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# Where do the Italians Belong?

Assessing Globalization and Identity

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# Abstract

The processes of globalization interfere in every aspect of life. Like societies, nations and communities; individuals and their national identity are also under severe pressure from globalization. The purpose of this thesis is to deepen the understanding of how globalization transforms identity and belonging. Using written literature and qualitative interviews this thesis creates a theoretical overview and concludes that globalization indeed transforms identity and belonging and that a crisis of belonging is arising. The case study, where this theoretical framework is applied, shows how the Italians are divided into three large groups of belonging. The Italians either feel a belonging to Europe, Italy or their region/city. All three sets of belonging have roots in history, but this thesis argues that globalization makes them stand out even more. It is concluded that an identity crisis is present and that identity and belonging clashes with the processes of globalization. Identity and belonging are therefore fragmented and undergoing constant changes. The thesis hence addresses the problematic relationship between globalization and belonging and emphasizes the problems of Italian national identity.

*Key words:* Globalization, belonging, identity, Italy, identity crisis.

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# 1 Introduction

The understanding of how we define ourselves and where we belong is of the utmost importance in today's world. The events from the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 till today - including the terrorist attacks on the twin towers at the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, the Balkan-wars and the ongoing war in Iraq – are certainly evidences of a world that is changing ever faster. More or less peaceful events such as the creation of the common currency in the European Union (or large part of it), the communication-revolution and the mounting right-wing nationalism in many West European countries are confirming the notion of a changing world. Whether these events are a part of a so called globalization process or not, there is an elevated number of scientific works trying to develop theories explaining how we should characterize present time. And how does the individual define him or her self in this changing world? It is clear that these above stated events and many others surely have a role to play in people's identity. In an ever changing world - undergoing some kind of processes of globalization (more on the precise definition and discussion of the term later on) - where does the individual feel that he or she belongs?

These processes are with out a doubt a part of the every day life in Europe in these years, but studies on the changes in identity are rare in many European countries. Italian identity was neglected as a scientific research field for many years and it is only in the last decade that discussions on italianness set start (Garau 2007, p.1). Since these discussions started, the political life in Italy has undergone an enormous corruption scandal and therefore entirely changed. It can be argued that globalization makes identity and belonging even more important in the world of today and since they are both under pressure from the same processes, this thesis finds it highly relevant to analysis what the consequences of the pressure are.

This thesis is divided in two separate parts. The first delivers a theoretic discussion of the terms globalization and identity and how they are interconnected. This theoretical part provides thus background knowledge, an introduction to the subject and lay emphasize on terms such as identity- crisis, confusion and hybrid identity. The second part - the case study - is the main research topic. Here the Italian case is presented and an analysis of Italian identity and belonging is offered.

## 1.1 Main Research Question

As the main heading of this thesis clearly illustrates the enquiry that characterizes it is *where do the Italians belong?* Before opening the theoretical discussion of a postulated identity confusion or crisis and before deepening ourselves in the complex Italian context it is of the utmost importance to specify the above enquiry in a main research-question that will act as a guideline throughout the thesis in general and especially the case study.

The central research-question of the thesis is therefore: *How do the Italians identify themselves as a consequence of globalization? Do they identify themselves as belonging to 1) Europe, 2) Italy, 3) their region or an even smaller community?*

The guiding question for the theoretical overview is *how globalization and identity are connected* and subsequently *how globalization transforms identity?*

The purpose of this thesis is to emphasize what effect the processes of globalization has on the individuals and their belonging. The main level of focus so far by political scientists studying globalization has been either to have theoretical discussions and identify the term globalization or to analysis its affects on actors such as for instance nation states. The psychological consequences on identity are rarely addressed directly (Arnett 2002, p. 774). In other words this thesis has the ambition of setting up a theoretic discussion and then analyze if and how the identity of the case chosen are changing in this period in time.

If globalization is indeed a significant process on the world today then an analysis of its influence on individual and group identity is as important as studying its relation with for example nation states and organizations.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is to emphasize that one consequence of globalization is a transformation in identity. In other words globalization changes the way people think about themselves in relation to the social environment. On this matter the author of this thesis agrees with scholars such as Giddens, Hall, Arnett etc. (Arnett 2002, p. 777).

As Sheila Croucher and her work *Globalization and Belonging*, this thesis aims to improve the understanding of how various forms of sociocultural and political identification and attachment are being affected by the supposed increasing interconnectedness - economic, technological, political and cultural – of the globe (Croucher 2004, p. 7).

It could be argued that these processes of rapid change are easily observed in Europe where probably the most ambitious political experiment, the EU, takes place. The European Union has continued its growth throughout the last approximately 60 years and has, with the latest enlargement and the creation of European citizenship, played an active role in the politics of identity in Europe. The theoretical chapter in this thesis has the ambition to show how all these above

stated processes are affecting national identity as a whole while the following case study has the objective of clarifying the more precise state of identity in Italy.

This thesis focuses primarily on the people as a whole and what problems in identification there might be.

It is important to clarify from the very beginning that this thesis has no ambition of covering the entire scientific field of study. It is on the other hand the ambition to point to some important works in the field and to place these in their correct context. Globalization and identity are two huge fields of study and a complete coverage is therefore not possible (especially not with the quantitative restrictions) – this should though not interfere with the qualitative aspect of this paper.

The focus is entirely on identity and belonging and how these terms are being affected by processes of globalization. No definitive answers will be given, but these important issues will be assessed with the intention of inspiring to future discussions.

This thesis starts with a discussion of both the terms *globalization* and *identity*. These terms are combined in a discussion of what effects globalization has on identity and it is stated that globalization transforms identity. Furthermore it is argued that identity and belonging are under pressure and that the citizens therefore are divided such that various identities exist simultaneously. One may argue that when overlooking the entire spectrum a sort of identity confusion or at least identity crisis can be observed.

After these theoretical discussions some methodological issues are considered. Finally the case of this thesis is examined. The theoretical discussions are taken into consideration while analyzing the case-study and its specific identity-markers. The main part of the thesis is exploring the various aspects of Italian identity and placing the bricks in the identity puzzle. Ultimately an answer to the main research question and a conclusion are presented.

