

Introduction: The Reason of the Research

The study of European minorities is very important in a post national and globalised era: these are the communities that were eclipsed in 19th century and early 20th century nationbuilding. Over the last few years, some of them seem to be re-emerging as significant political entities.

The re-birth of minority nationalism is often rooted in concrete issues such as complaints about economic and political dominance from the centre and fiscal and economic disparity. Peripheral groups use both these concrete grievances together with the usual encouragement of group mythology and historical memory to develop feelings of solidarity among the minorities concerned.

This research deals with this phenomenon in Italy. Between 1946 and 1948 there was a first wave of political decentralisation, which affected five regions. Since that time the application of devolution has been varied in the different regions and there has been additional legislation, and new regions have been included. The focus of the enquiry here is Sardinia.

The key factors of contemporary Sardinian nation building are various: the mythological past, the real past, and the perceived difficulties in the island's administrative relations with the Italian nation state

It would be interesting to find out whether this contemporary demand for more devolution is related to

a reaction against centralist policies in general or against specific centralist economic decisions.

Thus the first interest of this thesis is to find evidence whether there is a commitment to devolution. If the answer is positive then the next step will be to evaluate it and assess whether these calls stem from a popular or an elite background.

My analysis will then try to assess how the decentralisation/independence movement is received among the Sardinian population. This research on attitudes will determine whether those who are committed to greater Sardinian economic and political independence also exhibit cultural and linguistic loyalty.

I intend my contribution in this thesis to be threefold: I hope to demonstrate that this subject should be treated in an interdisciplinary way and grounded in sociolinguistic and political traditions. This is not a common approach in Italy and has not been undertaken in work on Sardinia. The focus for the thesis will therefore be political linguistics and will hopefully illuminate some of the recent developments where these two factors interplay.

My second contribution will be to determine the actors in the revitalisation and decentralisation processes. These may not be not the same as in the past. A new configuration of societal groups appears to be coming together in these devolution/independence movements to make their case for political, linguistic and cultural concessions.

My analysis of the political and sociolinguistic status of Sardinia will be dependent on three variables: European policies, Italian policies and Regional¹ policies. It will be interesting to analyse the clash between the executive of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, based on the Constitutional powers allowed in 1948 and the centralist Italian government whose power may be diminishing as regionalisation increases.

The concessions that are made by central government are limited and were applied differently in each of the autonomous regions. The strength of both ethnic and civic concepts of nationalism are still extremely strong in Italy. Therefore this thesis will also examine the literature on nationalism in order to situate the current developments in Italy and Sardinia. At present the perennialist model suggested by Smith (1999) seems to be the most appropriate, because he explains the cyclical reoccurrences of ethnicity within the civic national frame but, later on, it might be necessary to decide

¹ One main focus of my research will be to see whether Sardinia is undergoing a linguistic or/and cultural renaissance since Regional law 1997 and National law 1999 or not.

These laws stemmed from article 6 of Italian Constitution which says "The Republic protects with appropriate laws the linguistic minorities." That was 1947, and in those years Italy made large concessions in terms of political devolutions. In fact, article n°116 of Italian Constitution, qualifies Friuli (January 31st 1963); Sardinia (February 26th 1948); Sicily (16th May 1946); Trentino-alto Adige (South Tyrol 26th February 1948, 20th January 1972 autonomy increased); Valle D'Aosta (26th February 1948) as autonomous regions or "regions under special statutes", thus conferring more local autonomy in terms of internal policies but with no real policy at all in terms of language planning (with the exception of South Tyrol which is the only Italian region with two work-languages). Law 482/99 is still inoperative because it transfers the responsibility for language shift to private citizens. If at least 15% of those citizens and residents with the right to vote do not ask their city council or district to apply the law or if at least 1/3 of the town councillors do not ask for the application of that law there is no way the Central Government is going to apply it

whether this model is appropriate or not for the most civic aspects of contemporary nation building in the nations without states (eg. Catalonia). It must be investigated whether a new kind of nationbuilding is taking place may not require “absolute loyalty” like the nations portrayed by Smith (Smith 2003: Preface²). This form of nation building seems to be supported by a strong inter-class belief in a liberal economic system with some features of “protectionism” and administrative but may be supported indirectly by “primordialist” (as depicted in Smith 2001:53) forces stemming from a tiny group of separatist and environment concerned activists.

