*Australia and New Zealand Journal of European Studies*
*http://www.eusanz.org/ANZJES/index.html*
*Vol8 (2)*
*ISSN 1837-2147 (Print)*
*ISSN 1836-1803 (On-line)*

# 'Reflections on Italy's contemporary approaches to cultural diversity: The exclusion of the 'Other' from a supposed notion of 'Italianness'.

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## Abstract

*For many years Italy has been described as a country of emigration. Only since the 1970s Italy has moved from being a net exporter of migrants to a net importer. Despite growing cultural and religious diversity, the implications of the pluralisation of the Italian society on national identity have been largely ignored. Italy has been recently described as a country without an established model of integration or pluralism.[1] The so called 'Italian way' towards cultural diversity remained predominantly theoretical in character and not supported officially, in the sense of being incorporated into the nation's history (as it is in Canada or Australia). The rise of 'ethnonationalism' and legacies of past colonialism contributed to create an institutional notion of supposed 'Italianness', which is based on the exclusion of the 'Other'. During the Liberal and Fascist periods, colonialism was used to create and re-produce a strong sense of nationhood, re-composing the many internal divisions by racialising 'otherness' outside rather than inside the nation's borders. This study suggests that, due to historical amnesia and a weak national identity, a similar logic is now informing the implementation of anti-immigration policies in Italy.*

**Keywords:** Italy, 'Italianness', cultural diversity, 'Ethnonationalism'.

## Introduction

For many years Italy has been described as a country of emigration and only in the last few decades there was an inversion of this trend. Since the 1970s, though, it has moved from being a 'country of mass emigration to a country of mass immigration'.[2] Today Italy is among the EU countries with the highest volume of immigrants on its

[1] S. Allievi, 'Immigration, religious diversity and recognition of differences: The Italian way to multiculturalism', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, vol. 21, no. 6, 2014, pp. 724-737.
[2] S.V. Love, 'Language testing, "integration" and subtractive multilingualism in Italy: challenges for adult immigrant second language and literacy education', *Current Issues in Language Planning*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, 2015, pp. 26-42.

territory (it is ranked third behind Germany and the UK; Eurostat 2016).[3] The foreign population present in Italy as at 31 December 2015 can be quantified at 5.026.153 (or 8.3% 6,5 per cent of the Italian population), with Romanians (1,151,395), Albanians (467,687), Moroccans (437,485), Chinese (271,330), and Ukrainians (230,728) among the most numerous minority groups.[4] Immigrants also contribute for about 8.7% per cent of the Gross domestic product.[5] Despite that, 'significant and vocal segments of autochthonous population do not perceive long-term immigrants as fully a part of Italian society', as current political debates and episodes of intolerance and xenophobia against them may clearly suggest.[6] This attitude may be particularly due to the attention that media tends to place almost exclusively on the negative aspects of this phenomenon, such as illegal immigration and crime.[7]

Although in the last few decades the Italian society has become increasingly diverse, an official policy addressing the issue of a 'multicultural citizenship' is still missing. In those European countries where immigration flows have been higher, such as France, Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands, multiculturalism has been promoted until recently as the best way to deal with cultural diversity.[8] Within these contexts, as Garau[9] argues, 'the construction of coherent responses to immigration also triggered a public discussion on national identity'. On the other hand in Italy, an 'emergency' approach towards immigration is constantly reiterated by the government, with mainstream society's negative perception of migrants[10] providing an adequate back-up to the implementation of repressive measures. Over the years, the Italian government has generally avoided recognising the cultural and religious impacts of the presence of immigrant populations.[11] Cultural diversity was never seriously considered, let alone contributing to a re-definition of Italian identity in pluralistic terms. Interculturalism, which was introduced in the 1990s as a way to respond to the growing presence of foreign students within the Italian educational

[3] Eurostat, *Statistiche sulle migrazioni internazionali e sulle popolazioni di origine stranieri* [Statistics on international migrations and on foreign populations], 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics/it#Stranieri

[4] Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, *Anno 2015: Bilancio Demografico Nazionale* [Year 2015: National demographic evaluation], 2016, http://www.istat.it/it/files/2016/06/Bilancio-demografico-2015-1.pdf?title=Bilancio+demografico+nazionale+-+10%2Fgiu%2F2016+-+Testo+integrale.pdf

[5] Centro Studi Confindustria, *Immigrati: Da emergenza a opportunità* [Immigrants: From emergency to opportunity], 2016, http://www.confindustria.it/Conf2004/DbDoc2004.nsf/0/255BA632FD37DAEBC1257FDB004D5B56/$file/SEgiu16_Immigrazione.pdf

[6] D.L. Zinn, '"Loud and clear": the G2 Second Generations network in Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2011, pp. 373-385.

[7] European Migration Network, *The impact of immigration on Italy's society*, European Commission, 2004, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/illegally-resident/it-1st_study_en.pdf>.

[8] R. Emmett Tyrrell, 'Multiculturalism has failed', *The American Spectator*, 2011, February 17, http://spectator.org/archives/2011/02/17/multiculturalism-has-failed

[9] E. Garau, *Politics of National Identity in Italy: Immigration and 'Italianità'*, Routledge, New York, 2014.

[10] According to a recent survey, 67% of the people interviewed shared the opinion that immigrants pose a threat to national security. Only a small minority of the respondents (2%) considers immigration as a resource for the country; Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, *Gli italiani e le migrazioni: percezione vs realtà* [Italians and migration: perception vs. reality], 2015, http://www.ispionline.it/it/articoli/articolo/emergenzesviluppo-europa-italia-global-governance/gli-italiani-e-le-migrazioni-percezione-vs-realta-13562. Another study confirms the existence of a widespread anti-immigration sentiment in Italy; Eumetra Monterosa, *L'opinione degli italiani sull'arrivo degli immigrati* [The opinion of Italians on the arrival of immigrants], 2016, https://www.eumetramr.com/it/lopinione-degli-italiani-sullarrivo-degli-immigrati.