## 2 Theory

This chapter is meant to be an introduction to the field of study and is necessary for understanding the case study that follows. In other words the general view is necessary before putting on the specific Italian spectacles. The guiding question for this theoretical overview is: How is identity, globalization and their interconnectedness presented in political science of today? And how does globalization transform identity and belonging?

It is of course a broad area to cover in just a few pages as both words can be considered somewhat “buzz-words”. It is therefore the ambition of this theoretical overview to deliver some definitions to key terms and to go “beyond the buzz-words” and thereby clearly state the standpoints of this thesis in a way to make the analysis easier to follow. As stressed earlier, the theoretical overview can be applied to many cases and is not created with Italy in mind.

Before moving on to exploring in what way identity is transformed as an effect of globalization it is important first 1) to examine what globalization is all about; and second 2) to develop a brief discussion of the term identity.

### 2.1 Globalization

One of the terms most frequently discussed among policy makers and researchers is definitely *Globalization*. Every year in the past three decades the number of books and articles discussing the term globalization has grown exponentially (Scholte 2000, p. 14). Despite the quantitative escalation - or perhaps because of it - the field of globalization studies is far from homogeneous. The search of conceptual clarity is difficult, but in the following an effort will be made to simplify the complex topic.

The search begins with a definition of globalization which this author finds suitable for later studies. When this is done, complementary notes to the definition from various scholars are presented and finally the skeptical authors are given space by including them in the discussion.

A definition of globalization which combines four important elements, namely extensity, intensity, velocity and impact is presented by Held and McGrew amongst others. Globalization is...

*“... a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in the terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power”* (Held and McGrew & Goldblatt and Perraton, 1999 p. 68).

Sheila Croucher (Croucher 2004) treats globalization as a “cluster” of related processes which are increasing the economic, technological, cultural and political interconnectedness of the world (Croucher 2004, p. 13ff). According to her it is very important not just to examine globalization as an economic phenomenon but, as stated above, also to embrace the fields of technology, culture and politics - contradicting with the neo-liberal view of globalization as principally economic.

Another important researcher in the field of globalization is Jan Aart Scholte (2000). One of Scholte’s contributions to the topic is his terminological discussion. Scholte stresses the importance of clarifying what we precisely mean when we use the term globalization. He presents a sort of check-list of what globalization is *not*, because the term is often misused or misunderstood. Globalization is often portrayed as internationalization, liberalization, universalization or Westernization (Scholte 2000, p. 84). But these conceptualities of globalization bring nothing new – they already exist and this leads Scholte to stress that the supraterritoriality has the key concept of a definition of globalization: *Globality (as supraterritoriality) describes circumstances where territorial space is substantially transcended (Scholte 2000, p. 87)*. It is the growth in supraterritoriality that defines globalization and Scholte is certainly not alone in identifying deterritorialization as a central dimension of globalization (Croucher 2003, p. 12).

Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson are among the researchers questioning the entire globalization debate or great parts of it. They are convinced in their skepticism that globalization, as conceived by more “extreme globalizers”, is largely a myth (Hirst & Thompson 1999, p. 98). Hirst and Thompson are arguing against globalization in economic terms stressing that we are witnessing an international economy and not a global (distinct ideal type) economy (Hirst & Thompson 1999, p. 100ff). According to Hirst and Thompson there is in other words nothing new under the sun, globalization brings nothing new to the present world economy.

Another skeptical researcher is Justin Rosenberg (2000). One of his main arguments is that some writers describe globalization as an outcome, by invoking globalization as a process, tending toward that outcome (Rosenberg 2000, p. 92) – a methodological problem. According to Held and McGrew many skeptical scientists either have a strong attachment to essentially Marxist thinking or to realistic ontology (Held & McGrew 2003, p. 5). Even though these observers, and others, continue to doubt the significance of globalization they might concur with the majority of opinion which affirms that we are indeed living in a period of rapid change (Kennedy 2001, p. 7).

Yet another often mentioned commentator is Benjamin Barber (as quoted in Holton 1998) who emphasizes coexistence of globalization trends on the one hand and contrary trends towards divisive cultural fundamentalism on the other. A sort of black and white discussion is presented with a dichotomy symbolized with the clash between *McWorld* and *Jihad* (Holten 1998, p. 5).



This theoretical overview states though that a definition as the one given by Held and McGrew above, with the arguments by Scholte and Croucher as support, in most cases can be helpful when studying a subject in the field of globalization. It is also clear that if globalization and identity have to be observed with some kind of interconnectedness, globalization cannot simply be defined in economic terms.

No discussion of whether globalization should be analyzed in basic positive or negative terms is presented here. Nevertheless this thesis states that globalization can bring opportunities to some and threats to other – it is the context of where the processes are being experienced that is the essential.

If these events or processes of globalization are taken place in the world today, where does it leave the identities of the people of the world? How does the individual's identity handle these processes? How are identity and the belonging transformed? These questions are all sub-questions of the main research question, as previously stated: how the relation between globalization and transformation of identity is stressed in current works?

Before moving on to this interesting discussion, it is however important to emphasize what is meant by the term identity and how the research field is characterized? This will be deepened in the following chapter.

## 2.2 Identity and Belonging

As the terminology of belonging is only recently beginning to emerge in social science this chapter will focus on (primarily) identity and (secondarily) culture. Both of these are included in and are also fundamental for the understanding of the term belonging (Croucher 2003, p. 36). The political scientists Michael Billig (2006) and Peter Gundelach (2002) operate with a definition of national identity as a feeling of *belonging* to a nation when they distinguish national identities from nationalism (Billig 2006, p. 43ff & Gundelach 2002, p. 76). Belonging is an emotional attachment, it's a feeling of "being home" (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 197). Belonging to social locations as for instance a nation, a continent or a region are fluid and change in different historical contexts (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 199f). So studying the belonging of a specific group today will give no answers to the belonging of the same group further ahead in history. Having stated that national identity is a feeling of belonging then this thesis will operate with the two terms on the same footing and therefore when mentioning national identity and belonging, the meaning is the same.

