

**THESIS**

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**What makes an Italian?  
Formation of national and cultural identity in Italy**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

I chose my topic for personal reasons because I was fascinated by the country's history, culture, national traditions, and mentality during my stays in Italy. I will try to provide a comprehensive picture of the different aspects of Italian national identity and, finally, the parallels between the construction of Italian and European identities. Besides, the goal of my thesis is to present the Italian cultural identity, as well as its behavioural and business culture. Many books written in both Italian and English show that the political intelligentsia and the Italian people have a lot of disagreements and tensions about what it means to be Italian.

With the ever-increasing threats to national identity in today's turbulent world, it is a topic that is becoming increasingly relevant. This is especially true in a country where national identity has always been on the edge of the abyss. Moreover, the topic is of high importance as Italy celebrated its 161st birthday this March.

My thesis is based on the following logic: I begin with an introduction to the history of Italian identity disintegration, focus on the geopolitical situation in Italy, and then on the North-South conflict and finally on Italian unification.

In the following, I will give a comprehensive overview of the national Italian identity. Within this, I will focus specifically on the religion, national stereotypes, and language of my chosen country, as well as on the importance of the elements of cultural behaviour and cultural features. After this, I will write about business culture and Hungarian and Italian cultures.

Finally, I will look into what it means to be Italian today and why identity and cultural knowledge are important.

As part of my research, I want to first organize the secondary sources, then do primary research, which I have already done by making a questionnaire.

In conclusion, my thesis aims to prove the hypothesis that, despite the contestability or absence of the most essential elements of identity, we can speak of an Italian identity whose essence lies precisely in its diversity, in its non-existent unity. The Italian national identity is unconventional. The process of identity construction follows similar steps at the sub-national, national, and supranational levels, but to be effective in the long term, it needs a foundation to be built upon.

## **2. THE HISTORY OF ITALIAN IDENTITY DISINTEGRATION**

When it comes to the chronology of human history, there is disagreement among historians over the use of dates that are mostly symbolic in nature to indicate the borders between distinct periods of human history. For example, the collapse of the Western Roman Empire occurred in 476, when the Germanic commander Odoacer ousted the last Roman emperor, underage Romulus Augustulus, bringing the greatest empire of antiquity to a stop and formally bringing the end of antiquity to its conclusion. People living in the period, however, did not perceive much of a difference in 476; the process that eventually led to the fall of the empire had begun much earlier and was difficult to pinpoint. This is one of the sources of the disagreement surrounding 476. The exact date of the collapse of the Western Roman Empire is debated, but the majority of historians believe that it was a watershed moment in the history of the region, bringing about such extreme upheaval that it may be defined as a "watershed event." It is important to note that political and demographic problems were caused by an influx of barbarian peoples following the migration of indigenous populations in Italy. This led to a geopolitical and cultural split in the Appennines for more than 14 centuries that hasn't changed much since.

### 3. THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION IN ITALY

The Italian peninsula is located at the centre of Europe, stretching from the Alps to the Mediterranean Sea. This is a transit position that explains Italy's particular historical dynamism and its ability to concentrate and condense culture and civilization.

Its geographical location alone shows the extraordinary diversity that characterizes it in all areas, from the continental-style high plains (Pianura Padana) to the typically Mediterranean orange, lemon, olive, and vineyards, pre-Alpine lakes, and the high mountain ridges of the Appennines. In addition to the morphological diversity of the Italian landscape, the climatic diversity has required a high degree of adaptability from the Italian people, which has led to a diversity of lifestyles and mentalities. One of the most important geopolitical characteristics of Italy is the separation (Mezzogiorno) of north and south. In many respects, the opposite is associated with it. This is a common misunderstanding.

Its geographical location makes Italy a centre for a wide variety of cultural and political influences. As early as the 8th century BC, Greek founders settled in the southern regions of the Italian peninsula, and more and more of them arrived on the coasts of Lazio and Tuscany. The Etruscan people and their city-states were also greatly influenced by the Ionic settlers. It was here, in central Italy, that the Greco-Tyrrhenian culture, almost entirely under Ionian influence, was established. The name "Italy" was also given to the peninsula by the Greeks after the "Italic" people found in what is now Calabria.

The Greek settlements in Sicily (Agrigento, Siracusa, Taormina, etc.) still show signs of how the Greeks ruled the country.<sup>1</sup> Because the peninsula's axis is a little to the east, the Greeks focused on the eastern and southern parts, while the Romans kept a stronghold in the Tyrrhenian Sea area. The Appennines mountain range divides the peninsula into two parts. This explains why, for a long time, there was little transport from west to east.

The Tyrrhenian coast and the Adriatic coast were almost completely separated by the Appennines, and this gave rise to the idea of the Mediterranean character of Italy.

The two coasts (about 8,000 kilometers in total) have their own identities, but they both have the Mediterranean feel to them as well. Genoa and Pisa on one side and Venice on the other maintained their economic, political, and cultural influence, but their geopolitical position meant that they were never completely exposed to the same conqueror.

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<sup>1</sup> Giuliano Procacci: Storia degli italiani, Laterza, Róma–Bari, 1990 Harry Hearder: Olaszország rövid története, Maecenas, Budapest, 1992. (Downloaded:24.02.2022)



After the fall of the Roman Empire, the barbarian tribes (Longobards, Franks) advanced in the north, while Byzantium, followed by the Arabs and the Normans, had a strong influence in the south. As a result, Italy began to be divided into two (or more) parts, with a diverse range of civilizations setting foot on its soil, all with hegemonic ambitions. This diversity of historical, geographical, and cultural traditions has had a strong influence on Italian identity.

With time, Italians have evolved a great degree of adaptability, the ability to handle a wide variety of expressions and ways of thinking, as well as a high degree of flexibility, a tendency to syncretism, and intellectual mobility.

Despite this diversity, there were certain crucial factors that helped to bring Italy together throughout its history. One of these was the poverty that existed in Italy. It was founded on the lack of vital raw materials as well as the scarcity of favourable meteorological conditions for agricultural production at the time (few lowlands, many marshy and swampy areas).

Mountainous and forested areas cover two-thirds of Italy's land area, which is uncultivated. Furthermore, the hot southern climate is not conducive to farming, and water restrictions are still routinely imposed on the local population in this region. As a result, the Italian South is the most severely affected by poverty. In this situation, another characteristic of the Italian identity has emerged: that of "getting by as best one can" since everyone can only rely on their own strength and imagination to make a living.

This is the explanation for the development of Italian "ingenuity" and "Machiavellianism" in the upper classes. It is no coincidence that the patron saint of Italy is Saint Francis, the "poverello", the protector of the poor. The left-wing interpreters of Italian poverty consider Italy to be a "proletarian nation" and continue their political activism with reference to this.

Another such cohesive force is Italy's natural and cultural beauty. Italy gives the impression of a "cultivated landscape", with its wealth of ancient ruins and monuments, which are an important part of the identity of Italians living today.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> André Chastel: *Storia d'arte italiana*, I–II. köt. Laterza, Bari, 1997.: *Elementi di storia della cultura italiana*. 2001. (Downloaded:24.02.2022)

## 4. THE NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT AND ITALIAN UNIFICATION

After the creation of Italian unity, the young state had to face two serious problems: it is backwardness compared to the large, developed states of Europe and the development gap between the northern and southern parts of the peninsula, which was much greater than the former. The differences between the north and south go back a long way; according to historians, the gradual division of the peninsula began as early as the 11th century.

The problem of the urban-regional polycentric model of Italian diversity, with its ancient traditions, was almost eradicated, and the disruptive effect of the North-South bipolarity on the young unit was dwarfed by the problem of the urban-regional polycentric model. It is along the lines of the opposition between the two macro-regions that the national and Italian identity, that is, the birth and existence of the nation-state, are outlined.

The deepening of the North-South division is the result of the interplay of political, economic, and social factors.<sup>3</sup>

### 4.1. Social factors

"Italy is no more than a geographical concept," said Chancellor Metternich before the revolutionary wave of 1848. The political, economic, and social fragmentation of the peninsula seems to confirm this claim. Some, however, argue the opposite: according to Ruggiero Romano, Italy's 'linguistic unity and the relatively homogeneous character of its civilization meant that a collective consciousness had already been formed in the more educated and wealthier classes' in the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, at the cultural and literary level, the memory of ancient Rome was always present in Italy, one needs to only think of Dante or Machiavelli. However, this sense of national pride, both before and after the country was unified, was mostly found in the upper class.

Political changes in Italy did not lead to a major change in the social structure, and regionalism remained strong.

National consciousness in the countries of Europe generally takes a different form through collective symbols, customs, traditions, and literary works. As a result of social, cultural, and political fragmentation, the sense of belonging to a single nation with common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, institutional, and customary roots was, and as I will discuss later, still

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<sup>3</sup> Albrecht Carrié, René: *Le rivoluzioni nazionali. Storia universale dei popoli e delle civiltà. vol. XII.*, Torino, UTET, 1969. 282. (Downloaded:11.03.2022)

<sup>4</sup> Romano, Tenuti 1972, 8. (Downloaded:11.03.2022)

remains, rather low among the inhabitants of Italy. The preference for a centralized state model also necessitated the building of social unity, which was essential to the process of political, economic, linguistic, and cultural unification. The only means available was the literary tradition, but building a social community on literary values alone proved to be a risky venture. The problems of national identity today are still due to this.

In 1861, Italian territorial unity was not complete: Venice and Rome were not yet under the sovereignty of the Italian crown. These two large cities were eventually able to join the new Italian polity, not because of Italian efforts, but because of Prussian efforts to create German unity; this resulted in an Italian sense of national inferiority.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, who, or what finally created the Italians. The Risorgimento was only partially realized, fascism was only superficially realized, and resistance was only partially realized. The fascist regime was a significant stage in the process of nation-building by reviving the national-patriotic tradition of the Risorgimento; Italian identity was never as strong and widespread as it was between 1929 and 1938. However, there was a downside: the fall of fascism took with it the lofty notions of "fatherland" and "nation" and the values and symbols associated with them.

<sup>6</sup>The school system has not been an effective response to the problems: even though education was made compulsory, there were no funds to maintain schools and pay teachers. In the first half of the 20th century, illiteracy remained a serious problem, particularly in the South. As a result, initially, the clerks were almost exclusively from the north.

The birth of Italy was the result of a highly controversial process. Unification efforts began in in Turin, Piedmont, the United Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, with Rome as its political capital (after Turin and Florence). but with its economic centre much further north, and its inhabitants speaking the Italian language, of which Florence is the home.

## **4.2. Political factors**

No other large European region has experienced such a long and uninterrupted period of internal division and foreign domination as Italy. This geopolitical disaster is seen as a long-term extension of the crisis caused by the fall of the Western Roman Empire, which over time became a kind of stereotype and cultural paradigm for the people living on the peninsula.

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<sup>5</sup> Albrecht Carrié 1969, 283. (Downloaded:12.03.2022)

<sup>6</sup> Banti, Antonio Mario: Nazionalismi e neonazionalismi nella storia d'Italia. In: Limes, 2009/2. 117. (Downloaded:12.03.2022)

As with the medieval map of Italy, the Risorgimento period was characterized by a very varied and very different political palette. The Mezzogiorno was virtually absent from the political map of Italy. The level of administration and the position of the peasants in the Papal States and in the south were much lower than in the north, where the territories under direct foreign rule, namely Lombardy and Venice, were in the most advantageous position in terms of administration.<sup>7</sup>

In the first centuries of the modern era, Italy, unlike the West, did not have a nation-state. The idea of Italy had already been present at the end of the 18th century, when the French Revolution had given rise to a national movement, but it remained limited. Unlike France, it lacked a broad middle class that could have become the promoters of new ideas. Other problems were the underdeveloped economy, the high illiteracy rate, and the perception of the state as a hostile, oppressive entity. Although Napoleon created an annexed state in northern Italy, the Kingdom of Italy, between 1805 and 1814, after his fall the territory was again dismantled and, under the terms of the Congress of Vienna of 1815, the peninsula remained under Spanish or Austrian, mainly Habsburg, domination. The Habsburg dynasty was also at the mercy of the southern state formation, the so-called Dual Kingdom of Sicily, as shown by the Austrian intervention in Naples in 1821, during the first great revolutionary wave of the Risorgimento. In the 19th century, the Kingdom of Sardinia was the only truly independent Italian state, which is why it became the cradle of the Risorgimento, the effort to create an independent and united Italy.<sup>8</sup>

In 1861, several options for a new state were considered, but in the end, it was decided to abolish the previous political institutions and return to the beginning. A centralized government with a French-style administrative structure was chosen. This was because the Kingdom of Sardinia was expanded by law.

The Kingdom of Italy, proclaimed on March 17th, 1861, was not, however, formed around a strong central core, as was the case with many other European states, where this core was usually a large city which then functioned as the capital of the newly formed entity (e.g., Paris in France). In Italy, on the other hand, the process of unification started in one of the peripheries of the peninsula, the Kingdom of Sardinia, which was, incidentally, strongly French-oriented (just think of Nice and Savoy). The different territories played different roles in the process of

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<sup>7</sup> Nitti, Francesco Saverio: *Il Mezzogiorno e lo sviluppo economico italiano*. In: VILLARI 1963, 322. (Downloaded:12.03.2022)

<sup>8</sup> Albrecht Carrié 1969, 41–53. (Downloaded:12.03.2022)

unifying Italy, which took place mostly on the Turin-Florence-Naples axis, but there were also other steps.

The concentration of power in Piedmont was perceived by moderate political forces as a guarantee of order, while local initiatives threatened to shift in a radical direction.

In planning Italian unity, the political intelligentsia of the Risorgimento had two options: the Swiss or American model, which envisaged a federation of autonomous entities, or the French model, which was based on a centralized state. Germany, which had a similar history and geography to Italy, opted for the former model, which, after 161 years, was a more appropriate response to the challenges of political fragmentation.

In Europe, the creation of the nation-state and the development of national consciousness were the main features of modernity. The latter was mainly the responsibility of public institutions and the government. However, Italian modernity was defined by a fragile state-institutional structure and its inefficiency and disorganization, the lack of a state-promoted culture and values, the inadequacy of non-preventive means, and the dual absence of a conservative pole and a bureaucratic administrative elite with adequate powers and prestige, which sealed the problematic and uncertain legitimacy of the unitary state, resulting in a weak "national identity" in the political sense in Italy.

As a result of the state's inertia, national feelings and identity acquired a strong partisan political connotation. The influence of the state, which was overwhelmed by party politics, hindered the emergence and growth of social groups and ideologies and made it impossible for a genuine state and legal culture to emerge and develop in Italy, which would necessarily have created an autonomous administrative, cultural, and social elite and thus a conservative-oriented pole.<sup>9</sup>

An additional factor contributing to the lack of the latter is historical: it is difficult to conceive of a conservative political viewpoint originating in and acquiring legitimacy in a young nation-state that has been revolutionized and is bereft of historical precedent.

Neither the state, its institutions, nor politics were able to provide the conditions essential for citizens' education and the development of national identity. In this regard, culture and intellectual activity have not been particularly successful in this area. Despite the abundance of works focusing on the new Italian country, the strong old links that had been linked to culture, intellectuals, and political leaders for centuries had a greater influence.

Another explanation for Italian modernity's failure is that it has failed to embrace a national identity; it has lacked the imagination to integrate the historical specificities of Italian identity

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<sup>9</sup> Ceserani, Remo: *La costruzione dell'identità nazionale italiana. Le esperienze e le correnti culturali europee del Novecento in Italia e in Ungheria*. Budapest, ELTE BTK, 2003. 37 (Downloaded:20.03.2022)

with contemporary needs. As a result, modernity and the country have not been close to each other, with modernity not being able to become national and the country not being able to become modern.

### **4.3. Economic factors**

The urban polycentrism of northern and central Italy was accompanied by strong and uninterrupted economic development for at least three centuries, and the area was part of the wave of development affecting Western Europe. However, in the 19th century, medieval conditions continued to prevail in the Mezzogiorno: the unfavourable system of agricultural property; a network of latifundia in the hands of large landowners who worked their land with day laborers, and lived off the income from their land. Their yields were extremely low. At "Starete tutti meglio", or "it will be better for all of you," Camillo Cavour<sup>10</sup> would laughingly reply to those who asked him about the future of Italy, whether it was worth all the effort, blood, and sacrifice. In the South, however, even then, the majority response was the opposite. In the context of the single market created by Italian unification, southern trade and industry could not compete with its northern counterpart, which led to terrible results.