[11] Allievi, op. cit., p. 724.

system, remained 'predominantly theoretical in character and not supported officially, in the sense of being incorporated into the nation's history'.[12]

Despite being widely criticized and contested, a number of writers (e.g. Giovanni Sartori, Oriana Fallaci, Baget Bozzo)[13] have often focused their attention on the supposed dangers of cultural differences (nowadays with a specific focus on the Muslim 'threat'). Politicians and media make also free use of xenophobic rhetoric in addressing immigration, often portraying them as a mere security issue.[14] This trend, which evokes the 'clash of civilizations' theorized by Huntington,[15] could be linked to the Government's 'incapacity to deal with a shameful past and its unbroken ties'.[16] According to Mellino,[17] for instance, although Italy has a past as a colonial nation, with colonial discourse having played 'a central role in constructing the national identity, from the post-unification period onwards',[18] the Italian intellectual scene has been characterised by a scanty and late development of postcolonial studies. The lack of a 'colonial memory of racism',[19] together with a tendency to ignore or deny the reality of moments of national shame and historical revisionism (such as the Nazi-Fascist atrocities),[20] have contributed to create and perpetuate the myth of the Italians as '*brava gente*' (good people).[21] In turn, this has produced a perception of 'otherness' biased by fear, while favouring stricter anti-immigration policies as a response to it.

This study will offer important analyses of the historical and racial issues surrounding the treatment of 'Othered' communities in Italy. It will suggest that the dominant approach towards cultural diversity in Italy is influenced by historical amnesia and revisionism. In this context, the implementation of selective ethnic policies (for instance towards the Romani/'Gypsy' people) serves the purpose of creating an institutional notion of supposed 'Italianness', which is clearly based on the exclusion of the 'Other'. In other words, the construction of specific 'Others'– out of internal differences and 'otherness' (see the well-established North/South divide)– is allowing the reification of an alleged homogeneous 'Italian ethnic majority'. This became also the pretext for implementing a form of democracy with a strong ethno-nationalist drive, where different ethnic groups are viewed as unassimilable into the majority population.[22] The next sections will help to pinpoint the existence of long-

[12] R. Armillei, 'A multicultural Italy?', in F Mansouri (ed.), *Cultural, Religious and Political Contestations: The Multicultural Challenge*, Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, 2015, pp. 135-151.
[13] K. Calavita, T. Tsuda, P. Martin & J. Hollifield, *Italy: Immigration, Economic Flexibility, and Integration*, University of California, Irvine, 2006; R. Guolo, *Xenofobi e xenofili. Gli italiani e l'Islam*, Laterza, Roma, 2003.
[14] R. Cere, 'Globalization vs. localization: anti-immigrant and hate discourses in Italy' in M. Ardizzoni and M. Ferrari (Eds.), Beyond monopoly: globalization and contemporary Italian media. Critical media studies. Lexington Books, 2009; Garau, op. cit., p. 213.
[15] S. P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of the world order. Simon and Schuster, New York, USA, 1996.
[16] R. Armillei, '"Emergenza nomadi": Institutional continuities in Italian government policy towards the Romanies', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 28-42, 2014a, p. 42.
[17] M. Mellino, 'Italy and Postcolonial Studies', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 461-471, 2006.
[18] Ibid., p. 461.
[19] Allievi, op. cit., p. 733.
[20] I. Clough Marinaro, 'Between surveillance and exile: Biopolitics and the Roma in Italy', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2009, pp. 265-287.
[21] P. Pezzino, 'The Italian resistance between history and memory,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, pp. 396-412.
[22] S. Smooha, 'The model of ethnic democracy: Israel as a Jewish and democratic state'. *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2002, pp. 475-503; S. Smooha, 'The model of ethnic democracy: Response to Danel', *The Journal of Israeli History*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2009, pp. 55–62.

term continuities between contemporary Italy and the post-unification period. An in-depth literature review of the areas of interest was conducted examining the previous and current work of experts in the field of Italian history and identity to illustrate the contemporary Government approach towards 'Othered' communities.[23] By doing so, this study will provide an understanding of the reasons behind the persistent adoption of emergency measures when dealing with issues that are deemed to represent a threat to the character of state identity.

## The 'Liberal period': racialising 'otherness' outside the country

Italian political unification was the result of the Northern imperialism rather than of romantic nationalism of popular insurrection.[24] The aftermath of the conquest of the peninsula by the Kingdom of Sardinia, the so called 'Liberal period', was indeed 'illiberal' and unpopular. This was characterized by the explosion of a first, mainly forgotten, 'civil war' in the South, which was ultimately suppressed by government force.[25] At that time, no agrarian reform was launched in order to gain the support of the peasants. No union between town and country was established. The industrial north (the 'city') was rather exploiting the rural southern peasantry (the 'country'), mainly through high taxation. This situation paved the way to what later became known as the 'Southern Question', a well-rooted industrialised North and underdeveloped South dualism, which persisted ever since.[26] Peasants were basically turned into a 'colonial population'.[27] The failure to bridge the existing gap between the North and South of Italy, constituted only one of the challenges that the new Italian state was called to face. The government of the new country was also unable to deal with one of the major 'losers' of the unification process, the Catholic Church, which since the Council of Vienna in 1815 had nurtured visions of Italian unification under the auspices of the papacy.[28]

In a deeply divided country the development of an imperialistic endeavor soon came to be understood as the best way to establish a new sense of national unity. Particularly in the final years of 'Liberal Italy' (1870-1914), racism, colonialism and imperialism became increasingly defining traits of the Italian national identity.[29] Italy was a late arriver on the colonial scene and its colonial ventures were quite limited compared to the UK, France, Belgium and others. On top of that, the Italian military campaigns were extremely unsuccessful (such as the defeat at Adowa in 1896 against the Ethiopians and the one in Libya in 1915). After the decision to participate in the First World War, a deep post-war economic crisis, a 'mutilated victory' and the risk of a socialist revolution (1919-21 The Two Red Years), contributed to the establishment of a totalitarian state.[30] The major strength of the new regime was 'Mussolini's ability

[23] J.W. Creswell and V.L. Plano Clark, *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, 2nd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2011.
[24] L. Re, 'Italians and the invention of race: The poetics and politics of difference in the struggle over Libya, 1890-1913', *California Italian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-58.
[25] J.F. Pollard, *The Fascist Experience in Italy*, 2005, http://www.e-reading-lib.org/bookreader.php/135877/The_Fascist_Experience_in_Italy.pdf
[26] N. Carter, 'Rethinking the Italian liberal state', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2011, pp. 225-245.
[27] N. Carter, *Modern Italy in historical perspective*, 2010, http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/view/ModernItaly_9781849662109/preface-ba-9781849662109-preface-001.xml, Debates, para. 14.
[28] P.R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, USA, 2004.
[29] Re, op. cit., p.8.
[30] K. Roberts, *The rise of Italian Fascism*, 2010, http://gen2.ca/DBHS/ScholarlyArticles/Danny%20Maccagnone.pdf.