The most significant scientific debate in the topic of identity concerns whether identity is best characterized as static, essential and one-dimensional or fluid, constructed and multidimensional (ibid.). The former view is also known as primordialism or essentialism and examines identity as predetermined and "natural". Primordialism is not retaining much success in academic circles, but some scholars, journalists and politicians continue to describe identity in primordialistic terms. One of the most famous books in this ball ground is Samuel

Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1996) where he states that "...the great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural" (Huntington 1996, p. 22) and furthermore Huntington postulates that civilization will clash because their differences are "real and basic" (Huntington 1996, p. 25).

Constructivism or social-constructivism operates in opposition to primordialism. This approach argues that one individual might have several identities and simultaneously belong to different groups: ethnic, religious, political etc. The identities can furthermore change in time and place (Croucher 2003, p. 38f). The constructivist approach is the most popular among academics in recent times and social scientists have in this way rejected old "common-sense" notions as primordialism is often referred to (Kennedy 2001, p.2). Identity is created through interactions and the process of identifications is a never ending process (Hall in Kennedy 2001). Furthermore identity construction requires the creation of the "Other" for the formation of the belonging to an "Us". Identity (and belonging for that sake) marks differences and boundaries (Croucher 2003, p. 39f and Kennedy 2001, p.3f). These boundaries may be social, cultural, political or economic depending on the individual and the context.

Another important researcher working with identity is Anthony Giddens (1991). He believes that the individuals in this late modernity exercise much greater control over whether, when and how to assume a given social identity (Giddens in Kennedy 2001, p. 6). In other words identity and belonging are closely connected to a self-chosen "Self" – far from the thinking of the predetermined identity of primordialism and a step further out of the constructivist identity-road.

Identity is therefore, in Giddens and other scholars, based on individual choices, on decisions that each person make of what values to embrace and what values to refute. Identity should be seen as more "active" now than ever before (Arnett 2002, p. 781).

Identity can of course be viewed from several levels. The identities of nation, region, group, family and individual can all be observed per se. Most of the scientists work with a broad definition and are able to conclude all (or many) of the actors in their work. This theoretical overview has had the ambition to show meaningful works when analyzing the individual level.

After a presentation of a broad field of study and with the introduction to globalization fresh in mind it is time to move on to the combination of the two. How do the processes of globalization transform the individual's identity?

## 2.3 Globalization and the Transformation of Identity

We have now described the discussion within the field of studies concerning globalization and identity and have outlined some of the important scientific works elaborating these topics. With the definition of globalization by Held &

McGrew (and additional notes by Croucher and Scholte) on one hand and the constructivist approach (with the additional notes by Giddens) on the other hand we are now ready to take a closer look on how their relation are described in current social- and political science.

Whether one observes globalization as a crisis or challenge depends on the analyzed case and its context. No matter the starting point, globalization does indeed change the identity and belonging of the individuals and some important works addressing this issue will be discussed in the following.

Paul Kennedy (2003) emphasizes that the processes of globalization show that, like societies, nations and communities, individuals too are under severe pressure, perhaps even undergoing a crisis. This is also the opinions of writers such as for instance Hall and Woodward (Kennedy 2003, p.14). In addition Castells (1997) states that “*our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity*” (quoted in Kennedy 2003, p. 14).

In the work on Irish national identity G. Honor Fagan stresses that globalization increases the importance of identity and makes national-culture without any sense in the world today (Fagan 2001, p. 118). She joins Benedict Anderson’s (1983) argument on nations as invented communities and states that nations in today’s context of globalization are being re-invented (ibid.).

Political scientist Catarina Kinnvall (2004) stresses that an answer to the above stated insecurity of globalization, could be to seek reaffirmation by drawing closer to any collective that is able to reduce the insecurity. Religion and nationalism are two good examples (Kinnvall 2004, p.741). Kinnvall also quotes Giddens when he says that the individual in the modern globalizing world feels alone and lacks the psychological security provided by more traditional settings (Kinnvall 2004, p. 744). Kennedy joins works by Berger et al. and Magatti when he too argues that the individual feels homelessness because of the processes of globalization. Cultural experiences of all kinds tend to break loose from their traditional settings under the globalization processes and this is also bringing identity to crisis (Kennedy 2003, p. 11f).

Asawin Nedpogaeo (2001) agrees with the fact that globalization transforms identity and belonging, and he emphasizes that globalization transforms every social institution in which people lives are taken place (Nedpogaeo 2001, p. 99). He delivers some possibilities for what could happen to identities while recognizing that the possible outcomes are many. First of all some identities are eroded and/or eliminated. Others may go into a state of crisis (identity-crisis again). Other again will be strengthened and new identities can be created as a result of hybridization (Nedpogaeo 2001, p. 100)

Jeffrey Arnett points to some consequences of globalization for identity in his *The Psychology of Globalization*. According to his works globalization does indeed transform identity and more specific it creates the following phenomenon’s: Self-selected cultures, Identity confusion and Bicultural identity. These are according to Arnett some of the consequences of globalization (Arnett 2002, p.777). In this way Arnett agrees with Giddens self-chosen “Self” and with the constructivist identity approach and with the above stated scholars all emphasizing the identity confusion or crisis caused by globalization.

This thesis concludes that processes of globalization do surely exist and do indeed transform identity. The case study is then to show *how* the identity is changing and therefore where the citizens feel they belong. A crisis of identity could also be a result of globalization, according to this thesis, with different severity of the crisis depending on both the context and the objects studied.

## 2.4 Hybrid Identity

It is not the ambition of this thesis to take every aspect of identity and globalization into consideration, but it is considered to be important to mention the literature on hybrid identity. Hybrid identity is a possibility of dealing with the crisis described above and also simultaneously to have more identities depending on what context.

Scholte is one of the researchers working with hybrid identities caused by globalization. Hybrid identity is a mix of different identities into one. In other words one person might have more identities and be several selves at once (Scholte 1995, p. 180f). Scholte speaks of individuals, but the concept can also be applied to national identity where the population can include many different identities at the same time. This hybridization can in some researchers opinion lead to “identity-surfing” where people slide from one identity to another in a world of unconnectedness, encouraged by globalization (Scholte 1995, p. 181). The increasing hybridization of the entire social life is a consequence of globalization (Croucher 2004, p. 26).

## 2.5 Conclusion

The ambition of this theoretical presentation was to lay emphasis on the current field of study concerning both globalization and identity. Furthermore the two topics were to be combined in a discussion of how globalization relates to identity.

