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Minorities Formation in Italy

Introduction

For historical reasons Italy has always been characterized as a linguistically and culturally fragmented society.

Italy became a unified nation-state in 1860 after having been divided, for centuries, into small regional states and having been dominated, in successive times, by different European countries (France, Spain, and Austria). As a result, two phenomena have marked and still mark the country:

- the existence of important regional and local differences (from the cultural, but also economic and political point of view); the main difference is represented by the North-South divide (the question of the Mezzogiorno) that has strongly influenced Italian history and is still highly present in political debates; and
- the presence of numerous “linguistic” minorities (around five percent of the Italian population) that are very different from each other. In Italy, one commonly speaks of linguistic minorities: regional and local differences are expressed by the variety of languages and dialects that are still spoken in Italy. The term “ethnic” is scarcely used in Italy, even if it has been employed to define minorities together with the term “tribes” (see GEO special issue “the tribes of Italy”). When minorities speak of themselves, they speak in terms of populations, peoples, languages, and cultures.

The greatest concentration of minorities is in border areas in the northeast and northwest that have been at the centre of wars and controversies during the 20th century. Other minorities settled on the two main islands (where they can sometimes constitute a ma-

jority, such as the Sardinians). Small numbers of minorities from the Balkans or Greece are scattered in the southern part of the peninsula, where they settled centuries ago. In the central part of the country (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche) most minorities have disappeared with the exception of the Gypsy and Roma communities. The Roman Jews represent the largest minority in Rome. According to the definition of the European Union, all these populations represent regional minorities (RM). The EU definition makes a distinction between RM and IM, immigrant minorities. In Italy, immigrant minorities are a recent presence dating back to the 1980s.

In the Italian context, which institutions have dealt with cultural and linguistic difference? How? What has been the relationship between State institutions and minorities' institutions? What are the connexions between the cultural-linguistic and the political struggles? How has the Italian nation-state handled these issues? What measures have been taken by different government administrations? What kind of proposals have been drafted by various political forces? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to simultaneously consider the historical dimension and the present situation; the political dimension and the language issue; legislation and culture.

The historical dimension is the object of chapter one, where the oldest institutions defending cultural and linguistic difference are considered, from the *Agrupació Catalanista de Sardènyia*, founded in 1902, to the autonomist parties that were created after the end of World War II and the resistance movements that still exist: the "Union Valdôtaine", a political federalist movement established in 1945 in Val d'Aosta and the "South-Tyrolean Volkspartei" - SVP: a political party founded in 1945 in Bolzano-Bozen, in southern Tyrol.

The paper begins with the unification of the country and the development of the Italian nationalism in the period preceding World War I, through the phenomenon of irredentism. It considers the fascist period and the repression of any cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity in Italy. Only a few minorities' associations were able to survive during the fascist regime. Au-

tonomist and regional movements recovered during the Resistance (1943-45). The chapter analyses the complex relationships between regionalism, autonomies, federalism and the partisan movement, a topic that deserves further investigation.

The second chapter considers the Italian Constitution and the attention given to minorities in various articles. In the Constitution, language is the main element defining minorities, and as stated in Article 6, aimed at protecting linguistic minorities. The distinction between the majority and minority is based on a clear division between minority languages and dialects. The linguistic approach is embedded in the political point of view. According to the official linguistic theory, minority languages have no proximity to the Italian *Volgare* (the language that appeared in Italy circa the 10th century, spoken by the people – *vulgus*- in opposition to Latin) that is the origin of the Italian language and began to be written in the 10th century. The first document containing *Volgare* dates back to 960 A.D. and is the *Placito di Capua*, but there were a few texts in the “*koiné*” spoken in the Italian peninsula between 900 and 1200; the written language remained essentially Latin. According to linguistic theory, *Volgare* gave birth to the different dialects of the peninsula. Among them, Tuscan was later chosen to become the Italian, the language of the country. The main actors of the nation-building process, the *Risorgimento*, considered linguistic unification a central task of the new state: the school of unified Italy repressed dialects.

Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, a Jew from Gorizia (a town at the border with Slovenia, which, in Ascoli’s time, still belonged to the Austrian Empire) was the first Italian linguist in the 19th century. Ascoli scientifically studied the Italian language and its dialects, paying great attention to them as well to minority languages such as Friulan or Ladin. After Ascoli’s death, linguistic studies were scarce in Italy until the 1960s.

The *Linguistic History of United Italy*, by Tullio De Mauro was published in 1963 and it marks a new phase of linguistic studies. Tullio De Mauro maintains the distinction between the dialects as languages associated with Italian, because they are

descendants of Volgare (De Mauro: 1987) and the minority languages.

There are twelve minorities that are recognized and protected by the legislation: Albanian (Arbëresh), Catalan (Català), German (Deutsch), Greek (Grico), Slovenian (Slovensko) and Croatian (Hrvatski) populations as well as the French (Français), French-Provençal (Franco-provenzale), Friulan (Furlan), Ladin (Ladin), Occitan (Occitan) and Sardinian (Sardu) (Article 6 of the Constitution and Law no. 482, 1999, art. 2, subsection 1). These linguistic minorities are spread all over the country, both in the north and the south (see map). The law doesn't recognize all 21 minorities who speak different languages, according to Tullio De Mauro (Fenoglio: 1998, 1), including: Carinzian, Cimbri, Corsicans of the Maddalena Island (Sardinia), Jews of Rome, Gallo-Italici and Gallo-Romanzi in the south (small minorities speaking northern Italian dialects in the South), Mòchens, Occitans, Tabarchini, Walser (see maps).

According to estimates from the Ministry of the Interior, around five percent of the Italian population (around 2.5 million people) has a mother tongue that is not Italian (or from an Italian dialect). This datum doesn't take immigrants into account, but only territorial, regional or historical minorities.

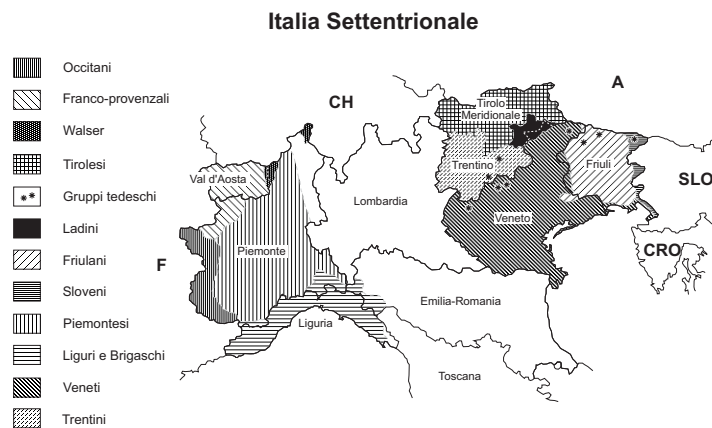


Table 1. Northern Italy

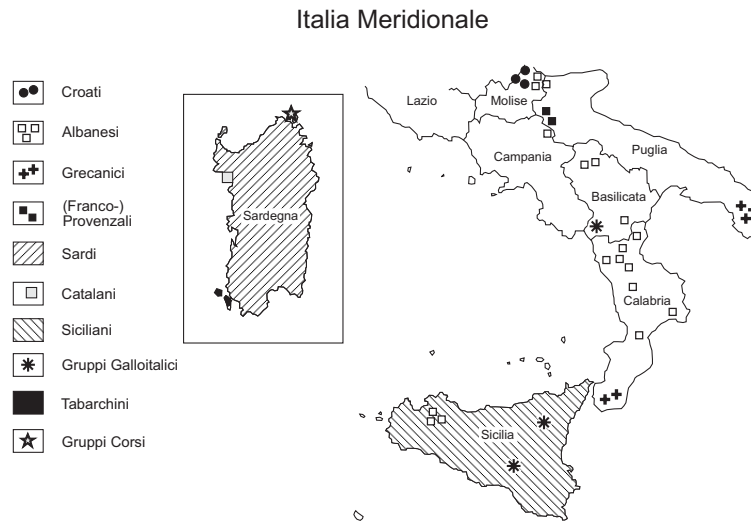


Table 2. Southern Italy

Source: De Mauro, *Italia delle Italie*, op.cit./BIVS

Besides the linguistic minorities, the presence of dialects that are still used in Italy is another important phenomenon. The linguistic division between dialects and minority languages proposed by De Mauro has not been accepted by various associations and cultural groups fighting for the recognition of their language.

Recently, the Northern League (Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania), a populist movement that has recently questioned the unity of the country in the name of federalism and the independence of the northern part of the country. Padania has as well claimed the recognition of language status to the "padania dialects". This demand is particularly explicit inside the Liga Veneta, which has reverted to the traditional use of the Venetian dialect inside the Republic of Venice. The toponymy has been changed in some northern cities administrated by the Northern League (Bergamo has, for example, become Berghem); some private schools now offer some subjects taught in the Padanian dialect. These new populist movements, using local identity

as a political argument and the recognized linguistic minorities' associations or political parties have completely different stories: in some areas they might have collaborated together, as it is the case in Friuli, but in the majority of the contexts there is no common platform, no shared view of the future. On the contrary, their relationships are characterized by reciprocal hostility. Moreover, they generally belong to opposing political alliances (the Centre-Right for the Northern League, the Centre-Left for the minorities' parties).

Chapter two analyses why the principles of Article 6 were not implemented until 1999. The institutional developments that have taken place after World War II have seen the formation of a hierarchy among minorities: some of them are more protected than others due to international treaties. Moreover, the establishment of five autonomous regions in the Italian Constitution signifies more consistent protection for these minorities than for those recognized through Article 6.

The chapter discusses the neglect among political forces (first of all the Christian Democrats) in developing a diverse, culturally and linguistically respectful policy. Following the fall of fascism, Italian nationalism, combined with the idea of a necessary modernisation didn't allow for a structural change in minority policies (for example an institutional and political development moving in the direction of federalism).