to re-unite the country through a subtle strategy of re-composition of the many internal divisions, which had been exacerbated over the years by the failures of the previous liberal governments'.[31] Through the promotion of an ardent nationalism Mussolini was finally able to create a collective sense of belonging to a distinct racial family, ethnic community, or 'stock'.[32] The Libyan war, in particular, while reflecting the long-term continuities between Liberal and Fascist Italy, came to symbolize this achievement, strengthening a new shared identity through the logic of racialising 'otherness outside rather than inside the nation's borders'.[33]

Despite Mussolini's ability in forging the nation as never before, the degree of popular consent enjoyed by the Fascist regime is to this day still debated.[34] The civil war exploded between 1943–1945 is evidence of a 'country of blood, violence, and fractures within society'.[35] In order to accelerate Italy's democratic transition, avoiding to inflame the revolutionary impulse, the legitimacy of the post-war Italian order required the minimization of the preceding era and its influence on later events. The absence of a war crime international tribunal in Italy, on the model of the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials in Germany and Japan respectively, allowed many fascists to go unpunished for their war crimes in occupied Europe and Africa, while promoting the myth of the Italians as '*brava gente*'.[36] This has allowed historians like Benedetto Croce to define Fascism as a mere 'parenthesis' in Italian history.[37] With the Cold War becoming the main determinant of international relations in the postwar world and the consolidation of the anti-communist bloc a necessary imperative, 'the issue of Italian war criminality was conveniently forgotten'.[38] For this reason, Italians have never come to terms with their past and true knowledge of history is still struggling to develop a shared understanding.

Surely the Fascist era is recognized as the darkest page in Italian history. Yet, it is not until recently that the war crimes of the Fascist regime were submitted to full scrutiny. National historical memory of the tragic events of the Second World War under Mussolini's regime and the partisan *Resistenza* (resistance) still represents a highly contested terrain.[39] For instance, for many years post-war Italian identity, and the idea of Italy as a free, democratic country, were almost entirely shaped by the narrative of the *Resistenza*. This perception 'was considered a unitary set of actions (particularly those of the partisans) that promoted staunch opposition to Nazi-Fascism and found an ample consensus amongst the population'.[40] In the last few decades, though, a small number of pioneering studies have emphasized the sharp criticism of the *Resistenza* and the partisan efforts, revealing the existence of a

[31] Armillei, '"Emergenza nomadi", op. cit., p. 35.
[32] Re, op. cit., p. 8.
[33] Ibid., p. 8.
[34] A. Mammone, 'A daily revision of the past: Fascism, anti-Fascism, and memory in contemporary Italy', *Modern Italy*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, pp. 211-226.
[35] Ibid., p. 214.
[36] Pezzino, op. cit., p. 402.
[37] R.A. Ventresca, 'Debating the meaning of fascism in contemporary Italy', *Modern Italy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2006, pp. 189-209.
[38] E. G. H. Pedaliu, 'Britain and the 'hand-over' of Italian war Criminals to Yugoslavia, 1945-48', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 2004, pp. 503-529.
[39] A.C. Bull, *Italian neofascism: The strategy of tension and the politics of non-reconciliation*. Berghahn Books, 2011.
[40] L. Tavarnesi and B. David, 'A Trial for the "Past", a Memory for the "Present": History and Memory in Italy', European Forum at the Hebrew University, Working Paper 120, 2013, http://www.ef.huji.ac.il/publications/Tavarnesi-Ben%20David%20for%20web.pdf, p. 16.

'divided memory', as Tavarnesi and David named it.[41] Interestingly, the heated debates on Fascism and the *Resistenza*, and its pivotal role in the definition of the national character, have prevented the public discourse from rethinking a supposed 'Italianness' in more pluralist terms. In other words, the changes which occurred within mainstream society, which are now less homogeneous and static from an ethno-cultural point of view,[42] have not yet been incorporated into the nation's identity.

## The Fascist legacy with post-war policymaking

Since 1945, almost the entire period of the Cold War, the Italian political scene was dominated by governments lead by the Christian Democracy (DC). The so called '*strategy of tension*,' which was coordinated by the American intelligence CIA and part of a larger NATO plan in Europe also known as '*stay-behind*',[43] enabled the DC to remain firmly in power. Called to form a 'front state' in the Cold War era,[44] with the aim to avoid both communists and neo-fascists to get access to power, the DC's strategy had been always quite contradictory. Although from the 1950s legal bans were introduced in order to forbid the re-organisation in any form of the dissolved Fascist Party, neo-Fascist movements were actually helped by the 'complacent' attitude of the ruling DC who used neo-Fascist movements as an anti-Communist tool.[45] In fact, one of the most controversial aspects of the 'stay-behind' strategy was the involvement of former fascist militants and organizations, such as the 'New Order'. During the so called 'Years of Lead', the period from the late 1960s till the early 1980s, there were at least four failed known *coup d'état* attempts possibly aiming at establishing a military state.[46] During this period, both left- and right wing organizations were responsible for terrorist attacks. However, with the ultimate goal of creating an anti-communist climate and increase the public support for the state those conducted by right wing groups, were falsely blamed on left-wing groups, with the hidden support of secret services and public institutions.[47]

According to Armillei,[48] 'although it was officially celebrated as a democratic political system, the Italian "*First Republic*" from 1948 until 1992 perpetuated an authoritarian government approach'. With its secretive and systematic use of un-democratic tools echoing the Fascist regime,[49] this period has been interpreted as a 'de facto colonization of the Italian state by the DC'.[50] In the 1990s the 'First Republic' came to an end after the '*Mani pulite*' (clean hands) scandal, an investigation which