A globalization definition has been found (Held & McGrew) with supporting important additions (Croucher and Scholte) and skeptical approaches have been mentioned as well. Afterwards the two major identity schools (primordialism and constructivism) were presented and the works of Giddens taken into consideration. Finally the relation between globalization and identity seems to impose transformation of identity and belonging as caused by globalization. The changing world brings the traditional identifications and belongings into crisis and confusion arises.

Whether these processes of globalization lead to individuals belonging to 1) their continent (broadening the “Us” in identification), 2) their nation (in spite of

the pressure from globalization) or 3) smaller units as the city or even smaller communities, is an interesting discussion that this thesis will try to develop further in the chapters to come. If a precise answer is not given, a crisis in belonging and identity of some magnitude is found.

The purpose was to highlight important works in the two topics (globalization and identity) and their interrelation. We are therefore ready to apply the above presented theories and analyze a case. This thesis has chosen Italy and has, as stated earlier, the ambition to enlighten the current identity “crisis” in the country. Before moving on to the analysis it is of the outmost importance to discuss some methodological issues of how this thesis came into way.

## 3 Methodology

The original Greek meaning of the word *Method* is, according to Steiner Kvale (1996): “a route that leads to the goal” (Warren 2002, p. 86). Extending this concept one could add that this chapter on Methodology is a description of the route chosen – a map – explaining which route this writer took to the goal.

This thesis, or route, is divided into two parts: A theoretical part leading the reader through some central aspects of the field of study and a case-study applying the theoretical discussion. The theoretical fraction can be used for other studies as well and is thought as basis knowledge to understand how and why a case study on belonging is important.

In identity studies and studies of belonging like this no casual relationship between phenomena is desired established and the focus is on *understanding* rather than *explanation* (Furlong & Marsh 2002, p. 20). With the written material and the qualitative interviews one tends to establish how people understand their world.

When one is studying identities and belonging there is no verifiable truth (Pettersson, p. 35). In this matter identity studies like this follows the hermeneutic or interpretist tradition.

### 3.1 Single Country Case Study

This thesis uses a single country case study for applying the theoretical framework. The discussion of the gains from this type of study in comparison to the comparative studies is never-ending, but when it comes to identity and belonging a single case study could be preferable. Identity is such a complex matter that one would loose too many arguments by making a cross-country study.

To continue this argumentation this thesis states that the advantages of a single country study are greater than the disadvantages in this matter. The loss of comparison as a method is compensated for, by gaining a complete understanding of a complex case. The single-country study can be compared with medicine studies where one treatment is analyzed intensively (Landman 2005, p. 34-35). I will argue that this way of conducting a case study and applying a framework gains a lot in improving the result of the one studied case, contingencies are minimized and the value of the result heightened.

It can be argued that the single-country case study can be used comparative if it uses a framework applicable to other cases (ibid.). This is the case with this

thesis and the theoretical chapter can, as stated earlier, be applied to other countries than the one chosen here.

It is not the goal of this thesis to prove causal connections between globalization and Italian identity – which it seldom is in identity studies – but simply to emphasize the changing in Italian identity in a world undergoing globalization processes

## 3.2 Italy

Italy is chosen as the case study in this thesis, because of its unique and complex identity. Furthermore Italy is chosen because of the relative few scientific articles on its identity problems in this era of globalization.

Italy is both a representative and a deviant case. It is representative because the problems of identity are present there as well as in every other country, but it is deviant for its particular history and social structure. You can find it all in the Italian context: Both regionalist movements, a strong identification with Europe and nationalist movements as well.

It is hard to find previous studies of current identity. Most identity-studies deal with historic features as grounding of the national identity, but not the present time of identity confusion and the increasing perplexity of where the Italians feel they belong. Studies of Italian identity combined with globalization are rare, even though the general research of Italian identity have been increasing in the past years.

## 3.3 Material

This thesis is primarily based on written literature, but also on some qualitative interviews. The literature is used in both the theory part and the case study while the latter were essential for the application of the theories to the Italian context.

The written literature is chosen with several criteria. In the theoretical chapter both “classics” and new literature is used. In the case studies both Italian researchers and foreign researchers are used and the literature is in English, Italian and Danish.

Having briefly described the principles behind the written literature it is equally important to develop and discuss the selection criteria for the qualitative interviews. This thesis is, as said earlier, also based on what one could label as expert-interviews. The author has interviewed “experts” in Italian society and used the qualitative interview as method. In the qualitative interview the participants are viewed upon as meaning makers and not passive conduits for retrieving information (Warren 2002, p. 83). In this way the interviews had the shape of a conversation with no definitive answers and the purpose was to derive

interpretations not facts (ibid.). The persons interviewed gave their opinion in this complex discussion and helped in this way the author in following the route to the goal.

Each interview-person and his/hers position in the big picture was considered. The position in the society, gender, class and nationality is also well thought-out during the interviews. The interviews was of explorative nature and thus semi-structured since the author is looking to explore and “map out” a complex problem

Furthermore both international and Italian experts and leading scholars were interviewed to heighten the representativity of the field study. In this matter it is essential for the author to thank everyone for their enthusiastic participation and a special thanks goes to Gloria Pirzio Ammassari, Arianna Montanari, Lisbeth Davidsen, Thomas Harder and Sarah Scuzzarello<sup>1</sup>.

The qualitative elite-interviews are also chosen for the limited time at the authors’ disposal. It would have been preferable to combine the interviews with for instance surveys and also preferable with more interviews, but this has unfortunately not been possible.

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<sup>1</sup> The interviews central to this study are listed under References.



## 4 The Italian Context

A well known quote from the *Risorgimento*<sup>2</sup> (unification) movement in Italy in the XIX century, assumable by Massimo d'Azeglio, clearly emphasizes the problems of Italian identity:

*"Italy is created, now we have to create the Italians."*(Own translation from Lazar 2007, p. 67)

At what point is the *creation* of the Italians today? In the following this will, among many other issues, be analyzed and discussed. After having stressed theoretically that some kind of identity confusion is taking place it is time for an empirical case study. The case study will seek to answer the main research questions of whether Italians belongs to Europe, Italy or their region/city. Each of these possible sets of belonging will be examined later on and various aspects will be taken into consideration in each of these. Some aspects can of course be placed in two (or all three) categories depending on the observing eye. For example the clientelism issue is both drawing the Italians closer to their home region and making many feel that Europe is preferable because the Italian and local governments do not work appropriately. The same can be said about for instance the phenomena Silvio Berlusconi.

