion from citizenship.

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[209] De Donno, "La Razza Ario-Mediterranea," 408.

[210] Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed., *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

[211] Zimmerman, 3.

[212] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.

Eliminating both Italian-Africans and Italian Jews from the citizenry was the legal embodiment of Mussolini's racial creed. The *Manifesto* also represents a fusion of racial status and citizenship status into one. In order to be an Italian citizen, one had to be a member of the newly created Italian race. Anyone who was black, Jewish, or part of the newly defined 'Other' was harshly ostracized. The convergence of racial and legal status led to an exclusion of blackness, Jewishness, and foreignness has remained entrenched in Italian national identity.

Mussolini's new racial policy was intended to discredit "the theories of the two races and the associations it had provoked with African peoples and Jews," ideas that were reflected in the American Immigration Act of 1924.[213] Instead of being both an Aryan and a Mediterranean race (which had previously encapsulated East African and Jewish peoples in addition to Southern Italians), the Italians were now simply an Aryan race. Mussolini worked exclusively with younger racial scientists to produce this racial agenda, intentionally excluding scientists like Niceforo who had promoted southern inferiority in the first place. This action reflected deep-rooted insecurity about the Italian racial identity, since the Southern Italians were viewed as the Mediterranean and racially inferior half of the country, as argued by Lombroso, Niceforo, and Sergi. The exclusion of such scholars was also strategic, as Mussolini was trying to argue that all Italians were Aryan and scholars who had argued that the South was racially subordinate would undermine this. In fact, in a private speech to the National Council of the Fascist Party on October 25, 1938, Mussolini stated the successes of his new racial laws: "This racial principle introduced for the first time in the history of the Italian people [by the fascist regime] defeats

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[213] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 476.

another so-called inferiority complex," that is, the Southern Question.[214] He argued that although Italy had been traditionally viewed as a mix of races, in fact, there was one race and it was Aryan.

At a speech in 1939 in Calabria, Mussolini also blamed the previous liberal governments for inventing the Southern Question. He exclaimed that there were "no Southern or Northern Questions, only a National Question, because the nation [was] a family where there [were] no privileged or derelict sons!"[215] In the South, where Jews were almost non-existent, fascist groups hailed their new racial status. The *Gruppo Universitario Fascista* of Palermo delighted in the fact that "finally 'Negroes and Jews' appear worse than '*terroni* and *cafoni*' in the Italian cultural hierarchy."[216] The unification of the Italian populace under one racial identity was celebrated as the highest achievement of Fascism, but it continued the racial exclusion that had always been present in Italy, simply by changing the designated 'Other.'[217]

*Conclusion*

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Italian nation-state colonized parts of North and East Africa, locating 'Otherness' further south than the *Mezzogiorno.* In these colonies, the Fascist regime created strict regimes of racial segregation along gendered lines that marginalized indigenous cultures and reflected ideals of European superiority. After allying with Nazi Germany, Fascists oppressed Jewish Italians and mixed-race African-Italians, depriving them of

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[214] Caglioti, 476; Michele Sarfatti, *Mussolini Contro Gli Ebrei* (Torino, 1994), 47. The words in the first bracket are Caglioti's; the words in the second are Mussolini's addition in pencil to the taped copy.

[215] Caglioti, "Race, Statistics, and Italian Eugenics: Alfredo Niceforo's Trajectory from Lombroso to Fascism (1876-1960)," 477.

[216] Caglioti, 478; Simone Duranti, *Lo Spirito Gregario. I Gruppi Universitari Fascisti Tra Politica e Propaganda 1930-1940* (Palermo, 2005), 325.

[217] Giuliani, "L'Italiano Negro," 574.

their citizenship and casting them as racial 'Others' in contrast to the purity of the Italian race. The racial unification of the Italian people was often highlighted as a crowning achievement of Fascism, but it was ultimately short-lived and came at great cost to Jews and African-Italians, whose exclusion from the nation would endure. Furthermore, the supposed joining of the two halves of the Italian country was fleeting. In the decades after the end of World War II, anti-Southern would resurge, showing the profound internal racism entrenched within Italy.

**Chapter 5: Postwar Italy**

*Introduction*

This chapter will discuss how racism against the Southerner returned in the postwar period, underlining the *anti-meridionale* racism so deeply ingrained in the Italian nation. In the last two years of World War II, partisan movements developed in northern Italy that led to new national ideals and further prejudice towards the South, which lay under Allied occupation. This division would display itself in the creation of the *Repubblica Italiana* in 1948, which began a new area of suffrage and citizenship rights in Italy. However, the postwar years also saw a re-conceptualization of the Southerner as a foreign 'Other' in the country, prompted by internal, northbound migrations to the booming economic center of the North that changed Italian society as never before. The return of old racism was coupled with the erasure of race and colonialism from the national consciousness, as politicians sought to portray Fascism as a period of aberration from Italian history that did not truly embody the Italian nation.

*The End of the War and the New Italian Republic*

The partisan movement, which developed in central and northern Italy during the last two years of World War II, introduced new myths of national character to northern Italy that would influence the creation of a new state. However, the South lacked a similar movement, adding a new dimension to northern ideas of superiority in the divide with the South. During the summer of 1943, Italy lay in chaos. The Allies were working their way up from Sicily to liberate the South. The Germans had installed Mussolini as the head of a new largely inefficient puppet government called the Republic of Salò in a town on Lake Garda in Northern Italy. During this period, groups of anti-fascist rebels (*partigiani* in Italian) with various political affiliations began to roam the northern and central countryside, aiming to overthrow Mussolini's government. They

would become the Italian Resistance and would have widespread military and political

consequences lasting beyond their years of fighting. In urban areas, various political parties came

together to form local and regional Committees of National Liberation (CLN), which would later

be combined to form a greater Committee of National Liberation for Upper Italy (CLNAI).[218] As

the end of the war approached, the CLNAI essentially became a provisional government,

coordinating the greater efforts of the rural *partigiani*, urban CLNs and the Allies to liberate

Northern Italian cities.[219] There was no Southern equivalent due to the Allied occupation, leaving

the two main regions of the country in drastically different states after the war.

The political values and legacies of *La Resistenza* excluded the South, re-creating the

colonial dynamic in which the process of state formation was led by Northern Italians and

imposed upon Southerners. Northern Italians' involvement in their own liberation stretched

across different socioeconomic classes and regions, further integrating the northern regions

around similar values of equality and anti-fascism. The leaders of the Resistance claimed that

they had achieved a new national unity, on anti-fascist terms, ignoring that this supposed unity

did not include half of the country.[220] The movement legitimized many new parties, including the

*Partito Communista Italiano* (PCI), the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), who would lead the new

Italian Republic, and the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI). The one thing missing was Southern

involvement. In the South, there was no similar populist dissidence, and political and economic

systems remained obsolete.[221] The South did not feel the same affiliation with these new parties

and their political ideologies. In the North, there were new ideas of governance and active

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[218] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*, Third Edition (Harlow, Essex, United Kingdom: Pearson Educated Limited, 2008), 377.
[219] Clark, 378.
[220] Clark, 379.
[221] Clark, 380.

citizenship that did not exist in the South. This created further impressions of the South as being passive and 'behind,' reintroducing its status as the 'Other.'

The North-South divide would play out in the creation of a new Italian state, as the two regions voted for different types of government. Anti-fascist parties had decided in 1944 to hold an institutional referendum after the war ended, and so on June 2nd, 1946, Italian citizens voted on whether to remain a monarchy or become a republic.[222] Women were able to vote for the first time ever in the election, marking the expansion of liberalism. The 1946 referendum highlighted "the split between a conservative, monarchist South and a radical, Republican North" that had been strongly influenced by the limited scope of *La Resistenza*.[223] In the end, the republic won, lifted by its northern and central support, but Lazio and the south voted strongly monarchist. Thus, Italian post-war state formation echoed the internal colonialism of 1861, as Northern ideas were forced upon the South. The Christian Democrats, who had won the most seats, formed the first government of the Italian Republic while trying to fuse the liberal ideas of a republic with the traditional and Catholic conservatism of Italy.[224]

Over the next two years, the drafting of the new constitution was spearheaded by liberal lawyers; therefore, it championed civil and political rights and was strictly anti-Fascist.[225] The Italian Constitution succeeded in developing a "republican citizenship" and a "democratic system centered on strong party identifications" by detailing the rights and responsibilities of both the Italian state and its citizens.[226] Article 3 states that "*tutti i cittadini hanno pari dignità*

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[222] Clark, 383.
[223] Clark, 383.
[224] Clark, 384.
[225] Clark, 384.
[226] Pamela Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship: Italian Repatriation and the Redefinition of National Identity after World War II," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 3 (July 2007): 715, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417507000680.

*sociale e sono eguali davanti alla legge, senza distinzione di sesso, di razza, di lingua, di religioni, di opinioni politiche, di condizioni personali e sociali*" (All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law regardless of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, and personal and social conditions).[227] The Republic was legally bound to enforce equality, create equal opportunity for all, and protect a citizen's right to work (Articles 3 and 4).[228] The first part of the Constitution lays out the rights and duties of the citizens, which include the basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech, freedom of movement, and freedom of protest. The document also outlines political and economic duties of citizens, providing an understanding of the relationship between citizen and state in the new liberal era. Yet, as I will show in the rest of this chapter, the Constitution was discretionarily applied depending on race, class, and gender.

*The Treaty of Peace with Italy, Race, and Repatriation*

In the aftermath of World War II, the political elite was left to navigate many questions of boundaries and belonging in the face of an Allied victory and the onset of Cold War tensions. Many Italians had been expelled from the African colonies during World War II soon after falling under British rule, but uncertainties over national sovereignty persisted. Although many Italians leaders argued that they should be allowed to retain their pre-1922 colonies, the Treaty of Peace with Italy, signed in 1947, stripped Italy of all its colonial territory.[229] The sole exception was Somalia, which was to remain under an Italian-administered U.N. mandate for ten years.[230] The treaty recognized Ethiopia's sovereignty and "declared the status of Italian nationals in that state as equivalent to those of other foreign nationals in Ethiopia."[231] In the years that followed,

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[227] "Costituzione Della Repubblica Italiana" (1948).
[228] Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana.
[229] Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship," 717.
[230] Ballinger, 717.
[231] Ballinger, 719.

the flows of refugees would include Italian citizens, coming from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Libya, Albania, and the Dodecanese Islands, as well as exiles from the Julian region that included Trieste and the Istrian peninsula (that remained under contention until 1954).[232] These flows of people, who shared a claim to Italian citizenship, embodied both the histories of fascism and colonialism that many were attempting to expunge from the national consciousness.