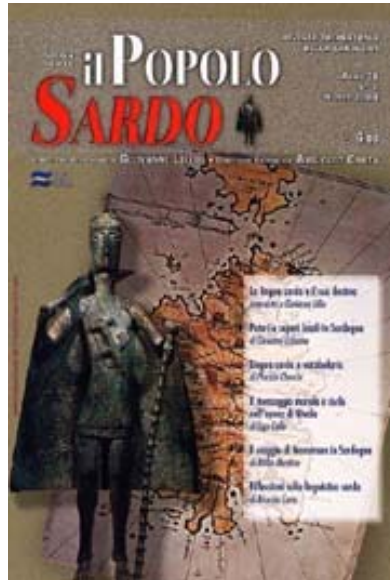
The third contribution will be my evaluation of the demand for language revitalisation. Is the Sardinian language a key vehicle for Sardinian culture which permits the group to present itself as a homogenous group or is it a minor issue, with group formation taking place in Italian. The Sardinian situation will be compared to the Catalan and Welsh phenomena. The Catalan phenomenon will not only be analysed by using a linguistic perspective but as conveyor of a new civic nationalism which is perceived as fruitful and convenient in terms of economic cultural and political aspirations (Walker 1996)³.

The general methodology I have chosen for my thesis aims at describing 1) What people do; 2) What people say they do; 3) The policy framework; 4) What people are urged to do by media

² Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford University Press, 2003

³ Geoffrey J. Walker, “Introduction,” in Albert Balcells’ *Catalan Nationalism. Past and Present*, Palgrave, 1996.

Journalists as actors: analysis of the Sardinian Print Media



Journalists as actors

Summary:

I identified four narratives in the Sardinian media

1) Political resentment Another centre-periphery problem “We were not consulted on American bases and Environment(nuclear submarines, depleted uranium). This issues are used to show how others moved to autonomy(especially Corsicans and Catalans. However activists and some journalists describe Catalonia as a model of Civic nation building by denying Catalans are nationalist and without taking into consideration the real weight of Catalan language shift which is not aiming to have a bilingual region. On the other hand, Corsicans are being considered as ethnic “brothers” and as another people exploited by imperialism. This form of ethnic autonomy may contain part of what Smith calls civic “Territorialism”(Smith 1991:117)⁴ This was evident especially in Journal A(“Giornale di Sardegna”) where the articles published show more link to a fixed and unpolluted terrain as the basis for the political community with some separatist views on the necessity to return to an agrarian society.

Sometimes the centre is Europe which is (both in A and B) mildly criticized for the impact on Sardinian market(eg. “The milk Shares”)

2) Resentment. Economic hardship. “The centre takes our money. We want it back; we want autonomy”.

3) Identity story. “Celebration of us,” Stories /invoke the unified past(either it be civic or ethnic); allusion to Blood and homogeneity by retelling genetic studies on endemic diseases “We are a genetic enclave”(Crocmagnon man-like the Basques) Nuragic people are the one to be seen as Ethnically original although some minor space is left (not during the 31 day + 1 time span) for the Shardanas myth which is linked to

⁴ Anthony D.Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Books, 1991

the legendary people of the Sea(13th century B.C.) which allegedly were of semitic origin like the Phoenicians who colonized the island and its market from the 9th century B.C. on.However, the majority of articles were dedicated both to Nuragic and pre-nuragic past and to the historical character of Eleanor of Arborea, Civic nation builder, polyglot (of Catalan origin) symbol of ancient independence and resistance against foreigners.(and the fact she promoted a very complete corpus iura in the Sardinian language appears to be not very important in the newspapers I have analysed)

4)**Language.** In the Sardinian print newspapers there is formal commitment to language issue to pay lip service to L.482/99. The contents are the needs of standardisation and the necessity to teach Sardinian at school because the language should cover all domains. They often quote Fishman and Catalan scholars. The message is that there can be real bilingualism. The articles are not being written by journalists but by scholars and activists, in fact the same position is to be found in web publishing which today is not part of my analysis.

Today I would like to concentrate on just one aspect of this.

I will focus on one set of actors in the nationalism, namely the campaigning journalists. Are they fueling nation building?

The microarea I am going to analyse is the Sardinian print media (my general corpus also includes national print media and electronic media). The whole set of data were collected between February 2004 and November 2005. However in this presentation I am presenting data analysis based on 31 day screening between 10th October and November the 9th 2005.