As stated earlier the search is for a core-identity, based on belonging. Other identities such as gender, social class etc. are taken into consideration during the analysis, but the main focus is undoubtedly on the core feeling of belonging. This empirical research has the ambition to emphasize where the Italian citizen feel home at the end of the day, not whether (s)he is a mother/father, rich or poor and so on.

The Italian context is presented and taken into consideration – what is the affects of globalization and what is coursed by the Italian context? This dualism is a tough one, as globalization interferes, so to speak, with the Italian context. As the processes of globalization are present everywhere, then the belonging of the Italians is coursed *both* by the Italian context *and* by globalization.

The Italian professor in political sociology Arianna Montanari supports the dividing into the three subcategories of Italian belonging (Europe, Italy and Region/City). She states that the Italian youth are divided into three groups of equal size when it comes to the core identification: one third feels for a belonging primarily to Europe, one third to Italy and one third to their city (Montanari 2007).

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<sup>2</sup> Il Risorgimento is the ideological and political movement that led to the unification or creation of Italy in 1860.

This division is also present in the works by John Loughlin (2001) as he analyses the belonging of Italians in the 1990's and emphasizes that half the population belongs to the region/city, a third to Italy and the last percentage to the world/Europe (Loughlin 2001, p. 218ff). Furthermore Renato Mannheimer's work on *Italians and the political life* also uses the same division into the three sets of belonging (Mannheimer 2003, p. 45ff). His research, based in surveys, concludes that half the Italian population feel Italian, 10 % European and the rest feel a belonging to smaller communities (Mannheimer 2003, p. 49).

Playing vital roles in the Italians identification are issues such as 1) History (both *Risorgimento*-movement and ancient history); 2) Internal geography; 3) Present politics (the Berlusconi and Prodi governments) and Lega Nord; 4) *Mani-Pulite*<sup>3</sup> scandals; 5) the Church; 6) and specific cultural phenomenon's such as clientelism.

In the following an analysis of why some feel a belonging to Europe, some to Italy and some to their city is conducted. It might be that one of the categories has stronger arguments than the other two and therefore can be labeled as the core identity or primary belonging. If all three categories are equally grounded in the Italian context then discussions of identity- crisis, confusion and hybrid identity and the non-existence of core identity are surely in its place.

Globalization is of course present in all three of the following sections, but is also treated separately in a way to put even more emphasize on the exact role played by globalization in the current identification of the Italians.

## 4.1 Italians and the Belonging to Europe

In the search for where the Italians belong, or feel that they belong, the first step is Europe. What aspects could lead Italians to identify themselves with their continent?

Since the creation of what today is known as the European Union, the Italians has always been one of the countries most positive to the concept of a close and strong European community. Many surveys have placed Italy among the most pro-EU and for instance the *Eurobarometer* shows that 71% of Italians find themselves somewhat European – the second highest score after Luxembourg (European Commission 2001, p. 11). On other questions concerning a common European identity, the tendency to trust the European Union and the feeling of belonging to Europe, Italy is always present amongst the most *European-friendly* countries (ibid.). All in all Italy is well known for its strong commitment to the EU (Kellas 2004, p. 107; Fini 2003, p. 15). What can be derived from this attachment to Europe will be examined subsequently.

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<sup>3</sup> Mani-Pulite, meaning clean hands, was an investigation into political corruption in the early and mid 1990's. Mani-pulite led to the termination of the first Republic and a nearly collapse of the known political system.

First of, all the importance of being a founding member of the EU as well as participating from the start is not to be underestimated. As one of the six original members Italy and the Italians could therefore feel some sort of responsibility for the European project. In addition to this it should be said that Italy during its membership in the EU experienced a great economic boom in the late 1950's and early 1960's and in these years Italy became part of the "rich" European countries (Harder 1999, p. 146ff). In the first two decades of European community, Italy went from being very poor to becoming an important economic factor and even though it was with United States as a role model, the European community played its part. The detail that the European Community is established in Rome with the treaty of Rome is yet another small piece in a pro-European puzzle.

Another significant factor in Italian politics concerning the identification with Europe is that almost every political party from right to left in the political scale are basically pro-EU. The parties can surely disagree on many issues concerning the European Union and the future set-up, but at the end of the day the Italian attachment to Europe is never questioned. The present Prime Minister Romano Prodi is a former chairman of the European commission and therefore easily placed as pro-EU and so was former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (Montanari 2007). Despite the fact that Berlusconi had his disputes, to say the least, in Brussels he was still very much positively orientated towards the European project. Even the charismatic leader of the rightwing party Alleanza Nazionale Gianfranco Fini highlights the fact of the political consensus at being positive towards the European Union and stresses that the Italian right-wing has always been pro-EU (Fini 2003, p.16).

A further feature of a belonging to Europe could be found in the corruption and distrust from a great part of the Italian toward the bureaucratic system in Rome. One could easily get the idea that a way of giving power the European Union is that it doesn't matter to the Italians if the laws are being made in Rome or Brussels. This argument could also be valid for the identification with the region/city as could the following – arguments against the belonging the nation state and then either pro Europe or pro region/city depending on the eye that sees.

The weak or sometimes missing Italian nation-state is an important factor that is weakening the national belonging and pushing the Italians either towards Europe or towards the identification of their region/city (Loggia 1998, p. 113ff). Ernesto Galli della Loggia writes in his "*L'Identità Italiana*" (1998) that the lack of a strong and functional state is a part of the entire Italian history. Loggia tries to explain the prejudices such as "nothing works in Italy" and "It is not just difficult to govern Italy it is useless" (ibid.). These prejudices and others are also part of the Italians own description of Italy, where "the grass is always greener on the other side". Adrian Favell (2002) emphasizes this auto-criticism as an important part of the Italian identity – saying for instance that the hospitals don't work is one way of devaluating the state. Favell calls it the *criticoni-syndrom*, when Italian intellectuals tend to complain and protest in a sometimes excessively self-critical way (Favell 2002, p. 237). Perhaps too many *criticoni* make it harder to believe in a strong and well functioning state – so why not identify oneself with Europe instead.