[41] Ibid.
[42] Garau, op. cit., pp. 212-213.
[43] C. Celani, 'Strategy of tension: The case of Italy', *Executive Intelligence Review*, vol. 31, no. 12, 2004, pp. 34-39.
[44] J.W Müller, '*The paradoxes of post-war Italian political thought*', *Princeton University*, 2008, http://www.princeton.edu/~jmueller/HEI-ITA-Thought-JWMueller-22Sept2008-pdf.pdf
[45] Pollard, op. cit., pp. 140-141.
[46] According to Gallego, for instance, a series of international events–the Cuban revolution, the defeat of the French army in Indo-China, Gaullism's 'soft' coup, the setting up of military dictatorships in Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru–were all part of a "chain of vigilance" enacted by the NATO (F. Gallego, The extreme right in Italy: From the Italian social movement to post-fascism, 1999, http://www.recercat.net/bitstream/handle/2072/1295/?sequence=1. The existence of a "secret armies' network" was revealed only in 1990, when communism stopped representing a threat for Western nation-states (see P. Willan, Paolo Emilio Taviani. The Guardian, 2001, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news /2001/jun/21/guardianobituaries.philipwillan).
[47] Celani, op. cit. p.38.
[48] Armillei, "Emergenza nomadi", p. 38.
[49] Pollard, op. cit., pp. 139.
[50] Müller, op. cit., p. 8.

uncovered the existence of a well-rooted mechanism of institutional corruption.[51] Yet, a moral regeneration of Italian politics, as was expected, never really occurred: "the political class has only partially 'renewed' itself, with a large number of politicians being 'recycled' from the parties of the 'First Republic'".[52] The creation of a centre-right coalition led by Berlusconi, in the period before the elections of 27 March 1994, drew together very different political forces, such as the post-fascist right-wing '*Alleanza Nazionale*', the '*Lega Nord*' (Northern League), and the Christian Democratic Centre, all united around the re-emergence of an anti-communist message.[53] Without the expected 'de-freezing' of civil war cleavages,[54] the idea that Italy naturally shifted from a 'First' to a 'Second Republic' has thus been questioned.[55] To this day, the Italian democratic system is still highly polarized.[56]

Interestingly, until 1994 Chiarini argued that Italy was 'the only Western democracy in which a political force that unmistakably harks back to fascism can be observed in the institutions of the state'.[57] More than a decade later, Berlusconi's last government (May 2008 - November 2011) was defined as 'the most right-wing cabinet since the Second World War'.[58] He owned the largest private television company in Italy, Mediaset, and while serving as Prime Minister, Berlusconi wielded 'considerable editorial influence over the three channels of State television service, known collectively by the acronym RAI'.[59] A growing concern regarding the role of the Italian media in disseminating 'ideas of racial superiority or incitement to racial hatred'[60] was especially stressed during his Fourth Cabinet. In fact, after 2008 national elections Berlusconi's right-wing coalition launched a massive campaign on security and immigration.[61] Nevertheless, manifestations of racism and xenophobia in Italy, cannot be only ascribed to right-wing movements, governments or parties. For instance, contemporary discourses centered on some sort of racial superiority thus derives from a well-established 'tradition' of racism, in which the left-wing and liberal press find their place as well.[62] For instance, the introduction of the so called

[51] A. Vannucci, 'The controversial legacy of "mani pulite": A critical analysis of Italian corruption and anti-corruption policies, *Bulletin of Italian Politics,* vol. 1, no. 2, 2009, pp. 233-264.
[52] D. Della Porta and A. Vannucci, 'Corruption and anti-Corruption: The political defeat of "Clean Hands" in Italy', *West European Politics*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2007, pp. 830-853.
[53] I. Diamanti, 'The Italian centre-right and centre-left: Between parties and "the party"'. *West European Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2007, pp. 733-762.
[54] N. Sitter, '*Civil war politics – the 'first' Italian republic: The institutionalization of the civil war cleavage in post-1945 Italian party politics*', paper presented at the 50th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association, London, UK, 2000.
[55] P. Edwards, '"Alternation? What Alternation?" The Second Republic and the challenge of democratic consolidation' *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2011, pp. 319-342.
[56] G. Ieraci, 'From Polarized Pluralism to Polarized Bipolarism: Party System and Patterns of Competition in Contemporary Italy', *Società Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 2012, http://www.sisp.it/files/papers/2012/giuseppe-ieraci-1221.pdf
[57] R. Chiarini, 'The extreme right in Italy', in N Langenbacher & B Schellenberg (eds.), *Is Europe on the "right" path? Right-wing extremism and right-wing populism in Europe*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, Germany, 2011, pp. 141-157.
[58] L. Fekete, 'The Italian general election and its aftermath', *European Race Bulletin*, no. 64, 2008, pp. 2-15.
[59] Human Rights Watch, *Everyday intolerance: Racist and xenophobic violence in Italy*, Human Rights Watch, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/italy0311WebRevised.pdf, p. 10.
[60] Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Eightieth session. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the convention. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Italy*, OHCHR, 2012,
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/CERD.C.ITA.CO.16-18.pdf, p. 5.
[61] G. Sciortino, *Diversity and the European public sphere: The case of Italy*, Eurosphere Country Reports, Online Country Report no. 13, 2010, http://eurospheres.org/files/2010/06/Italy.pdf
[62] Re, op. cit., p. 2.

'Emergenza Nomadi' (Nomad Emergency) targeting Romani camp-dwellers was the result of a bipartisan approach (see next section).

Broadly speaking, right-wing political alignments in Italy has the historical tendency to fuel racist tropes, particularly in relation to issues such as crime and security.[63] For half a century (and more) the 'Right' was 'synonymous with Fascism'.[64] In the last two decades, the right-wing separatist party '*Lega Nord*', one of Berlusconi's closest allies, often made immigrants' presence a security problem. Together with this nationalist movement, right-wing party '*Alleanza Nazionale*' (AN)[65] and a number of assorted fascistic organisations, such as Casa Pound, Forza Nuova, Militia and Contro Tempo, have emerged in Italian politics during the 1990s.[66] As reported by Sigona, 'the old dichotomy which sees "security" as a prerogative of the right-wing and "solidarity" of the left-wing'[67] was disrupted by the introduction of Emergency decree no. 181/2007 under a centre-left national administration. This was one of a series of policy proposals labelled '*Pacchetto Sicurezza*' (Security Pact), which former Prime Minister Romano Prodi had issued after the murder of Giovanna Reggiani supposedly committed by a Romanian Romani in the city of Rome. The main feature of the decree was the introduction of certain residence conditions for non-citizens, which deepened insecurity surrounding those undocumented migrants.