The presence of these refugees in Italy raised many questions about belonging and citizenship, but they were always reaffirmed as Italians exercising their rights as citizens. Returning Italian citizens were categorized as distinct from the "many other displaced persons seeking refuge and assistance in Italy after the war."[233] The category of "repatriate" was clearly distinguished from immigrants or foreigners. The case of the Istrian exiles was perhaps most indicative of how citizens were defined and granted the right to return. The clauses concerning nationality options for people coming from the Dodecanese Islands, the Val d'Aosta, and Istria in the 1947 treaty gave "all Italians resident in the respective territories on or before 10 June 1940 the right to choose Italian citizenship."[234] But what constituted Italianness? In this option, the principal requirements were "Italian as the *lingua d'uso* (language of use) and *domicilio* (domicile) in Italy."[235] Yet even domicile had varied meanings– from where someone had his or her "principal affairs" or interests to someone's primary residence, and this meaning varied by case depending on the other countries involved.[236] In Yugoslavia, authorities often refused requests to leave Istria "on the grounds that Italian was not the language used at home, in spite of

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[232] Ballinger, 717.
[233] Ballinger, 723.
[234] Ballinger, 726.
[235] Ballinger, 726.
[236] Ballinger, 726.

what prospective [migrants] had declared."[237] This use of language to determine Italianness

became more and more widespread, shown by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declaring that

those whose "language of daily use [was] Italian" were Italian.[238] Through such policy, language

became a representation of ethnicity and therefore race. The Italian state had promoted an ethnic

understanding of citizenship since its inception. The Treaty of 1947 dropped the blatant criteria

of race, but instead utilized language as an indicator of ethnicity. The *lingua d'uso* came to be

interpreted as the *lingua di patria*, that is, the nation.[239] Italianness was defined by language,

which was ironic given that dozens of regional dialects existed throughout the country.

Furthermore, language was used to determine *italianità* only for white Europeans, showing the

racial hierarchy implicit in such practices.

With these new standards for Italianness, race and xenophobia combined to produce new

discrimination.  Race became explicit again when Italians were fearful of bilingual Slavs

"masquerading as Italians," and the Ministry of the Interior clearly stated its fear that that people

of "Yugoslav race and customary language" would acquire Italian citizenship.[240] This statement

casts Slavic people as a dangerous 'Other,' and draws a strict cultural, racial and linguistic

barrier. The prejudice against Slavic people illustrates the exclusionary nature of elite Italian

whiteness. By spurning people of Slavic origin, Italians placed themselves in a position of

superiority. The Minister ordered that all foreigners in Italian territory register with police by

March 31, 1947, and in some places, local authorities along the eastern border were still utilizing

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[237] Ballinger, 727.
[238] Ballinger, 727.
[239] Ballinger, 728.
[240] Ballinger, 729; Ministero dell'Interno, "Oggetto: Riacquisto Della Cittadinanza Italiana,"
April 24, 1949.

a fascist law that required foreigners to state their religion and race.[241] This discrimination against those who were not ethnically Italian also existed in the case of Dodecanese Islands. Authorities examined requests by Italian men to bring their Greek wives to Italy on a case-by-case basis, considering "the type of marriage rite performed and its validity under Italian law," as well as the volition of the Italian male.[242] Gender-based exclusion continued to be present in such policies of repatriation, and therefore citizenship. Furthermore, the 1947 treaty did not address the cases of illegitimate children, orphaned minors, or adopted children, again showing the preference for ethnic Italians. Laws concerning repatriation focused on preserving the privileges and exclusivity of Italian whiteness racializing and excluding foreigners.

*Citizenship in Postcolonial East Africa*

The racism involved in granting citizenship is most evident when examining the postwar status of the former Italian colonies in Africa. Labeled "black natives," the indigenous people of the Italian East African colonies were denied the option to move to Europe and were expected to acquire "the citizenship of their respective countries."[243,244] They were intentionally left out of the 1947 treaty:

> The lack of specification in the 1947 Treaty regarding the citizenship of residents in the former African colonies highlights the implicit assumption that Italianness (as whiteness) was obvious there, in contrast to the ambiguous situation along Italy's eastern border.[245]

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[241] Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship," 730.
[242] Ballinger, 730.
[243] Ballinger, 732.
[244] In 1950, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia and Somalia had begun a ten-year rule under a UN-granted Italian mandate,
[245] Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship," 732.

It was easy to make clear distinctions based on race in Italian colonial Africa. Whiteness came to be synonymous with Italianness, therefore access to citizenship was more rigidly defined through racial status.

There was one exception to the exclusion of colonial subjects. As I have already discussed, there was a significant population of mixed-race persons (known as *meticci*) living in the East African colonies, some of whom had been recognized by their Italian fathers and granted Italian citizenship before fascist laws stripped them of it. The laws of 1940 had turned them into colonial subjects, and according to the new Ethiopian state's citizenship laws, "all *meticci* automatically became Ethiopian citizens."[246] Yet some chose to renounce their Ethiopian citizenship in the hope of retaining their Italian one. The Italian government supported these choices, seeing "their choice of Italy as a validation of Italy's accomplishments and civilizing mission in Ethiopia."[247] This was a rare instance; in most cases, the Italian government displayed "fundamental ambivalence" toward the Italo-African population, often ignoring their presence altogether.[248] Such ambivalence reflects the lack of desire to accommodate blackness into Italian identity.

For most *meticci*, citizenship was not an option, as paternity defined individual identity.[249] Out of an estimated 15,000, at most 2,000 mixed-race citizens had received legal recognition from their Italian fathers.[250] Even when the fascist laws prohibiting citizenship to mixed-race children were abolished in 1947, the new law still mandated paternal recognition as a

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[246] Ballinger, 732.
[247] Ballinger, 733.
[248] Ballinger, 733.
[249] Ballinger, 734; Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," 98.
[250] Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship," 733.

necessity for citizenship. Furthermore, the Italian Civil Code "prohibited inquiries into paternity and the legal recognition of children born out of wedlock" until 1975.[251] Since most Italian men who fathered children by East African had wives in Italy, many children of mixed descent "suffered not only due to the colonial relationship, but also because of the patriarchic imprint of the Italian legislation."[252] Citizenship clearly functioned as a social closure here, excluding blackness from *italianità.*

Even those who were able to obtain their Italian citizenship did not necessarily feel more at home because of it. In Somalia, which saw an increase in births in the ten-year period of the Italian mandate (1950-1960), many Italo-Somali children were educated in Italian in special boarding schools and some were able to gain Italian citizenship. Yet this Italian education did not guarantee equal treatment. One of these citizens, Gianni Mari, President of the National Association of the Italo-Somali Community, described himself and his fellow Italo-Somalis as "aliens with Italian passports" ("*extracomunitari con passaporto italiano*").[253] As during the fascist period, despite having legal rights, these citizens were at the bottom of the social hierarchy due to racial and colonial prejudice. Those who could access citizenship were socially exiled due to their blackness that was construed as 'Otherness.' This continued social exclusion maintained the integrity of Italian whiteness and shows the hierarchy of citizenship. Possessing legal status did not mean accessing the privileges of whiteness.

Markings of difference in everyday life made integration into Italy difficult for repatriates and the rare postcolonial migrant. Even some Italian nationals who had spent time abroad came

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[251] Ballinger, 734.
[252] Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans during Italian Colonialism," 105.
[253] Ballinger, "Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship," 735.

to be defined by their representation of the fascist and colonial regimes, which the government attempted to erase from the public sphere. For migrants from postcolonial possessions who had managed to attain their Italian citizenship and make it to the peninsula, discrimination and prejudice were consistently present. Competition for jobs and resources created further tensions, and rights to housing and assistance were only provided to citizens.  After World War II, "Italian identity and belonging rested explicitly on linguistic affiliation qua ethnicity and implicitly on a racialized notion of Europeanness and whiteness."[254] Language was used to determine *italianità* only for white people, denying the possibility that an Italian could be black. These ideologies of race and *italianità* continued to dominate citizenship policy.

Thus, in order to be an Italian citizen truly included within the national community, one needed to be white, speak Italian, and have Italian ancestry. These barriers display continuity with previous understandings of citizenship, which consistently remained patrilineal throughout the existence of the modern Italian state. Although less explicit, race was nonetheless always part of national identity.

*Hiding the Past: The Erasure of Race and Colonialism from Public Discourse*

The redefinition of the Italian state in the early postwar years would lead to a "foreclosure of race and racism" from the Italian cultural and political scene of the decades to come.[255] The discourse surrounding the creation of a new state effectively separated Italy's fascist, racist, and colonial past from its present. One of the main impetuses for such a project was that many former fascist politicians remained in power even after the war was over and the Italian Republic had been created. This desire to "reduce the political trauma and liabilities

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[254] Ballinger, 739.
[255] Mellino, "De-Provincializing Italy: Notes on Race, Racialization, and Italy's Coloniality," 91.

arising from the deep involvement of most of the Republican post-fascist ruling classes in the fascist experience" reflected the will of not only the Italian political elite, but also American and Western geopolitical interests.[256] This process, dubbed "de-fascistization" by the historian Emilio Gentile, would include the "minimization and caricature of [fascism's] most sinister and violent features," including its racial, supremacist, and genocidal ideologies.[257] For example, the racial anti-Semitic laws of 1938 were interpreted by these post-fascist politicians to have been passed due to pressure from Hitler, with the conclusion that racism and anti-Semitism were not intrinsic to the Italian fascist experience.[258] Such analysis cast Italian fascism in a better light than German Nazism, and depicted Italian Fascism and racism as a "mere break from the rest of Italian history."[259]

These revisionist histories were also applied to Italy's colonial past. By framing Italy's colonial projects as strongly tied to the monarchy and the fascist state, the post-war republic was able to avoid any sort of association. Furthermore, since Italy's colonial period was brief, and its colonies had simply been stripped away after its defeat in World War II, the processes of decolonization were much less drawn out and complicated in Italy than in other colonial powers like France and Britain. This silence in the public discourse on Italian colonialism, and especially on crimes committed in the colonies would linger for the rest of the century. The history of colonialism was not discussed in schools, and the term *razza* came to be used to describe breeds of animals as opposed to race.[260] This silence lingers in Italy to this day, and Italian people lack

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[256] Mellino, 92.
[257] Mellino, 92.
[258] Mellino, 92.
[259] Mellino, 93.
[260] Medhin Paolos, Angela Davis, and Lorgia García Peña, "Asmarina" (Asmarina: Film and Discussion with Angela Davis, Medhin Paolos, and Lorgia García Peña, Harvard Art Museum, March 29, 2018).

the vocabulary to critically discuss the relationship between race and citizenship, making it ever more difficult to effect real change in the restrictive citizenship laws.