The weak state is also a product of the political picture in Italian history from the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War up until *Mani-Pulite* in the beginning of the 1990's. None of the three big political parties had national references: The Christian Democrats (Democrazia cristiana) referred to the religion and US, the Communist Party (Partito comunista) to the Internationalism and USSR and the Socialist Party (Partito socialista) had its roots in the objection of the two others (Lazar 2007, p. 70). None of them were too nationalistic and both the internationalism in the Communist Party and the religious aspect in the Christian Democrats have probably moved the belonging of the Italian citizens to a broader level – away from the borders of Italy.

Having mentioned the religious aspects it is also important to stress the role played by the church. First of all the strong commitment to the catholic church in Italy - with almost 40% active catholic in the country – is evident (Introvigne 2002). The church is borderless and in this way one could state that the Italians are used to see themselves as a part of something bigger. In this matter it is not the belonging to Europe, but more a belonging to the Christian community in the world and this is still in opposition to both the nation Italy and the region/city. The second important argument when it comes to the church is the fact that the creation of Italy was very much in conflict with the Vatican state (Lazar 2007, p. 67 & 71). Rome was conquered in 1870, even though the Pope felt as a prisoner in the state of Italy. Another aspect from the Risorgimento years is that one of the most important (if not the) philosophical father Giuseppe Mazzini<sup>4</sup> always believed in a federal European state. In other words one of the central figures in the most patriotic period in Italian history dreamt both of an Italian state, and also of a European constitution (Harder 1999, p. 39f)

When referring to the creation of Italy it is also clear that with such a new country (1871) it is easier to feel a strong identification with Europe as a continent.

Another argument in this analysis as to why some Italians feel a strong identification with Europe is a paradoxical one. The pride of exporting important political thinkers such as Machiavelli, Dante etc. and having strongly influenced the rest of Europe both during the Roman Empire (with the legacy in both politics and law in mind) but also for instance during the renaissance and other cultural periods is big. When Alleanza Nazionale leader Gianfranco Fini talks of an European identity he stresses that the European culture *is* the European identity and that the Italian culture is present everywhere in Europe today (Fini 2003, p. 21). In a way one could say that the influence from Italians in common European history makes some Italians feel a close tie to Europe.

At a referendum in 1989 more than 90% Italians voted “yes” to whether the European Parliament should create a constitution for the United States of Europe. The referendum had no consequences, but this shows just how much the Italians see themselves as Europeans (Harder 1999, p. 202). In 2007 the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the treaty of Rome was celebrated heavily in Rome, as a reminder of just how

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<sup>4</sup> More on Giuseppe Mazzini can be found in Pecora 2001, p. 156-162.

important Europe is for Italy. It is in other words hard to find in Italian who is not proud of belonging to Europe, the difficult task is to explore whether it is as a primary belonging or secondary.

Several key arguments as to why some Italians consider themselves as primarily European have been put forward above. The positivism towards Europe is a thing that both Italian citizens and Italian politicians can agree on, but it is not a common thing in Italy (Lazar 2007, p.72).

## 4.2 Italians and the Belonging to Italy

Event though the state is considered historically weak by many and that almost every political party is basically positive towards the European Union many aspects point to a belonging to Italy. This section discusses why some Italians could feel themselves as primarily belonging to Italy – in other words what Italian nationalism is made of and also what make Italians, Italians.

To begin with, it is obvious that history plays a vital part. The Italians are proud of their (ancient) history and it is clear than even though the state can be considered weak as stressed in section 4.1, the nation can at the same time be considered strong (Montanari 2007). A missing state yes, but also a strong national identity - build on cultural features and artist in.

Another factor that makes some Italians feel a strong tie to their nation is the “made in Italy” trademark: a sign of quality when it comes to the clothing industry, design, food and wine. For many Italians these are areas which make them proud of being Italians.

However, a historical period that Italians are not so proud of is the period between the two World Wars under the Mussolini regime (1922-1943). Nevertheless this is also to be considered as an important period for the birth of a sense of belonging to Italy. After the 1<sup>st</sup> World War many Italians felt badly treated and the myth of the loss of the now Croatian city Fiume at the Versailles negotiation. This was used in the growing nationalist movement and in the years after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War sense of belonging to Italy grew in the country (Harder 1999, p. 98f). Without discussing the fascist years it can be said that Mussolini did a great deal to stimulate a nationalist feeling in Italy. Another period creating a strong national identification in the country is the period of the big economic boom from the mid 1950’s. The reduction of the analphabetic-problem and the creation of mass-media with both TV and Radio is an important step in homogenizing the country and creating a feeling of belonging even in regions hardly reached by any media prior to this date (Lazar 2007, p.72).

In today’s politics both Alleanza Nazionale with Gianfranco Fini and Forza Italia with Berlusconi use the national rhetoric. Fini has been moderate in the past decade or so though and it can be argued that Berlusconi in his years in power has used politics to gain own interest in favor of those of the country. It should be said however, that the name Forza Italia (i.e. *come on Italy!*) for a political party was unthinkable twenty years ago and that Berlusconi is surely playing the

nationalistic card in the political debate (Lazar 2007, p. 78). The problem for Fini and his Alleanza Nazionale is that in spite of being a right-wing nationalistic party Fini is careful not to draw attention to the country's fascist history (ibid.). This leads back to the argument that the Italians that feel the belonging to Italy as the most important, justify this feeling primarily on the historic heritage from great personalities in for instance science and art; on the beauty of the country including the city of arts such as Rome and Florence and on the modern export successes as design, food and wine. In other words a national identity, build on cultural heritage and not on a strong nation-state (Montanari 2007).

The pride of being Italian increased during the 1990's, where the younger generation didn't necessarily feel a stronger belonging to the country, but they did feel some pride in being Italians (Loughlin 2001, p. 221). Paradoxically enough with the rise to power of Silvio Berlusconi, playing on all his national pride, many Italians felt the pride of being Italians themselves declining. Being Italian abroad was soon followed with a demand for explanation from foreigners of the phenomenon Berlusconi at home (Montanari 2007).

