

**Italianness - a matter of birth or blood? A discussion on how mental models, ideology, and institutions lead to ethnic discrimination of immigrant communities in Italy**

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SS156 - Comparative Politics in Practice

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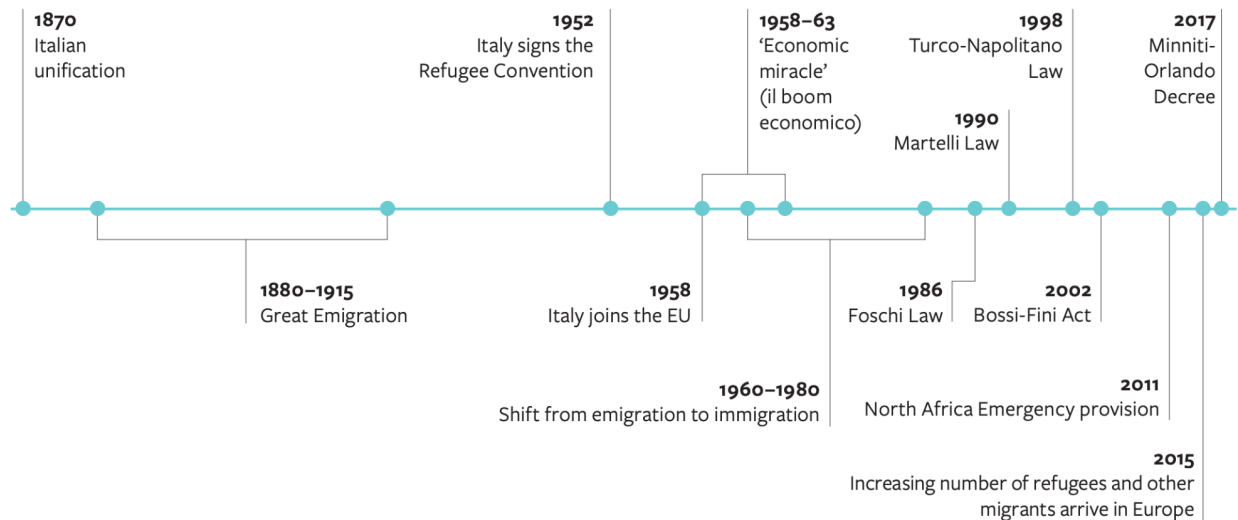
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## Italianness - a matter of birth or blood? A discussion on how mental models, ideology, and institutions lead to ethnic discrimination of immigrant communities in Italy

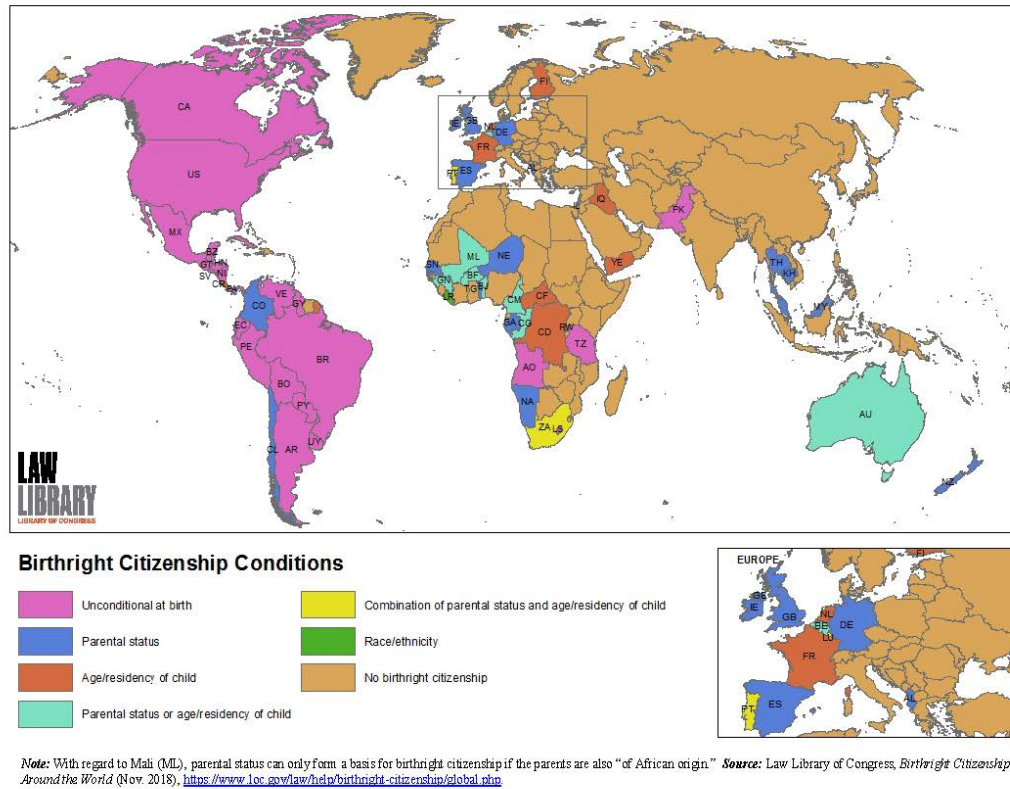
### Introduction

The Parlamento is currently debating citizenship reforms, including the failed *ius scholae* proposal, which aimed to grant citizenship to foreign children educated in Italy, and a national referendum to reduce the naturalization residency requirement from 10 to 5 years (Ionta, 2024). This debate reflects long-standing ideologies about Italian identity, with some advocating for maintaining the status quo, while others support greater inclusion of immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe (Censori, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Timeline of immigration to Italy, putting these migrations into historical perspectives (Holloway et al., 2021)