*Il Boom Economico and Resurgent Racism*

Postwar economic change would drastically change the composition of Italian society and provide an arena in which dormant racism could reawaken. With the fascist veil of nationality unity stripped away, the North-South divisions re-emerged, exacerbated by the waves of northbound internal migration sweeping the country. In the aftermath of World War II, over 90 percent of Italians lacked one or more modern amenities (like electricity or running water) in their homes, not to mention the significant number of Italians who had no home at all.[261] There was high unemployment and infant mortality, and much of the country was still agricultural. The modest industry that existed was concentrated in the North. Migrations abroad continued, forming new communities in places like Toronto, Buenos Aires, and Sydney and reinforcing the diasporic and therefore ethnic nature of Italianness. However, with the financial support of the American Marshall Plan, northern Italy recovered from the devastation of the war, with a rapidly growing industry that would come to be known as an "economic miracle."[262] Southern Italy and its agricultural-based economy did not, leading to new northbound migrations in which Southern labor migrants became the racialized working class in Northern cities.[263]

The advent of *il boom economico* in Northern Italy "changed the character of Italy's international migrations and ended the country's long history as one of the world's most important exporters of labor."[264] With a booming economy in the North, migration became

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[261] Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 155.
[262] Gabaccia, 155.
[263] Gabaccia, 155.
[264] Gabaccia, 160.

national from the South to the North. The Marshall Plan aid bolstered industry and exports in the

north, but the economic growth did not reach much further than central Italy, and the South

continued to languish. Emigration from the South remained strong; however, in the years

between 1955 and 1981, almost equal numbers of Southern Italians chose to head northwest for

work as those who chose to go abroad.[265] Internal migrants were "fundamental actors in the

radical and rapid changes that transformed Italian society and its economy" during these years.[266]

Peasants became manual workers on the assembly lines in northern factories or moved to work

the lands left behind by families that had migrated to urban centers, while also dealing the

mechanization of agriculture.[267]

Class divides became increasingly present within society, building upon tension that had

existed since the creation of the Italian state. However, these class divides became compounded

by regional prejudice, since Southerners and Northerners had rarely cohabited the same

municipal spaces before. Competition for jobs, resources, and opportunity led to renewed

classism and racism that exploited the Southerner. The modernization of society brought new

consumerist ways of living and the mixing of many peoples in urban space, which in turn

produced new conflict using old prejudices. These new migrations reinvigorated northern racism

towards southerners.

Discourses and images of the *questione meridionale* developed over the previous century

dominated the way internal migrants were discussed and viewed.[268] Southern migrants were once

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[265] Gabaccia, 162.

[266] Enrica Capussotti, "Nordisti Contro Sudisti: Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Italy: 1950s and 1960s," *Italian Culture* 28, no. 2 (September 2010): 122, https://doi.org/10.1179/016146210X12790095563101.

[267] Capussotti, 122.

[268] Capussotti, 123.

again constructed as the "Other," exemplified by the Torinese newspaper *La Gazzetta del Popolo's* 1956 inquiry on immigration entitled "I torinesi e gli altri."[269] Personal advertisements and housing and labor markets explicitly stated "preference based on place of origin."[270] These prejudices and stereotypes were often constructed through the lense of *campanilismo* to disguise the racism at play. *Campanilismo*, derived from the word *campanile* meaning bell tower, is often interpreted as devotion or love for one's city, reflecting "historical roots" and "folkloric articulations."[271] Within the context of *antimeridionalismo* (anti-southern sentiment) and especially in the 1950s and 1960s, *campanilismo* "[transformed] prejudices and discrimination [into an] innocuous representation of common sense."[272] Yet the realities were far from harmless.

In the 1950s, Southern dialects were constantly conceived of as "a sign of otherness," and occasionally physical features were as well.[273] Many Northerners claimed that the internal migration was a southern "invasion" that brought unemployment, illiteracy, delinquency, and huge and disorderly families.[274] The Southerners had been stripped of the whiteness they had acquired under Fascism, and were viewed as foreigners in their own country. A new political party in Piedmont, called *Movimento per l'autonomia regionale piemontese* (MARP) utilized the slogan "Fuori Napoli da Torino."[275] A predecessor to the *Lega Nord,* MARP advocated for Piemontese taxes to remain in Piedmont and for the prevention of Southern immigration. Some northerners referred to Southern communities in the north as colonies, reinforcing the historical

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[269] Capussotti, 125.
[270] Capussotti, 126.
[271] Capussotti, 126.
[272] Capussotti, 126.
[273] Capussotti, 125.
[274] Capussotti, 126.
[275] Capussotti, 126.

entanglement between colonization and migration that had existed in Italian diasporas.[276] Southerners were conceptualized as foreigners across the north, and their identity was multifaceted and intersectional, combining aspects of geography, class, and culture to exclude them from the Italian identity.

*Discrepancies in Citizenship Rights*

Although the 1948 Constitution had theoretically guaranteed equal rights for all citizens, anti-Southerner prejudice and contradictory laws limited the efficacy of such entitlements, especially in urban space. Under fascism, Mussolini had attempted to de-urbanize the country in the name of revitalizing the Italian race. This anti-urbanization law had aimed to keep the population in the countryside to promote agriculture and large families by making migration to urban areas illegal. This law would not be abolished until 1961, leaving around three decades worth of southern migrants essentially "illegal" as "*clandestini* in their own country."[277] Some northern cities like Turin responded accordingly, granting temporary permissions that would later become permanent residence. But the law also "blackmailed migrants through residency rights," and many "illegal" migrants were forced to enter the informal labor market, where they were subject to further exploitation and poor treatment (much of this already existed in the formal labor market as well).[278]

Even in the sphere of education, a right guaranteed by citizenship, prejudice against southerners reinforced the social hierarchy. The 1948 Constitution had laid out many rights for citizens, one of which was the right to education (Article 34).[279] Southern peasant families were

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[276] Capussotti, 128.
[277] Capussotti, 135.
[278] Capussotti, 135.
[279] Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana.

generally large and illiterate, and their migration to the north in great numbers overburdened the education system. Schools viewed these new arrivals with a civilizing mission, in which the inferiority and the otherness of the southern children became clear.[280] In the early twentieth century, classes for children with special needs or learning challenges were established, called *classi differenziali*. In the 1960s, enrollment in these *classi differenziali* rose, leading to the consistent creation of new specialized classes. Although these classes were not supposed to be based on class or geographic origins, "in northern cities children born in economically disadvantaged southern families represented the majority of students in these grades."[281]

Differentiated classes reiterated the 'otherness' of southern students and prevented them from integrating with their new peers. In turn, this produced lower education standards and reinforcement of social outcomes in line with the racial hierarchy in society. Thus, the normative role of the institution of education was less important than its pedagogical one, allowing such discriminatory practices.[282] These rights of citizenship "depended not only on territorial belongings but on class as well;" in many cases, wealthier educated southerners would utilize class alliances with northerners to differentiate themselves from their poorer, "uncivilized" counterparts.[283] The stigma attached to southern identity was incredibly negative, and hard to overcome. These differences in educational outcomes, a right supposedly guaranteed by citizenship, function as institutionalized racism.

The wave of southern migration to northern Italy in the 1950s and 1960s illustrated the failures of national citizenship. Despite supposed guarantees of equality, access to social services

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[280] Capussotti, "Nordisti Contro Sudisti," 130.
[281] Capussotti, 130.
[282] Capussotti, 130.
[283] Capussotti, 130.

and the political system, discrimination against southerners existed in many institutions of the state and the economy. Race became equated with geography, and it affected citizenship, such that "institutions, laws, and economic and social patterns" legitimated the anti-southern racism that manifested in "concrete forms of exclusion and discrimination."[284] Citizenship had remained intricately connected with race.

*Conclusion*

In this chapter, I have shown how the renewed racism against Southern Italians in the postwar period led to unequal and discriminatory applications of citizenship rights in the North. Mussolini's attempt to unify the country had failed, and the North-South divides had only intensified as World War II came to a close. The economic boom in the 1950s had left the South in the dust, prompting intense northbound migration. The appearance of the 'Other' in Northern urban and rural spaces demonstrated hierarchies of whiteness and foreignness in Italian society. In the next few decades, more people would begin to arrive in Italy, but with origins that went far and beyond the Italian borders. Immigrants from China, the Philippines, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, and many other countries would begin to arrive, forever changing the makeup of Italian society and challenging paradigms of race and whiteness.

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[284] Capussotti, 136.

## Chapter 6: Contemporary Italy

*Introduction*

In the past forty years, Italy has transformed into a destination country for immigrants, irrevocably changing the social fabric of a nation that lacks the words to critically discuss race and difference within society. Immigration disrupts traditional understanding of citizenship as being an extension of a nation and its people. The children of immigrants, carrying multiple identities, challenge this concept even more poignantly. Italy's immigration law has focused on preventing undocumented immigration, while failing to define a real procedure for legal entry. Combined with a new citizenship law that makes citizenship even less attainable for non-EU foreigners, Italy sends clear messages that immigrants are not welcome. Outdated at its inception, the citizenship law of 1992 has left thousands of second generation immigrants in limbo, as they are not naturally recognized as citizens by the country that they grew up in. This chapter will discuss the exclusion of second-generation immigrants from Italian citizenship, and the role of race and 'Othering' in maintaining Italian identity.

In the previous chapters, I have shown how citizenship has functioned as a tool of exclusion and discrimination towards those who were perceived not to be 'Italian.' The target of this 'Othering' has varied throughout history, but its predominant scapegoats were the Southerner and the colonial African subject. In contemporary Italy, this new 'Other' has become the immigrant, clearly demonstrated by the political rhetoric of *Lega Nord*. The immigrant 'Other' can be, for example, an Albanian, a Pakistani, or a Nigerian, elaborating a wider target of orientalist discourse. In this chapter, I will primarily focus on racism directed towards Sub-Saharan Africans; however, it is vital to acknowledge that xenophobia and racism in Italy is directed towards Eastern Europeans, Central Americans, Asians, and practically anyone who

looks 'different.' The existence of a new antithesis to *italianità* does not preclude the Southerner or the Italo-African from being excluded and disparaged in discourse and law. These histories combine together to create complex social hierarchies that define Italian society. The contemporary racism towards immigrants must be studied in the context of historical processes of racialization in Italy.