A significant personality working for a national identity has surely been former president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi<sup>5</sup>. Ciampi put great importance in important national markers such as the use of the flag (*il tricolore*), the national anthem and on national marking days (Lazar 2007, p. 78ff). It is important to stress that Ciampi tried to be patriotic and not nationalistic because of the past of Italian nationalism. Ciampi delivered several patriotic speeches and became more and more popular during his spell as president. With over 80% backing him up in December 2005 it could seem that many were in favor for his patriotic crusade (Harder 2007). The work of Ciampi has surely been an uphill fight as a study by Renato Mannheimer in 2003 showed that 60% of the population didn't have a national flag at home and half the population knew the music, but only some words in the national anthem (Mannheimer 2003, p. 50). It is again worth mentioning that the Italian nationalism is based on culture and, as showed by Mannheimer, not on nation-state symbols as the national anthem or the flag.

The national identification in Italy is awakening when big occasions in the world happen. This was the case with the killing of 19 Italian police officers and numerous wounded in Nassiriya (Iraq) which brought together the entire nation with thousands visiting the coffins at the *Vittoriano* monument in Rome. Other more joyful events are the sports events. Medals at the Olympics for instance makes every Italian proud and of course the football World Cup triumph's in 1982 and 2006 are something that brings *Il Tricolore* to the streets and this in soccer, which is normally known for creating diversities among cities and regions in Italy.

The growing skepticism towards immigrants in Italy is a sign of a growing nationalism from the 1990's and forward. Renato Mannheimer (2003) shows in his work that more than half the Italian population thinks that the immigrants threaten the Italian culture (Mannheimer 2003, p. 107).

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<sup>5</sup> Ciampi was the tenth Italian president, 1999-2006.

An argument used for explaining Italian nationalism in this thesis is Language. The Italian identity and Language is a long and difficult dispute. At the time of the unification of Italy the Italian language was only spoken by a small minority (the elite) (Bedani & Haddock 2000, p. 98f). In that time the Italian language was obviously creating a belonging for the region/city, but things look very much different now. In the years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War the Italian language exported from the elite to the masses. This was done due to the fact that the official Italian was the language of the newspapers, television, electronic communication, bureaucracy and is now virtually spoken by everyone (Bedani & Haddock 2000, p. 110).

The belonging to Italy does surely exist despite its difficulties and a pride of being Italian is very much alive in the Italian society.

### 4.3 Italians and the Belonging to the Region/City

After having dealt with the Europeanisms and the Italianness of Italian national identity the following section will emphasize the belonging to the region/city. It is first discussed if the third identification should be labeled region or city in the Italian context and afterwards a number of arguments follow that can explain why some Italians feel that their region/city is their primary belonging.

An important term in this matter is *campanilismo*. The makeup of Italian society is, in fact, quite fragmented and instead of feeling the sense of belonging to the country, many Italians have a geographical bond on a much smaller scale, usually to their village, or *campanilismo* (Boncompagni 2001, p. 241). This strong belonging to the local village or city is a deep grounded identity in the Italian society and can be explained partly with the fact that Italy as a nation-state is only approximately 150 years old.

Furthermore it took the Italian state very long time to reach the smaller provinces, where the clientelism was (and somewhere is) the link between the town and the government (Santomassimo 2003, p. 108ff). It didn't (or doesn't) matter a great deal if the region/town was (is) under Italian, Spanish or a third power. It was (is) still the local mafia boss, who set the rules; delivered the jobs and so on.

On the political level the regions play an important role. A special federal situation is created for the regions Sardegna, Sicilia, Val d'Aosta, Trentino Alto-Adige and Friuli Venezia-Gulia (Lazar 2007, p.69). These regions tend to identify themselves with something a little different from the Italian nation-state. Several political parties have had its roots in regional issues, but only a few with electoral power. These are the Northern League<sup>6</sup>, The South Tyrol People's Party, the Valdostan Union and the Sardinian Action Party (Kellas 2004, p. 103). All four

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<sup>6</sup> More on Lega Nord later on in the thesis.

represent *nations* within Italy (according to themselves) and are obviously receiving far the most electoral support in their local areas with a small exception in the Northern League (Lega Nord) (*ibid.*).

The Northern League and its former leader Umberto Bossi took advantage of the *Mani-Pulite* scandals in the early and mid 1990's where the established parties were all eliminated. The Northern League received 8% and 10% to the parliament at the 1994 and 1996 elections respectively and took part in the Berlusconi coalition – paradoxically with Alleanza Nazionale and Gianfranco Fini. Many voted Lega Nord because it was a vote for change and against the established political system; these votes were lost in the next two elections (i.e. in 2001 and 2006) where the party took 3.9 and 4.6 percent, respectively, of the votes (<http://www.electionresources.org/it>, last visited on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2007). Almost the same numbers are valid for the election to the senate. The Northern League is originally a federation of various parties or Leagues in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Piedmont, Tuscany and Venice – brought together by the charismatic leadership of Umberto Bossi (Cedroni 2007, p. 247ff; Kellas 2004, p. 103f). Lega Nord originally fights for independence for the lands north of the river Po, the *Padania*, but in reality and more evident in the new millennium the party supports the idea of a federal Italy. Umberto Bossi is no longer active in the party on the national level due to an illness in 2004 and the real fight for independence for the north states is no longer as active as in the early days of the party's history. Furthermore the party receives many votes for its harsh politics when it comes to for instance criminality and immigration (Bull 2000, p. 259ff). Few of the voters for Lega Nord actually believe in an independent Padania and this is due to the lack of historical roots. Lega Nord is different from the majority of other regionalist parties in Europe due to the lack of historic claims to nationhood in its area. Instead the Northern Party has tried to invent an identity for the North of Italy to accompany its political project (Giordano 2002, p. 170).

As a conclusion to the regional aspect this thesis agrees with scientists such as Arianna Montanari (2007) that a third belonging in Italy, besides Europe and Italy, is the city. Including in the word city is small villages or towns and therefore the concept of *campanilismo*. And one must agree that the phenomenon is important in Italy. It is of the utmost importance for a person born in Florence that he is Florentine and not from Siena for instance. This belonging to a small community is also strong in the importance of the family. Having a strong family tie is something the Italians care about and for many the family comes first. With this in mind it is easy to follow the trace from the family to the small community in the village. Even many people studying and living in Rome for instance talk with pride of the heritage and strong community in the village outside Avellino or wherever. Furthermore the *campanilismo* can also be strong inside the bigger cities in a way that it suddenly is not enough to be Roman, but one identify oneself as being Trasteveriano<sup>7</sup> for instance.