My methodology for this part of the work consisted in monitoring the regional print media (The two most widely spread Sardinian newspapers which I called here A and B⁵) daily and finding the main threads on a medium-large time-span.

All the chosen articles fit the requirements for standard format for publication in Sardinia (50 columns and 70 records)⁶

The four threads I have chosen have local relevance (by local I mean to the whole of Sardinia) so that the gravity or levity of the information makes sense in a regional environment (Luhmann 2000: 29)⁷.

The analysis of them will provide a synchronic picture although the threads tend to appear diachronically. For example, once the *querelle* on the Vat and taxes allegedly “stolen” or “robbed” by central government has faded (in A since 11th November whilst in B it was still present), another strong argument is going to replace it (the clash against the privatization of Sardinian A-roads and the protest because Sardinia is the only Italian region not to have motorways). In turn the Vat *querelle* had replaced the strong protest against American bases and their impact on the environment (nuclear danger, nuclear waste, lack of any safety plan for population), on Sardinian economy (tourism and fishing) and on taxes to be paid by residents. In my analysis I give a picture which is the general product of a 31 day mosaic. Still, my focus will be on the journals plus publishers as actors and there are tendencies which are the same regardless of the subject of the articles they are publishing. There are some threads, such as identity

⁵ A is the “Giornale di Sardegna,” B is the “Unione Sarda”

⁶ Dr. Pinna, personal information

⁷ Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of The Mass Media*, (Frist published in 1996, translated in 2000), Polity Press.

which hardly changed their focus during the 31 day screening and even in the follow up.

These threads were identity and language.

After the 31 day screening I decided to obtain a further controller by analyzing a single day some time after I had concluded the data collection from my main sample group. By doing this I was able to discover whether the tendencies were still present or not and whether there can be traced new threads or not. No new main threads were present even if at micro level the subjects and their composition were changing. In the discussion of the results I will be presenting my data as if they stemmed from a single actor, namely “Sardinian journalists”, but again this is a construct which was convenient to collect more data and therefore have wider and more significant a sample group. The journalists who wrote the articles were many, and the newspapers from which I collected my data were two. One of them, namely *A*, (*Il giornale di Sardegna*), appears to be more polemic towards Berlusconi’s government and tends to diminish all the results obtained by political negotiation.

Still, the threads and the subjects reported were the same in the two newspapers and never appeared in National newspapers but once. The Vat querelle spread in National newspapers only once other Italian regions (namely Campania, Marche, Toscana, Valle D’Aosta, the latter being the only autonomous region with a similar status to that of Sardinia) formally submitted their protest against 2005-2006 national balance sheet (cutting down the money available for regions and over-centralising the fiscal system). This happened on 15th November.

At the end of my first analysis I will provide some excerpt from the articles I found and I will translate part of them⁸.

Analysis of 31 day corpus.

I have categorised the corpus I have collected from the “Il Giornale di Sardegna”(A) and the “L’Unione Sarda”(B) into the four following themes:

1)POLITICAL AUTONOMY 19.1%

- Enhance on Sardinian autonomous charter(36 articles plus an introduction shaped on the new Catalan proposal) against centralism and new fiscal proposal of devolution as anti-Northern League’s devolution (a separatist political party which is encompassed in Berlusconi’s Government) which is perceived as a totalitarian force and ethnically exclusive. Language, culture, natural environment, landscape(*Lingua, Cultura, Ambiente, Paesaggio*) **Total of articles: A)18, B)7 (A+B) 25**

Total of front pages: 0

⁸ Before start we must take into consideration two interesting data which belong to the Italian print environment: 1) many National print media have got an online edition which is identical or semi-identical to the print edition(in the case of the Sardinian newspapers the electronic edition is being distributed on a Pdf file of the whole print edition). According to data published by “la Repubblica” on the 3rd of November 2005, electronic editions of official print newspapers are being read by almost the same number of users as the print edition. It seems that the users don’t skim through the electronic newspaper copy but they read it carefully. Many international newspapers such as “The guardian” or “El Mundo” or “le Monde” have more users who read the newspapers from outside the country where the newspaper is being published. On the other hand, as I will show in my chapter dedicated to the Sardinian non-print media, non-official newspapers in the minority languages (see also Sue Wright 2006) can rely on a very limited audience despite the possibility to trace this magazines quite easily by using a Boolean search