Following unification, the hoped-for land reform did not materialize, as the peasants' objective of dispersing state-owned land met with strong opposition from landowners, and political authorities, dependent on the backing of the great landowners, did not make a choice that was adverse to them. This connection may be reversed: the ruling classes in the South intended to ensure the state's protection of their position, and hence endorsed the North's regulations. They were followed by the not-so-powerful middle class. Only the lower classes, who had seen their living conditions deteriorate rather than improve, showed their discontent, but these rebellions failed to produce any major reform and were generally covered in inactivity. As a result, there was a complete lack of trust in the legal system, which regrettably led to the formation and spread of what we now term organized crime, originally in the interests of the poor.

"The Mafia is nothing more than a natural rejection of the legality that is unable to regulate the reality of the Mezzogiorno."

It was at this time that the phenomenon of brigantaggio, or highwaymen, was developing in the territory of the Kingdom of Sicily. This was triggered by the lack of agrarian reforms, the imposition of new taxes, and the introduction of conscription.

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<sup>10</sup> Politician who created the modern nation-state in the 19th century.

It was not only the brigantaggio that declared open war on the new state; the Church also opposed it. At the birth of Italian unity, there was a political-ethical conflict between the state and the church, with the Pope refusing to recognize the young state. This also created a new rift between the state and the people, on which the Church exerted a strong influence. After the bloody crushing of the resistance, which had almost turned into a civil war in southern Italy, many of the peasants who had lost hope chose to emigrate. The social debate between the North and South can be summarized briefly as follows: the North accuses the South of preying on them and holding them back, while the South accuses the North of exploiting the Mezzogiorno. Negative indicators from the South do indeed worsen the country's average (GDP per capita, unemployment, etc.), but without the South, the North would not be as developed as it is today. The nature of the sacrifice made by the South can be summarized as follows: the resources, economic, political, and human factors that could have served the economic transformation and modernization of the South were transferred to the North and helped to develop industry there. After the unification, the North took advantage of the Mezzogiorno. It used it for at least ten years as a financial reserve and a market to build up its modern industrial equipment. The trade deficit was covered by cheap food exports from the south, and southern gold reserves were exported to the north.

The situation was further exacerbated by the introduction of protectionist measures,<sup>11</sup> which hit the most prosperous sectors of southern agriculture the hardest. In the First World War, the Italian army was mainly supplied by farmers recruited from southern Italy. The northern workforce is said to be essential to the running of the war industry.

From large feudal estates to farm tenancy, from farmland leasing to sharecropping (mezzadria), from direct production to cooperatives, the peninsula had a lot of different ways to grow food as well.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Salvemini, Gaetano: Il federalismo. In: VILLARI 1963, 462 (Downloaded:21.03.2022)

<sup>12</sup> De Viti De Marco, Antonio: Il Mezzogiorno - mercato colonial, 1963, 344–345. (Downloaded:21.03.2022)

## 5. NATIONAL IDENTITY

The concept of identity is very much in vogue today; there have been many studies and essays, each from a different perspective. The multiplicity of concepts is vital because identity is part of sociology, psychology, ethnography, history, and political science, but the list is not complete. Several studies and treatises include the word "treatise" in their titles without discussing it in any meaningful way. Some consider it less important, but research into and understanding identity in this diversity is important and useful because nation, politics, and identity are all intertwined. Clarifying the concept of identity is not an easy task, as it involves so many disciplines. The original Latin word is a compound word: identity. The id is the third person singular neutral gender of the personal pronoun id, hence he. The meaning of entity is nothing other than being, essence, or reality. The main characteristic of identity is that everything, living beings, human beings, can only be identical with themselves. This needs not to be acknowledged; it necessarily is; it cannot be. Belonging to something, to a group, is nothing other than our identity. First and foremost, finding our identity expresses the self-identity, the self-consciousness by which we ourselves can be classified into a collective, a group, a race, a people, a nation. Ultimately, this is the purpose of identity, of it is formation.<sup>13</sup>

### 5.1. Individual, family, oligarchy

The most prominent features of Italian national identity are individualism and family-centredness, or familism. The development of the individual in Italy, due to its particular historical-political development, did not follow the European model.

The Italian type is the product of spontaneity, an individual who is individualistic but who likes closed and transparent groups such as the family, or the corporation, which are run by traditional, old principles. So, this is not the modern individual, but the traditional individual. The Italian individual is characterized by its tendency to distance itself from active participation in public affairs and from responsibility. This is due to the fact that politics in Italy is closely linked to power. Italians' relationships with politics are determined by their relationship with money. They have little interest in common interests or common ideals. The desire for community, for learning, and for mobility is lost in Italian politics. In Italy, people are more interested in rank, family, and relationships.

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<sup>13</sup> Koller Boglárka: Nemzet, identitás és politika Európában, Zsigmond Király Főiskola, 2006, p. 45. (Downloaded:03.03.2022)



The modern, unifying political culture is lacking, which makes it difficult for Italy to catch up to modernity. It is not only that there has always been a high illiteracy rate, but that it has also been inadequate in terms of initiatives and quality in terms of literature and culture in recent years. The real lack of politics and culture is an obstacle to the development of an individual-based society. The oligarchies continue to operate within the state. Oligarchies are local, family-based, traditional aristocratic groups that have extensive power in a given area or locality.

They are narrow social circles that seek to perpetuate their influence at all costs.

The oligarchies are part of the family network that runs through Italian society as a whole, and they can act as a powerful force that is almost independent of the state.

The family has an "absolutely central" place in Italian social and political life.

In addition, there are also historical reasons for this. The central figure of Latin familism, the "pater familias" was a model that was carried on by the Lombard and Christian traditions (in the person of the Father). This family is characterized by unconditional and personal loyalty to one another as well as a strong blood bond based on respect for common values. This is based on the economic factor that joint family businesses provide for the family. The family in Italy is a space of collective activity, typical of the whole Mediterranean region. However, Italian families are characterized by an extraordinary diversity of family relationships and a wide range of activities, even more so than families in other countries.

This ensures that their members are in a state of perfect equilibrium, economically, socially, and psychologically. It combines respect for the hierarchy with the preservation of individuality and initiative. Due to the very frequent social, legal, and political insecurity that characterizes Italy, only a small group such as the family (or even the oligarchy or the corporation) can provide the individual with the security and the faith to survive.

This historical experience has influenced the Italian identity towards less and less trust in state institutions, common national values, and collective initiatives. There are few countries in the world where the individual, the individualist, individualism is as strong as it is here.

Italy is not characterized by giving and taking and agreement between the parties, so Italians individually never lose everything and never win everything, but, acting as a group, they win and lose. The search for agreement and consensus may also involve the antique humanism and Christian solidarity deeply rooted in the Italian identity. Politics in Italy have tried to serve this social consensus. By doing so, it has tried (and still tries) to keep traditional social roles.

## 5.2 „Campanilismo”

Campanilismo is derived from the term "campanile," which has no precise English meaning (bell tower). It is a highly important component of life in Italy, reflecting a sense of self-identification, pride in one's origins, and a sense of belonging to one's own country, a sensation that is generally far greater in Italians than any sense of national identity. Before stating, "I'm Italian," an Italian will say, "sono Romagnolo," "sono Veneziana," or "sono Napoletano," depending on where they are in the country.

This phrase refers to the campanile, which is also known as the bell tower, and which used to be regarded as a municipal emblem, which explains the name "campanilismo." It is possible that the church bell was rung from the bell tower in an emergency, but it is also possible that the bell was sounded to proclaim joyful news. People in Romanesque architecture, which was popular between 1000 and 1200 AD (Anno Domini), built the main church or cathedral in a place near the town square. A separate, free-standing bell tower was also built near the church or cathedral to keep it at the centre of daily life and activity.

Campanilismo can be regarded in either a bad or good light: on the one hand, it can generate fear of outsiders, while on the other hand, it can develop a sense of civic pride.

The reason it is so powerful in Italy is that the country was politically separated for hundreds of years, and it was not until later that its transportation infrastructure was constructed sufficiently to link cities. Despite the magnificent legacy of the Romans in this area, it took Italy a long time to catch up with other European countries in terms of road development.<sup>14</sup>

Italy is a young nation that it was founded between 1860 and 1870. Before that time, there was only a multitude of small independent states, many of which were at odds with one another, each with its language, dialect, and traditions. Despite Italy's political unification and the influence of mass media, which have homogenized Italian life to some extent, campanilismo still exists today. Rivalries remain entrenched between different regions, provinces, and municipalities. Campanilismo also represents adherence to one's region's traditions, customs, and dialects. Italy has many religious and national holidays, but each region or town has its own celebrations. Most of these are religious in nature, but they may also be linked to historical events or culinary traditions like the sagre (local food festivals) that take place in different parts of the country during the summer.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Dion Protani (30.11.2021) <https://www.italyreview.com/what-is-campanilismo.html>  
(Downloaded:18.02.2022)

<sup>15</sup> Serena: Italian language blog (02. 02. 2009) <https://blogs.transparent.com/italian/campanilismo/>  
(Downloaded:18.02.2022)

## 6. WHAT IS ITALIAN IDENTITY?

"In Italy, the sense of being Italian is much stronger than the concept of a national state."

A complex and diverse identity, like that of the Italian people, has roots in the past that goes back even before the country became a state.

"An identity divided between religious feelings and the poorly understood secularity of the state."

"An identity wounded by internal conflicts that have often taken on the hues and tones of real civil wars fought to redefine, with arms and blood, the criteria of a new national identity. "In the early years of the Republic, there was a sense of "separate memberships" instead of "common citizenship."

This is because there have been conflicts that have left scars in the collective consciousness that are hard to heal.<sup>16</sup>

Italian identity is a general characteristic of the Italian population that binds its inhabitants together despite the extreme diversity that can be observed in all areas of the peninsula. This identity is also shaped by factors in Italy that act as ontological determinants in terms of geography, history, culture, and even anthropology.

From the collapse of the Roman Empire until the unification of Italy in 1861, the region known as Italy was inhabited by various political organizations. Unification created an Italian state comprised of twenty distinct regions, each with its own distinct personality.

Each of the twenty areas has a tale that dates all the way back to ancient times, with origins in the wealthy and strong city-states that pioneered so many 'firsts':

The first bank of the common era (1406) was established in Genova (region of Liguria) and the first university (1088) began in Bologna (Emilia Romagna). During the Renaissance, which happened between the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe, a lot of new art and culture came to life in Europe for the first time.

In fact, what is Italian national identity, the answer is a complicated one since Italian identity is comprised of a variety of customs, ways of living, thinking, and speaking that link each Italian to the "Campanile" of the town/city/region where they were born.

Perhaps the Italian national identity could be described as multidimensional because it has led to a lot of creativity in a wide range of fields.

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<sup>16</sup> Lepre, Aurelio: Storia della Prima Repubblica, Il Mulino, Bologna 1993. (Downloaded:22.02.2022)

## 6.1. A country of multiple identities

Even before the critical medieval period of fragmentation, the inhabitants of the Appennines were already strongly attached to their homeland.

With the fall of the empire, this narrow homeland became the only homeland, as the higher territorial entity ceased to exist. It was only in the middle of the 19th century, with the creation of Italian unity, that history restored this reference to Italy in the form of nationality. But the Italian state was too young to unite a peninsula divided by millennia of political, linguistic, and cultural divisions. Efforts to create and strengthen national identity after Italian unity have been slow and have yielded few results. The word "homeland" is used by most Italians to refer to their city, region, or family and friends. This is especially true in the South.

The Mezzogiorno is often referred to as a "society of families" since the traditional social system is based on the family. As the famous Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia writes: "In the Sicilian mind, the family is the only real institution."<sup>17</sup>

The Sicilian state is the family. The state, which we call the state, is outside of it; it is an entity created by force. "

Italians initially identified with their city, later with their region, and finally with their country. The last decades have seen the emergence of new categories of territorial identity: northern (nordic) and southern (meridionale), which have revived old hostile stereotypes.

The image of the North as a centre of modernity and development, which was mostly positive in the South before, is now becoming more and more mixed in with negative stereotypes.

The territory of "Northern Italy" was reduced in favour of Central Italy. The same was true of "Southern Italy," but here the negative stereotypes are predominant.

The northern regions of the Mezzogiorno (Abruzzo, Molise) also migrated to Central Italy, while others (e.g., the islands) reinforced their own regional identity.

The declaration of belonging to the Mezzogiorno was highest in Campania, Calabria, Puglia, and Sicily (regions that are considered strongholds of organized crime).

The North and South were two shrinking and distancing entities, while the centre, which has hitherto received less attention and is centred around the capital, was growing in importance.

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<sup>17</sup> Galasso, Giuseppe: *Passato e presente del meridionalismo. Genesi e sviluppi*, Guida, 1978. 171. (Downloaded:22.03.2022)

Central Italy has been characterized not only by a convergence of political orientations, but also by the most active social participation and a high degree of identification with the macro-region (around 20%). Central Italy was also marked by a lot of animosities.

Tuscany distanced itself sharply from both the North and the South, with Lazio and Umbria mainly from the South and Sardinia from the South. In addition to macro-regions, there was a growing trend again towards campanilismo at the expense of national identity, i.e., a preference for local, regional, and urban belonging, complemented by a new cosmopolitan identity.<sup>18</sup>

The media situation showed the stability of campaigning, while the national press was less and less able to influence Italians politically.

## **6.2. Italian and European identity**

Confrontation with other cultures and religions has presented a serious challenge to our national identity. When two groups of people met, there was a dramatic shift in how people perceived values, rights, religion, and customs. Some cultural currents want to portray people's meetings as a clash of civilizations. An illustrative element of religious sentiment for our country.

The religious imprinting of Italian society's identity and culture is unquestionable because Christianity is part of the same DNA of the Italian people, as recognized in the same constitutional charter by the will of the constituent fathers of the secular cultural or ideological matrix. Italian society bears visible traces of the culture that has sprung from the Christian tradition over the centuries: the social body itself bears the signs of the concept of the Christian community, open, welcoming, supportive, and inspired by the principle of subsidiarity.

The same can be said of the country's economic structure, which is made up of small and medium-sized enterprises. The offspring of a cooperative credit system established by Catholics at the turn of the century when the political commitment was prohibited.

People in the country are very interested in the concept of Christian roots, which has also been revived in Italy. The rediscovery of one's own authentic national identity is the challenge that awaits all of the old continent's countries, which are increasingly being called upon to confront cultures "other" than their own and, above all, to face the test of ever greater European integration, including at the political level.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Diamanti, Ilvo: Un Paese dalle mille identità; è tornata l'Italia dei comuni. La Repubblica, 2006. (Downloaded:22.03.2022)

<sup>19</sup> Foa, Renzo: Il decennio spreco. Ma è davvero impossibile cambiare l'Italia?, Fondazione Liberal, 2005. (Downloaded:22.02.2022)

Today, national identity is one of Europe's most important issues. In the 21st century, national identity is becoming an increasingly valued competitive factor worldwide.<sup>20</sup>

The process of European unification has been improving, which some thought would eventually lead to the death of the nation and the creation of a single great European state.

The slow and long process of European integration has disproved these hopes. It shows not only that the nation-states still have some rights, but also that the people have come to see the value of belonging to their own country again.