*The Effects of Immigration Upon Citizenship*

In classical modern western thought, citizenship has been closely tied to the nation-state and its people. Immigration directly upends this idea. The idea that the nation-state equals a land, a people, and a citizenry had traditionally "functioned as guide for the distribution of rights and duties that constitutes the basis of civil cohabitation in the democratic model," and the twentieth century had seen a continued widening of the recognition of individual rights at the same time as the reinforcement of the nation-state.[285] From the 1970s onwards, however, processes of globalization and migration have transformed the idea of citizenship, "highlighting the contradictory link that binds belonging to a political community to the protection of individual and collective rights."[286] Within this global migratory context, citizenship became a battleground over sovereignty and identity. According to Colombo et al.:

> The presence of the migrant leads to the deconstruction of the apparent unity of citizenship, highlighting the fact that the recognition of rights (civil, political, and social), and of identity and the willingness to participate in collective life, may constitute distinct elements that may also diverge or compete with each other.[287]

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[285] Enzo Colombo, Lorenzo Domaneschi, and Chiara Marchetti, "Citizenship and Multiple Belonging. Representations of Inclusion, Identification and Participation among Children of Immigrants in Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 334, https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2011.565630.
[286] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 335.
[287] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 335.

The children of migrants deconstruct the idea of citizenship even further. They are not the "simple extension of their parents' 'native soil,'" and instead embrace the "models of their fellow natives," encapsulating multiple identities and experiences.[288] These individual and collective identities "demand recognition" and cannot be reduced to a single ethnic or national identity.[289] National identity and citizenship thus become distinct–one does not determine the other.

Immigration has also illuminated citizenship's function as a mechanism of closure to mark borders and regulate entry into states.[290] Entry into the territory of a state is a right only given to citizens; those who enter without citizenship are often denied access to legal residence or regularization.[291] Therefore, nationality laws in Europe have essentially become a part of immigrant and immigration policies, as they can be utilized to encourage certain immigrants (i.e. those from the EU or those with Italian ancestry) and discourage other ones (i.e. anyone else).[292] Even those immigrants who acquire citizenship or legal status do not always feel welcomed or equal due to their ethnic difference.[293] Joppke, a prominent citizenship scholar, argues that "liberal states…are couched in distinct cultural colors–its official language, holidays, or church relations cannot but privilege the ethnic majority population over the immigrant minorities."[294] This is certainly the case in Italy. Its restrictive nationality laws send a clear message about who can be 'Italian.'

*Emigration to Immigration*

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[288] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 335.
[289] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 335.
[290] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.
[291] Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 629.
[292] Giovanna Zincone, "Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy," EUDO Citizenship Observatory (Florence: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2010), 6.
[293] Joppke, "How Immigration Is Changing Citizenship," 630.
[294] Joppke, 630.

Immigration occurs due to a variety of causes–work, family, war, famine, persecution– and has different outcomes. Immigration with the intention to stay, however, must be considered a stop on a pathway to permanent residence that culminates in citizenship. Therefore, immigrants have the potential to change the demographics of society, and this has provoked great fear in Italy. In Italy, the categorization of immigrant remains a subordinate status for generations, and children born in Italy to immigrants are still viewed as foreigners. The immigrant is a racialized and inferior status, illustrating the institutionalized racism embedded in immigration and citizenship law.

Immigration flows to Italy began in the mid-1970s, after many northern European countries closed their borders in the wake of the 1974 oil crisis. Italy only truly became aware of the immigration trends after the 1981 Census revealed an "unexpectedly high number of foreign residents and presences on Italian territory."[295] However, politicians did not feel compelled to take much action since most immigrants were of Italian origin and did not require "cultural or economic integration."[296] The increased influx of immigrants of non-Italian origin during the 1980s pushed the government to finally pass legislation on immigration. Immigration only became a national problem once the immigrants were not Italian, showing the implicit racism in the policy change.  Between 1984 and 1989, around 800,000 people entered the country, alarming society.[297] As immigration continued, the pressures upon society became clearer: many immigrants were undocumented, their legal entitlements were undefined, and there was no

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[295] Giovanna Zincone, "Illegality, Enlightenment and Ambiguity: A Hot Italian Recipe," *South European Society and Politics* 3, no. 3 (September 1, 1998): 48, https://doi.org/10.1080/13608740308539547.
[296] Zincone, 48.
[297] Zincone, 48.

process of integration to speak of.[298] The growing tensions over housing, homelessness, the black market for labor and the squalid living conditions of immigrants had reached a climax in August 1989, when Jerry Masslo, a political refugee from South Africa, was murdered in Calabria.[299] His death led to a new importance given to immigration in the Italian political agenda. The Italian government aimed to give "immigrants already present in Italy the opportunity to lead a decent life and to strongly reduce inflows."[300] However, new citizenship law was not considered as a way to achieve this. Instead, the government passed a series of immigration laws that granted amnesties but aimed to discourage immigration through prioritizing European Union citizens and treating migrants as temporary workers.

Italian immigration law, while intending to discourage undocumented immigration, in fact increased the amount of people entering the country clandestinely. The Italian government first took action on immigration in 1986, passing the *Foschi Law* (no. 943), which aimed to both prevent "illegal[301] immigration" and "legalize and regulate the situation of immigrants [already] in Italy."[302] Italian politicians believed that "illegal immigration was due to the hidden economy," yet refused to acknowledge that the Italian social and economic systems attract immigrant labor due to inadequate public services for the young and the old, as well as the

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[298] Zincone, 48.

[299] Eduardo Meligrana, "Razzismo: Jerry Masslo, un raccoglitore di pomodori ha cambiato l'Italia," Il Fatto Quotidiano, August 25, 2013, http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2013/08/25/razzismo-jerry-masslo-un-raccoglitore-di-pomodori-ha-cambiato-litalia/691986/.

[300] Zincone, "Illegality, Enlightenment and Ambiguity," 50.

[301] The term "illegal immigrant" has come to be viewed as a pejorative and inaccurate term. Elie Wiesel famously said: "No human being is illegal." Therefore, I will use alternative terms such as "undocumented" and "unauthorized" to describe the phenomenon. Some usages of the phrase "illegal immigrant" remain to preserve the integrity of other author's words.

[302] Zincone, "Illegality, Enlightenment and Ambiguity," 49.

demand for domestic labor.[303] Consequently, there was no attempt to truly limit unauthorized entry into the country until recently.

The *Martelli Law* (no. 39) introduced new bureaucratic obstacles that continued to make undocumented immigration an attractive option to enter the country. Visas became "compulsory for people coming from 'high emigration risk areas'" and an immigrant needed to prove that they had "proper accommodation and a minimum income level" as criteria to reside on Italian territory.[304] It is wholly unrealistic to expect an immigrant to find housing and have a certain level of income before arriving in a destination country. Therefore, coupled with its broad amnesty to undocumented migrants, the *Martelli Law* was considered "the strongest message that illegal entry to Italy and subsequent legalization were the easiest way to immigrate to Europe."[305] There was no reliable border control, and it was easy to obtain documents that gave reason for legalization. The Italian government again "failed to define a real procedure for legal entry," contributing to continued rise in unauthorized immigration.[306] This lack of attention upon legal immigration suggests that Italians were simply not interested in incorporating new members into society.

The Italian government has consistently given precedence to the labor and migratory needs of EU citizens over non-EU citizens. Workers from outside the European Union could not easily move from one job to another within Italy. The *Martelli Law* set quotas for how many non-EU workers could enter the country each year, and work permit priorities were given to

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[303] Zincone, 48; Zincone, "Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy," 6–7.
[304] Zincone, "Illegality, Enlightenment and Ambiguity," 50.
[305] Zincone, 53.
[306] Rima Al-Azar, "Italian Immigration Policies: The Metaphor of Water," *The SAIS Europe Journal of Global Affairs*, April 1, 2006, http://www.saisjournal.org/posts/italian-immigration-policies.

Italian and EU citizens first. It also established an "annual quota system with input from unions" illuminating the importance of Italian interests at play.[307] It further suggests that Italians viewed non-EU immigrants as competition for jobs and undesirable additions to the nation-state.

The Italian treatment of immigrants as predominantly workers overlooked the complex reasons for immigration. Assuming that immigrants were arriving in Italy for the same reasons that southern Italians had left Italy a century prior, the government made sure that provisions in the *Foschi* law gave Italian nationals "priority in employment opportunity."[308] Entry and work permits were dependent on a lack of available Italian workforce to fill jobs. These conditions for entry made the existence of such migrants appear temporary, validating their exclusion from integration and citizenship rights. Although the *Foschi Law* provided for family reunification and regularization, its bureaucratic obstacles ignored the complex origins of immigrants. The *Martelli Law* made possible certain adjustments for family or humanitarian reasons, which were utilized after crises in Albania, Yugoslavia, and Somalia.[309] While this shows recognition for human rights, Italy's colonial legacies in both Albania and Somalia had led to these crises in the first place. Furthermore, Italy had possessed territory in Yugoslavia, as well as granted citizenship rights to many ethnic Italians coming from Slavic territory.

Besides the afore mentioned humanitarian crises, Italy did not facilitate expedited immigration or regularization procedures for people coming from its former colonies, such as Albania, Somalia, and Eritrea. While Howard argues that major colonial powers have liberalized citizenship laws for immigrants from former colonies, Italy's colonial regime was short-lived and became more discriminatory and conservative under fascism, illustrating a different

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[307] Al-Azar.
[308] Zincone, "Illegality, Enlightenment and Ambiguity," 49.
[309] Zincone, 51.

trajectory.[310] Furthermore, colonialism was largely written off as part of the fascist regime, and thus any discussion of colonial reparations or postcoloniality was avoided in politics, education, and the media. When Italy began to receive immigrants, there was little acknowledgement of the growing communities, even those that had come from former colonies speaking fluent Italian or claiming Italian citizenship.

New immigration law at the turn of the twenty-first century continued to grant amnesty and crack down on undocumented immigration. The *Turco-Napolitano Law,* of 1998 aimed to curb undocumented immigration, regulate arrivals of foreign workers, promote immigrant integration and ensure basic human rights to migrants.[311] It also provided amnesty to undocumented migrants present in Italy on March 27, 1998.[312] In 2002, the new center-right coalition government made good on its promises to reform immigration by passing the *Bossi-Fini Law* in 2002, which further "[restricted] residence permits and illegal entries."[313] The law aimed to discourage permanent settlement, abolishing sponsor systems, shortening residence permit durations, and linking the validity of the permit of stay to employment.[314] These conditions were unattainable for many migrants. It also increased detention and deportation of illegal migrants by increasing police control and regulation. Additionally, the amnesty provision of the *Bossi-Fini Law* regularized 646,000 immigrants, the largest ever in Europe.[315]  Despite its amnesty, the *Bossi-Fini Law* made clear that the Italian government did not want immigrants–

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[310] Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe*.

[311] Angela Paparusso, Tineke Fokkema, and Elena Ambrosetti, "Immigration Policies in Italy: Their Impact on the Lives of First-Generation Moroccan and Egyptian Migrants," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 18, no. 2 (May 1, 2017): 503, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0485-x.

[312] Paparusso, Fokkema, and Ambrosetti, 503.

[313] Paparusso, Fokkema, and Ambrosetti, 504.