Italy and Europe's *ius sanguinis* (right of blood) citizenship system is a product of historical context, where citizenship is tied to ancestry, in contrast to the Americas' *ius solis* (right of land) (see Figure 2), which emerged from different social dynamics, illustrating how laws function as cultural systems that can become problematic when transplanted between societies (Merry, 1998). A law that works for a social-political context may not work in another. This paper argues that despite potential changes to formal citizenship laws, the deeply ingrained cultural ideas of *Italianness*, shaped by historical notions of *ius sanguinis* and reinforced by racial biases, will continue to reinforce the emergence of ethnic discrimination. Even immigrants with citizenship status are unlikely to be accepted into society due to the persistence of cultural and racial ideologies (formal versus informal citizenship). Citizenship in Italy is a political designation that protects from expulsion, not a marker of social inclusion or acceptance, meaning that legal reforms alone will not dismantle the mental models and informal rules that perpetuate exclusion and xenophobia (Ambrosini & Pozzi, 2018).



**Figure 2.** Library of Congress's (2018) visualization of countries that have the right of soil (*ius solis*) and the right of blood (*ius sanguinis*). Note that most countries based on the Rule of Land are in the Americas.

This ethnic discrimination against immigrants is, thus, an emergent property of interrelated subsystems, such as immigration policies, employment practices, and social attitudes, that reinforce one another through feedback loops in a self-sustaining pattern of exclusion (O'Connor, 2021; Reskin, 2012).

## Meet the system

A system deconstruction is needed to understand this system better, which leads to the emergence of discrimination. This analysis will consider the Italian Parliament as its primary domain, given its institutional capabilities to change (formal) laws.



## Legislative System and Parliament (Core Agent)

- **Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei Deputati)** Parliament's lower house and requires MPs to declare which parliamentary group they belong to within 2 days of the first session. Formal rules: each MP must belong to a group, and those who do not align an established group must join the Gruppo Misto (Mixed Group) that accommodates unaffiliated deputies.
  - Distribution of members:
    - **FORZA ITALIA** - BERLUSCONI PRESIDENTE: 68 Deputies
    - **FRATELLI D'ITALIA**: 40 Deputies (Far-right party, opposed to inclusive immigration policies)
    - **INSIEME PER IL FUTURO** - IMPEGNO CIVICO: 49 Deputies
    - **ITALIA VIVA** - ITALIA C'È: 32 Deputies
    - **LEGA** - SALVINI PREMIER: 131 Deputies (Right-wing, nationalist party, strongly opposed to reforms like jus solae)
    - **LIBERI E UGUALI** - ARTICOLO 1 - SINISTRA ITALIANA: 10 Deputies (Left-wing, supportive of pro-immigration reforms)
    - and other minority parties
- **Senate (Senato della Repubblica)** Parliament's upper house; it amends, reviews, and votes on bills passed by the Chamber of Deputies.
  - Similar to the Chamber, Senators belong to political groups that reflect party ideologies, and tend to be more conservative.
- **Legislative Committees**
  - Constitutional Affairs Committee and the Social Affairs Committee review laws related to citizenship.