## Racializing the 'enemies within': Ethno-nationalism at play

What emerged so far is the existence of strong continuities between pre- and post-war policy making. The lack of an in-depth and cohesive historical analysis aiming at showing similarities and common features of these different political stages, together with an underdeveloped field of research around Italian colonial past, the Fascist era and their influence on later events, represented significant impediments to a comprehensive understanding of contemporary ethnocentric and anti-immigrant policies. The next two sections will thus provide concrete examples of a well-rooted discriminatory attitude affecting all nationalities and ethnic groups. The Romanies and 'boat people' represent the clearest examples of the complex and contradictory approach adopted by public institutions, which oscillates between a vague sense of solidarity and a policy of exclusion.[68] On the one hand, the Italian Government, in conformity with international law and cooperation, introduced several measures to tackle the causes of marginalisation and to improve the social inclusion of 'Othered' communities. On the other hand, immigration (and 'cultural diversity' more broadly)

[63] A. Vannucci and D. Della Porta, *Countries at the crossroads 2011: Italy*, Freedom House, 2011, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/ITALYfinal.pdf
[64] Chiarini, op. cit., p. 141.
[65] AN, an evolution of the former neo-fascist party Italian Social Movement (MSI), 'never really renounced its fascist history'; Ibid., p. 150.
[66] P. Berizzi, Fascisti del terzo millennio è la Cosa Nera in cerca d'autore [Fascists of the Third Millennium is the Black Thing in search of an author], *La Repubblica*, 5 June, 2012, http://inchieste.repubblica.it/it/repubblica/rep-it/2012/06/05/news/fascisti_e_post-fascisti_del_terzo_millenino-36171750/
[67] N. Sigona, 'The 'latest' public enemy: Romanian Roma in Italy. The case studies of Milan, Bologna, Rome and Naples', Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, 2008, http://www.romsintimemory.it/assets/files/discriminazione/intercultura/guerra-ai-rom/III.3.d%20ALLEGATO%203%20OSCE_publicenemy.pdf, p. 8.
[68] For a more insightful analysis of this dichotomous behaviour see R. Armillei, 'Neither Included, nor excluded: The paradox of government approaches towards the Romanies in Italy', Citizenship and Globalisation Research Paper Series, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2014b, pp. 1-22; R. Armillei, 'Boat Arrivals and the "Threat" to Italian National Security: Between a "Moral Panic" Approach and the EU's Failure to Create a Cohesive Asylum-Seeking Policy', *Journal of Applied Security Research*, Vol. 12, No. 1, forthcoming.

is handled as security issue through the adoption of emergency measures, rather than a resource and an integral part of the nation's cultural fabric.

*The Romani peoples in Italy: Between 'campisation' and lack of cultural recognition*

The Romani presence on the Italian peninsula can be dated back to the 15th century. Since then, the '*zingaro*' (an Italian derogatory term for 'Gipsy') has always been characterised as the outsider *par excellence*, forced to play the role of a 'guest' and live out a condition of eternal '*semi-clandestinità*' (semi-illegality).[69] Especially after the '*Risorgimento*' (or Resurgence), the new unified Italian nation-state introduced policies specifically directed at controlling 'vagabonds' and, more broadly, 'socially dangerous' groups, such as the Romanies.[70] They became the main catalyst for all fears harboured by the Italian elite for the purity of a putative national identity. As in other parts of Europe, in Italy the pinnacle of segregational practices against Romanies was reached early in the 1940s when they were interned in concentration camps.[71] Notwithstanding the terrible price paid by this population, Italy has not yet officially recognized its responsibility in the genocide of Romani peoples during the Fascist Era.[72] For many years it was commonly believed that Fascism targeted Romanies 'exclusively as a problem of public order and not as a racial issue, unlike the Nazi regime',[73] leaving behind the idea that Fascism was lesser evil than Nazism.[74] In addition, the Romanies have been always denied compensation for their genocide. As a matter of fact, they have been almost completely excluded from Italian history, as reported in previous studies.[75]

The situation of Romani peoples in Italy provides a clear example of the failure of the Government in guaranteeing equal treatment for all ethnic groups. Since the 1970s, the Italian government has addressed the Romani issue in terms of '*Problema Nomadi*' (Nomads Problem).[76] Today, public institutions still tend to categorise these peoples as 'nomads' or unsettled immigrants, although half of them are actual Italian citizens.[77] Because of their supposed 'unsettledness', they have not yet been recognised as a '*minoranza storico-linguistica*' (historic-linguistic minority)—like numerous other well-established ethnic groups—a status that would enhance and protect their language and culture.[78] In a work published in 2000 by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Italy was iconically defined as 'Campland', the only country in Europe promoting a policy of segregating its Romani population inside so

[69] M. Tomasone, 'Il genocidio nazista dei Rom' [The Nazi Genocide of the Romanies], *Akra*, 2012, www.akra.it/amis/micros/rom_micros.rtf
[70] Clough Marinaro, op. cit., p. 272.
[71] L. Bravi and N. Sigona, 'Educazione e rieducazione nei campi per "nomadi": Una storia' [Education and re-education inside camps for 'nomads': An overview], *International Journal of Migration Studies*, vol. 43, no. 164, 2006, pp. 857-874.
[72] R. Armillei, 'The institutional concealment of the Romanies' culture: The ongoing legacy of Fascist Italy', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, Vol. 22, No. 5, 2016, pp. 502-520.
[73] Clough Marinaro, op. cit., p. 273.
[74] Ventresca, op. cit., p. 193.
[75] Armillei, op. cit.; L. Bravi, *Porrajmos, altre tracce sul sentiero di Auschwitz* [Porrajmos, new traces along the path towards Auschwitz], Istituto di Cultura Sinta Mantova, Italy, 2006.
[76] Bravi and Sigona, op. cit.
[77] European Roma Rights Centre, osservAzione, & Amalipé Romanò, Submission of the European Roma Rights Centre, osservAzione and Amalipé Romanò concerning Italy for consideration under the universal review by the United Nations Human Rights Council at its 7th session February 2010, ERRC, 2010, http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/04/29/m00000429.pdf
[78] Armillei, 'A multicultural Italy?', p. 137.

called '*campi nomadi*' (nomad camps).[79] More than a decade later the strategy of housing Romani peoples in 'ghetto-like urban camps'[80] still represents the pivotal measure used by the Italian government to ensure the 'inclusion' of this minority group. Interestingly, only a small part of Romani peoples actually lives in camps and just 3 per cent of all the Romanies in Italy still maintains a 'nomadic' life style.[81]