Chapter three considers the changes that have taken place in the 1960s and 1970s when a small minority cultural revival took place in Italy. During this period the majority of the institutions dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity were created. Their relationship to the Italian State and their role in the recognition of cultural diversity and the promotion of cultural pluralism in Italy are analysed, together with the first legal proposals for the implementation of Article 6 of the Constitution.

Chapter four considers regional legislation in the 1990s concerned with the protection of minority languages and analyses Law no. 482/1999 implementing Article 6 of the Constitution. It describes which institutions have acted for the implementation of the Law 482/1999 and the latest developments following the

approval of the Law. It also considers present developments and the debate on separatism and federalism, where the Northern League has played a major role. This question is very complex because of its political implications, since the development of the Northern League, formed for the defence of local identity, might be at odds supporting a populist political project.

Chapter five is dedicated to the institutions dealing with cultural diversity represented by immigrants. In the last 25 years, Italy has become an immigration destination: the immigrant population is around 2,600,000 persons. Immigrant minorities who arrived in the early 1980s are still in the process of settlement. The development of an immigration policy, especially in matter of integration, has been extremely slow in Italy. When the foundations for an integration policy was established by the previous centre-left government in 1998, the majority change in the general elections of 2001 prevented their implementation. In the five years of the centre-right government, institutional racism expressed by different governmental entities -especially the Northern League, has been combined with repressive immigration policies linking strictly stay permits and work. However, there exist different local policies developing multiculturalism and interculturalism at the local and town level. These institutions are analysed in chapter five.

In the same chapter, the question of religious minorities is considered. The Italian Constitution condemns religious discrimination. Religious minorities have established different forms of agreements with the Italian State: however religious minorities have been insignificant from the quantitative point of view (30,000 Jews and a few thousand Protestants) before the arrival of Muslim immigrants, who number about 800,000 (some sources claim one million). With the arrival of the Muslims, the question of cultural pluralism has become crucial. An agreement between the Italian State and Muslim organisations was finally reached in 2005.

A general analysis on the question of Italian identity, minorities and new immigration concludes the chapter and the report.

The research was mainly bibliographical, conducted mainly at the EURAC in Bozen, in the analysis of documents produced by the associations and institutions, and in thirty interviews with experts, members of associations or institutions dealing with cultural difference and minority issues. While conducting this research we followed an interdisciplinary approach, combining political science and sociology with linguistics and anthropology.

The study of all these documents allows for the interpretation of the different cultural, linguistic and political approaches to the multiple diversities existing in the national territory and towards minorities during the Italian nation-state building process (the Risorgimento) from the post-World War II period up until recent years. Behind these approaches lay opposing visions of the State (centralism, federalism, etc.) These approaches are reflected in the action of the various institutions promoting minority languages and cultures in their relationship with the nation-state and successive Italian governments.

Each chapter presents a description of the main institutions of which we have already discussed in a chronological manner, starting from the oldest ones. This has allows for an historical overview, which is the best way to describe the trajectory of Italian nationalism and of the forces that have tried to oppose it in the name of minorities. The institutions appear in the text by the date of their foundation: many of them still exist, although some have disappeared. The ones that represent continuity with the past, have, however, often modified their approaches and goals.

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Italy Until 1945.
The Oldest Institutions Defending Cultural and Linguistic
Minorities**

*The formation of the Italian Nation-State and Cultural Diversity
within the Italian Territory*

Italy became a unified nation-state in 1860, after having been divided for centuries into small regional states and dominated by different European countries. The process that led to the unification of the country, led by the Kingdom of Sardinia, in the Piedmont, and their Kings, the Savoy family, was called Risorgimento, and occurred during the first half of the 19th century until 1860 (what is considered the complete unification of the country within the natural borders, was completed in 1918, when Trento and Trieste became part of Italy).

As a consequence this complex history, the Italian peninsula was characterized by:

- the existence of important regional and local differences (from the cultural, but also economic and political perspectives); and
- the presence of numerous linguistic “historical” minorities very different one from the other.

The promoters of the Risorgimento were aware of these differences, but the proposed solutions expressed opposing views of Italy’s future: besides the opposition between monarchy and republic, which divided the supporters of the Kingdom of Savoy and the followers of Mazzini, it was also a question of a centralised state or federation. The federal model, proposed mainly by republican Carlo Cattaneo, wanted to give a political expression to the cultural differences between different regions in the country. In the end, the nation-state conception that prevailed was an expression of the ruling class dating from the first Kingdom of Italy in 1860. The Risorgimento created a centralised monarchic state, with a common education system and a strong national bu-

reaucracy. The linguistic diversity existing in the peninsula was not considered part of the Italian cultural heritage.

The choice of a centralised monarchic state was not the result of a general mass movement pushing towards cultural and linguistic homogenisation: it was the idea of a few patriots and the will of the Piedmontese ruling class that had led the Risorgimento, militarily supported by some scholars and intellectuals. Although different components of the Italian people took part in the nation-building process, but lower classes remained quite indifferent:

In principle, the unification of Italy was actualised thanks to a limited minority of bourgeoisie, liberals and conservatives, of republican and democratic professionals and intellectuals, while the rural masses and the citizens' populace, oppressed by a centuries-old poverty and ignorance, certainly did not participate in the action of unification, with due exceptions (A. Camera, R. Fabietti:1976, 208).

Consequently, the choice of a centralist state was guided by the principles behind the Kingdom of Sardinia, and it consisted in extending the Piedmontese administrative, political, juridical and educational system to the regions of Italy which were progressively annexed to the Italian Kingdom through referendums.

According to Toso, this was the early conception of the Italian nation, disrespectful of minorities, a concept that would influence Italian policy in the following years. On the basis of this idea, for the first ruling class of Italy, there existed multiple internal differences: regional differences, linguistic differences, and the question of the south. These elements of division had to be overcome as soon as possible. Camillo Benso, count of Cavour, one of the main forces behind the Italian Risorgimento, declared that bringing harmony between the north and the south would have cost as much as a war with Austria or the conquest of Rome. One of the first Italian ministers of the new Italian kingdom, Massimo D'Azeglio, stated in 1861: *Fatta l'Italia bisogna*

fare gli italiani (having made Italy, we now have to make the Italians). The army, the education system, and the bureaucracy were considered to be the instruments that would linguistically and culturally unify the population.

Language was considered the main instrument of Italianisation. The issue of the language in Italy was dominated by the ideas of writer and linguist Alessandro Manzoni, who defended the absolute necessity of spreading the Tuscan-Florentine language everywhere in Italy by all means possible, for example, sending Florentine teachers to every corner of Italy. Manzoni also supported the normative idea to establish the written practice of Italian on the basis of the oral language of the Florentine upper classes (Goebel: 1994).

In a country where the use of dialects were very much alive and used by 97.5 percent of the population (De Mauro: 1986, 43), the school engaged in a battle against the local dialects.

In spite of the work of Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, the most important Italian linguistic of the 19th century who supported the pedagogical value of the coexistence of national and regional dialects, the centralised approach prevailed. Consequently, the term dialect ended up assuming a negative connotation and the minority languages ignored.

The choice of centralization somehow contradicted the historical experience of the Kingdom of Sardinia that led the unification process. This Kingdom had different minorities in its territory, such as the Walser, who spoke German, and the Catalan-speaking minority in Alghero and was also characterized by multilingualism: in Piedmont, the population spoke French, Italian, and Occitan; in Sardinia Sardinian and Catalan. During its history, the Kingdom of Sardinia had showed different attitudes before local autonomies. It had granted large administrative autonomy to the Val d'Aosta valley and to Sardinia until 1848 (when a sort of constitution was introduced, the Statuto Albertino). It had adopted the Italian language only in 1848 and had accepted bilingualism, French-Italian, in the parliament. The Statuto Albertino in fact stated: Art. 62. - The Italian language is the official language of the Houses. However, the use of French

with the members originating from the countries where it is used is optional, or in responding to the latter. (Id. art. 62).

As a result of the unification of Italy, even the minorities in the Kingdom of Sardinia saw their autonomy reduced: in the Val d'Aosta valley, French was progressively eliminated from school, a fact that provoked the reaction of the population and the intellectuals.

The first institutions for the defence of minority cultures were founded in areas that had been part of the Savoy monarchy or the Kingdom of Sardinia. The first one was founded by the Catalans of Sardinia, influenced by the revival of the Catalan culture in Catalonia. The second one was founded in the Val d'Aosta, where, as we have noted, the passage from the Kingdom of Sardinia to the Kingdom of Italy had meant a worsening of the position of the French language and previous autonomy. In 1902 the *Agrupació Catalanista de Sardenya* was founded in Alghero. In 1909, the *Ligue Valdotaïne pour la Protection de la Langue Française* was founded in Aosta. Both organizations had mainly cultural goals, but the League, which answered to the receding status of the French language in unified Italy, turned soon to political activities.

A specific consideration must be applied to religious minorities. The Savoy Kings had showed a certain tolerance in front of the Valdese minority (a protestant group), who, originally confined to some valleys, had later been able to settle anywhere within the Kingdom. After the unification, the long conflict with the Pope during the *Risorgimento* led to a rugged secularism in the newly born state. For this reason, religious minorities enjoyed the longest period of tolerance and recognition in all of Italian history.

In the first sixty years of the Kingdom of Italy, the existence of internal minorities was taken into account in the censuses. After the unification, in 1861, the first census documented the existence of some minorities, trying to understand their demographics (Census 1861). Albanians, Catalans, Greeks and Germans (G. Sepe: 2001, 68). The German-speaking minority was considered one unique minority: in fact, under this minority, we should

include at least four linguistic sub-groups (Cimber, Mochen, Walser, South-Tyrolean).

The first census did not consider all the ethno-linguistic minorities, who were living in the country at the moment of unification. It didn't mention the Franco-Provencal of the Val d'Aosta and the Occitan-speaking people of the Valadas of Piedmont at the French border; it didn't mention the Sardinians; the Romany or Gypsies. The omission was not repaired by the following three censuses that continued to count the same limited group of minorities in 1901, 1911 and 1921. The later censuses, during the fascist regime and the Republic, ignored minorities.