## Provinces and Municipalities (Regionalism)

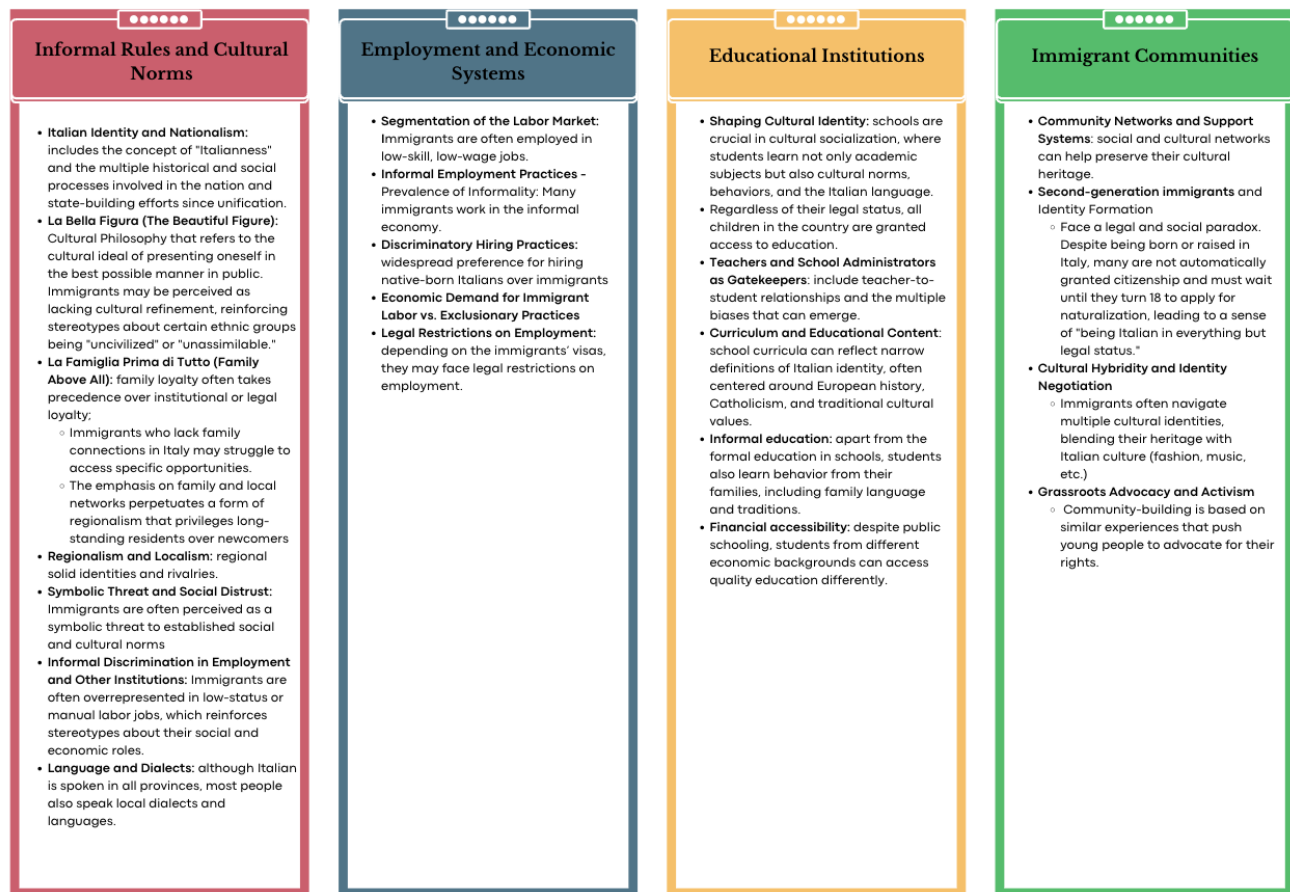
- **Provinces and Municipalities:** Italy's Administrative Structure: Italy is divided into 20 regions, which are further divided into provinces and comuni (municipalities).
  - **Provinces:** Provinces are intermediary administrative divisions between regions and municipalities. There is a significant difference between the North and the South provinces.
  - **Comuni (Municipalities):** Municipalities are the smallest administrative units in Italy and have direct control over most day-to-day factors (water, tax, etc.) Each municipality has a mayor and a city council responsible for local governance.
- **Special Autonomous Provinces and Regions with Special Status**
  - Include Trentino-Alto Adige, Sicily, Sardinia, Friulia Venezia Giulia and Aosta Valley. These regions have broader legislative powers and can create independent immigration policies.
- **Conflicts Between National and Local Policies: Highlight Italy's regional diversity and identification.**
  - **Tension Between National Policies and Local Governments:** Some local governments actively oppose these policies, creating "sanctuary cities" where immigrants are protected.
  - **Symbolic Acts of Resistance:** Progressive local governments, especially in cities like Bologna and Naples, may adopt symbolic acts of resistance against national immigration policies.

## Cultural and Social Agents

- **Public opinion:** a powerful determinant of policy-making and societal attitudes toward immigrants
  - **Regional variations:** Northern Italy tends to be more conservative than the South.
  - **Generational Differences:** younger Italians tend to be more inclusive and supportive of immigrant rights.
- **Media Influence:** central conductor of the "narrative" aspect of immigration.
  - News, entertainment, and social media: Sensationalist news media heighten fears and reinforce stereotypes. Movies and TV shows may also portray immigrants in stereotypical roles.
- **NGOs and Advocacy Groups** operate within and outside formal political structures to challenge discriminatory practices and promote social inclusion. It can bridge the gap between the government and the population.
- **Political Ideologies and Parties:** The ideological spectrum ranges from far-right nationalist parties advocating restrictive immigration laws to centrist and left-leaning parties promoting inclusivity and multiculturalism.
- **Social Networks and Community Structures** include family ties, community organizations, and regional affiliations that influence social interactions and resource access.

## Legal and Judicial Systems

- **Constitutional Court:** The Constitutional Court of Italy ensures that laws and regulations comply with the Italian Constitution. Review rules and protect rights.
- **Local Courts:** handle cases related to immigrant rights, including disputes over residency permits, citizenship applications, and allegations of discrimination. Ex: Questura.
- **Law Enforcement Agencies:** includes the police (Polizia) and immigration authorities.
- **Immigration and Citizenship Bureaucracy:** the bureaucracy responsible for processing immigration and citizenship applications. Also include bureaucratic obstacles.



*Figure 3. This is a breakdown of the agents involved in this complex system. It includes eight main categories of agents and more specific agents. This format includes national and local agents that best help us understand the system, as opposed to also including international agents (ex, the European Union and international pressure). Figure 8 breaks down the cultural aspect of the Cultural Iceberg Model.*

## Formal Rules

### 1992 Citizenship law

Since the 19th century, the codification of nationality has reflected institutionalized historical idioms like *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli*, shaping how political actors perceive nationality (FitzGerald, 2017, p. 135). Citizenship laws are thus codified systems structuring political behavior (Cairney,

2019, p.1). In Italy, significant changes occurred from 1912 to the 1992 citizenship laws, with the latter allowing dual citizenship, eliminating gender-based discrimination, and broadening *ius sanguinis* to include descendants of Italian emigrants, contrasting with the previous law's more restrictive provisions (Bussotti, 2016).