In actuality, the sluggish and long process of European integration has proven to be a stumbling block to these expectations. The creation of a political Europe does not extinguish the identities of the countries that have been in Europe for a long time. Instead, it forces people to reevaluate themselves and communicate with one another. Great European artists are those who have a strong connection to their country's history and culture.<sup>21</sup>

### **6.3. The missing pillars of Italian identity**

As we have seen, at the time of the Risorgimento, the ideology of unity was embraced by the intelligentsia, but was elusive among the people. The Italian identity was defined primarily in negative categories (what was not Italian), and the population suffered rather than accepted the new identity. The creation of Italianess proved to be a particularly difficult task because the main components of identity were highly problematic or even absent. There is no single ethnicity in Italy, although under fascism there were attempts to revive the myth of the descendants of the ancient Romans. Italy has always been seen as the heir to Rome, but the assimilated indigenous population of the territories conquered by the Latins was not genetically Roman in antiquity, and the Middle Ages saw the peninsula enriched with many new ethnicities. Not to mention the Sardinians, who come from a mystery and cannot be traced back anywhere else in Europe. They are not related to any other Italian people or any other European ethnic group. Because of its important but universal character, the Catholic religion could not become a tool of nationalism. In addition to the Catholic cultural sphere, liberalism and Marxist-socialist ideology did not serve to spread nationalism, but rather, by promoting internationalism, they worked towards strengthening localism and decentralization. After the birth of Italian unity, an

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<sup>20</sup> Kurkó Gyula: [Index - Belföld - Kövér László: A nemzeti identitás Európa egyik legfontosabb ügve](#)  
(Downloaded: 03.03.2022)

<sup>21</sup> Bollati, Giulio: *L'italiano. Il carattere nazionale come storia e come invenzione*, Einaudi, Torino 1998.  
(Downloaded:22.02.2022)

attempt was made to create cultural unity in the form of a "fictional" Middle Ages, but this was not successful. Although Italy is united by the legacy of ancient Roman culture, some cities (e.g., Florence) are dominated by medieval and Renaissance art, while Byzantine culture is also important in Venice, and the monarchical architects of the 19th century, well known in Vienna and Budapest, have left their mark in Turin.

History and language are two of the most important building blocks of identity. According to Benedetto Croce, the identity of a person is nothing other than "it is history, its whole history, and its history alone". History is the autobiographical narrative of a nation, a kind of self-representation, and it seems logical that without a collective historical memory, there can be no national identity. Indeed, the selection, selection as 'history', and then teaching of individual events from the common past create a strong bond between individuals belonging to a given nation. Through centuries of fragmentation and foreign occupation, Italians have not shared a common historical event that may have helped them to develop a cohesive identity and a feeling of national belonging as a country.

From 476 to the Risorgimento, Italy has had essentially no common history; instead, they have the history of a series of separate states that have artificially met and merged at a particular point in the past. Although the history of the territory of the Dual Kingdom of Sicily and of the Ecclesiastical State can be said to be more or less unified, the history of the city-states of Italy can be divided into dozens of separate histories.

#### **6.4. Elements of Italian identity**

Italy has always been linked together by Catholicism and the spirit of ancient Rome, even though its national identity is not always clear.

The only way for a "new Italy" to come into being is if politicians pay attention to cultural awareness and the "modernization of identity." The unity of Italian culture refers to a common, traditionalist attitude. By the centrality of tradition, I mean "the consciousness of living transmission", the transposition of tradition into the present, it is imbuing with new content.

From its rich and varied history, each nation chooses the events and traditions that it considers to be the most influential in shaping its own identity; fascist Italy, for example, sought to evoke the greatness of ancient Rome. Despite the emphasis on the fact that there are ancient roots, the process of creating a national identity is arbitrary and made up of symbols and models that were made up.

According to a Demos survey, the elements that most define the national identity for Italians are family (43%) and artistic heritage (35%), as well as the "art of making do" (98.2%), the Catholic tradition (23%) and their creativity in the arts and economy (20%).<sup>22</sup>

Identification with the nation at a territorial level understands Italy as a territory of links, traditions, and cultural values. However, the political-institutional dimension remains the weak link in the chain of national identity. This is why the factors that form the basis of the political community are at the bottom of the list: acceptance of the principles of democracy (10%), civic virtues, and trust in the state (6%). Finally, the survey looks at what Italians are most proud of. National pride is very much focused on social and local traditions, culture, and the arts.

In addition, Italians are extremely proud of their artistic heritage (75%), their attractions and cuisine (71%), the national anthem, and the Tricolour (67%).

I conclude that Italians are united by their creativity, inventiveness, and ability to overcome difficulties. All of this, however, takes place at the local or family level, isolated from the State and its institutions.<sup>23</sup>

For Italians, one of the most defining elements of Italian identity is creativity, which is the basis for distinguishing between the various elements of the construction of Italian national identity.

## **6.5. Italian political identity and political culture**

The issue of Italian identity raises the issue of the importance of distinguishing between patriotism and nationalism, which we will discuss further below. The question of whether patriotism is a virtue can be answered in the affirmative, whereas nationalism, which was very prevalent in Italy at the time, is generally considered to be a negative socio-political phenomenon in general.

Although, since the beginning of the twentieth century, patriotism has increasingly been dominated by chauvinistic and nationalist overtones, until fascism appropriated patriotism in the service of a specific ideology, this is still the case today.

However, the positive and democratic origins of the concept of patriotism should not be obscured as a result of this. According to the philosophies of Montesquieu and Rousseau, patriotism is synonymous with civic virtue, respect for the law, freedom of all, and the citizen attitude guaranteed by the law.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> DIAMANTI, Ilvo – Ceccarini Luigi, Natascia: L'Italia secondo gli italiani. In: Limes, 2009/2. 38 (Downloaded:23.02.2022)

<sup>23</sup> Ceccarini, Diamanti 2011 (Downloaded:23.02.2022)

<sup>24</sup> Massimo Rosati: Il patriottismo italiano, Bari, 2000. Laterza. (Downloaded:25.02.2022)



Political culture is synonymous with patriotism. Furthermore, it is synonymous with respect for the law, respect for the political institutions that protect public freedom and a positive emotional attitude toward one's country, and as such, it is an integral part of a democratic political system of government. This is why self-government, i.e., participation in political and public life, is a requirement. It can thus be said that patriotism is a virtue of the republican tradition. Therefore, the constitution must ensure cultural pluralism in modern societies. Today, the idea of patriotism based on linguistic, cultural, and religious homogeneity must be met with some criticism.

The Italian identity, strong historical traditions, and diversity of political culture result in an infinite diversity of parties in an over-politicized Italy. It is a complex process and a complex system that is constantly undergoing significant change and can therefore only be truly understood in its transformation. Each political culture can, of course, correspond to more than one party, and sometimes there can be a party or movement that draws from each political culture. There are few parties with a clear political culture.

Nowadays, in a nutshell, Italians are proud of Italy, but they are disillusioned with the state.

## 7. ITALIAN IDENTITY IN THE KITCHEN

Traditional Italian cuisine and food are the most representative aspects of national identity for Italians.<sup>25</sup> Their food is often thought to be the most unique, memorable, and good in the world. Food has been highly appreciated in Italy for generations, and cooking has served as an expression and a means of bringing people together. Most significantly, economic status and family size have an effect on how members view food and also serve as a foundation for family identity.

Many contemporary Italians continue to demand that their meals be made well and are adamant about consuming only the finest ingredients. Food structures and the manner in which food is sourced, cooked, purchased and eaten bring families closer together. Food and culinary habits are intrinsically tied to the enjoyment and the senses in contemporary Italian houses, and they serve to bond family members. Modern Italy's changes have had little effect on the family's emotional structure or the significance of food in family relations.

Cooking gives a foundation for intimacy and parenting role expectations, especially when they dine together at the table. The term "slow cooking" refers to an Italian program in the mid-twentieth century that highlighted the value of slowing down, preparing, and seasoning food.

In Italian, the term "gola" refers not just to the throat but also to the need for eating, demonstrating how essential food is to self-expression in Italian cultural life. Depending on the type of dinner, certain meals might take hours to make since they are made "well" and with the best quality. A digestive, which is an alcoholic drink such as limoncello, amaro, or grappa, is sometimes served. Changes in modern Italy have demonstrated that some families no longer always dine with a complete supper in such an extravagant manner, while some still do so on a weekly basis.

In Italy, meals are an important part of every family's daily routine. Young children, in particular, rely on their parents for meals and socialize at the table, where they engage in leisurely eating behaviours as a group. Despite the fact that Italian mothers tend to play a strong maternal role, they also use food to communicate their love and interact with their children.

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<sup>25</sup> Wine News: [https://winenews.it/italia-150-anni-identita-paese-la-cucina-e-i-piatti\\_308419/](https://winenews.it/italia-150-anni-identita-paese-la-cucina-e-i-piatti_308419/) (Downloaded: 28.02.2022)

In addition, because the family is such an essential element of Italian society, mothers utilize food as a way to communicate their affection for their children. In order to cook meals, people must operate within certain social, economic, and cultural frameworks that "define when and with whom we eat, what and how much we eat, what we purchase and where we go shopping, as well as when and with what equipment and methods we prepare our meals." <sup>26</sup>



*Figure 1: Family dining*

Resource:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/11/travel/11Frugal.html>

If identity is what makes every single person unique and identifiable, in the same way, we can say that the identity of Italian cuisine lies in its variety of products, styles, and traditions. Uniqueness and a level of wealth that the rest of the world admires. As a result, this abundance of treasures and excellence is viewed as a barrier to the advancement of the culinary arts. In my opinion, they have the greatest treasure on the face of the world.

### **7.1. Food as a sign of identity**

In addition to fashion, design, art, and natural beauty, Italian cuisine is perhaps the most comprehensive representation of what is meant by the term Italian style. That is, eating well, rituals, and customs, formed over centuries of wise care of the territory and cultural influences of peoples and civilizations, often far from the Mediterranean.

The strong point of Italian cuisine is certainly the huge variety of dishes, each one strongly linked to its place of origin. Each dish is also linked to a story that tells the work of women and men in the continuous search not only for taste but also for quality, excellence, and distinction. There is no doubt that many of our dishes would not exist if we had not had contact with distant cultures and traditions. Already with the Greeks, the Etruscans, and the Romans, relations with

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<sup>26</sup> Yoair Blog: Jenny Niedenfuehr: <https://www.yoair.com/hu/blog/anthropology-italian-cultural-traditions-surrounding-family-and-food/> (Downloaded:28.02.2022)

other Mediterranean civilizations were very prolific. It suffices to think of the flourishing trade exchanges with the Phoenicians, who brought products from the East and Africa to our shores. The fall of the Roman Empire and the subsequent subdivision of the Italic peninsula into states, republics, principalities, kingdoms, duchies, etc., favoured the consolidation of local identities. Identities that are also reflected in agri-food production. Each community, in fact, had every interest in increasing trade, and therefore, they aimed to improve the quality of the offer of typical products. Just like it happened for the great Italian cities, each one different from the other, but from which it is still possible to see the economic and military power they had, in the same way, cooking is clearly distinguished by local peculiarities and production excellences. In this way, many traditional typical dishes: such as tortellini from Emilia, pizza from Naples, panforte from Siena, panettone, chocolates, cheeses, wines, etc.

To conclude, religion influences the traditions of a people inevitably. In fact, many dishes are the result of a combination of local and seasonal products. Therefore, their preparation was once linked to important celebrations: Christmas, Easter, All Saints' Day, and so on. On such occasions, the masters of the house always did their best to prepare the best dishes that the diners could expect. Today, the consumption of many dishes does not follow the tradition of the past. However, we are still bound by some customs.

## **8. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITALIANS?**

### **8.1 Faith**

Although Italy was extremely fragmented after the break-up of the Western Roman Empire, two factors that brought the peninsula together should be mentioned. The Church is one of these unifying forces, which is universal rather than national but is an important political cohesive force. It is no coincidence that Italy is known as the "people of saints, poets, and navigators" (Popolo di Santi, Poeti e Navigatori), which refers to three fundamental elements of Italian identity: the cult of the saints, closely linked to local patriotism; poetry, or the importance of the arts; and, finally, the maritime trade that led to the flourishing of the city-states, considered Italy's second golden age after ancient Rome. Alongside religion was always present the cohesive force of antiquity, the myth of the continuity of Roman origins.

They are all born Catholic in Italy, but only a few practice their faith throughout adult life. Religion is more cultural than spiritual and it influences political choices.

### **8.2. Personality**

Italian people are "personal," that is, they like things that are (only) for them. However, they are not individualists in the sense that Hofstede uses in his studies on the relationship between national culture and organizational behaviour, but they do like to pamper themselves with certain objects that they do not willingly share with others. This is also why they tend to have little regard for what is by definition "public": spaces, services, green areas, etc., and why, while attracted by globalization, they do not willingly give up local dialects, customs, and products. In order to defend what they consider "personal", people tend to be quite litigious (the number of lawsuits per inhabitant is among the highest in the world), especially in situations that presuppose a common goal: from condominium meetings to Parliament. It is not by chance that they have districts, municipalities, provinces, regions. In short, they feel like a single nation only on the occasion of the World Cup. There are a lot of small businesses (even medium-sized ones are few) in their industry, which is why there are not many big businesses. The positive aspect of this attitude is that Italians have a very clear idea of what a good and beautiful product should look like. This explains why the great fashion and luxury brands are often Italian: the companies that built them were directed by Italian consumers, so eager to always get the best for themselves (after all, if something is good for an Italian, it has no difficulty in being appreciated by anyone). The propensity for "personalization" in business organizations has very negative effects; just think of business meetings, where decisions are almost never made by

vote because the important thing is to win consensus by convincing, one by one, the people involved in the process of choice. Every participant in meetings feels entitled to give his or her opinion, and what counts, more than the idea or opinion itself, are the personal characteristics and influence of the person speaking.

### **8.3. Flexibility**

Their relationship with time is quite original; they certainly do not consider work to be the centre of their day, and the phrase "time is money" does not belong to them much. Even during meals, they generally prefer to talk about other things, focusing more on building relationships and interacting than on discussing work-related issues in detail. However, their flexibility leads them to work more than others, partly because their willingness to extend their hours is well regarded in the company. Their typical workday runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., but it is not hard to find colleagues in the office much later. They naturally like vacations and weekends, but they accept, without too much protest, work calls even on public holidays. Their propensity for flexibility in time management makes them chaotic; hardly anything they do is well organized, although they have improved in recent years. Italian people hate time-planning, and when they do, no one really expects deadlines to be strictly adhered to; long-term plans (when they exist) are set in a generic and rather vague way. They are clearly incompetent when it comes to project management and adhering to previously stated schedules. Italians, despite their best efforts to be punctual, are adept at finding compelling explanations for their tardiness. All this has dramatic repercussions in the public administration, which has biblical decision-making times. However, Italians are particularly adept at finding "last-minute" solutions to issues and at reacting quickly and efficiently to unanticipated events and turbulence in the surrounding environment, a competence on which their managers are frequently judged. Furthermore, they are the best at making products that are "tailor-made" by seamlessly adapting to the needs of specific customers.

### **8.4. Communication**

Italians like conversing with one another, sometimes even at the dinner table or in front of the coffee maker. Their preference for written documents as a result of this decreases significantly. They may say "yes" more out of courtesy than out of genuine conviction in some cases. In most cases, the intense discussions that excite the various meetings (which are held voluntarily and sometimes for useless reasons) do not result in a decisive conclusion; rather,

they should be considered as a theatrical performance, which is necessary to validate the legitimacy of the choice. The fact that they all speak at the same time is not a surprise to anyone.<sup>27</sup>

The way in which Italians speak is completely original; gestures are their prerogative and serve to better relate to others. Perhaps also for this reason, they do not like to communicate in writing and speak a few languages. They gesticulate conspicuously, even when they are on the phone. Italians tend towards the first attitude, expressing their thoughts and moods directly with gestures and physical contact. These all might lead to misunderstandings.

## **8.5. Connection**

Like the telephone network, they function well when they are within a network, which they strive to create, adding connection after connection to our network of friendships. Although their starting point is almost always the family, the building of relationships is not only based on nepotism and patronage, but also on economic foundations. It is not by chance that Italy is the home of industrial districts, where countless small businesses interact with each other, creating a series of interesting synergies. Their relational attitude can also be seen in their ability to see problems from different angles, according to a holistic approach that combines different disciplines and perspectives.

A foreigner wishing to interact with an Italian network will therefore face several difficulties, the first of which will be determining who is truly in charge and who its more influential "allies" are. After all, the power of an individual is determined by the number of strong relationships that they have managed to establish in a given period of time. They place greater emphasis on the role of individuals than on the results achieved by them, and it is for this reason that loyalty and personal traits are regarded as more essential than merit. And, in some respects, it explains why people are so drawn to certain brands, which, after all, may be considered the "nodes" of the market network. Even the networks of industrial districts are usually built around a central enterprise that serves as a pivot for the whole network. In spite of the fact that they are usually quick to get impatient with their bosses.

