

*Regional Media
and Identity
in Sardinia*

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To Sofia

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I.1.0 Sardinian identity and the media: Statement of Aims

Sardinian Identity and the Media: identity building and rebuilding in a 'post-national' era

This study examines the negotiations and reshaping of Sardinian identity in the Sardinian print and web media in an age when the traditional concept of citizenship is rapidly changing.

The relation between self-identity, group-identity and institutions and their representations in the media are the two poles of this work.

The nation state is still the prime focus of citizens' relationship with authority but the identities and commitments towards the contemporary Italian centralising nation state have been slowly transforming over the last few decades as, like other states, Italy has relinquished some sovereignty to be part of the European Union.

However, Italy, from the years 1946-1948, has also relinquished some degree of autonomy to its regions, five of which were named autonomous in the years following the downfall of Fascism. These autonomies, fall under article 116 which regulates the special statutes adopted by constitutional law, and enjoyed by Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Southern Trentino, and the Aosta Valley. The political setting of these autonomies is not the same for each of these regions.

The level of efficacy of autonomy perceived and begotten by formal regulations in the case of the so called "historical" minorities should be correlated to the importance still given to the constant re-mapping of the so called "primary" identity: namely, Italian national identity in an era of multiculturalism and rising level of immigrants from European and non-European countries. Italy has traditionally been a nation state which has had to develop a sense of homogeneous identity between citizens and institutions

belonging to peripheral regions and those belonging to the historical centres of power and/or culture. Nowadays, much public debate on identity is more focused on schooling and assimilation of foreigners or new Italians within the Italian school system or work places or health care. For this reason, Sardinians and the Sardinian media are coping with the process of primary identity or ongoing identification with both Italian and European institutions and, to some extent which may result as significant or irrelevant in the maintenance or spread of regional identity.

Both Italian and Sardinian and European identities are undergoing a process of representation and historicisation encompassing both an imagined and represented past and future. Scholars such as Giddens (1991) calls for modernity as a conveyor of a social order based on two forms of dynamism: one is directed to undercutting traditional habits and customs, whilst the other evaluates their global impact. Giddens does not evaluate the chance that globalisation implies a whole set of different influences some of which aim at keeping or rediscovering ethnic identities. Large scale immigration to Italy may change the identification with the nation state which has been continuous all over Europe especially in the aftermaths of First World War and Second World War and the rise of the European Union. Newspapers to a certain extent, e-journals and magazines, together with commercial capitalism (Hutchinson 2005) are two important factors for mirroring the policies of identification and representations with nation states or territories or with historic groups within the nation states.

My aim is thus two-fold: a discourse analysis of the representations being generated by the Sardinian media and a field research in order to gain insight into the extent to which these representations may help trigger different attitudes in representing and evaluating the relationship between Sardinia and the nation state.

The theoretical approach of Anthony D. Smith will constitute my theoretical background through my analysis of the data deriving from newspapers

together with the theory of Serge Moscovici on active minorities and group-consensus as well as Social Representations.

In order to analyse the narratives of the print media I relied on Fairclough's framework as well as Billig (1995) and Rosie's (2004) work on print media analysis. Their case studies helped me to design my own methodology for data collection.

One of the main perspectives on the analysis of the attitudes towards Sardinian identity will be that of Moscovici's theory on the influence of the minorities (Moscovici 1976b; Moscovici 1980; Moscovici, Mugny, Van Avermaet 1985; Moscovici 1985; Moscovici 2000; Contarello, Mazzara 2000) which re-examined the data analysed by Gerard (1964) starting from Ash's experiments on conformity and commitment to the group. Gerard's experiments revealed that if the subject maintained his early independence from the majority he would have remained independent also on subsequent trials (Moscovici 1985:177).

According to Gerard (Moscovici 1985: 171-186), Moscovici maintains that the paramount factor in minority success is the behavioural style aimed at gaining the attention of majority members. I think this could be the same with the actors of the print and non print media. These actors or intellectual minorities must be seen as credible in order to be given the stage and find audience for their ideas. Gerard wrote that *in order to be successful the minority must strike a resonant chord, however faint, in the majority. In the programme put forth they must somehow engage needs of the majority or appeal to the ambivalence the majority may feel towards current social norms.* (Moscovici 1985:172)

In my analysis of the internet one of the main features will be the intergroup competition even between members of a larger minority, eg. Sardinian intellectuals. A larger group of independent publishers, scholars and activists may divide themselves into subgroups if there is no convergence on some

opinions or behaviours. In Sardinia that is the case with the issue of language standardisation which actually divided a tiny intellectual minority into two subgroups: on the one hand we have “unionists” who believe a single standard may help the Sardinian language to become a tool to build a chance for Sardinian to survive and be taught in schools and also to be considered a possible mean for more political autonomy; on the other hand we have a smaller group of people who believe Sardinian is a linguistic issue first and any variety has the right to become a standardised one. Such conflicts may generate dissensus and no alternative has been found to the dominant solution which bridges both independent publishers and intellectuals and the political élites: a single standard.

Marková explained that media of communication are now extremely different to what they were at the turn of the 19th century as they were described by Durkheim (Marková-Farr1995). Marková maintains that Durkheim and Wundt’s collective representations presented as cultural rather than social phenomena are not much relevant in the context of modern society especially because collective representations according to Durkheim held societies together(Marková-Farr1995:3) whereas social representations may also be a product of the fragmentation of scientific plus common sense knowledge

Massmedia had a paramount role in generating and spreading social representations (Marková-Farr1995:7)

The notion of the changing role of massmedia over the decades had already been analysed by Anderson (1983) Yet, a decade or two decades may be sufficient to radically change perceptions and representations. Also the social agents may have changed and the influence they exercise may have changed in terms of quality and quantity.

Minority agents today can try to create new opinions and beliefs through print or electronic media. In this work there will be enough space dedicated to the analysis of the penetration of both regional print media and electronic magazines or websites who work as information providers and/or “conversionists” in order to gain people s attention to many issued related to

Sardinian identity. However, it must be taken into consideration that according to the latest survey carried out by Censis, or Centre for Social Studies and Policies and recently published on <http://www.censis.it>¹, The technological revolution in Italy is increasing thus facilitating access to knowledge but the only mass medium which can be defined as “massive” in Italy is Television. 72% of the Italian population access to information through television (analogic tv) only² thus qualifying for the last place in Europe in terms of access to new media. Digital divide becomes evident if we divided the populations by age-brackets. As far as traditional non-visual media are concerned, Italian newspapers are less widespread than Britain and so do print books. The largest divide is the Internet which in Britain is used at least once in a while by 61.4% of the British whilst the Italians who have surfed at least once, are only 37.6%. The rates on the numbers of copies sold by regional newspapers will be displayed in chapter IV.

¹ The Censis report was published on 2006, October the 30th; the news was widely reported by both TV, radio and newspapers.

² These data were also published by Corriere.it; retrieved at http://www.corriere.it/Primo_Piano/Economia/2006/10_Ottobre/30/censis.shtml, on 2006, 30th October, 19:45

Past and future: Grounding Sardinia in a social economic environment: new immigrations; Sardinia keeps its peripheral status.

The presence of a process and a public demand or a massive public campaign for the assimilation of new and regular landed immigrants who, at the end of 2005 represented 5.2% of the Italian population³, may be analysed as one of the possible backgrounds for Sardinian “peculiarity” given the fact the new wave of immigration remains a relatively minor phenomenon especially in the rural areas of the island.

The data were published on the official web sites on traditional newspapers and agencies on 25th October 2006 and in all Italian newspapers on the next day⁴. Sardinian print newspapers were quite an exception as only *Il Sardegna* published a small article on this subject and reported only the local figures on new immigration in Cagliari⁵. It must be remembered that *Il Sardegna* is part of a national network of daily newspapers which have a number of pages in common all over Italy; for this reason *Il Sardegna* in publishing data on the national survey conducted by Caritas respected a given format. As a matter of fact, the most traditional and non-autonomist newspaper, such as *L'Unione Sarda* ignored the results of the Caritas report on immigration and it went totally unobserved both on 25th October and in the next few days. The absence of a wide public debate on new identities and citizenship can represent valuable data in terms of the narratives going on in Sardinian newspapers.

³ Data retrieved from Dossier Immigrazione at <http://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/>, 20:23 p.m; the data from December 2005 were officially presented on 25th October 2006, at 10:30 a.m, on the premises of “Teatro Orione,” via Tortona 7, Rome. The same data were published on the same days by [www.Ansa.it](http://www.ansa.it) and were retrieved from http://www.ansa.it/opencms/export/main/visualizza_fdg.html_2020619863.html at 20:37; and

⁴ *La Repubblica*: 26th October 2006, p.33, Chronicle, Caterina Pasolini’s article: *Rapporto Caritas sugli stranieri: “La popolazione cresce solo grazie a loro.” Uno su dieci ha già comprato la casa. Immigrati sopra quota tre milioni “Tra dieci anni saranno il doppio”*; *Il Messaggero*: 26th October 2006, pp.1 and 11, Chronicle, Corrado Giustiniani’s article, *Oltrepassata la Gran Bretagna per numero di stranieri: metà sono donne. Una culla su dieci è di genitori extracomunitari: <<Cittadinanza sbocco naturale dell’immigrazione>>*

⁵ *Il Sardegna*, 26th October 2006, p.26

The number of regular immigration has been estimated to be 3,035,000, 1.2 million of whom have been living in the country on a permanent basis for at least five years thus qualifying as long term residents who can be given a “green card” for good. According to the latest projections, in 2015 the number of permanent immigrants in Italy will be more than 6,000,000 people. The current number of non-Italian residents in Italy has almost equalised the number of people with an Italian passport who live abroad (3,150,000) and, if we take into consideration the growing rate of landed immigrants over the first Semester 2006 the number of foreign residents will have overtaken the number of Italians who live abroad.

Immigrants are also consistently younger on average if compared to Italian citizens. As a matter of fact 70% of immigrants are between 15 and 44 years whilst only 47.5% of Italians belong to that age bracket. Moreover they work in higher percentage if compared to Italians. In fact data on employment rate reveals that 727,000 immigrants were employed in 2005 out of a total of 4.5 million employments being made all over the country. If we displayed the data on average age of immigrants we would discover that immigrant citizens who are underage are 586,000, that means 19.3% of the whole permanent immigrants. Out of these 586,000, 328,000 young people were born and grown up in Italy and are still resident in Italy, but they do not have Italian citizenship.

All over 2005, 58,000 babies, which represent 10% of all newborn babies in Italy, had both parents who did not possess an Italian passport and the trend is growing steadily. On the other hand, in the central area of a city like Cagliari, economic and political capital of Sardinia, more than 50% of its residents are retired people (83,000 out of 160,872 residents in 2005)⁶.

The trend is of 1,073 people who leave Cagliari for other cities each year because they are unemployed.

⁶ Data based on Caritas report on Sardinia issued at the end of 2005. The data were retrieved from “L’Unione Sarda,” Friday 23rd December 2005, Sardinia’s chronicle, p.19, Fabio Manca’s article: *Inchiesta. Radiografia della città: uno su cinque è disoccupato, uno su tre è anziano, uno su cento lavora al comune. Un cagliaritano su due è pensionato. La media dell’assegno Inps è 540 euro, dell’Inpdap 1100*

A number of 35,000 people from Cagliari are unemployed which represents 21.8% of Cagliari's population (one citizen every 4.6 citizens). Moreover about 50% of the people are retired; and the majority of them are benefiting from INPS pensions which are on average 539 euros per month for each retired male citizen and 435 for women and a minority get 1.100 euros for as retired public employees (Inpdap).

High unemployment rates affect Italian society. Even though the general unemployment rate is very close to other European countries such as France, the incidence of youth unemployment is much higher in Italy if compared to France (Censis data: 1999)

This is sufficient to obtain a gruesome insight into the economic background of the inhabitants of the capital city of Sardinia. Sardinia, in the Caritas report on immigration has been taken into consideration together with Sicily. Sardinia plus Sicily attract less foreign work if compared to Southern, Central and Northern Italy. Sardinia and Sicily account for as little as 3.2% of the whole permanent immigrants but Sardinians (1,600,000 people) plus Sicilians (5,000,000 people) together make 11% of Italians (Toso 2006: 141-152). North Western Italy hosts 34.1% of new immigrants, North Eastern Italy 26.9%, Central Italy 26.8% and Southern Italy 9.0%.

Cagliari alone hosts 45.2% of Sardinian immigrants but the city of Cagliari represents only 10% of the Sardinian population. Cagliari hosts 9,014 foreigners and the number of foreigners who live on the island are 20,031 which means less than 0.7% of whole landed immigrants in Italy whilst if we singled out Sardinians alone represent 2.7% of Italian population. Sicily, on the other hand hosts 2.5% of whole landed immigrants and Sicilians represent 8.3% of Italians.

This means that apart from Cagliari where foreigners represent 5.6% of urban population (in Rome, according to *Il Messaggero*, regular immigrants are 365,000, 12% of whole urban population), the phenomenon is relatively unknown away from the city. Data also show that Sardinia is the place attracting the least number of permanent foreign residents.

The principal national groups as far as the Caritas report is concerned is the following: Romanians (11.9%), Albanians (11.3%), Moroccans (10.3%), Ukrainians (5,2%), Chinese (4,9%). In Sardinia the national groups to which the immigrants belong to are completely different. The lack of massive emigration to the island is counterbalanced by the presence of historical national groups which arrived in the 1980's such as Senegalese people who were the first to "land" on the island at first in the summertime and then on regular basis. The *Il giornale di Sardegna* does not report very precise rates but the most flourishing communities in terms of numbers are Senegalese followed by Chinese, Moroccans, Germans (because of NATO military bases), Philippines, Ukrainians.

All other nationalities count less than 300 people each. Apparently, if we trusted the media, Sardinia is hosting a very tiny number of Romanians who are undergoing a process of disconfirmation and distrust by major European countries as Romania is about to join the European Union (January 2007) but, member states do not want to allow free circulation for Romanians and other communities (Bulgarians) within the European borders.

In 2005, as far as regular immigrants are concerned, the absence of any significative differences by gender as a whole in Italy has been recorded and this is valid for Sardinia also which records more women regular immigrants than men but, immigration from non-European countries to Italy, as far as my research is concerned is a minor issue in the Sardinian media.

This may reflect also the different social condition of immigrants depending on the area they live in. As a matter of fact, only 10% of immigrants in Sardinia possess a green card, which can be obtained in five years (it was six years during the former government) thus putting Italy in line with the other European countries. In Bolzano-Bozen, 46% of immigrants have a green card for permanent residence.

Formal regulations to protect regional languages and ethnicities

According to Mead (1934: 260) *the concept of communication cannot be set up as something that exists by itself, or as a presupposition of the social process. On the contrary the social process is presupposed in order to render thought and communication possible.*

The social processes had already been termed by Mead: “generalized social attitudes” in 1915 (Mead 1915:141)

Mead implies that the way we act on the part of anyone in claiming our rights, for example, language rights, we *are calling for a definite response* because we assert those rights to be universal and we wait for a response in order to adjust our own conduct on it.

Laws such as Regional Law 26/1997 in Sardinia or Regional Law 15/1996 in Friuli or National Law 482/1999 for all 12 ethnic and linguistic minorities were generated by communication and for their application need a formal response in the communities in which the laws should be applied and, according to Mead (1934:261), *the institution represents a common response on the part of all members of the community to a particular situation.*

A part of the ethnic community within the state in which they are embedded should therefore replicate somehow a process of nationbuilding in order to make sure the regulations to defend or expand their markers of linguistic or ethnic identity were socially accepted and formally applied even if, in the case of minority language learning, the choice remains in the hands of adults responsible for the education of younger learners who are not given freedom of choice to disagree with the link between identity and language.

The rights and identification of the single to and within a group are being treated as the rights and identification of a group to and within another, usually larger, group.

As a matter of fact, formally, especially after 2001, the single region can also take the initiative after consultation of local administrations (Provinces and

Town Council, Municipality) and negotiate other forms of autonomy according to the principle found in Article 119.

These two articles, 116 and 119 emphasise and organise administrative devolution whilst particular forms of autonomy related to distinctive identity are contained in article 6 on Linguistic Minorities. The latter law was object of a strong cultural revival in the nineties which lead to the issue of a new law, Law 482/99, December 15th, 1999, published in The *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n.297 on December 20th, 1999. By this law the state must protect the following languages and cultures in Italian territory (articles 1 and 2):

Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovenian, Croatian and the speakers of: French, Franco-provençal, Friulan, Ladin, Occitan, Sardinian.

According to this law, every Provincial Council will have to delimit the territory where this norm will be applied, if requested by a third of the members of the Council, by at least the 15% of the resident population, or by means of a referendum (article 3). The regulation focuses on education: so in infant schools, as in primary and secondary school, educators are able to choose any of the protected languages as a teaching instrument, if asked by the parents (articles 4, 5 and 6).

Thus, the social, economic and institutional setting, together with the persistant need to maintain and anchor the loyalty of current or future Italian people and institutions to a shared idea of an Italian community, might have been a hindrance to a significant and grass-rooted policy in favour of larger autonomies and/or federalism. Another obstacle to the significant development of larger autonomies or cultural movements in favour of a renaissance of the ingroup culture were affected by a perpetual cutting down public expenditures. As a result, a reduction of up to 44% of the funds established by Law 482/99 will take place in 2007-2009 according to article 25 of the so called “Bersani Decree,” DL 223/2006, published on June the 30th 2006. Current expenditures on language maintenance will therefore decrease. The reduction was uncovered by non-public agencies like Furlan

website www.lenghe.net on 29th October 2006 and the news spread like wildfire in the independent net⁷.

As a matter of fact, the authors of the most complete Sardinian website on sociolinguistics and ethnicities, Sotziulimbarda, immediately translated (into Italian and Sardinian) and published the news which was originally given in Furlan <http://www.sotziulimbarda.net/ottobre2006/fundos482.htm>. As the content analysis of print media will show, news as the one above mentioned are hardly given in traditional print media and the material concerning L482/99 or Regional law 26/1997 are not given much relevance in terms of number of articles published and also in terms of representations being conveyed by journalists as neither do they present any account as to how lack of public money may affect language maintenance or the development of a standard nor do they pose the question of the relationship between Sardinian language and nation building.

As Toso maintains (2006), the issue of language is often analysed only culturally and hardly ever socially and politically. It is not only the issue of the claims made but how such claims are received (Joseph 2006:58). To be received by an audience, claims must be represented and transmitted so that they can be received and eventually validated or rejected by the audience thus creating new knowledge either it be common sense or scientific one.

The lack of consistent policy towards decentralisation or autonomies or the lack of consistent relinquishment of a part of sovereignty to some or all regions does not imply the lack of tensions, conflicts, polarisations of opinions (Hutchinson 2005) which may characterise both intra-group discourse on the media or inter-group, occasional attitudes and/or acts of so called low level violence towards the out-groupers even if not in the terms described by Connor (2001: 65).

⁷ Retrieved at http://www.lenghe.net/read_art.php?art_id=1091, on 29th October, 20:43

Not much work has been done on the subject in Italy, but, one of the few works which provided a wide literature review on ethnicity and instances of autonomy, independentism and devolution in Italy, (Toso:2006) showed how the issue of identity was not developed from the same background in all the Italian regions and it analysed the current tendency to leave requests of sovereignty aside and to act towards policies of cultural renaissance. According to Istat 2001 the number of illiterates is about the same of 1951 when illiterate people aged 6 upwards were 14% on average(they were 23% of the Sardinian population). If we take into consideration general rounded figures on the number of illiterate people in Italy according to national censuses carried out between 1861 and 1951 emerges that there is a relation between illiteracy and unemployment rates and moreover, illiteracy rates are always higher in the rural areas away from the urban centres.

For this reason it is quite interesting to note that the majority of the active and voluntaristic actions aimed to create new literacy in the Sardinian language are in the hands of free-lance activists or scholars and are not always backed up in terms of public or private money or by official publishers, institutions or academies. Even more interestingly, the activists very often succeed in realising their projects in the rural areas rather than in the urban thus creating minority literacy in the written language even if, especially in the Campidanese area, this process does not lead to spread and support a single standard as in the “academy”.

Thus, the issue is a very complex one as it is difficult to evaluate the true effects of Italian policies on identity-building from 1861 on or more recent Sardinian policies of identity maintenance or understand the various requests for more autonomy over the years without a multi-disciplinary approach which will take into consideration many features in order to try and assess some sound or unclear on-going attitudes and representations of Sardinian identity and its relationship(s) with people, land, institutions.

Shared cultural and social knowledge.

The relations and the fusion between individual aims and the aims related to the social context were object of studies since the dawn of Social Psychology. One of the scholars who tried to bridge cognitive-social psychology and sociological-social psychology was G.H. Mead, who wrote in the 1930s and was influenced by the cultural mainstream of his contemporaries.

Mead analysed the relations between individual aims and context-related aims and held that “I” and “Me” could merge together especially in experiencing religion or patriotism thus causing individual and contextual aims to overlap, as reported by Contarello-Mazzara (2002: 14-15).

Mead’s theory was later developed by H. Blumer who developed the concept of symbolic interactionism (Contarello-Mazzara 2002: 15-16)

According to Moscovici (1979, 2000), laws and regulations must be transformed into common sense, or the “known”, in order to be objectified and anchored in the shared knowledge of the single and of the community alike.

For this reason, the means of communication and their social actors become the setting and the human agencies of such “translations” of the *inconnu* into the *connu*.

Thus, in print media, nation states, and the national characters are often represented as a human constant which must be taken for granted. This attitude is shared, according to Smith (1986: 7), by both academics and ordinary people:

Most people took national divisions, national character and nationalism for granted, even when they deplored its harmful effects. They may have yarned for a supra-national entity, even a world government, and pinned their hopes on the League of Nations and the United Nations; but, as this latter term tells us, the permanency of the nation and of a ‘world of nations’, was not seriously doubted. (1986:7)

As written in the introductory paragraph, the second task will be to discover whether there is any significant correlation between the narratives represented by journalists and people's attitudes towards them.

Finding correlations between media representations and people's attitude

As far as the latter issue is concerned, I will try to assess possible correlations or area of interests by conducting focus group interviews with a target audience which will be of:

1) groups

formed by

2) a number of participants which ranges between four-to-twelve

of

3) adults

4) who were born and grown up in Sardinia

5) with a University degree or a post-grad

6) who know Sardinian newspapers

7) who know the issues at stake in the newspapers

8a) who do not live on the island

and

8b) who live on the island

A second study will focus on a group sampled as follows

1) groups

formed by

2) a number which ranges between four-to-twelve

of

3) adults

4) who were born and grown up in Sardinia

5) without a University degree

6) who know Sardinian newspapers

7) who know the issues at stake in the newspapers

8a) who do not live on the island

and

8b) who live on the island

Each participant will share the above eight characteristics with the others and questions will be tested and will undergo an estimation of how much time should be spent on each question before running through the final draft.

Focus groups are one important mean of qualitative data collecting. In social sciences, according to Morgan (1997:7), data are collected through participant observation, typically in groups, and individual interviews. Focus groups

gives the opportunity to observe much interaction on a chosen topic in a limited period of time which will be decided by the researcher. The aim is to reproduce a naturalistic setting for observation and provide direct evidence about what kinds of ideas and information are being expressed by the participants.

Two major experts in the field of focus groups, namely Marková-Farr (1995) hold that to avoid to merely reflect the views of both the researcher and the participant, researchers may try to reproduce the frame in which the formation of public opinion is likely to be generated.

Such a context is called: discussion group, which Moscovici named the “thinking society” in miniature (Moscovici 1984). Marková-Farr point out that this method allows the researcher to obtain a good sampling of a particular culture which has generated the issues rather than reflect the opinion of the interviewed. In focus groups research questions at debate will be those defined by the contents of the newspapers analysed at an earlier stage by the moderator who will be completely familiar with the issue and the questioning route he intends to develop. Participants will be given an excerpt from a newspaper and the questions posed will be *conversational, clear and short* (Krueger-Casey 2000:67)

My goal, after having collected and analysed a large corpus of written material, will be to gain understanding about what the opinions of the Sardinian participants are on the narratives which are often at stake in the regional print media.

This kind of method does not imply statistical projections (Krueger & Casey 2000: 25). Moreover, critical aspects such as the selection of the sample group, question making (in my case excerpts from newspapers will be submitted), and analysis will require much attention especially in working with communities (Krueger and King 1998; Krueger & Casey 2000). Another problem which may affect the desirable efficacy of both qualitative and

quantitative research method are the dynamics which lead participants to look for social desirability during the sessions and the effect of persuasion also known as “snow-ball effect” (Mazzara 2002:136)

Attitudes towards Language and identity: how can they be measured?

Nowadays the issue of “ethnie” seems to find more space on the Sardinian media than in the past. The shared imagery of a common ancestry and of a “distinctive” history is given more space in mass media rather than in those media limited to more specific fields (eg. Sardinian archaeology). Toso, has given a language and political insight into aspects such as group self-boistering and self-consciousness. These actions are socially and politically in charge of defining a minority language first *de iure* and then *de facto*.

In fact, according to Toso (2006:62), formally, each Italian region could define its regional varieties as language(s) rather than dialects within the Italian language continuum.