The most relevant formal rule is Act No. 91, February 5th, 1992, which is grounded in the concept of *ius sanguinis* (Article 1. b says a person is a citizen if their father or their mother is a citizen) (Ministero Dell'Interno, 1992), which implies that national identity and citizenship is inherited through ancestry and bloodline instead through lived experience or cultural integration. The idea that only those with Italian heritage can truly "belong" reinforces exclusionary practices toward immigrants and their descendants, particularly those from non-European backgrounds. Article 9. f states that citizens from non-EU countries who resign legally in Italy for at least ten years can request citizenship (Ministero Dell'Interno, 1992). Moreover, the law stipulates that children of immigrants born and continuously residing in Italy can only apply for citizenship upon reaching 18 years of age in only one year, a condition that has led many to feel Italian yet remain "Italians with a residence permit" (Ambrosini & Pozzi, 2018).

It is possible then to break down the institutional rules that govern Italian citizenship acquisition and loss, focusing on the current 1992 law. The figure below represent the ADICO breakdown.

<b>A</b>	Individuals and their descendants, particularly those born in Italy to non-Italian parents or ancestry and who seek Italian citizenship.
<b>D</b>	Immigrants and non-Italian descendants may apply for citizenship, but only after meeting stringent criteria, such as prolonged residency (10 years for non-EU individuals) and language requirements.
<b>I</b>	To restrict the acquisition of Italian citizenship to those who can prove ancestral or cultural ties to Italy, thereby maintaining cultural homogeneity, national identity, and sovereignty.
<b>C</b>	Individuals without Italian ancestry, regardless of whether they are born in Italy must wait until they are 18 years old and apply within 1 year if they meet residency and legal criteria.
<b>O</b>	Those who do not meet the criteria will NOT be granted citizenship, leaving them without full rights and access to many social, economic, and political benefits that come with citizenship (ex: voting rights, passport, etc.), even if they have lived in Italy their entire lives.

<b>A</b>	Immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees residing in Italy or seeking legal status within the country.
<b>D</b>	Immigrants and asylum seekers must comply with more stringent immigration regulations, which limit their access to humanitarian protection, residency permits, and asylum requests.
<b>I</b>	To restrict immigration, reduce the number of asylum seekers, and impose harsher penalties for undocumented immigrants, making it difficult for immigrants to secure legal status or remain in the country.
<b>C</b>	The law applies to non-citizens, particularly those who do not meet strict asylum or legal residency criteria. It also imposes penalties for immigrants found without proper documentation or who engage in activities deemed illegal.
<b>O</b>	Immigrants face deportation, denial of legal status, or exclusion from basic public services like healthcare and housing. In addition, they may be subject to detention and fines.

**Figure 4.** This is an ADICO (Attribute, Deontic, Aim, Condition, Or Else) analysis of the 1992 Law and the Salvini Decrees based on Streng & Odera (2021).

*Salvini Decrees (2018 - Law Decree No. 113/2018)*

In 2018, Italy's far-right government introduced the "Salvini Decrees," imposing restrictions on asylum seekers and immigrants, including reduced humanitarian protection, dismantling the SPRAR integration program, limiting citizenship grants, increasing deportations, and criminalizing NGOs aiding migrants at sea (Reidy, 2022). Though some provisions were revoked after three years, certain restrictions still persist (Testore, 2021).



**Figure 5.** Photo of young protestors manifesting against the Salvini Decrees (Giannini, 2018). It is possible to infer that there is a generational gap between those in favor and against the Salvini Decrees.

According to Elinor Ostrom's classification, these two laws function primarily as Boundary Rules by defining how individuals may enter or leave the "Italian citizen" position and specifying eligibility criteria and procedures (Streng & Odera, 2021). By setting stringent entry conditions, they control the composition (racial, demographic, etc.) of the citizenry and influence who can access the

rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Carter, 2014; Bloemraad, 2017). Both laws are highly prescriptive and exclusionary, particularly the Salvini Decrees, and reflect an institutional preference for preserving a (pseudo) homogenous national identity rooted in ancestry that does not align with Italy's contemporary multicultural reality.

Despite the boundary nature of these rules, there are still formal mechanisms for naturalization. However, it should be reinforced that formal citizenship does not guarantee informal citizenship or social acceptance, as cultural and societal ideologies prioritize lineage over lived experience, making legal status a necessary but insufficient condition for genuine integration and belonging (Ambrosini & Pozzi, 2018). Thus, while the laws provide a structured process for naturalization, they still fall short of addressing the more profound, informal barriers to social inclusion.



### PROPOSTA PER L'INTRODUZIONE DELLO JUS ITALIAE

#### ART. 1

(Modifiche alla legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 91, in materia di cittadinanza)

1. Alla legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 91 sono apportate le seguenti modificazioni:

a) all'articolo 1, dopo il comma 1, è aggiunto il seguente:

“1-bis. Il comma 1, lettera a), non si applica al figlio nato all'estero in possesso di altra cittadinanza, i cui ascendenti in linea retta di primo, secondo e terzo grado sono nati all'estero.”;

b) all'articolo 3, dopo il comma 1, è inserito il seguente:

“1-bis. Il comma 1 non si applica ai nati all'estero, ivi adottati, in possesso di altra cittadinanza, i cui ascendenti adottivi in linea retta di primo, secondo e terzo grado sono nati all'estero”;

c) all'articolo 4, dopo il comma 2, sono aggiunti i seguenti:

“2-bis. Lo straniero nato in Italia o che vi ha fatto ingresso entro il compimento del quinto anno di età, che vi abbia risieduto legalmente senza interruzioni nel territorio nazionale per almeno dieci anni e che vi abbia frequentato regolarmente per almeno dieci anni e completato con esito positivo i corsi di studio rientranti nell'ambito dell'istruzione obbligatoria, secondo la disciplina vigente, presso istituti appartenenti al sistema nazionale di istruzione o percorsi di istruzione, diviene cittadino se dichiara di voler acquistare la cittadinanza italiana entro un anno dal raggiungimento della maggiore età. Prima del compimento della maggiore età la dichiarazione è resa dal soggetto che esercita la responsabilità genitoriale. Il minore straniero che acquista la cittadinanza ai sensi del presente comma, se in possesso di altra cittadinanza, può rinunciare alla cittadinanza italiana entro un anno dal compimento della maggiore età.”;