The implementation of the '*Emergenza Nomadi*' can be seen as the symbolic expression of the tendency to describe them as unwilling or unable to settle within the host society.[82] In 2008, in clear continuity with previous left-wing governments, the Berlusconi right-wing coalition implemented a state of emergency which described and handled the Romani issue as a 'natural disaster'.[83] In 2011, responding to a larger European Union's initiative, the Italian government launched its 'National Strategy' introducing a number of measures to enhance their social inclusion. This commitment, though, which aimed to overcome the emergency approach adopted during the previous years, remained mostly on paper. On May 2, 2013, the Court of Cassation, Italy's highest court, ultimately declared unfounded, unwarranted and unlawful the '*Emergenza Nomadi*'. Nevertheless, political and ideological attacks on Romanies continue. In addition, as conveyed in a recent report issued by the European Roma Rights Centre (2014), housing, employment, education and health projects are still inadequate to the challenge of achieving an authentic inclusion of Romanies.[84] Today, it is still politically acceptable to institutionalize Romanies in '*campi nomadi*' and to proclaim a 'state of emergency' with both major political blocs' endorsement. This may suggest that Fascist-Nazi persecutions of Romani minority groups during the Second World War are neglected or simply forgotten events.[85]

## Fears of an immigrant invasion and criminalizing attitudes

One of the major issues in Italy is that there is no 'organic' policy of inclusion in all fields of society and the prevailing trend is to devise policies promoting a balance between the safeguarding of the national identity and a vaguely defined idea of integration.[86] In 1998 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) had already concluded that 'in Italy there is no general legislation to counter racial or ethnic discrimination'.[87] Although thereafter progress has been made in a

[79] ERRC, 'Campland: Racial segregation of Roma in Italy', 2000, http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/00/0F/m0000000F.pdf
[80] Clough Marinaro, op. cit., p. 265.
[81] Commissione Diritti Umani del Senato, 'Rapporto conclusivo dell'indagine sulla condizione di Rom, Sinti e Camminanti in Italia' [Final report of the survey on the status of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Italy], *Senato della Repubblica*, 2010 http://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/commissioni/dirittiumani16/Rapporto%20conclusivo%20indagine%20rom,%20sinti%20e%20caminanti.pdf
[82] E. Balibar, 'Foreword', in N. Sigona and N. Trehan (eds.), *Romani politics in contemporary Europe: Poverty, ethnic mobilization, and the neoliberal order*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2009, pp. viii-xiii.
[83] M. Fiorucci, *Un'altra città è possibile. Percorsi di integrazione delle famiglie Rom e Sinte a Roma: Problemi, limiti e prospettive delle politiche di inclusione sociale* [Another city is possible. Integration trajectories of Roma and Sinti families in Rome: Problems, limitations and perspectives of social inclusion policies], Geordie onlus, Roma, Italia, 2010, p. 34.
[84] ERRC, 'Written comments by the European Roma Rights Centre, concerning Italy to the Human Rights Council, within its universal periodic review, for consideration at the 20th session (27 October to 7 November 2014)', *ERRC*, 2014, http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/italy-un-upr-submission-20-march-2014.pdf
[85] Armillei, 'The institutional concealment of the Romanies' culture'.
[86] Armillei, 'A multicultural Italy?', Concluding observations.
[87] European Roma Rights Centre, Written comments of the European Roma Rights Center concerning Italy for consideration by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 54th Session, 8-9 March, 1999, ERRC, 1999, http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/00/E8/m000000E8.pdf, p. 2.

number of areas, there are still issues that continue to rise concern, which clearly appears in a recent report published by ECRI:[88] both criminal law provisions against racism and anti-discrimination provisions are rarely applied; there is widespread use of racist and xenophobic discourse in politics, particularly targeting Blacks, Africans, Muslims, Romanies, Romanians, asylum seekers and migrants in general. Racism and discrimination on ethnic grounds therefore come clearly into view and Italian authorities have acted ineffectively to counteract human rights abuse. Rather, they have periodically adopted a highly restrictive immigration policy approach. For instance in 2008 a right-wing coalition led by Berlusconi capitalized on fears about immigrants and public safety concerns to win elections.[89]

Since then, despite its obligations under international human rights laws, the Italian government kept reinforcing discriminatory measures against immigrants, which became a security issue for the nation.[90] A 'moral panic' approach is particularly visible with regards to the arrival of 'boat people' which produced alarm among Italians fearing an immigrant invasion. Expressions such as 'human tsunami' and 'human flood' are often used in order to implement emergency policy measures and a security regime.[91] According to the European Council on Refugees and Exiles,[92] Italy currently records the highest number of arrivals by sea. Yet boat arrivals represent only a fraction of the undocumented migrants residing in Italy. In fact, the majority of irregular migration consists of people arriving 'by plane or land, or as tourists who subsequently work and overstay'.[93] The migration cooperation announced with Libya in May 2009 is a clear example of the government's willingness to set aside human rights to advance populist anti-migrant policies:

> the government began unilaterally interdicting boat migrants on the high seas and returning them summarily to Libya, with no screening to identify refugees, the sick or injured, pregnant women, unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking, or others in need to assistance, in breach of human rights and refugee law.[94]

Until now, political debate on this issue and the practices adopted by the Italian government were generally about preserving national security and 'stopping the boats', extraterritorial processing and repatriation, rather than about human rights and global responsibilities. Even though 'boat arrivals' make up only a small proportion of 'illegal' immigrants,[95] the growing popular perception is of being 'swamped' by 'irregular' maritime arrivals. In addition, there is nowadays a perception that ethnicity and crime are connected, reinforced by a negative discourse