[314] Paparusso, Fokkema, and Ambrosetti, 504.

[315] Paparusso, Fokkema, and Ambrosetti, 504.

legal or undocumented. In the fifteen years since, only minor changes have occurred to existing immigration law– more amnesties, new measures to curb undocumented immigration, and application of EU directives. Restrictive citizenship law acts in conjunction with immigration law as a determent of immigration, as the limited access to citizenship in Italy may discourage immigrants from settling there. However, immigration has continued to rise, creating a pressing need for an overhaul of immigration and citizenship law in Italy, which remain antiquated.

*The Citizenship Law of 1992*

With little regard for the changing demographics of Italy after two decades of immigration, the 1992 citizenship law reaffirmed the dominance of *ius sanguinis*. As a "delayed-action provision conceived in the past to honor a debt of gratitude towards Italian emigrants," the 1992 law was "outdated since its inception."[316] The main principles of the law originated in the 1960s and had been discussed during the 1975 National Conference on Emigration, but the project had been delayed by political and economic instability.[317] When Act 91 finally passed in 1992, it remained "intrinsically ethnocentric."[318] For people of Italian descent, the length of residence required to naturalize and become a citizen dropped from five years to three years, and to two years for minors. The provision on stateless people and refugees remained unchanged from the 1912 law, such that they still had to reside in Italy for five years before naturalizing. However, the biggest change in the 1992 law was that non-European Union foreigners had to reside in Italy for 10 years before applying for naturalization.[319] These varying mandatory residence periods made the 1992 citizenship law more blatantly preferential to ethnic Italians

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[316] Zincone, "Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy," 2.
[317] Zincone, 2.
[318] Zincone, 2.
[319] Zincone, 2.

than any previous law. Furthermore, the possibility of citizenship by *ius soli* became more unlikely by requiring "continuity and legality of residence as further requirements for children born in Italy."[320] These changes placed ethnicity as a more important factor in determining *italianità* than both language and culture.

The 1992 law also promoted conservative, traditional family values by making marriage "an easy path to nationality."[321] If a resident foreigner married an Italian citizen, only six months of marriage were required to apply for citizenship, and there was no test to pass establishing the persistence or verity of the bond.[322] This combination of leniency and strictness was reflected in naturalization statistics. In 1993, out of a study of 5,000 naturalizations, only 7 percent were from residence, whereas the other 93 percent were from marriage.[323] The heteronormative and patriarchal values behind such liberal policies on naturalization by marriage illuminate the continued conservatism of Italian society.

Italian emigrants and their descendants were some of the greatest beneficiaries of the law, indicating the ethnic bias of the Italian government when creating new citizenship law. The 1992 act legalized dual nationality and begun "a long series of reacquisition programs for expatriates and their descendants who may have lost Italian nationality," the last of which was approved in 2006.[324] This led to a large reacquisition movement. Between 1998 and 2007, almost 800,000 people outside Italy claimed to be Italians and requested citizenship.[325] Citizens can opt into a special register (AIRE) that allows them to vote, and although the social rights of external

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[320] Zincone, 5.
[321] Zincone, 3.
[322] Zincone, 3.
[323] Zincone, 4.
[324] Zincone, 5.
[325] Zincone, 5.

citizens have been cut for economic reasons, the interests of Italians abroad continue to play a role in domestic politics.[326] Such policy also implies that being Italian is not about geography or homeland; it is about culture, language, and ethnicity. This sentiment has become a central part of the platform of right-wing parties, that continue to oppose any reform of citizenship law in Italy.

*New Racism in Changing Politics: The Rise of Lega Nord*

The rise of *Lega Nord* represented the Italian incarnation of an ethnic turn in European politics, and legitimated racism in the political sphere. This "ethnic wave of political mobilization" took off in the late 1960s and continued to grow in the following decades, sanctioning the practice of "self-determination based on ethnic difference" that provided European sub-regions with the criteria to argue for special treatment.[327] These decades coincided with the secularization of society, which was particularly poignant in Italy due to the power of the *Democrazia Cristiana (D.C.)*. Furthermore, the *Tangentopoli* (Bribesville) corruption scandal in 1992 rocked the Italian political establishment and provided the space for *Lega Nord* to gain influence on the national level. In the 1992 general elections, *Lega Nord* came in fourth, reflecting a massive growth in the party's national appeal. Today, the *Lega* is a national party with wide-reaching appeal as it capitalizes upon anti-immigrant sentiment. The progression of its orientalist rhetoric underlines the consistent usage of the 'Other' in Italian identity construction.

Smaller *leghe* like the *Liga Veneta* and the *Lega Autonomista Lombarda*, founded by Umberto Bossi, began to organize in the 1970s and 1980s due to their resentment of the central

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[326] Zincone, 5.

[327] Eva Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità"* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 107.

government in Rome, and the Southern half of the country.[328] In 1991, these *leghe* merged together under the leadership of Umberto Bossi to create a much larger party called *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza di Padania*. The goals of the party were to "protect and represent the North's interests against taxes, Roman bureaucracy, and the centralized political system," while "*anti-meridionalismo* was central to building the party's identity and agenda."[329] With the fall of the first Republic, *Lega Nord* transitioned from being a fringe political movement to a national party that gained power through the center-right coalitions in government. The League has been a critical actor in preventing the passage of new citizenship law.

    *Lega Nord* conceives citizenship as exclusive and cultural, while incorporating democratic and socio-economic aspects.[330] They advocate an elitist citizenship for members of the Northern state with its own welfare system, illuminating the use of citizenship as social closure.[331] The *leghista* "conception of citizenship is [also] rather paternalistic and hetero-patriarchal" such that "women are relegated to the private sphere… while men are at the heart of the public sphere and participate in decision-making and communication processes."[332] This continues a Italian tradition of discrimination based on gender, especially concerning rights and family structure. The *Lega* assigns the status of 'second class citizens' to those who they

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[328] Garau, 108.

[329] Capussotti, "Nordisti Contro Sudisti," 124; Ilvo Diamanti, "La Lega, Imprenditore Politico Della Crisi. Origini, Crescita e Successo Delle Leghe Autonomiste in Italia," *Meridiana*, no. 16 (1993): 99–133.

[330] Florence Di Bonaventura, "Italy and Lega Nord: Stories of Communities, National (Dis)Integration and Spaces of (Restricted) Citizenship," *SocietàMutamentoPolitica* 7, no. 13 (2016): 302, https://doi.org/10.13128/SMP-18288.

[331] Di Bonaventura, 302–3.

[332] Di Bonaventura, 303; E Bellè, "From Territory to Community. Inside the 'black Box' of the Lega Nord's Populism," in *Etnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa*, ed. M Abélès and L Dematteo (Bologna: il Mulino, 2015).

perceive as enemies of the nation, and by such differentiation, grants less rights.[333] In order to

ensure that more rights are actually provided to those 'first-class citizens,' the League sees

benefits like employment, social services, and public resources as being accessed and distributed

through the community.[334] Therefore, the *leghista* understanding of citizenship requires that

there be a subaltern in order to create an superior citizen, a clearly orientalist interpretation.

The League used the idea of territory to create an exclusive group identity and reject any

perceived as ethnically inferior. In *leghista* propaganda, territory became conflated with identity,

and the traditional North-South and urban-rural divides in Italian society provided the bases upon

which Northerners could differentiate themselves.[335] Ethnicity became a "principle of legitimacy

for the acquisition of rights in the Italian state."[336] This conflates race and citizenship, as

Mussolini did in the final years of his dictatorship. Being a *leghista* requires the rejection of the

Other, whether it be a Southerner or, later on, gay peoples, drug addicts, or anyone considered to

be leading a "weak" or "alternative lifestyle."[337] However, the South was the most common

target for many years, and thus excluded from the community of northern citizens.

The denigration of the Southerner commonly found in *leghista* propaganda is a

continuation of the racist and anti-southern sentiments that has existed throughout Italian history.

The League vehemently used pejoratives like *terrone* to describe people from the South, which

came to represent everything the North believed the South was: "lazy, backward, dirty, Mafioso,

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[333] Di Bonaventura, "Italy and Lega Nord."
[334] Di Bonaventura, 304.
[335] Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 106.
[336] Maria Cachafeiro, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Italian Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 47.
[337] Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 109.

and ignorant."[338] The South was passive and corrupt, and the North was the victim.[339] This strongly resembles the anti-southern discourse of the late nineteenth century. Slogans like "Kill the Southerners, save millions" from a meeting in Chioggia on September 15, 1996 or the commonly used statement "The North has got one single problem: Southerners" clearly singled out the Southerner as different, worthless, and foreign.[340] Many Northern League members believed Italy to be a multi-ethnic state, in which the various ethnicities were, for example, Sicilian, Neapolitan or Calabrian.[341] The Southerner was "essentialized in fixed stereotypes and exploited to build an alternative identity and provide Padani with a sense of belonging."[342] This usage of 'the Other' to create exclusionary belonging defined the rhetoric of the *Lega Nord.* A Southerner could clearly not be a citizen of Padania.

After a certain point, the League began to focus on a new 'Other' to define their identity: the *extracomunitario*. The word *extracomunitario* differs from the word immigrant, as explained by Balbo and Manconi in their book *Razzismi: Un Vocabolario.*[343] While 'immigrant' stresses the otherness through the common experience of the arduous journey of leaving a country of origin, it also erases any internal differences (like gender, ethnicity, language, and history).[344] In contrast, the term '*extracomunitario*' stresses the shared identity of Italians and Europeans (i.e. the community) while implying the otherness of the immigrant who is 'extra' and 'outside.'[345]

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[338] The word *terrone,* discussed in earlier chapters, is derived from the word *terra* (soil), and traditionally described those employed in agriculture and more generally, Southerners.
[339] Capussotti, "Nordisti Contro Sudisti," 124.
[340] Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 110.
[341] Garau, 110–11.
[342] Garau, 111.
[343] Garau, 111.
[344] Laura Balbo and Luigi Manconi, *Razzismi. Un Vocabulario* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1993), 18–19; Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 111.
[345] Balbo and Manconi, *Razzismi. Un Vocabulario*, 18–19; Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 111.

This term reinforces feelings of belongings and European solidarity. The Northern League exploits this newly founded European identity to "preserve the status quo of 'fortress Europe.'"[346] The outsider threatens the Italian identity, as well as the European one.

The idea of localized rights based on community is also applied to those whom the League wants out of its community. Umberto Bossi used the slogan "Let's help them home" whereas Matteo Salvini states that "Africa must grow in Africa."[347] Rhetoric like *Stop all'invasione* is clearly xenophobic, but the League justifies its hostility towards foreigners by "using socio-political differences such as the respect for cultural differences, the support for development policies, [and] the unemployment and lack of financial means to guarantee them decent living conditions."[348] Furthermore, as the *Lega* conceives citizenship rights as being granted by the community, this further excludes immigrants from opportunity and a sense of belonging. Citizenship acts as a barrier, with legal and intrapersonal implications–one can be denied opportunity and social capital based on a legal status.