- I have chosen to insert the environmental issue and independence issues against American militar bases in Sardinia in the autonomy chapter even if it may well be inserted in the identity section given the harsh demand of “getting back” full possess (Sardinia is considered as the entity being pillaged by external forces) over natural reservations and areas of natural values is pushed forward by radical primordialist nationalist forces which base their claims on ethnic identity. (Smith 2001, 53)⁹. In fact, the activists who claim independence and freedom from the Americans in the articles reported by the journalists describe Sardinia as an organic nation whose citizens should flee urban corruption and globalised market. This frame leads the island and its citizens undergo reification. **Total of articles A)25, B)6, (A+B)=31, Front Pages, A 2**
- Risks of Centralisation and anti-europeanisation.
A) 17, B)4,(A+B)=21
- **Total 52**

⁹ *Nationalism: Theory, ideology and Myth. Key Concepts*, Polity press 2001-2003

2) ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES AGAINST CENTRE AND CENTRALISM 58.9%

- Grievances against “Rome”: 1) “The Centre is keeping our VAT taxes and therefore in fifteen years we have accumulated 80 times as many debts as a huge city like Milan(28th October) and it is not applying the law by not considering Sardinia is entitled to those funds by its Constitutional charter of 1948”. In few words this means that 23.5% of the firms operating in Sardinia do not pay their taxes in Sardinia. Thus government, each year, since 1991, sent back 1099 million euro VAT and taxes instead of 1511. As a consequence Sardinia is claiming 4.5 billion euros back from central government. As a side aspect to the problem of debts and “robbery” of the money due, journals told the story Sardinia will be out of European **Objective 1 Regions**¹⁰ programmed from 2007 to 2013 given the fact Sardinia has overcome the 75% of the average European GDP¹¹ The newspaper reported all the tensions between the ministry of Economy and Sardinian Governor and insisted on the fact that such tensions may lead the island to vote for a new charter with more or total fiscal autonomy from Italy. The reported *j'accuse* of the Sardinian parties reached its peak and rapidly faded in the first week of November 2005(and the news was retold by the media.)
- The city of Cagliari must become a new centre, the economic capital of the Mediterranean market and cultural arena. **A)20, B)11, (A+B)=31**

¹⁰ Objective 1 regions are determined according to Regulation EC number 1783/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 1999 on the European Regional Development Fund(Official Journal L 213 of 13th August 1999)

¹¹ GDP+ Gross National Product. GNP, Gross National Product is hardly used by the media to explain economic situation to their audience.

Articles: A) 80 B) 49 Total of front pages: A) 10 (first Front page, 23 October 2005); B 8 (first Front page, 26 October 2005): Whole articles dedicated to this subject out of 62 issues (A+B) = 160

- 2) The Government wants to use Sardinians as guinea pigs for experimenting digital-commercial Television which will replace normal television without giving public support for that and forcing people to buy Paolo Berlusconi's decoder and leaving the citizens no other choice.

Sum of articles: A) 32 B) 10 Total of front pages A) 3, B) 0. Total A+B=42

- Problems linked to transports and insularity: high costs for flights and ships as means of transportations, demands for reductions provided the "peculiarity" of Sardinia. Problems of privatization of public airlines and maritime ferries.

Total of articles: A) 36 B)16 Total of front pages: A)4, B)3. Total A+B=52

- European regulations which badly affected the Sardinian economy A) 18, B) 20. Total(A+B)=38 Front pages A)0+ B(1),