[88] European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *ECRI report on Italy (fourth monitoring cycle)*, Council of Europe, 2012, http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/italy/ITA-CbC-IV-2012-002-ENG.pdf, pp. 8-9.
[89] Sciortino, op. cit., p. 18.
[90] Chiarini, op. cit., p. 114.
[91] G. Garelli and M. Tazzioli, 'Arab Springs making space: territoriality and moral geographies for asylum seekers in Italy', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 31, 2013, pp. 1004 – 1021.
[92] European Council on Refugees and Exiles, *Mind the gap: an NGO perspective on challenges to accessing protection in the common European asylum system*, Asylum Information Database, 2014, http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/shadow-reports/aida_annual_report_2013-2014_0.pdf, p. 48.
[93] D. Del Boca and A. Venturini, 'Migration in Italy is backing the old age welfare', *IZA Discussion Paper Series*, no. 8328, 2014, http://ftp.iza.org/dp8328.pdf, p. 5.
[94] Human Rights Watch, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
[95] G.C. Blangiardo and V. Cesareo, 'Foreign population in Italy: statistical framework and integration', in V Cesareo (ed.), *Migration: a picture from Italy*, Fondazione Ismu, Milan, 2013, pp. 11-28.

about immigration. This concern is exaggerated, as shown in a number of studies,[96] and the fear of crime is disproportionate to reality. This over-reaction could be better described as continuance of 'Othering' those who are different, and ethnic nationalism, leading to the criminalization of entire communities and cultures, rather than mere individuals. That Italy increasingly penalizes asylum-seekers entails a clear shift from 'democracy' to 'security' in a world of citizenship and people circulation. Despite using wide discretional power, the State authorities have not yet been able either to prevent the upsurge in 'illegal immigration' or to resolve its true causes. Though as de Haas[97] has argued, restrictive migration policies rather than 'solving' this issue, produce more 'illegality' over time. In turn, the problem's persistence has pushed public institutions 'to adopt even more restrictive policies'. Interestingly, there is a well-established attitude among Italian mainstream society to sustain the emergency policies constantly reiterated by the government.[98]

## Between Intercultural rhetoric and Ethnocentric practices

In the last decade, a growing interest around a new intercultural approach led a number of governments, particularly in Western Europe, to re-think their policies towards the management of cultural diversity.[99] While multicultural policies were experiencing increasing distrust, the intercultural paradigm emerged almost in opposition to it. The 9/11 terrorist attack in the US was a watershed moment. During the following three years (2002–04) the Secretary General of the Council launched an integrated project, titled *Responses to Violence in Everyday Life in a Democratic Society*, containing policy recommendations about combating violence in everyday life. In this context, *Violence, Conflict and Intercultural Dialogue* was 'the fifth in a series of publications designed to acquaint the reader with recommendations or instruments used to launch Council of Europe (COE) activities and projects on violence prevention'.[100] The year 2008 was even proclaimed *European Year of Intercultural Dialogue* by the European Parliament and the member States of the European Union (EU). During the same year the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* was launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs, arguing that interculturalism should be the preferred model for managing cultural diversity in Europe. The intercultural trend was also welcomed by the UNESCO in its 2008

[96] D. Van Dijck, Is the EU on illegal migration securitized? yes of course! a study into the dynamics of institutionalized securitization, paper to be presented at the 3rd Pan-European Conference on EU Politics, Istanbul, 21-23 September, 2006; H. de Haas and N. Sigona, 'Migration and revolution', *Forced Migration Review*, no. 39, 2012, pp. 4-5.

[97] H. de Haas, *The myth of invasion: Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union*, International Migration Institute, 2007, http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/Irregular%20migration%20from%20West%20Africa%20-%20Hein%20de%20Haas.pdf, p. 65.

[98] N. Pagnoncelli, 'Un italiano su due è contro gli sbarchi ma dice sì a cittadinanza immigrati' [An Italian every two is against immigrant landings, but is in favour of giving them citizenship], *Corriere della Sera*, 26 October, 2014, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2014/ottobre/26/italiano_due_contro_gli_sbarchi_co_0_20141026_569663aa-5cdb-11e4-a22a-1b2843529fe0.shtml; P. Isernia and F. Olmastroni, 'Images of the immigrant: European public opinion and immigration', in M. Ceccorulli and N. Labanca (eds), *The EU, Migration and the Politics of Administrative Detention*, Routledge, New York, 2014, pp. 59-78.

[99] R. Zapata-Barrero, 'What Is an Intercultural Policy? A Comprehensive View', 2013, http://globalgovernanceprogramme.eui.eu/what-is-an-intercultural-policy-a-comprehensive-view/#comments

[100] J.F. Bourquin, Violence, conflict and intercultural dialogue. Peace Palace Library. 2003, http://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/ebooks/files/Coe21.pdf, p. 3.

*World Report on Cultural Diversity*, which somehow signed the beginning of a more global consensus.[101]

In terms of the Italian context, the fact that a multicultural paradigm has never taken root here places the country in a unique position within the European context. But while multiculturalism has been described as a 'missing model' in Italy,[102] at the beginning of the 1990s a lively debate on intercultural issues started to emerge instead. It was in 1990 that the *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Universita' e della Ricerca* (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research) introduced the concept of 'intercultural education' for the first time. In the '*Circolare Ministeriale*' (Ministerial Memo) No. 205/90 it provided the following definition:

> The primary goal of intercultural education is the promotion of a *constructive coexistence* within a composite cultural and social framework. Not only does it entail acceptance and respect of the other, it also promotes the recognition of cultural diversity while encouraging dialogue, mutual understanding and mutual transformation.[103]

In 2007, Italy even claimed its own model of cultural diversity: *La Via Italiana per la Scuola Interculturale e l'Integrazione degli Alunni Stranieri* ('The Italian way to intercultural schooling and the integration of foreign students'). In other words, the new intercultural paradigm was introduced mainly as a response to the growing presence of foreign students within the Italian educational system. According to Gobbo, intercultural education emerged as the most 'desirable answer aimed to teach respect for, and to valorize, the different cultural orientations now present in schools'.[104]

But while promoting mutual knowledge and understanding of the many and various cultural differences that exist in our societies, Gobbo also recognizes that ignoring the persistence of discrepancies in power and equality of opportunities bestowed on people of different cultures, has transformed the aim of mutual understanding and equity into empty rhetoric. The Italian intercultural model is certainly based on a dynamic conception of culture which acknowledges 'cultural relativism' while promoting social cohesion and the building of common values. Yet, although its theoretical stance would argue in favour of a dialogical praxis, it does not seem able to move beyond the existence of hegemonic points of view, which have the power to generate an uneven dialogue between a 'dialoguer' and 'dialoguee'.[105] Another critical aspect of interculturalism in Italy was highlighted by Love and Varghese.[106] According to them, little space is generally dedicated to issues of racism in the schooling system, and in Italian society more broadly. Not only is intercultural education unable to address the lived experiences of xenophobia and racism in the ccontemporary anti-