Toso and other scholars, such as Joseph (2006:45) maintain that the differences of language structure in defining a “stable” language (according to the structural definition given by Ferguson in 1959), are now trivial if compared to the cultural-political factors. Toso goes a bit further in assessing the lack, in many Italian regions, of even the cultural factor which would be the first step to develop group commitment to a regional language.

This, in turn, would prevent the development of any instance or policy to give prestige and identity to some linguistic varieties

It comes as no surprise that in this thesis I will focus on those communities which historically and through print media mediated or new media mediated communication, have categorised themselves together. I will therefore take into account Moscovici’s theory on minority influence to evaluate and bring out the alleged “distinctiveness” of Sardinian identity and commitment.

Commitment is often defined loyalty in Nationalism theory.

Loyalties are socially constructed sentiments and cultural units and for these reason it seem very difficult to measure them but there is a strong tradition of research in social psychology which hinged on qualitative research methods from the Symbolic Interaction Theory developed by Thomas and Znaniecki

(Mazzara 2002 and 1996) to the work conducted by Sherif at summer camps to which the participated. Sherif was a participant observer (Sherif 1966) of intergroup relations at a summer camp.

He immersed himself in the subject being studied, and gained deeply understanding about groups competition and the feel being generated either they be feelings of competition, hostility and social distance. Later on he was also able to design group activities to reduce hostility and rivalry between groups. Mazzara reported that Gordon Allport himself was one of the first scholars to foster and systematise the use of personal data in conducting social research (Mazzara 2002: 26)

Tajfel (1970) was one of the first scholar to demonstrate the development of positive feelings among the members of a group who feel categorised together. The media not only embody ideological assumptions to transform them into common sense knowledge but they do also contribute to sustain existing relations even if these relations are socially constructed. According to Fairclough (2001) the relationship between ideology and power often relies on common sense which is grounded, according to the interpretation of Garfinkel's, in discourse and social action. The articles published by the media are the connections between the text and everyday world. It will be interesting to analyse the texts and the narratives which stem from the texts in order to reveal the presence or the absence of ingroup versus outgroup in the representations of membership and causal attribution provided by the media and in the representations of membership provided by the participant which will take part into focus groups.

Research, conducted over the last forty years, (Sherif: 1966; Tajfel, :1981; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Hewstone: 1990 Ellemers, Van Rijswick, Bruins & De Gilder: 1998Turner: 1999; Doosje and Branscombe: 2003; Oakes, Haslam & Turner 2004; Turner 2005), suggested the existence of a significant relationship **between ingroup identification and intergroup attribution bias.**

That is quite significant in terms of historical and sociological interpretation of inter-group clashes, tensions and in the attribution of more negative deeds to the outer group which in this case is represented by the “Italians”.

Tensions and attribution of negative deeds or attitudes to the outer group has often been analysed using a cognitive approach (Hewstone 1992:235). That approach has, according to Hewstone (1992) *had a major impact on our understanding of how stereotypes are formed, represented and maintained.* (Hewstone 1992: 235-249).

The complex issue of the representations of identity and commitments can be analysed through Moscovici and Smith’s approaches which have many features in common: Smith talks about the transmission of historical shared and collective values which can be summarised as “symbols” and “myth” all-together featuring political relationship, its representations and day-to-day experience.

Moscovici, even though he distance himself from the classic definition of what collective representations are (Moscovici 2000: 33) maintains that according to the classic definition collective representations are

an explanatory device, and refer to a general class of ideas and beliefs (science, myth, religion, etc), for us they are phenomena which need to be described and to be explained They are specific phenomena which are related to a particular mode of understanding and of communicating- a mode which creates both reality and common sense. It is in order to stress such a distinction that I use the term ‘social’ instead of ‘collective’.

Moscovici talks about the shaping and reshaping of shared representations through the perennial interpretation of scientific knowledge **plus** non-scientific knowledge; both scholars believe in the transmission of these represented and representative knowledge by the members of the group to their offspring and fellow members.

1.1.1 Italy, Sardinia and other formal autonomies: review of central-periphery relationships and devolved powers from 1948 to 2006

In Sardinia, over the last four decades there have been three main autonomist parties, not necessarily political ones, which were well aware of the regulations concerning the status of autonomy. According to them the level of autonomy that was contained in the Constitution of 1948, was not enough.

The three parties were formed by neo-sardists of the seventies; the intellectuals of *Nazione Sarda*” such as Lilliu, Contu, Spiga, Usai, Nivola, who pushed forward the necessity to link the language to the reshaping of a more autonomous Sardinian identity; and the labourist working class which asked the central government to implement policies aimed at bridging the gap between Sardinia and other Italian regions by re-shaping and re-balancing the role of Sardinia in the centre-periphery relations by evaluating and using the human resources present on the social-economic venue represented by the whole island. These movements who were born in the years following 1945 were now mature and in the 1980’s were strong enough to implement a more autonomistic policy which apparently was doomed to failure only few years later.

Nowadays many Sardinian intellectuals don’t issue or apply any laws but they try to push forward their ideas on autonomy and on Sardinian identity through the media either they be print traditional media (*L’Unione Sarda, Il Sardegna, La Nuova Sardegna*) or independent ones such as peer-reviews hosted on Sardinian web-sites (*Sotziulimba Sarda*) or, in fewer cases, by “communicating” their ideas in widely spread independent magazines (ex: *Lacanas*) or cartoons (ex: *Fisietto*)

1.2.0 A good moment to write on this topic

I will conclude this introductory chapter by writing why these topics might be considered very interesting in these very days.

I singled out three main reasons why this is the best moment to examine this topic: 1) a socio-politic one 2) an economic one 3) a potentially international one which is spread by cheap means of communication and publishing. Beyond that it should be noted that, until the beginning of the 1990s (Gutierrez-A.D.Smith in Guibernau-Hutchinson 2001: Xi) not even the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism was founded yet. Ethnic conflicts and geopolitical reasons to explain them were already present but the issue of ethnicity and nationalism were not widely studied at the University. Gutierrez-Smith reports (Guibernau-Hutchinson 2001: Xi) that courses on nationalism began to attract considerable interest only from 1989 on. In Italy, as far as I am concerned,, do not exist proper and organised courses on ethnicity and nationalism. Even the word, “nationalism”, has undergone a tacit ban since the Second World War and as far as my research on print media is concerned I never found a single opinion being reported of anyone defining himself/herself as a nationalist. In Sardinian newspapers the substitute for nationalism is “nationalitarian” which is the adjective related to the most activist forces. No favourable milieu for studies on nationalism is hosted in the Italian Universities and this could be a good reason to write on this topic but I will now try to single out some of other reasons why a research on nationalism, media and representations should be conducted in Sardinia.

1) Socio-Political reasons. The years following World War I, saw the rise of the Communist party in Italy (and the founder was Antonio Gramscim, Sardinian philosopher and one of the most influent *maître à penser* of both Italian communism and British post-structuralism). The disillusionment for the results of the war and the non-distribution of the land and the fresh

memory of sacrifice pushed forward by those who fought for Italy lead to the creation of Sardinian *Partito Sardo D'Azione* directed by democratic intellectual Emilio Lussu. After few years many members who represented the grass-root of the party converged into *Partito Fascista*. In the aftermaths of World War II, Italy, as in the case of Germany and Japan described by Hutchinson (2005 137-141) a national re-building appeared virtually impossible and partly for this political reason, Italy was one of the strongest supporters the European Union. The commitment to the new supranational identity as well as the erosion of Italian national identity was in urgent need of new shared imagery and cohesion to be built and transmitted. The print media were one of the tools for such practical purpose. On the other hand, over the last few years, once the collusion with Fascism and Nazi war crimes were dispelled by fifty years of television, journalism, intellectuals and political elites, Italy underwent a process of more open new-nationalisation in political discourse with the help of the heads of state **from President Ciampi in the last few years of 1990's on, who have shifted from a political attitude which saw the attribution of wholly positive national values to anti-fascism only, to a more homogenizing public attitude which encouraged a set of shared values linked to the commemoration of sacrifice on both sides, either it be fascist (Republic of Salò) either it be anti-fascist (Partisans).**

This setting together with the successful integration of Italy into the European Union may have helped the renaissance of regional identities. This renaissance is in turn attributed to cultural interest or an allegedly economic need to hurry the creation of a federal nation state. Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, on June 25-26th Italians voted against Berlusconi-Bossi's devolution. Sardinia was one of the Regions who pushed forward the referendum to abrogate Berlusconi-Bossi's proposal which aimed not only at reforming Italian Constitution and premiership but also to create a Federal Republic. As a result, less Sardinian people if compared to national average went to vote(46.6% vs 53.7) and, among the voters, more Sardinians than the average of other Italians said no to devolution (72.3% vs 61.6%)

This proposal is now abrogated and new centre-left Government will hardly propose new devolution. In July 2006, the term "sovereignty" gained

the front stage when central Government rejected the written proposal of a new statute for Sardinia in which the island claimed the sovereignty for Sardinians. The news was reported by all major Sardinian newspapers⁸.

As far as Constitutional right is interpreted, the new statute was dismissed because the concept of sovereignty is applicable to all Italians with no regional distinctions.

The clash will lead to the judgement of the *Contitutional Court* which is the Institution which regulates over any disputes arising from the interpretation of hierarchy between Regional Laws and National Laws.

The Sardinian proposal shows the presence of a strong regional request for more devolved powers and the writings and the official proposing of new charters are there to testify the presence of different processes of nation-building which are taking places in Sardinia. My thesis will try to give an insight on the spread of nation-building through the media. My aim is to discover what messages the authors of the print media are sending and how these messages are turned into social representations in order to conventionalize objects, persons and events for the audience. The reality spread by the media is according to the **theory of social representations** (Moscovici 1984) determined to a high degree by what is socially accepted as reality.

In a recent study on Italian parties Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2004:55) showed that Centre-Left coalition in Italy has a Europeanist attitude which tends to focus the representation of the nation and its inhabitant as strong Europeanist in a Europe of nation-states. Italy, according to the two researcher represents a very interesting field of research because its elites are oriented pro-Europe but with a centralist political system with strong regional cultures. However, till nowadays, none of Italian Regions claimed a whole independence. If Italy was a nation-state divided into region with strong ethnic components we might have considered Hasting's view on the subject

⁸ *Unione Sarda*, 2006, 30th July, p.3

that define the second cause of nationalism: namely an adequate internal dynamism that only large groups seem to possess. For this reason, Catalans, despite having built a sort of civic nation building still belong to a large ethnic group such as Lombards. Others such as Sardinian and Friulan are less and beyond that, they are not considered ethnic regions. With the proposal for devolution being abrogated, Sardinia is going to keep its former status inherited from the Republican Constitution.

2) Economic reasons. Sardinia won't be included in the Objective 1 of the Structural Funds from 2007 on. European Structural Funds which were allocated to helping areas lagging behind in their development ("Objective 1") where the gross domestic product (GDP) is below 75% of the Community average do not fit anymore to Sardinia which now generates more wealth alone and therefore must re-shape its position in the economic arena of Southern Europe and Mediterranean countries and its relationships with Italy and Europe⁹. Sardinia, as autonomous region, was entitled to get back part of the VAT which has been charged annually. The discovery of not being given this back since 1992 may generate nationalistic forces as well as regional protectionism that may lead to new taxes to be implemented by Sardinia Government against non-Sardinia citizens who want to invest or spend some time in Sardinia. In this case cultural rights may be used to strengthen minority rights rather than the other way round.

3) Ethnic and identity reasons. Nowadays there is a constant echoing of other regional minority in other parts of Italy and Europe. In particular Sardinian traditional and web media tend to report any news on successful language revitalisation acts if they come from Friuli and Catalonia which are

⁹ The city of Cagliari hosted one important International Forum on Mediterranean Market "What Future for the Mediterranean Region?" Important leaders such as Juan Prat Y Coll (who is current Plenipotentiary of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Mediterranean Region) and Amre Moussa (who is Secretary General of the Arab League) and Nuno Severiano Teixeira(former Minister of Portuguese Internal Affairs and current Director of Portuguese Institute for International Relations) together with President Soru took part in it and designed an agenda for the economic future of the area. The programme was retrieved at http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1_44_20060609182331.pdf on 11th June 2006 , 10:30

seen as a close and attainable model or peer group (Friuli) and a great example of what a successful nation without state should aim at (Catalonia). Ethnic elements are echoed by the media. The possibility to have a drop of the blood of the alleged “original” or “most powerful” inhabitants of Sardinia gives anybody the possibility to feel realistically as part of that constructed heritage allegedly oppressed by a dominant culture and perceived as decadent and subjected to the central forces usually qualified as the outer group: “They” vs the in-group “us”. Despite the formal commitment to Europe and to Italy itself it is possible to trace a significative relationship between Sardinian elites and the cultural difference used as markers (Smith 1986:17) to reconstruct or help the renaissance of the old nation by stressing its “pedigree”.

1.4.0 Research outline

The thesis will have the following form.

1) Discussion of the literature on Italian nation building with particular emphasis on the role of the press from the Unification on.

2)The role of the press: methodology and main findings that seemed to be constructing the Sardinians as a distinctive group.

I am looking for any evidence that Sardinian elites were acting in the traditional manner of nationalist theory, trying to persuade the mass of Sardinians that they are a group apart and that they deserve to be treated as such. Are Sardinian newspapers trying to rise the interest in Sardinian regional identity or are they just mirroring what happens in the socio-political arena?

The first set of data comes from a review of the local Sardinian press over a period of 26 months. Throughout that period two of the most popular Sardinian papers were surveyed and all stories and articles that could be considered to be nation building in intent were noted..

3)In-depth analysis of the four main narratives found in the press

After analysis it emerged that there were **four narratives** that seemed to be constructing the Sardinians as a group apart with a powerful representation of Sardinian collective cultural identity.

This chapter will include a narrative on the Sardinian language which will be analysed according to the number of articles published on this issue and according to the representations given to the language by the journalists and actors.

4)The role of the internet: methodology and main findings.

This chapter takes into account the new media that complements the traditional press and examines whether those who publish on the Internet are echoing what is being published in the newspapers.

The data collected will tell the reader whether the net is widely surfed for minority language-maintenance and/or other issues of identity are at stake. A more complete thesis, to be written at a doctoral stage would require a field research to be carried out to discover how language and other aspects of identity, including nationalism if present in the media, are represented by a large number of respondents

The model was provided by a framework developed by Unesco over the years 2002-2005 aimed at assessing and measuring cultural diversity on the web. I think the cyber aspects to identity should be widely investigated because the Internet differs from both print publishing and audio-visual media. This medium is accessible to all those who have the IT competence and modest equipment. There is no capital investment necessary and still there are relationships with traditional media and traditional form of publishing. In the discussion of data I will show evidence of how articles on nation building or other issues are re-visited and sometimes answered back through non-traditional media. There are relationships between those actors of non-traditional media and those who author print media.

This chapter provides data to show what Sardinian political militants and cultural activists are disseminating on the WWW. Using Boolean search techniques corpora were collected and the content analysed.

A conclusion which will include research done now which aimed to discover if Sardinian identity is significantly being re-built or not and if it is so how is the building and re-building being done? The data collected shows the narratives and discourses circulating in Sardinia and some of the reactions to them. I wish to go on with this work at doctoral level to find out by field research 'How do Sardinians react to the narratives of the press and the Web and how do Sardinians represent themselves'.

This aspect should be investigated by bringing the traditional and new frameworks of nationalism and social representations together

II.0 Historic overview on Sardinian nation building from Risorgimento to the Republican years

II.0. Historic overview on Sardinian nation building from Risorgimento to the Republican years

My aim for the present chapter is to draw a thread which from community-making of the Sardinian and Italian Risorgimento will lead to the contemporary European setting for regional nationbuilding and their social influences . The area or field of research is media, and political and social behaviour.

The literature on Sardinia written by Sardinian authors which I have analysed generally assumed that Sardinians underwent top-down decisions and not much or nothing was left in term of self-decisions. These data clash with the attitude to change, to be found in the electorate's behaviour over the last few years which seems to be low when referred to devolution and/or independence. In the chapter on the media I will analyse whether the print media are attempting to propose themselves as a source of knowledge, an "Epistemic authority".

A brief history of centre-periphery relations

Sardinia was part of Piedmont-Sardinia before Italian unification and one of the first provinces to become part of united Italy in 1860.

In **1720** the kingdom of Sicily was exchanged for that of Sardinia and as a result, the Savoy, bought the land and the right to name themselves kings of Sardinia. In 1743 the kingdom was combined with Piedmont. The kingdom kept its name "kingdom of Sardinia," but as a matter of fact those were the years when the central-periphery relationships between Sardinia and the future Italian nation state started. My work will try to find whether a unbalanced relationship between Rome and Sardinia lasts until nowadays.

This political tie started in 1720 did not faded off even when Napoleon's armies invaded Continental Italy. Still, Sardinia had already had many relationships with some continental entities such as the cities of Pisa and Genoa in the middleage.

In 1796 Napoleon conquered the kingdom along the rest of the Peninsula and the king Charles Emanuel moved to Sardinia. In 1814 the kingdom was restored and a more conservative and centralist attitude was adopted by the Monarchs. In 1848 Carlo Alberto issued a Charter which originally it was a rather conservative document that set up a “pure” constitutional monarchy; after many social changes pushed forward by liberal governments its spirit was changed to a more liberal application of its articles given the power to change or adapt the Charter by normal laws.

Even before this date Sardinia was subject to the centralising tendencies of the Turin monarchy. Sardinian intellectual elites, had already engaged into a process of construction and elaboration of a sense of Sardinian national belonging since the early years of 19th century. Some Sardinian politicians who were well known at national level such as deputy Giorgio Asproni (1808-1876) who was elected deputy at the Italian Parliament nine times, had always dreamt of Sardinian autonomy within a federal and republican Italian nation state. Yet, according to authors such as Marroccu (2004), for the Sardinian political élites, that cultural forms and practices could become resources politically expendable has been a discovery dating from the first years after World War I with the . The development of cultural forms as a tool for political practice such as autonomy or devolution had to wait until the years of the second world war when Altinero Spinelli together with Eugenio Colorni (father in law of noble prize Amartya Sen) and Ernesto Rossi issued his Manifesto on Federalism (1941). Few years after that, on 27-28th August 1943 a group of antifascists chaired by Spinelli founded the European movement for Federalism. Giuseppe Dessì, a very well-known Sardinian writer in 1951 wrote an article entitled *Le due facce della Sardegna tra emigrazione lingua e tradizioni*; he claimed that for Sardinians the only way to be Italians **was to conceive Italy as related to the European Community**. Federalism and devolution were born in a former-communist and socialist environment as a reaction to the absolute sovereignty of the nation states and the same ideas were to be found in the autonomist movements of Sardinia which were very active especially shortly after the first world war when the

soldiers who fought in the trenches for Italy asked for more rights and were more organised than regional intellectuals who had tried to act collectively between the 1820s and 1860s to construct and promote the cultural identity of the island. The intellectuals who were in favour of federalism in those years often used the past as reminders. For example the law of the “Chiudende” issued by Carlo Alberto of Savoy in 1820 not only did change Sardinian landscape for good but it also changed the relationship between Sardinian rural society and cattle breeding and cropping. The “chiudende” meant fencing the small amount of land which the croppers had been plowing and cropping in that very year; before that much of Sardinian landscape was free without any restriction to necessity of the communities which alternated cropping and cattle breeding. As a result of the Law of the Chiudende each and every Sardinian was a land owner but often small owners who could not live on the small amount they could exploit without modern means for harvesting etc were forced to sell their land. So as a result 1) rural working class as well as new industrial working class were generally speaking labourists and in favour of Sardinian autonomy. The acts and the laws of the Savoy such as the Law of the “fencing” had to be accepted but helped the feeling of diversity and the themes of the clash between the oppressors “them, or the Savoy or the Continental” and “we the oppressed, the people of Sardinia” to be transmitted and become part of Sardinian shared culture.

These claims can be included in the Smithian interpretation of territorialism. The rediscover of the past and an allegedly “purity” of Sardinian culture were the tools to gain an internal recognition they had been unable to attain from the contemporary currents of Italian and European culture but the minorities were not able to produce a conversion effect on the status of Sardinia. For this reason, active autonomists had always found more useful to converge into large massive parties in order to obtain innovation on their particular target. As we will see in the data collected on the web, nowadays minorities have different tools for gaining public audience but yet they need majority in order to try to change the status quo.

As Moscovici(1985) explains, the relationships between minority and majorities stems from the tension as in the Dreyfuss affair, when, in an initial phase of tension, only a very small minority were convinced of Dreyfuss's innocence and fought against the view of the vast majority which conformed to the "official" views in the media discourse. To outspread the message of the minority time and much passion on the object is needed. For this reason, the Sardinian question to exist needs to be reconstructed in the public opinions and tension between a major and a minor party is needed. Sardinia had not his first newspapers until 1889, and for this reason collective thinking and conformity could not be widely outspread through the media. Gentile had, in a way, a pre-etno-symbolistic vision, shared by some pre-risorgimento historic and activists, as he was sure the restoration of origin was to be a moral restoration rather than only civic or ethnic. These views were shared by Gioberti and those who thought the Church might be the tool to push forward the allegedly moral and civil primacy of Italy among the nations. These views were already present in the reporter-styled books which were issue between 1870-1910 before newspapers became the real stage of political consensus building as reported by Briganti (1972a, b). In the writings produced between 1871 and 1885 the focus was on the loss of Risorgimento idealistic efforts to create a homogeneous and enlightened society; middle and high bourgeois were highly criticized and despised and depicted as ignorant and unreliable representative of the people. Those writings were mainly a tool for the low middle class intellectuals who had lost their economic and politic power in the industrialization era. At the turning of the century the middle class will act as a more homogeneous class and more conservative attitude because the presence of working class on the new social arena was perceived as a great danger.

However, in the mid 1850's the reaction against what was perceived as a colonial regime was outspread through books which were to be bought and read by a tiny minority of Sardinians. However none of such intervention prevented Sardinia from becoming assimilated into the Italian nation state

geographically and culturally. The cultural resistance against incorporation has been in the hand of minorities since Sardinia's incorporation. In 1848, Ignazio Esperson wrote an important work which was published in 1878. It covered sixty years of Savoy ruling over the island. Esperson holds that during those years Sardinia underwent a colonial régime, centralistic, former autonomy-breaking without any appreciable development in terms of economic and social growth (Sotgiu1974:22)

In Sardinia, after an effort of local elites to gain some form of self-governance within the ancient regime (the so-called Sard Revolution of 1793-96), a cultural renaissance took place between 1820 and 1870.

This long preceded the birth of a modern political movement, the origins of which only date to 1919, with the birth of the Sardinian Action Political Party (Partito Sardo d'Azione). During the 1800s the cultural movements lost cultural relevance.

In the aftermath of World War II the autonomous instances, were not only in the hand of the activists and elites of the Sardinian Action Party, but became common to all political parties in Sardinia, especially the labourists. As my data on the print media tell as far as the last few years are concerned but the majority of the instances were economic first and then ideological.

According to Marrocu (2004) these instances became, from 1945 onwards, the basis of a common ideology among Sardinian politicians in Italian national politics and European arena, aimed at maximizing the resources that Italy and Europe could grant to Sardinia's weak economy. As my data will show in the case of the VAT which involved autonomistic claims, economy, either it be a case of centre-periphery clash or internal clash is the firestarter of almost any claims for more autonomy. But as Marrocu holds and as recent referendum results on Federalism as well as public reaction to laws promoting cultural heritage show there might be a weak emotive involvement of the majority of Sardinians.

As a matter of fact, Devolution, within Italian regions was not a priority neither in the Statute nor in the Republican Constitution. The latter contained

articles formally stating the existence of an issue of identity (articles 2, 3) and also Autonomy (116) but identity and autonomy were not considered as a continuum and part of a devolved power of self-governing for the autonomous regions and until the sixties no intellectuals or activists were able to obtain a wide consensus over the question of identity and autonomy/independence.

II.1 A significant part of identity? Italian language, English and Sardinian language.

Language and Identity

According to the first Survey of 1861 conducted in the Realm of Italy after the unification many people were not able to write in the Italian language at all.

Candeloro(Candeloro:1994) reported few stats and figures that indicate a good 78% of the population at the time of Unification, as being illiterate in the Italian language. This percentage is 75% if we consider also Lazio and Veneto. Sardinia stands as the place with the highest percentage of analphabetism (90%); Sicily (89%), Continental Southern Italy (86%), Umbria(84%), Marche (83%), Emilia-Romagna (78%), Toscana (74%), Lazio (68%), Veneto (65%).

It is important to note that the survey did not included(only surveys from 1951 on did) data on the number of semi-illiterate people which according to Candeloro (Ibidem: 56) was probably very high. Ninety years later after the Second World War and before the great economic shift took step in Italy, those who were completely illiterate were 12% and overall 58% of Italian people had not attended but few years of primary school without completing even the first stage of regular education(Mammarella-Desideri 1992).

Primary education worked differently in the urban areas if compared to the poorer urban area. In the first years of Italy as a unite state only 0.8% of the young population (people whose age bracket was 18-23)(Matteucci-Talamo: 347; Candeloro:57) had attended any secondary school. One third (Matteucci-Talamo 1960: 58-67, 197-348 and 320-32:) out of them may have attended the University, which means 6.500 university students in the years 1861-1864 (ISTAT 1861 and Matteucci-Talamo 1864).