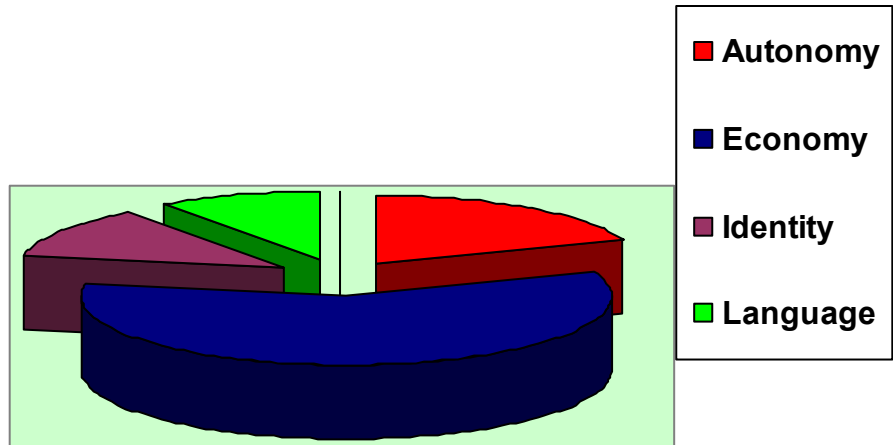
3) IDENTITY 12.1%

- Myth of origin/Archaeological findings **Total of articles A)20, B)9,(A+B)=29, Front pages=0**
- Seeking independence: describing other minorities asking for that(eg.Catalans and Corsicans) **A)16, B)7, (A+B)=25, front pages A=1**
- Symbols of a golden age **A)1, B)3(A+B)=4**
- **Total 33**

4) LANGUAGE 9.9%

- Sardinian language **A) 10, B) 17(with an internal page each week entirely written in the Sardinian language)27. However the article published by B were sponsored by Law 482/99 and were occasional (Dr. Pinna, personal information, 10November 2005)**

Journalists as actors: Graphic 1



Journalists as actors: Excerpt from newspapers

Economic grievances example1(excerpt): translation of an article drawn from the “Il Giornale di Sardegna”, 3rd of November 2005, p.12, “La Sardegna Torna in piazza. Giunta, ultimatum al governo”.

The decision to go out into the streets to protest has been taken and a date has been set for Thursday, 17 November.

Sardinia is mobilized in order to give its support to the dispute about fiscal incomes which has already been termed the “Mother of All Battles”

Economic + Independence requests example

2(excerpt). I consider this example as very important because it comes from a former President of the Italian Republic and because the newspaper decided to publish it on the 4th of November which is Italian National Unity Day and in the same day current President Ciampi’s speech to address Italian unity, freedom and independence was reported as the front page story in all the national newspapers and agencies (“La Repubblica,” “Il Corriere della Sera” and “Ansa”. Ciampi described Italy as a civic nation where patriotism is the capacity to work for the welfare of everyone and for the prestige and image of Italy worldwide. *The love for Italian Unity, Italian freedom, Italian independence must be supported daily*(President Ciampi’s speech reported by “La Repubblica,” & “Corriere della sera” 4 November 2005) The same day ISTAT national official data for the year 2004 on massive immigration to Italy and a raise in the perception of poverty within the Italian population were published.

Not only did Cossiga consider the economic grievances of Sardinia against the Italian state but he also holds that Sardinia must promote defend and extend its status of autonomous region. In the opening he defines himself as Republican, autonomist, “Sardist”, Italian and “Sardinian nationalitarian¹²”.

Interview with former President of the Italian Republic Francesco Cossiga, “Il Giornale di Sardegna”, 4th of November 2005, p.8, “Caro Berlusconi non vogliamo regalie. Lo Stato ci deve dare quello che ci spetta”

Honourable first Minister, dear Berlusconi, I am writing you as a Sardinian and “old” representative of the Sardinians in the National (Italian) Parliament...The State is seriously indebted to Sardinia and it became such on purpose...We don't ask for “bequests” but we ask what is due to us! I have given my advice to my friend Renato Soru that he should strengthen his action of political pressure but I also suggest him taking some steps towards “judicial violence” and taking it to court, to both civil and constitutional ones the Nation State and its managers. Maybe it will then be the case to pass on “low intensity” violence acts such as by preventing our money being carried out of our island or by avoiding the collection of them! But I have also said to my friend Renato Soru that as a question of principle, after the Italian general election day in any case, we need to give birth to a great autonomous “nationalitarian”¹³ movement, by promoting a great reformation of the

¹² The term “nationalist” is practically banned from the Italian vocabulary. Normally its usage implies a negative meaning (eg. Coupled with Fascism or racism)

¹³ This neologism was in use since the seventies in order to prevent Sardinian nationalistic movements to be regarded as fascist nationalistic movements (Dr. Daniela Pinna, personal informant)

charter for autonomy even implementing our laws independently from the nation state...

Statements:

Luigi Angeletti, national secretary UIL trade union: *We will be with the Sardinians in Rome to back up your claims which are correct and sacred!*(Angeletti speech of 7th November reported by “Giornale di Sardegna” 8th November 2005)

3rd Excerpt, “Giornale di Sardegna,” 8th November.