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<sup>27</sup> Carlo Alberto Pratesi: *Le otto caratteristiche degli italiani*, March.2010.  
<http://carloalbertopratesi.sitonline.it/1/upload/pratesi.pdf> (Downloaded:20.04.2022)

## **8.6. Mobility**

Italians like to move around a lot. Just notice the extraordinary traffic in their cities and the commute they take on vacation. Since they do not like to do business over the phone or email, preferring face-to-face relationships, they are willing to put up with the cost and hassle of long commutes. They are very reluctant to move permanently, even if only from one part of their city to another.

On the other hand, this also makes them very loyal to companies, they change jobs with great difficulty. In fact, Italian people have the lowest mobile management population of all industrialized countries, and this, on the other hand, makes it very difficult to rationalize strategies in the organization that involve transfers from one city to another.

## **8.7. Appearance and innovation**

importance they place on form and appearance is obvious to everyone; it is easy to recognize an Italian even just by his or her clothing. And the appearance changes from sector to sector. For example, there are work environments where a tie is a must and others where formal attire can make them feel out of place. There is no denying that if somebody wants to be respected, it is best to conform to the dress code. The same attention to aesthetics is reserved for products and packaging, which, in order to compete in the Italian market, must be well designed. The Italian obsession with quality drives the continuous search for the most innovative ways to achieve it, and this generates a symbiotic and unique relationship between creativity and technological innovation. In other words, behind the beautiful things that make Italians want to visit, there is almost always a layer of expertise and cutting-edge research, experimentation, and technology.



## 9. RELIGION

Roman Catholicism is the most widely practiced religion in Italy. The capital is Rome, the city of the popes. Vatican City is located in the centre of Rome. It has been the centre of Christianity for nearly two thousand years. The land of Italy boasts religious artworks and saints with exemplary lives. Italian has become the unofficial intermediary language of the Catholic Church alongside traditional Latin. The Vatican itself has not always been as international as it is today: the Church had only an Italian Pope until the election of John Paul II. for more than 450 years. History has high expectations of Italians. The Italians have been called the most religious people in Europe. As Italians turn to the Church is enviable. Although Roman Catholics and other Christians constitute 80% of the population, more than 40 million people (three-quarters of Italians) profess to be Catholic Christians. The University of Michigan reports that the country also has a rising Muslim immigration population.<sup>28</sup>

According to Statista, the number of Italians who attend religious services at least once a week has decreased significantly between 2006 and 2020. In 2006, slightly more than 18 million Italians aged six and up attended weekly services, a figure that is expected to fall to 12 million by 2020.<sup>29</sup>

Religion is highly respected even among non-believers. Institutions act as a community and cultural space for the wider society. This is probably one of the reasons why religion is widespread among young people. Religious practice and religious consciousness are not the same, especially in Italy. Only 31% of Italians go to church every week according to one survey. This is well above the European average, but it still shows that the majority of proud Italian Catholics are now only occasional religious practitioners. Therefore, Italians can boast less and less of being the most religious nation in Europe. Indeed, alongside secularization<sup>30</sup>, they face another major difficulty: immigration. The country has been a major destination for immigrants for many years, with the result that more and more Orthodox Christians and Muslims are living in the country. Religious pluralism was almost unknown until thirty years ago. Even today, the number of Protestants is less than one million in the centuries-old Catholic country. Catholic Christianity was the state religion until 1984. Faith is taught in all schools to this day. As in the national system, it is not compulsory, but it is very popular. However, a tenth of the children is

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<sup>28</sup> Global business knowledge: <https://globaledege.msu.edu/countries/italy/statistics> (Downloaded:18.02.2022)

<sup>29</sup> Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/576085/weekly-church-attendance-in-italy/> (Downloaded:18.02.2022)

<sup>30</sup>Secularization: State action to reduce the influence of the church

now of immigrant parents.<sup>31</sup> Religious engagement has waned in popularity in the twenty-first century, especially among young Italians. There is a universal consensus that the number of practicing Christians is far smaller than the total number of Christians. Despite this, earlier generations remain more spiritually committed, notably the elderly Italian population in Australia.<sup>32</sup>

## 9.1. Catholicism in Italy

The influence of Roman Catholicism on society is undeniable, and it has worked as a unifying force in Italy. Thousands of churches dot the landscape, with over 900 in Rome alone. According to Catholic Church statistics, 96% of Italians were baptized as Catholics.<sup>33</sup>

In spite that this statistic does not reflect the number of current or active members, it demonstrates how significant the Catholic tradition is in cultural activities (e.g., birth, death, marriage). The Catholic Church's dogma has had a profound influence on Italian culture and social norms over time. Numerous devout Catholics view the Pope as the ultimate source of direction and leadership. As a branch of Christianity, Catholicism adheres to the idea of God as the "Holy Trinity," comprised of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Baptism, first communion, confirmation, and marriage are all significant Catholic events in the ordinary Italian's life. These rites of passage commemorate pivotal moments in a person's life. Certain Catholics are able to attend Mass, which is a religious service conducted by a priest on Sundays, often in the morning or at other times during the day.

However, masses are also held throughout the week, they are just shorter in duration. It is possible that Italians residing abroad would choose to attend a church led by an Italian priest. Many missionary priests have volunteered to help Italian migrants in other countries with their spiritual needs. A rosary, which is a string of beads or a knotted thread, is worn or used by devout Catholics for prayer. As they repeat a prayer, the participant customarily moves the rosary in their hands, touching each bead. Some Italians may also donate a portion of their salaries to Catholic community service organizations. Christian iconography, such as portraits of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, may also be found in people's homes.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Leelőssy Ádám (29.03.2017.) 777 blog: <https://777blog.hu/2017/08/09/keresztenyek-vilag-korul-katolikus-szomszedaink/> (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>32</sup> Cultural Atlas: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/italian-culture/italian-culture-religion> (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>33</sup> Cheney (2005) (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>34</sup> Cultural Atlas: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/italian-culture/italian-culture-religion> (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

## 10. NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

Italians have a significant influence on their image of themselves abroad because of established stereotypes. On the one hand, as in the case of all other nations, the fact that outsiders see the given people in their full integrity is discovered as such properties that are considered less characteristic within a country, or that they are unwilling to notice because of their bias. Stereotypes and commonplaces are not just another way to define an entity between people.

Through the definitions created by others, a sense of belonging to a particular society's behaviours, value categories, and customs brings to life a collective image based on a common system of symbols. On the other hand, in Italy, which has existed for thousands of years, many "foreigners" have lived side by side. Thus, mainly the regional and urban stereotypes mentioned above have spread.

Due to the peninsula's artistic and commercial significance, Italy is a kind of exotic country in the eyes of foreign travelers. Italy, a young country that felt far away from the rest of the world, turned out to be a more easily understood and stereotyped group.

During the period of independence, foreign attention focused on those who were working for national unity, especially Giuseppe Garibaldi. The leader of the thousands was particularly popular in France, thanks to the influential Alexandre Dumas, who regularly reported on the expedition, while in England the focus was more on Giuseppe Mazzini. The Italian unity drive was well received, with a romantic image of the Italians as brave people fighting against foreign oppressors. However, towards the end of the 19th century, the young state came under increasing criticism for its political actions, as illustrated by the proliferation of negative stereotypes. The shortcomings of Italian warfare in the unit, even more than the establishment of unity, by the events of the Second World War are illustrated, where Mussolini's Italy had to rely on Germany as if it were a succession of aids once again. This was probably the inspiration for Churchill's memorable phrase: "the Italians are losing a football match as if it were a war, a war as if it were a football match."

The situation deteriorated further in the 1950s, when Italy, unable to maintain its own internal order, was unable to participate effectively in international processes. The country's image saw a strong fluctuation in the second half of the twentieth century. In the 1960s, the Italian style became known for being beautifully designed and innovative. The Pininfarina, FIAT 500, FIAT 600, and Vespa scooters, as well as other well-known consumer goods, changed Italy's image: it became a stronghold of fashion, design, and architecture.

They are constantly on strike, with a Mediterranean temper, loudness, and laziness (*dolce far niente*), but they are also sympathetic, friendly, and know how to live (*dolce vita*), generous, and very good-looking. All this corresponds only partially to the image Italians have of themselves. Their peculiarity is their humour.

They also proudly complement their image by emphasizing their inventive, intelligent, and resourceful nature and the creativity and genius of their nation (inventors, artists, made in Italy, cuisine, fashion, music).<sup>35</sup>

### **10.1. Local stereotypes**

Stereotypes contribute significantly to the research of identity, as they express how Italians see themselves and how others see them. In my opinion, stereotypes predominate about cities and regions within the country in terms of the way Italians see themselves. There is still hostility between cities or even neighbourhoods close to each other, although nowadays this is more verbal or linked to tradition in the different regions or macro-regions.

Cities have tried to project a positive image of themselves. The Tuscans are proud of their language and their sense of humour, but they also focus on their Etruscan ancestors, who never succumbed to the barbaric Romans, but instead educated them in culture.

### **10.2. Stereotypes of the North and South**

In the nation, there is a significant disparity between the northern and southern areas. Their language and traditions are also very different, as the two regions are very different. They are one of the best-known regional contrasts in Europe. The northern provinces of Piedmont and Lombardy are among the most prosperous regions of the continent, while the south is characterized by emigration and high unemployment. This divide between the people is very strong and has not eased even after many years.

Italy has a diverse industrial economy that is based on the automobile industry. In the northern areas, the most important industries include textiles, food, clothes, machinery, iron, steel, footwear, and ceramics, to name a few. Those in the south, on the other hand, have far less economic opportunity. The southern hemisphere's economy is mostly made up of small businesses that grow and make things, as well as the tourism industry.

There are a lot of mechanical engineering products, food and drink, olive oil, textiles and clothing, manufacturing machinery, motor vehicles and transportation equipment, chemicals,

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<sup>35</sup> Eco, Umberto: *Com'è l'Italia descritta dagli altri?* In *La Repubblica*, 11. July.2003. (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

minerals, non-ferrous metals, and other things that come from the southern hemisphere for people to buy.

In the early nineteenth century, Italy was one of the most underdeveloped countries in Europe. The conditions were mainly created for modern capitalist development in the northern regions due to their location. These areas were located close to the rapidly growing areas of western Europe and were thus easily integrated into the European bloodstream. The development of the southern part of the country was hampered by several factors. Southern Italy has suffered several conquests and has been under foreign rule for many years. The geographical conditions are less favourable, with a large part of the territory covered by mountains and hills. This made agricultural production particularly difficult. The climate also meant that there was a lack of water. The country has very few natural resources, the most important of which are in the north (natural gas and hydropower). To overcome the development gap, the Southern Development Program was launched in 1950 and continued until 1975. It included infrastructure development and land reform. Despite these efforts, Southern Italy is still a backward area.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the economic divide, there is also a major fault-line between the North and the South in terms of social capital.

The deficit in social capital is particularly marked in the South of Italy; this means that there is a lack of solidarity on a par with the political-institutional order of a democratic state. Instead, other forms of solidarity predominate, notably familism and localism.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Szabó Pál (2002) Észak, Dél, Harmadik Olaszország és társaik makroregionális tagozódás Olaszországban. Budapest. [http://geogr.elte.hu/REF/REF\\_Cikkek/SzaboPal/8\\_szabopal\\_tanulmánya.pdf](http://geogr.elte.hu/REF/REF_Cikkek/SzaboPal/8_szabopal_tanulmánya.pdf) (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>37</sup> Ravelli, Fabrizio: Cittadini doc, l'Italia finisce a Terni. In un Atlante la mappa del 'capitale sociale'. In: La Repubblica (Downloaded:10.03.2022)

## 11. LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

A separate chapter has been dedicated to the study of language because, in my opinion, it is the area in which an individual's identity is most visibly converging with that of a group or community. Language is not only a means of verbal communication, but it is also a fundamental component of one's own and one's society's sense of self. In addition, since the individual's mother tongue language, he or she has also acquired behaviours and norms, as well as a sense of belonging to a particular territory or community, among other things. As a result, language is regarded as a high priority.

Like identity, language is a highly malleable, constantly evolving phenomenon, and there are often close similarities between language and identity. I think it is also important to discuss the question of language in more detail because, in the case of Italy, it is here that the process of "making Italians" is best captured. The changes in the relationship between the Italian language and other dialects are a good example of how national identity came to be and how it is now.

### 11.1. The power of language

A language is occupied by its speakers in a concrete physical space, but it also occupies a symbolic, inner space in the sense that it serves as a repository of values and culture. In contrast to being a stable, unchanging entity, the domain of language is constantly changing, subject to the influence of interpersonal relationships, conflicts, interests, conflicts of interest, and, above all, political forces and institutions. In his study "La geopolitica delle lingue in poche parole" (The geopolitics of languages in a few words) Roberto Mulinacci argues that the geopolitics of languages is nothing more than the continuation of territorial rivalries on a different level and through different means.

In reality, the geographic distribution of languages is a direct result of the historical, political, economic, and cultural factors that have shaped the communities that speak the languages.

As a result, a language's spread or acquisition of official status within a state is linked to questions of power and territorial rivalry, and as a result, it raises political issues such as the need for decentralization.

The state is the one that wants to centralize languages and dialects, and the nation is the one that wants to protect its regional languages and dialects.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Roberto Mulinacci: La geopolitica delle lingue in poche parole. In Limes, 2010/3. 7–9. (Downloaded: 23.02.2022)

## 11.2. The variety of Italian language

The majority of Italians speak regional Italian, i.e., standard Italian with an accent specific to their region or city. Individual pronunciations are still so distinctive that even Italians less familiar with linguistics can easily identify the city or region of origin of a stranger.

The Italian language is regional, is completely equal, and coexists in parallel. After the loss of the dialect, the language is primarily concerned with the "continuation" of the dialect. Regional Italian became the vehicle of identity.

The Apennines have always been known for having a lot of different languages. In the Roman Empire, only the intelligentsia and the people who ran the country spoke Cicero's classical Latin. The country's official language is Italian.

Italian is spoken by about 59 million people, but there are also a lot of different regional languages. As a result, some people speak both Italian and a local language, while others only speak Italian as a second language. Italian is spoken as a second language by over 93 percent of the Italian population, according to the BBC. Neapolitan, Sardinian, Venetian, Friulian, Sicilian, Ligurian, Piedmontese and Calabrian are only a few of the country's dialects.<sup>39</sup> Milanese is also widely spoken in the city. Albanian, Bavarian, Catalan, Cimbrian, Corsican, Croatian, French, German, Greek, Slovenian, and Walser are other languages spoken by native Italians.<sup>40</sup>

Several of these regional languages (for example, Lombard, Sicilian, and Sardinian) are quite unlike Standard Italian and are frequently incomprehensible to speakers of other regional languages or Standard Italian. Despite the fact that minority languages are spoken by minority groups inside Italy, they differ from regional languages in that they are spoken by minorities from different countries or regions of Europe, as opposed to regional languages, which are spoken by minorities from only one country or region of Europe. They are the outcome of a series of consecutive migratory waves that have occurred in Italy over the ages. Diaspora languages are some of the minority languages that are spoken by people who have migrated to a new country. Due to the vast number of Italian immigrants who have settled in a variety of locations across the world, Italian is also spoken by minority populations in countries other than Italy. Other countries have made Italian their official language as well.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> BBC Home: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european\\_languages/countries/italy.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/countries/italy.shtml) (Downloaded:18.02.2022)

<sup>40</sup> Kim Ann Zimmermann ,Jonathan Gordon\_ (January 17, 2022) <https://www.livescience.com/44376-italian-culture.html> (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>41</sup> SlowItaly: <http://slowitaly.yourguidetoitaly.com/languages-of-italy/> (Downloaded: 22.02.2022)

### **11.3. The relationship between the Italian language and the dialects**

In the 16th century, the Florentine dialect began to rise above the rest of the languages, eventually taking over the role that Latin had played. When they talked about the languages of the peninsula, they mentioned dialects for the first time in their conversation.<sup>42</sup>

After the creation of the unit, Italy finally opted for a French-style centralized model of language, as it had done for its political, administrative, and economic organization. The appointment and spread of a single official language were very important for the unity of the centralized state and the people of Italy. Graziadio Isaia Ascoli was one of the people who backed the other, Swiss-American model.<sup>43</sup>

The spread of standard Italian was extremely slow. The school system was ineffective, and at the outset, the majority of Florentine teachers did not speak the dialect of their native city. The high rate of illiteracy also made it difficult to learn the Italian language. According to the official language, the dialects were mostly spoken and did not do as much for communication as the official language did. For that reason, the dialects were thought of as less important languages, and as a result, they were used to discriminate against certain groups of people, like low-income schoolchildren who did not speak enough Italian. It is important to point out that dialect speakers were persecuted because they spoke in their language, which was an important part of their collective identity.