The case of Sardinia. Sardinians and Catalans.

The history of Sardinia goes back to the Neolithic Era: let us just hint at the nuraghic civilisation and the old cultural unity of the island. Sardinians resisted the occupation by the Romans, who could never completely assimilate them. After the decline of the Roman Empire, various dominators followed: Vandals, Ostrogoths and Byzantines. They alternated up to the birth of four independent Sardinian states known as Giudicati: Torres, Gallura, Arborea and Cagliari.

The Sardinian language appeared around the 10th century, through a particular development of Latin, imported into the island during seven centuries of Roman domination. Old Sardinian texts date back to that period: more than twenty papers and as many administrative documents produced in the 11th 12th centuries have been discovered and published:

But the most surprising thing is that these texts prove the existence of a primitive Sardinian Koine. The Sardinian Koine, unfortunately dispersed due to the bitter history of Sardinia, is much earlier than the Italian Koine. (S. Salvi: 1975,176-177).

During the early Middle Ages, Sardinia, under the Pope's patronage since the disintegration of Byzantine dominion, experi-

enced a golden age of independence, the time of the Giudicati. However, since the 12th century, it was occupied by the Italian marine republics of Pisa and Genoa. In the 13th century, under pressure of from Emperor Federico II, the Pope formally established the Kingdom of Sardinia. The new kingdom should have been inherited by the emperor's son, but the throne remained vacant. In 1295, Pope Bonifacio VIII, hoping to drive out the Catalan-Aragonese and to restore the island to the Angevins, left the throne of Sardinia to the Catalan king of Aragon, provided that he would abandon Sicily. This decision resulted in more than a century of wars and conflicts between the Catalan-Aragonese, newly entitled landholders of the island, and the Pisans, the Genoese and the Sardinians who opposed them.

Alfonso of Aragon began conquering the island in 1323. The Catalan language has been present in the area since 1353, when the city of Alghero (then a Genoese colony) was taken by Admiral Bernat de Cabrera. In 1354, the Catalans officially settled down in the city and started to transform it into a sentry of their military power. Living conditions of the non-Catalans became intolerable: they couldn't hold public positions, practise any profession, and work as tradesmen. The local population did not passively accept the new conditions and made frequent protests and rebellions. Meanwhile, the repopulation of the island was implemented by importing native elements from Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Kingdom of Valencia. This immigration was further fostered by *guidatici* (safe-conducts granting impunity for possibly perpetrated crimes) and by various exculpations for those who, guilty of lesser offences, were ready to move to *L'Alguer* (the place of algae). The Catalan presence was especially reinforced after 1372 when repeated revolts led King Pietro il Cerimonioso to expel all the Genoese and Sardinians from the city.

Since then, *L'Alguer* has been completely Catalan, preserving this characteristic for the past few centuries. The immigrants dominated the city, imposing Catalan as the official language in Alghero and in the whole north Sardinia. The use of Catalan continued to be prosperous during the centuries of the Aragonese

and then Spanish domination upon Sardinia. This was also favoured by intense commercial exchange with the motherland and by the particular status of the city, which – for a long time – represented a kind of separated body with regard to the hinterland. The immigration contributions from the adjacent territories were modest and linguistically absorbed.

The outbreak of large epidemics in the 17th century reduced the Catalan population and the city was repopulated by new Sardinian immigrants who inherited the Catalan language, customs and culture. Thus, L'Alguer remained Catalan.

In 1720, Sardinia fell under the control of the Piedmonteses. In the second half of the 18th century, Italian was imposed as the official language of the island. The Savoy domination of Sardinia rendered L'Alguer (which officially became Alghero) less and less an island within the island. Although the Catalan language and culture progressively diminished under the Italian State, the Catalan linguistic and cultural traditions survived, even after the unification of Italy, becoming the first minority who created institutions to preserve its language and culture: the Agrupació Catalanista de Sardenya was founded in Alghero in 1902.

The origin of this association can be traced to the development of the Catalan “Renaixensa” during the second half of the 19th century. The Agrupació Catalanista de Sardenya was founded by Catalan scholar, Eduard Toda who had settled in Alghero. The association had mainly cultural goals: in opposition to the Catalans in Spain, Alghero Catalans had no political ambitions as a group.

This is not the case of the Sardinians, among whom a cultural and political Sardinianism took hold. Between the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sardinians, while defending the specificity of their language and their ancient traditions, began to claim political and administrative independence.

Under the Piedmontese rule, Sardinia had maintained an autonomous Parliament and status between 1720 and 1847. The formation of a unified Sardinian-Piedmontese parliament (in view of the Statuto Albertino) did not improve the living conditions of the population, which became even worse, due to

the imposition of new export taxes on local products that were traditionally exported to France.

Popular reaction to the misery and the deterioration of the local economic activities encouraged banditism, while a political Sardinianism gained a foothold among intellectuals and the politicians. A group of young intellectuals created a Lega contro il protezionismo, considered the embryo of the Sardinian Party of Action (PsdA). During World War I, the Brigata Sassari, a group of soldiers and officers from Sardinia contributed to the development of a new Sardinianism.

After World War I, the Sardinian autonomist movement developed through the creation of the Sardinian Party of Action, founded in 1921, a party that was left of the socialists and right of the communists, revolutionary, aware of the class struggle, and socialist (Gatterer: 1999, 973). The Partito Sardo d'Azione was repressed during the fascist regime. Its last Congress was held in Macomere in 1925; the party was forced to become clandestine until 1943.

The Sardinian autonomist movement looked at the Catalan experience in Catalonia as a model. In 1922, the Partito Sardo d'Azione published Greetings to the Catalan Brothers:

We too dream of a renewed Sardinia in the spiritual and economic independence [...] We too want to create a Sardinian thought, a Sardinian soul, a Sardinian life [...] Autonomists look at Catalonia with a lot of affection.

The oldest cultural and political institutions of minorities in Italy: from cultural goals to political action

The oldest organisation defending the culture and the language of a minority is the Agrupació Catalanista de Sardenya, founded in 1902 in Alghero by a Catalan scholar, Eduard Toda, under the influence of Catalan nationalism at the end of the century. The Catalans in Alghero were, however, too negligible to constitute the political project that characterized the Catalan movement.

The action of the Agrupaciò was, consequently, cultural. It contributed, nevertheless, to mature the awareness of the specificity of the group in the Italian context and to the preservation of the culture and language. After more than one hundred years, Catalan is still spoken in Alghero and the associations are very lively. Additionally many other associations for the defence of the Catalan traditions have been founded, as we will see in the next chapters.

The Ligue Valdotaïne pour la protection de la Langue Française was founded in 1909 in order to protect the French language whose status had worsened in the unified Italian state. However, soon after the league started a political action claiming various forms of autonomy for the valley. After World War I, they sent a memorial to the Italian Minister of foreign affairs, Emanuele Orlando, who was in Paris at a peace conference requesting administrative decentralisation and cultural autonomy. With the arrival of fascism, the conflict with Italian power became much worse. The League officially ceased to exist in 1926, during fascism, when a new association, the Jeune Vallée d'Aosta went underground in order to avoid fascist persecutions.

Since its foundation in 1921, the "Partito Sardo d'Azione" (PSdA), is a coalition that represents 'all the Sardinians that democratically and pacifically fight for the sovereignty of the Sardinian People on its own earth and for its right to independence'. Even if the promotion, the maintenance and the diffusion of the sardista culture was one of the main goals of the party, the founders, Emilio Lussu and Camillo Bellini, considered themselves close to socialism and wanted to fight for justice and equality. The action of the party was important during fascism, the Resistance and after World War II.

The connection between cultural and political action appeared to be a character of the institutions representing different minorities. While the minorities in the newborn Italian state were beginning to fight for cultural and linguistic recognition, Italian minorities were still living in the Austrian Empire fighting not only for their rights, but also for the independence. They were also founding associations for the preservation of the

Italian language and culture, as in Trento, the Società Alpinisti Tridentini (S.A.T.) The paradox is that, in the same border area, while the Friulans claimed autonomy to the new Italian State, Italians claimed autonomy and independence to Austria. The eastern borders of Italy, area where different populations such as Italians, Germans, Slavonic, Friulans, and Ladins have lived together more or less in peace, witnessed the main theatre of slaughter during World War I. After the war, new territorial divisions brought the reunion of Italian minorities to Italy in addition to minorities who could not identify themselves with the Italian State.

Irredentism and minorities. The case of the Friuli.

We have seen that Toso considers the creation of a centralised Italian State as the inception of the Italian nation, disrespectful of minorities. The history of Italian nationalism is however quite complex. Other historians have established a distinction between two periods or ages in which different forms of Italian nationalism expressed themselves before World War I:

a) the Risorgimento period, the age of nation-building, would be inspired by “nationalitarian” ideas (“nazionalitario”), dominated by a universal idea of the nation inspired by 19th century liberalism, the fight for the independence of the Italian nation being associated to the liberal system of rights and freedoms; and

b) the period that followed unification, especially after 1870, would be an age of nationalism characterized by the attempt to expand beyond its borders in Europe (trying to conquer some territories where Italian-speaking populations were not the majority), and launching colonial wars in Africa (Galante Garrone: 1973). This nationalist ideology brought Italy into World War I, in order to expand the borders beyond the national territory, submitting German and Slavonic populations.

Italian nationalism was particularly strong in the years that preceded World War I, establishing the roots for fascism that de-

veloped after the end of the war. Various research projects have focused on the nationalist movements that developed in the first twenty years of the 20th century, ending up in fascism (Gaeta: 1981, Perfetti: 1977, Lill and Valsecchi: 1983).