**Figure 6.** Forza Italia's proposal to change the 1992 Law, including limiting jus sanguinis and losing provisions for naturalization (Italianismo, 2024),

The right-wing Forza Italia (see Figure 3, under the Parliament category) party released on October 5, 2024, *ius italie* another proposal to limit legislation on *ius sanguinis* as well as loosen regulations for naturalization (Forza Italia, 2024).





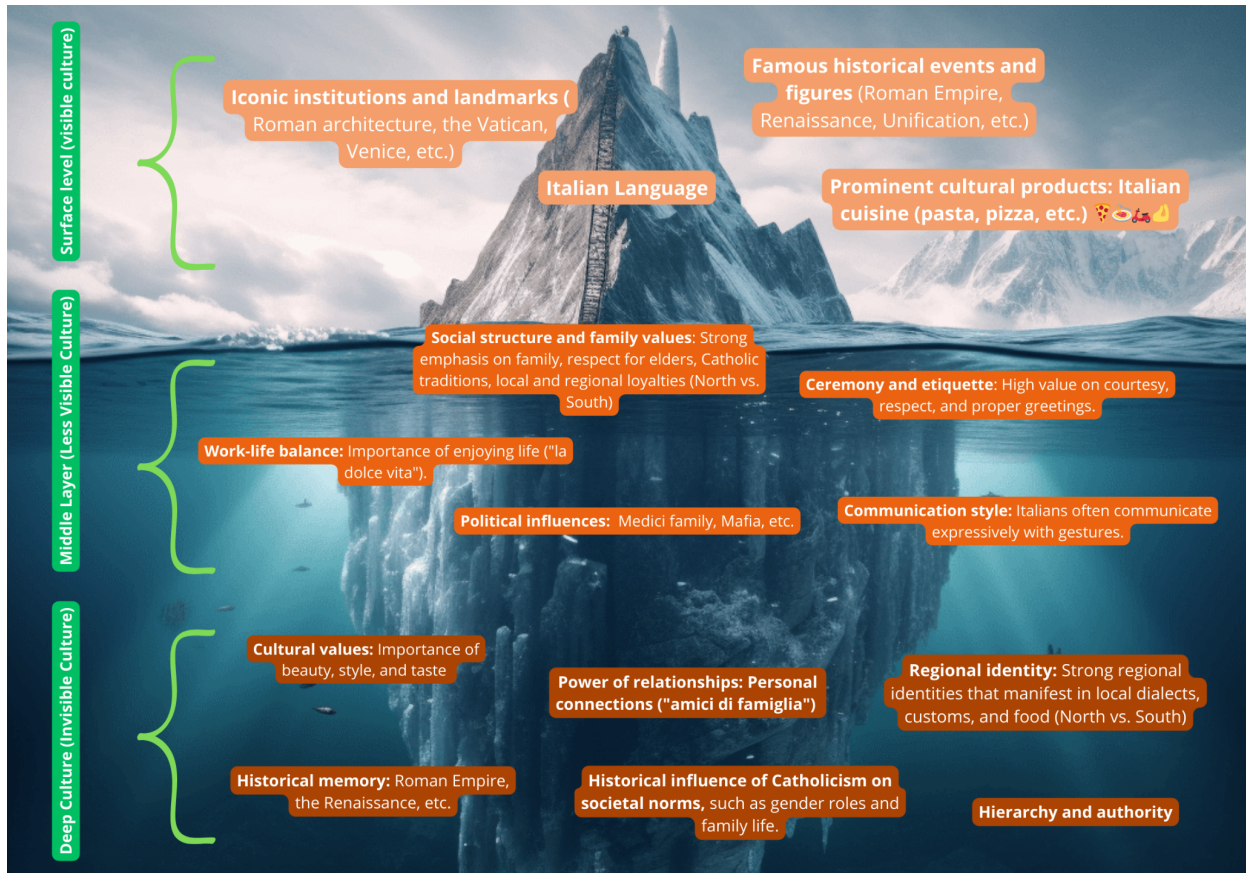
*Figure 7. Forza Italia's (2024) Instagram post releasing their proposal. Although this is not an exemplary primary source, it is interesting to read the comment section and understand people's reactions to this announcement by a conservative party. Some of the comments say that none of the four points are sensible, that Italy 100 years from now will not be what current Italy looks like because thousands of Muslim Africans can become "Italians"; this proposal is nonsensical because the current law works because Italy is the country that "gives out the most citizenships" in Europe.*

In Italy's parliamentary system, laws must pass both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, often undergoing multiple amendments during the shuttle process (Chamber of Deputies, 2023). Forza Italia will need a strategy that includes building coalition support, navigating opposition, leveraging the navette process, and shaping public opinion to advance the bill successfully.

## Informal rules



Written and unwritten rules together shape a nation's political behavior, with identity narratives and imagined communities playing a key role in defining citizenship and national unity (Cairney, 2019; Anderson, 2016).



**Figure 8.** The Iceberg Model of Culture helps us better understand the depth of cultural norms and values and how they create mental models and foster ideologies. Citizenship laws require speaking Italian, which is actually at the surface level of the model.