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<sup>7</sup> Trasteverino refers to the part Trastevere in Rome.



This is of course strongly connected with the clientelism syndrome, a history of changing powers in the Italian peninsula and with the long distances in the country: only 60 years ago many Sicilians didn't know what went on, on the other side of the mountains in the horizon, they had never seen the ocean and knew roughly nothing about the country which they were officially citizen's of (Harder 1999, p. 146).

A brief look at the most important sport in Italy, football, can tell us more about the importance of the city. The rivalry between many cities goes deep and is something to take very seriously. Great rivalry is at stake and the Italian police force has surely plenty to do handling football related violence. Even matches with teams outside the Serie A<sup>8</sup> between for instance Avellino and Napoli are rated as high-risk matches.

So in a world of rapid change and globalization, where identity confusion and multiple identities are being broad up a near leak hole for many Italians is their local community and their family. The frightening aspect of the changing world leads to a feeling of belonging to something static and traditional. For many Italians with a new and in some eyes weak state, the city is the place to belong.

## 4.4 Globalization and Belonging in the Italian Context

Even though globalization played a role in the three sections above, it will be stressed even clearer in the following. This is done to highlight its importance in Italian identity and therefore to make it clear that the current discussions of Italian belonging is coursed by globalization. Despite the fact that each country obviously has its own identity-makers, one could argue that globalization transforms these and creates a new agenda. Knowledge of other cultures and identities and a connection to the rest of the continent creates new sets of looking at national identity and belonging. This knowledge of other identities can be used to both reinforce ones own identity ("we are not like them, we are different, we belong to Italy/Rome"), but also to embrace other identities ("we are not that different, we belong to Europe"). Which of these three above discussed identities is the most predominant in Italy today?

All three sets of belonging put forward above are very much alive in the Italian identity today. Each of them has roots in history, but one could say that before the *Risorgimento* of the XIX century the belonging the locality was prevailing. With the creation of an Italian nation-state a long project of creating a common Italian identity began. This project took a detour during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and in the years to follow. In these years the European project gained pace and the Italian people stood united behind it. It is often held up as a paradox that

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<sup>8</sup> Serie A is the highest Italian football league.

the Italians are both the most “regional” and “European” of all European countries. This can though be explained with the fact that Italians see the European community through less nationalistic eyes than their fellow Europeans, due to their stronger belonging to their region/city. One could argue that the diversity among the Italian population actually is an essential piece of the common Italian identity (Montanari 2007; Davidsen 2007; Harder 2007). As said earlier many aspects in all three sets of belonging dates back in time, but as globalization increases the significance of identity, the diversities between the three sets of belonging are becoming clearer and more vital. A firm, never changing belonging is impossible to find and this leads surely to some sort of crisis.

In the present time of globalization we have arrived at a time where all three identifications seem to have a sense of importance. Studying where the Italians belong in general terms from above, seems to give no single precise answer. It is hard to deliver a core-identity for the majority of the Italian people – where do they in general feel that they belong in a global world?

Having emphasized that all three sets of belonging are present and significant and applying the theoretical framework developed in this thesis, the options in this identity-crisis can be two:

- 1) The tri-belonging above is a demonstration of an identity-confusion where the traditional sets of identification have been deleted or somewhat transformed by the globalization and the Italians as a population are confused and find it difficult to unite behind a core-belonging.
- 2) The tri-belonging above is an expression of hybrid identity where the Italians take on an identification-mask according to the situation. They can each feel all three sets of belonging, either depending on the *Other* in a specific context or simply three sets of belonging in the same time.

No matter the two answers given above, a conclusion drawn from the analysis could be that the core-belonging for the Italians is hard to find and that a sort of identity crisis is taken place. When they lay their heads on the pillow at night they don't feel a belonging to the same thing. Some feel a belonging to Europe, some to Italy and some to their city. This is due to the factors analyzed above, but if this thesis should pick one out it would be the short experience of a strong state before being put under pressure by the processes of globalization. Other and older nation-states can in some way act as a safeguard against globalization. The Italians did not have a strong nationalistic identity to fall back on and are therefore divided in belonging.

As emphasized in the theoretical overview globalization increases the importance of identity and the feeling of belonging is as important today as ever. Having studied the Italian case it can be concluded that *an identity crisis is present*. The gravity of the crisis can be discussed and the opinions are many. The opinions concerning what can or should be done are just as many and this is neither the time nor place for this discussion.

Without analyzing other cases, as this thesis only focuses on Italy, it can be concluded that Italy politically speaking is a complex paradox of pro-EU, nationalist- and secessionist movements (Kennedy 2004, p. 107). Nevertheless it doesn't seem to be these different standpoints that make Italian politics unique, on the contrary national identity and belonging have for a long time been in 2<sup>nd</sup> row.

## 5 Conclusion

The two interconnected parts laid out from the beginning of this thesis were the construction of a theoretical overview in the field of study of identity and globalization and a case study of Italian identity today where it was asked where the Italians feel that they belong.

The first step in analyzing where the Italians belong was the creation of a theoretical overview and discussion. Here it was concluded that this era of globalization creates, theoretically speaking, a transformation in identity. This transformation could for instance lead to an identity confusion or hybrid identity – both results of an identity crisis. This thesis states that globalization, understood as the current period in time, indeed transforms identity and creates a new basis for belonging. The processes of globalization increase the importance of identity and in the same time create a crisis for both identity and belonging.

Second part of the thesis was a case study of the national Italian identity. It was asked whether the Italians feel themselves as belonging to Europe, Italy or their region/city. It can be concluded that *each* of these identities certainly exists in Italy and they are *all* significant. This can lead to the conclusion that globalization in the case of Italy creates or maintains identity-diversity. There does not seem to be one single set of belonging in the Italian population and a core identity is not obvious – a crisis of belonging is present.

One main observation of this thesis is however that identity and belonging in this era of globalization is incomplete and fluid, a contradictory and fragmented process without end. The Italians' feeling of belonging is under constant change and indeed fragmented.

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