The rise of *Lega Nord* also occurred during a period in which the number of foreign immigrants in Italy was rising. The League has been at the forefront of the right wings' radical attacks upon the idea and growing reality of a "multicultural Italy" and has "contested most forms of foreigner's integration into the political and social fabric."[349] Using immigrants to represent "forms of diversity, backwardness, and alterity" allows Italians to construct their identities as "united, developed, and modern."[350] Yet *anti-meridionalismo*, while often

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[346] Balbo and Manconi, *Razzismi. Un Vocabulario*, 18–19; Garau, *The Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and "Italianità,"* 111.

[347] Di Bonaventura, "Italy and Lega Nord," 304.

[348] Di Bonaventura, 304.

[349] Capussotti, "Nordisti Contro Sudisti," 124.

[350] Capussotti, 124.

appearing "softened" by xenophobic discourse, continues to affect Italian politics. The growing presence of immigrants in Italy simply adds a layer to the bottom of the racialized hierarchy of citizenship in Italian society.

Matteo Salvini has championed the rebranding of *Lega Nord* to include voters in central and southern Italy who share his anti-immigrant views.[351] Salvini took over the leadership of Lega Nord in 2013 from Umberto Bossi. In his previous political exploits, he had heavily criticized Southerners, singing at the annual *Lega* festival in 2009: "What a stink, even dogs are running away, here come the Neapolitans."[352]  But in the years after he took the reins of the party, over 600,000 migrants arrived in Italy, and Salvini capitalized upon Italian economic struggles and xenophobia to expand his message.[353] In the campaign leading up to the Italian election on March 4, 2018, he utilized the slogans "*Prima gli italiani*" (Italians First) and "*Stop Invasione*" (Stop Invasion) and traveled as far as Sicily to promote his message. His extremism has provoked and rationalized dangerous racism. The central Italian city of Macerata on February 3, 2018 a fascist and racist gunman who hailed Salvini as his 'captain,' went on a shooting rampage and wounded six African migrants.[354] In his remarks following the violence, Salvini condemned the violence but also argued that "unchecked immigration brings chaos, anger" and "drug dealing, thefts, rapes, and violence."[355] A *Lega Nord* candidate in Lombardy,

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[351] Jason Horowitz, "Italy's Populists Turn Up the Heat as Anti-Migrant Anger Boils," *The New York Times*, February 5, 2018, sec. Europe, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/world/europe/italy-election-northern-league-populists-migrants.html.
[352] Horowitz.
[353] Horowitz.
[354] Elisabetta Povoledo, "'Racial Hatred' Cited After African Immigrants Are Shot in Italy," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2018, sec. Europe, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/03/world/europe/macerata-italy-shooting.html.
[355] Horowitz, "Italy's Populists Turn Up the Heat as Anti-Migrant Anger Boils."

advocating for closed borders, stated that migration endangered the white race.[356] Salvini's

rhetoric has zeroed in on the immigrant as the cause of all Italy's problems.

This interpretation of the immigrant as the 'Other' has promoted a unified Italian identity

in a similar way to Mussolini's use of African colonial subjects. There is a southern and central

branch of the Northern League called *Noi Con Salvini* ("We're with Salvini"). Its leader,

Francesco Zicchieri, recently said:

> The project of Salvini is a national project. His political ideas, his notion of protecting the territory, is seen the same in the north and south.[357]

When he shifted the target of his denigration from the Southerner, Salvini was able to attract a

new category of supporters, discontent with the government. Salvini has drawn a rigid line

between the Italians and the immigrant, and his growing power in the national government has

endangered the political movements advocating for more liberal citizenship law and changes to

migration policy. The fact that Salvini's ideas so closely resemble Mussolini exemplifies the

widespread erasure of race, fascism and colonialism that has occurred in the Italian national

consciousness.

*The Lack of New Citizenship Law*

Since 1992, there has been no substantive citizenship reform, reflecting the fixed

understanding of Italianness and growing anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. The lack of path to

citizenship for the second generation remains the most gaping hole in Italian citizenship policy.

Children of immigrants upend the traditional conception of citizenship in a transnational world.

Their treatment is the most evident failure of citizenship law in Italy. In order to become a

citizen, second-generation children who are born in Italy must have lived in Italy for their entire

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[356] Horowitz.
[357] Horowitz.

life without any interruption. Their parents had to be "regular" (i.e. having a residence permit) in the moment of the birth and remained regular from then until their child reaches majority age.[358] If these two preliminary conditions are met, the child can declare their intention to become an Italian citizen, but this must be done before the age of 19.[359] However, even these two conditions are hard to meet–approximately 50% of foreigners who currently possessing permit have a previous experience of irregularity, especially since it is not uncommon for parents to "raise their children in the country of origin, at least for a short period of time."[360] The difficulty of fulfilling all these requirements is obvious when looking at citizenship acquisition statistics– between 2007 and 2009, "less than 1 percent of regular migrants became citizens each year."[361] Such restrictive policy highlights the Italian desire to maintain a white, ethnically Italian population.

This does not mean, however, that there has been no attempt to reform citizenship law. The length of time required to naturalize after marriage has been lengthened to two years. There have been attempts to introduce a language requirement, proof of shared values and an oath of allegiance to citizenship proposals.[362] Yet the most consistent topic of the debate on citizenship reform concerns children born and or raised in Italy. In 1999, Livia Turco stated at a conference held by the Integration commission:

> Children [young foreigners] receive ambivalent and contradictory messages that can cause internal conflict. At least the message that comes from the Italian state should be clear. Above all, during adolescence girls and boys need to feel welcome and a part of the receiving society so that they can perceive it as their own country.[363]

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[358] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, "Citizenship and Multiple Belonging. Representations of Inclusion, Identification and Participation among Children of Immigrants in Italy," 337.
[359] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 337.
[360] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 337.
[361] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 337.
[362] Zincone, "Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy," 25.
[363] Jacqueline Andall, "Second-Generation Attitude? African-Italians in Milan," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 395, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183022146518.

Several bills have died in Parliament, due to opposition from parties like *Lega Nord* and the center-right coalition. Howard highlights the existence of anti-immigrant right-wing parties as a key factor in the lack of liberalization of citizenship law.[364] Italy's citizenship law has become thoroughly obsolete, clearly demonstrated by the fervent activism by the children of immigrants, the so-called second generation.

Activist networks have promoted the cause of second generation immigrants, placing it prominently in the public sphere–yet citizenship bills continue to die in Parliament. The frontrunner of this wave of activism was the *Rete G2 –Seconde Generazioni* (Second Generation Network) founded in 2005 in Rome, uniting immigrants from diverse regions including Latin America, South Asia, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe.[365] *Rete G2* has conducted several large-scale projects to raise public awareness of their cause, ranging from a civic and educational radio show called *OndeG2* in which members of the second generation shared their experiences with the Italian public, to the campaign called "*18 anni… in Comune,*" aiming to educate second generation immigrants of their rights and the process to acquire citizenship.[366] The network also organized a nation-wide campaign, lasting from 2012 to 2017 called "*L'Italia sono anch'io*" (I too am Italy) to push for a reform of citizenship law.[367] One of the highlights of the campaign was when the Chamber of Deputies (i.e. the Lower House) passed a bill amending the Italian citizenship law of 1992, on October 13, 2015.[368] As a *La Repubblica* article recounts, after the passing of the bill members of the *Partito Democratico* applauded

[364] Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe*.

[365] "Rete G2 - Seconde Generazioni," *Rete G2 - Seconde Generazioni* (blog), accessed April 18, 2018, http://www.secondegenerazioni.it.

[366] "Social Justice," Medhin Paolos, accessed April 18, 2018, https://medhinpaolos.com/social-justice/.

[367] "Social Justice"; Paolos, interview.

[368] "Social Justice."

while deputies of the *Lega* shouted "Vergogna!" (Shame!).[369] The right-wing parties *Forza Italia*

and *Fratelli d'Italia*, also voted against the bill. In a subsequent, Facebook post, Giorgia Meloni,

the president of *Fratelli d'Italia*, criticized citizenship as a tool of integration and accused the left

of trying to gift citizenship and sell out the Italian identity, history, and culture.[370] This statement

implies suggests that to be part of this Italian identity, history, and culture, one must be

ethnically Italian. Even non-Italian whites are excluded from this identity and the resources of

Italian whiteness. Citizenship thus becomes the legal codification of Italian whiteness.

Although many Italians favor granting citizenship to second generation immigrants, they

often propose prerequisite conditions, showing again the usage of citizenship as a boundary.

These conditions range from "the absence of illegality to the presence of a good work ethic," but

could also be linked to the legality and work status of their parents.[371] Simon, age 19, with one

Italian parent and one foreign one, was very opinionated:

> If people were to come here and work, and work hard to live here, then I think it is good
> to give them the right to have citizenship. But if a person comes here, doesn't do
> anything, deals drugs, and ruins the Italians people, no.[372]

Margherita, age 33, expressed reservations about granting citizenship to parents who did not

have jobs:

> But there should be some guidelines, whereby someone who is born here, their parents
> work here, so they should have Italian citizenship. If two people come here, and one
> gives birth here…I don't know.[373]

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[369] "Cittadinanza: sì della Camera allo ius soli. La nuova legge passa al Senato," *Repubblica.it*, October 13, 2015, http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/10/13/news/legge_cittadinanza_senato-124967907/.

[370] "Cittadinanza: sì della Camera allo ius soli. La nuova legge passa al Senato."

[371] Bianchi, "Italiani Nuovi o Nuova Italia?," 329.

[372] Bianchi, 329.

[373] Bianchi, 329–30.

The idea of linking citizenship to employment ignores the conditions of the Italian economy and the difficulty of finding a job as an immigrant. Italians set unrealistic expectations for citizenship requirements, viewing it much more as a benefit of contribution rather than identity. This overlooks the possible connections between the two.

The meticulous path to citizenship for the children of immigrants living in Italy also demonstrates great hypocrisy when considering past citizenship law. The very first citizenship law in Italy granted citizenship to the children of foreigners if the foreigner had been living in Italy for at least ten years uninterrupted for reasons other than commerce.[374] The children of immigrants today would become citizens at birth using the law of 1865. After World War II, language was used to determine Italianness when granting citizenship, as discussed in the section on repatriation.  Children of immigrants speak Italian fluently, with no accent; yet it is easier for an Italian-American with no knowledge of the Italian language to become a citizen than them. It is also incredibly ironic that current Italian citizenship law favors emigrants to the point that descendants of Italians are technically granted citizenship upon birth–although not formally recognized, it is theirs unless they explicitly revoke it. Meanwhile, there are thousands of people living in Italy who desperately want citizenship and have a full knowledge of the Italian language and culture. Citizenship is more than just a legal status. It is civic duty, involvement in society, and a sense of belonging. It is unethical and nonsensical to exclude potential citizens who desire to participate fully in society.