This paper identifies two informal cultural norms in Italy that perpetuate ethnic discrimination using the Iceberg Model.

*La Famiglia Prima di Tutto (social structure and family values)*

Family first and above all else emphasizes the importance of family in social and professional life, as seen in Ginsborg's (2003) work on the sociological foundations of Italian society. It is a cultural expectation that family will trump legal and institutional loyalty, often culminating in nepotism and favoritism (Putnam et al., 1994). Family-based networks also influence regional governance, with Sicily and Calabria being known for the Mafia. For nearly three centuries leading up to the creation of the Republic of Italy, people identified themselves not as Italians but as members of provincial and local societies (similar to families), speaking different Italian dialects and taking longer than other European countries to achieve a national identity and a centralized government (Guida, 2020).

### *La Bella Figura*

Although there is no single definition that captures the complexity of *la bella figura* (LBF) (the beautiful figure) as a cultural phenomenon, the consensus is that performance culture and social interactions lead to a deep-rooted cultural philosophy that emphasizes the importance of presentation, appearance, proper behavior, and good manners (Ramos-Ortiz et al., 2020; Guida, 2020). LBF is putting one's best side forward, especially in contrast to the fear and shame of making *brutta figura* (the ugly figure). LBF acts as a feedback loop between the projection an individual puts out to the public and the input they receive, creating a dual nature where Italians hold judgments of themselves and are also judged by others (Ramos-Ortiz et al., 2020). Research reveals an undertow of social distrust within Italian society, leading to a discrepancy between appearance and reality primarily due to centuries of turbulent economic, political, and social conditions, as exemplified by the proverb “chi dici il tuo segreto, doni la tua Liberta” (to whom you tell a secret you give your freedom) (Guida, 2020).



First, we see that negative media portrayal amplifies negative public opinion by focusing on stereotypes or incidents involving immigrants, which in turn intensifies societal fears, xenophobia, and nationalism. Increasing negative opinion creates political pressure on Parliament, leading to restrictive immigration laws and policies (ex: Salvini Decrees) and reinforcing immigrants' exclusion (nonacceptance) from society and employment opportunities. This marginalization of immigrants who rely on government support feeds back into the cycle that portrays them as “undesirable” or “outsiders” by negative opinion and media. Looking at formal institutions, we see that discriminatory practices within legal enforcement or judicial rulings validate exclusionary policies, making it harder for immigrants to challenge their marginalized status. As nationalist ideologies grow, they influence both (negative) media portrayals and legislative decisions. Note that increased protests and demand for change actually increase the negative portrayal (“ungrateful”, “violent”), increasing social exclusion in a neverending cycle.

However, there are opportunities for intervention through balancing feedback loops. Demand for change can act as a disruptor by influencing Parliament to consider alternatives or even by decreasing negative (perhaps increasing positive) media portrayal. Educational institutions also play a role by increasing economic opportunities and decreasing negative public opinion. The more immigrants become citizens, the more access they will have to vote in policies that favor others in their community.

Being an Italian citizen will not suffice, as there is a clear need for a multifaceted approach with integration programs and cultural competency training. Furthermore, legal reforms should not only aim to facilitate formal citizenship but also foster social policies that promote social inclusion and combat xenophobic ideologies, leveraging community organizations to bridge gaps between immigrant and native communities.



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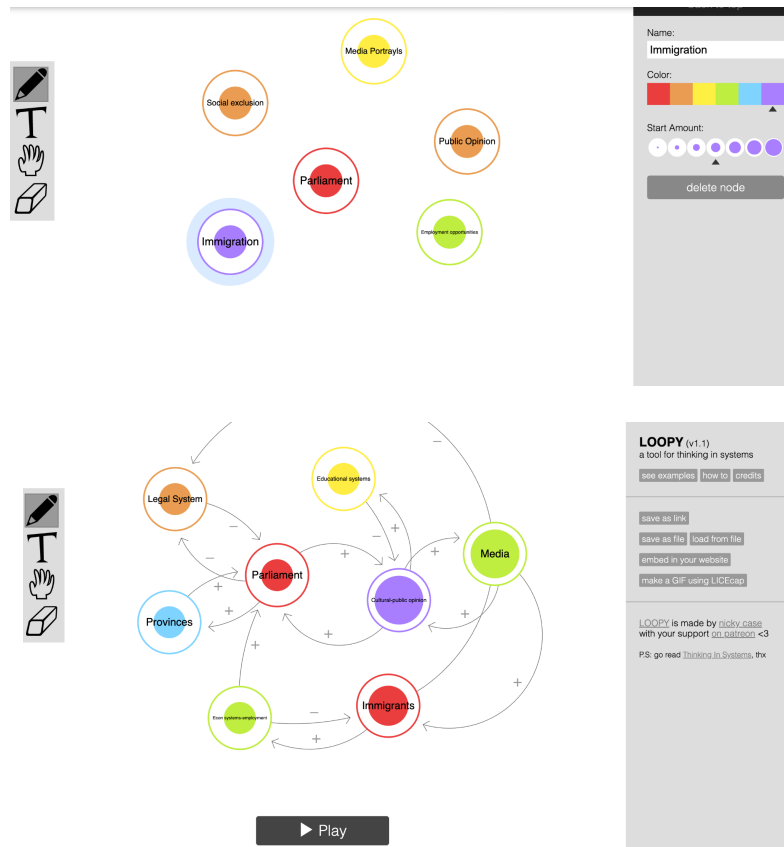
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## LO and HC appendix