What is happening nowadays?

The question of literacy is still open today in Sardinia and there is much debate whether the Region should invest public money on Sardinian language planning. The data on school drops show that 23.9% of Sardinian students in 1991 still dropped out before completing the high school (Mammarella in Desideri 1992) , and 23.2% of students between the age of 6 and 19 abandoned their studies, thus qualifying as the worst of the Italian students in terms of school dropouts and degrees completed. This situation together with the growing perception of English as the key to find more jobs and compete with other European regions contributed to the dismantling of the collective perception of Sardinian as a convenient language in terms of cultural and economic opportunities.

The Region, over 2005, has implemented some territorial and protectionistic economic and cultural policies but the money invested on the outspread of Sardinian in 2005 is less than 1% of the money which will be invested on the outspread of English in 2006.

The only ones to include Sardinian language as a key ethnic issue are those who have a voluntaristic attitude towards nation building. Moreover they are hardly represented in the Sardinian parliament whereas the politicians or the media mark their right of self determination giving it a politic, economic and cultural background.

If the representation of Sardinian identity is being rebuilt as a national one by the cultural elites they are doing so by building it on a re-discovered *long durée* thus encompassing territorialism, perennialism and ethnicity.

The language issue, shares with other aspect of identity the familiar background especially in the rural areas but it is not shared by those who work in traditional media. The rise of interests in the print media is only related to publishing whenever the publishers of the newspapers have some interest in promoting magazines or books in the Sardinian language.

After the downfall of Fascism, Sardinian language, with its fragmentation due to the lack of a standard, was at risk and there were not many data available to

know about language use and language health. The most complete data we possess on language use dates back to January 1995 when a large survey carried out by EuroMosaic, given that no census data was available by which a representative sample could be developed, decided to create a quota sample based upon equal distribution by gender, social class and age at each sampling point; they did so because they thought that in this way internal comparison across these demographic variables could be facilitated.

They concluded as follows:

This (the Sardinian language) would appear to be yet another minority language group under threat. The agencies of production and reproduction are not serving the role they did a generation ago. The education system plays no role whatsoever in supporting the language and its production and reproduction. The language has no prestige and is used in work only as a natural as opposed to a systematic process. It seems to be a language relegated to a highly localised function of interaction between friends and relatives. Its institutional base is extremely weak and declining. Yet there is concern among its speakers who have an emotive link to the language and its relationship to Sardinian identity¹⁰

The current legal status of Sardinian is to be found at the beginning of the 1980's.

On October the 16th 1981 the European Parliament adopted a Charter for **Regional or Minority Languages** known also as "Strasbourg Charter" promoted by former socialist *partigliano* Gateano Arfè which followed Oslo Conference of 1976 which was focussed on cultural rights. This time identity and culture were recognized as essential part of the psychological formation and health of the individual. Language was considered an important part of the identity of the individual. In article 3 Arfè claims the need for minority culture and languages to be given formal protection. In article 4 he asks for the promotion of lesser used languages and its use in public institutions. In

¹⁰ The entire survey is available at http://www.eurolang.net/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=43&lang=en ; I retrieved it on August 3rd 2006. h.15.40

article 6 he approved the European Charter of Minority Languages as an effective and flexible tool to maintain and promote these languages. Article 7 asked the Governments to ratify the resolution by signing it in their parliaments. In article 10 Arfè asks for an inclusion of minority languages in those programmes which promote student exchange as Erasmus etc and also asks for minority languages to be included in the television broadcasting. Article 13 asks to apply this Charter also to those ethnic minorities “non-territorials” or non-historical or not-considered historical such as Rom. Article 13 was not part of the interpretation and implementation of Italian national and regional laws following Arfè resolution

After the mid 1990s regions such as Friuli Venezia Giulia (Regional Law 15, 1996) and Sardinia (Regional Law 26, 1997) promoted the first regional laws which promoted Sardinian/Friulan languages for public use within the regional borders may not represent sufficient attempts to gain national attention towards minority identities and languages. But it was only following the example of European legislation that a wider National law on maintenance and protection of the minority languages and identity was issued (15th December 1999). In fact, regional laws which followed the article 6 of Italian Constitution was approved in many regions even those regions not benefiting from an autonomous status. Thus, Regional courses of language and culture were set up at regional level and were directed to young learners who could get marks for their scholastic curricula. Extra-curricular courses were left to the initiatives of the citizens. The organisers of courses for adults were often the same people who tried to outspread interest towards Sardinian identity on the WWW. After the law 482/99 was passed, independent initiatives stayed but Universities and other official bodies came into the arena. Single authors could now cooperate or play alone by using cheap means of communications

As far as Sardinia is concerned, the influence of the Council of Europe lead to the issue of Sardinian Regional Law 26/1997 and Italian State Law 482/99

and Regional Resolution 26/3 2003¹¹ which all included regulations in order to protect and promote Sardinian identity as a macro issue including autonomy, cultural heritage and language. That strong political result could be started as an unintentional result of people behaviour at a micro-level which is social-practice of accepting minorities before top-down regulations were implemented to give legal penetration to a social demand? This is a difficult issue. Authors such as Wright (1999) showed how language was a neglected political aspect for many years but the community of communication need political centres as well as social practice.

Regional Law 26 of 1997 for the “promotion and recognition of the culture and the language of Sardinia” was born as a law produced by the insiders for the insiders.

For the first time, it engages in a common project both the political and cultural elites of Sardinia. Law 26 instituted a Regional Observatory for the Culture and the Language of Sardinia. This was formed by “experts” appointed by the Sardinian Parliament and by the Provincial Assemblies, but it is also a direct expression of several non public bodies such as cultural institutions.

Who are these actors: some academics as well as non-academic; speakers, writers, linguists, ethnologists. None of them was able to influence directly the distribution of the economic resources to foster the project. Cultural elites were those most directly interested in the practices contemplated by this Law but were kept apart from the legislative process. As a result, nine years since its approval, there are still clashes and lack of cooperation between experts and public bodies. Law 26 has brought the theme of Sardinian culture and language to schooling. This law put language as an important part of identity building. Still, this issue seems far to be taken seriously in the print media.

¹¹ In B.U.R.A.S. (Official Gazette of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia), 2006, January, retrieved at http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1_4_20060113131532.pdf, 2006, 2nd June, 18:31

II.2 From the Statuto Albertino to the Republican Constitution

Autonomous Regions

The application of the new regionalist status took the ruling political parties more than 20 years to put the issue into action. In fact it wasn't until 1970, that Italy established fifteen Regions with ordinary statute. These were officially established as territorial entities with democratically elected legislative bodies and executive governments endowed with a number of autonomous powers. The five regions with more devolved powers were Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta. Trentino-Alto Adige(South Tyrol) gained today gains from more active powers because its status was more complex since the very beginning of Republica Itay. This kind of Consitution differed very much from **The Statuto Albertino** which was a more flexible but very limited Constitution if compared to the Republican one.

In this case the adjective “flexible” means there was no hierarchy between different kinds of legislation so that Constitution could be changed by ordinary laws whilst this is impossible in the Republican Constitution. In the Albertino Statute there were no concessions for minorities of any sort and the element of Social Covenant present in the Statute was the union of a nationalistic and religious attitude which gave the king a statue of symbol of the destiny of its people even if for the first time its power had some limitations and the citizens called “regnicoli” which meant “realm dwellers” had some formal rights for the first time. However the Statute lacked the contract form which saw two contractors: the king and its people. In fact the charter is called “ottriata” which means granted by the sovereign and not discussed by an assembly. The lack of a form resembling contracts *inter partes* was not only admitted but postulated by Gentile's soul-fascism (1944-1923:30) who held that the concept of national identity is neither the *elective principle of the French*, nor the *natural or racial one of the Germans*.

Nationality converges..with the general idea of life, of man, or better of the spirit.

However, according to Dainotto (2001:243) the analysis of Risorgimento which took its cue from Gramsci's framework of failed revolution points to the persistence of regional and local identities in conflicts since the post-Unitarian years.

During the fascism, in a speech he held in 1923 and which is contained in *Il Tramonto della Cultura Siciliana*, Gentile, (1992:137) said that Italian patriotism in the years which followed the Risorgimento had the power to depress and almost erase the "*sentimento regionale*". The eradication was not only cultural and economic (and this happened as soon as the elites who relied on small land's possessions underwent a dramatic economic crisis given the steps taken forward by a large industrialization process) but also psychological because people felt apart from the elites who ruled the Parliament. The Parliament itself was represented iconically by using literature since 1871, as showed by Briganti (1972 b). The Parliament, depicted as the stage of of corruption and single minded people, had lost the power to convert positive energy which overcame regionalism in the years before the Unification. As a result, Italian writers became professional but people and minorities were not to have any space left until the fascism which aimed at awakening local energies

...reawakening of the Italian soul the need is felt to awaken all the sleepy local energies, stimulating the particular capabilities of the different provinces, to give the national soul, in the end, a concrete content consisting of all the memories and glories of the various regions (Gentile 1992:137)

The power of the various regions does not seem to be elicited even in the years following the writing and the application of the new Republican Constitution

Bedani (2000: 214-216) reports the thought of Ernesto Galli della Loggia (1998:44) about the key issue to the transformation of Italy from a whole

centralist state into a potential regionalist state. Della Loggia thinks the turning point must have been the exclusion of Catholic Church from the ideological foundations of the Italian State as for many centuries the faith in its Catholic confessional form represented the only unifying trait common to all Italians. This trait was excluded as soon as on 1st January 1948 following the Decree of 16th March 1946 the Albertino Statute ceased to exist. For the hundred years in which the Albertino Statute served as Constitution for Realm of Sardinia first and Realm of Italy since 1861, the army, the educational system and the bureaucracy were considered to be the instruments that would unify the population linguistically and culturally. By following the French model, the new state wanted to put into practice the principle of 'one language, one nation'. For this reasons, large minorities such as Sardinians were not considered an ethnic minority and as a result Sardinians had not entered any survey in order to establish ethnic minorities or alloglots which were carried out by Istat since 1861.

Even though post-World War II independentist parties in Sardinia stemmed from the important heritage of anti-fascism within the Partito Sardo D'Azione, it is interesting to note how Forgacs (2000: 145-147) holds that a regular television service and prior to that, neorealistic movies which worked as documentary investigations on local realities played an important role in building an Italian identity **in spite of the still on-going process which determined regional and subcultural loyalties.**

Europe of markets and no chance to develop the Europe of regions

Forgacs (2000:151) holds that Gramsci's vision on the capacity of intellectuals or activists to influence national aggregation and identification and create a consensus over the issue of devolution had already begun to *shrug off* in the late 1950's. and it was only in the late sixties that regional separatists or autonomists tried to make allegiance with other similar movements in Italy and abroad. This could happen only once the Europe of the market was fully established. In March 1957 EEC became real by signing

the Treaty of Rome. The existence of a community did not mean the existence of a shared super-national identity. As Ginsborg (2000: 160) points out by quoting L. Cafagna(1981),

The Europe born of the Treaty was a Europe of markets, not a Europe based on common and progressive social standards, nor a Europe which took the initiative in defining qualitative lines of development within which growth and distribution could be harmonized

This was the background of the first Republican years and at the end of this period the first demands officially made in relation to the Sardinian language begin to appear. A resolution adopted by cultural and non-government elites, namely the University of Cagliari in 1971, summoned national and regional authorities not only to recognize the Sardinian people as an ethnic and linguistic minority, but also to recognize Sardinian as the national and official language of the island.

II.3 The republican years: Constitution and regional legislation

The Republican Constitution came into force on 1 January 1948. We must take into consideration that in those very days the European setting was growing towards a pan-European customs union.

In fact, as Middlemas (1995:19) reports, by December 1947 the first feasibility study for the Franco-Italian Customs Union was ready and underwent a second commission to organise its implementation. Less than two years later the Schuman Treaty would turn into reality. As Middlemas pointed out, those years were economy-focussed and the Italian Constitution was also a tool to recover and overcome the pre-War industrial output. Other sources such as EuroMosaic, which is more language-focussed, hold that the aim of the autonomy statute of 1948 had been socioeconomic restructuring

and not linguistic reform¹². In this latter case, they think that a part of group and individual identity such as language, was not in the agenda.

Ginsborg (1990:150-151) holds that in those early days of the Italian post world war reconstruction, there was much more concern about public and central agencies and the destiny of their employees than on other legal aspects covered by the Republican Constitution. As a matter of fact the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI) was the largest agency for state intervention in the economy employing 216.000 people and according to De Gasperi's the idea of a European community was functional to the welfare of Italian community.

The destiny of State industries had much more influence than any local claims for self-government or economic devolution. This might have been due by the necessity to international peace keeping which was also a priority. Furthermore, Ginsborg (1990: 159) holds that De Gasperi policies towards the implementation of a federal Europe were motivated by two main reasons: peace keeping over the European continent and the belief that an economic union with Northern Europe would have helped Italy to solve its endemic economic problems especially the underdevelopment of Southern Italy.

To do so, in the first months of 1948, the U.S.A government financed Italy with 176 million dollars (of that time) called "Interim Aid" Ginsborg (2000:115).

Constitution: contents

I will now briefly pass to the contents of the Republican Constitution.

To begin with there are a number of articles known as the Fundamental Principles; they are 12 articles and they represent the pillars of the democratic freedoms of the new state.

¹²Retrieved at <http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/web/document/sard/an/i1/i1.html> on December 2nd 2005

The Italian Constitution belongs to a legal tradition based on an idea of right protecting individuals independently of the community to which they belong. This is much at stake when the protection of individuals means a single sovereignty for all individuals, a sovereignty which cannot be changed and cannot be shared and given out to smaller in-groups. Still the tensions which became open in 2001 when the part of the Constitution called the title V and concerning the relations between State, regions and local communities, was reformed were present from the very beginning, as Italian regions as administrative areas (with the exceptions of Sardinia and other four regions) were created more than twenty years after the Republic and 110 years after the unification.

As a matter of fact, the article 5 of the Constitution declares that the Republic is one and indivisible and “recognises and promotes local autonomy”:

The republic, one and indivisible, recognizes and promotes local autonomy; it fully applies administrative decentralization of state services and adopts principles and methods of legislation meeting the requirements of autonomy and decentralization.

But for the first time since the Italian nation-state has existed there is an article 6 concerning linguistic minorities that states as follows:

The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities through appropriate measures.

As we mentioned earlier, the Constitution deals with the question of local autonomy in Title V (II), regarding “Regions, Provinces, Municipalities”.

It specifies that the regions with particular forms and conditions of autonomy are Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Valle d’Aosta (art. 116). It is important to note that Italian Constitution partially changed the relationship between the State and Regions on October 18th 2001 and officially issued on *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n°248 24th October 2001. After five years the issue was not accepted by political parties as well as print and non-print media and the issue is much at debate by constitutionalists such as **Caravita** (2002) who wrote a book called *La Costituzione dopo la riforma del Titolo* containing some specific articles on “old” autonomous regions and “new” forms of autonomy and **Mezzetti** (2002) *La Costituzione delle autonomie* as well as the best known work of **Nicotra** (2005) *Scritti di Diritto*

Costituzionale Italiano e Comparato. However much of the debates on this issue is also available on-line for free from the site www.federalismi.it; it only requires registration and the surfer can then access to all cutting-edge materials on the contents of Constitution, the devolved powers and the proposal to partially re-write those parts of Constitution which assigns more sovereignty to smaller territories. I will now spend few words on the regional legislation and statutes of autonomies which are called regions with “special statute”.

Regional legislation

As for what Regional legislation is concerned, the Republic Constitution declares the activation of 5 “special statutes” *Regioni* (regions) and 2 self-governing provinces: Bolzano and Trento; and 15 “ordinary” *Regioni* (regions).

The President of the Region is elected by universal direct suffrage, he represents the Region, he promulgates laws and regional regulations;

The *Giunta regionale* (Regional government) is appointed and may be dismissed by the President of the Region, who may appoint members outside of the Regional Council. The other regions were thought of as “ordinary” but did not come into force for decades. According to ordinary statutes *Consiglio regionale* (Regional council), has 80% of its members are elected by universal direct suffrage under the proportional system from provincial lists, 20% are elected by direct universal suffrage under the majority electoral system from regional lists (Art. 1 Law 43/1995).

Under the new Art. 122 of the Constitution, the Regions may draw-up their own electoral system as well as their legislative and supervisory powers; the President of the Council is elected by the Council and steers its work. At Local level we have the Provincial Council of the 100 provinces which is elected by universal direct suffrage; The Province has got its decision-making body, namely the *Giunta Provinciale* which in turn has got the powers to implement guidelines set by Town Councils which are currently 8.103. Town Councils in turns are elected by universal direct suffrage, and the majority system is used for areas with a population of less than 15.000 people otherwise the proportional system shall be used.

The Town Councils have some general powers as approving balance sheet and they also have their own share of decision-making represented by the body called the *Giunta Comunale* which is appointed by the majors who devolve some powers to it.

Diversity and rights of the single

The Italian Constitution guaranteed the rights to diversity through articles n 2, n°3 and n°6. The Constitution guarantees “inviolable rights” of the individuals for all Italian citizens and for the first time it copes with the issue of language “by means of special provisions” Article 6 and states the special statutes granted to Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Valle d’Aosta (article n°116)

This was in general. In particular, only few months later the official issue of Italian Constitution, on 26th February 1948 the Autonomous Status of Sardinia came into force as Constitutional Law (n°3) and it was issued officially by *Gazzetta Ufficiale* of 9th March 1948, n°58.

The articles 1 to 4 of Sardinian Statute focussed on general issue such as regional competence on education and economy according to “national interests” Which are al Economy has a great share even in the following articles such as 7 and 8. In particular, article 8 will be of extreme importance in recent years when Italian governments did not granted 9/10 of its taxes to Sardinia. According to article 50 the Government of Sardinia can be dismissed by the President of Italian Republic. The Statute can be changed if the Regional Government or at least 20.000 voters wish to do so (article 54). This Statute has much to do with economic and fiscal autonomy and devolution but there is not a single article which deals with “nation building”. As much as for the Italian Constitution the main aim was to cover the gap between the rich and the poor regions.

II.4 Nation Building: a literature review

To understand the process of the possible dismantling of the nation state, it will first be necessary to understand when the nation state system came into being.

As to regards on when Nationalism starts Smith criticizes the narrative and chronological patterns of modern studies of nationalism (Smith: 2000: 6-7). He explained the basic opposition or dichotomy between what he calls voluntaristic or civic nationalism and organic or ethnic nationalism. He holds that nationalism and national identity is not likely to become weaker or fade (Smith 1995:116).

Smith was one of the first modern scholars who since the early 1980s shifted the study of the motifs and consequences of nationalism away from the European borders trying to insert the overall phenomenon in a globalized society with new values, new web of relationships, new media, new traditions.

Smith criticizes the narrative and chronological patterns; he maintained that Renan's thought belongs to civic nationalism as the French scholar did not described a Nation whose compatriots were live reminders of the glorious or mythological past of the nation. The nation Renan had in mind was civic as it was thought of as embedded in the human choice of the individual and in the ethic choice to respect the rules the community.

Smith's early ideas tended to display nationalism as a inner force which is hardly declared but always present in the process towards participant society (Özkirimli 2000:49) but later on he made clear that in 1848 the nationalistic process although powerful it was limited in Europe (Smith 1998:11). Smith thinks that the lack of extention was due to the contingent economic culture

and to Marxism which tended to explain the whole evolutionary frame of human relations by class factors and economics.

Anderson (Anderson 1983) believes that before possibly giving an answer to “When” we must be sure on “What” we intend by nationalism; he holds that things would be easier if this phenomena were strictly thought as dependent on a concept of a political imagined community; such a community **must be thought by its members as sovereign and limited in terms of territory and number of the other members of it**. The birth of the original consciousness of the nations and the nation states must be sought in the decrease in the numbers of written languages due to the economic reasons (thus causing also spoken language to reduce in number), in the new technology (print) and the capitalistic market forces which created (for the economic reasons above mentioned) monoglot readers.

Özkirimli (2000) describes Anderson’s starting point as an attempt to build an equalization between nationalism and cultural artefacts; to do so he quotes Breully’s vision who marked Anderson’s work as reductionist because it showed lack of congruence “cultural” and “political” nationalism especially when he focuses on Official Nationalism and Imperialism in Europe (Anderson 1991, chapter 5 pp.67-82and 6, pp.83-111).

Özkirimli seems to refuse to accept as valid any discourse which generalizes the cultural dimension instead of contextualizing it to smaller settings such as small groups.

Moreover, Anderson seems to have underestimated the importance of wars in building a national consciousness and hyperestimated the role of print capitalism over language choice:

*In its huge, ramshackle, polyglot, but increasingly literate, domain the replacement of Latin by **any** vernacular, in the mid nineteenth century, promised enormous advantages to those of its subjects who **already** used that print-language, and appeared correspondingly menacing to those who did not. (Anderson 1991: 78)*

Print Capitalism is necessary to explain some of the standardization processes which went on all over Europe in the 18th and 19th century, but for what

Italian standardization is concerned we will see how this started from a cultural elite instead of a dynamic bourgeoisie movement.

Anderson's example of the language in use by the Habsburg as an example of non-direct participation of the language in nationalism was not perceived as an example but as an attempt to find a general theory which was therefore rejected by some scholars as Breuilly despite the good value of Anderson's work in terms of new cultural-focussed attitude towards the theory of nationalism. However, Anderson's diachronic and synchronic world-wide vision of patterns in nationalism seems to confirm its roots in the ruling classes.

Primordialists

Primordialists' vision holds that nations can be found *from earliest antiquity, from the beginnings of records in ancient Sumer and Egypt, and they have dominated political life in every era since that time* (Smith 1995:34)

Some of the peculiar characteristics of primordialism is present in the idea of collective attachments to the historic lands the representation of which is communicated as "sacred" and as a symbol of union for a given ethnies. The myth of ethnic election peculiar to the ethno-symbolic approach is also shared by primordialists as long as the community is represented as rooted in a fixed place for good, *in sempiternum*: a ever-lasting place which links and historicise nature and people building a so called "ethnoscape" (Uzelac-Ichijo 2005: 102). However many primordialists tend to set the birth of nationalisms in middle age. **Hastings** for instance, is one of those scholars who differently from modernists tend to give a medieval birth to nationalism. According to his thought, England was already a proto-nation-state in the 9th century.

Nation-State in England seems to have precede both the Nation and the Kingdom (Hastings 1997:48)

Hastings holds that Modernists' vision can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Nations are only in modernity (from late eighteen century on)
- 2) Nations are created by Elite construction
- 3) State has primary role.

The concept of what should be defined as ethnic group is something physical because we often represent ethnicity like a feature proper of a community already present in a larger society the latter being the nation state. Schermerhorn (“Ethnicity and Minority Groups” in Hutchinson-Smith 1996) defines an ethnic group as a collectivity present in a larger social and human frame, possessing own **real or putative ancestry**, memories of a shared historical past, focus on one or more symbols.

Hastings has chosen England as prototype of a nation with a strong cohesive feeling of unity which originates from a bottom up sentiment rather than by the work of elites. In fact he writes that.

..one major factor which frequently made a negative contribution to the ideology and consciousness of the English nation was the monarchy itself. From the twelfth to the fifteenth century its mind was bewitched again and again by the mirage of ruling France and it clung to the use of the French language when it was largely abandoned and disliked by the nation. It is ironic that the Hundred Years War so greatly increased English national sentiment and anti-French feeling because the purpose of the war was to make the King of England King of France.(Hastings 1997:48).

Nationalist sentiment is therefore seen by Hastings as in contrast with royal power.

Smith and Hutchinsons’ vision of national identity qualified it as a multilayered construct featuring historic territory, homeland, shared myths and common historic memories; shared popular culture; same rights and duties; single economic territory with mobility of labour and exchange of goods.

Hastings focussed more on the features which qualify a nation state. A nation state should possess both pre-national features which were to be found in nations plus a different kind of bond to the citizens . In a Nation state:

1)Citizens **use** its vernacular language extensively in a written form which is often absent in pre-modern societies. At that time in western Europe Latin was the only Lingua franca for its flexibility and because it responded to the demands of a powerful institution such as the Roman church.

2) Be **loyal** to both the concepts of **shared culture and identity**

3) Have a control over a specific geographic territory in a more conscious way than ethnic groups.

4) **Citizens identify themselves with society horizontally. They have the feeling to have an active part in it.**

In few words, Hastings believes that nation, ethnicity, nationalism and religion are “four distinct and determinative elements within European and world history” (Hastings 1997:1)

The major difference between Hastings and the modernist vision of nationalism is that Hastings individuates the core of nation building process at the time of the imperial struggles at the end of the sixteenth century. What is more, according to Hastings, classical modernists have almost forgotten the importance of religion in the nation building process.

Gellner

Gellner's theory was stimulated by his encounter with Kedourie's Nationalism (1960). Kedourie's famous opening is quoted in Gellner (1997:10)¹³ Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1983 Gellner states that the traditional ethnic group as the main theoretical background for nationalism was never the small, homogeneous with high degree of intragroupal solidarity (*Gemeinschaft*) but was the *Gesellschaft*, “the chauvinistic nation state” instead (Wright 2004: 282). As we can see in nowadays political instances(eg. In Catalonia), *Gesellschaft* is being applied to smaller context thus creating a new form of nation building as a subspecies of a wider European shared identity or as one of the layers forming people's identity.