Among these nationalist movements, a special place is occupied by Irredentism (from “non-redento”, unredeemable), a movement founded in Naples in 1877, whose official goal was to reunite the regions of Trento, Trieste and Gorizia at the eastern borders which were under Austrian control and where a part of the Italian-speaking population was in favour of annexation to Italy. In Trento, Trieste and Gorizia, still under Austrian domination, the irredentist movement was active through different patriotic societies such as the Società Alpina, shut down in 1872 and reopened as Società Alpinisti Tridentini (S.A.T.) on the model of the German Alpine Societies (Deutsche Alpenverein).

In Italy, in fact, the Irredentist movement had different political goals: its founders were radicals, members of the “historical left”, left members of parliament who opposed itself to the historical right, in power following unification. For the founders the movement was also considered a means of fighting any policy of rapprochement with Austria, wished by the right-ruled government. Radicals wanted instead to favour an alliance with France, the Latin sister, which, moreover, represented a policy of democratic republicanism, looked at with interest by radical Italian politicians. Some radicals considered themselves followers of Giuseppe Mazzini, an important Risorgimento character. These “Mazzinians” defended irredentism as a freedom movement against the colonial politics of the right-ruled government that was sending troops to colonize African countries. They were not pacifists: they were in favour of war against Austria. According to them, only through war could Italy find its place among nations. The idea that war could give Italy a position among the nations was shared by the historical right in power and particularly by the head of the government, Francesco Crispi, who considered war as an instrument for creating national identity and cohesion. It is interesting to notice that a representative of Italian nationalism such as Francesco Crispi was himself a member of a

minority, his family being Arberesh, a southern Italian Albanian. However, the historical right and Francesco Crispi preferred colonial adventures to the war against Austria.

The regions that irredentists wanted to unite the Trentino, Trento, the Venezia Giulia and a section of the Friuli, Val Canale and Carso, the larger part of this region having become part of Italy in 1866. The irredentist movement considered these areas Italian, but, in fact, these border-regions had a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic population. Different religions corresponded to the various multiethnic groups where there was a Catholic, Jewish, and Orthodox Christian presence.



Fig. 1 Friuli Venezia Giulia

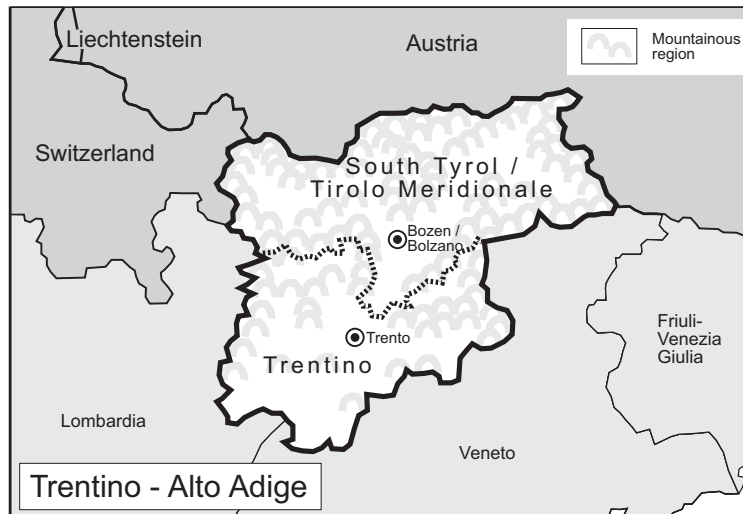


Fig. 2 Trentino Alto Adige

Leonardo Zanier, a Friulan author, describes the eastern borders of Italy that the Irredentist movement wanted to annex to Italy as:

Complex territory. Many languages that are spoken as well beyond the borders: military, state, language [...] borders that have changed at least ten times, Carinzia, Friul of the Hills, Cadore, Val Canale [...] Family names elaborate the complexity of the history and the diversity of the populations who settled in these valleys, for centuries building a community and communication models, so enchanting and efficient [...] Longobards (chei da Faida), Russians (chei dal Rus), Slavonic (chei dal Rus), German (di Mochin), Hungarian or Turks (dal Negro), Jewish (di Pasca or dal Ghet).

For the Irredentist movement that wanted to Italianise the region, this diversity was irrelevant. In fact, Trento, Trieste and Gorizia, still under Austrian domination, the greater part of the Irredentist movement was democratic and mainly voiced the demands of 800,000 Italian-speaking people. The idea of considering the territories where different linguistic and ethnic groups

(Italians, Germans, Slovenians and Croats, Jews, Friulans, Ladinians) lived together as Italian, presented the potential risk of future oppression and discrimination.

Of the 800,000 Italians or Italian-speaking inhabitants, only a minority spoke Italian. The majority of them spoke dialects (such as the Venetian dialect in Friuli or Trentino) or minority languages such as Friulan.

While the Irredentist movement developed in Friuli divided between a larger Italian part and a smaller Austrian part, an autonomist movement, with political and cultural goals appeared claiming autonomy to the Kingdom of Italy (without any success) and promoting studies and research on the Friulan language. Friulan had been recently recognized as a Romanic language, different from Italian, thanks to the work of the Graziadio Isaia Ascoli . In 1873, Ascoli had written the *Saggi Ladini*, in which he analysed the specificity of the Friulan, the Ladin and the Rotoroman (spoken in Switzerland) languages.

The phonic, morphological and lexical peculiarities of the Furlan reflects historical original events, that is the autonomy enjoyed until 1420 by the Land of Friuli under the political-religious administration of the Patriarchs of Aquileia. (interview with Leonardo Zanier, writer, Associazione Paese diffuso, Coneglians)

In fact, in 1077, Emperor Henry the IV had given the county of Friuli to the patriarch of Aquileia. The county had an autonomous Parliament, where the Church, the aristocracy, the towns and the rural communities were represented. Friulan was the language of the county: the first written documents appeared in the 13th century. This autonomy lasted until 1420, when Friuli became part of the Republic of Venice.

The use of Furlan by the Church contributed to the growth of its prestige. For this reason, the annexation of Friuli to the Republic of Venice and, in limited part, to Austria in 1530 ended further developments of Furlan cultural specificity, but it didn't destroy the original language and traditions. Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century, Furlan was mainly spoken in the rural areas, while in the towns it was more common to speak Venetian

dialects. The work of Ascoli meant a re-discovery of the past and encouraged other authors, like Ugo Pellis to continue this line of research. Pellis published the results of his linguistic research in 1907 and 1910.

Ascoli's research enhanced interest for the Friulan language among the local elites and the general population. Friulan associations for the defence of their language and culture are among the oldest in the country. Ugo Pellis became the first President of the Società Filologica Friulana established in Gorizia on 23 November 1919, just after the incorporation into Italy, by the local intellectuals' initiative. The overall objective of the Società Filologica Friulana was to preserve the Furlan language and conduct research on the language and culture.

The first article of the Society states:

the goal of the society is the promotion and the diffusion of the Furlan language through the study of philology, history, art, music, popular tradition, the promotion of literature and theatre, the restoration and valorisation of cultural heritage, archaeological, ethnographic, bibliographical [...]" (Giovanni Frau, Società Filologica Friulana).

In opposition to other organisations, the society succeeded in remaining out of politics (necessary in order to survive the fascist regime). The society still exists, its central headquarters is in Udine with satellite offices in Gorizia, Pordenone and Tolmezzo. It is one of the oldest institutions in Italy promoting cultural diversity. Its activity was supported as well by other associations such as Scuole Libere Furlane and the Clapis Culturali, groups promoting the defence and the use of the Furlan language. Important ethno-linguistic surveys brought the realization of the Italian Linguistic Atlas, of the "Historic Furlan Ethno-linguistic Atlas", as well as the establishment of the Centro di Toponomastica" (Udine: 1991). Together they provide the largest archive and reference for all research activities in this field.

Other activities include training courses and materials for primary and secondary school teachers, Furlan language courses, in addition to three magazines published periodically. It also has a library and an online catalogue.

The Conservatorio Tomadini is an older institution that was essential for the diffusion of Friulan culture, as far as music is concerned. The first public school of music in Udine was opened in 1826: a new association named Società Filarmonico-Drammatica Udinese, gathers, together with the components of the most important local aristocratic families, the lovers of music and theatre. In the first triennium the authorities didn't succeed in starting music lesson programmes and the only activity developed by the association was the organisation of parties, philharmonic and amateur drama; in 1830 they decided to change the denomination of the society in the institute, observing the primary purpose of the association, that of musical education. In 1831, after a contest, both a music and violin teacher were finally appointed: Giuseppe Magagnini (Montecarotto, 1802-1885) and Giacomo De Sabbata (Cividale del Friuli, 1800 - Udine, 1840).

In 1837 the school changed its name to Istituto Filarmonico Udinese; In 1838 Francis Comencini (Mantua, 1792 - Udine, 1864) became manager of the school. After his death Antonio Traversari and Alberto Giovannini become the directors (Brazzano, Gorizia 1842 - Milan, 1903).

From 1876 the Commune of Udine assumed the direct management of the school favouring the study of the wind instruments for the formation of the city band. The school renewed itself radically after World War I, with manager Mario Mascagni (St. Miniato, Pisa, 1882 - Bolzano, 1948). In 1922 the musician Jacopo Tomadini joined (Cividale del Friuli, 1820-1883) and with a 1925 decree it was recognized as a musical institute. In 1981 the definitive transformation in National Conservatory of Music enabled the institute to become the most important musical institution in Friulana.

World War I and Minorities: the tragedy of the borders

The Irredentist movement contributed to creating the justification for Italy to enter World War I. In 1915, Italy entered World War I with the official purpose of conquering Trento, Trieste and Gorizia. In fact, through the secret London Pact (26th of April 1915) between Italy and the Allies (Great Britain and France), Italy's north-eastern borders were to expand after World War I to South-Tyrol, Trentino, Venezia-Giulia, Istria, some of the northernmost Croatian islands, Slovenian Carso and the upper Isonzo area.

On the 29th of October 1915, Austria asked for the end of the war and on the 3 November 1915 Italian soldiers entered Trento, while the bersaglieri reached Trieste. One of the most important scholars on minorities in Italy, Claus Gatterer asserts the events of the end of World War I as the imperialist obsessions of a nationalist Italy that had pushed itself beyond its national territory, submitting hundreds of thousands of German-speaking (the South-Tyrolean) populations and Slavs.