Fausto Bertinotti, national secretary of PRC(Communist party). As you will read in the reported speech, Bertinotti is not backing Sardinian federalism but he judges the fact: Italy leaves Sardinia in debt despite Sardinia has not been given back the money it was entitled to and he goes on attacking the government. The use of the news or the fact is very different because it doesn't ask for any separatist or federal agenda: fausto Bertinotti, “The Government must fork out the money!”, “Il Giornale di Sardegna,” 8th november 2005 p.11: *There are some commitments which must be kept because not to do so may damage the reliability of the whole system. The agreement which declares by law that part of the taxes must be given back to the Regions cannot be disregarded. This is why the government must give back the money(more than 4 billion euro) to Sardinia for the Taxes collected in Sardinia. Sardinia is heavily in debt(500 million euro per year). ..The Government must show us if they are able to solve at least one problem.*

Journalists as actors: Follow Up

Small Follow up: Analysis of a single day(11 November)

1)Autonomy/Devolution 13.8% A)2, B)2, (A+B)=4,

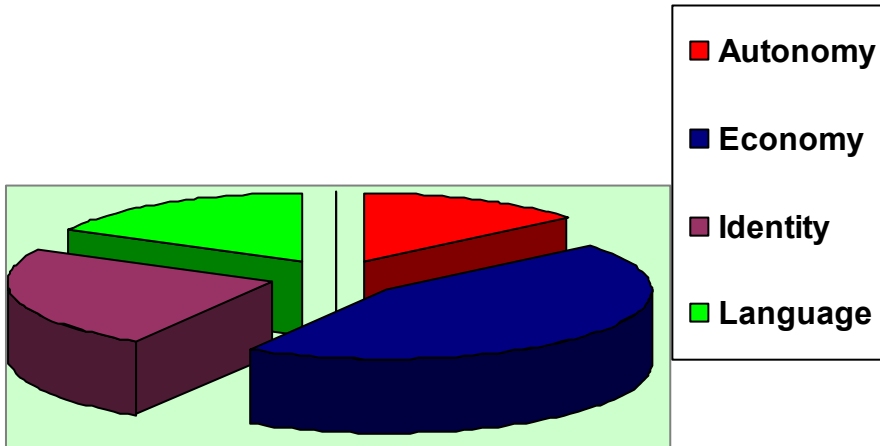
2)Economy) 44.8% A) 8 Front Page 1(“The Spoof Story of the Income divides Soru and the Trade Unions”)

B, 5 Front Page1 (“Fiscal Controversy: the State is paying in the first millions”)(A+B)=13