Gellner maintained that Nations are not given but are created by states and by those who works to spread these ideas, namely, the nationalists (Gellner 1997: Preface IX).

Later on, as soon as he developed and reformulated his early theoretic approach, Gellner regretted his inactivity of the first period when he did not

¹³ Ernest Gellner, Nationalism, Phoenix Paperback, 1997

replace or correct the Kedourian view of nationalism as an utterly constructed contingency .

set a difference between been patriotic about city, local area, rulers or even empires and a loyalty committed to a nationality. He holds that nationalism was seen as the whole agencies able to undertake social reforms and to promote human progress were to receive emphatic endorsement in Europe only in the 18th century (Özkiriml 2000: 39).

Differently from Keourie's, Gellner saw nationalism as the inevitable destiny of the modern world (Gellner 1997: Ibidem). However, Gellner wrote that nations and nationalist sentiments are not found universally and moreover they don't last for ever (Gellner 1997:5).

In 1998 (Gellner 1998:181) Gellner holds the individual **has a spiritual contractual power within the community but he/she can withdraw their support to such a social contract.**

Gellner's vision has also been interpreted by those scholars who focussed on small nations and language policies. Each citizen may decide that he/she are not satisfied with the boundaries which represent or not represent their own nation state or the nations they feel to be loyal to (Williams: 1994).

The two visions of society (atomistic individualism and romantic organism) described as competitive by Gellner leave two possibilities open which were recently described by Wright (2004:244)

People are either individualists accepting membership of a community in a contractual spirit, but reserving the right to choose what they want from their society and to exit from it if its suits them to do so, or they are social animals who can only find fulfilment through participating in and belonging to their distinctive culture. To leave the group would attract censure from other members and would be seen as contrary to the individual's own interest

Other scholars such as Williams (Williams 1997:24) pointed out that Gellner has always focused on the building of contingent relationship between the nations and the nation states. He presumes that nationalism stems from a

situation of conflict with the nation state but he also argues that: *The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation* (Gellner 1983: p.6)

The community postulated by Gellner is neither the individualistic one nor the communalistic one. Gellner doesn't think the free will of the individual is a background issue to the formula which may identify a nation as much as the concept of shared culture which *brings in far too rich a catch. Human history is and continues to be well endowed with cultural differentiations* (Gellner 1983:54)

Gellner's paradigm is that we cannot define nationalism or nation building in terms of the allegedly age of the nations, but we can only **define nations in terms of age of nationalism** (Gellner 1983:55).

Ultimately, Gellner's work tried to combine the concepts underlying nationalism and their political applications.

It can therefore be assumed that his vision of society was a classical Sociological one which was founded on the basic distinction between traditional and modern stages of societies which were to be divided into hunter-gatherer societies, agro-literates and industrial ones.

He saw the high culture model as a pervasive one and a model which changed the concept of nationalism:

*That homogenous culture is THE political bond, that mastery off (and one should add, acceptability in) a given high culture (the one used by surrounding bureaucracies) is the precondition of political, economic and social citizenship. If you satisfy this condition, you can enjoy your **droit de cité**. If you do not, you must accept second-class and subservient status, or you must assimilate, or migrate, or seek to change the situation through irredentist nationalist activity. This principle does not operate in other social conditions and is not a permanent part of the human psyche or social order; it is not an ideological invention, or a political device at the service of other interests; nor is it the expression of dark, blind, atavistic forces. Then it concludes by making clear its pessimistic vein: But it operates powerfully in our type of social condition, it has a strong hold over the hearts and minds of men, and it is not transparent to those under its sway, who generally do not understand its genuine mainsprings* (Gellner 1997:29-30).

Özkirimli (2000:129) summarised the four main theories on nationalism identified by Gellner:

- **The nationalist theory which sees nationalism as a natural, self evident and self-generating phenomenon;**
- **Kedourie’s theory which treats it as ‘an artificial consequence of ideas which did not need ever to be formulated, and appeared by regrettable accident’;**
- **“The Wrong Address Theory” favoured by Marxists which holds that the “awakening message was intended for classes, but by some terrible postal error was delivered to *nations*;**
- **The “Dark Gods Theory” shared by both lovers and haters of nationalism which regards it as “the re-emergence of the atavistic forces of blood or territory”**

Özkirimli goes on by reporting Gellner’s thought which says that nationalism is that political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.

Greenfeld too started from a primordialist view.

She holds that the start of French nationalism was to search in the symbolic role played by France as the most Christian of the nations since 1254, but somehow suggesting (1993: 181) that the process towards French nationalism as a collectivist and civic prototype was not concluded.

Habermas(1992 quoted in Dahbour 1999:334-336) thinks that modern civic nationalism stemmed from the **reconciliation of republican ideas and larger territorial states**. He divides the concept of ethnic nationalism and civic one quite clearly by using much of the categorisation present in Smith although in more a deterministic way:

*After 1871, Renan was only able to counter the German’s Empire’s claims to the Alsace by referring to the inhabitants’ French nationality because he could conceive of the “nation” as a nation of citizens. The nation of citizens does not derive its identity from some common ethnic and cultural properties, but rather from the **praxis** of citizens who active exercise their civil rights. At this juncture, the*

republican strand of “citizenship” completely parts company with the idea of belonging to a prepolitical community integrated on the basis of descent, a shared tradition, and a common language. Viewed from this end, the initial fusion of republicanism with nationalism only functioned as a catalyst (Dahbour: 334-336)

What is important in this kind of community is the personal commitment to the institutions.

Habermas holds that backspin of modern nation state was that given the form, modern trade could flourish from it. Still, Habermas thinks, there is no direct relation between democracy and capitalization.

Hobsbawm points out how the building and the importance gained by linguistic and cultural community was not present before the nineteenth century (Hobsbawm 1990:101).

His vision of nationalism is dyadic because he divides it in a civic, political and democratic nationalism deriving it from the French Revolution and in a ethnic, linguistic and cultural nationalism and he assigns its creation to the German Romantics (Smith 1999: 204).

As many modernists, Hobsbawm holds (1990: 37-38) that the main important criterions are **1) The historic association with a current state or with one with a sufficient “long” past 2)The existence of cultural elites which possessed a standardized written vernacular. 3) The ability to conquest.** Hobsbawm holds that there is nothing like the capacity to “being an imperial people” in order to create a collective identification with the nation state.

He indicates 1917-1942 as the years of the temporary disappearance of Liberalism and of those economies shaped on a model which stem from Mazzini’s “every nation a state” (Hobsbawm 1990: 101; Bonifazi 1992: 326) and “only one state for the entire nation”

Ernest Renan (1823-1892) who is quoted very often by many contemporary scholars because was one of the first ones to give a systematic-historical definition of modern nations in his important essay on this issue which was delivered on the 11th of March 1882 (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?* La Sorbonne, Paris, 1882)

In chapter one Renan wrote: *L'établissement d'un nouvel Empire romain ou d'un nouvel Empire de Charlemagne est devenu une impossibilité. La division de l'Europe est trop grande pour qu'une tentative de domination universelle ne provoque pas très vite une coalition qui fasse rentrer la nation ambitieuse dans ses bornes naturelles* (Renan 1882 :Chapter I).

The gist of the modern idea of nationalism is appearance itself which is the perception of reality shared by the citizens who have chosen to become part of a nation. This concept is a key issue in the work of many modernist scholars which followed but the danger of the micro-groupal component is present in the guidelines for civic nationalism described by Renan. This component is a major issue in Smith's integrate theory.

I have chosen Smith's approach because he tries to reconcile Modernists' and Primordialists' visions by observing that nationalism was born into allegiance and entered into contract. Smith himself evidenced the problems related to a clear definition of civic and ethnic nation building because civic nationalism is a universal concept encompassing the universal rights of the individual citizen as being applicable anywhere but it fails when the theoretical universal citizenship is translated in the context of the specific people living in a specific territory (Smith 1995:97-99). He also holds that people came before the geographic entity and once the civilization, that means people plus their culture, is well established, they do not quit their ethnic symbol but they may "betray the character of their birthplace" in order to become planetary (Smith 1995: 21)

In Smith's view we may distinguish between what are the cultural roots to nationalism and the political manifestation of it (Smith 1995:52).

The small nations had their movements for autonomy between the late 1890's and the 1960's but as far as Smith is concerned their cultural roots can be traced as far back as early nineteenth century just as in the case of many "bigger" Western nation-states. In this case Nationalism theory holds that the world is divided into nations each of which has its unique destiny and

national character and that the individual or the citizen must be loyal to the nation he is related to (Smith 1995:55). Moreover according to Smith's vision(2003) the majority of nations hinge on ethnic nation building or on a mixture of territorial nationalism based on the "geo-body-sation" of the land whose destiny accompany the formation of national identity and group nationalism.

II.5 Sardinia between 1720 and the First World War: building an Italian identity

The incorporation of Sardinia in the Italian Nation State is rooted many years before the Savoy achieved Italian Unification. The Realm of Sardinia which encompassed Sardinia and Piedmont became a reality on the 4th of August 1720 when after the Treaty of London(1718) and by confirmation obtained at Aja (Treaty of Aja 1720) Sardinia was assigned to Vittorio Amedeo of Savoy who had to rule it taking into consideration the Laws which were operating in the island before they Savoy took it over. The charter which substituted the *Carta De Logu* (which was written in a mid-variety of Sardinian) and all the Aranese-Catalan and Castillian laws which were issued in the last four centuries of Spanish government was the *Albertino Statute (Realm of Sardinia and Realm of Italy)*. This charter did not comprise any law or bill ensuring any language right but contained only laws and articles referring to the Religion, the King, the right for the subjects to be free, the right for the subjects to have private properties. Many of these social laws were also contained in a non-written code which stands as the example of the moral code of the interior; this moral and social code is known as “Codice Barbaricino”. The key to understand Italian nation building during the Risorgimento lays in the shared aims of politicians and intellectuals who wanted to create a moral legacy to contribute to the birth of an Italian national culture. The recreation of tradition the new interpretation of models and movements had a strong influence in the creation of a sense of unity and homogeneity in the nation-state. Literature, even popular literature helped create fragmentation and stereotyping for centuries: universal christianity and civic values were the keys to bypass negative characterisation of people and society especially representing Southern Italy or the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Moe 2001:128-129). In those days not Sardinia had been annexed for 140 year but the Piedmontese-Sardinia gist of the forecoming nation-state was called Realm of Sardinia. Still, stereotyping and prejudices of Sardinians

and other people from the Southern part of the Peninsula were massive and visible in the print media and in the pseudo-scientific theories of those days (namely the work of Cesare Lombroso). These theories took their tolls not only on the new Italian citizens but also on the immigrants. The South was far from the ideas of progress and civilization whose positive stereotype was represented by Piedmontese civilization (Moe: Ibidem). In such a difficult social and economic environment, language as a tool to convey Italian identity for all the citizens was becoming a paramount issue.

The island quitted its status of isolated land since the First World War on. About 1/8 out of the whole Sardinian population took part in the First World War (In 1921 Sardinians were 859.000) and the young soldiers who fought the War were about 100.000. 14% of them died. The number of Sardinian casualties was the highest of all the Italian regions given the fact that Italy as a whole reported 10% of dead. The high number of dead and casualties contributed to create a multilayered feeling of nationality: on the one hand the homogeneity of the groups sent to fight by the Italian "Stato Maggiore" created strong feelings of intra-group solidarity among different social classes. It was the first time Sardinian farmers and urban work class were together under Sardinian officers (Artizzu, Barreca, Boscolo et Al: 1967). These officers were to become an elite which would create the ruling political class in Sardinia after the First World War. Some of them, such as Emilio Lussu, went on to create the first nationalistic party in Sardinia, a party created by former soldiers who, once the war was over, wanted the land to be redistributed because many of them were farmers. On the other hand Sardinian ceased to consider themselves as a group extremely marginalised because it was the first time that Sardinians openly shared the destiny of the still young Italian Nation. Regional pride was to be enhanced in order to create a powerful brigades but also to rise the level of commitment to Italy as the place where Sardinians were equals or more brave than the others. The traditional media had a strong part in it. Newspapers' headings such as <<Gli Intrepidi Sardi>> (Artizzu-Barreca et Al, Ibidem) that meant both <<the

brave and fearless Sardinians>> were often drawn from official nation reports on the war operations. The sense of pride in elite corps create homogeneity among 95% of its components who were workers, craft-workers, shepherds and the tiny minority of middle-class and lower middle class who were often reserve officers; among them professionals, clerks, accountants, lawyers, young graduate and undergraduate students. Upper middle class did not exist(Artizzu-Barreca-Boscolo 1967:258)

II.6 Post 1945. Incorporation breaking down

One of the most important character of the attempts to build a Sardinian national consciousness and a movement for autonomy was the polyglot globe trotter architect Anton Simon Mossa (1916-1972) who is quoted in regional newspapers (eg. GS 24th November 2005) and whose books are a vehicle of ethnic independentism mediated by an application of Marxism (Revolutionary Socialism) to a small non-international entity such as Sardinia. In 1967 he wrote that Sardinia should obtain national independence for and become one region in a European federation. Mossa's nation building is both ethnic and civic because (Antonio Simon Mossa 1965):

"I is only by a conscious civic unity that it will be possible to obtain with sacrifice and humility that new society which Sardinian have been waiting for ever.

Mossa's ideas on Europe were against the ideas shared over Europe at that time. He didn't believe in a Europe of the nation states but he believed in a Europe of ethnic people or nations instead but when the concept of ethnic nation develops it becomes civic as in the case of Italian nation building.

He believed in a regional socialism which aimed at assuring all the Sardinian people as an ethnic group the control over the means of production but still the island should have been opened to a free and massive cooperation with other European states. In his thought Sardinians were not an amorphous mass of individuals but an association of communities. Nationalism must be built on the micro-communities. This last concept differs from Italian

nowadays official civic nationalism; in fact president Ciampi call each and every citizen to give their contribution to the building of a global Italian community.

Sardinian post WW2 nation building strenght which built the autonomy charter were easily downsized in the 1950's when the political elites saw it as dangerous. Autonomy was often labelled as an experiment (Richibesu 1978: 32). From then on all the strenght aimed at a kind of regional application of Marshall plan in order to improve the economic condition of the island. For this reason the majority of politicians were centralists and loyal to the idea of a role for Sardinia within the Italian nation state. The most harsh independentists were often intellectuals who hardly had any official politic role. In the case of Simon Mossa, he was marxist in background and anarchic in his dreamed application. He didn't believe in an organization based on parties and he didn't believe in the importance of elites for democracy. He believed on a wide and participatory democracy to be raised on the premises of real life. The politicians as a class should not avoid the people to exercise their rights of sovereignty. We can't find in Mossa's age the strong and orgainzed belief in a one ethnic kinship because this kind of large civic/ethnic nationalism was impossible to accept for a thinker who wanted to comprise the complexity of a fragmented society instead of reducing it. It seems that the focus on the myths of "distant origins and symbols and memories of a golden age of former glory"(Smith 1999:130), are more present and exploited today by activists, scholars, journalists and publishers. Mossa is seen as one of the founding fathers whose greatness is to be celebrated post-mortem in order to give a solid civic background made out of thinkers whose ideas are depicted as actual and feasible today instead of in the years when they were born and contextualised.

In 1971, just before his death he wrote his manifesto as follows in a regional newspaper("Nuova Sardegna 20th January 1971¹⁴): *Sardism is not only the universal autonomistic principle applied to Sardinia, but it is also and above all the*

¹⁴ My translation (Nuova Sardegna 20-1-1971) Antonio Simon Mossa

principle of worldwide revolutionary Socialism applied to the Sardinian people....but this represents above all the universal principle of the fight against colonial oppression which has placed Sardinian in the margin of the development and civil progress

Sardinian nationalism is thus seen by many activists authoring the web and by some journalists of the print media as the gateway to re-placement in the European arena. Nowadays these thoughts are used by those who strive for a new economic role to be played in the Mediterranean arena. His thought of what Sardinian nationalism should be like has been collected and interpreted by 53 Sardinian scholars and activists (Francioni ad Marras 2004). According to Smith(1995:98-99) *Even today, beneath the public version there is often a deeper religious content to the sense of value and dignity of the national community, one which inevitably lends an air of exclusiveness to the core ethnic community of the nation. This is a sense of national dignity and chosenness that exists in France as much as in South Africa, in the United States as much as in Israel or Japan, in Australia as much as in Sri Lanka. In other words modern nations are simultaneously and necessarily ethnic and civic*

In February 1968 the XVIth Regional Congress of *Partito Sardo D'Azione* played a major importance in writing down a regional agenda on nationbuilding. Those years gave Sardinian activists and intellectuals the possibility to go abroad and make contacts with other European minorities as reported by Francioni-Marras (2003:352). One of the most important Sardinian activist and intellectuals of that time was Antonio Simon Mossa who developed a thought which was not an independentist one but was influenced by federalism instead. For this reason he tried to convince independentists of the necessity of the creation of a federal Europe of the regions.

A more formal and widespread debate on the legislation began “at the end of the 1970s, with the writing of Manlio Udina [*Sull’attuazione dell’art. 6 della Costituzione per la tutela delle minoranze linguistiche*17] on the need to implement the Constitution on the question of linguistic minorities. During

the 1980s, various bills and proposals for the implementation of art. 6 [of the Italian Constitution] were put forth.” (E. Palici di Suni Prat: 1999, 26) In 1987, the linguist Tullio De Mauro wrote:

Parliament is finally (January 1987) at the point of discussing a bill which, after forty years, implements (with several cautions) art. 6 of our constitution on the protection of the less widespread languages. (De Mauro : 1987, XIV)

His work was published shortly after and too early to testify the abortion of this enthusiastic legislative intention. In 1991 Italy still had no general protection law for its linguistic minorities. What is more important is that despite the protection allowed Sardinian is not spoken in writing and speaking about all the contemporary subjects including literature, arts or sciences. The language seems to be central to ritual manifestation of Sardinian identity but this manifestation seems to be perceived by Sardinian themselves as non-convenient in order to : 1) assimilate into the Italian nation-state 2) cover the economic gap with average Italian incomes. A practical consideration was and it is still preferred to the symbolic value of languages to many distinctive culture such as in the case of Hebrew displayed by Joseph (2006:23)

Moreover the issue of language is not directly perceived by regional and national media as directly linked to devolved powers or independentism which are generally depicted as negative. As a matter of fact, in recent years, the question of Sardinian autonomy has not been perceived as a potential threat even by external observers such as the French Prime Minister Sarkozy who in 2003 was campaigning for allowing the Corsican a certain degree of devolution; on that occasion he said that hopefully Corsica would have followed the example of “peaceful Italian isle of Sardinia” *that just nine km away from Corsica has enjoyed autonomy since 1948 and has no independence seekers*¹⁵

¹⁵Retrieved from CNN at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/07/06/corsica.poll/index.html> on December 2nd, 2005

A new proposal for a new Regional Charter was approved by Sardinian Regional Parliament on 19th May 2006 with the votes of labours and without the independentist(*Sardisti*). According to this new proposal the “special” autonomy should be re-written according to “Regional Identity” and according to the duties of State and Region. The main aim is the pursue of fiscal autonomy and the relationship between Region and local institutions. This new proposal is now promoted almost fully by non-traditional media (Internet) as identity issues covered by newspapers are more on the myth of origin of Sardinians linked to archaeology findings and hypothesis on Sardinian origin and role played in the historical arena since pre-bronze age. The official Sardinian web site covering all aspects of identity was launched I in May 2006¹⁶. The parts covering culture, language and laws promoting identity etc were authored by few people who authored the first website on sociolinguistics¹⁷, devolution, culture.

Bossi’s proposal

On 25th and 26th June 2006 Sardinians (72,3% of voters which is more than the Italian average of 61,6%) were among the Italians who have voted against a bill(referendum) to change Italian Constitution and give birth to Federalism. This bill was thought of and put forward by Bossi and Berlusconi at the very end of the former government which lasted until April 2006.

As a matter of fact the politic elites of Sardina, in February 2006, were among the first to campaign for a “NO” at the referendum in order to abrogate Berlusconi’s proposal once and for all as current Prime Minister mr. Romano Prodi is opposed to any form of federalism. According to Berlusconi-Bossi proposal the prime minister would have gained more executive powers such as dissolving the Parliament and appointing or dismiss ministers and have a

¹⁶ <http://www.regionesardegna.it/>, <http://www.regionesardegna.it/tematiche/cultura/>;

¹⁷ <http://www.sotziulimbasarda.net/>

more direct influence on government policy thus radically changing the roles assigned to the Prime Minister since the Republican Constitution in the years following the Second World War and the downfall of fascism. According to the proposal also the chambers, Deputies' and Senate's would change by assigning internal affairs such as immigration, foreign policy and defence in the hands of the Chamber of Deputies; but the Senate would be responsible for a new federal law which would give to the regions more power and control over education, hospitals and health care in general and law and order.

III.0 Analysis of print media: review of similar research studies

III.0 Analysis of print media: review of similar research studies

I decided to analyse the texts of two Sardinian widely spread newspapers for two years in order to find and display any significant relationship between newspapers and Sardinian identity. A content analysis of the large corpus will be displayed but Interviews with the “actors”, namely professional and non-professional journalists who have written the articles will be collected later on.

Not many works have been produced in the field I have chosen and none have been produced in Sardinia.

Billig developed a methodology and applied it empirically in 1993 (Billig:1995). His work aimed at finding relevant narratives of nationalism within many British newspapers analysed on a single day. He focussed on a daily press because, as Michael Rosie has interpreted (2004), he aimed at reproducing the imagination of a whole bounded national community.

According to Rosie (2004), Billig’s approach gave for granted that any significative framed or news, had to be referred to Britain or British once the deixis “I” and “We” was perceived as “We”=The British and “Here”=Britain. Furthermore, Rosie (2004) holds that Billig’s approach was not systematic and could not be extended as he did. Billig had 10 newspapers to focus on which he divided into three categories or market groups (1995, p.110): those aimed at working class groups, those he calls “respectable ones” (1995, Ibidem) and those addressed a middle-class audience.

The approximately average combined sales of the ten media he analysed were about 12.9 million copies.

I could not rely on such amount of sales and on that number of newspapers given the fact that in Sardinia there are only three main newspapers

(*L'Unione Sarda, Nuova Sardegna* and *Giornale di Sardegna*). For this reason I preferred to present a larger corpus on a long term research.

My research lasted two years and it is ongoing

Two other scholars, namely, Arus Yumul and Umut Özkirimli, have reproduced Billig's experiment in 2000 (2000, pp.787-804), this time on 38 Turkish newspapers selected at random. Billig had introduced the term 'banal nationalism' to cover all those "cache" facets, or routine practices and ideological habits which are spread daily by the newspapers and are the backspin of nationhood. In replicating Billig's experiment on 38 newspapers on a randomly selected day Özkirimli's results did not deviate from Billig's findings in the British case.

Billig had divided the newspapers he had chosen into liberal broadsheets, tabloids and populist ones.

IV.0 Analysis of Print Media: resources and methodology

IV.0 Analysis of Print Media: resources and methodology

For my work I have chosen the most ancient and established newspaper in Sardinia together with a very recent one which is partly a format and which is outspread as much as the older one. These two Sardinian newspapers are sold all over the island.

The *L'Unione Sarda*, is the most ancient, complete and traditional one and it is available in Sardinia since 1889 and it claims to be independent. Moreover it belongs to those years when the most important Italian newspapers were born thus transferring the political debates from books and pamphlets to the daily or "penny press"(Murialdi 2002). It must be taken into consideration that in 2000 (Murialdi 2002: 11) only 10.2% of Italians bought any daily newspaper on regular basis thus positioning Italy as the third last in Europe. Liguria is the region where 18.1% of inhabitants buy more newspapers on regular basis and Molise is the place where only 3.6% of the population buy newspapers. The data on Sardinian newspapers positioned the island within the Italian average but, in 2004 the birth of *Il Sardegna* debunked old rankings.

In fact, *Il Sardegna*, a new born newspaper (2004), is written for a good part by contributors of many non-professional journalists and free-lancers who have their mail addresses on the bottom of each article.

Il Sardegna covers the market which was once covered by the *La Nuova Sardegna*. Moreover, *Il Sardegna* was the model for many newspapers (the most recent one is *E Polis Roma* which was first issued on the first of October 2006) whose local news are different for each area or region. Both *E Polis Roma* and *Il Sardegna* had the same director in the days of my research, namely Antonio Cipriani.

I compared the two newspapers in order to assess the relevance of *Il Sardegna* to provide enough local news related to Sardinia and Sardinians.

On 2nd October 2006 the first page of *E Polis Roma* and *Il Sardegna* were different whilst from page 2 to 3 is in common; from page 4 to 5 the news are

local, page 6 are partially local; page 7 is in common but even if the journalists are the same in the case of Rome for example the news will be local. Page 8 is in common as much as page 9 which can also be located after some advertising. Page 11 is local with the same format (the letters of the readers); page 13-21 are in common.

