

Original article

Question of national identity as a part of the cultural security of Italy

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ABSTRACT

The research subject discussed in the article is the main conditions of the cultural nationality of The Italian Republic.

In the first part of the text, the notions of spiritual and material cultural heritage and the concept of national identity are described and explained. Next, the problem of Italian national identity is discussed. The Italian Republic is a young state with a strong regional identity and still weak national identity. Italy is inhabited by many ethnic groups, often characterized by diverse cultures and customs. The situation is complicated by the Italian Peninsula's history, which contributed to the conflict of interest between the north and south. The author analyzes history, language, and religion, searching for common elements determining Italian nationality. Italian society, as mentioned above, has still been searching for its national identity. Unification of the nation is a process that is in progress. It is still a challenge for both the authorities and the citizens.

Finally, the elements of Italian material cultural heritage are characterized, and the domains of cultural heritage and the institutions responsible for their security are described.

KEYWORDS

cultural security, culture, national identity, the Italian Republic



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Introduction

Cultural security (apart from political, military, economic, ecologic, ideological, and social security) is one of the security types of thematic nature. There is a distinct correlation between the security types mentioned above, and cultural security seems to permeate other security dimensions. Some researchers rank cultural security into social security. In the light of challenges related to the phenomenon of globalization, it should be treated as a separate, significant issue of research, especially when preferred until now by the Occident multiculturalism seems to experience a real crisis.

Cultural security, as a significant element of national security, determines the continuance of a country. The Italian Republic is quite a young country, and society has been searching for its

shared identity. A nation can not exist without culture. Therefore, it is crucial to answering the question: what is culture and which factors provide its security.

Culture and cultural security

According to Jan Pruszyński, the concept of culture is “the totality of spiritual, intellectual and physical acquis, created by individuals and the collectivity, preserved and strengthened, as well as the attitude towards its components” [1, p. 61-62]. Leonard Karakowsky presents a different view on the notion of culture. According to his definition, “culture is a symbol of communication” [2]. The concept of culture is often identified with the notion of civilization. Quoting Edward Burnett Taylor, “culture as a civilization in the broadest ethnographic context, is a concept involving knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, law, customs, and other abilities and habits, earned by a human as a member of a society” [3].

The concept of cultural security is linked to the notion of culture. Marek Bodziany defines cultural security as “a constant and essential element of national security placed in an international reality, related to the nonphysical (spiritual), physical and social realm of culture considered at all its levels and all the elements of social structure; as well as to national identity, representing the core of activities of all the subjects responsible for creating the cultural asset of a country and its image in the international arena” [4, p. 109].

Jan Czaja lists the following factors of cultural identity [5, p. 82]:

1. Protection of spiritual culture values, significant for national identity, including religion, language, historical traditions, customs, philosophy, literature, ideology, etc.
2. Protection of physical domains of culture and national heritage e.g., monuments, churches, palaces, works of art, urban complexes with historical layouts, and other essential objects.
3. A sense of cultural security concerning a nation – individual national security – freedom of creating ethnic groups – cultural distinctiveness.
4. The concept of openness of culture, which is significant for its historical development, the balance between the internal development of a culture based on traditional values and its protection against the intrusive influence of other cultures with simultaneous internalization of non-conflicting elements.
5. Foreign cultural policy – promoting native culture and creating conditions to develop unrestrainedly.
6. Close association between the concept of cultural security, foreign policy, and domestic policy of a country and national security strategy.

The factors shaping national security also include national character. According to Józef Kocur, national character is “a set of personal and cultural characteristics considered as typical for members of a particular nation, and it functions as a stereotype based on the belief that the character of those qualities exists in that society. Apart from them, national character is also formed by particular attitudes, the value system, individual and social beliefs that are conveyed in the science, culture, and art of a particular nation. A complex of psychobiological and culture-social characteristics featuring and creating a particular stereotype of national character should then influence behavior and social attitudes functioning in the nation” [6].