Because all of the people who lived in a particular area spoke the same dialect. Historically, language was associated with the home where it originated.

Italy's school system, conscription service, emigration, and internal migration, as well as the spread of communication (television and radio), helped the Italian language finally win over the dialects in the 20th century.

The development of linguistic unity was hindered by a unitary state with a political, economic, and cultural centre, a hegemonic cultural stratum, and a lack of literacy in Italy. The political division of the peninsula led to a lot of different centres, which often communicated more with other parts of Europe than with each other.

### **11.4. The use of dialects**

The practice of code-switching between different linguistic variants, such as Italian and dialect. In addition to the local identity, a new national Italian identity has emerged. These identities

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<sup>42</sup> DE MAURO, Tullio: Un'identità non immaginaria. In: *Limes*. 2010/3. 16–17. (Downloaded: 22.02.2022)

<sup>43</sup> Ceserani Remo: La costruzione dell'identità nazionale italiana 2003, 37 (Downloaded: 22.02.2022)



coexist peacefully. According to Tullio De Mauro, there are few countries as linguistically heterogeneous as Italy; the peninsula is home to some 10 national languages (Ladin, Sardinian, and Friulian) and a myriad of dialects. While De Mauro refers to these three variants as separate languages, other linguists include Friulian and Sardinian among the dialects. Linguistically, each dialect is a separate language, called a dialect only because of sociolinguistic issues (prestige, codification, official language status). However, there is still a big social gap between people who speak Italian as well as people who speak dialects.<sup>44</sup> The diverse linguistic map of Italy is an inexhaustible subject for social and identity researchers. In Italy, dialectologists have always been interested in sociolinguistics. Some dialectology has even merged with sociolinguistics on its own.<sup>45</sup>

Like the idea of a "united Italy," Italian was popular among the intelligentsia and the upper classes of society. After 1861, the wider population found itself confronted with a new foreign language. The written Italian language, with its heritage of classical literature, science, and philosophy, reflected the spirit of a united Italy that recalled the memory of ancient Rome.

When Italian unity was created, between 1861 and 1865, the capital of Italy was Turin. Records of the period tell of a colourful cavalcade of people thronging the streets of the city. The city of Turin is said to be the first real incarnation of the Italian "melting pot." Everyone drinks and eats, although sometimes in different dialects they do not understand each other. The most famous of the Risorgimento, the most famous hymns of the Risorgimento seem to express the many regional accents.<sup>46</sup>

In comparison to the rest of Europe, the employment of dialects in Italy is now unrivalled in modern times. To this day, dialects are still spoken in many parts of Italy as a way to communicate casually in a wide range of social situations and with families.

Contrary to common opinion, the usage of dialects in particular Italian regions is widespread and not simply among the older generation in these regions. Despite the fact that standard Italian is frequently used among the younger generations, many young people can express themselves, or at the very least understand themselves, in their own dialect in casual social settings. Even within a single geographical location, dialects and accents can differ significantly. Florentine accent is very different from the accents of places like Pisa, Livorno, Lucca, and Arezzo, for example, despite the fact that there are not any real and valid dialects there.

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<sup>44</sup> De Mauro, Tullio: Il plurilinguismo nella società e nella scuola italiana. In: SIMONE – RUGGIERO 1977, 87–88. (Downloaded: 23.02.2022)

<sup>45</sup> Berruto, Gaetano: Dialettologia e sociolinguistica in Italia. 1977, 76. (Downloaded: 23.02.2022)

<sup>46</sup> CAPRARICA 2010, 10–11. (Downloaded: 23.02.2022)

Dialectal distinctions between locations within the same province, or even between locations that are only a few kilometres away, are highly recognizable in other parts of the world.

Many years have passed since the erroneous assumption was made that dialects were the "poor and impoverished parents" of standard Italian, which has evolved mostly from the Tuscan dialect. Dialects, on the other hand, show how different cultures are in their own right.

In the last 50 years, many regional terms from Tuscany, Lombardy, Veneto, Naples, and Sicily have been adopted by the national language. This can be traced back to the Renaissance, which was a time when people began to learn more about the world around them.

Because dialects have been studied by linguists for a long time, it should come as no surprise that they have been used in literature and poetry for a long time.

In the past, there was a bias against dialects, with people assuming that standard Italian was the language of the bourgeoisie and that dialects were the language of farmers and laborers, as opposed to standard Italian. However, in recent years, the majority of this prejudice has been eradicated.

### **11.5. Regional dialects**

Despite the fact that the nation has a huge variety of regional languages, only a handful of them has been recognized by the government as official languages. This is due to the fact that Italy has a long history of strong regional identities that existed until it was unified in 1861 and united as a single country.

These regional languages are not just dialects of Standard Italian; rather, they are distinct languages in their own right that are not the same as the Italian language.

People who speak various regional languages in Italy frequently find themselves unable to comprehend what they are saying. Northern languages are more like French and Occitan are more common than standard Italian or southern dialects, which is why they are classified as such. The largest group of people not speaking Italian are the Sardinians. They speak Sardinian, who speak Sardinian. These are the four dialects of Sardinian that exist today. Friulian is a language spoken by approximately 350,000 people in the Italian region of Friuli. Mostly spoken in the province of Udine, but also in the provinces of Gorizia and Venice, it is a language of the Rhaeto-Romanic group.

### *11.5.1. Additional regional languages*

Emilia-Romagna is a distinct language from Italian that is connected to the Lombard language family. Throughout northwest Italy, it is spoken in sections of Emilia and Romagna, southern Pianura Padana, southern Lombardy, northern Toscana, and northern Marche, among other places. Central Emiliano, Western Emiliano and Eastern Emiliano are the dialects spoken in the region. The other dialects are Northern and Southern Romagnolo, Lunigiano, Vogherese-Pavese and Mantovano among others.

Piedmontese is a dialect of Italian that has a significant French influence and is distinct enough from standard Italian to be considered a separate language from the rest of Italy. It is spoken in the Piedmont region of Italy. The language includes a number of dialects, some of which are classified as separate languages. The dialects of Western Lombardy are intrinsically comprehensible to speakers of the other dialects since they are derived from the same source language. Others who live in more conservative areas may have to speak a "standard" dialect of Lombard in order to connect with people who speak other dialects of the language. This may be difficult for them to do.

In northern Italy, Venetian is a dialect of Standard Italian that is spoken mostly in the city of Venice and the surrounding region known as the Tre Venezie, as well as in sections of the provinces of Veneto Tridentine, Venezia Eugànea, and Venezia Giulia, which includes the city of Trieste. Bisiacco is a Venetian dialect that is spoken in the province of Gorizia.

The Neapolitan-Calabrian dialect of the Italian language is spoken in the southern Italian regions of Campania and Calabria. In the region, the languages of Napoletano, Northern Calabrese-Lucano, and other dialects are spoken. In comparison to Standard Italian, Sicilian is sufficiently diverse to be regarded as a distinct linguistic entity. A number of Sicilian dialects are spoken, including Western Sicilian Pantesco and Messinese. Sicilian dialects such as Southern Calabrese and Pugliese are considered to exist.

### *11.5.2. Minority languages*

Minority languages, such as German and Slovene, are those that are recognized as national languages in other countries, but they are spoken by a minority in Italy, where they are recognized as such by the European Union. As a result, they are different from Italy's regional languages, which are only spoken in certain parts of the country. From the Roman Empire to the present-day Italian Republic, Italy has been one of the countries that has undergone the most dramatic changes in its geographical landscape over the centuries. As a result of this, as well as the fact that Italy is located in the heart of Europe and has been subjected to successive waves

of invasion, it is not surprising that, in addition to standard Italian, a large number of minority languages are spoken in Italy. Minority groups in Italy, for example, speak German, Slovene, and Griko, as well as many other languages.

The languages considered fall into two categories: minority languages that are regional languages in another country and minority languages that are national languages in another country. This has resulted in a fundamental distinction between the minority languages listed here and the regional languages of Italy; the latter is not unique to Italy but are also spoken in other countries or regions, even when a regional version has been established within Italy, such as Griko and Molise Croatian.

Minority languages that are also the national language of another country, or varieties of such languages, are classified as follows: It differs greatly from Modern Greek in many ways due to influences from ancient Byzantine Greek, Doric, and Italian dialects, as well as Romance dialects.<sup>47</sup> Even today, distinctions in regional accents allow people of one town to differentiate themselves from residents of a nearby town, even if the two towns are just a few miles apart in distance. Immigrants' immigration has also resulted in the formation of various new languages, including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Turkish, Mandarin, Chinese, Kurdish and others.<sup>48</sup>

Aside from Monaco and the surrounding island of Malta, where it functioned as the country's official language until the country's Constitution was adopted, Italian is also widely recognized and taught across Italy. The remnants of several languages that were previously spoken and written in Italy may be discovered in museums and archaeological sites around the country, with the most notable examples being those in Umbria and Tuscany. These languages are now believed to be extinct.

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<sup>47</sup> UNHCR((United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): <https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d02c.html> (Downloaded: 22.02.2022)

<sup>48</sup> Nationalia 2007-2022. <https://www.nationalia.info/interview/10706/sardinian-nationalists-admire-catalonia-but-this-interest-isnt-mutual-sardinia-isnt-as-hig> (Downloaded: 22.02.2022)

## 12. CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR

Decency, also known as "culture of behaviour", is an integral part of human communication. It regulates social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, and also the relationships between people.

Every social community has behavioural characteristics and creates its own written and unwritten moral and non-moral rules as well as its own rules of interaction, which constitute a culture of behaviour.<sup>49</sup>

Maintaining social order is particularly important in any community. Ethical norms have evolved over many years, and a variety of rules for community interaction have been built into the legal system. Behaviour, experience, and conduct are vital parts of decency. They can acquire knowledge by recognizing and taking into account the behaviour and opinions of people who are more experienced than we are in certain respects. Much of their knowledge comes from personal experience. It is shaped by work, family, social circumstances, moral consciousness, and culture. Behaviour is a formal expression of conduct. It is the basis on which an individual is judged in all personal relationships.<sup>50</sup>

### 12.1 Activities of behavioural elements

These elements whose manifestation requires the participation of the actor.<sup>51</sup>

That is, the person must do and say something in order for others to see that he or she can behave. In order for our behaviour to be socially acceptable, it is always important to observe the following elements: greeting, introducing oneself, kissing hands, shaking hands, raising hats, and bowing, as well as, addressing and shaking hands.<sup>52</sup>

#### *12.1.1. Salutation*

In Italy, people judge each other by their first impressions. It is important to show your respect and that you are aware of the rules of etiquette, which is very important when you first meet someone. An Italian business partner puts a lot of effort into appearances, so it is inappropriate to call him by his first name until he initiates it himself. Addressing is extremely important in correspondence. In this case, "Signora" (Madam), "Signore" (Sir), and "Signorina" (Miss) are

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<sup>49</sup> Hossó Nikolettta: Protokoll a diplomácia és nemzetközi kapcsolatok háttérében, Budapest; 2015 (Downloaded: 17.02.2022)

<sup>50</sup> Dr. Sille István: Illem, etikett, protokoll: Budapest 2000:15 (Downloaded: 18.02.2022)

<sup>51</sup> Hegyi Zsuzsanna: [http://etk.pte.hu/protected/OKJ/Egeszsegugyi\\_gyakorlatvezeto/Hegyi\\_Zsuzsanna/06-yiselkedeskultura.pdf](http://etk.pte.hu/protected/OKJ/Egeszsegugyi_gyakorlatvezeto/Hegyi_Zsuzsanna/06-yiselkedeskultura.pdf) (Downloaded: 18.02.2022)

<sup>52</sup> Protokoll egyetemi jegyzet: Magyar Protokoll-osok Klubja Országos Egyesület; Budapest, 2002:16-27. (Downloaded: 19.02.2022)

usually replaced by "Professore" (Teacher), "Dottore" (Doctor), "Avvocato" (Lawyer), "Ingegnere" (Engineer) or the academic title.

The doctorate and the medical title have a huge social prestige. An Italian man is very proud of his title and is happy to stick to the title he has earned at university. It is used to indicate social status. In addition, titles of rank and nobility are also used to address people, even if they are not of noble birth. The title "Eccellenza" or "Sua Eccellenza" is used from the title of Secretary of State upwards. Italians address each other in three ways The forms 'tu' (you), 'Voi' (you) and 'Lei' (you). Young people and family members use the 'tu' form of address between themselves.

### *12.1.2. Introduction, greetings*

In Italy, it is the guest who first has to introduce himself to an older, more senior person with an unusual degree of humility. As the authority of religion is also very high, the structure of the church has a great influence on Italian relations in other areas. In the Italian culture of behaviour, greetings are adapted to the time of day. The time of day is very different from the European conception. For Italians, the morning usually lasts until noon. They may invite each other for dinner up to 9 p.m., as the evening begins at night. Eleven o'clock is also still considered social time. When greeting each other, the gentlemen always shake hands, which is accompanied by a smile and eye contact. The greeting often includes a handshake, and when the relationship is closer, the traditional greeting for men is a pat on the shoulder and a kiss in the air next to both cheeks.

A woman is right to shake hands when meeting other women. Women give each other a symbolic kiss on one side of the cheek. Young people greet each other with "Ciao" (hello), but when they pop into a restaurant or shop, they greet each other with "Salve".

The "Salve" greeting is more formal than "Ciao", although not as formal as "Buon Giorno" (Good day) and "Buona Sera" (Good evening). Of course, when meeting a business partner, the most formal form of greeting is used. When saying goodbye on leaving, there is no distinction between a "salute" and a "greeting", as "Salve" (hello) or "Arrivederci" (goodbye) are always used. "Arrivederci" is considered a form of sign as "ArrivederLa" is the pronounced form. It is advisable to use this expression when meeting business partners or older and more senior people.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Una finestra sull'Italia: I saluti italiani ([gennaio 14, 2013](https://italiabeneetti.blogspot.com/2013/01/i-saluti-italiani-ciao-come-stai.html)) <https://italiabeneetti.blogspot.com/2013/01/i-saluti-italiani-ciao-come-stai.html> (Downloaded: 18.02.2022)

### *12.1.3. Kiss*

In Italy, kissing has a long history and is deeply embedded in Italian culture. Italians are friendlier and more sensitive than their northern neighbours. In Europe and North Africa, the ancient Romans were credited with spreading the kiss. Contemporary writings detail at length the ways of kissing and describe three distinct categories of kissing the Romans used: the kiss of the hand or face; the passionate kiss; and the "principle" of "kissing" with lips closed. In those days, kissing was not as closely linked to love as it is today.

In general, cheek kissing is common between men and women and between women and women. Face-kissing involves one or two light kisses, the latter on both sides. The lips only touch the other person's cheek if they are extremely good friends. In Italy, there are regions, especially in the south, where men are greeted with kisses on both cheeks. For foreign men coming to the country, it is safer to shake hands to greet people.

Kissing is less common at business events and is mostly reserved for informal social gatherings. The greeting is most commonly used between two ladies or between a woman and a man, whereas men prefer to shake hands.