In 1918, after the defeat of Austria, South-Tyrol – comprising Trentino and the Ladin valleys – was annexed to Italy. Austria had been defeated and there was no possibility for this country to defend the German-speaking populations of South-Tyrol. The German-language population desperately tried not to finish in a linguistically Italian State and asked for self-determination. In October 1918, the mayors of the Dolomite Ladin municipalities gathered in Vipiteno and, in the name of their linguistic group, also asked for the right to decide about their own political destiny. The destiny of the German South-Tyrolean was indeed the destiny of the Dolomite Ladins. The treaty of St. German divided Tyrol into three sections. Northern and eastern Tyrol remained Austrian. Southern Tyrol entered into the Kingdom of Italy. Justice was done to the Italian Trentino, but this justice was denied to the Germans and Ladins (S. Salvi: 1975, 134).

In October 1918, the mayors of the Dolomite Ladin municipalities gathered in Vipiteno and, in the name of their linguistic group, also asked for the right to decide on their own political

destiny. Their appeal was very explicit: "We are not Italians, we refused to be it from immemorial time and we do not intend to be Italians in the future either". The destiny of the German South-Tyroleans was indeed the destiny of the Dolomite Ladinians. The treaty of St. German broke Tyrol into three parts. The northern and eastern Tyrol remained to Austria. Southern Tyrol passed to the Kingdom of Italy. Justice was done of the Italian Trentino, but this justice was denied to the Germans and Ladinians." (S. Salvi, 1975, p. 134).

The situation was more complex in relationship to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which was strongly supported by the Americans, the British and the French. After World War I, Italy annexed some entirely Slovenian areas, situated beyond the borders of the former Austrian littoral. This fact aroused opposite reactions in the local populations: while Italians welcomed the new situation, it was a real trauma for Slovenes and Croats, who were engaged for the national unity and who, at the end of the war, declared themselves favourable to the emergent Yugoslav State. Indeed, these communities already experienced the political acculturation in the multinational Habsburg State and now aspired to the unification with their motherlands: for them it was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, founded in 1918.

The new borders fixed by the London Pact, cut one fourth of the Slovenian people from their national stock: from 271,305 (according to the 1921 Italian census) to 327,230 people (1910 Austrian census). The increased number of Slovenes in Italy did not alter the situation of the Slovenes living in the Venetian Slavia (ca. 34,000, according to the 1921 census); inasmuch as this region has been a part of the Kingdom since before, the local Slovenes were considered already assimilated and consequently remained without any recognised national right.

Nevertheless, the Italian government, even if within a general plan of nationalisation of the annexed territories, at first allowed the Slovenian minority to renew its national delegations and schools in mother tongue, indispensable for developing the Slovenian national group. The project – taken seriously into account by the pre-fascist government – of granting the annexed

territories with certain autonomy, alike to that enjoyed in the Habsburg period, would have led to a better relationship between the minorities and the State. The Italian Parliament also voted for policies aimed at the protection of minorities.

However, the inflexibility of Italian and Yugoslav delegations at the Paris Conference on the border definition delayed the political stabilisation and sharpened national contrasts in the occupied regions, where non-Italian communities often represented the majority. The Italian administration showed itself unprepared in front of delicate national and political problems emerging in those territories. Between 1918-20, this combined with the image of Slavs as enemies, coined in the recently concluded war, pushed the Italian authorities of occupation to adopt oppressive measures, in particular towards those who manifested their will to be annexed to Yugoslavia. There followed restrictive actions, penalising the resumption of cultural and political life of the Slovene population: dissolution of local administrations and national councils, limitations of the freedom to associate, detention of ex-Austrian soldiers, internment and expulsion, especially of intellectuals. In parallel, the authorities of occupation fostered the display of Italian signifiers, so as to offer a politically Italian image of the region in the negotiations for the new border definition.

The formation of the mutilated victory myth and the occupation of Fiume accomplished by Gabriele D'Annunzio (1919) prepared the ground for the imminent affirmation of the "fascism of frontier", which set itself up as a defender of Italian interests on the eastern border, attracting a great deal of local Italian nationalists towards the anti-Slavism combined with the anti-Bolshevism.

Many Slovenes and Croats, trusting the principles of social justice and national equality, joined the socialists and made revolutionary components prevail inside this movement. This was the excuse for the fascists to coin the neologism "slavocomunista" (Slav-communist), which additionally fed the nationalist extremism. The crisis of the liberal state offered a free ground to the fascist aggressiveness throughout Italy, which in occupied

territories was even harsher, owing to a diffused hostility towards the local minorities. Thus, the accidents in Split (Croatia), which resulted in both Italian and Yugoslav victims, and the fire in the Narodni Dom, the seat of the Slovenian organisations, in Trieste in July 1920, were only the first cases of a long series of violent acts.

The Rapallo Treaty (1920), signed by the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, had a negative effect on the subsequent political development between two states: the Treaty fully embraced the Italian demands and cut away one abundant fourth of the area considered by the Slovenes their own "ethnic territory". This outcome was due to the favourable position of Italy in the negotiations, having come out from World War I as a winner, being reconfirmed in its status of "great power". Italy was not obliged to respect the Slovenian and Croatian minorities; it guaranteed – on the contrary – the protection of the Italian minority in Dalmatia. Still, some thousands of Italians moved from this region to the Kingdom of Italy.

Despite expectations of both Italian and Yugoslav negotiators that the Rapallo Treaty would have laid the foundations of good relations and a mutual cooperation between two states, things did not go that way: two years later, fascism came into power in Italy. An aggressive anti-Yugoslav foreign policy began.

Fascism and minorities

The Kingdom of Italy had done nothing for the historical minorities living in the national territory nor had it given an answer to the demands of autonomy of Sardinians and Friulans. After World War I, democratic Italy was incapable of dealing with the minorities that had been annexed and didn't respect the engagements taken with them, especially with the Slavonic minorities. If, under the Kingdom of Italy, the condition of minorities was not favourable, the situation became far worse under fascism, which came into power in 1922.

Fascism considered minorities as conquered enemy peoples, according to autonomist leader of the Val d'Aosta, Emile Chanoux. Fascism represented the most nationalist experience of the Italian nation-state.

Fascism was a consequence of many factors: economic changes, postwar crisis, fear of a proletarian revolution. It is not the place here to analyse the causes of fascism. Thousands of books have been written. Our interest is in understanding the relationship between minorities and the nation-state as well as the institutions that have developed cultural, linguistic and political pluralism. Fascism meant a worsening in the conditions of minorities in Italy. However, its action had some continuity with the previous regime. Fascism's ideological roots go back to the nationalism that the governments both of the historical right and of the historical left had promoted through colonial wars and, later, through intervention in World War I. The pacifist opposition of the socialists had not been strong enough to counteract mainstream nationalism.

Particularly, during World War I, different forms of nationalism found a common purpose. The future head of fascism, Benito Mussolini, a former socialist who had protested against the colonial wars, like the Libya war in 1911, was in favour of World War I. So was Gabriele D'Annunzio, a poet, famous for his love stories. D'Annunzio was to become the official poet of fascism. The ideology of exaltation of war as an instrument for creating national identity (which had existed already under Francesco Crispi, during the second half of the 19th century) became part of the fascist ideology. Understanding the continuity of Italian nationalism is extremely important in order to understand the relationship between the state and its minorities.

Fascism's programme was nationalist, centralist, authoritarian, anti-democratic and expansionist, meaning hostile to all neighbouring countries, to which it had territorial claims. Fascism completely parted ways with what was left of the liberal ideas of the Risorgimento: we can even say that the republican, federalist component of the Risorgimento had completely failed or had been defeated by a nationalist conservative social bloc.

The Italian nation-state for which Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cataneo had fought for had never seen the light. What had been created was a nationalist monarchy, which had oppressed the internal minorities, provoking reactions such as banditism in Sardinia and in southern Italy (reactions that had been repressed with blood), launching imperialist colonialist adventures against the peaceful populations of Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia and Libya, that had cost thousand of lives, had expelled millions of citizens through emigration and, at the same time, had sacrificed hundred thousand of lives during World War I for annexing 800,000 Italian-speaking people and oppressing thousands of Slavonic, German and Ladin populations.

The tragic outcome of the first sixty years of unified Italy – sixty years characterized by repression against banditism, a war against Austria, colonial wars, repression against the working class, huge emigration movements (up to one million people left Italy in 1912) and the Great War –, was, in fact, fascism.

Fascism gave a new sense to the myth of Rome (in fact “Italianism” and “Romanism” were superimposed in the fascist mythology), which was used as a justification for an imperialist ideology, guided by a strong desire to build a new empire with extended borders from the natural ones of pre-war nationalism (and nationalist irredentism) to those of the old Roman Empire. The myth of empire implied imperialistic and colonial ambitions: during fascism, Italy initiated aggressive wars against different countries such as Ethiopia and Albania while reinforcing the repression in its former colonies like Libya, Eritrea and Somalia.

Fascist policies promoted a total nationalistic ideology in education and in every sector of social life. This ideology needed centralism and opposed itself to minorities, who had to disappear. Together with nationalism, racist ideas became part of the official fascist culture (e.g. those of the criminologist Cesar Lombroso from the 1870s).

The legislation promoted repression against the minorities and their languages, forced “Italianisation” of areas where the German-speaking, the Slovenian-speaking, the French-speaking populations lived, and racially discriminatory laws introduced

in 1938 aimed at the Jewish population based on the Nazi model. In opposition to a “revisionist” opinion in Italy that tends to defend the alliance with Nazi-Germany was a direct consequence of the fascist ideology and policies.

During Fascism, speaking a minority language became a crime. Such an attitude concerned especially minority groups such as the Germans of the South-Tyroleean region and the Slovenes of the Venezia-Giulia, living in border areas that had been at the centre of the Irredentist movement, the ideological support for World War I.