[101] W. Kymlicka, 'Comment on Meer and Modood', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2012, pp. 211–216.
[102] S. Allievi, 'Immigration and cultural pluralism in Italy: multiculturalism as a missing model', *Italian Culture*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2010, pp. 85-103.
[103] Armillei, 'A multicultural Italy?', p. 136.
[104] F. Gobbo, 'Religious multiculturalism and intercultural education: Reflections on the educational experiences at the Waldensian Collegio della Santa Trinità in Torre Pellice (Italy)', *Intercultural Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2000, pp.289-303.
[105] T. Lähdesmäki and A. Wagener, 'Discourses on governing diversity in Europe: Critical analysis of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 44, 2015, pp. 13-28.
[106] A. Love and M.M. Varghese, 'Race, Language, and Schooling in Italy's Immigrant Policies, Public Discourses, and Pedagogies', *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2012, pp. 1-19.

immigration political climate of Italy, but it also does not contextualize them as 'being rooted in a long history of race and linguistic based nationalism'.[107] With this regard, Love and Varghese suggest that the introduction of critical race theory (CRT) – which has been hardly applied pedagogically –, more than intercultural dialogue, might help to challenge the exclusive character of Italian national identity. Combating dominant ideology through counter-narrative voices of those who experienced racism and discrimination is described as a valuable technique in the classroom.

With the official aim to foster tolerance of ethnic heterogeneity Italy adopted its own cross-cultural paradigm towards cultural diversity. This paper suggests that, despite established rhetoric emphasizing inclusion, supposedly providing 'non-core groups' with more political participation, influence, and improvement of status, Italy's policy approach could be better described as a form of 'political rhetoric/theatre',[108] with the implicit assumption that inclusion is into some 'mythical mainstream'. Rather than political unification, it was Mussolini's Fascist doctrine, calling for the absolute primacy of the State, which created a collective sense of national unity based on a supposed Italian ethnic unity. With the end of the Second World War, the previous discriminatory government doctrine was not dismantled. The model of 'ethnic democracy' elaborated by Smooha, can help to frame the presence of people forced to live within a society but with no recognised right of belonging. Instead of renouncing its traditional, structured dominance, there are clear signs of an Italian 'core ethnic' majority trying to make the new emerging democracy serve them in a form of 'ethnic democracy'. Recent authoritarian approaches,[109] particularly directed against 'non-core' ethno-cultural groups, promote an ongoing sense of threat which represents one of the conditions for this type of democracy to survive.

Smooha refers to 'ethnicity', not 'citizenry', as the cornerstone of a type of democracy characterized by the inherent contradiction between ethnic ascendance and civic equality. He used the term 'diminished' democracy to describe a state that rather than serving all its citizens equally, it privileges the majority and strives to advance its interest.[110] In this context, the 'ethnic nation', while shaping symbols, laws and policies of the state for the benefit of the majority, create the 'others' as less desirable people who cannot be full members of the society. The criminalization of Romanies and illegal migrants, by media and the Italian political class alike, led to their inevitable and progressive distancing from political life. With increasingly stricter qualifying rules for naturalization, citizenship, often considered as a crucial instrument for integration into mainstream society, became a mere chimera for 'alien' groups. Even when they are born on national soil, they still do not have citizenship rights due to the prevailing norm of '*ius sanguinis*' (the principle that a person's nationality at birth is the same as that of his/her natural parents) and, more broadly, to the lack of political engagement with the issue.[111]

## Conclusion

[107] Ibid., p. 12.
[108] Kymlicka, op. cit., p. 214.
[109] R. Armillei and F. Mansouri, 'States of Emergency', OpenDemocracy, 2015, https://opendemocracy.net/riccardo-armillei-fethi-mansouri/states-of-emergency
[110] Smooha, 'The model of ethnic democracy: Israel as a Jewish and democratic state', p. 478.
[111] P. Villano and A. Bertocchi, 'On Active Citizenship: Discourses and Language about Youth and Migrants in Italy', Journal of Civil Society, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2014, pp.82-99.

In a globalized world the existence of multicultural societies has become an indisputable fact, even when the 'politics of recognition' are not in place. As Nye[112] puts it, multiculturalism is not an optional extra that a society can choose to have or avoid. Yet, Allievi[113] argues, the Italian society is going through a phase characterised by reactive identities and cultural conflict which is 'producing a diffused anti-multiculturalist opinion, even though multiculturalist policies have not been openly implemented'. For many years after political unification, the idea of migration was 'limited to the internal movement of Italians migrating from the South to the North of the country and Southerners represented the foreign component of an increasingly multicultural society'.[114] Since the 1990s, though, mainly in response to new waves of immigration, various forms of extremism have emerged and dominated the Italian political scene, by playing with the mainstream fears in order to implement emergency-type of measures against them. While shifting public attention towards this new emerging issue, the *Lega Nord*, in particular, was able to induce other more established parties of the Right, but occasionally the Left as well, to adopt a similar approach towards immigration.[115]

In the context of a society which is still trying to come to terms with its past and to establish a collective sense of identity, the rise of 'ethnonationalism', historical amnesia and revisionism are all factors that have contributed to exclude 'Othered' communities from a contemporary notion of 'Italianness'. Only recently race-oriented studies have started to show that 'various forms of racism have played in the history and even in the formation of Italy as a nation and, indeed, in the creation of the "Italian identity"'.[116] During the Liberal and Fascist periods, for instance, colonialism was used to create and re-produce a strong sense of nationhood, re-composing the many internal divisions by racialising 'otherness' outside rather than inside the nation's borders. This study suggests that today, by pathologizing the 'Others' and their cultures as ungovernable or prone to violence, crime and social collapse, the same 'colonial logic' shapes the institutional approach towards cultural diversity. The implementation of highly restrictive anti-immigration policies, not only is allowing the 'myth of Italian kindness and moral superiority'[117] to re-emerge, but is also contributing to install what Smooha defines 'ethnic democracy'.

[112] M. Nye, 'The challenges of multiculturalism', Culture and Religion, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2007, pp. 109-123.
[113] Allievi, 'Immigration, religious diversity', p. 724.
[114] Garau, op. cit., p. 209.
[115] Garau, op. cit., pp. 212-213.
[116] Re, op. cit., p. 2.
[117] Ibid., p. 1.