The importance of consistency cannot be overstated. Make sure that if you kissed someone at a prior meeting, you do it again at the following meeting, or else the other person will be insulted.<sup>54</sup>

## **12.2. The passives of behavioural elements**

These elements characterize the level of our knowledge without our involvement. It implies that we do nothing to allow someone to judge whether we can behave appropriately. This includes appropriate manners, courtesy, decency, tact and compassion, politeness, attentiveness, self-control, dress, conscientiousness, appearance, and patience and punctuality.<sup>55</sup>

It is based on respect for the basic rules of manners, natural behaviour, and a good sense of self-awareness. Good manners are also defined as conforming to the formal expectations of a formal event. By propriety, we mean the discretionary behaviour of showing respect without creating selfishness in others, using standards such as good manners, attentiveness, and discretion. Politeness is a value of manners that is intended to make a good impression on

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<sup>54</sup> The Local, Catherine Edwards: <https://www.thelocal.it/20170706/how-to-do-the-italian-cheek-kiss-greeting-italy> (Downloaded:18.02.2022)

<sup>55</sup> Hegyi Zsuzsanna: [http://etk.pte.hu/protected/OKJ/Egeszsegugyi\\_gyakorlatvezeto/Hegyi\\_Zsuzsanna/06-viselkedeskultura.pdf](http://etk.pte.hu/protected/OKJ/Egeszsegugyi_gyakorlatvezeto/Hegyi_Zsuzsanna/06-viselkedeskultura.pdf) (Downloaded:18.02.2022)

others. Attention can be expected from everyone, as it can be learned. Discretion and empathy are mental qualities that enable us to understand the situations of others. Individuality is a set of moral traits that are manifested in behaviour. It cannot be inherited, but it can be developed. The traits that shape individuality have two defining conditions: the practice of good behaviour and the recognition of good behaviour. Conscience is the personalized moral consciousness that enables a person to judge his own feelings and the ethical correctness of his actions. Calmness and tolerance are important. "To be angry is to revenge the faults of others on ourselves."<sup>56</sup>(Alexander Pope)

### *12.2.1. Good manners*

An Italian is polite, well-mannered, a good speaker, and a pleasant conversationalist. The Italian's attitude is characterized mainly by the expression 'allegria', which means joy of life with an infinite nature that an outsider would find difficult to understand. Sunshine, companionship, and collective cheerfulness are the loves of life. They have a very positive attitude towards life, although they often experience happiness and sadness alternately. They seek to enjoy life to the full and give thanks for life's blessings. They are very good-humoured, so they love to play jokes on each other, but if someone from a foreign country does this to them, they are displeased. As well as the importance of greetings, they demand physical contact. They offer warm hearts and good cheer to those they see. In fact, there is nothing wrong with two men kissing each other on the cheek. Italian men are also very enthusiastic and always call women 'bella' (beautiful) or 'cara' (nice).

### *12.2.2. Courtesy*

The cornerstone of good Italian manners is "Grazie e prego" (thank you and please). However, simply saying "Un caffè per favore" in a café, which means "One coffee please", is not bad manners. After all, you are asking for a service, and if someone is too polite, it will be considered a pretense and therefore impolite. Italians use the word "mi dispiace" when apologizing. They tend to be exaggerated as being too open and quick to make contact and show emotion. Businessmen are excellent conversationalists and do not violate international principles. In the office, however, it is not appropriate to be imprecise and lax. An Italian is happy to invite a foreigner for coffee, lunch, or dinner. They are very generous and treat their partner with special treatment. They try to choose an excellent restaurant, provide a generous menu, and quick service. They also take great care in selecting the wines.

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<sup>56</sup> Idézet ABC: <https://idezetabc.hu/idezetek/alexander-pope/duhosnek-lenni-annyi-mint-masok-hibajat>  
(Downloaded:17.02.2022)



### *12.2.3. Character and conscience*

The Italian proverb " It's good to trust others but, not to do so is much better."<sup>57</sup> (Benito Mussolini) sums up in one sentence the Italian character and conscience. They are open, welcoming, and kind to people from new places, but it takes a long time to gain trust in them. The outcome of the negotiations, however, may not be successful, despite the fact that foreign negotiators are very welcome. They are very deliberate and prepared when it comes to business, as they will immediately expose the negotiating party's weaknesses. It is important to be prepared for any negotiation, and not to be hesitant, as this will be noticed immediately. Their suspicion is also reflected in the fact that bargaining is important to them, and negotiation without bargaining is unthinkable. In many respects, Italian etiquette is more relaxed, but there are rules that must be observed. For example, leaving the table at dinner or bending down to eat. You are not allowed to leave the table until everyone has finished eating.

Italian people can be described in one word: moody people. Their behaviour is influenced by their emotions. They often change their personalities and moods. One minute they are moody, angry, ill-mannered, dismissive, and the next moment they are happy, self-absorbed, and see everything as beautiful. They are often very patient, and sometimes, when the weather is bad, they can be very grumpy, so their expressions are more obvious, violent, and spontaneous. They are also surprisingly perfectionists. For them, most disputes can be resolved through bribery, and compromise. In many people's eyes, Italians are passionate, cheerful, and loudly devious Mediterranean people, often associated with unreliability and laziness. Italians are also brilliant in dress, design, and cuisine. Gifts and favours play a particularly important role in the lives of Italians.

This means that, by accepting a souvenir, they owe a favour to the other person, and they are also committing themselves to life. In business, they are disciplined by their work, so extraordinary forms of expression are not to be expected. The mood swings are mainly felt according to the season. As winter sets in, they become more gloomy, whereas their mood becomes more cheerful in spring. These mood swings have an impact on society and the whole family. Italians are particularly generous and cordial with foreigners, but a compliment from an Italian man is just a polite habit and should not be taken seriously. In negotiations, Italian businessmen are eager and motivated throughout.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Talpai Lóránt: 2019.12.18. LXXIV.51.: <https://hetnap.rs/cikk/Nepek-es-nemzetek-30271.html>  
(Downloaded:17.02.2022)

<sup>58</sup> Richard Hill: *Mi, európaiak: Geomédia Szakkönyvek*: Budapest, 1999: 147.site (Downloaded:17.02.2022)

## **13. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

### **13.1. Economic and social status**

Italy is one of the world's seven economic superpowers, along with the United States and China. It is a member of both the European Union and NATO. It occupies a significant economic and military position in the Mediterranean, and it is also the EU's fastest-growing member state. In recent decades, the country has been notably renowned for a variety of issues, such as political difficulties, unemployment, and criminal activity. Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the northern region contribute significantly to the state's gross domestic product (GDP). The prosperity of the country's economy is based on the hard work and tenacity of its business people and other entrepreneurs. The majority of family companies are structured in such a way that they pay the least amount of insurance and taxes possible. There are certain industries that compete with one another, and these industries are centred in fewer geographical regions. They are able to do so because they are outperforming corporations in the most developed nations. This is not something we see anywhere else in Europe. A large part of their success may be attributed to their natural design ability. They make an effort to maintain a sense of balance in whatever they do.

### **13.2. Social life**

When an Italian business colleague invites someone to lunch, business, politics, the mafia, or religion are not discussed. They casually discuss their acquaintances and families. Sport is another extremely popular subject. In their everyday lives, Italians shun danger and uncertainty, choosing friends over strangers.

Lunch and supper are often two or three hours long, and everyone is required to remain at the table until their meal is done. They may not always bring gifts when they visit, but they always surprise the lady of the home with flowers. The colour red is also avoided in this instance. No flowers or presents are presented if the invitation is for a standing reception or cocktail party.

### **13.3. Women**

Women are primarily responsible for family management, but they are also active in public life. In public, a woman cannot dispute her boss or spouse. When a businesswoman travels to Italy for a meeting, she is generally treated as a female. She may achieve equality through deft, effective, and spontaneous bargaining skills. While women account for a sizable portion of the workforce, the proportion of women in top management positions is rather low. People from

other countries always treat senior female executives from other countries with the utmost respect and dignity.

### **13.4. Gesticulation**

It has been estimated that the average Italian man routinely employs around 250 gestures. When conversing, hand gestures are frequently used. They like gesticulating and pointing vigorously, and they are not repulsed by rough language when agitated. When someone suddenly gesticulates on the street, chances are they are of Italian descent or have lived in the nation for an extended period of time. They can communicate in any language and at any time because of their remarkable communication abilities. While Italians may not be fluent in many languages, they make an effort to "act out" what they intend to say when they speak. Not only are gestures employed internationally, but their pronunciation is an integral aspect of their communication. They enjoy being the focal point of attention and attracting attention to themselves. When speaking, gesticulating is frequently accompanied by facial expressions. Grinning is a fundamental mode of communication, mostly used to convey sympathy, but it may also convey the joy and peace emanating from their bodies. They quickly grin, frequently with a burst of laughter. Emotional expressiveness is far stronger and more passionate than we are accustomed to.<sup>59</sup>

### **13.5. Business life, work**

Italian business people take reasoned, competent, and encouraging arguments seriously, but they do not stick to rigid rules. Conflict is very dominant, and one should not be surprised by minor quarrels that often seem to be nothing. When they raise their voices, it is not a sign of anger. Italian people are quite flexible. They often argue with each other, though never out of anger, but out of a conviction of principle. They love a good argument and bargaining. As you can see in classic Italian films, the decision is never made immediately. Italians are also very polite in rejecting offers that are not to their liking. They set an agenda for meetings, which they do not really keep, but meeting delivery deadlines is essential in trade relations. When they go to a negotiation, they usually come with a lawyer, who helps them draw up the contract accurately. At work, the average Italian office life is no different from the Italian way of life, as the most important thing for them is presentation and appearance. Bosses and office staff

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<sup>59</sup> Hidasi Judit: Szavak, jelek, szokások. A nemzetközi kommunikáció könyve: Windsor Kiadó: 1998  
(Downloaded: 01.03.2022)

also behave and dress as the job requires. In Italian business life, professionalism is essential. Unfortunately, the mafia is also a dominant feature of their lives and is prevalent in smaller firms. The mafia is made up of mafiosos who form an organized criminal group. The name comes from the Italian term "mafioso". According to the Italian police, there is no longer a mafia, as a number of locally organized mafia associations have emerged. These groups have operated independently in different provinces and have also expanded their activities to other countries. Tax evasion and moonlighting are also part of the Italian way of life.

### **13.6. Dressing**

Clothing plays an integral part of in Italian fashion. It is essential to have your own elegance, sophisticated use of colour, modernity, and boldness. Their dress is far more vibrant and elegant than that of Central Europeans yet within acceptable limits. Italians make snap judgments about a person's social rank and age within the first few minutes of meeting them, based on initial impressions. For them, the initial impression is extremely significant.

They also like to follow fashion trends in their professional lives. Summer, on the other hand, tends to favour dark tones. Italian clothing is crafted from superior materials. Men always wear modest suits and jackets for their initial presentation. Ladies may wear business suits or subtle dresses, but a masculine trouser suit is not recommended. Additionally, a casual appearance is useless. Businessmen and women in Italy should avoid wearing trousers. Women typically exhibit an unobtrusive but feminine grace. Elegant accessories, on the other hand, are critical for all sexes. Dinner jacket is reserved for special events, although suits are required for evening and formal gatherings. Sunglasses are a must for them on the street. They are, however, prohibited in business. They are extremely fashion-conscious since they assess individuals only on the basis of their looks. Fashion is judged on the basis of a well-coordinated ensemble of clothing, shoes, and accessories. They feel that the manner in which one dress reflects one's education, family history, and social position equally, and that extra care should be taken of one's appearance during a business meeting. Before the presentation begins, a well-chosen suit will help in still confidence in your negotiation partner. Italy has established itself as a key shoe manufacturing force on a global scale. Italian footwear is designed to be comfortable, lightweight, with a thin sole, and constructed of high-quality leather, and they place a premium on shoe selection, maintenance, and wear. According to the Italians, a shoe is only as good as its thin sole, which they see as a symbol of elegance.

### **13.7. Dress code in business life**

Dress and appearance are significant aspects of Italian culture. A fashionable style is viewed as a sign of affluence and success. Milan is one of the world's four major fashion capitals, which helps explain why Italian design and workmanship are admired, respected, and emulated globally. Anything manufactured in Italy is viewed with the highest regard. Prada, Marni, Max Mara, Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Missoni, and Gucci are just a handful of the chic Italian labels represented in the palette. Elegance is typically associated with garments composed of fine textiles such as lightweight wool and silk. They are constantly on the lookout for stylish brands and accessories.

For business meetings, formal attire is always expected, and dark colours are preferred by males. Businesswomen typically wear basic, attractive jeans, but they also enjoy wearing skirts with a little jewellery and makeup. Conservative style is always appropriate, but more casual clothes are becoming more common in smaller businesses and financial institutions.

It is critical to realize that Italy is a key fashion design and manufacturing hub in Europe. Even their streetwear is stylish and classy.

## 14. CULTURAL FEATURES

It is the setting for cultural events and the source of historical pride in a country of extraordinary natural beauty and diverse regional features. The Italian way of life, known as the "Dolce Vita," is distinguished by a genuine appreciation of one's surroundings as well as a convergence of food, fashion, and design. The Italian way of life has an impact on all elements of one's existence. For those who want to integrate into Italian society, understanding and learning about the culture is a vital tool. Italian culture is also characterized by individualism, a society where individual responsibility and close family ties are emphasized, which is proof of the fact that Italians are self-reliant, but at the same time family is very important to them.<sup>60</sup>

### 14.1.1. *The beautiful figure*

"La bella figura" (the beautiful figure) refers to someone who has a flawless appearance and delivers a winning performance. It is regarded as a symbol of Italian fashion and culture. "A good impression" is a phrase that can only be found in the Italian language.<sup>61</sup>

As journalist Kamin Mohammadi states in this book *Bella Figura*, the main aspect of the bella figura is to make every area of one's life beautiful. Its primary characteristics are affluence and generosity. An Italian lady who follows the bella figura is well aware of the significance of excellent behaviour and good conduct in her life and in her relationships. Her stories also teach us how to eat healthfully without sacrificing taste, as well as how to be an Italian woman who can appreciate life's pleasures.<sup>62</sup>

### 14.1.2. *Italian style*

Comfort and elegance are essential elements of the Italian style. Fashion is in the blood of the Italians. Regardless of wealth or social position, people dress and behave impeccably and do everything with great elegance and happiness. Both external appearance and internal beauty are very important to them, and they are held in high esteem. The Italian people appreciate a foreigner if he is well-groomed, has excellent and tasteful clothing, and enhances his appearance with elegant footwear. Choosing the most appropriate attire and a designer to match is a very important consideration for all Italians. Fashion is about well-groomed, while interior design is about understated luxury.

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<sup>60</sup> Jodie R. Gorrill. M.A. Intercultural Communication Source: CIA World Factbook 2007  
[http://www.nyland.it/download/Communicaid\\_BusinessInItaly.pdf](http://www.nyland.it/download/Communicaid_BusinessInItaly.pdf) (Downloaded: 01.03.2022)

<sup>61</sup> Beppe Severgnini:  
2008: [https://books.google.hu/books?hl=hu&lr=&id=VukA0I\\_zwMsC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Bella+figura+Italia&ots=Lz4UK2kVCm&sig=Amt8--rdNkQYYCgAhk7SAjLL8Zw&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Bella%20figura%20Italia&f=false](https://books.google.hu/books?hl=hu&lr=&id=VukA0I_zwMsC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Bella+figura+Italia&ots=Lz4UK2kVCm&sig=Amt8--rdNkQYYCgAhk7SAjLL8Zw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Bella%20figura%20Italia&f=false) (Downloaded: 01.03.2022)

<sup>62</sup> Kamin Mohammadi *BELLA FIGURA*, HVG, Budapest, 2019: Hogyan éljünk, szeressünk és együnk olasz módra. (Downloaded: 01.03.2022)

### *14.1.3. Gastronomy and culinary pleasures*

Italian gastronomy is an integral part of the Mediterranean diet, which has been designated as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Cooking is a seductive art of living for the majority of the Italian population. The Italians prefer to use fresh, seasonal, and locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. Italian culinary recipes are characterized by a never-ending search for the balance of tastes that brings out the flavours of each ingredient. Italian gastronomy, which is simple but tasty, is a culture that comes from the traditions of each family. Italian cuisine is one of the best known and most popular in the world. There is no such thing as a uniform Italian cuisine. Due to the country's great geographical distances and climatic differences, different branches of agriculture have developed. Many people think of Italian cuisine as something they know well, but the gastronomy is extremely varied.

