

Italy

Choosing a place for this Location/Regional Analysis Project wasn't necessarily a difficult decision. I immediately knew that the location I planned on analyzing was going to be Italy. I chose Italy because it is a country with very unique history and culture. I have always been interested in the history of Italy primarily because my father's side of the family originated from there. This makes my ethnicity half Italian, and I believe it would be interesting to learn more about the country my ancestors came from. While reading through the textbook, I decided to use Chapter Two: Population and health, Chapter Three: Migration, Chapter Four: Popular and Folk Culture, and Chapter Ten: Food and Agriculture, to assess my location. When trying to gain a better understanding of an unfamiliar place, it is important to take population and health, migration, popular and folk culture, as well as food and agriculture into consideration to gain the most knowledge possible.

Chapter 2: Population and health

Population health is such a significant factor in our world that effects everyone. When analyzing population and health over a region, it is important to first acknowledge that both population and health are two separate factors; however, they easily influence one another. Population health is based off of the different health outcomes within a certain group of individuals. When it comes to Italy's population, its numbers happen to be on the slightly larger side in comparison to other countries. It was the most popular "international tourist destination in the world until the beginning of the 80s, but then began a gradual descent in the ranking" (Angeloni, 2013, p. 17). Although Italy's ranking has decline, it is still considered one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world. This is because of the large number of visitors that Italy experiences yearly. With this being said, tourism has as a significant impact on people's

health due to “all aspects of the migration journey, including the country of origin, the transit process, the destination country, and even return journeys back to the country of origin” (De Luca, 2013, p. 2). This is quite relatable when it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic that people are witnessing all around the world right now. One of the countries that has been affected the most by the virus is Italy. In a blink of the eye, the country “went from the discovery of the first official COVID-19 case to a government decree that essentially prohibited all movements of people within the whole territory, and the closure of all non-essential business activities” (Pisano, 2020). With the virus quickly spreading across the country, and death tolls rising, it is crucial to keep people away from one another. This is currently being done by enforcing rules such as social distancing, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, as well as restricting travel—eliminating tourism and the risk of spreading the virus. It is very important to follow these precautions because population and health go hand in hand and the larger the population or groups of people, the higher the risk of becoming infected and spreading the virus. With all this being said, it is evident that population and health have a very complex relationship with one another.

Chapter 3: Migration

Every location around the world has its own individual history of what first attracted immigrants to that place, and what eventually pushed others away. Most people associate Romans as the first settlers of Italy. This is true; however, there were quite a few other groups of people who settled in Italy shortly after the Romans. The Greeks, the Sabines, and the Etruscans were a few others who inhabited Italy. This resulted in a divide throughout the country. As time went on, Italy finally became unified as a whole, but both the land and people were not. Several years of anger and bitterness had left “violence, social chaos, and widespread poverty” (Italian-The Great Arrival, n.d., p. 3), but the government was unable to help the people of Italy. As a

result, this influenced Italians to leave their homeland and migrate to other places such as the United States. Most of the Italians who were fleeing included, “farmers and laborers looking for a steady source of work—any work. There were a significant number of single men among these immigrants, and many came only to stay a short time. Within five years, between 30 and 50 percent of this generation of immigrants would return home to Italy” (Italian-The Great Arrival, n.d., p. 3). Although certain people decided to leave Italy, this decision was not permanent because “approximately 8 million people left Italy while slightly fewer than 5 million returned” (Birindelli, 1986, pg. 144). Their goal was to temporarily migrate in hope of improving their lives. Once this was achieved, they could then one day return to Italy and continue on with their better, more successful lives. However, this is not always what happened. Other Italian immigrants found themselves enjoying their new lives elsewhere and made the decision to not return to Italy. Surprisingly, immigration to Italy happens to be a fairly recent occurrence. It began in the 1970s and took off during the 1990s. Immigration to Italy was “fueled by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the expansion of the European Union, and political instability in Northern Africa. Immigrants come to Italy as asylum seekers, legal immigrants, refugees, and irregular arrivals” (De Luca, 2013, p. 2). Italy’s migration patterns are constantly shifting along with the rest of the world, and this is commonly seen as a result of economic or political factors.