The worst pages of these repressive policies were written in occupied South-Tyrol, where the Italianization of the territory through massive immigration was followed by the “ethnic cleansing” of the German-speaking minority (Steininger: 2003). The alliance with Nazi-Germany after the annexing of Austria (the 1938 Anschluss) forced the German-speaking population to choose Italy or Germany, provoking a mass migration leading to tragic outcomes (the German-speaking South-Tyrolean were sent to the eastern territories recently occupied by the Reich). This policy of Italianisation and ethnic cleansing also concerned the Ladins of South-Tyrol.

Slovenians were also victims of attempts of forced assimilation. Slovenian and Croatian institutions renewed in Venezia-Giulia after World War I were progressively eliminated; numerous cultural, social, professional, youth, sport associations, economic and financial institutions, council houses, libraries, etc. were abolished; schools were Italianized, teachers transferred to the inland of the kingdom, dismissed or constrained to emigrate; their access to the public employment was limited. Political parties and press became illegal, the possibility of any delegation was excluded, the public use of their languages forbidden. Slovenian and Croatian minorities stopped existing as a political force in Italy. Their exiled representatives continued to operate through the Congress of the European nationalities, and co-operated thus in preparing policies aimed at solving minority issues.

Fascist denationalizing action went beyond the political persecution of minorities, trying to realize the “ethnic drainage”

(bonifica etnica) of Venezia-Giulia. The Italianization of the local toponymy, personal names and surnames was aided by the following:

- encouragement of emigration;
- employment of the Slovenian manpower in the country and colonies; and
- projects of internal agricultural colonization with Italian elements.

Finally, economic measures aimed at the drastic simplification of the Slovenian society structure had to eliminate its upper strata in order to heighten the stereotype of the uncultured and rural Slav, deemed as easily assimilable by the “superior” Italian civilization.

In the Val d’Aosta in 1925, fascism started a politics of linguistic assimilation, which culminated in the Italianization of toponomastic and in the project of Italianization of names. The Ligue valdotaine pour la protection de la langue française, had asked for administrative decentralisation and cultural autonomy. They had received no positive answer. The 19 of December 1923, 8,000 heads of family of the Val d’Aosta, on the initiative of the League, sent a petition to Mussolini asking for cultural autonomy and administrative decentralisation. The answer was repression.

Such a situation provoked the creation of a clandestine regionalistic group of resistance, La jeune Vallée d’Aoste (The young Val d’Aosta, 1925) that took the place of the Ligue Valdotaïne pour la protection de la langue française. Because the League was considered too soft towards fascism by some of its members, in 1923, a young student of medicine, Joseph-Marie Alliod, with others founded the Groupe valdôtain d’action régionaliste. After a few years this group became the “Jeune Vallée d’Aoste”, which was officially founded by Joseph-Marie Trèves. Because of fascism, the “Jeune Vallée d’Aoste” went underground in 1926.

The group held its conferences in the mountainous regions (Col de Joux, Saint Nicolas, Comboé, etc.) or in other isolated

places (Castle of Ussel and Montjovet, etc.) with the pretext of archaeological studies or touring. The members of the “Jeune Vallée d’Aoste” were decidedly federalist, and they dreamt a *État valdôtain fédéré*, on the model of the Swiss cantons.

As we will see in the next paragraph, the Val d’Aosta was one of the first areas where the Resistance movement developed following the fall of fascism in 1943. At the end of 1943, Emile Chanoux, leader of the movement and a partisan organised a meeting in Chivasso. The “Declaration of Chivasso” represents the most accomplished and intelligent expression of the federalist idea at the time.

The Jeune Vallée d’Aosta doesn’t exist any more, but its ideas have been taken up by the Union Valdotaïne, founded in 1945 and has progressively become the main party of the Val d’Aosta.

It is curious that some authors tend to minimize the repressive fascist policy in Val d’Aosta in comparison with what happened in South- Tyrol. For example Palici di Suni Prat writes:

Towards the French language spoken in the Val d’Aosta, fascism has used more tolerance than towards German in the Alto Adige or Slovenian in the Venezia-Giulia, taking into consideration the deep historical bonds between the Valle and the Savoy State. (E. Palici di Suni Prat: 1999, 31)

However, this is not the opinion of Emile Chanoux, leader of the autonomist movement of Val d’Aosta at the end of the World War II who declared fascism had treated the populations of the Val d’Aosta as a conquered enemy people.

Sardinians as well opposed themselves to fascism: as we have already mentioned, after World War I, the Sardinian regionalist movement particularly developed through the creation of the Partito Sardo d’Azione, PSdA (Sardinian Party of Action, 1921), which became clandestine in 1925.

What is less known is the fact that, according to some witnesses, fascism repressed even the minority languages of the southern villages, like the Arbëresh (Italian Albanians). We have

collected this account in the course of an interview. “During the fascist period it was forbidden to our citizens to speak Albanian. For this reason, the value, the sense of our language was lost and the following generation has suffered because of this [...]” (Interview with Giulio Peta, President of the Proloco and Centro Anziani di Caraffa). (For information about this Centre, refer to the following chapters). However this opinion is quite controversial: other representatives of the Albanian minority have suggested that the repression had been quite weak and that the Arberesh played a role in the fascist colonial aggression to Albania, becoming the Italian colonial administrators.

Religious and ethnic minorities such as Jews and the Roma and Sinti people, who were deprived of citizenship, deported and exterminated in collaboration with Nazi Germany were the minorities who suffered the most from fascist policies.

The racial laws against Jews considered Italians not only a race but an “Aryan race” (sic). In 1938, the fascist government organised a racial census in which 58,412 persons “of Jewish race” were counted. In 1946 when the war was over, the Jewish community fell to less than half that number: 26,000. 8,500 were killed in deportations and massacres, 9,000 emigrated and some 2,000 had converted to other religions.

The Roma and Sinti became the target of real persecutions having been defined by the fascist ideology as naturally “unso-cialable” people. According to laws concerning the public order (against wandering, beggary etc.), they were subject to internment in concentration camps in various parts of the country.

During the fascist time, few institutions defending linguistic and cultural diversity survived: Friuli once again represented specific case, because of its role in defending Italianity at the eastern borders. That’s why the Società filologica Friulana survived during fascism and research in Friulan linguistics continued. However, in fascist times, Friulan was considered an Italian dialect and not a language. This theory is supported by Ettore Tolomei and Carlo Battisti.

Minorities and the Resistance. The case of the Val d'Aosta. The Manifesto of Chivasso.

In the night between the 24th and the 25th of July 1943, after the American forces had landed in Sicily and while Italy was being bombed, the Great Council of Fascism, after a long and difficult debate, approved a resolution that removed the role of commander in chief from Benito Mussolini, returning it to King Victor Emmanuel the III. But when, the 25th of July, Mussolini went to see the King to return the command he had received in 1940 he was arrested. The King proclaimed as new head of the government Marshall Badoglio, who dissolved the National Fascist Party and all the main fascist institutions. At the same time, the new government engaged itself to continue the war on the side of Germany and Japan. The short military armistice with the Allied forces (and the change of alliances from Germany to the Anglo-Americans) was signed, after weeks of discussions on 3 September 1943 and was announced on 8 September 1943.

This is not the place to write the history of this period. We can just state that with Gatterer, Marshall Badoglio was interested in establishing a military dictatorship in place of the fascist dictatorship; that purging of fascism was reduced to a minimum during the forty five days of the Badoglio government; that this government didn't organise any resistance in provision of German actions after the announcement of the armistice. Moreover, in border areas where the minorities lived, this government continued to repress and arrest anti-fascists (Gatterer: 1999). This government continued to be an expression of nationalism and was, of course, repressive towards minorities, especially border minorities, fearing a possible change of borders, after the end of the war.

But the Badoglio government was short and limited to some areas: in 1943 Germans occupied Italy and created the Salo Republic, with Mussolini at its head. The minority question -in relationship with the debate on the new form of state Italy had to take and the federalist option- was debated inside the partisan movement. Between 1943 and 1945, Italy was a great political

laboratory, where, among dramatic and tragic events, the future of the country was elaborated, which has not yet realized all the suggestions and the potentialities expressed in those years. (Gatterer: 1999, 852).

As we have said, the debate on minorities was provoked by research on the best form for a future democratic Italy: on this issue, there was no agreement among the anti-fascist parties: the federal option was supported especially by the Partito d'Azione. In 1943, a member of the Partito d'Azione, Gabriele Foschiatti, wrote a document, in which it was explicitly written:

The end of the World War must mark the end of the dogma of the absolute sovereignty of the State. Limited inside (...) by the sovereignty of the local governments -towns and regions-, it will have to be limited in its external relations by the Constitution of an European Federation of the free nations. (Gatterer: 1999, 839)

Not all the parties who were fighting fascism and nazism had the same federalist vision of the Partito d'Azione. For example, a large part of the Christian Democrats wanted to restore the pre-fascist state and maintain the borders as they were. The question of the borders was, in any case, crucial:

More than a document of the clandestine press (of the Italian movement of Resistance) wanted to inform the Italians about the criminal and violent actions fascism had subjected the foreign populations and minorities. But the policy of violent de-nationalisation acted out by the fascist regime against the border mixed-languages areas -from Venezia Giulia to Alto Adige and to the Val d'Aosta, questioned the integrity of the pre-war borders (Collotti: 1965-66, 28)

The border issue was quite problematic for the partisans' movement. But the question of the minorities was not only theoretical: it was imposed by the political action of the minorities themselves, who had insured against fascism.

In July 1943, in Sicily, a separatist movement developed; the Sardinian autonomist returned in the fall of 1943, while regional-

ist and federalist streams were strongly reinforced by the partisan movement in northern and central Italy.