**#systemmapping:** I applied this HC by first listing down all of the agents involved - including human and non-human agents, including cultural factors and institutions. I also made a conscious choice not to include the EU as another big agent so as to not bring more complexity to the system, focusing on eight main agents: the Parliament/Legislative system (core agent), provinces and regionalism, cultural and social agents, legal and judicial systems, informal rules and cultural norms, employment, and economic systems, educational institutions, and immigrant communities. Within each of these eight main categories, I distilled their main agents, including the main parties in Parliament and their representatives - this was particularly relevant when I discussed Forza Italia's new proposal regarding citizenship law. Naturally, I simplified these agents to create a complex causality map, but the core essence of each of the eight main categories is there. Another possible deconstruction of the system would have included EU institutions, but I did not include them since national and regional authorities predominantly shape immigration and citizenship policies. By focusing on national and local agents, I could focus on day-to-day dynamics and understand the politics of the Italian parliament.

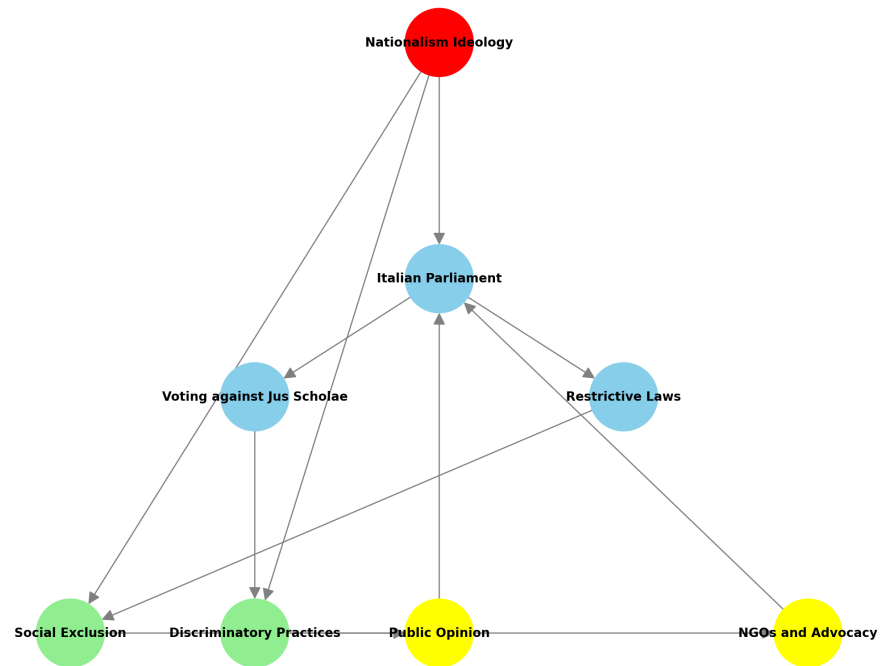
**#complexcausality:** After breaking down the system into different agents and subagents, I reclassified them into main nodes that would help me create a map. With that in mind, the initial breakdown (#systemmapping) led to 10 main agents - immigration, negative public opinion on immigrants, nationalism (cultural norms), Parliament (Legislative), Legal Systems (enforcing laws), social exclusion (immigrants' exclusion from society regardless of citizenship status), protest and demand for change in the system, negative media portrayal of immigrants, educational institutions and resources on immigration, and employment opportunities for immigrants (workforce). See below.



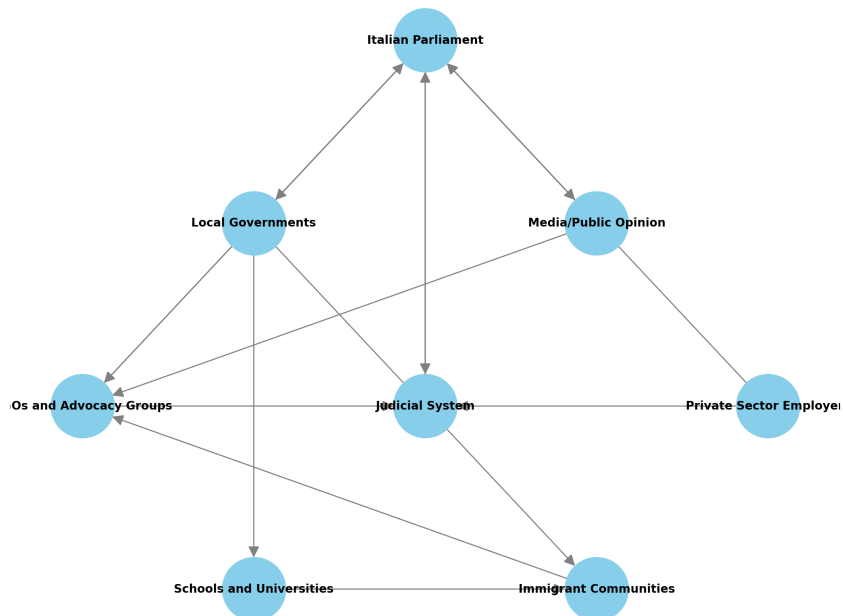
I ended up not including “Provinces” because the idea of regionalism and decentralization would be implied within nationalism (each region has its own nationalistic tendencies).

Additionally, I did not apply #networks, but I drafted a network model to help me understand the connections between each node and their feedback loops.