Chapter 4: Popular and Folk Culture

Before diving into popular and folk culture that is significant to Italy, it is first important to understand the meaning behind both of these. Popular culture is of similar form over vast amounts of area, yet folk culture changes from place to place throughout different communities. In addition, popular culture tends to be seen in more urban locations such as towns and cities, and folk culture usually pertains to more rural areas such as the country. Due to the fact that

Italy just recently became a unified country a little over a hundred years ago, culture and traditions differ among various locations. Each area has its own different aspects that make up their own customs, traditions, and history. Despite the fact that Italy's culture and traditions vary throughout the country, art has always played a large role when it comes to Italian popular culture. The Italian Renaissance depicts a time of rebirth through the use of "Greek and Roman sculpture, painting, and decorative arts for inspiration" (Szalay, 2016). Most artwork made during this time period emphasized human beauty and nature through everyday life and emotion. Artists also focused on improving their skills by making their artwork look much more realistic and 3D through techniques such as shading, lighting, and perspective. On the other hand, tournaments, festivals, religion, and food are just a few of the things that make up Italian folk culture. Tournaments such as The Palio, bring lots of excitement and thrill to cities such as Siena. The Palio is referred to as a unique horse race that occurs twice a summer and involves "ten jockeys, representing ten of Siena's seventeen *contrade*, or districts, racing bareback three times clockwise around the main square of the city. The winning horse gains for the *contrada*, a silk banner" (Logan, 1978, p. 045). The Palio is considered folk culture rather than pop culture because it is an event that is favored and well-known to just a few cities within Italy. It is greatly admired by many because it "provides present-day competition between the city's independent districts, which symbolically recreates the cultural history of the city as a whole" (Logan, 1978, p. 046). Tournaments such as the Palio are able to keep both the history and culture alive for years to come throughout these cities.

Chapter 10: Food and Agriculture

Italy is home to some of the most unique food and cuisine, in which people from all around the world are aware of. Several iconic foods and drinks include pizza, pasta, gelato, and

wine, which are specific to Italy. One of the main reasons as to why people travel to Italy, is to experience the food and Italian culture. Italian cuisine has a wide range of ingredients that are commonly incorporated into dishes. Italian cuisine has and continues to become such a popular ethnic food because for the most part, it is made with natural ingredients and fresh, organic produce. Italy creates “a success story in organic fruit and vegetable production, by taking advantage of favorable climate and agronomic conditions and close geographic access to major markets” (Biasetti, 2013). Almost half of Italy’s land is solely used for agricultural purposes. In fact, it also happens to be the headquarters of the food and agriculture organization. In addition to signature dishes, wine is also a symbol of Italy. Since the beginning of time, Italians have made wine a part of their everyday lifestyle and they “lead the world in wine consumption by volume with 70 liters per year per head. Grapes are grown in almost every region of the country and there are more than one million vineyards under cultivation” (Monteverdi Company, 2015). Behind France, Italy is second in line when it comes to mass producing wine all over the world. Most people are familiar with Italian wine, and it is a large part of Italian culture and tradition.

Overall, population health is such a significant factor in our world that effects everyone. It is also a topic that’s quite relatable in our world as of right now regarding the pandemic of the Coronavirus which is currently affecting Italy along with the rest of our world. Migration regarding Italy was able to tell me about the history of the first settlers as well as what pushed others away. Popular and folk culture stood out to me because Italy is known for its vast history of art and culture which can be seen among certain time periods such as the Italian Renaissance. Lastly, food and agriculture also play an important role when it comes to culture in Italy. Several iconic foods and drinks such as pizza, pasta, gelato, and wine are specific to Italy. After researching population and health, migration, popular and folk culture, as well as food and

agriculture, I was able to take each of these factors into consideration and gain a better understanding of where my family initially came from, and how the history of Italy has shaped it into the country we know it as today.

Bibliography

- De Luca, G., Ponzo, M., & Andrés, A. (2013). Health care utilization by immigrants in Italy. *International Journal of Health Care Finance and Economics*, 13(1), 1-31.
Retrieved February 27, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/23352540
- BIRINDELLI, A. (1986). STABLE FEATURES AND CHANGING ASPECTS OF ITALIAN MIGRATION ABROAD IN RECENT TIMES. *Genus*, 42(3/4), 141-163. Retrieved March 2, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/29788872
- Monteverdi Company Limited. (2015). History and Background of Italian Wines. Retrieved from http://www.monteverdi.com.hk/index.php?route=information/information&information_id=6
- Biasetti, D. (2013). Italy Organic Agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/y1669e/y1669e0a.htm>
- Szalay, J. (2016, June 29). The Renaissance: The 'Rebirth' of Science & Culture.
Retrieved from <https://www.livescience.com/55230-renaissance.html>
- Logan, A. (1978). The Palio of Siena: Performance and Process. *Urban Anthropology*, 7(1), 045-065. Retrieved April 5, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/40552805
- ANGELONI, S. (2013). CULTURAL TOURISM AND WELL-BEING OF THE LOCAL POPULATION IN ITALY. *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management*, 8(3), 17-31. Retrieved April 4, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/24873354

Pisano, G. P., Sadun, R., & Zanini, M. (2020, March 29). Lessons from Italy's Response to Coronavirus. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2020/03/lessons-from-italys-response-to-coronavirus>

Italian - The Great Arrival - Immigration...- Classroom Presentation: Teacher Resources – Library of Congress. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/italian3.html>