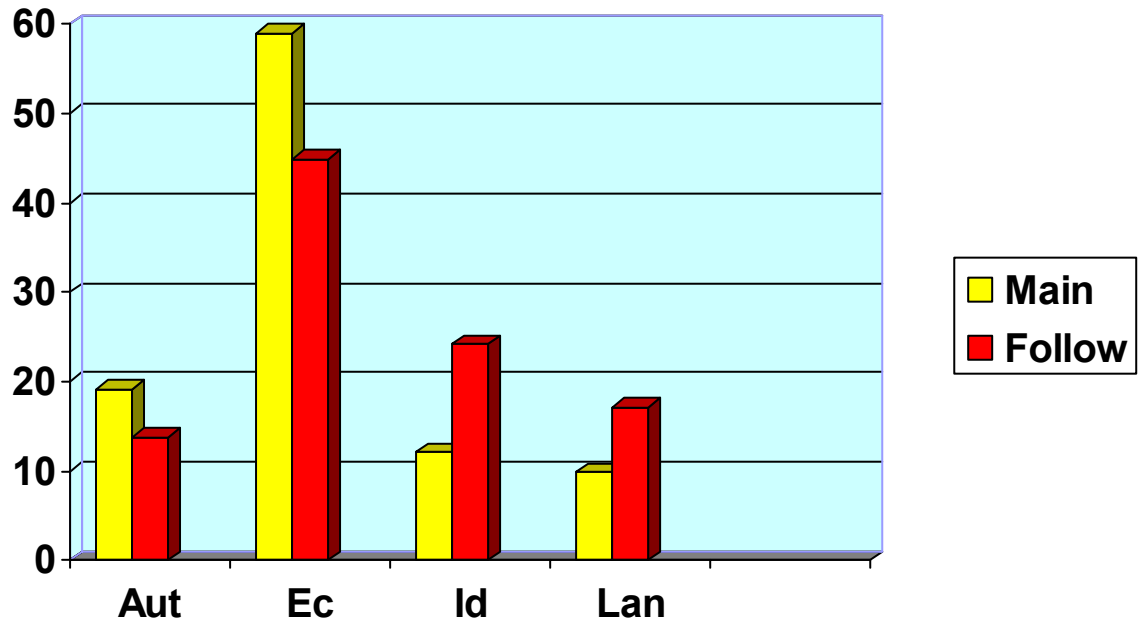
3)Identity 24.2% A)2, B)5(A+B)=7

4)Language 17.2% (A0+B5)=5

Journalists as actors: Graphic 2



Journalists as actors: Graphic 3



Journalists as actors: Discussion of the results

- **Autonomy.** This category contains all those articles whose contents relate directly to autonomy issues. The autonomy issue is often dependent on some news which is presented as independent(eg. environment, economy, identity) and it shift to “issue of independence” which interests only a tiny but loud number of separatists¹⁴. Much of this issue is contained in the category which I qualified as economic. The devolution aspect *per se* is hardly reported by the journalists and the only devolution reported is that proposed by Berlusconi and Northern League party. The only time the autonomy is analysed separately it is nevertheless compared to the Catalan autonomous charter. Catalonia stands as the model for any journalist who writes on Sardinian autonomy charter. The devolution(especially in A) is often depicted as tool promoted by a “bad” nationalism, namely that represented by the Northern League. In few cases the articles opened by referring to the autonomous charter but then inserted it in a comparative discourse which encompassed past Sardinian independence and past Sardinian *corpus iura*. As for what economic/environment grievances are concerned is quite useful to refer to the whole screening(2004-2005) to discover that the journalists did not dedicate much space to the results of the regional referendum in 2005 which had to confirm a law of 2001 which allowed the Italian

¹⁴ The island is often described by these activists as a promised land and its inhabitants as the offspring of a unique and homogeneous ethnic group. All the layers that built Sardinian history and population are described separately as a product of intruders and they are not considered as genuine

government to store “special” waste produced elsewhere in Sardinia. There was a poor turnout (only 24% of Sardinians) and the waste were allowed in Sardinia but neither organised protest nor a campaign against it involved the media. The possibility to allow the Waste in Sardinia may be stopped by article n°6 of 1948 charter which allows Sardinia to avoid the application of any law coming from national government which could damage the interests of Sardinia. The presence of the American bases was never “confirmed” by the national parliament. If the devolution approved by house of Senate and Deputies on 16 November 2005 will be confirmed by popular referendum in 2006 thus becoming effective in 2011, there will be no more way for the regions to formally reject any deed from central government provided the central government declares it being done for “superior national interests.”

- **Economic Grievances Against Centre.** This issue will occupy much space in the newspapers. Very often journalists report the news in a way that any economic initiative being taken from central government(whether it be digital television or privatization of A-roads or lack of funds or contrasts with European regulations on milk production) is seen as a display of central force against those rights coming from the article 6 of autonomous charter). Sometimes the central initiatives are presented as not sufficient to solve the endemic Sardinian rate of unemployment (ISTAT data September-December 2004)¹⁵. The tendency is clear and on the 12th of November (which was not included in the 31 day

¹⁵ Istat Data from “L’Unione Sarda,”19 April 2005 describes Italian rate to be 8.4% on average(the two ends being 2% Northern Italy, 23% Southern Italy) whilst Sardinian unemployed are 13.9% of active population(with a homogeneous fifty fifty even if analysed by gender)

screening) A presents a new clash against the government and wild privatization in the front page and there are 4 main articles on this. On the other hand B keeps the former clash(the VAT taxes) in Front page but the subject of the A-roads is given much space against by interpreting it as a central policy which will take its economic toll on Sardinia which is the only region in Italy which does not have a motorway(endemic lack of infrastructures). B dedicates 4 articles to the issue of VAT and 5 articles to the A-roads. Some of the articles were slightly anti-European especially in A which seems definitely a newspaper more for insider if compared to B. However the anti-European sentiment is always under control and journalists tend to blame Italian government for European policies.