According to George W.F. Hegel, the most remarkable German philosopher of the 19th century, the Italian, similarly to other Roman nations, “stubbornly stick to abstraction, that is why

they lack rich inner life” [7, p. 309]. Essential issues are confined to the Church and believed to be solved themselves. The German philosopher considers “separation of religious interests from secular ones, i.e., dichotomization in the sense of one’s own” [7, p. 309] as the Italian nation’s main characteristic. The decline in inner life causes it. Religious practices are held externally. The secular factor is not encumbered by religion [7, p. 309]. The next common characteristic shaping the Italian national character is that Italy is mainly an urban civilization. Cities have always been at the center of culture. There was a rivalry between the cities, but they often made alliances. Then, the Italian identity and culture were both developing [8]. Urbanization is a characteristic quality of Italian history. The system of cities established in ancient times remained unaltered until now. They symbolize stability and continuity the Italians are still aware of. The Roman settlements and cities were important cultural centers. They played a significant role in creating the national identity. For centuries until modern times, the inhabitants of The Italian Peninsula have prioritized the local identity over the general Italian one [8]. Edmund Lewandowski accurately claims that numerous ethnic accumulations have shaped the Roman nations “due to the convergence of various cultures. On the Italian Peninsula and the Iberian Peninsula, there is the largest ethnic mixture” [9, p. 87-88]. Thus, modern Italy is a variegated and diverse conglomeration of social, ethnic groups.

The problem of national identity in the Italian Republic

The key factor of cultural security is its identity.

Aristotle listed three forms of identity. The first one differentiates an individual from collectivity. It is a quantitative identity. The second one is a qualitative identity – that means indicating one’s characteristics that distinguish an individual from others. The third form is a specific identity that identifies an individual with a larger collectivity [10, p. 35]. On the other hand, John Locke listed two types of identity: relative, describing the way others perceive an individual, and subjective – how individuals perceive themselves [10, p. 35].

The concept of awareness is closely linked with the concept of identity. According to Mariusz Kubiak, individual awareness can be defined dichotomously: “On the one hand, as an ability to reflect the objective reality and to understand it accurately as well as the processes taking place in it. On the other hand, it is also becoming aware of oneself – one’s thoughts, aims, actions, and one’s attitude towards the outside world” [11, p. 53]. Thus, individuals’ self-awareness enables them to determine their identity and find their place in the larger society. It can be a nation or a smaller collectivity, e.g., inhabitants of a particular region, city, or village.

Jerzy Kunikowski defines the concept of the nation as a group of people “connected by shared language, religion, history, and traditions; however nations evince different levels of cultural heterogeneity” [12, p. 74]. Therefore, national identity is “a reflective attitude to a nation towards oneself: collective self-knowledge, self-assessment, the depiction of oneself” [13, p. 187].

National affiliation consists of two factors. The first one is a genetic factor, the biological background. The second one is a psychological factor, national awareness. Both the factors can coincide, or one of them can appear [14, p. 60]. According to Leszek Kołakowski, history is the primary bond of a nation. It differentiates a particular society from the rest of the world. Historical awareness creates an emotional bond [15, p. 100-114], thereby creating a national identity. According to Jan Pomorski, historical awareness elements include the knowledge of the past derived from literature, art, scientific works, films, folk memory, and

historical experience. Assessment of past events and their accurate commemorating is also significant [16, p. 10]. Cultural identity is also an integral part of national identity. It can be defined as “awareness and inner acceptance of affiliation to the particular cultural field and emotional relationship with its traditions, acquis and today” [11, p. 54]. Omar Calabrese claims that identity can be called “national” when there exists a national perception, and a society identifies itself with a particular nation [10, p. 36].

When individuals identify themselves with local society, it is a local identity. “Campanile” – local patriotism formed in ancient Italy. The name comes from the word ‘campanile’ which means bell towers of a parish church. Thus, it is a parochial patriotism, the bond with the habitation [8]. Because of the historical background, Italians are often more associated with their region than with the country and the Italian society. Local patriotism dominates national patriotism, and the regions rival with each other in many aspects. Then the question is – what factors determine Italian identity?

History, race, language, and culture can be regarded as factors determining identity. According to the author quoted above, it is not easy to find any common roots in such a young country as Italy, which is only 170 years old. Apart from the catholic religion that cannot act as statehood independently, it is not easy to point out other elements that could be a solid basis of the national identity of The Italian Republic. Faith and the Church are universal, monotheistic, and for this reason, they cannot be national identity indicators as they are in, e.g., Judaism [10, p. 41].

The Italians are the multiethnic nation [10, p. 41]. The ethnic diversity stems from the history of the Italian Peninsula. Numerous civilizations inhabited ancient Italy. The largest one was the Romans, who lived in the central part of the peninsula. They were called the Latins; they derived from the most prominent ethnic group—the Italic peoples. In the north, there lived the Etruscans. The Greeks inhabited the coasts of Sicily, Calabria, and Puglia. Minor ethnic groups that resettled Italy are the Ligures, the Celts, the Adriatic Veneti in the north, the Sicels in Sicily. On the Italian Peninsula, there was also a country established by the Phoenicians-Carthage. There prevailed two significant civilizations – Spanish and Austrian in the 16th-18th century on contemporary Italy’s territory [8]. All those civilizations and nations created contemporary Italian culture.