Then local reports and issues are treated: from now on in Rome the rubric is called “Rome” whilst in *Il Sardegna* is called “Grande Cagliari” which indicates the city of Cagliari and its metropolitan area. All the most important news for my research were given in these pages between 21-22 and 35. After that a couple of pages are in common but then there is the rubric called “Cultures” and each place has its own news which are positioned at the very beginning of the Rubric whilst after the first few pages local news are taken over by international or national news on arts and culture which are in common. Sports news which are given much space on Mondays are again partly local and partly common to both newspapers. Although the format is the same each newspaper is print between 56 and 64 pages. In Rome there are many other newspapers which provide the readers with free and rapid news namely: *Metro*; *City*; *Leggo* and many others the format of each do not normally exceed the thirty pages. *Il Sardegna* and the others newspapers of the same group are not strictly made of Ansa news plus advertising but are something in between Ansa news and penny papers. Moreover they are more interactive or they simply convey a *sense* of interactivity to their readers as in the new media (Lievrouw-Livingstone 2002: 9)

As much as in traditional Sardinian press both *Il Sardegna* and *L'Unione Sarda* host a relatively small number of journalists who are therefore easy to contact and to interview for in-depth analysis of the Sardinian media actors.

As a matter of fact all the journalists or scholars or contributors who write on *Il Sardegna* have a mail address which is that of *E Polis* thus confirming that the information circulating in the two newspapers (as well as the others of the same group) is built, directed and outspread by the same small group of journalists.

Il Sardegna gives the readers cheap or free and immediate access to national and regional information and, when it was launched, it was founded only through private advertising and public money for printing.

I am thus presenting two main source whose publishing policies take different lines: one is more conservative and the other one is more fresh but also in possess of a higher tendency to sensationalism and to give very rapid and volatile news closely related to the new media.

However I am quite convinced that both sources are reliable in terms of recurrence and continuity of narratives and themes which are expressed by the news. The themes I have found are many but may be summarised in four main narratives which covers all the five areas which Guibernau utilised to give her recent definition of national identity (2004: 134-141):

- 1) **the psychological dimension;**
- 2) **the cultural dimension;**
- 3) **the territorial dimension;**
- 4) **the historical dimension;**
- 5) **the political dimension.**

All five dimensions were present in the four narratives I have found but what Guibernau intends by psychological dimension in building national identity in the twenty-first century (2004:134) is also part of all the other dimensions

..the consciousness of forming a group based on the 'felt' closeness uniting those who belong to the nation. Such closeness can remain latent for years and suddenly come to the surface whenever the nation is confronted with an external or internal enemy-real, potential or constructed-threatening its people, its prosperity, its traditions and culture, its territory, its international standing or its sovereignty. As Guibernau puts it, interpreting Smith's life work on the subject, the psychological dimension contains all the other four dimensions and I believe it is exactly the same with my corpus.

Il Sardegna: some data

According to the data available on the Internet the *Il Sardegna* was founded on the 21th February 2004 and is printed in 80.000 hard copies a day¹⁸ plus 5.000 completely scannerized electronic copies which are distributed for free on daily basis¹⁹.

The newsagents sell this newspaper which is cheap (50 cents) if compared to all the other regional and national newspapers but is still possible to get the newspaper for free in bars, airports, universities and public offices. In big cities such as in Rome, given the high competition, the other newspaper of the group, *E Polis* is distributed for free.

The electronic pdf copy reproducing exactly the print copy is always available for free.

As I have pointed out before, the *Giornale di Sardegna* shares the same format and the same publishers with other eight newspapers mainly North-East based owned by the same publisher with the same directors, co-directors and chief-journalist.

All the newspapers were born between 2004 and 2006.

In practice Grauso created a brand for local information in Northern Italy, Rome and Sardinia. The high number of newspapers of edition may give the publisher an extensive tool for political and social influence as well as advertising. Yet, the whole number of newspapers distributed by the Sardinian publisher is much more inferior to the coverage of “video” media such as Internet or Television. Still, the idea of building a format can be tied up with the transformation of ‘old’ print mass media from the outset into a cheaper and also on-line service.

¹⁸ (<http://www.sardinews.it/editoria.html> retrieved on 1st April 2006 at 9:50)

¹⁹ (<http://www.publikompass.it/pagine/pagina.aspx?ID=IlGiornale001&L=IT> retrieved on 2nd April 2006 at 12:58)

Nicky Grauso, was the first one to develop Internet in Italy when he founded “VOL-Video on Line” in January 1996 which was later to be taken over by current Sardinia Governor Soru who is the one who has founded the Cagliari based world famous internet service and telephone provider Tiscali in 1999.

In those years, Cagliari was the city which had the largest number of Internet accesses in Italy. In those early years he was also publisher of Polish print newspaper *Zycie Warsawy* .

L'Unione Sarda: some data

Differently from *Il Sardegna*, *L'Unione Sarda* was founded in 1889 and is the most ancient print newspaper in Sardinia. It is one of the most ancient newspapers in Italy.

It is currently printed in 75.000²⁰ copies per day and it was the first newspapers which had a partial on-line edition in Italy when Nicki Grauso was one of the stakeholders at the beginning of the 21th century. At that time the on-line edition was for free.

The on-line edition which is the scannerized pdf copy of the paper edition is no longer available for free since 10 July 2005.

Each paper copy costs 1 euro but there are still no data on the on-line clients. On the 1st of April and then on the 3rd of April I personally made contact with two journalists each one in charge of a page on news which focussed on Sardinian people including personal contributes but no one could give me an answer on the number of electronic copies their newspaper sells.

²⁰ (http://www.unionesarda.it/US_redazione_001.asp?IDCategoria=39 retrieved on 1st April 2006 at 9:53)

The difficulty in coping with that is maybe due to the selling which is on week or month or year basis and as far as I know there aren't statistics single out on a year or day average.

The clients can also buy the right to access a number of copies (10, 30, etc) which should be consulted in six month time.

The access can be obtained from any desktop since the technology to read the newspapers is present on the website :

(http://www.unionesarda.it/US_homepage_001.asp?IDCategoria=1) whilst the free electronic version of *Il Sardegna* requires the reader to have Acrobat reader installed on his/her machine.

The data from the web page of *Unione Sarda* claim that the paper edition of *Unione Sarda* is read by at least 357.000 readers daily.

The approach I used to analyse the resources I have collected

My major research area is to research symbolic, social-collective codes in the field of identity, in the description and representations of identity and in the reception of these representations.

My approach in the analysis of the data which stem from the print media differs a bit from Billig and Özkirimli's ones and it is more similar to that of Rosie (2004) as my content analysis is based on a wide number of articles and it focuses more on regional reports.

The nature of the articles I have collected is widely regional but also national as devolution and autonomy are an important issue in Italy; in fact the relationship between regions and central government underwent recent changes in 2001; these changes were hardly explained in Regional newspapers which generally avoid technic reports. The two newspapers I have chosen are mainly directed to Sardinians although their agenda is not only regional since all main national news is reported in the first pages.

The massive amount of reports made quite easy to categorise them into four narratives. Some of these samples will be analysed and discussed in this chapter.

My analysis won't be complete in terms of the characteristics of Fairclough's textual analysis. As a matter of fact dialogicality is the most important aspect together with the theme hosted in the articles. Thus the three focuses will be the social actors (journalists) and the themes or news being reported to the audience which represents the third focus. The elements of the texts will fit together in a coherent presentation although they might not represent an unitary, determinate or unambivalent whole (Fairclough 1992: 133)

To do so I had been surveying and analysing regional press for twenty-six months and the methodology is based on techniques developed by Billig in 1993 (1995) and Rosie (2004). Billig found strong traits of nation building in the British print media and to do so he relied on twelve British newspapers. He focussed on a single day. I didn't do the same because I had to take into consideration that the historical numbers of newspaper readers in Sardinia or Italy as a whole has nothing to do with the strong British tradition which according to Bairstow (1985 quoted in Billig 1995, p.11) places Britain as the second highest source of newspapers readers in the world even though this has been declining from the 1980's on (Jowell et Al. 1987, 1992 quoted in Billig 1995, p.11).

Still, the matching of the data on the spread of *L'Unione Sarda* and those of more informally accessed *Il Sardegna* make sure these two newspapers are read daily by between 1/3 and 1/2 of Sardinia's population.

For this reason I think that if there is any interest in redefining Sardinian cultural, historical and political boundaries that will be quite clear in the regional press. To define narratives the threads I have found I decided they must be CONSTANT in time and CONSISTENT in numbers and space occupied.

This is also, according to Moscovici's principles (Duveen-Moscovici 2000), the way to define a social fact as "social representations".

Moscovici (2000:63) reminds its readers that the character of social representations are revealed especially in time of crisis and tensions which cause a group to actively and/or passively undergo re-shaping of image. Moscovici (64) refers to crisis and tensions between reified and consensual universes of meanings create a rift, a divide, between common sense knowledge and scientific knowledge as a consequence of a revolution of commonsense. Such tensions, according to Moscovici, are derived from new elements such as new discoveries or new conceptions over different issues. What happens is that scientific issues are “translated” or represented and also connected to common sense knowledge which is pushed forward by the media. For instance, none of the articles which focussed on Sardinian DNA or Archaeological discoveries or legal problems related to the Status of autonomy, were treated only scientifically. The readers were always given a story before data or scientific knowledge. The story was always based on common sense knowledge, which is the translation of the shared scientific and non scientific heritage within the community and then, from that, new knowledge and ideas were pushed forward in a circle of shared thought.

The ones in charge of that were active elites of intellectuals.

The authors of these articles play a role in the circulation of knowledge, common sense and stereotypes. I won't go on a further discussion to analyse whether the knowledge spread can be defined according to Cartesian's universals but still, a corpus of many thousands of articles can provide us with sufficient data in order to define the clear and distinct ideas or narratives which the press and its authors are transmitting to the audience. Many of these journalists accepted to be interviewed. Interviews will be part of future research at phd level.

I have identified four narratives in which demand for devolution would contribute to a climate in which independence or autonomy could move onto the political agenda and strong cultural maintenance help the group to keep or to imagine clear distinctive ethnic traits shared by the whole community of Sardinians.

The relevant weighting of these four narratives out of the whole corpus showed quite a regular trend for discourse on independence/devolution and identity.

IV.1 Categorising the narratives

Categorisation of the four main narratives I have found:

1. **archetypal myth of origin story.**
2. **the second is an archetypal periphery-centre conflict based on territorialism.**
3. **the third is a narrative which stems from economic instances of devolution, specifically the reaction to the non-application of the Autonomous Status of Sardinia which entitles the island to get back some VAT from Rome.**
4. **the fourth thread concerns the revitalisation of the Sardinian language.**

These patterns respond to a representation of values and meaning given by the authors-emitter and the audience-receivers. The narratives and their subnarratives will be analysed in the next paragraphs.

IV.2 Summary of the main narratives

Fairclough (2003:26-27) writes how Systemic Functional Linguistics, believe the texts cover altogether different functions such as : ideational, interpersonal and textual; according to this perspective

texts simultaneously represent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, the mental world); enact social relations between participants in social events and the attitudes, desires and values of participants; and coherently and cohesively connect parts of texts together, and connect texts with their situational contexts (Halliday 1978, 1994). Or Rather, people do these things in the process of meaning-making in social events, which includes texturing, making texts

Fairclough prefers to put it slightly differently at least in terms of naming.

In fact he divides text meaning into three major types: Action, Representation and Identification.

Fairclough concentrates on

1. **ways of acting**
2. **ways of representing**
3. **ways of being.**

According to Fairclough, representation corresponds to Halliday's 'ideational function'

As far as my research is concerned, even though I will take into consideration Halliday's approach I have chosen, for this first stage, to focus more on ways of acting and representing through the media and I will do so by approaching the data I have collected accepting the theory of Social Representations and the ethno-symbolistic approach to nationbuilding.

IV.2.1 Archetypal myth of origin

1876 articles found

This narrative although not massively present is steady and not often directly related to contingent policies but to the longevity of Sardinian culture and internal kinship. This narrative is entirely in the hands of cultural elites but further field research may reveal whether it is shared by audience in terms of every-day knowledge and/or common sense knowledge. In that case it would be quite difficult to assess to what extent this narrative was present in the minds of the interviewees and whether they feel it changed their attitudes toward the issue at stake. As for now, I will concentrate my analysis on how recent events or historical facts are represented. The Archetypal myth of origin is a narrative which is not only associated to ethnocentric values and ingroup representations: it is also used to bridge current studies on archaeology and DNA to common sense and past beliefs on these issues. The purpose of all representations is to make the unfamiliar familiar and thus the non-clear roots of Sardinian origin undergo such a mechanism of familiarisation or objectification and, later on, massive anchorage and spreading the news to the audience.

According to this thread, the original inhabitants of Sardinia, from whom the present day Sardinians are said to be descended, are constantly invoked. In this narrative, the Sardinians' ancient and distinctive bloodline is stressed and a strong sense of loyalty and coherence among fellow-nationals is being fostered. The emphasis on the roots are a constant sign of resilience.

The Nuragic people from the pre-bronze age are often depicted as the ethnically and culturally original inhabitants of Sardinia and there are efforts going on to insert the Nuragic people in the frame of the indo-european and semitic invasions which involved the mediterranean area during the 13th-12th centuries BC (see the People of the sea). These articles are important in terms

of nation building since their contents aim to create an idea of Sardinians as very ancient and to some extent “chosen” people especially when the People of the Sea won the spotlight of Mediterranean real or partially real archaeology over the last few years.

An recurrent news being elaborated is that the writings are an original creation of the Sardinians thus suggesting that inscriptions may have already been present since the Nuragic age rather than being a tool “imported” by external traders and/or rulers such as Phoenicians first then Punic then Roman etc etc

IV.2.2 Territorialism

Political resentment on territory: 2.315 articles found

This narrative is based on centre-periphery tensions on relatively recent territorial occupation from external forces (American bases with nuclear submarines) and internal ones (Italian army training sessions using depleted uranium). However, the contrast is between Sardinians (the ingroup) and any outgroup group which in turn are present day administration (eg. The Italian government) or past rulers such as Romans, Pisans, Aranese etc. Each group is described in conflict with the allegedly original unity and freedom of the Sardinian nation. Territorialism is one of the most powerful categorisations in the study of ethnic-nationbuilding.

The tensions on territory are often directed to internal audience, namely Sardinian politicians and policies which are depicted as inadequate to make sure rural areas are preserved and people are unable to keep their old habits and rural professions.

In many different ways the Sardinians are shown as the victims of the distant power centre. Sardinia is reified and described as a place which should be handed back to its inhabitants.

IV.2.3 economic instances of devolution

Resentment. Economic hardship and demand for Fiscal devolution: 2707 art.

According to the data I have found the growth rates of Sardinia have remained desperately low since the early 1990's. This was apparently due to the deeds of Italian central government which ceased to give Sardinia the percentage of VAT it was entitled to.

The non restitution of this money was depicted as one main causal factor in the underdevelopment of Sardinia. According to Guibernau (2004:138) Smith's work failed to address the political aspects of nations and national identity. I believe the political-sociological aspect is dependent on economy. Generally speaking this narrative contains also territorialism and the personification of the nation but the main features are the urgency for money and the perception or the representation which is spread through media discourse, of a centre which cannot take care of the economic and political aspect of the "Sardinian issue" or "Questione sarda".

For this issue journalists report a compact support to Soru's policies by left and right of the political spectrum. For months the newspapers emphasised this issue as the **causal factor** in the underdevelopment of Sardinia. **The journalists made their audience believe that the development of an idea of strong identity is based on Sardinia's autonomous status and the Government is guilty because by keeping the money it fails to apply this status.**

To do so they reported many interviews in which often Soru himself and sometimes others (eg. former president of Italian Republic Sardinian born Cossiga) declared that the money was being drained out of Sardinia by wrong taxation. An article in which Cossiga himself suggested Sardinian people to avoid paying taxes to Rome was released on the national day of the Republic. This is an issue which in various forms occupies much space in the newspapers and paves the way to ethnic nation building.

IV.2.4 The issue of language

344 articles.

Traditional linguistic and sociolinguistics have treated the question of Ethnicity as if only marginal in the analysis of the Nation States' policies . Both groups intend language rights as human and individual rights.

Some social psychologists conducted important studies to measure the level of distinction between personal and governmental involvement in human rights. The representations of such an aspect of identity which is also a formal right as the freedom to speak a language must take into account:

1)the nature of the representations which are shared by the group being investigated (Spini-Doise 1998); in this case how language and ideas connected to it are circulating and how are categorised by its speakers;

2)Which is the weight that individuals or groups are giving to the chosen dimension (language). In this case, by now I can investigate the variations in weight given by journalists to the different narratives I have collected but this aspect, which Doise (1985, 1990) names "interindividual differences" can also be treated later on in field research;

3) Social anchoring (Spini-Doise 1998). We need to understand how social position or social identities are organised and *how they anchor people's representations* (Spini-Doise 1998: 604)

The above system of analysis can be used to all the four narratives in order to study attitudes linked to the way people perceive social relations among social groups. In this study I could rely on a literature review on the issue of language made by articles issued over the last two years and a half. However the issue of language was present both in the newspapers and in public discourse well before my data collection started. At least, the public

awareness of the issue of Sardinian language dates back to 1997. Before the 1997, claims on the rights of the Sardinian language had less coverage in the print media; further more, web and cheap publishing was not as outspread as nowadays.

Yet, as far as my data are concerned and as far as formal laws imply, unlikely other examples provided by nations without states, (Guibernau 2004: 136), Sardinian language appears to be a weak tool for instances of devolution despite its formal recognition in public bodies. In the Sardinian print newspapers there is sometimes formal commitment to language issue to pay lip service to Regional Law 26/1997 and national law 482/1999 and almost all the articles written in Sardinian were sponsored by Sardinian government and not openly written by any journalist or activist or intellectuals. The majority of the editorials on this issue are written by Sardinian widely known scholars who mostly are historians, archaeologists, writers, musicians and applied linguistics.

No professional journalist has ever written an editorial on language planning.

This lack of “presence” may be due to two main factors as follows:

- 1) If we admitted that the images of Sardinian identity are based on the social and cultural constructs of an elite through the media it is possible that the language is seen as largely inefficient to reach a large audience.
- 2) On the other hand, if we considered Sardinian identity as strongly based on ethnicity, it would be possible to think that the language is an insider tool for insiders in order to maintain the ethnic bonds but is not perceived as useful in public life. The recent and important *Campielo* prize for Italian literature in 2006 saw Salvatore Niffoi as the winner. The Sardinian born writer, as many writers, writes **only or mainly on Sardinia**; he sets his stories on the island and often traditions and cultural traits are thus conveyed to a large audience of Italian audience. Yet, as for the majority of Sardinian writers, the ethnicity and Sardinian identity are conveyed without much reference to the Sardinian language. The Italian language is an instrument which at the same time is accepted and shared by fellow nationals (Sardinians) and the outsiders (the others, the

“continentals”). This thread deserves an in-depth field investigation to discover if language is playing a role, either it be effective or symbolic in the shaping and re-shaping of Sardinian identity.

The majority of the intervents hosted on the newspapers on Sardinian language (but written in the Italian language) were aimed at promoting a single standard for Sardinian language.

Rubrics hosting the articles

The intervents on Sardinian language were issued in only three of the four rubrics hosting other cultural and historic issues, namely, *Letters and Opinions* normally confined at page 40 or 41 in the *L'Unione Sarda* or in another rubric called *Sardinians all over the world* which normally is issued once a week at page 15 or in *Cultures* at page 49-50. All the other articles on identity finds more spaces; articles on autonomy are hosted in the first ten pages of both newspapers whilst articles more focussed on history, roots and ethnicity are often internal and or in the rubrics on culture etc.

IV.3.0 Sub-Narratives

The narratives responds to what media represent as the Sardinian identity in terms of the relationship between Sardinians and the state and between Sardinians and Sardinia and less often between Sardinians and Sardinians.

A field research would be necessary to assess to what extent do the media “empower” Sardinians who are depicted as a single group. It would be important to understand to what extent identity and the identity pushed forward by journalists and other social actors who use the print media, change people’s attitudes or actions. Do people feel more likely to take part into collective actions such as demonstrations, claims, petitions to re-shape the relationship between Sardinia and the central government after being addressed by regional media or do people possess a strong ingroup loyalty even without reading newspapers at all? Of course, in a further field research there will be a control-group which will consist of people who do not generally read the newspapers. However this would not give us enough evidence of the value of newspapers as nationbuilder as people undergo many stimuli through many means of traditional and non-traditional communication. Still, as far as this research is concerned, it will be possible to show how social actors try to address the audience regardless of the consequence in terms of social influence.

Many studies, especially in Social Psychology could show the origin and the effects of collective actions but it is more difficult to assess to what extent media, and in this case, print media, are responsible for that.

In this section I have included the narratives I have found on a more detailed level. These can be analysed according to the basic themes derived from the Smith’s ethno-symbolic approach and Moscovici’s social-representational approaches.

Most narratives will be followed by one or more than one brief translated excerpt from a newspaper which will be analysed. As far as the translation is concerned I relied on my own strengths.

One important feature common to most articles is the absence of clear boundaries between the speech and the issues reported in the text and those who were not uttered at all by the politician or protagonist.

In order to better understand it Fairclough has classified four different ways of reporting (2003:49):

- Direct reporting
- Indirect reporting
- Free indirect reporting
- Narrative report of speech act

All of these different reporting were used but ‘Direct reporting’ which implies quotation marks with a reporting clause is used with headings and sub-headings. Free indirect report is hardly used whilst narrative reports are often used together with direct and indirect reporting. The main narratives could be easily divided in sub-narratives which display a more detailed range of themes.

These sub-narratives were the following:

- **Identification with common culture, customs and traditions pertaining to rural life, its history and culture**
- **Identification with common culture, customs and traditions pertaining to urban life, its history and culture**
- **Difficult relationships with the Central Governments now**
- **Difficult relationships with the Central Governments in the past**
- **Proposals in order to change relationships with the Central Governments in the near future.**
- **Common political and legal system in the past**

- **Common political and legal system in the future**
- **Sardinian internal economy: contrasts between rural producers and regional government.**
- **Desire to have a different role in the economic arena: Cagliari metropolitan city by representation prior than by law**
- **Desire to have a different role in the economic arena: Cagliari metropolitan**
- **Sardinian language: series of issues and translations, the newspaper (normally *L'Unione Sarda*) being the publisher**
- **Sardinian language: the debate on its use and standardisation process**
- **Representation of common and putative ancestry**
- **Common history, common destin, representation of shared and putative ancestry : mythic overlaying**

Common history and destiny is a “perennial” sub-narrative, a social and historical glue, which kept steady and omnipresent in all other narratives. In this narrative I report the absence of any ideas on a “Covenant to God”; the allegedly “chosenness” of Sardinians is rooted by journalists and intellectuals in ancient history either it be written history: (eg. The state of bad relations with actual government started with Imperial or Republican Rome) or non-written (eg. The Shardanas of the sea)

Hutchinson (2004:120) observes that the process of mythic overlaying is a process that preserve the old myths and by spushing them into a substratum they *resume their hold on collective loyalties* (2004:120)

IV.4.0 Excerpts

The majority of the articles I have found show journalists as social actors who have an important role in re-defining both ingroup (Sardinians as a whole) and outgroup (any Central Government which have shaped and re-shaped Sardinian history).

These perceptions are pushed forward not only by giving the news but by grounding the relationships between Sardinia/Sardinians and central powers in the past. The role of economic revolutions and dislocations as the periodic firestarters which instigates nationalist building or rebuilding has been made clear even recently by authors such as Hutchinson (2005 141-143)

In order to define some of these narratives as social representations

As far as the economic grievances are concerned, the highest number of articles are related to the issue of VAT which is massively present from April 2005 on.

As reported on *L'Unione Sarda* on Friday 2nd of December 2005, p.3, the “Stages” of the conflict followed the early bureaucratic discovery (2002) of the “anomaly” by The Regional Commission in charge of the balance sheet. The enquiry was started by Eliseo Secci.

On 24th of April 2005, the Region reports the alleged “anomalies” to the State Accounting Department. From then on, the news became public and spread like wildfire and conveyed more than the original meaning. In fact, the State Accounting Department recognized the mistake but neither the clashes or the instances related to central-periphery relations ceased to be a hot news in the Sardinian newspapers.

Excerpt 1, *L'Unione Sarda*, Thursday 1st December 2005, p.2:

The following article and the others which were contained in the same page (2) are a good example of the importance of the representation of the relationship between Sardinia and Central government in any economic dispute. There is no mention on the changes introduced in 2001 in the relationships between regions and state: what matters here is the march and the massive participation which is overestimated and the article is written one day before the demonstration actually took place. The same phenomenon was recorded in November 2005 when the demonstration could not take place (*L'Unione Sarda*, 3rd November 2005)

Moreover, the journalist points out the motifs of the demonstration are common knowledge because all over the last two years and a half Sardinia's claims for the VAT were a matter hardly at stake both in print media (eg. *Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*) and in the electronic edition of them, namely www.corriere.it or www.Repubblica.it or www.Ansa.it, the latter being a free information provider. In doing so the journalist first objectify the protest by turning abstract ideas eg. Clash between Sardinia and Rome into something real and tangible. Over the years this attitude can be anchored and spread as a common belief.