Network Diagram: Ideologies, Formal Rules, and Informal Rules in Italian Immigration System



System Map: Immigration Inclusion in Italian Society



**#emergentproperties:** I used this HC to explain how ethnic discrimination emerges from a series of reinforcing (feedback loops) subsystems, including different human and non-human agents. Ethnic

discrimination is not simply the sum of individual boundary laws, cultural norms, or policies, but rather the result of the interactions between these elements. For instance, in my causal diagram, I illustrated how negative media portrayal, public opinion, and restrictive immigration laws reinforce one another, creating a self-sustaining pattern of social exclusion. This interconnectedness shows how the marginalization of immigrants emerges as a higher-level phenomenon driven by feedback loops between cultural expectations (e.g., *la bella figura*), legal frameworks (e.g., *ius sanguinis*), and nationalist ideologies. By examining how these lower-level interactions collectively produce the emergent property of social exclusion, I focus on tackling this issue not just through formal laws but also through cultural and social elements.

**#professionalism:** Although I submitted this assignment a few days later than the deadline, I did so within the limits of my extensions given that I recently moved to San Francisco. I also made improvements to my arguments followed all of the assignment instructions, and reduced the word count to 1630 words to be within 10% of the word limit.

**#ss112-constructivism:** I applied this LO by using constructivist frameworks to analyze how ideas, identity, and norms shape the treatment of immigrants in Italy, particularly through the lens of legal and cultural concepts of *ius sanguinis* and cultural notions of "Italianness." As Merry (1998) explains, laws function as cultural systems that are problematic when transplanted between societies, thus comparing the Americas and European countries (Figure 2). I also argued that the Italian identity, historically tied to blood and ancestry, is reinforced by citizenship laws and social narratives that exclude immigrants even if they meet legal criteria for naturalization. By connecting these norms to

political outcomes, such as restrictive immigration laws and social exclusion, I demonstrated how cultural mental models maintain systemic discrimination over time.

Constructivism was also particularly useful for this analysis as it highlighted how cultural beliefs and narratives perpetuate legal structures that favor ancestry over lived experience, linking it to #SS156-InformalRules. I included *la bella figura* because of its relevance in the media and as a well-known element of Italian culture. The Iceberg model also (Figure 8), helped me understand how ideas and cultural norms are a product of a much deeper social fabric. Frameworks, such as rational choice, would have focused on material incentives or economic factors (it is common knowledge that Italy is fighting a war against a low birth rate), but constructivism allowed me to focus on how identity shapes political outcomes.

**#SS156-RulesandOutcomes:** I contrasted the intentions behind formal rules like the 1992 Citizenship law and the Salvini Decrees with their actual outcomes, demonstrating a significant divergence between what these laws aim to achieve and the real effects they produce. Keep in mind that the 1992 law is an updated version of the much more restrictive 1912 law. The intention of these rules was ostensibly to preserve national identity by enforcing stringent criteria based on *ius sanguinis* (right of blood) through the male line (1912 law) and now through one of the parents (1992 law). As some mentioned in the Instagram comment section, the “current laws work”; the question is “to whom?”. The outcome of these rules has been the systemic exclusion of immigrant communities, even those born and raised in Italy, from full societal membership. Furthermore, I highlighted how informal rules, such as cultural norms around *La Bella Figura*, interact with these formal rules to exacerbate social exclusion, as immigrants who do not conform to traditional Italian social



expectations face additional barriers to acceptance. These dynamics collectively perpetuate discrimination,

**#ss156-FormalRules:** I applied this LO by examining the impact of formal rules, including the impact of the 1992 Citizenship Law and the Salvini Decrees, distinguishing them within Ostrom's classification and using ADICO to understand how they influence ethnic discrimination. I critiqued the format and implementation of these rules by demonstrating how they create barriers to social integration, even for legally naturalized immigrants, who may still face exclusion due to societal norms prioritizing lineage.

Moreover, I included a discussion on the formal process required to make changes to law, specifically how the Parliament passes laws. I then included a brief analysis of how Forza Italia will have to use the formal process to pass its *ius italie* bill, including making alliances with the Prime Minister's party (see Figure 2).

**#ss156-InformalRules:** I focused on the unwritten practices and narratives that function as informal rules influencing interactions within Italian society based on the Iceberg Model of Culture. I delved beneath the surface elements like language and customs to uncover deeper cultural norms such as "La Famiglia Prima di Tutto" and "La Bella Figura". These practices are regularly used and widely upheld, shaping social expectations and interactions, even if Italians do not talk openly about it. This unwritten rule influences interactions by prioritizing established family networks, thereby marginalizing immigrants who lack such connections. I showed how these cultural norms reinforce ethnic discrimination by keeping out people who don't fit into Italy's traditional family-centric social structure by closely examining how these norms operate as unwritten laws.

I also examined how political narratives act as informal rules that influence both public opinion and governmental actions. Right-wing parties Forza Italia utilize narratives that frame Italy as the "refugee camp of Europe," fostering a societal perception of immigrants as threats to national identity, although their recent proposal indicates a cultural shift. To compellingly justify this analysis, I incorporated the comment section from Forza Italia's recent Instagram post about their proposal to reform citizenship laws with comments expressing fears that granting citizenship to immigrants, particularly from Muslim and African backgrounds, would dilute Italian culture. This narrative functions as an unwritten rule by reinforcing the idea that true "Italianness" is tied to ancestry and cultural conformity.

**AI statement:** Apart from using Grammarly to correct grammar mistakes, I used ChatGPT to help me distinguish between multiple elements, sort through my notes, and draft a network system that I would then incorporate into the causality diagram.