The issue of Italian nations appeared as the country was established. Until the Italian unification, known as the Risorgimento, there was a geopolitical disruption in 1861 on the Italian Peninsula [17, p. 59]. The Italian identity did not exist earlier. After the Risorgimento, one of the fundamental problems was the differences between the regions on the north and south [18, p. 234]. The vast part of the society was attached to the former regional division. Thus, the unification of the nation became the main challenge. The Italian unification resulted from the domestic war and was not approved by the whole society. The lack of Catholic Church advocacy meant that the leadership was deprived of the moral authority source. The Italian nation lacked common politics. The attempts to create history in the spirit of patriotism made by the propagandists were too far-fetched and unable to convince the people. Disappointment started to accumulate. The newly established country faced with the still not solved problem of national identity. A spiritual breakdown would mean the real breakdown of the country. Thus, patriotism was built by the saints’ cult, by memories, and by making Garibaldi and Victor Emanuel II national heroes [18, p. 234].

The unification of all the Italian people, regardless of views and classes, was one of the main assumptions and tasks of fascism. Solidarity and national unity became the fundamental

conditions to create a powerful society able to win in the great revolutionary war [8]. During the times of fascism, theatre art, concerts, and film shows were used to create the nation [18, p. 176].

The process of creating a common nation is very long [17, p. 141]. The Italian national identity should still be enhanced. The search for this identity should be started with the geographical position of Italy. The country is situated mainly on the Italian Peninsula. Naturally, such a location sets the state borders [17, p. 7]. Thus, there is a concept of the inhabitants of The Italian Peninsula as a particular community. National mythology with national heroes in the leading role is an essential factor determining identity. Its task is to integrate the community, unify life goals, and provide symbolic identity patterns [19, p. 20]. Historical and literary characters can be such heroes. National symbols such as flags and anthems are also important for creating the identity. The authorities' task is creating a modern society promoting Italian culture and tradition [17, p. 141-142]. The Italian identity consists not only from the country's physical characteristics but mostly from its spirit and culture shaped by Catholicism and Latin language. Italy was seen as the major civilization in Europe [17, p. 31]. Latin-catholic heritage as an intellectual element is a factual basis of cultural identity and cultural security of the Italian Peninsula inhabitants. It also had a significant influence on the process of shaping European culture. Native language became an essential element in shaping national identity. It is an essential communication tool, facilitates internal migrations and differentiates a community from other groups. According to Guliano Amato, language is one of the most critical forms of national identification [20, p. 11]. The Italian word *la madrelingua*, which means a native language contains the word *madre* (mother), indicating that it is an ancestors' language. There are also vital links between the language, the culture, and Italian identity. The Italian language was created based on the Florentine dialect in which Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarca wrote [20, p. 12].

The following language variations are distinguished in the Italian Republic [21, p. 12]:

1. Standard Italian – the official language.
2. Regional Italian.
3. Dialect.

The standard Italian is an official communication code, but it is not a language of the first socialization. In their everyday life, the inhabitants use most often regional languages and dialects. Bruno Migliorini emphasizes that a language has political and social-cultural status and a deeply rooted literary tradition. It is also used at schools, in offices, and other public establishments. It is the mean of cross-regional communication. It appears in all the social-cultural life areas [22, p. 43].

Factors that contributed to the language unification in a significant way are:

4. The unification of Italy.
5. The industrial revolution.
6. Internal migrations.
7. National media, e.g., television, radio.
8. Education (at all the education levels).

Long after the unification, the inhabitants did not communicate via one common language. Gradually military service and television influenced the situation improvement [23]. Regional languages and dialects pose a strong opposition to the Italian language. Dialect is a language system used in a particular area only in the social and cultural environment [24, p. 570]. It

cannot be used in an official context. It should be noticed that many Italians still use only regional language.

Contemporary Italian people use the Italian language, a dialect, or just one of them. The largest part of the community communicating with the Italian language lives in Tuscany, Liguria, and Latium. The smallest part is placed in the Region of Veneto, Calabria, and Trento. In Veneto, Calabria, Basilicata, Sicily, Campania, and others, most of society still speaks only dialects (Fig. 1).