Furthermore, I was present the day of the march and as I could see the March encompassed less than the number of participants declared and the Italian media did not cover the event.

In this case communication stays with the insiders and build on the audience's loyalty to the Sardinian nation. Few days later similar articles were issued by describing the demonstration together with the reports of the political steps to be taken in order to get some of the money the Region is entitled to. Other articles within the same page gave less information and arouse more instances of nation building by addressing the community without grounding the requests on contemporary economy or on the issue at stake. The reasons for the clash between Sardinia and Rome are represented as historical. An author who often address the audience in this way is Salvatore Cubeddu who writes on autonomy and other aspect of identities such as Sardinian language. In an article I will present later he developed the

theme of language as an aspect which will lead Sardinia to become a nation. However the first excerpt I am presenting still gives the information rather than addressing Sardinians as if they were born as an ethnic group and a collectivity and they did so for many centuries .

Journalist: E. P.

Heading (font 24): Five thousand Sardinians march on Rome

Subheading: (font 16) Revenue, today the demonstration: the march will reach Palazzo Chigi

Subheading 2: (font 14): Sardinians are asking for the repayment of the share of taxes which the State is keeping from 1991 till today; this share is due by right to Sardinia

Text: (font 10): Piazza Esedra, Via Cavour, the Fori Imperiali and Madonna di Loreto square. The rage of the five thousand passes along these streets; it is the march which today will allow Sardinia to materialise (to appear all of a sudden) at midday in front of the great portal of Palazzo Chigi's, the premises of Central Government. The motifs of the claim are well known also outside Sardinia: the State retains from 1991-illegitimately- a great share of taxes which are due to Sardinia. The bill, according to the Region is already done: 4 billion euro, an amount which in particular turned the State Accountant pale. The Region and the Sardinians are asking that in the forthcoming Balance Sheet there will be a consistent place for resources bounded to Sardinia, and at least an advance on the bill of 800 million euro to be assigned in 2005 and 2006. The Government, one month ago, has transferred less than 400 million. An amount of money which raised the many objections as far as Regional Committee is concerned.

**Excerpts 2 and 3, and *L'Unione Sarda*, Thursday 27th October 2005, p.1
and: *L'Unione Sarda*, Thursday 20th April 2006, p.6**

Excerpt 2 represents an exception, in fact on the same day another article on language was hosted in the same rubric but it focussed on the well known issue of standardisation and of the cultural value of learning Sardinian.

It is not usual in the corpus I have collected to find Sardinian language related to instances of autonomy, but, as anticipated in Excerpt 1, Cubeddu uses an historical perspective in order to enhance the importance of re-shaping the Sardinian identity as a national identity with the help of historical facts.

The reference to the collective movements of the seventies, to the steel workers is bridged and compared to actual policies which stem from a very different setting. The author fails to do so because he wants to provide the audience with the image of an island which has the same economic problems as yesterday's and the rebuilding of a cultural and identity tool such as language has the same value of economic rebuild and of the localization of economic resources. Some of the articles written by Cubeddu were hosted in the front page as Excerpt 2, issued on 27th October 2005 by the same author (*Fiscal issue: Sardinians and the debt of "Master" Rome*) and every and each one of them were grounded in past history, even contemporary history before and post World War I; history becomes *history of the political relationship* between Sardinia and Rome....and each article which apparently focuses on the fiscal issue is a firestarter for instances of autonomy thorough the reshaping of a certain amount of history reported on a chronological order. Moreover, reification is always the main element in order to remind Sardinians of their loyalty to the land. It is also interesting to note that the journalist claims to be a non-independentist and even a non-autonomist: this implies only the fact he does not belong to any political movement but, as far as I am concerned, all his articles had a very strong autonomist approach imbued with historical knowledge of local authorities and regional independentist movements.

Excerpt 2

L'Unione Sarda, Thursday 27th October 2005, p.1

Journalist: S. C.

**Heading (font 16): Fiscal issue: Sardinians and the debt of “Master”
Rome**

Text: font 10

“Can Sardinia be enough to stay on its own? The political independence cannot be achieved if a complete economic independence is not present. By that each and every nation, at least as far as its prime needs to grant its political and physical existence to be enough to stay on its own”. This answer and this question is not being raised by an independentist and not even by an autonomist. This phrase was drawn from a report which had been approved by the Council of the Chamber of Commerce of Cagliari on the 29th of October 1916. It was ninety years ago..

but the issue related to the Sardinians who could live by exploiting their own resources, from a free and advantageous trade without being punished by an unfair taxation, has remained a persistent problem as well as the question: can Sardinian be enough on their own?

The Sardinian Charter, with its Constitutional limits, represents the Constitutional agreement between Sardinia and the State; thus article 8 grants the solid ground and the conditions for the special region to exist; article 13 provides for the possibility for the renaissance of its economy and society.

All of a sudden we get to know that those conditions are object of debates for almost 15 years. We get to know that the fiscal crisis of the State is going to overwhelm us thus canceling any form of trust not only in the reliability of men but also in the rectitude of institutional relationships. Depending on the outcomes of this issue all the Sardinian community will be called to verify whether the “Institutional pact that binds Sardinia to Italy is based on those (relationships) or not.

The almost 1,6 million inhabitants of this land of ours are now invited to get organised and to take up their responsibilities of defending their own rights as nation

Excerpt 3

L'Unione Sarda, Thursday 20th April 2006, p.6

Journalist: S. C.

Heading (font 16): The issue of the unified “limba”

Subheading: (font 24) “Limba” and future: walking towards the future

Text: font 10

The awareness that Sardinian autonomy, in such a form as it was allowed in 1948, would not be able to solve the problems of the Sardinians is bounded to three main prosecutors: juvenile neo-sardism of the 1970's; the intellectuals of Sardinian Nation (G.Lilliu, A.Satta, Gf. Contu, E.Spiga, G.Usai, E.nivola) who gave prestige to the referendum for the Sardinian language; the steelworkers and construction workers when won't be held to the ransom pushed forward by petrochemical Ravelli's and asked for a development for Sardinia to be based on local resources. All this was told, written and cried more than twenty five years ago. These movements and their blueprints pushed forward the success of Sardism in the decade which followed. And they (the blueprints) were overcome as soon as the success of Sardism did so. They left some small flame to be kindled only by few intellectuals. And over the last twenty years by some councillor who accepted to follow them either it be laws or culture, or proposals in order to unify the language, or to outspread the “Sardinian day” all over the island. Supporting the Constitutional assembly of Sardinian people was the last fatigue. What is the sign and the message conveyed by this commitment? It is not possible to build a territorial-compatible economy regardless of the people who dwells and work there. There were economy and local culture represent an inextricable unicum. Back in 1979, the important sociolinguist B.Weinstein theorized that linguistic development will provide the people who follow their interests and protect their ideas with a point of reference. Language rebuilding, by sharing diversities in order to enrich all sides, is tantamount to economy rebuilding.

Moreover: where there is an economic emergency often there are also linguistic and anthropological emergencies. It is a happy event that after so many years, the economism of a great part of the labours reached as far as the different Sardist souls were waiting for them. The Regional government did good because they chose the way of standardisation even if they did it softened.

The acceptance of some kind of standard is an essential step in order to recover, affirm and outspread an unarmed language such as ours.

It reassures the many experts and generous who think about their sardity as a dare for the future. It gives us the breath of a nation

Excerpt 4: *Il Sardegna*, 27th October 2005, p.12.

Journalist: S. P. She writes regularly on *Il Sardegna* and she is part of Soru's movement called "**Progetto Sardegna**"

Title (font 12): Fiscal Income: First meeting between the Prime Minister and the Governor of Sardinia;

Subtitle: (font 24)Defrost Between Soru and Berlusconi; furious row with Tremonti

Subtitle 2: (font 14). The Prime Minister has promised a new meeting.

The Governor: might he act as a good pater familias

Text: (font 10) Yesterday evening the president of Sardinia Renato Soru talked to Silvio Berlusconi at Palazzo Chigi. According to very reliable sources which are close to Sardinian governor, Berlusconi is available to another meeting by next Tuesday or Wednesday. The relationship is still very tense with the minister of Economy mr Giulio Tremonti that has stressed the point that he is not available unless the issue is at stake in the institutional "State-Regions Conference".

Comment: The State-Regions conference is issued in 1999 by art 4 of the decree n°303 of 30th July. According to many scholars in the field of Constitutional Law the recent sentences reached in 2004 and in the few previous years (n°304 and 306 in 2002; n°196, 313 and 324 in 2003) confirmed the tiny space of autonomy granted to the Italian Regions considered as a whole (Grassi: 2004). On the one hand Sardinian government is asking the Italian government to respect older regulations dating back to the first Constitution of 1948 on the other this journalist as many others fail to report the fact that the latest reform of article 119 has given more power to "ordinary regions" thus downsizing the powers devolved to the Autonomous Regions with the exceptions of South Tyrol and the city of Bozen (Caravita 2002: 145).

Excerpt 5 *Il Sardegna* 4th of November 2005, p.8,

Author: former president of Italian Republic: F.C.

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 following another article published on the third of June, which is the day after 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 nationalitarian"¹².

It is also important to note that Cossiga urges Soru to action by suggesting he took what he calls some "low level violence". What Cossiga defines as low-level violence differs from what Connor (2001: 65) shows as the occasional violence of Welsh towards Englishmen in Wales in response to the outgroup which is perceived as intrusive. The violence defined by Cossiga is not to be practised towards the "Italians" who live in the Sardinian soil, but it is against

Italian institutions perceived as detrimental to Sardinian economy. The unfriendly atmosphere and the causal attribution is directed towards central institutions is here motivated exclusively by economic grievances. Sardinian Sacred land is represented as the symbol for the perceived constant and perennial damage caused by the **central institutions** as oppressors rather than the by other people as the oppressors. Italians were hardly named as oppressors and this can be due to many reasons linked to the formation and anchorage of Italian identity in Sardinia, or to the conformity of traditional press.

A similar article was published in June when Cossiga defined himself as Sardinian before Italian; that clash between the former role of Cossiga as president and custodian of Italian unity and its current role of Senator and opinion maker enhances the importance and the necessity to explore the role of the fluctuating or multiple commitments to groups. Cossiga himself in his article published on June, 3rd, 2005 defined the Sardinian quest for identity as necessarily a “geometrically fluctuating identity”

Excerpt 5

Heading (font 16) Dear Berlusconi we don't want any privilege The state must give us what we are entitled to

Text (font 10)

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” movement, by promoting a great reformation of the charter for autonomy even implementing our laws independently from the nation state...

Excerpt 6 *L'Unione Sarda* 29th of May 2006, p.20,

Author: P. S., sculptor

On 29th May 2006 a well known Sardinian artist tried to push forward the representation of Sardinian flag as the wrong flag through the most widely outspread print media. The artist did so because, according to his vision which might be well interpreted using an ethno-symbolist perspective, the Sardinian flag not only represents Catalan oppression but it does not represent Sardinians as a group. Sardinians, he wrote, need to find out a new symbol to convey an idea of a shared past and also of a “golden” past.

The same artist, in August, through the words “uttered” “by his “Avatar” which played a cameo role in a issue of a very famous Sardinian cartoon (*Fisietto & C. La Saga dei Pistis*,(2006), 31, “*Piazza Civiltà Nuragica*”) where other characters play each one a different role each one with a different personality. In this story the artist together with the cartoonists, by using positive characters, pushed forward the representation of Sardinian flag as the wrong flag and described the Nuragic age as the age of allegedly Sardinia independence, well before middle-age with the realm of Arborea thus expressing the same opinion which was to be found in his articles in the *L'Unione Sarda*.

In both issues, the Nuragic age is represented as an era where Sardinian were self-conscious about themselves as part of a single nation.

That (*Fisietto* 2006, 31, pp.46-49) is a clear example of ethnic nation-building + territorialism in order to influence the perception of the audience on Sardinian identity. Examples as such can be found very often in the two newspapers I have chosen and were also found in many of the web-sites which I had analysed for the Unesco project on the use of minority languages in 2004-2005.

In the Cartoon all the messages which had something to do with independence and/or historic roots and origin myth were delivered in Standard Italian language which is the language used to talk about all Sardinian issues, including Sardinian language;

Fisietto & C. is normally written wholly in a mixed code Italian-Sardinian often with the help of foot-notes with the translation of some passages wholly

in Sardinian (it also depends on the characters and what they represent and their age, condition, background, etc). For this reason, the use of standard Italian in delivering a message related to Sardinian nation building indicates the importance given to this subject. As far as the article is concerned, it is also important to note how intellectuals make reference to other intellectuals well known among the ingroup of Sardinian intellectuals.

According to Moscovici (2000: 63) some social representations do concern facts and other do concern ideas. In this case the interaction played by the concept and symbol of Sardinian flag concerns both and cannot be analysed as a fact isolated from the flow of communication which has generated it. The necessity to change Sardinian flag, pushed forward by the artist, **is a non-isolated symptom that the group and its images are undergoing a change which may be present at a cognitive and at social level as well.**

This article can be adequately analysed by all three Fairclough's text meaning, namely Action, Representation and Identification. In this case these categories are present through the whole text but the author puts more emphasis on the identification and historical representation of the objects (the flag and Sardinian unity). The first part of the article is a long pattern of historical information and rebuilding for the audience. The author informs, advises, warns and try to create commitment in addressing the readers as if they were "we", the whole Sardinian nation. This attitude is very common in many articles of my corpora.

Excerpt 6

Heading (font 24) Throw the Moors Away from the Sardinian flag

Text (font 10)

Eventually history is within easy reach of everyone : on the *L'Unione Sarda* issued on Monday, 2nd of May 2006, professor Cesare Casula started from the unconditional praise of Catalonia and then moved on to praise the Realm of Aragon in order to illustrate the origins of “our” flag. Here is not necessary to repeat the historical events which gave us the image of the four Moors which, according to the traditional view is prone to the conquerors and rulers till nowadays. Everyone of us can see with the help of history that the flag is a “sad” flag.

That flag, which was rejected even by the Aranese, today displays itself trying to show up well inside and in front of all Sardinian public bodies and buildings...

A flag, the Four Moors, which is an explicit symbol of violence and colonialism. Historically (as reported also by the official Document of the Sardinian Region) we are coping with Aranese issues related to the year 1.096 A.D. when the Spaniards defeated the Moors at Alcoraz (a white field with red cross), in each canton they put the effigy of the be-headed heads of the Moors who were defeated.

No! That cannot be the emblem of a civil nation. What Sardinia has to do with that?

Or maybe should we be still proud of the fact that the Aranese who has colonised Sardinia since 1324, have left “their flag” for us to adopt it?...

That symbol has nothing to do with us and moreover it is not representative...

It is necessary to repeat it: Sardinia has nothing to do with that (flag) unless we, as very often happens because it is our custom, we will go on pretending that nothing happens and we passively accept colonial commands. Colonial commands have brought to Sardinia only harassments and poverty. A nation which wants to live in its own era should be able to open a debate on and invent its own image with courage and decision. (A nation) should do it freely, by appealing to the creativity and fantasy of everybody...

A new symbol: this time it will be a symbol of renaissance and peace. A

symbol to shake off thousand of years of oppression; it will allow us to face the world and to look at the future being proud of ourselves²¹ but with our head safely attached to our body, and well aware of an identity full of our most genuine culture

²¹ In Italian to be proud is usually said “to have a high head”; “but with our head safely attached to our body”, has a double meaning:

- 1) the state of being not be-headed like ther Moors and
- 2) to play it safe in order not to be headed-off and /or to keep their head.

IV.5.0 Conclusions

The author of the excerpt 6 did not mention the issue of language or the low level of hierarchisation of Sardinian language in the print media.

For Pinuccio Sciola seems absolutely natural to express his thoughts and address Sardinians by using Italian which, despite the efforts done by some cultural, political and activist elites, remains a tool which is not used to exercise public power thus confirming Anderson's well known vision on print capitalism in terms of final product: Sardinian print media do not use Sardinian language but the relationship between nationbuilding and Sardinian ideology associated to language is not massive although is present.

All the narratives found are expressions of current issues at stake and also of current and past features of identity being re-constructed daily. In August 2006 few articles on a bank robbery associated to the presence in Sardinia of a group of irredentists were published but, as theme, they were never developed and they disappeared very quick. Irredentism is an issue which is an *objet cache*, an hidden object which is often related to unknown and undefined people as was the case of the words of former Ministry for Internal Affairs, Pisanu, who, all over the past few years, forged the compound term "anarchist- insurrectionalists" in order to define a ghost group which was never openly located geographically or politically. The term anarchist-insurrectionalist was preferred to the term "irredentist" as this would imply the presence of a movement which is backing irredentism. The latter term, being a term which derives from Italian "irredenta" is not often present in the English dictionary (is not present on Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995, Cambridge University press) can be translated as unredeemed and could be easily associated to "irredent lands" thus creating or assessing the presence of irredentist ingroups and/or outgroups who advocate the recovery of territory culturally or historically related to one's nation but now subject to a foreign government, in this case "Italy". This word is therefore not used in order not to insert any element of de-nationalisation or non-

homogeneisation within the Italian community which the media depict as homogeneous.

I will use them at first to show what were the major issues at stake in the years 2004-2006 in the newspapers chosen; whether these issues were relevant to discuss identity and the re-shaping of it; group formation and clashes between in-group (Sardinians) and out-group (Central government and Italians). It is a very complex issue as Central government might be not often equalised to Italians as a whole but, as far as my data are concerned, a self-objectification of Sardinians as a group is present as much as the historical re-construction of the relationships of Sardinia with the different Institutions which governed Sardinia over the centuries.

Any institution, whether it be Roman, Pisan, Spanish or Italian, are perceived as those who want to control Sardinian resources and here, in the on-going importance of historical interpretation may lays the foundation of the enduring empowerment of some of the journalists in addressing the “Sardinian nation” in order not only to report with rich details what people do in terms of collective actions (eg. The demonstrations to ask for the restitution of part of the VAT due to Sardinia) or what people *should do* to express social identity and group objectification.

On a further level it would be important to confirm whether Sardinian people who read newspapers as well as the social actors who write the articles perceive and ascribe similar/dissimilar characteristics to themselves and to the group they consider as theirs and to what extent if any they attribute responsibilities to outer group for economical and/or sociological issues related to Sardinia .

At present, my overall aim is to discover the relevant patterns in terms of narratives and discourse in the great number of articles I have found throughout my daily research over the past two years.

I have used both a historical and a social-psychological approach.

The historical approach is based on ethno-symbolism whilst the social-psychological approach is based on the work of Moscovici's and the scholars who derive their theories on his school of thought on social representations and on social influence.

Presently, the historical approach is more important because I don't have data collected from interviews, questionnaires etc. For this reason, the social-psychological approach will be better defined at a further level of study.

Ethnosymbolists hold that nations are culturally unique or are perceived as culturally unique by their members. The members of these nations which do not need to be also states, designate themselves, often through their elites as nationals. In fact the shared belief of being part of a nation is not often shared by the largest part of the community. What matters is the role of symbols, memories, in a word, history which must be rooted as far in the past as possible and are re-interpreted by intellectuals. Over the few decades before Mohammed spread Muslim faith, in pre-islamic Araby, the role of poets (shairs) (Halm 2006: 18) at the beginning of the sixth century A.D., contributed to the creation of an ideal setting for the rise and outspread of Islam.

Poets had the role to convey memories of the community and to present these memories as the heritage of the best community and they were aware of it (2006: 18). Some Sardinian intellectuals and journalist are doing the same by spreading ethnocentrism with their vision of history through the print media. As much as the islam at the very beginning, before its political and military use, was a product by insiders for insiders, Sardinian identity thorough the media is a product for insiders first and then for outsiders.

One of the main features of ethno-symbolism is the re-interpretation of the "ancient past" as if this past were transmitted intact and pure by transmitters or conveyors who are also interpreter of most of the values conveyed by symbols.

Many narratives such as the resentment against an economic hardship are depicted very often as related to the political and economic situation where it

is generated. However even though, in the case of economic resentment which fostered demand of devolved fiscal powers, the periodic declaration which tended to re-assure the islanders the money was about to come (2004, 26th September 2006) what stays after the narrative evanishes is the sense of the inner-group. Allport (1954-1979) claimed that it is very difficult to define what an in-group is but all members of in-groups use the term “we” *with the same essential significance* (Allport 1979:31).

I could not verify Allport’s claim but I found the use of the term “we” a lot in the writings of Sardinian reporters’. They spoke on behalf of the whole Sardinians depicted as a homogeneous group which allegedly suffered tensions, mis-communication and ill representation by the outer group: “them”. Furthermore other scholars such as Billig and Rosie were able to verify the persistence of inner-group feeling both in the newspapers addressing the nation and in the field.

Still, many narratives can be thought of using a historical perspective thus observing that they might be caused by the still non perfect cohesion of the construct of Italian national identity which is still very important in public discourse (and I’d like to verify whether this is significantly present in people’s discourses or not) .

In fact, according to Bauman (2003:23), Italy is a place where national identity is still a priority after 150 years and the imagined sum of the whole parts of Italian identity are more in number and also more constructed than each single part. Many of nowadays instances of more identity and autonomy stem from economic reasons but it is very difficult to analyse and assess whether people’s behaviours are linked to the input pushed forward by the media. In terms of national identity some experiments tells attitudes and beliefs towards people of different nationalities are harsher than actual behaviours (Moscovici-Marková 2000). Attitudes are generally linked to the sphere of the individuals whilst social representations are part of social knowledge, common sense and folk knowledge (Moscovici-Marková 2000:234). The result of social representations is a relationship are made out of three basic elements: social representation, individual representation and

the object which is the existent expression of a social representation (Moscovici- Marková: 235).

The representations which seem more rooted in Sardinian culture in the eye of the print media are those related to an epic past. I say epic using the definition of Bakhtin's (Holquist-Emerson 1981) who by this category intends features such as 'beginning,' 'first,' 'founder,' 'ancestor,' 'that which occurred earlier'. These representations work as social symbols that however constructed constitute common realities. These representations convey thoughts, feelings and are communicated in a way they seem uniform in the way they are understood by the audience (Verkuyten 1995:279). Social representations are significant when they are widely present and deep. They are objectified that according to Moscovici means they are materialised and also transformed as counter-process (Verkuyten 1995) into new abstractions which are being expressed by the audience.

The significance of a number of identity features is not only linked to the process of abstraction and communication but a feature is significant when it is massive or using Moscovici's terms we call it "anchored". To be anchored a representation of identity must be communicated widely and the features which were widely spread through the media were economic issues.

Bauman points out that Scottish people re-discovered their identity only after central government started to "pocket" all the money from the extraction of the Scottish oil (Bauman 2003:66). In the Sardinian context, the centre-periphery relation was depicted as that between a centralised and stubbornly bureaucratic institution (the nation state) and Sardinians who were depicted as a population of robbed tax-payers.

According to the framework I have chosen (Marková, Fairclough), a survey on the media may be a very broad issue as it encompasses: the analysis of content, main topics and recurrent themes, contradictions and conflicts, the use of rhetoric, the use of metaphors. The key questions were not only how media spread identity but also who are the actors who spread it.

As a result, the corpus show a number of issues which are partly common knowledge for many insiders such as traditions, habits, Sardinian heritage and partly scientific issues such as genoma research and DNA research. Sardinian language, despite formal coverage and political reinforcement, is largely left aside and it seems that Sardinian journalists in reflecting and rebuilding the current issues at stake in Sardinian society, do not “mistake” language with *ethnie*; ethnic features are singled out from the perception of being part of a wide cultural heritage and language is only paid lip-service as it is evidently not used for everyday written, computer-mediated and oral communication by both *elites* and, as I will try to show by displaying the data from language use on the internet, by *young people in an urban environment*.

Is Sardinia a place whose intellectuals are trying to foster the acquisition of a share of sovereignty by emphasizing the concept of **enduring ethnie** or does the perception and spread of Sardinian identity belong to those few cases of invented ethnie “reconstructed” a-new by intellectual elites such as the case of Bangala in the former Belgian Congo as reported by Smith (1986:17). Probably is impossible to choose as the social representations of some features of Sardinian identity and relationships even if well anchored do change over time. What does not change is the function of Social representations of identity in the re-creation of Scientific and Common-sense knowledge.

Scientific knowledge enters into the general message and reshaping of attitudes and identity spread by the media (Moscovici and Marková 2000: 228).

Moscovici and Markova see the communication process as a circular triangle between the object (identity in this case) and subjectivity and objectivity. Common-sense knowledge descend from Scientific knowledge but it is also the starting point of many rural cultures. The work of the Sardinian journalists and intellectuals who wrote the corpus I have collected act as a medium in the reshaping and spreading of scientific and common-sense knowledge. In the case of the instances for more devolution spread by the print media is easy to see that no one among the journalists or reporters or even activists gave in-depth or scientific or technical explanations about precise articles and new

laws regarding Sardinian relationship to federalism but of course these laws were mentioned somehow, adapted to common-sense knowledge and communicated to a vast number of readers.