In fall 1943, the first partisan groups were created in the Val d'Aosta led by Emile Chanoux and Carlo Passerin d'Entreves. On 19 December 1943, Chanoux called in Chivasso the representatives of the Valdostans and of the Provençals living in Italy for a proclamation of autonomy. The Manifesto of Chivasso describes the work of cultural, political and moral destruction operated by fascism and elaborates a political frame for future Italy and for the regional area:

- freedom of language, as well as freedom of religion, is an essential condition for the preservation of the human personality;
- federalism is the best frame for guaranteeing this individual and collective right, and represents the solution to the problem of the small nationalities and to the historical phenomenon of irredentism; and
- a federal republican regime on regional and cantonal basis is the only guarantee against the coming back of the dictatorship.

The Manifesto of Chivasso claimed three types of autonomy for the alpine valleys: political and administrative autonomy; cultural and educational autonomy (teaching in the local language); and economic autonomy.

The Manifesto of Chivasso represents the most accomplished and intelligent expression of the federalist thought of the time. Unluckily, Emile Chanoux was arrested and killed by the fascists and the Germans on 18 May 1944. It was a great loss for the federalist movement, for the minorities and in general for the Italian democracy. The death of Chanoux presents some obscure aspects: there is the suspicion that he was denounced to the fascists by other partisans because he was considered to be pro-French.

In fact, in the Val d'Aosta, there were some partisan groups that were in favour of the annexation to France. The most common feeling, however, was the fight for obtaining autonomy:

better to have autonomy in Italy than live without autonomy in France. In the presence of an equivalent cantonal system, France was preferable; in any case, the State that would guarantee more autonomy was considered best. As an answer to the autonomist claims, the partisans of Piedmont answered foreseeing a future of European collaboration: In this collaboration, bilingual peoples, like the ones of your valleys, will have a great task to accomplish. (Collotti: 1965-66, 28).

But promises of autonomy were not accomplished without further fights. The Val d'Aosta was liberated by the partisans and by the French troops in April 1945. However, the allied forces convinced De Gaulle to retire the troops. After the French left, since the autonomist claims of the valley's population seemed to get lost, all the inhabitants of the Region descended to Aosta, asking for the plebiscite. In front of a risk of a referendum for the annexation to France, the valley was granted the administrative and linguistic autonomy inside the Italian State with an autonomy status, on 7 September 1945. A few days after, the Union Valdotaïne was created in order to organise the autonomist forces and to struggle for the implementation of the decree of autonomy. In absence of this autonomy status, France would have probably asked for an international protection for the Val d'Aosta.

The relationships between the Resistance movement and the minorities were much more complex in southern Tyrol and in Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

Southern Tyrol had suffered greatly from Italian domination: the population was relieved by the fall of fascism, but, when South-Tyrol was occupied by the Germans under the administration of the Gauleiter Hofer, resistance by the German-speaking population was scarce. There were, in fact, two movements of resistance: one "autochthonous" South-Tyrolean and one Italian: both were extremely limited because of the specificity of the situation. The South-Tyrolean resistance was led by Hans Egarter, who was in contact with Erich Amonn, who, in 1945, founded the Sud-Tyroler Volkspartei, SVP. The goals of the two movements were different: the South-Tyrol resistance move-

ment wanted to re-unify the Tyrol, in the Austrian State, while the Italian resistance wanted to maintain the Italian borders as they were.

In the Venezia Giulia, the relationship between the Italian and Slavonic partisans was based on collaboration until 1945, when the partisans of Tito occupied Trieste. The border with Yugoslavia and the status of the town of Trieste remained an area of conflict for many years. In this area, fascist nationalism continued to be expressed by a large part of the Italian population. It is interesting to notice that, while the bourgeois groups of Trieste were in favour of fascism and even of the German domination, if it guaranteed the order, federalist and autonomist ideas were supported by different members of the Partito d'Azione.

In Friuli, the partisan movement was strong enough to create an autonomous republic that lived for three months in 1944: the autonomist movement took new energy from this democratic experience.

The political parties of the minorities

The Union Valdôtaine and the Südtiroler Volkspartei SVP are the most important political parties still represented in the Italian Parliament, defending local minorities in Italy.

The Union Valdôtaine is a political federalist movement established on 13 September 1945 following a governmental decree that introduced the first elements of an autonomous organization of the Val d'Aosta region. In opposition to the central authority abandonment of the French language in the public discourse and education, members called jointly for the preservation of the linguistic and ethnic minority of the local population, claiming up to now for the widest possible autonomy. Its objectives are:

- on a political level, to set the proper basis for a joint work among the Italian government and the regions for a new constitutional reform towards a real and effective federalism;

- to promote a strategic international alliance aiming at granting the political representation of the regions by the EU parliament;
- to preserve and promote the local French Provençal language, also networking with other European French-speaking countries; and
- to sustain the local economy and entrepreneurship for a wider economic autonomy.

Members of the movement take part in the sections established in each municipality, gathering at periodical meetings and bringing up their claims by the Directive Committee to the Federal Committee (eleven people) and National Congress (representatives on a proportional basis after elections).

The Südtiroler Volkspartei SVP political party was founded in 1945 with the purpose of representing the German-speaking population of South-Tyrol. Its political orientations are close to the Christian Democratic parties of Europe. Today it is still the main party of the autonomous province of Bozen with approximately 62,000 members. The 62,000 party members are organised into 291 groups.

The Italian Constitution, The Autonomous Regions and the Post-war Institutions Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The Constitutional Assembly and minorities

On 2 June 1946 Italians voted for the first time after the fall of fascism, having to choose the form of the State (republic or monarchy) and the members of the Constitutional Assembly. Not all minorities could vote: South-Tyrol and the Venezia Giulia, at the Yugoslavian border, were still controlled by the allied forces and they didn't participate to the elections. The republic won, with 54.3 percent of the votes, mainly in the north (the south voted for the monarchy).

In the Constitutional Assembly, formed by 556 members, the Christian Democrats were the biggest party, with 207 deputies, followed by the Socialists (115), the Communists (104), the Liberals (41), the Populists of the Uomo Qualunque (30), the Republicans (23), and the Monarchists (16). The Partito d'Azione, which was the party most in favour of a federalist Italy received only nine deputies. The Constitutional Assembly began its discussions in an atmosphere of hopes and concluded them in a climate of growing indifference. [...] In the meantime, other worries and oppositions had appeared: America or Russia, peace or war, hell or paradise, damned or not-damned [...] The Cold War had broken out. (Gatterer: 1999, 1047)

The Cold War had an important impact on Italy, because it justified the shift towards conservatism, centralism and nationalism operated by the Christian Democrats of Alcide De Gasperi, who became head of State after the elections of 1948, in the name of the anti-communism and the fight against the reds. It is interesting to notice that the Christian Democrats were not, at the origin, a party in favour of centralism and nationalism: they had Don Sturzo, who referred himself to the tradition of one of the fathers of the Risorgimento, Gioberti, in favour of a federal Italy. But, in the international context of the Cold War and in correspondence

to the economic forces that supported it, the Christian Democrats became a centralist, nationalist party, against the autonomies.

In the Constitutional Assembly, the Christian Democrats, together with the Partito d'Azione, seemed to go into the direction of a state organisation that was almost federalist. The Marxist Left seemed more hesitant: it was in favour of administrative decentralisation, but not of regions like "cantons". After the elections of 1948 that gave rise to the Christian Democrats, due to fear of communism, the positions turned: the Christian Democrats in power became centralist and hostile to autonomies, while the communists and the socialists became the supporters of autonomies (Gatterer: 1999).

The Italian Constitution is not a "leftist" constitution, neither is it revolutionary. It was written among contradictions, in the attempt of overcoming old and deep conflicts. The Italian Republic had to abandon the authoritarian centralization that had characterized fascism, for a larger recognition of regional autonomies, corresponding to local differences. This implied the creation of a new legal status for minorities guaranteed by the Italian Constitution. On the issue of minorities and of autonomies, the most important articles of the Constitution are:

- Article 5 -the Republic, one and indivisible, recognizes and promotes the local autonomy;
- Article 6 -the Republic protects with ad hoc norms the linguistic minorities;
- Article 115 -the regions are constituted in autonomous entities with its own powers and functions; and
- Article 116 -Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto-Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Val d'Aosta are granted particular forms and conditions of autonomy, according to some special status adopted with constitutional laws.

Moreover, articles 117-118 and 120 define the functions and powers of the regions, mentioning as main organs, the Regional Council, the Giunta and the President of the Regions. All these articles, if implemented, could represent a reasonably fair sys-

tem of recognition and protection for the minorities. However, during the same constitutional debate, inside the Constitutional Assembly, a number of deputies were suspicious in front of too explicit rules, recognizing cultural diversity in Italy. Even a large autonomy of all the regions and not only of a few of them was seen with suspicion. In the society, the forces opposing to the autonomies were the centralised bureaucracy, the representatives of the government at local level (the prefecties), and the local bureaucracy.

The institution of the regions was delayed and only the regions with special status were created in 1948. Moreover, a necessary condition for the functioning of the autonomies was the penetration of the all structure of the nation-state by an authentic democratic spirit.

After 1947/48, the process of restoration took place: the “de-fascistisation” of the bureaucracy was stopped:

The President of the country had a decree approved that re-integrated in the State administration, including in the high hierarchies, persons who had been excluded because they had been fascist or had participated in the Salò Republic [...] National pacification was proclaimed with the end of the anti-fascism movement [...] The Italian State expelled from its body the anti-fascist revolution and re-absorbed the fascists who accepted to abjure the Mussolini revolution [...]

(Valiani, *L'avvento*: 134).

Consequently, as a result of the Cold War and the shift towards conservatism and a new form of nationalism, the articles of the Constitution concerning minorities were not implemented and the regions with ordinary status were not created. With the exception of the autonomous regions, the authority remained in the hands of the central state through the prefecties, state representatives who controlled the local administrations in the name of Rome. Only four regions received a specific status through the Constitutional Assembly: Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino Alto-Adige and the Val d'Aosta. It was not possible to establish

the Friuli Region, because part of its geographical area was still the free Territory of Trieste, under the administration of the Allied Forces. Each one of the autonomous regions had a different system of competences.