- **Identity.** The data for this issue were the most difficult ones to control given the fact that identity issue is often present in many articles on autonomy, economy, environment and language. Again, categorisation was a necessary construct in order to analyse threads and possibly trends. What it is evident from the articles and from the graphic is that 1) identity is quite a steady and ever present issue even if not massively. Identity is presented in terms of Sardinian history, Sardinian pre-history, and Sardinian genetics. From the beginning of November on there were at least two articles on Sardinian archaeology (Pre-Nuragic and Nuragic age) every day. The journalists hold these issues are important for both the mediterranean history (by enhancing Sardinia's importance in the mediterranean market) and for the social representation of Sardinia's importance to both outsiders and insiders. The concept of genetics is totally transformed or socially "mis-translated" or partially translated by journalists for

insiders. The projects which focus on endemic diseases due to long term isolation of Sardinian population is somehow re-proposed to the audience by enhancing on ethnic homogeneity as 1) a decisive national factor 2) “eugenetics”, especially by reporting international or national news on the higher percentage of long-living people in Sardinia (National Geographic Italia, November). What the journalists do is to transform any study conducted in isolated areas (eg. Ogliastra area, www.parcogenos.it) on genetic diseases to a discourse on genetic homogeneity. These articles are often associated to articles on Nuragic age where nuragic and pre-nuragic age works as the Lebanese “three million people” phenomenon described by Joseph (2004: 198-202)¹⁶. Genetic homogeneity plus the focus on relevance of Nuragic and pre-nuragic culture as the only original indigenous culture are constantly used as powerful ethnic nation building tools. The focus is on the “originals,” the first ones, the ones who came first and who had not any relation to all the other groups which came later. Joseph (2004)¹⁷ Another factor of nationbuilding present in the corpus on identity is the perennialist ethnic-civic beliefs which stems from Middle Ages rather than from genetics and archaeology. The main significant conveyor of this belief I could find both in my 30 day screening and in the follow ups and even in these days is the Eleanor Factor. Allegedly Catalan born Eleanor (1340-1404) was the Queen of Arborea and despite her non-native origin and maybe birth which was so common in middle age, she is

¹⁶ “The co-construction of religious and ethnic identity: Maronites and Phoenicians,” in John Joseph 2004.

¹⁷ John Joseph, *Language and Identity-National, Ethnic, Religious*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

perceived as the most important Sardinian character. She represents independence and the resilience of Sardinia against the Catalan Monarchy. She was an ancient Evita Peron and still her character is seen as very close to common people. She is also very important for a corpus iura, a Charter, called *Carta De Logu* which was in use until 1827. This charter is absolutely the most important document in the Sardinian language but there is no evidence the journalists referred to it as an example of high prestige for the Sardinian language. This document is widely known by all those interested in Sardinian linguistics but Eleanor is being used by journalists as symbol of a past unity but not as much as a symbol of language prestige despite Carta de Logu is massively studied by applied linguists. Eleanor is the symbol of resistance and past prestige and of civic nationalism. Her figure is seen in relation to people as citizens of a once free Sardinian nations with its culture and duties of citizenship which were covered by *Carta De Logu*. The commitment to Eleanor present in these articles has hardly anything to do with the Sardinian language despite the Eleanor code covered all the formal linguistic domains. From 12th November on there were 1.5 articles per day on average in each newspaper and more or less the tendency is being confirmed.

- **Language.** I will let the data speak here, but I must say that the articles I found in my screening, at least those drawn from B, were highly affected by a factor but still bear significance. I have interviewed an executive of B (my informant Dr. Pinna) to ask her whether it was common to find articles in the Sardinian language in a newspaper wholly written in the Italian language or not. I discovered the articles in Sardinian are being issued once a week to promote Law 482/99 which formally

gives co-officiality status to the Sardinian language in Sardinia together with Italian. Still, this important initiative is not related at all with all the other news present in the newspapers and stand like a chapter in a foreign language which the newspaper must publish weekly because the Region told them to do so. In fact journalists as actors are not rising the demand for the use of Sardinian language and the page in the Sardinian language is written by students or Sardinian scholars who study applied linguistic as a profession but none of them is a journalist. As a matter of fact, Sardinian language or articles related to Sardinian language never appeared in A which is the newspaper which hosted the majority of anti-central and pro-autonomy views. This may suggest that language is not important (but by now I cannot show any evidence of whether it will be so in future) NOW in the demand for more economic-cultural autonomy from the rest of Italy. Again in the days I have not included in my analysis no issue of Sardinian language was present. The issue of the language is official but it is practically a background one which I know because I am in contact with those scholars who have been formally in charge of implementing a written standardization. A second, definitive standardization was implemented in October but no news of it was in the Sardinian newspapers.

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