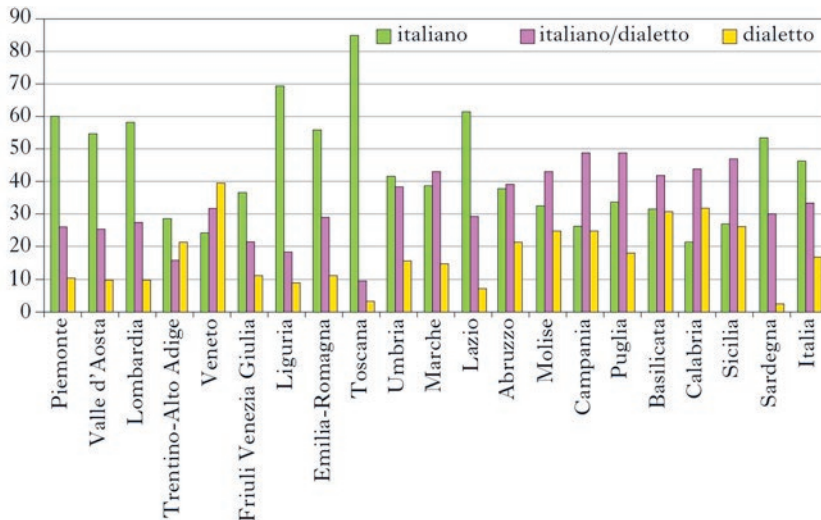


Fig. 1. The Italian Language vs. dialect
Source: [25].

Nowadays, the Italian language develops also via the internet, mainly via social media and numerous internal migrations.

Protection of tangible national heritage

The tangible national heritage of the Italian Republic protection is an essential factor of cultural security.

“The threats in the area of tangible culture are much more reachable than in symbolic culture, thus assessing the state of cultural security is easier and more measurable” [26, p. 43].

The main threats of tangible national heritage are [27]:

1. Theft or damage to works of art and monuments as a result of an armed conflict.
2. Theft in order to receive an individual material benefit.
3. Vandalism – the deliberate destruction of monuments and works of art.
4. Damage to a work of art or a monument during transport.
5. Damage of monuments caused by forces of nature.

It is worth pointing out that the Italian national heritage is an integral part of world national heritage. The world national heritage is handled by the United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organisation – UNESCO. UNESCO's main task is identifying, protecting, and transmitting the cultural heritage to the succeeding generations [28]. In the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris 16 November 1972, it is stated that national heritage includes [29]:

1. Monuments. including paintings, sculptures, architecture, structures and elements of structures of architectural character, grottos, writings, and elements of historical value.
2. Buildings complexes important from the point of view of science, history, and culture.
3. Monumental places – works of humans and nature or archeological sites important from the anthropological, ethnological, historical, and esthetic point of view.

Countries are obligated to identify, protect, and maintain cultural heritage. Therefore, they should pursue a valid policy, establish protection, carry out revalorization, maintain forces, do scientific research, and develop studies that will enable them to minimize the threats of cultural heritage and support educational centers in maintaining revalorization and protection of cultural property [29].

The UNESCO convention covers 1092 objects of cultural and natural heritage, of which 54 is on the territory of The Italian Republic. Five ones belong to the natural heritage, the following seven are the cultural landscapes, and the rest are monuments, works of art, structures or structures complexes, and excavations [28]. Another important document regulating cultural property protection is the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The countries obliged to “foster in the members of their armed forces a spirit of respect for the culture and cultural property of all peoples” [30].

The protection of cultural heritage was included in the constitution of the Italian Republic. Article 117 stipulates that the protection of goods is an obligation of the country. In Article 9, it is stated that the Italian Republic supports the development of culture and protects the historical and artistic heritage [31].

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism of the Italian Republic are in charge of protecting and promoting the cultural heritage. It realizes its policy by doing research work and by education, by organizing and financing events concerning culture, by supporting museums and libraries, cinemas, excavations, parks and landscaped that are parts of the national heritage, contemporary art, and architecture and also by promoting Italian culture in the world [32]. The detailed provisions on cultural heritage were included in The Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape. In the document, there are provisions concerning the protection of the national heritage, including cultural and landscape heritage. The cultural goods, real assets, and movable property of historical, nature, cultural, morphological, or aesthetic value are the society's property and need to be protected by the state. In the decree, the imperative to promote knowledge on cultural heritage and reinforcement of the protection of the cultural goods are listed [33].