Restaurants, pizzerias, trattorias, osterias, and enotecas can be found in almost every part of the world. The focus is always on the unrivalled and fresh produce of the region. The gastronomic diversity of Italy is impressive: the spicy hams of Calabria, the rich seafood dishes of Sicily, the rich tomato-based paradise of Sicily, the cheesy risottos of Trentino, and the vegetable dishes of Tuscany are a real culinary delight. For Italians, Italian cuisine is a regional cuisine. Pecorino cheese is used in southern Italy and Sicily. In Tuscany, rosemary is very popular, and saffron is used a lot as a condiment in Milan. Pasta dishes are a typical part of the Italian daily diet. Pasta is available in a variety of shapes and forms, including cannelloni, casarecce, farfalle, fettuccine, and tortellini, to name a few examples. Pasta dishes like as lasagna, cannelloni, macaroni, tortellini, and tagliatelle have become increasingly popular both within and outside of the country. Pasta is typically flavoured with pesto, veggies, minced meat, fish, sauces, and mushrooms, among other ingredients. Eggs, shellfish, crabs, and smoked bacon are popular toppings. Pizza is a distinctive Italian specialty that has become popular throughout the entire world. A combination of the Romans and the Greek colonists in southern Italy created it. Although it has beginnings in Roman times, its appearance may be traced back to the antiquity of the period. Margherita pizza refers to a type of pizza in which the base of the pizza is produced without any additional toppings and is flavoured solely with tomato sauce, fresh basil, and mozzarella cheese. Crab, fish, and other seafood are abundantly harvested from the sea by fishermen. It is possible to use these ingredients in a variety of ways. Fruits of the sea is a unique and truly traditional Italian meal made up of a range of seafood that is both innovative and traditional. The repertoire of desserts is also very broad. Gelato, also known as the world-

famous ice cream, is made in Italy. It was invented by Italian pastry chefs. They also have a number of popular sweets, such as Tiramisu, a coffee cream cake with baby sponge, Panettone (Italian dumpling), and Panna cotta, a cold cream dessert. On the drinks list, wine takes the noblest place. Most of the vineyards were cultivated by the wine-loving Romans, who were brave enough to taste the juice. The most famous Italian red wine is Chianti, which is mainly found in the wine-growing regions of Tuscany. Chianti's packaging is unique, as the wide-mouth bottles are sold in straw-wrapped bottles.

Many vermouths are also well-known, such as Martini and Cinzano. One of the aperitifs is Campari. Grappa, a high-quality brandy, also comes from Italian soil.

Coffee is also a way of life for Italians. There is not a day that goes by that they do not pop into their favourite café for a delicious cup of coffee. The main varieties of Italian coffee culture are espresso, cappuccino, macchiato, ristretto. The coffee culture began in the 1900s, when Luigi Bezzera, the ancestor of today's espresso machines, licensed the use of the cappuccino system. It was this machine that created espresso, the name of which refers to its preparation. This is because the coffee is pressed through high-pressure steam.

In general, however, the Italians, famous for their coffee-drinking habits, enjoy a cup of coffee with a quick sip. The Italians' strong espresso black and cappuccino are very popular and recognized worldwide. Cappuccino is the name given to a creamy espresso, a delicious blend of whipped milk and espresso. A perfectly made cappuccino is made up of one part coffee, one part very hot milk, and one part milk foam.

## **14.2. Business culture**

Italy has an extraordinary reputation for its food, art and rich history, making it an appealing investment environment. Its location gives it a wealth of diverse cultures and traditions. The country plays a significant role on the international stage in economic, military, and diplomatic affairs.

The main hurdles one may face in doing business are bureaucracy, a slow judicial system, bribery, tax evasion, and corruption. There are numerous advantages to conducting business in Italy, as well as government tax breaks for foreign investors. Its diverse economy is home to almost every industrial sector. While production in the northern regions is predominantly concentrated on food, textiles, machinery, iron and steel, clothing, footwear, and ceramics, the main sectors in southern Italy are agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. However, as mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, there is a big difference in income between the north



and the south, with the north being much richer than the south. Despite this, the state is financially developed and has a good commercial location with contemporary infrastructure. Because Italian culture is still largely family-oriented, cross-cultural knowledge is also vital for commercial relationships. Furthermore, Italian businesses are hierarchical and regionally biased. On the other hand, meetings are less formal than in many other European countries.

Before embarking on any significant commercial venture, Italians believe it is critical to get to know the people with whom they will be doing business on a personal level. Obviously, the significance of human ties leads to a strong emphasis on business fun.

Usually, the party who invites settles the bill. There is no need to be too enthusiastic in presenting business topics during dinner conversations. Food, wine, Italian regions, and football may be popular topics of conversation.

Lunch is generally considered the most important meal of the day, and you are more likely to be invited to lunch than you are to supper. A tiny cup of strong black coffee is served to finish the meal. Dinner is accompanied by a glass of wine.

Italy's business sector is home to small and medium-sized family-owned organizations. In fact, due to a scarcity of available venture financing, several companies have relied only on family funds and retained their revenues to reinvest in new ventures. Italy has often faced economic difficulties. After the global banking crisis, the economy recovered and became attractive to investors. The economy not only has an active export base but is also open to foreign products and ideas. Doing business in Italy is proving highly successful for many global companies, as the country's economy continues to improve.

With a well-educated and sophisticated consumer base and a vibrant manufacturing sector, Italy has thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises producing high-quality goods in a wide range of sectors. Italy represents an attractive opportunity because it has a distinctive and unique business culture. Italian business is highly relationship-oriented and incredibly important. Italians talk a lot. Good communication is mysterious and noisy. In Italy, a language is a key tool. Formal presentations in Italian business can seem a bit stiff and overly academic. At smaller gatherings, information is usually disseminated in a less formal way. Italians attach great importance to getting the right information.

### 14.3. Hungarian and Italian culture

Because the cultures are different, they are easily distinguishable. This also means that we have the cultural endowment or intelligence to distinguish between individuals belonging to different cultures.<sup>63</sup>

Given their shared history, Hungary's prosperity is very similar to Italy's, according to foreign investors and tourists. We are close economically, culturally, socially, and geographically.<sup>64</sup> At the end of the Second World War, Italy was the only country where it was not necessary to propose the establishment of cultural links, but only to extend the existing ones. The foundations of friendship between Hungary and Italy were laid by the common events of the war of independence in the past. In the "Risorgimento,"<sup>65</sup> Italian sentiments were merged with those of the Hungarians. Their relations were also favoured by the decisive role played by the left in Italy's political system. The hardships of the 1990s attracted a large amount of Italian capital to Hungary. The economic ties between the two countries were becoming increasingly important. By 1997, there were some 1,350 Italian companies and an increasing number of direct trade links. Italy has become one of the most important economic links in our country. As the Italian-Hungarian culture is constantly coming together, it is recommended that a Hungarian businessman should be aware of the customs and traditions of his Italian business partners, especially if he wishes to become a business partner in the future.

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<sup>63</sup> Niedermüller Péter (1999): A kultúraközi kommunikációról, Budapest. 96–111. (Downloaded:28.02.2022)

<sup>64</sup> Pintér Emil: Európai illemtan, avagy mit tanulhatunk a Nyugattól? Budapest, 1998.sites: 29-32. (Downloaded: 28.02.2022)

<sup>65</sup> Risorgimento: the 19<sup>th</sup>-century movement for Italian political unity

## **15. WHY ARE IDENTITY AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT?**

Culture and national identity have often been the driving force behind the formation of many governments over the years. This has made visible all of the characteristics that show how a group of people use things, what they do, and how they live. Many of those states are now undergoing transition. Because of the ever-increasing migration of people from their places of origin to other parts of the world, there is an unavoidable mixing of races, which may result in the cancellation or fusion of the same, causing their origins to be lost to future generations for the first time.<sup>66</sup>

First and foremost, maintaining one's sense of self is critical since it contributes to the development of one's character. It means that we become more confident and competent people when we understand who we are, have faith in ourselves, and are able to identify our own strengths. Secondly, it helps us be able to distinguish ourselves from other people by keeping our identity.

Furthermore, keeping a sense of self-identity allows us to feel comfortable. The sooner we accept ourselves for who we are, the sooner we will be able to free ourselves from anxiety and feel confident in our own skin. Feeling at ease in your own skin cannot be measured.

Finally, we become more conscious of our immediate surroundings and our position within them. All people are here for a reason, and understanding their own self-identity provides us with the tools they need to carry out that reason successfully.

In my opinion, knowledge of cultures is very important because it facilitates communication and brings people together. When people are surrounded by foreign cultures and feel uncomfortable, it is called culture shock.

The culture in which we live has a big influence on our thinking. Most of the time, we think that the religious beliefs, customs, politics, and ways of thinking of other nationalities are strange. This also means the way people relate to the world. For development, we need cooperation and encounters between different peoples to stop the threats and problems that the world is facing. This requires patience, emotional intelligence, moreover a high degree of tolerance. If this is done only unilaterally, it fosters a willingness to compromise and rejects the possibility of a productive solution. If we are open to others with an interest and willing to learn about other nations cultures and accept their cultural practices, we can easily find common

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<sup>66</sup> Donato Francesco Bianco: Il Titolo: <https://www.iltitolo.it/archivio/notizie-approfondimento/cultura-e-identita-nazionale-nell-italia-di-oggi> (Downloaded:10.03.2022)

ground. The way to get closer to Italians is to get to know their customs and language, but if a businessman does not accept this, he is not to expect successful international work. Learning the language of the country will create a much closer relationship with the desired nation because if you speak their language, they will treat you differently. This is true for many countries, but especially for Italy. People are happy when a foreigner adapts to them and speaks their language, thus gaining their trust. This is especially common in Italy because Italians, due to their boundless patriotism, do not really speak a foreign language, so they cannot really express their thoughts and emotions in another language as they would in their own. This is no different from other nations.

## 16. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ITALIAN TODAY?

“Italy is a democratic Republic, founded on labour. Sovereignty belongs to the people, who exercise it in the forms and within the limits of the Constitution.”<sup>67</sup>

So begins the first article of the Italian Constitution, which establishes the new Italy's republican nature. It is said that a republic is a type of government where political power is held by a single person (the Head of State) or by a group of people chosen by the people (the Parliament).

The referendum was held a few years after the fall of fascism following the Second World War. Italy conducted the referendum on June 2 and 3, 1946, to vote on whether to remain a monarchy or become a republic.

It should be noted that the fascist dictatorship survived in Italy for 20 years with the support of the royal family. After 85 years of royalty, 12,718,641 Italians voted for the republic against 10,718,502 royalists.<sup>68</sup> The Republic won with 54% of the vote, just over half of the total. Italy became a Republic.

In the case of Italy, this form was adopted through an institutional referendum held on June 2, 1946, a date that is enormously significant from a historical, political, and social standpoint. Every year since then, the Italian people have joined under one banner, the tricolour, to joyfully honour their nation. This year celebrates the 76th anniversary of the Italian Republic.

Italy was a monarchy for centuries before becoming a republic. During the period from the Unification of Italy in 1861 to 1946, or for a total of 85 years, Italy was known as the Kingdom of Italy and operated as a constitutional monarchy. Victor Emmanuel II, Umberto I, Victor Emmanuel III, and Umberto II were all Italian monarchs in the 1800s. Umberto II ruled for just over a month, from May 9 to June 18, 1946, and was known as the "King of May" for that time. As a result, Italy has been a Republic since 1946. Italy's first Prime Minister, Alcide De Gasperi, was in charge of the country from 1946 to 1953. He was also a big help in setting up both the Italian Republic and the European Union.

The Italian Republic was finally proclaimed on June 8, but the birth of the Republic is still celebrated on June 2. The first official celebrations took place on June 2, 1948, in Rome, with a military procession along Via dei Fori Imperiali, ending with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Altare della Patria at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The following year, Italy joined NATO, and to celebrate, ten parades were held simultaneously throughout the country, and in 1950, the

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<sup>67</sup> Italiano Bello: <https://italiano-bello.com/en/amo-litalia/italys-republic-day/> (Downloaded:04.03.2022)

<sup>68</sup> Olaszamma: <https://www.olaszamma.com/2016/06/viva-la-repubblica/> (Downloaded:04.03.2022)

military parade on June 2 was included in the protocol for official celebrations. From 1948 to 1977, June 2 was celebrated every year, but then, due to the raging economic crisis, it was moved to the first Sunday in June. In 1976, the military parade was cancelled in view of the earthquake that struck Friuli Venezia Giulia on May 6, 1976, killing almost a thousand people. The celebrations on June 2 were finally reintroduced in 2000.

## **17. RESEARCH**

### **17.1. Research aim, method, and tools**

The main aim of my research is to assess, Italian people's perceptions of their country.

I used a questionnaire in an attempt to gain a complex picture of people's knowledge about themselves. The survey is intended for Italian people. My survey consisted of 13 shorter and longer questions, which are relevant and contain questions that everyone can understand, and can be completed in just a few minutes. I chose "questionnaire research" because I believe that the virtual advances of the age make it the most appropriate way to get people's views across in an enjoyable, efficient, and quick way. The questionnaire can be easily be completed on a computer or smartphone. The questionnaire was created on an electronic platform and was completed by 60 people.

Once the data is available, the focus is on what reading we get from the results. In interpreting the questionnaire, I have tried to make it easy to understand and interesting for the reader of the thesis.

### **17.2. Research results**

There were 60 Italians in all, with men and women represented. My first question, asking about the gender ratio, should give an accurate figure. The responses showed that the sex ratio was quite lopsided. The questionnaire was completed by 78,3% of women and 21,7% of men.

The majority of participants were aged between 18 and 30, but there were also respondents aged over 50. The younger age group seems to have been more active in responding.

My further question was, whether the respondents thought it was important to define one's identity. For this question, they could choose between three options: important, less important, and not important. Among the respondents, 66,7% answered "important," 20% "less" and 13,3% "not important".

The next question was, if they believed that a European identity existed alongside their own national identity. Here, almost all Italians answered yes, with 93,3%.

I was curious to find out if in their opinion, knowledge of different cultures and identities was important to the ordinary person, or if such knowledge belonged more to the field of diplomacy. They were given a scale from 1 to 5 to pick from. The numbers 4 and 5 were selected by the vast majority of voters. As a result, they deem it significant.

According to the next question, the respondents had to decide whether understanding different cultures was necessary for business. On a scale from 1 to 5, practically everyone gave a score of 4 or 5 in response to the question.

In the eighth question, I wanted to know if Italian people had heard of the term "Campanilismo". This phrase refers to the campanile, which is also known as the bell tower, and which used to be regarded as a municipal emblem. It is possible that the church bell was rung from the bell tower in an emergency, but it is also possible that the bell was sounded to proclaim joyful news.

It is a highly important component of life in Italy, reflecting a sense of self-identification, pride in one's origins, and a sense of belonging to one's own country, a sensation that is generally far greater in Italians than any sense of national identity 80% of respondents are familiar with it, while 20% haven't heard of it. This shows that a significant proportion of people are familiar with this. Following that, I inquired as to what they thought was the most important topic when discussing their own country. Most answers were about culture and cuisine, followed by language, at least, religion and identity. After this, I inquired as to what they believe it means to be Italian today. They could select from these possibilities here. There were several possible answers:

- "People are proud of their country and their language"

- "People are nice and friendly"

- "One of Europe's leading countries"

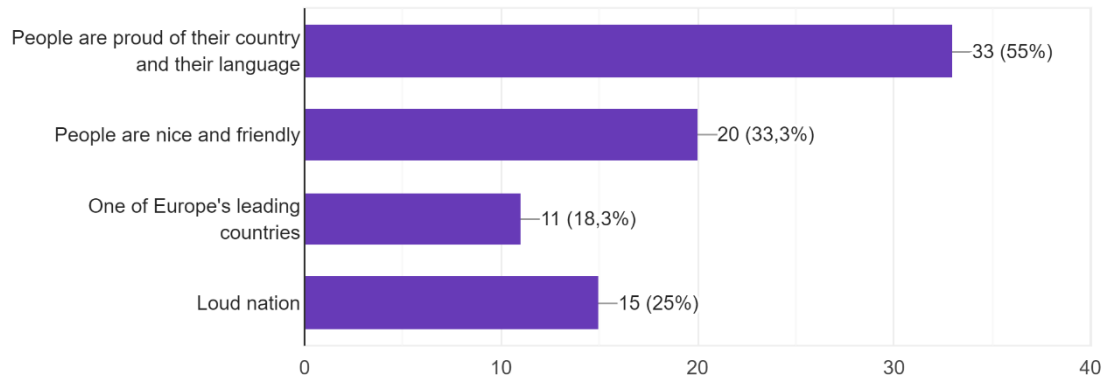
- "Loud nation"

Here, the most common response was that people were proud of their country and their language. For me, this is a very important question, and that is why I will illustrate my findings with a graph.