What is relevant and we can trace it without going on in-depth field research is the role of the journalists as conveyors of selves, namely the audience's selves. In fact the question we should pose to ourselves is on behalf of whom are the journalists presenting a perspective or addressing the readers? Markova (2003; 2006a; 2006b), defined dialogicality as the capacity of the human mind to conceive, create and communicate about social reality in terms of the 'Alter'. Journalists, although not on live communication, do presuppose a relationship with their readers and they take the role of the group thus addressing the other readers as if their thoughts were shared by the whole group and as if their personal voice were a number of collective voices.

However I think a great part of the work done by journalists are objectively derived from a political mechanism which is going on: the tensions between a new vocation to autonomy and polycentric with Italian state and the persistent cultural, social, constitutional principle of Unity also called "national interest" (E. D'Orlando 2002: 113).

Future Research: blueprints

One possible development of this research will be to try to find the continuities and discontinuities between the representations proposed by journalists and the actual ingroup attitude towards the outgroup (eg. Sardinians towards central government or towards the Italians who live on the continent)

It could be difficult, as research in social psychology have shown (Rabbie 1998, Messick & Mackie 1989) to attribute clear differences in interpersonal and intergroup behaviour according to the membership or non-membership of the participants or according to the memberships of the “others”, namely continental Italians or the reification of central government.

If I decided to choose focus grouping in order to know more about attitudes towards the ingroup and the out-group, I should, according to Rabbie (1998: 498-499) take into consideration that participants (categorised as group members) are usually in a symmetric relationship to each other:

individuals are pitted against other individuals whereas groups are paired with other groups. This means that it is uncertain whether possible differences in interpersonal and intergroup behaviour should be attributed to the membership or non-membership of the actor, or the membership or non-membership of the opponent.

However away from any generalisation it could be objectively difficult to assess whether the news on the print media influence the audience and to what extent, if any, does the alleged influence go. If I chose focus grouping instead of submitting only structured questionnaires, apart the problems related to symmetries and asymmetries I could have a more large stage for participants to express their attitudes.

Yet, according to Rabbie (1998:499) and Rabbie & Horwitz (1982) who derived their theories from the Behavioural Interaction model (BIM), groups tends to strive more for the long-term goal of mutual cooperation than individuals, provided that the other (programmed) opponent can be expected or trusted to cooperate as well as in the prisoner’s dilemma. If the opponent

seems to follow a competitive or exploitative strategy groups will behave more competitively than individuals (e.g. Rabbie *et al.*, 1982).

Others such as Schopler and Insko (1992) seem to confirm what I found in the articles I have analysed: outgroups tend to evoke always more competitive and distrustful beliefs than single individuals. According to this vision the others are perceived by the whole ingroup in more competitive and symmetric relation than the case of inter-individual relationships. So competitive attitudes rise more easily if a single think himself/herself as part of an extended group in symmetry with another group of people which is not perceived as a group of distinct characters.

However it will be difficult to do measurements in order to find significant correlation between beliefs or attitudes which are being pushed forward by journalists and the amount of same beliefs and attitudes shared by an audience.

Even if I had a control group formed by those individuals who do not read the newspapers I would not be able to measure the “amount” of common sense or social influence they are missing because they don’t read them. As a matter of fact, newspapers are not the main access to information in Italy since the very beginning of mass publishing in the last decades of the 19th century. Italy has never had the so called “penny press” unlikely the Anglo-Saxon world.

From the *Il Fanfulla Della Domenica* and *Il Corriere della Sera* on, newspapers were the political and social stage of politic and cultural elites. For this reason it could also be interesting to interview the social actors who shape and re-shape opinions. The Sardinian journalist who produced the thousands of articles I have collected were tiny in number and within reach. Some of them, especially those free-lancers who write for *Il Sardegna* are willing to be interviewed.

However in my further studies I will try to absorb some of Markova’s methodologies in dealing with discourse analysis and focus groups.

According to Markova, very often in social research on discourse analysis the method chosen by researcher becomes more relevant than the research problem.

Such practices would result in theories about how talk is organised on a time-frame, how participants construct their opinions, which topics are avoided and which are at stake. Markova's approach does not deny the importance of this kind of approaches at micro-level, she argues that the study of socially shared knowledge, requires a prior focusing on theoretical and analytical presupposition underlying dialogue and polylogue before setting out to do field research.

Markova and Moscovici (2000) believe social realities provide individuals and groups with different kinds of knowledge, languages and relationships that co-exist and are mutually interdependent (Markova 2006 a).

Such realities are organised, namely, collective experience, habits and traditions, and they are passed on by previous generations.

The circulation of ideas and topics in dialogue is therefore not only a matter of constructions from the present time and the local geographical area where the phenomenon is generated, but each dialogue is embedded in the past and is open to the future. Markova adopts a Bakhtinian approach as she holds that while we speak and think in the present, our speech and thought always remembers the past. I believe this approach was largely shared by A.D. Smith in building his theory on ethnosymbolism.

Narratives, which are themes being thematised (and therefore named *themata* by Markova) rooted in culture and transmitted from generation to generation through language, communication and common sense thinking. This is why measuring to what extent narratives are being transmitted by newspapers and accepted by the audience without being already present it is practically impossible. What is possible is that a tiny minority of social actors who has media in their hands can help generate new forms of socially shared knowledge. That knowledge may also concern the representation of negative centre-periphery relations by either spreading the representation of the outer group (the Continental) as a threat to the ingroup mainly for economic reasons and that may enhance the perception of difficult inter-group relations (Allport: 1954) or, they may be conveyor of an attitude aimed at recovering distinctive traits of identity in order not to be perceived as totally assimilated to the larger outgroup of Italians.

V.0. New Medium?: language use and surfing on Sardinian authored web

V.0. New medium?: language use and surfing on Sardinian authored web

The role of publishing in the standardisation and spread of standard languages is well known (Anderson 1983-1991) as well as the importance of the elites of publishers together with the re-inventing of the tradition and the invoked past and religion in order to start nationalist upsurges (Anderson-Sethi:1996). The Internet links up every computer networks. According to a projection elaborated in 1999 (Castell 2000: 375) in 2007 the connected hosts should be at least 878 millions.

That scenario was clearly underestimated as today and in the next few years broadband penetration will continue to increase in the United States and Europe. Large scale deployments of city-wide broadband efforts in several large cities have started making internet access similar to traditional phone service. In a future, phone companies, will break the 20-Mbps barrier and close in on the 100-Mbps speed, making internet access on par with regular local network access.

As a result. the increase in broadband penetration may results in more visual and vocal communication over IP services but it doesn't always implied the development of powerful or efficient networks (Castells:2000) ; mixed forms of written, oral and visual communication such as videoblogs hosted in yootube gave potential visibility to many but still this visibility becomes official when the information is reported by more "official" media either they be print media, or on-line version of print media or traditional broadcast such as radio or Tv channels. The potential of easy access to communication is counterbalanced, in the case of Sardinian websites to a lack of visibility in larger public spheres.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, tradition with its steady identification with past culture has been structured and reported by journalists and intellectual élites in the print media according to current political setting. In the case of the access to new media, the idea of approaching them in terms of a clear distinction between online and offline attitudes of the surfers has developed a steady branch of research (Slater 2002: 533)

As data show, Sardinian language use has been hardly correlated to access to the new media and its contents. Moreover, the number of websites available are not often surfed. One reason for the latter phenomenon can be due to the protocol in use in order to catch the websites. While a great deal may be caught in the net, there is still a wealth of information that is deep, and therefore, missed. The reason is simple: Most of the Web's information is buried far down on dynamically generated sites, and standard search engines never find it.

Traditional search engines create their indices by spidering or crawling surface Web pages. To be discovered, the page must be static and linked to other pages. Traditional search engines can not "see" or retrieve content in the deep Web — those pages do not exist until they are created dynamically as the result of a specific search. Because traditional search engine crawlers can not probe beneath the surface, the deep Web has heretofore been hidden.

Authors and publishers can fuel collective representations of Sardinian identity by deciding which elements of identity must be enhanced and hosted in the newspapers.

Language found a significative space only in Spring 2005, following Governor Soru's decision to adopt a formal written standard for the Sardinian language to be used by Public Bodies as possible communicative tool with their citizens but not in lawmaking or any formal act of legislation.

There is evidence that a paramount aspect of identity for journalists is that linked to a relevant historic re-building which would replace Sardinia at the core of past and future Mediterranean history.

This spirit seems to be shared by journalists archaeologists and political activists thus confirming Gillette's theory (2002, p.182-186) regarding aspects of ethnic Mediterranean theory were still rooted in Italy after 1945.

It comes as no surprise that the Mediterranean characteristics claimed by Sardinian archaeologists are different from the negative characteristics which according to Gianfranco Miglio's theories as reported by Gillette (2002, p.184) opposed Nordic culture of Northern European Italians to Mediterranean culture allegedly *based on impersonal rule and individualism rather than relations of personal dependence.*²²

My will to assess whether the ethnic rebuilding of Sardinian identity was present even in non-print media authored by non professional journalists and if so to what extent were the reasons why I have decided to write this chapter which will be naturally completed by a chapter based on field research.

In this chapter I will present and analyse the findings of two year research over Sardinian websites.

Its main component relies on the cultural and political elites who have the capacity to advocate people to action: **Is that happening on the internet?**

What is the role of the elites who authors Sardinian websites? What do they have in common with journalists and activists who authors print media?

With this work I will try to underline the affinities between cultural elites who work in print media and non-traditional media. On the Internet the main actors may be those who helped by the relative low cost of publishing play the double roles of speakers of a less used language and also activist in terms of identity and consensus builder. I will try to assess whether there is a correlation between the use of Sardinian language and contents of the websites.

However the main part of this chapter will focus on the simple assessment of the presence of Sardinian language in the websites.

²² Gianfranco Miglio, "Toward a Federal Italy" in *Telos*, 1991, quoted by Gillette(2002, p.183-184)

My research was conducted in 2004 under the supervision of Sue Wright; she supervised a group of data collectors from different European countries who had set out to discover whether a web sites in lesser used languages were present in significant numbers.

Another aspect of the research aimed at identifying the agencies responsible for the creation of Sardinian websites and discover whose interests they represented.

V.I. Methodology and findings

a)Aims

The paper looks in detail at a few websites and investigates a number of aspects.

Are these sites built and maintained by ‘insiders’ for an ‘insider’ audience to promote Sardinian identity or does it also have the role of promoting Sardinian language to outsiders?

What role is claimed for such websites in the movement for Sardinian autonomy or independence and what role is claimed for language as a tool for more autonomy and/or independence ?

b) Methodology chosen and literature review on former work done on the same subject

At the very beginning I reported on the presence of websites in the Sardinian languages, the authors and their political agendas as part of a large data collection and analysis implemented by Unesco Babel Project in 2002-2005.

At this early stage, research was quantitative.

As a matter of fact, many search engines offer the option to do full Boolean searching requiring the use of the Boolean logical operators, the group decided to adopt this methodology.

Other authors have conducted systematic quantitative and qualitative surveying on Internet language practices. The focus of both was to measure language use but also attitudes towards the language. Measuring attitudes does generally involve submitting questionnaires or administering interviews (Wetherell 1996: 128) and that can be quite a complex task. As far as my research was concerned, for the part of the research on attitude towards language use I did use Likert scale as it is one of the most common techniques. Participants will be asked to place their attitudes on the issue of language on a continuum. The continuum is a five point scale on which agreement or disagreement with the issue can be represented by circling a

point (0-5) on the scale. The aim is to trace attitudes first; making a reasonable prediction about future behaviour may be a step too far at present. The figures will be based on a small scale survey based on 173 participants residing in the province of Cagliari. There are no statistics available on language use in the city of Cagliari, even though many scholars and activists have observed that Sardinian is not transmitted in the families and institutions do not seem able to implement a language policy.

Helen Kelly Holmes (IJMS 2004) was one of the first scholars to conduct research on the field.

One of the problems to be considered is that the questionnaires submitted tended to evaluate the competence claimed on the respondents' self assessment. She tried to overcome this problem by requiring the participants to state their activities over ten sessions.

I could not do it with my sample group because the Deans did not allow me to organize language access testing session.

In her paper, Holmes reported on Internet practices of 2267 students in eight different countries. Her major finding was that, if we considered the sample group as a whole, the English language was not widely spoken on the Internet if compared to each national language. On the other hand, the author suggests that the English language is being used massively by those groups who are trying to reverse language shift in their nation state.

In the case of Sardinian the first studies on Sardinian and the Internet were conducted by **Guido Mensching** at the University of Köln in 1994 (Mensching-Remberger 1999). Mostly, the Mensching group developed a project with the objective to reverse language shift in Sardinia by inserting the Sardinian culture and the Sardinian language in a network of minority languages being taught on the Net mainly for a German speaking audience. The idea was to build and promote a collection of textbooks in Romance languages.

Mensching assigns 1,3 million speakers to the Sardinian varieties as a whole.

Grimes (Grimes 2000) assigned 1,5 million speakers.

The “Mensching” group decided to focus on internet as a rescue tool enabling the reinforcement of the linguistic consciousness of speakers and learners of the language. In 2001 Grimaldi-Remberger presented a sociolinguistic study on the Status of the Sardinian language focussing on the Net (Grimaldi-Remberger 2001). According to Grimaldi-Remberger the Sardinian language despite being a distinct Romance language from the Italian it has been sociologically treated as an Italian language thus implying many negative consequences such as the loss of language prestige and the loss of public and formal domains. This attitude to portray Sardinia in the Italian continuum is present till nowadays (McCull Millar 2005). Grimaldi and Remberger believe Internet can lead to a convergence in terms of orthographic homogeneity but Sue Wright (Wright 2006) shows the opposite.

According to Ethnologue Sardinian is endangered because young people use it less than in the past and parents tend to speak only Italian at home, especially in the cities. These data are confirmed by Toso (2006) and Bolognesi-Heeringa (2005).

For this reason I decided to search the net for websites in Sardinia and, at a further level, to investigate whether the Sardinian language is used by young people to surf the Net.

I decided to focus on young people (age bracket 15-18) because they are that group who, especially in urban areas, were born monolingual Italian as there is evidence for that not only in the reports by Ethnologue (1998) but also in Euromosaic 1995, Mensching and Remberger (1999), Salminen (1993), Bolognesi-Heeringa (2005), Toso (2006), Corongiu (2006).

Moreover, it was easy for me to collect a large set of data in high schools.

The participants were asked their age, gender and level of instructions and how often did they surf the net and which was the language used predominantly. My response range were ordered from 0 to 4 on a Likert scale.

Mannetti explains how Likert scaling is divided in three stages:

- 1) sentences must strictly pertain to the attitude we want to measure;
- 2) the sentences must be submitted to a sample which will indicate for each sentence the degree they agree or disagree with it;
- 3) the whole scoring must be computed by doing the sum of the partial scores obtained by a single participant for each item, (Mannetti 1998:71).

c) First Findings

According to Sue Wright(2006) the Internet may be a part of two very different social trends:

On the one hand, the emergence of the inter-regional networks and systems of interaction and exchange of globalization encouraging the spread of English. On the other hand, the ease and relatively cheap cost of using information technology allowing any language group to produce its own sites, journals and programmes.

Moreover, Internet should not be considered as a medium detached from the mainstream of traditional print

Anderson (1983) has explained the role of print capitalism in the spread of national language and nation building from the sixteenth century on. According to his vision, capitalism played a paramount role in unifying and reducing the number of vernaculars by developing print-languages.

In the Internet non profit organizations try to gain the attention of public bodies and official media in their strive to get funds and visibility.

In my first analysis of non-print media following the methodology developed by Babel project I found out that the Sardinian websites thus found were hardly built in the Sardinian language and language itself was not a priority in the authors' agenda.

This is the state of arts regardless of the shared imagery of a common ancestry and of a “diverse” history which is given much space in the print media and regardless of the formal shift in the approach to European

minorities following the Arfè resolution of 1981 and, in the case of Sardinian, Regional Law of 1997 promoting the Sardinian language.

There are some data which are considered to be true even though no complete sociolinguistic survey has ever been done in Sardinia. According to the early outcomes of the latest census being conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and reported by the “Unione Sarda” (p.40, 9th of June 2005) Sardinians who speak the Sardinian language are 1,269,000 out of 1,600,000 people.

According to Ethnologue (1998) there are 1,5 million Sardinian speakers. Sardinian language can be considered at risk, given the fact that the Sardinians are less than 1.7 million as a whole and that a lot more than 30%(which is the percentage which Unesco drew for a language to be considered endangered) of pupils are not receiving any formal education in the Sardinian language

Many scholars (Remberger 2001, Ethnologue 1998) hold that Sardinian is being spoken at least by 75% of the residents but it is still considered an endangered language by the Unesco since 1993 (Unesco Red Book on endangered languages).

If this data is true, Sardinians who speak Sardinian language do not use it on the internet to build their sites or, those who build web sites do not think Sardinian as an efficient tool for mass-communication. **Being a cheap tool the web sites authored by Sardinians seem to face the question of independentism/regionalism even in a more open way than in the two newspapers analysed in chapter four.**

As far as the Italian minority languages are concerned **Berruto**(2004) has estimated the monolingual Italian speakers to be only 40% of the Italian people and the bilinguals that use their minority language as their first language to be around 25-30%. This broad esteem was obtained by data collected in 4 years of work both on the formal domains of the language (eg.

Piedmontese) and on line by Berruto and his team. They reported good results in terms of the assessment of language vitality in the chat rooms as I will report later on.

V.II. Two macro varieties

There are two main macro varieties of the Sardinian language. Southern (Campidanese) and CentralNorthern (Logudorese).

The Northern variety was considered as the main variety by many scholars from the beginning of the XXth century(Wagner 1908) up till now.

Traditional media and print agencies may also have affected the users' attitude towards the Southern variety which seems to be considered as "impure" because less conservative and allegedly more similar to the Nation-State language, the Italian language. This has created a negative "domino effect" which pushed scholars to try to downsize the Southern variety and ask for a Northern-based standard.

However, things have changed over the past three years and nowadays there is much struggle going on to decide which variety must be chosen to build up a written standard.

There is a new wave of scholars(Bolognesi, Viridis) who often live and teach abroad. They are showing new evidence about how the Southern variety is a variety very rich in lexicon and with a more modern syntax, still it seems that it is "less" akin to the Italian language if compared to the Central varieties. They did so, (especially Bolognesi in Bolognesi-Heeringa 2005) by using computational linguistics and showing that the Southern variety is less akin to Italian than the "pure" Northern one. Yet, Southern Sardinian has always been seen as less committed to the Sardinian language especially in the urban

area. The issue of attitude has much to do with mutual intelligibility. If a Northern speaker does not want to be understood the only thing he/she has to do is to open up his/her larynx a little bit so that the breath can flow with less interruptions. The issue of “divergence” from a standard is mainly phonological.

The issue of standard has ceased in part to cause internal upheavals among scholars and activists as soon as public bodies decided to participate actively.

As a matter of fact, the first complete multimedia course in Sardinian language, suitable for primary schoolchildren but also for adults who wants to learn basic Sardinia, is available since September 2006 on the website of the Region of Sardinia (www.regione.sardegna.it) as well as on two other regional portals for education and culture: 'Conoscere' (www.conoscere.it) and 'SardegnaCultura' (www.sardegnaicultura.it).

The issue of the standard was thus overcome by publishing the course in three different varieties: the two main macro-varieties, namely Logudorese and Campidanese plus Nuorese which is often treated as a sub-variety of Logudorese.

However, some independent publishers such as *Condaghes* are promoting both convergence towards a standard and multiple-standard maintenance for literary purposes. A very important example of this is represented by *Addia*, a partly historical novel in which their authors by using both macro-varieties aimed at developing convergence to a standard through an interwoven and mixed variety and also a shared imagery of Sardinian as the language of a homogeneous and self-boistering people who are part of a single and independent nation: *isbolighende ins os séculos e in sos fatos s'istória de Addia e de sa Sardigna, sa variedadi logudoresa e cussa campidanesa de sa lingual sarda s'intrèverant e s'amesturant fintzas a si torrai a lingual úniga imberiedendi sa metàfora de s'unidadi de sa natzioni* (Alcioni-Pala 2004)

In this case the authors are not only trying to re-gain a vernacular culture but are building a rationale, an agenda for Sardinia to play an independent political existence which must, according to this vision, be grounded into an historic past depicted and represented anew as the only *opus certa*

V.III. Assessing the presence of websites in one or more of the two macro varieties

The first of my research was focussed on the presence of websites in the Sardinian languages and those authoring them. Once I have provided my data on the sociolinguistic status of Sardinian as a tool for Internet access I try to assess to what extent the Sardinian language is present on the World Wide Web.

For this part of investigation I drew the methodology from the work done by Sue Wright and the Unesco Team for European Languages over the past few years(2002-2004).

Sue Wright (2004) in her earlier research for the Unesco project showed how WWW has ceased to be the reserve of the educated elites who were the only ones able to use English as a medium, and spreads across social class (The AMD Global Consumer Advisory Board 2004)

In the conclusion of her work Sue Wright explains that the likelihood is that the WWW will fracture into small language communities.

Wright gathered scholars, experienced researchers and research trainees from different countries: Italy (Sardinian, Piedmontese, Arbrësh), France (Occitan), and the Netherlands (Frisian).

This team, of whom I was part since 2004, decided that even before our research will be completed (2006), the situation will have evolved and the data thus gathered could be incomplete.

The creation of Web pages has been exponential in the last decade. Anyone trying to ascertain the number of Web pages in any language must take account of this growth. It is also essential to be aware of the short life of many sites.

Given the state of affairs, the Unesco did not set out to make an exhaustive, quantitative survey of websites in the five languages and so did I for what the Sardinian language was concerned.

My aim, was simply to ascertain that the Sardinian language were present on appreciable numbers of sites on the Internet, and then to identify some common features of these sites.

The key questions the research team tried to answer were:

- 1) Is X being used on the WWW?
- 2) What is it being used for?
- 3) Who is publishing these pages?
- 4) Who is funding the publication?
- 5) What variety of the language is being used?

Thus I proceeded as follows: I asked the association that exist to defend the language and culture of the Sardinian to recommend few sites to me. This step was not a particular fruitful one. Then I submitted a small structured questionnaire with few open answers to high school students in order to collect data on language use and web access in Sardinian. Meanwhile I used the web engines inserting the word for the language in Sardinian, because many sites consciously direct attention to the fact that they are in the

particular language. In the web engines which allowed Boolean operators (AltaVista, Google, Ixquick, etc) I have also inserted:

a) the adjective relating to the main aspects of group culture;

b) grammar words with high frequencies very well known to appear in many texts. The grammar words were chosen carefully so that they would differentiate the language from others on the dialect continuum(eg.Sos/Sas/is/sa in the Sardinian language);

c) frequently occurring set phrases and lexical chunks(such as “Fortza Paris”- that means We got power together) or “Limba Sarda”

Using these terms and strategies in different combinations I was able to identify a far larger number of sites in Sardinian. Now we as a team decided to categorise our corpus in five categories as explained into the next paragraph.

V.IV. Categorisation of Websites

The team divided the web sites the group investigated into 5 main categories.

- **Web sites promoting aspects of contemporary culture:** sites built as on-line magazines including notices of forthcoming or past music/art/folk festivals
- **Web sites promoting the language**(to facilitate acquisition of the language/literacy in the language plus help to aid the maintenance of the language for those who already know it)
- **Web sites celebrating the history of the group:** ancient history plus demand for a *new civil history* (Lyttelton 2001:27). The authors use the cultural wealth selectively and transforms it according to their political and cultural agendas as described by Gellner(1983:55-56)
- **Language used as a part of the defining criteria for group membership** in a political sense which encompasses civic and ethnic nation building.
- **Commercial or promotional purposes.** Language for selling to a target market for particular products or services including language teaching.

We searched until what we found in the first sites visited could be confirmed and no new categories to extend the data nor information to contradict first findings were found.

In conclusion the Sardinian language is present on the Internet.

I, as far as my part of the work was concerned, could report almost 300 websites partially or wholly in the Sardinian language

In my work few sites, such as “sotziulimbasarda.net”, “comitau.org”, “codda.org” and is “callonarasa.net” are being described with more details because many aspects of them offered many features which made them good as case-studies.

The websites I have found and evaluated were built at least partially in one of the two macro varieties of the Sardinian language which are Campidanese and Logudorese.

The Sardinian language appears to attract less commitment than Sardinian culture.

In fact, as seen in the first part of my research, only 17% of the young participants included Sardinian among the languages used to surf the net. On the other hand **40% of the participants declared to surf on sites promoting Sardinian culture** whilst 60% of them answered 0 for the same question.

One of the main features of the websites are mailing lists and chat-rooms. I have included a question on the use of the Sardinian language in those situation involving informal language as well as formal.

As for the kind of language used on the net I didn't expect to find the language of the grammarians but that of daily life. However few websites, promoted standardisation and though expressed their ideas using a formal language.

In my work I sought to consider to what extent do the Sardinian access the WWW in the Sardinian language.

Furthermore I was interested to know whether Sardinian websites were also promoting identity and which were the narratives, if any, to express identity.

My data show Sardinian identity and culture are likely to survive.

Some efforts are being made to push a language standardization forward. This process is quite visible in such websites as "sotziulimbarda.net", and "comitau.org". However the two sites are authored by scholars and activists who took different sides. The authors of Sotziulimba are in favour of a single standardisation for written Sardinian; they share this position with Governeor Soru and regional ministry for culture. On the other hand the authors of Comitau would like to promote a standardisation based more on the Southern variety and they do not accept the current official standard issued in 2005. However, over the last year, comitau.org has displayed less and less contents wholly in Sardinian thus losing the staus of best web sites in the Sardinian language.