*'Italiani Senza Cittadinanza'*

With such restrictive policy, citizenship clearly operates as a tool of social exclusion. Colombo et al. conducted a study of how children of immigrants of various origins living in

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[374] *Codice Civile Del Regno d'Italia*.

Milan conceive and speak about citizenship in 2011.[375] All of the young people interviewed

expressed "great interest" in acquiring Italian citizenship in its legal sense.[376] Formal citizenship

status is "an instrument that allows admittance (to the human assembly: the recognition of

equality, equal rights, the guarantee that one will be protected from discrimination and

prejudice."[377] Obtaining citizenship would allow these people to avoid the humiliating, arduous

processes of the Italian administrative system. Many of the interviewees shared "anecdotes and

short stories of experiences and clashes with administrative offices in the attempt to obtain

documents, rubber stamps or certificates from the Italian bureaucracy."[378] Citizenship is utilized

as an instrument of power in denying these residents a "normal and legitimate presence."[379]

Adian, an 18-year-old born in Italy to Eritrean parents, reflects:

> You feel different because you have a residence permit to be here, in this country where
> you were born, whereas all the others can stay without any problems. You have the
> permit, you don't have the freedom to live in the country where you were born. You ask
> for it and if everything goes well, yes, if not you go back to a country where you have
> never lived. OK, so they've never refused me my residence permit, but it really makes
> you feel different, it makes you feel that you are not as complete as a citizen.[380]

Citizenship comes to embody much more than a legal status. One's existence is continually

delegitimized through not having citizenship.

Through everyday interactions in society, citizenship comes to embody participation and

involvement. Even the most banal things come to represent "unjustified exclusion" when one

does not have citizenship.[381] Children without citizenship status often are prevented on going on

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[375] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, "Citizenship and Multiple Belonging. Representations
of Inclusion, Identification and Participation among Children of Immigrants in Italy," 334.
[376] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 337.
[377] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 337.
[378] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 338.
[379] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 338.
[380] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 338–39.
[381] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 340.

school trips abroad since they do not have the freedom to travel or have to jump through several hoops to acquire such permission. This came up in several interviews conducted by Colombo. One person recounted how they feel "really bad" when they cannot participate in discussions about voting and politics.[382] Lack of citizenship status comes to affect personal self-worth and sense of belonging. These spaces of participation opened up by the status of citizen are important "both on the symbolic level–constituting a further element of recognition that reduces the feeling of precariousness and exclusion– and substantial level–allowing a person to be able to participate on debates and decisions judged relevant to their lives and personal projects."[383] Citizenship status affects resources and social capital. The symbolic marking of difference denies such people opportunity and autonomy.

Citizenship also constitutes an important part of identity formation. Almost all of the interviewees stated that they felt Italian, although their Italian identity did not exclude their other ones. A 19-year-old born in Italy to Salvadorian parents, Iris, said that "I consider myself a little bit more Italian than Salvadorian but that's really very normal because I have lived here…If I went to live there it would be like starting all over again."[384] Daily habits, experiences, and time all play a role in identity formation. The citizenship law passed in 1992 legalized dual citizenship, but clearly was only aimed at descendants of emigrants. It should have also included provisions for descendants of immigrants, who are able to hold dual identities. The various understandings of citizenship–as legal status, as acceptance, as identification– present a multifaceted understanding of belonging. If people who identify as Italian are denied access to citizenship, then what is the precluding factor?

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[382] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 341.
[383] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 341.
[384] Colombo, Domaneschi, and Marchetti, 343.

*The Role of Race in Determining National Identity*

Everyday interactions recounted by children of immigrants suggest that Italians perceive being black and being Italian as mutually exclusive categories. Andall detailed such experiences after conducting interviews with second generation African-Italians in Milan in 2002.[385] Feelings of non-belonging because more intense during or after secondary school, which for Andall's interviewees was during the 1990s, a period of increasing immigrant visibility and rising xenophobia in Italy.[386] For example, a 21-year-old man whose country of origin was Sierra Leone reflected that his identity was in a period of transition:

> Up until a while ago, maybe a few years ago, I would have replied Italian but when you grow up you begin to notice differences and now I am turning back to my culture. From secondary school onwards [post-14] I began to realize that there was a difference. Okay, you can speak Italian well, they know that you are Italian and everything, but you always feel that there is something that doesn't make you equal. So, maybe I might think that we are equal, but then someone will say, yeah, you speak Italian, you were born here, but you are black.[387]

Other youth shared similar experiences of rejection from their community. A 19-year-old woman, who was born in Milan to parents from Sierra Leona and Cape Verde, recounted a humiliating instance she was mocked for stating that she was Italian. Race clearly plays a large role in determining identity; the Italian national imagination seems unable to comprehend a black Italian or an Italian person of color. This teenager's self-identification changed soon after, and she declared, "I will absolutely never say that I am Italian…I was only born here."[388] This theme of inequality was prominent in the interviews, but many attributed it to ignorance rather than outright racism. Yet they recount stories of labor discrimination, being subjugated to document

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[385] Andall, "Second-Generation Attitude?"
[386] Andall, 398.
[387] Andall, 397.
[388] Andall, 397.

checks by police, and tense interactions with people who refuse to acknowledge their Italian identities.[389] One Italian-Eritrean said that her white Italian friends even spoke badly about other immigrants (in this case, Albanians) in front of her, forgetting that she was of immigrant descent herself.[390] The postcolonial migrant is discriminated against, regardless of country of origin. The everyday racism shown towards African-Italians has led to many of them leaving Italy and seeking prosperity elsewhere.

These second-generation immigrants also highlight the complexity of Italian society and the existence of multiple 'Others.' As I have shown throughout this thesis, the social hierarchy in Italy has subjugated various ethnic identities to the bottom rung throughout history, creating a multi-layer system, the bottom of which immigrants currently reside. Yet the Southerner is still there as well, as a 16-year-old girl of Eritrean lineage living in Naples illuminates:

> It's not that they look at me and say that I am just Eritrean. But they don't think that I am completely Italian, maybe fifty-fifty. In other words, I was born here in Milan, I've always been here but in the end I'm Eritrean. I don't know, I have a friend who is from Naples and he doesn't feel Italian but feels Neapolitan. So maybe they think the same about me.[391]

Racialized people in Italy have been unable to overcome the history of legal and societal discrimination that preceded them. The fact that both a Neapolitan and an Eritrean-Italian feel excluded from the national Italian identity illuminates the failed processes of nation-building and erasure of fascist and colonial experiences.

Racial difference continues to be a dominating factor in determining identity. Multiple identities are excluded from being Italian, but many white Italians tend to counter this experience with questioning the existence of an Italian identity in the first place:

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[389] Andall, 398.
[390] Andall, 401.
[391] Andall, 397.

> Pietro: Italy, from a racial point of view, is a contradictory country.
> Andrea: I think there are already too many differences in Italy.
> Luca: There are already internal differences among Italians. We've always been a country made up of regions, and each region feels Italian for their own reasons.
> Andrea: We don't really have a sense of nationhood . . . because who says, 'I belong to the Italian nation'? Or to belong to 'the Italian people' . . . nobody says that. I mean, you only feel Italian when you are at the stadium watching the national team! (Pietro, 18, Andrea, 20, Luca, 20)[392]

These young men emphasize regional identity over national one but do allude to the existence of a larger Italian identity. They also explicitly mention race and difference as two factors that prevent a unified Italian people. This underlines the importance of race in determining identity in Italy.

The imagined Italian identity continues to be White, Christian, and ethnically Italian, excluding the numerous immigrants of various origins who have made Italy their home. Giancarlo, a 19-year-old living in Genoa, expressed this sentiment very clearly:

> I think the average Italian person will never look at a black person and say 'That's an Italian' . . . even if that person is born here! Even if it is not an acquired nationality... It's imagining a white Italian, Mediterranean or with Mediterranean features, not of color.[393]

If a 19-year-old still sees race as a major factor in determining who is an Italian citizen, then it is clear that second-generation youth will continue to endure discrimination and difficulty in gaining acceptance.[394] Therefore, work must be done to change the "boundaries of the Italian imagined community."[395] Conversations about race, colonialism and fascism in Italy are long overdue, but are necessary to begin deconstructing antiquated stereotypes of *italianità*.

Granting legal status to second generation children will not eliminate racism nor discrimination in Italy, but it will be an important step in the path towards equality and

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[392] Bianchi, "Italiani Nuovi o Nuova Italia?," 330–31.
[393] Bianchi, 331.
[394] Bianchi, 331.
[395] Bianchi, 331.

acceptance. Citizenship functions as an instrument of integration and equal legal status is crucial to improving integration for immigrants and their descendants.

*Conclusion*

In this chapter, I have shown how the 'Otherization' of the immigrant in Italy has built upon the past century and a half of orientalist discourse directed towards the Southerner, the Jew, and the African colonial subject. The privileges of whiteness tied with Italianness are denied to foreigners regardless of their race, and race remains an explicit component of Italian identity, which is codified in citizenship law. The law marks children born in Italy as foreigners in their own country and continues to support stereotypes that Italians must be white and ethnically homogenous. Exclusion from legal rights and discursive exclusion from belonging and society reinforce each other, marginalizing immigrants and their descendants. Although there is ample support for the reform of citizenship laws, there are many Italians who oppose change. The right-wing political parties that represent these Italians, like *Lega Nord* and *Fratelli d'Italia*, continue to block change in Parliament, leaving the lives of thousands of youth in limbo. This exclusion from the rights and privileges of citizenship generates the idea that there is only one way to be Italian, which is dependent on a perpetual 'Other.'

**Chapter 7: Conclusion**

*Key Findings*

Postcolonial and racial theories provide a vital theoretical framework to comprehend the historical legacies of the racialized institution of citizenship in Italy. At the conception of the modern Italian nation-state, the government essentially created an Italian ethnicity through citizenship law, establishing a connection between ethnicity and nationhood that has remained firmly entrenched in society. This connection between race and citizenship that began in the liberal period would endure and change through the colonial, fascist, and postwar periods, making the contemporary exclusion of the immigrant in Italy one that must be understood in the context of Italian history.

In order to understand the contemporary debate over Italianness and citizenship, I have critically analyzed the history of citizenship in Italy and how it gives power to the current law. Citizenship law, as the legal codification of nationality, is imperative for understanding the construction of Italian national identity, which has relied upon orientalist discourse to define itself against an 'Other.' This orientalism has cast a certain group, whether it be the Southerner, the African, the Jew, or the immigrant, in a negative light in order to define an Italian identity.