To protect the monuments and works of arts, the Italian Carabinieri Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage operates; the carabinieri unit cooperates with other Italian police and with Interpol units. This special unit cooperates directly with the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. Italy was the first nation to establish a police unit to prevent crimes concerning exportation and retrieval of stolen cultural properties. Thus, Italy overtook the UNESCO activities in terms of protection of tangible cultural heritage [34].

The significant part of the cultural heritage of The Italian Republic belongs to the Catholic Church. It is connected with a long history of Christianity on the Italian Peninsula. In Italy, there are 226 dioceses, approximately 100,000 churches, 826 catholic museums, and 5,500 church libraries [35].

In 1996 the number of museums, monuments, and galleries was 463. Table 1 shows the division into regions. Every year there are more and more places connected to art, history, and culture.

Table 1. Allocation of museums, monuments, galleries, and archaeological sites in the regions

Allocation of museums, monuments, galleries, and archaeological sites in the regions		
region	number	%
Abruzzo	17	3.68
Basilicata	9	1.94
Calabria	13	2.81
Campania	64	13.82
Emilia-Romagna	27	5.83
Friuli-VeneziaGiulia	27	5.83
Lazio	73	15.77
Liguria	21	4.56
Lombardy	17	3.67
Marche	6	1.3
Molise	6	1.3
Piedmont	27	5.83
Apulia	19	4.1
Sardinia	25	5.4
Sicily	No data	No data
Tuskany	57	12.31
Sudtriol	8	1.73
Umbria	19	4.1
Aosta Valley	No data	No data
Veneto	28	6.05
Total	463	100
North	155	33.48
Centre	155	33.48
South	153	33.04

Source: Based on [27].

The cultural wealth of the Italian Republic also contains state institutions such as 13,000 libraries, 3,500 museums, 20,000 castles, historical complexes, villas, palaces, archeological areas, and archives [35].

Conclusion

Factors influencing the form of cultural security and the national security of The Italian Republic are mainly history, catholic religion, national character, and language. Italian is a nation composed of numerous social groups that very often have diverse cultures and customs. The situation is also complicated by the rich history of the Italian Peninsula, which contributed to the conflict of interests between the north and south parts of the country.

The biggest challenge for the cultural security of the Italian Republic is regionalism. Each of the regions fortifies the Italian culture with numerous significant elements – in the material sphere and the spiritual one. Nevertheless, while observing the inhabitants of Italy, it is possible to find numerous similarities that make them create a particular community.

As mentioned above, Italian society has been continuously searching for its national identity because the local patriotism is still more potent than the national bonds. The unification of the nation as a process is continuing. It is still a challenge for state authorities and the citizens.

Italian culture also embraces monuments as well as movable and immovable goods. The society owns them, and the state is obligated to protect and maintain them. Plenty of them are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and therefore they are not only Italian but also the world cultural heritage.

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Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Biographical note

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Główne uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa kulturowego Republiki Włoskiej

STRESZCZENIE

Przedmiotem rozważań podjętych w artykule są najważniejsze uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa kulturowego Republiki Włoskiej.

W pierwszej części tekstu opisano i wyjaśniono zagadnienia z zakresu duchowego i materialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego oraz tożsamości narodowej, najważniejszych elementów bezpieczeństwa kulturowego, które stanowi integralną część bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Następnie został poruszony problem włoskiej tożsamości narodowej. Republika Włoska to młode państwo o silnych tożsamościach regionalnych i wciąż jeszcze słabej tożsamości narodowej. Włochy zamieszkuje grup etnicznych i społecznych o często odmiennych kulturach i obyczajach. Sytuację dodatkowo komplikuje zawiła historia Półwyspu Apenińskiego, która przyczyniła się do konfliktu interesów pomiędzy północą a południem kraju. Autorka analizuje czynniki, które determinują narodowość włoską, takie jak: historia, język, religia, poszukując części wspólnych. Społeczeństwo włoskie, jak wspomniano wcześniej, wciąż poszukuje tożsamości narodowej. Zjednoczenie narodu to proces, który nadal trwa. Stanowi wciąż wyzwanie dla władz państwowych i obywateli.

Na koniec scharakteryzowano elementy materialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego Włoch oraz opisano dobra dziedzictwa kulturowego i najważniejsze instytucje odpowiedzialne za ich ochronę.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

bezpieczeństwo kulturowe, kultura, tożsamość narodowa, Republika Włoska

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