In 2004 the comitau group was authoring the majority of those sites promoting the language. In the next years both the publisher of Comitau's and the publisher of Sotziulimba's succeeded in publishing their work traditionally.

V.V. Assessing the presence of web sites in the Sardinian language

As already anticipated the method we used to survey the websites was that of Boolean searchers.

Much database search is based on Boolean logic search. When I need to find information about the presence of Sardinian websites I will insert Boolean operators such as “AND” “OR” “NOT” “AND OR” .

In Php language theory the term Boolean refers to variables that can either be “true” or “false”; “on” or “off”; “0” or “1”; “yes” or “no”.

Example by inserting the words **Limba Sarda AND Internet** the first site selected by Google.it will be SARDU.NET at <http://www.sardu.net/>. Later on I submitted a questionnaire to see whether the sites thus found were known by the surfers. The results showed that among the young people the majority of the websites thus found were widely unknown.

The bilingual or almost monolingual sites represent a tiny minority and they operate more as the traditional press with the main difference that they work to get commitment to the idea of Sardinian as a nation state and to promote the Sardinian language as a co-official language to the same level of the Italian language. These sites as comitau.org and sotziulimbasarda.net are insider-authored sites for insiders.

Still they try to gain the attention of few outsiders, which are still considered part of the ingroup as they generally are Sardinians who weren't taught the language or other Italians who live in Sardinia but have developed a taste for Sardinian language learning or love Sardinia for its wilderness and/or history.

In such an environment learning Sardinian cannot be defined as learning an “L2” language. The learners contribute to build a setting where they can have

one-to-one tutorials (thus reproducing to some extent a L1 learning environment) or learn in group.

As a consequence the surfers accept *inputs* both in standardized Logudorese(from those authoring the site) and in any non-standard or standard campidanese variety(the surfers).

Again *outputs* are formally in standard Logudorese(from the authors) and in standard Campidanese, in Limba Cxomuna (newly approved standard to be found in Sotziulimbarda.net), in Standard Logudorese and eventually in non-standard Campidanese or Nuorese from the whole surfers.

Remembering the influence of newspaper on nation building and the spread of the national language(Anderson 1983-91) these sites may be influent linguistically at least at a micro non administrative level. But if they come to be used by large numbers they could play their influence in the official arena thus asking for funding in order to pay for their on-line courses, on-line publishing, conferences(also in the premises) etc etc.

Creators and aims.

I expect to divide them in three main groups often related:

- 1)Publishers and stakeholders of Sardinian Literature(mainly in the Italian language).
- 2) Politicians or movements.
- 3) Tourism.

V.VI. Examples

Example 1 Sotziulimbarda.net

Until 2004 the best site for Sardinian language maintenance was probably Comitau.org. and web authors such as Danish scholar Lone E. Olesen ranked Comitau as a wholly Sardinian website: <http://www.geocities.com/moorella/sardinia.html>

But, from 2005 on, that is no longer the case and Comitau presented less contents in the Sardinian language; on the other hand, the space left by the disavowal of Comitau's roots was covered by Sotziulimba which hosts articles and work of many scholars in the field of sociolinguistics, politics and applied linguistics.

Sotziulimba appear to have more impact on the ingroup because the audience is an active audience which can take part in building and rebuilding the information provided on the site. Differently from Amos Cardia and Comitau's, Peppe Corongiu tried to obtain convergence to a standard and to avoid disputes in order to gain more visibility for Sardinian language and culture. He knows majority and conformity have lead to no change till now but he nonetheless tries to build a network of intellectuals a peer network to help the issue of nationbuilding to be a more open issue either it be related to language or to other aspects of identity (Corongiu's ideas were also present in print media and books such as *Làcanas* IV, 22, V/2006 and Corongiu 2006). Sotziulimba's leader is trying to elicit a collective revival of interest towards Sardinian cultural and political distinctiveness.

As a matter of fact, Sotziu is a web-magazine, probably the best web-magazine in the Sardinian language because it gives to anyone the possibility to publish their opinions and news in the Sardinian language, and also a cultural and political network. Sotziulimba doesn't develop other functional aspects directly linked to applied linguistics which were developed by other websites which started as magazines, which was the case of Comitau all over 2004.

Example 2

WWW.Comitau.org

The authors of comitau.org maintain that the English language has already overcome the Italian language in terms of prestige. In their ranks which reflect a sociolinguistic setting in which Sardinian is the lower prestige language, the Italian language seems to be losing prestige in relation to the English language. (but they do not say whether Italian and Sardinian are confined to every day life or not) Italian comes second place and Sardinian comes last.

What do they want to change? It simple as that, they want to reverse language shift but, differently from Sotziulimba, they do not aim at converging to a single written standard.

In Comitau's view Italian and Sardinian should stand at the same level as co-official languages.

The authors, no later than the 22th of April 2004 renamed their group: "committee of students of the Sardinian language"(comitau de istudentis pro sa limba sarda) turned into "committee of bilingualism operators"(Comitau obradoris de bilinguismu).

Internet as a rescue and development tool plays a major role in their work. The information contained in this website is "horizontal" rather than "vertical" because it works like an open-source system. Still, there is a lack of complete freedom given the fact that like in any traditional magazine information has been selected and re-shaped according to the authors' aims. The only websites which is providing a really free language tool is the site hosted at the Free University of Berlin <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu>.

That site works as a tool for language retrieval and as a mailing list for scholars to debate. Yet, no other services are provided with few exceptions(eg.they advert on-line courses etc etc).

Shifting the register: there is evidence from the website that there is a double attitude in communicating to insiders and outsiders. More nationalist messages are written in the Sardinian language.

Over the year Comitau.org has changed its name because it has changed its function given the “declared” shift in the Sardinian policies towards bilingualism. Leaving apart for now the issue of whether Sardinian policies towards nationalism is being effective or not. The following documents were drawn from www.comitau.org, which is the most active wholly monolingual site for the study of the Sardinian language. Their aim is to promote Sardinian language as equal to the Italian language. It comes as no surprise that in a period of total globalization Sardinian is invested as bridge-language, a small lingua franca helping the users to improve their skills in European language learning. This is clear in the Italian version of the writings that focuses more on Sardinian as a vehicle to Europeanization reversing a century of “downsizing” Sardinian as a working language. Although the above is only an excerpt from a published work, it manages to illustrate quite accurately how the whole role of Comitau as promoters of the Sardinian language developed, in terms of the roles adopted by the promoters, the kind of questions that they are answering implicitly, the type of interaction with the readers, and the content.

Examining the excerpt one cannot but notice the asymmetrical and controlling nature of the discourse. The provider (Comitau’s director Amos Cardia in this case) instructs, provides the answers, judges and establishes alternative behaviors to correct what she has identified as mistakes made by the Sardinian speakers and by those who are Sardinians and not speak “the language”. This behaviour often implies that answers are given without anybody a question.

The main creator of Comitau, Amos Cardia, has also become a “traditional author” in 2005. In 2006 he published his second book and to present its contents could rely on the best “blurbs” in the Italian linguistics field, as it appears, De Mauro himself has praised Cardia’s work.

Example 3

<http://www.codda.org/index2.html>

The surfers of Codda.org have a large community to express their ideas <http://www.codda.org/forum/>. Sardinian is used iconically to write sketches or short jokes, especially vulgar ones. The authors and the surfers build on visual and written communication to rebuild symbols. For example Harry Potter becomes Harry Podda, the surname Podda being quite common and also locally related to well known family in the field of Cheese factory productions and business in the area of Cagliari. So this is an ingroup web site for in-groupers in a very similar way to www.iscallonarasa.com. The latter also features videos and phonic jokes.

As far as the organisation of contents is concerned, as Danet had already observed (2001, 2002), the largest part of the contents are surfed in asynchronous modes, as in paper letters.

On the other hand there is less authoring, less press-agency in this kind of site because almost every kind of messages are being published without any selection whilst as we have already observed sites such as Comitau.org leave the totality of the decision taking regarding web contents to the “creators” and “builders” of the sites.

People who surf Codda.org forum are geographically scattered all over the island and from the continent. Still, the active presence is not massive at all. Many surfers are regulars and they are a few dozen people. These people use their regional variety of Italian to communicate actively.

The trend is to recreate an informal environment and the language in use although written seems to be far more free and less grammatically correct than the spoken language itself. Very often Sardinian users use an unfaithful syntax on purpose and continental users use their tokens (eg. Roman expressions or short funny or characteristic interjections) Language occupies a very tiny percentage and the only message linking to a private website

talking of the Sardinian language reveals an entirely Italian site. Typically people use topics or title as a firestarter to get involved in more intimate and informal views and messaging. Sex talk is openly accepted as well as erotic pictures and explicit small videos. I could observe one case of indirect racist talk in a non-regular surfer who pretended to speak like an Indian building on grammatically broken structure. It is quite difficult to find racism in these kind of communities whereas sexism, especially heterosexism, which is another kind of racism if we prefer, is quite present

All the mailing going on is in the Italian language but the surfers can chose to be represented by a Sardinian icon(called Avatar) that you can choose from a large list of Categories which are very often up-to-date.

Many messages are hosted by non-Sardinians participants. The only link to the Sardinian culture is the love which many continental participants declare to the rest of the community. The love is expressed to the land(the vacations and the sea) as a top location for wilderness and tourism.

Example 4

Free University of Berlin <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu/>

Political websites are a tiny minority on the WWW whilst the presence of cultural websites partly or wholly in Sardinian is quite a secure data.

The Institut für Romanische Philologie der Freien Universität Berlin it has been the first branch of an Academic institution to host any electronic tool to outspread the use of the Sardinian language. The project was launched in 1994 by Guido Menschig(Grimaldi Remberger 2001) and Jürgen Rolshoven, who was then the head of department.

Menschig was then given the possibility to write the first philological grammar for German learners of the Sardinian language: the book was published in the series edited by Rolshoven called *Bibliothek Romanischer Sprachlehrwerke*, i.e. "Collection of textbooks in Romance languages"(Grimaldi, Remberger, IBIDEM).

As Grimaldi and Remberger explains in their work available on-line, *“the Sardinian internet project initially started as a mere experiment - just a web site on Sardinian - which soon proved to be a most efficient instrument to retrieve and manage data concerning the Sardinian language community”*. The group defined a range of objectives(Grimaldi Remberger, IBIDEM):

- *to constitute an international exchange forum on issues concerning the Sardinian language and culture*
- *to supply an extensive documentation on the Sardinian language*
- *to collect and analyse linguistic data assisted by the sardophone internet community*
- *to build up text archives and larger corpora*
- *to provide the internet community with a series of useful language tools.*

The most frequently used tool that this site is offering is a mailing list which gave birth to a small community of scholars and activists who are in the Sardinian language field. Yet they offered the possibility to have synchronous communication through a chat(or “tzarra”) but it is not possible to use it due to technical problems which will be solved soon.

This kind of web-site is indeed different from all the other websites we as the Unesco Team have been categorizing. In her *Cyberpl@y(2001)*, Brenda Danet described how e-mailing affects what were once formal relationships between students and professors etc etc.in other words, e-mailing leave room to the implementation of a different form of relationship to someone regardless of the fact that a student is often socially less “visible” or “important” than a professor.

Furthermore, e-mailing gives the users the impression to take part in a live-almost synchronous conversation. Few years have past and possibly these

new writing or written-conversational modes or registers are much wider. For instance in the setting created by the users of the University of Berlin's web Sardinian speaking community a scholar may take offence if anyone keep calling him/her "professor". It will be interpreted as mockery because form of electronic or net-etiquette has been accepted from the mid 90's on (Danet 2001, 1997)

V.VII. Language choice on the net among high school pupils: age bracket 16-19

Unesco subsidised research provided evidence that Sardinian is being used on the Web. Comitau.org is a major portal providing many services both on line and on the premises.

However, in this paragraph, I will try to display the results of a questionnaire (see also Chapter VI:Tables) submitted to a sample group of young people in the urban area of Cagliari.

Accorging to Livingstone(2002: 15):

until fairly recently the media-centred approach has tended to neglect the social contexts of use for media, including the ways in which media use is contextualised in relation to other media

In Livingstone's there is evidence that young people construct diverse lifestyles not just from one medium but from a mix of different media.

As a result, as I have recorded in websites such as coda.org and iscallonarasa.com, the web environment contains a set of cultural meanings

and practices that may also not include the use of a particular standard such as Sardinian in the case of young Sardinians.

I will summarize the results of a semistructured questionnaire I have submitted in 2004. Given the fact the number of items I generated weren't so many I decided to chose a Lickert Scaling method to collect my data.

The participants to questionnaire were as follows:

the **male** participants were **88**, the **female 88**. Their age bracket was 16-19

My reponse ranges were ordered from 0 to 4 and the ranges of items were common both in their meaning(eg. 1)How frequently do you surf the Net in the Italian language; 2) How frequently do you surf the Net in the English language) and in their score assignment (I have assigned 0 as being highly negative and 4 highly positive)

88 male, and **88 female**. Their age bracket was 15-19 and A number of 80 male (**90%**) participants expressed their commitment to the Italian language chosing 4 on a Likert Scale 0-4.

But among the same sample group a number of 28/88 (**31.8%**) expressed their commitment to the **English language as first language** to surf the net as well as Italian.

This results seem to confirm the tendency expressed by a former research conducted by Helen Kelly-Holmes(2004) that reported 72% of Italian students being bilingual English-Italian on the Internet. In her study, referring to the Italian sample Holmes wrote "English is clearly the most favoured language for Internet usage among this sample"(Holmes 2004: 33)

In my sample group the same tendency can be registered although a bit lower. We must also take into consideration that the spread of ages was different in the sample group chosen by Holmes. In fact, all the students who took part in the research conducted by Holmes were taking English language classes at the university at the time when the research was done. I have chosen my

sample group at random in a “environment”(high schools) where English language is the being taught as second language in 92% of the cases.

There were 8 boys (9.1%) who surfed the Net in English a bit less than in the Italian language

So we may conclude that 40.9% of the Sardinian boys of the sample surf the net in the English language only a little bit less than in the Italian language.

There were two boys who chose to surf **only in the English language**) and not in the Italian one.

Among the girls no one claimed such an attitude.

Among the girls, those who chose to surf mainly in the Italian language were 84 out of 88 (95.5%)

Those who surfed only in the English language or in English as well as in Italian were 16 out of 88 (18,2%); **27.3% of the girls surf the Net in the English language almost as well as or a bit less as in the Italian language.**

Only six male participants out of 88(13.6%) declared to Surf the Net only in the Italian language whilst the girls who surfed the www only in Italian were 16 (18.2%);

Only 17% of the young participants included Sardinian among the languages used to surf the net.

Furthermore I Still, I wondered how frequently the participants did surf web to chat in Sardinian chats or take part into Sardinian mailing lists. I obtained the following results:

Male Sample: Chatting in Sardinian.

Less than one quarter of the male participants have ever taken part in a **Sardinian chat-room (22.7%)** whilst the **female** respondents who claimed to chat at least once in a while were even less(15.9%)

Mailing in Sardinian. Eighteen respondents out of 88 represent the **20.4%** of the male sample group who claims to mail in the Sardinian language at least once in a while; for what concerns the female informants only 10 of them claimed to mail in the Sardinian language at least once in a while.

That counts for the **11.4%** of the female subgroup.

English as a lingua Franca?

1) A number of 80 male (**90%**) participants expressed their commitment to the Italian language choosing 4 on a Lickert Scale 0-4.

But among the male sample group a number of 28/88 (**31.8%**) expressed their commitment to the English language as first language to surf the net as well as the Italian language. There were 8 boys (**9.1%**) who surfed the Net in English a bit less than in the Italian language (3 out of 4). So we may conclude that **40.9%** of the Sardinian boys of the schools screened surf the net in the English language only a little bit less than in the Italian language.

There were two boys who chose to surf **only in the English language** and not in the Italian one.

Among the girls no one claimed such an attitude.

Among the girls, those who chose to surf mainly in the Italian language were 84 out of 88 (**95.5%**)

only in the English language or in English as well as in Italian were 16 out of 88 (**18.2%**); like the additional data on the boys those who surfed the net a bit less than in the Italian language were 8 (**9.1%**). **For this reason we may say that the 27.3% of the girls surf the Net in the English language almost as well as or a bit less as in the Italian language.**

Only six male participants out of 88 (**13.6%**) declared to Surf the Net only in the Italian language (0 English; 4 Italian) whilst the girls who surfed the www only in Italian were 16 (**18.2%**);

After the main survey I will implement some follow ups in order to see if a qualitative tool may help me to obtain a clearer vision on this issue.

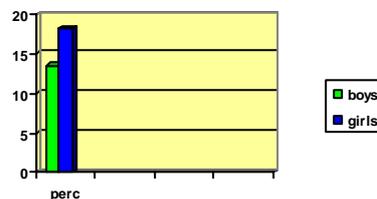
My Hypothesis is that there will be **an increase in the demand of Internet language service** although there will be a decrease in spoken language skills

in respect to Lucia Grimaldi and Eva-Maria Rememberger's data of 2000-2001. I can relate the percentage obtained from a significative portion of population using the Net at least once a month(which is more or less the 40% in the whole of Italy) to those among this group who still speak Sardinian in the family. As Lucia Grimaldi & Eva-Maria Rememberger have shown, the mail is considered a familiar mean of communication quite similar to the use of ORAL LANGUAGE. I tried to understand whether the capacity declared in the oral Sardinian language can possibly be found also in the Chat rooms, the forums and the web communities in general.

Which Websites?

Research among young Sardinians seemed to indicate that this was not the kind of website they were accessing. I will give here some stats on this:

The following chart shows you my previous results on whether the boys and the girls could report of any websites they had visited or not,



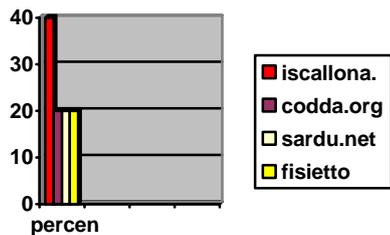
GIRLS who know any Sardinian websites: 11.8% . Girls who claimed to know any Sardinian websites were 17 years old on average.

www.iscallonaras.com was known by the 40% of the GIRLS who knew of any Sardinian websites.

www.codda.org was known by the 20%

www.sardu.net was known by the 20%

www.fisietto.com by the 20%



BOYS who know any Sardinian websites: 14.6%. The boys who knew of any websites were 15 years old on average

V.VIII. Conclusions

The Sardinian students showed an almost complete lack of information about Sardinian websites as well as a low level of Sardinian language use to on the Internet

The of these students are bilingual Internet users (Italian/English) thus confirming the data found by Holmes (2004) as far as data on Italian and English data are concerned with Italians. What is more interesting is that young Sardinians are not developing a multilingualism which include one of their native or allegedly native languages: Sardinian.

Sardinian probably is not perceived as a sufficient tool for communication, group maintenance, reflection, identification. Young people do not use Sardinian to convey their thoughts and receive information on the net and they don't use it to produce news, ideas in organised networks. The only groups using Sardinian are to some extent linked to the market of traditional publishing(eg. Daily newspapers, magazines, independent publishers). Even though these forms of publishing hardly convey large financial flows, being generally dependent on voluntaristic associationism, they belong to print capitalism. I haven't found, so far, any website in the Sardinian language or promoting Sardinian culture, which was authored by one or more people who belonged to the age bracket I have examined.

Still, there are many aspects of Sardinian identity which could be present and be communicated through forms which do not include written communication in a Sardinian standard.

Moscovici describes language as the conveyor of social representations **which are a tool to understand and communicate what we know already** (Moscovici 2000:31)

Language is in that case is in-between a so called “language of observation” which consists of a system expressing pure facts and the so called “language of logic” expressing abstract symbols.

In this study I looked for the presence of what Moscovi calls language of observation as the main contents in the Sardinian websites and the language of logic as something being transmitted: symbolic meanings such as visual communication through flagging and other built and re-built forms of imagery which were to be found in two different kind of websites: those authored by activists and those authored by young people such as Codd.org etc. In examining the presence of Sardinian language I have treated the data as written text, not much different from daily newspapers. On the other hand I think the power of evocation linked to visual and iconic use of Sardinian symbol should be adequately analysed. The groups who authors or surf the net represent an ongoing process of production and utilization of representations and relations. It is hard to define as non-Sardinian a site such as codd.org which on the one hand features less written contents in the Sardinian language but on the other hand includes much visual communication grounded on many different aspects of Sardinian identity.

As far as verbal or written verbal communication is concerned I can say there are not many websites wholly developed in the Sardinian language but if we did not consider verbal or written communication as the best means of communication and knowledge we should find interesting narratives which deal with the shaping and re-shaping of Sardinian identity of our time.

Table 1 : Questionnaire

**Internet & The Minority Languages
Pilot Case Study: Sardinian & the Net**

Questionnaire :
Your Age ? Gender ? M F

1. Which year of study are you enrolled in?:

1. I
2. II
3. III
4. IV
5. V
6. Repeating one of the years above.
7. Other ?

2. How often do you surf the net?: On a Lickert scale please rank it from 0 to 4

1. Everyday or nearly everyday (4)
2. More than once a week (3)
3. Once a week (2)
4. Once a month (1)
5. Less than once a month (0)

3. How frequently do you surf to consult the following sites:

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Sardinian chat rooms | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 2Web Communities in the Sardinian language | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 3Sardinian on-line libraries | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 4Sardinian on-line trading | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Sardinian language E-learning/Distant learning | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 6.TV News or TV in Sardinian language through the Internet | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |

4. How frequently did you "bump" into these sites:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sardinian chat rooms | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 2. Sardinian Web Communities | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 3. Sardinian on-line libraries | | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Sardinian on-line trading | | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Sardinian language E-learning/Distant learning | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 6. Sardinian newspapers or Video News by Internet | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 7. Sardinian culture | | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

5. Do you remember any of the Sardinian sites you surfed whether on purpose or by chance? If so can you name and rank them in order of importance for you?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- other _____

6. Regarding these sites, can you please categorise their target audiences, their prime purposes and their creators?

6.1. Target of the sites you have encountered (from 0 to 4)

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Young people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| b) Middle aged | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c) Elderly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

6.2. Prime Purposes of the sites you have visited

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Sardinian Regional Politics | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b) Tourism/promoting holidays | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| c) Sardinian Music files sharing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| d) Comix-cartoons | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e) Environment defense | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| f) Sardinian Archeology | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| g) Sardinian History | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h) Linguistics | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i) Cooking | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j) Sardinian traditional recipes | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| K) Sardinian merchandising | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l) Sardinian Sport | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m) Other, which? _____ | | | | | | |

6.3) What in your opinion, is the Prime Purpose of the creators of these sites you have most frequently encountered?

7. What were the best research engines for getting access to the Sardinian sites?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Other _____

8. Which is the language you use predominantly when you surf the web? Please give your answers on a scale from 0 to 4

1. English	0	1	2	3	4
2. Japanese	0	1	2	3	4
3. German	0	1	2	3	4
4. Chinese	0	1	2	3	4
5. French	0	1	2	3	4
6. Spanish	0	1	2	3	4
7. Russian	0	1	2	3	4
8. Italian	0	1	2	3	4
9. Portuguese	0	1	2	3	4
10. Korean	0	1	2	3	4
11. Other : write which	0	1	2	3	4

9. On Sardinian Language, can you please answer the following questions (Can there be language revitalisation without standardisation? Please answer on a scale where: 4 = I totally agree; 3 = I quite agree; 2 = I don't agree very much; 1 = I disagree somewhat; and 0 = I do not agree at all):

1. Standardization of written language	0	1	2	3	4
2. Standardization of spoken language	0	1	2	3	4
3. Standardization for both of them	0	1	2	3	4
4. It's better to have none	0	1	2	3	4

10. If you speak Sardinian please answer the following

1. Is it the language that you actually speak in the home/family? Yes No

2. If so, to what extent ?(Please answer on a scale from 0 and 4) 0 1 2 3 4

11. Do you use Sardinian for

1. E-mailing	0	1	2	3	4
2. Chatting on the net	0	1	2	3	4
3. Both of the above mentioned	0	1	2	3	4

=====

Thank you very much

Table 2: Chat and Mailing in the Sardinian language

A

Chat Girls 15.9%

Chat Boys 22.7%

Boys who chat in the Sardinian language at least once in a while are 42.7 more than the girls.

Mailing Boys 20.4%

Mailing Girls 11.4%

In this small group the boys who mail in the Sardinian language at least once in a while are 79% more than the girls

B GIRLS: surf the Net almost exclusively in the Italian language (95.5%)

BOYS(90%)

C

GIRLS surf the Net exclusively in the English language=0%

BOYS 4.5%

D

GIRLS surf the net in the English language as well as in the Italian language 18.2%

BOYS 31.8%

Boys who surf the net in English as well as in Italian are 74.7% more than the girls

E

GIRLS surf the net in the English language a bit less than in the Italian language 27.3%

BOYS 40.9%

F

GIRLS surf the net only in the Italian language=18.2%

BOYS 13.6%

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