What do you think, what does it mean to be Italian today?

60 válasz



The next question was whether they thought if Italian unification had really been achieved. Because their country just celebrated the 161st anniversary of unification this March.

Respondents were given a choice of three options: "Yes," which received 58.3%; "no," which received 5%; and "the process is still ongoing," which received 36.7%. Which is quite a remarkable.

In question eleventh I asked respondents to rate how much they think language influences identity on a scale of 1 to 5. Here, the overwhelming response was 4 and 5.

The penultimate question was whether the different dialects were still an important issue in the Italian language today on a scale of 1 to 5. The vote was for 4 and 5. It means that it's very important to them. As I mentioned earlier in the essay in chapter eleven, dialects are still used in many regions of Italy to speak casually with friends and family. Contrary to popular belief, dialect usage is ubiquitous in several Italian regions, and not just among the older population. Many young people can express themselves, or at the very least understand themselves, in their own dialect in casual social settings.

Finally, I inquired as to whether they believe in an Italian national identity. For this question, almost everyone said yes.

Overall, I feel that I have managed to answer the questions I was asked, and I have a much greater knowledge of the subject now than I did before I started the thesis. I am particularly pleased that 60 Italian people completed my questionnaire. A complete version of the questionnaire is attached at the end of my thesis.

## **18. CONCLUSION**

In my research, I have tried to present both the smallest and the most general details.

In my opinion, nowadays people think that knowledge of different cultures, customs, and identities is not so important for the ordinary person, but rather a diplomatic task.

I believe that we all have a right to know who we are and what our origin is. The people, places, and stories of our families are a part of the unique story of our identity.

Being Italian entails inheriting a rich cultural, literary, and artistic legacy. The fact that one is Italian means that one is the heir to a cultural, artistic, and natural history that is unique and that one is proud of one's capacity to preserve, safeguard, and enrich that heritage for the benefit of all humanity.

They are a country that is torn apart by deep-seated divides. Between regions, between provinces, between cities, and between neighbourhoods. It is a country with a wide range of cultural diversity. Differences in taste, habits, ways of life, and language are all present. Not to mention variations in viewpoints and religious beliefs. Being Italian is more than simply having citizenship, an identification card, or a passport. It is a way of life.

Whatever people say about Italians who live outside of Italy, they are people who know how to work hard and overcome any obstacle, even if they do not have the best working conditions. They can also achieve great things even if they do not have a lot of money or are not sure they'll get enough help from the government.

According to my belief, national identity is in our roots; we just need to know how to bring it out again. In this, politics must be the driving force, the catalyst of those feelings of national unity.

## **Acknowledgments**

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I would also want to express my gratitude to the 60 individuals who took the time to complete my questionnaire. Finally, I am grateful to my partner and my parents, who have supported and helped me throughout my studies.

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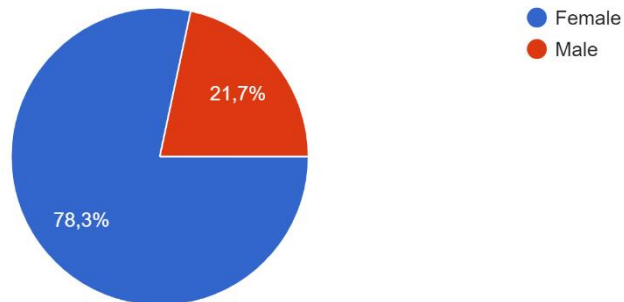
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## 20. ATTACHMENTS

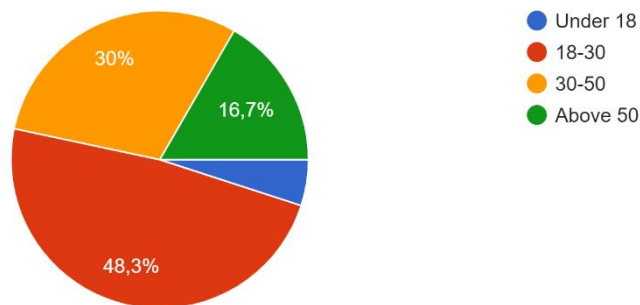
What is your gender?

60 válasz



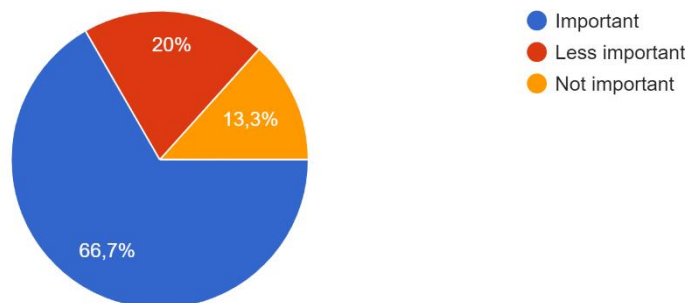
How old are you?

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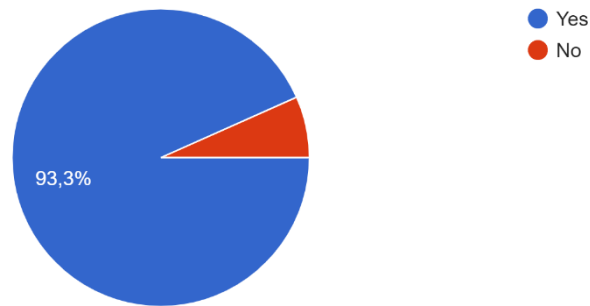
It is important to you to define your identity?

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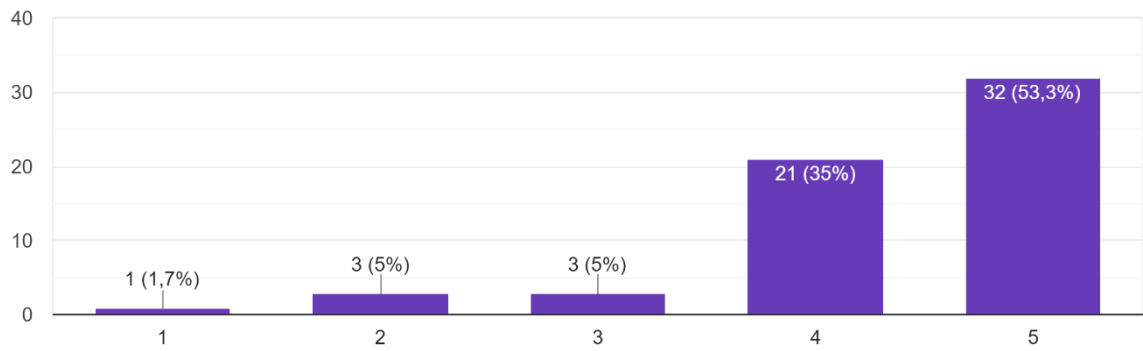
Do you believe that a European identity exists alongside your own national identity?

60 válasz



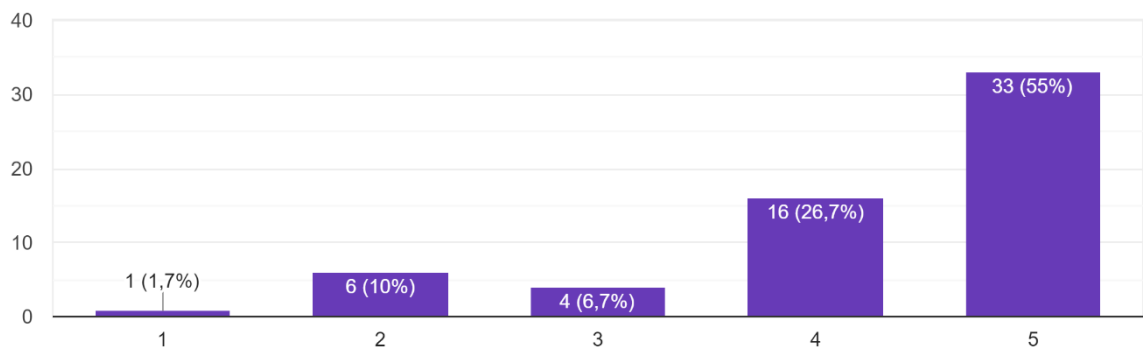
In your opinion, is knowledge of different cultures and identities important to the ordinary person, or does such knowledge rather belong to the field of diplomacy?

60 válasz



Do you think knowledge of different cultures is necessary for business?

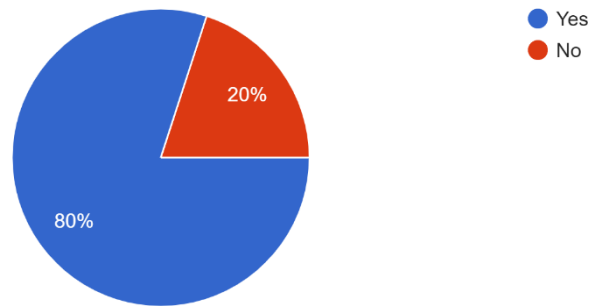
60 válasz





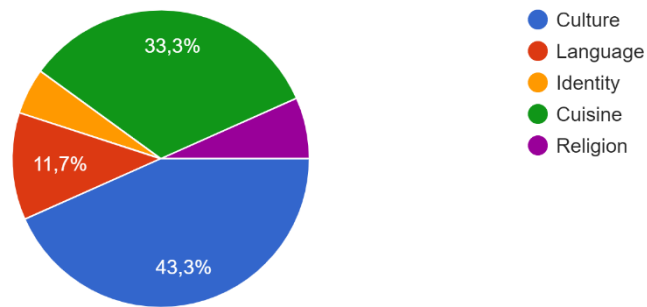
Have you heard of the term "Campanilismo"?

60 válasz



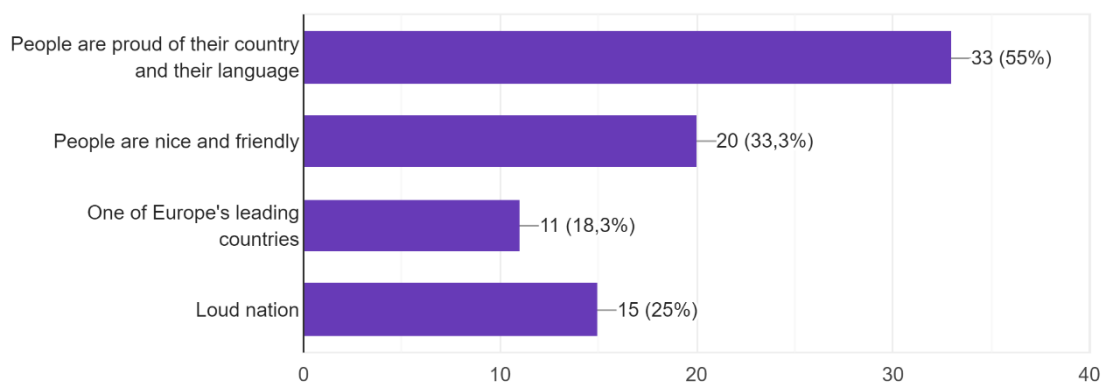
What do you think, what is the most important topic when you talk about your own country?

60 válasz



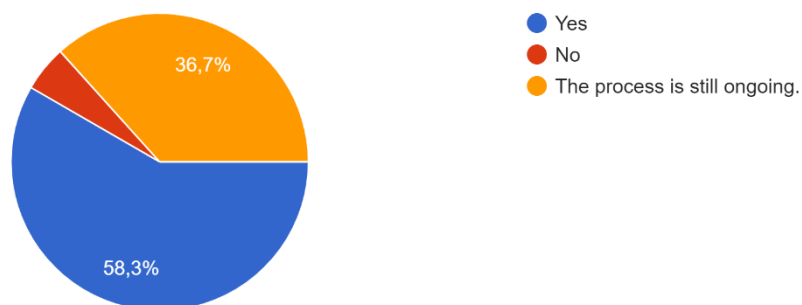
What do you think, what does it mean to be Italian today?

60 válasz



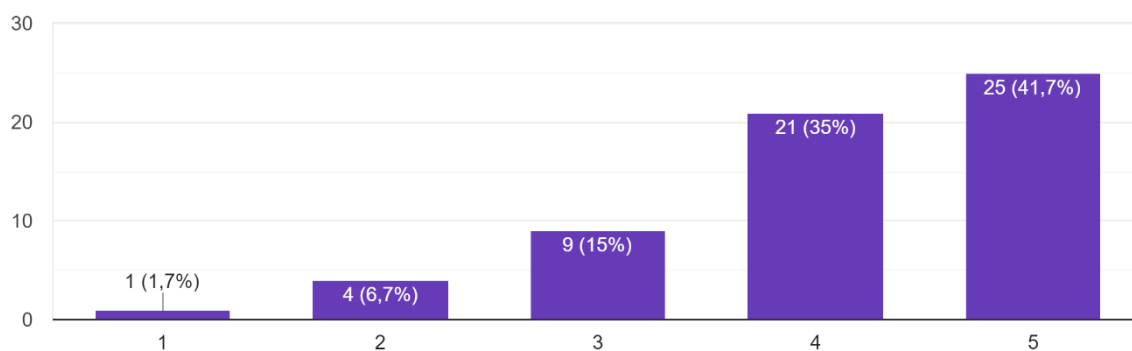
Your country just celebrated the 161st anniversary of unification this March. Do you think it has really achieved Italian unification?

60 válasz



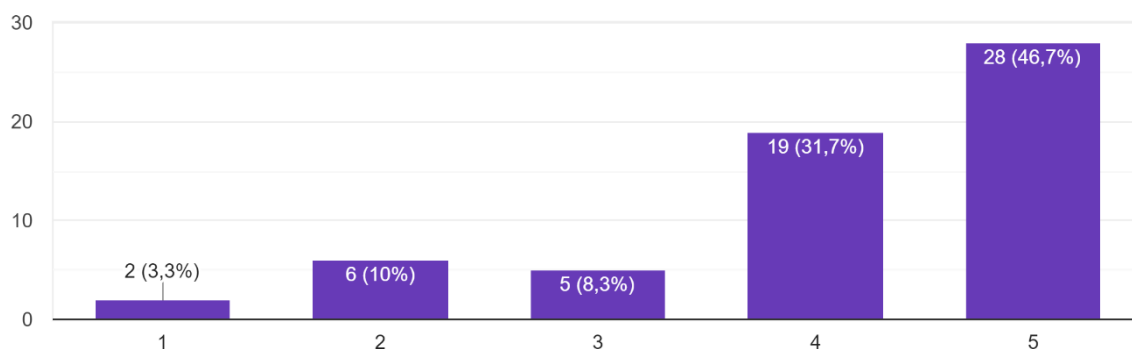
How much do you think language influences identity?

60 válasz

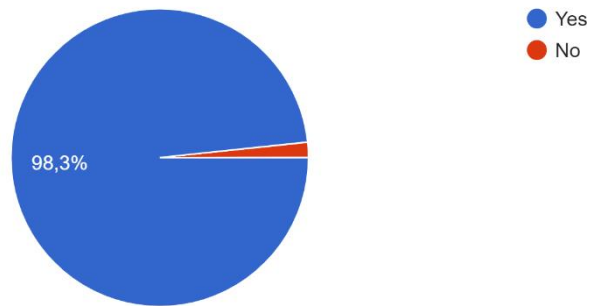


Different dialects are still an important issue in Italian language today?

60 válasz



Do you think there is an Italian national identity?  
60 válasz



## NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott ..... *Kocsis Petra* ..... büntetőjogi felelősségem tudatában nyilatkozom, hogy a szakdolgozatomban foglalt tények és adatok a valóságnak megfelelnek, és az abban leírtak a saját, önálló munkám eredményei.

A szakdolgozatban felhasznált adatokat a szerzői jogvédelem figyelembevételével alkalmaztam.

Ezen szakdolgozat semmilyen része nem került felhasználásra korábban oktatási intézmény más képzésén diplomaszerezés során.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy a szakdolgozatomat az intézmény plágiumellenőrzésnek veti alá.

Budapest, 20<sup>22</sup> év ..... *05* ..... hónap ..... *03* ..... nap

..... *Kocsis Petra* .....

hallgató aláírása