Thus, the primitive, dangerous, and black 'Other' became the antithesis of *italianità*. Italian citizenship law has operated as a tool of social and legal exclusion based on race, and this exclusive nature of citizenship translates to the elitism of Italian whiteness. Italian identity has constructed whiteness through historical legacies of 'Othering' that build upon each other and create intricate social hierarchies directly connected to race. Whiteness and citizenship affect opportunity and social outcomes in Italian society, leading to a continual marginalization of the

'Other.' This racial discrimination remains pertinent to this day, as Italy continues to receive migrants and discourage them from becoming contributing members of society.

*Implications: Italian Xenophobia and the Lack of Citizenship Reform*

In the past five years, the fear over the influx of immigration to Italy has permeated media and politics, leading to a rise in membership of anti-immigrant parties and decreasing the likelihood of citizenship reform. Italy has experienced a significant rise in immigrant arrivals due to humanitarian crises, testing the viability of its services for recent arrivals. Since 2013, Italy has been the migrant's gateway to Europe, given its relatively accessible location on the southern border of the continent.[396] Italy is a key part of the Central Mediterranean route, in which migrants depart from the shores of Libya and Tunisia, usually assisted by smugglers, and attempt to travel to Europe. After the EU closed the Balkan route in 2015, the Central Mediterranean route saw an increase in trafficking.[397] In 2015, approximately 154,000 people arrived in Italy, a small decrease from the previous year, but a significant change from 2013, in which Italy received only around 42,000 immigrants.[398] Large populations came from Eritrea, Nigeria, and Somalia, with smaller numbers from Sudan and Syria, among others.[399] This new status as both a transit and destination country for immigrants has strained Italy in terms of infrastructure and funding for programs directed toward recent arrivals.

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[396] Jake Flanagin, "How Italy Became the Refugees' Gateway to Europe," *The New York Times*, October 22, 2014, sec. Opinion, https://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/how-italy-became-the-refugees-gateway-to-europe/.

[397] Jim Yardley, "Rising Toll on Migrants Leaves Europe in Crisis; 900 May Be Dead at Sea," *The New York Times*, April 20, 2015, sec. Europe, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/21/world/europe/european-union-immigration-migrant-ship-capsizes.html.

[398] "Global Migration Trends Factsheet 2015" (International Organization for Migration, 2015).

[399] International Organization for Migration.

Immigration has become linked with citizenship reform in the Italian media and in politics. Italians express great reservations about immigration– in a 2010 EURISPES study, 64.7 percent of Italians believed that immigration increased criminality.[400] This labeling of the immigrant as criminal evokes the 'Othering' of the Southerner during the era of brigandage and underlines the transformation of the 'Other' in Italy. The dialectic between law and public opinion is such that laws create opinion, and opinion influences law. Therefore, the idea that immigrants are criminal becomes an impetus to exclude immigrants from entering and integrating into Italy.

As I have shown, citizenship functions as a tool of integration that guarantees rights and societal participation and implies belonging. Marking immigrants as different and dangerous creates the idea that they cannot assimilate and will in fact have negative effects upon society. Political parties like *Lega Nord* are able to capitalize on fears of limited resources and xenophobia to advance their platforms, claiming that liberalizing citizenship and immigration law would threaten Italian culture. Since foreigners are already disadvantaged due to the constraints of menial jobs and rampant discrimination, the lack of new citizenship law propagates the 'Othering' of the immigrant socially and legally. The fear that has arisen due to new global migration trends has made the liberalization of citizenship law increasingly less likely.

The most recent attempt to effect change in citizenship law fell short, and the next Italian government will have strong representation from right-wing and populist parties, thus crushing hopes of establishing forms of *ius soli*. In October 2017, Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, of the stated that he was trying to pass a bill that would grant citizenship by birth to children of long-

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[400] Zincone, "Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy," 9.

term foreign residents in Italy.[401] Citizenship reform had been part of the *Partito Democratico*'s electoral platform since 2013, but the bill had been blocked by the Senate for more than two years, and this was Gentiloni's last attempt to pass legislation before the upcoming elections.[402] By late December, the *PD* conceded that it did not have enough votes to pass the bill before the upcoming elections, and left office in March 2018 without having effected any citizenship reform. In the elections, the Italian electorate dealt a resounding blow to the *PD* and its liberal coalition partners, turning out in strong numbers for the populist *Movimento 5 Stelle* party and the anti-immigrant right-wing coalition led by *Lega Nord*, in partnership with *Forza Italia* and *Fratelli d'Italia*. Although the new government has yet to form, the *PD* lacks the representation in Parliament to advocate effectively for citizenship reform during this new mandate. This thesis has revealed more historical depth to the most recent election, highlighting how anxiety about losing the privileges of whiteness is embedded in Italian identity and law.

*Proposals for Future Research*

During the course of this research, I often considered how Italy's historical insecurity over its place on the Southern border of Europe and its role in the European Union affected discourses of identity, but such analysis was outside the scope of the paper. Thus, I posit the question: Given Italy's geopolitical positioning in Europe, how does supranational citizenship complicate Italy's ethnically based citizenship laws and the orientalism used to construct *italianità*? Northern Italian insecurity about their positioning in the European continent played an important role in the attempts to differentiate itself from the southern half of the country in the

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[401] Annalisa Camilli, "Ius soli, ius sanguinis, ius culturae: tutto sulla riforma della cittadinanza," Internazionale, October 20, 2017, https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/annalisa-camilli/2017/10/20/riforma-cittadinanza-da-sapere.
[402] Camilli.

nineteenth century. Narratives of Southern inferiority in Italy are matched by similar discourses of Italian subalternity in Europe, such that the metaphor of backwardness often applied to the *Mezzogiorno* can be found applied to the entire country of Italy just as often.[403] Italy's economy is often discussed as "lagging behind" and "catching up" to the economies of northern European countries.[404] Agnew eloquently states that: "Everything that is distinctively Italian about Italy is backward when compared to the successful countries of the north."[405] These geographical divides have impacted Italian colonialism and fascism, as well as postwar development on the continent. Such insecurity still defines Italy's interpretation of its position in Europe, which has become increasingly clear with the increase in immigration. Italy has largely shouldered the burden of the increasing number of migrants, and "has been increasingly insistent that the rest of Europe do more to help," especially with migrant processing and resettlement.[406] However, the response of the EU has been underwhelming, leaving Italy feeling abandoned. Anti-EU and populist sentiment has grown in Italy in response to both immigration and enduring economic struggles, and the March 4 elections dealt a blow to the European establishment. This underlying fragility regarding geography and cultural has asserted itself in racial stereotypes and political maneuvering that reinforces the idea of Italy being 'behind.'

I would have liked to study in further depth the contemporary cultural movements in Italy that advocate for a more expansive Italian identity, which includes people of color. Considering the failure of Italian citizenship law to absorb non-whites into the Italian nation, how do postcolonial writers and artists challenge dominant narratives of white *italianità* by increasing

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[403] John Agnew, "The Myth of Backward Italy in Modern Europe," in *Revisioning Italy: National Identity and Global Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 24.
[404] Agnew, 25.
[405] Agnew, 25.
[406] Yardley, "Rising Toll on Migrants Leaves Europe in Crisis; 900 May Be Dead at Sea."

the visibility of racially diverse, transnational Italians in the mainstream public consciousness? As I have discussed in this thesis, "Italian institutions are resistant to the inclusion –not just symbolic but also physical– of black bodies into Italy's national body."[407] Postcolonial Italian artists feature this exclusion of blackness from citizenship as a central theme in their work. The 2015 documentary *Asmarina* by Medhin Paolos and Alan Maglio that juxtaposes the "urban geographic memory of the city of Milan," particularly in the historic Eritrean-Ethiopian neighborhood of Porta Venezia, with the colonial violence that "continues to hold Black Italians as superfluous to the nation."[408] In a similar fashion, the autobiographical novel *La mia casa è dove sono* by the Somali-Italian Igiaba Scego, explores how Italian history is built upon a colonial relationship with Africa through her feelings of displacement in Rome.[409] These immigrant narratives "talk back," in the words of Graziella Parati, and "force Italy to recognize its past crimes" to expand the figurative borders of the nation in this new multicultural Italy.[410] As Italy lacks the critical vocabulary to discuss race and 'Otherness,' the sharing of these immigrant second-generation experiences are incredibly important in disputing normativity and encouraging the dissection of Italy's colonial and racist past and present. Recognizing Italian colonialism and its legacies can lead to understanding Black Italian belonging for second-

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[407] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, "Italy's Postcolonial 'Question,'" 372.

[408] García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," 215; Medhin Paolos and Alan Maglio, *Asmarina*, Documentary, 2015.

[409] García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," 212; Igiaba Scego, *La Mia Casa è Dove Sono* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2010).

[410] García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," 211; Graziella Parati, *Migration Italy: The Art of Talking Back in a Destination Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

generation *italiani di colore*, as race and national belonging have always been irrevocably connected in Italy.[411]

A final topic of analysis that I confront in my research was the emergence of a sense of national belonging not dependent upon legal status, given that many second-generation immigrants in Italy self-identify as *italiani senza cittadinanza.* How does the exclusion of *italiani di colore* from Italian national identity prompt new conceptualizations of citizenship that continue to enforce hierarchies and marginalize the 'Other?' Legal citizenship does not guarantee national belonging, as the formation of an Italian identity "occurs at the intersection of the law with everyday practices such as participating in the education and labor system," speaking Italian and local dialects fluently, and being part of larger national and local communities.[412] Restrictive access to citizenship leads to an asserted cultural citizenship, which appears in the work of citizenship activists in Italy and is "based in lived experiences rather than the law."[413] However, the "hegemony of Italian whiteness" often disrupts such shared visions of unity. Even second-generation Italians who have acquired citizenship do not necessarily feel included in Italy, as routine interactions consistently exclude them and question their *italianità.* These *italiani di colore* are "alien citizens," that is, citizens of a nation by birth or by cultural assimilation but who are presumed "foreign by the mainstream and at times by the state."[414] Race, colonialism, and migration continue to entangle to produce a racially charged understanding of *italianità.* It is only by addressing Italy's silenced histories of discrimination towards Southerners, colonialism,

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[411] García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," 217.

[412] Lombardi-Diop and Romeo, "Italy's Postcolonial 'Question,'" 372.

[413] García Peña, "Black in English: Race, Migration, and National Belonging in Postcolonial Italy," 224.

[414] Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

fascism, and xenophobia and their enduring effects that the Italian people can begin to critically analyze racism in society and legally and discursively expand understandings of Italian identity to include *italiani di colore*.

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