After World War II, Italy had to sign international treaties in relation to border countries: France for the Val d'Aosta, Austria for South-Tyrol and Yugoslavia for the Venezia Giulia and Trieste. Concrete measures for the protection of German-speaking, French-speaking and Slovenian-speaking minorities were foreseen by the Peace Treaties. In fact, the practical respect of ethno-linguistic identity in Italy was imposed from the outside by the winners of World War II. This respect, however, concerned some minorities while excluding others.

In Italy, the question of minorities has been put and is still put in extremely different ways because of historical and political reasons. Minorities such as the German, in the Bolzano province, or the Slovenian, at the eastern border, who found themselves included within the Italian borders, because of the peace treaties after World War I, mainly because of the myopic pressures of the military power, have a peculiar history. They have suffered persecutions aimed at their de-nationalisation both during fascism and, sadly, even during the years of the Republic. Luckily for them, as for the people of the Val d'Aosta, the allied forces, who had won the war, imposed Italy to respect their ethno-linguistic identity, if not by the weapons, by the pen of diplomacy. Ladins could also be included in this protection system. All the others were without any form of recognition and protection. Albanians, Catalans and Greeks had to wait that a new Mussolini attack their countries of origin, that Italy lost another war, that the winning forces imposed on Italy some measures of protection for them [...] (De Mauro: 1982, 34).

The Italian Constitution of 1948 and the minorities

In this paragraph, we analyse the articles concerning minorities in the Italian Constitution. We have said that the Constitution is neither “leftist” nor revolutionary: it could however represent a good basis for the recognition of cultural diversity, the protection of the minorities and the development of political local autonomies, if, after the beginning of the Cold War, a sort of “restoration”, that is a shift towards centralism and nationalism, wouldn’t have taken place. The new constitution and the regions found themselves embedded in the political climate of anti-communism, provoked by the Cold War. It is true that the Constitution has not been modified, but, practically, changes have been introduced considering that many important parts, as the regional order, have not been implemented [...] (Calamandrei, *Scritti e discorsi politici*). The institutional development towards the recognition of cultural diversity in Italy was halted.

The Constitution of the Italian Republic came into force on 1 January 1948. Its contents begin with the Fundamental Principles in twelve articles, covering the bases of the democratic freedoms of the new state.

The Italian Constitution includes several articles to protect individuals and groups from discrimination based on ethnic origin and religious beliefs. The Italian Constitution is part of a juridical tradition based on the notion of state of right, referring to the protection of individual juridical subjects, separate from their group belonging; at the same time, however, it enlarges the notion of protection, up to the point of including within itself the protection of social groups, both cultural and religious, to which individuals belong.

For those reasons individual personal integrity cannot be guaranteed if the shared inter-subjective life contexts, where the individual, by socialization, has established his own identity; therefore the protection of individual rights necessary goes through collective rights.

Articles no. 2 and 3 of the Constitution – fundamental for the entire question of the discrimination against minorities – recog-

nize and guarantee inviolable human rights. Thus, Art. 2 states that:

The Republic recognizes and guarantees the inviolable rights of man, as an individual, and of the social groups in which he expresses his personality, and demands the fulfilment of the duties of political, economic, and social solidarity.

(La Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana, 1948, Art. 2).

Article 3 on the principles of freedom and equality of citizens deals with the question of differences and protection thereof based on religion, language, race and nature. Article 3, in fact, establishes that "All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, and political opinions, personal and social condition."

It is the Republic's duty to remove obstacles of an economic and social nature which, really limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, impede the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country. (The Constitution Art. 3).

Article 5 declares that the Republic is one and indivisible and "recognizes and promotes local autonomy [...] and administrative decentralization." (The Constitution, Art. 5):

The Republic, which is one and indivisible, recognizes and promotes local autonomy; it applies the fullest measure of administrative decentralization in services dependent on the State and it adjusts the principles and methods of its legislation to the requirements of autonomy and decentralization.

This article is very important, because it is the basis of future regional decentralization and of the local government reform of 1990.

However, Article 6 is the most important article of the Constitution for the protection of linguistic and cultural minorities. It states "The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities through

appropriate measures". (The Constitution, Art. 6) (by means of special provisions). There are twelve recognized linguistic minorities, namely: Albanian (Arbëresh), Catalan (Català), German (Deutsch), Greek (Grico), Slovenian (Slovensko) and Croatian (Hrvatski) populations as well as the French-speaking ones (Français), French-Provençal (Franco-provenzale), Friulan (Furlan), Ladin (Ladin), Occitan (Occitan) and Sardinian (Sardu) (Article 6 of the Constitution and Law no. 482, 1999, Art. 2, subsection 1).

These articles establish the basic principles of the respect for pluralism. Nevertheless, article three confirms a principle of negative protection in the form of non-discrimination, while the safeguarding of ethnic and cultural characteristics is clearly stated only in article 6: this means that the policy on minorities is oriented towards the negative, not towards positive protection. As we will see, this approach of negative protection will come to characterise also migratory policies, refusing any form of positive discrimination.

The Constitution deals with the question of local autonomy in Title V (Part II), regarding "Regions, Provinces, Municipalities", creating five regions with special status. The regions with particular forms and conditions of autonomy are: Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Val d'Aosta (cf. Art. 116). The Constitution regulates the number of senators from these regions (cf. Part II, Title I: "Parliament", Art. 57), and the election of the President of the Republic, in which the regions take part "[...] so as to ensure that minorities are represented [...]" (Cf. Part II, Title II: "The President of the Republic", Art. 83).

For the populations of the border areas, bilateral treaties and agreements, established with the neighbouring countries (Austria, former Yugoslavia and France) after World War II, the recognition of their specificities and the protection of their language, guarantee the protection of their cultural and linguistic characters.

The Constitution regulates the number of senators elected from these regions (cf. Part II, Title I: "Parliament", Art. 57) to the national Senate, and establishes special rules for the election

of the President of the Republic, in which the regions take part “[...] so as to ensure that minorities are represented [...]” (Cf. Part II, Title II: “The President of the Republic”, Art. 83).

Article 9 specifies: “Within three years of the implementation of the Constitution, the Republic shall adjust its laws to the needs of local autonomous authorities and to the legislative jurisdiction attributed to the Regions” (Id., Art. 9). “The general provisions of Title V shall apply temporarily [...] to the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia [...], without prejudice to the protection of linguistic minorities in accordance with Article 6” (Id., Art. 10; about Art. 6 see above).

In two autonomous regions, the Trentino-Alto Adige, particularly in the province of Bolzano, Bozen, South-Tyrol, and the Val d’Aosta, it has been possible since 1948 to attend French and German-speaking schools, which are the official languages in the area. In Trieste and Gorizia, there are schools in Slovenian.

As far as the religious minorities are concerned, the Constitution represents a great improvement. The Catholic Church is the official state religion and “All religious confessions are equally free before the law [...]” (The Constitution, Art. 8). Freedom of religion is also established through Article 8 that states all religions are free before the law. Finally, Article 19 can be considered as the basic norm in matters of religious freedom.

In conclusion, the Constitution represents a potentiality, which has not yet been completely implemented, “with both culture and politics shifting to and from between national concerns and individualistic process of gaining freedom. The pluralistic factor, in the communities, was in practice eclipsed” (Interview with Prof. Gilberto Pressacco, Conservatorio Tomadini, Udine, Friuli).

Institutional development in the autonomous regions

The Italian Constitution created five regions with special status, while the protection of linguistic minorities foreseen by Art.6 of the Constitution was not implemented until 1999. For many

years, there were, de facto, three categories of linguistic minorities:

- border minorities, like the Germans of South-Tyrol and the Slovenians, who were protected by international treaties and agreements (Italy-Austria agreement of 5 September 1946, called De Gasperi-Gruber and the Italy-Yugoslavia agreement of 5 October 1954, integrated in the Osimo Treaty on 10 November 1975), that is minorities whose issue was of international relevance; in the province of Bolzano, inside the autonomous region Trentino Alto Adige, the coexistence of German and Italian schools, as well as the use of the two languages, were guaranteed; the province of Trieste, inside the autonomous region of Friuli, guaranteed the public use of the Slovenian language and, from 1961, the Slovenian schools);
- the other minorities who lived in autonomous regions, enjoying of a specific status, which could guarantee the protection of the minority language (the Val d'Aosta, whose autonomous status guaranteed the use of the French language, Article 38, allowing to write public acts in the two languages, the Friulans, the Sardinians); and
- the minorities, who could just refer themselves to the Constitution, whose Article 6 had to be implemented by future legal interventions. This last category of minorities had just a formal protection, but didn't dispose of the legal means to exercise the rights to protection of linguistic and cultural difference.

Francesco Toso has described this sort of hierarchy among minorities:

With the time, a sort of hierarchy of the identities was formed, due to of the lack of implementation of a general policy, and which indicates an approach to single situations generally bound to the emerging of claim processes: in fact, substantial recognition is enjoyed only by the minority languages and cultures protected on the basis of international agreements (German and

Ladin in Alto Adige, Slovenian in Trieste and French as culture language in Val d'Aosta); substantial autonomy given to some regions is as well the result of international agreements or the attempt of answering to independence movements, which, in the years following World War II, questioned the integrity of the territory (Toso: 1996, 42-43).

Toso offers a highly negative judgment on the general policy towards minorities developed and implemented by the Italian State. According to him, practically, all the measures taken have been an answer to the political unrest of the minority, especially when this unrest could find support in foreign countries (i.e., Austria): they have somehow been an obliged choice. There has never been, in Italy, a general political view of the issue embracing globally the linguistic and cultural fragmentation of the country.

The hierarchy among minorities, the absence of a national policy and the development of local policies, responding to the struggles of each minority, have meant that the institutional development for the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in Italy has been very diverse, responding to local realities and to the type of protection they could enjoy.

In the autonomous regions, because of its specific status, was better able to develop movements promoting and defending cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as real political and administrative autonomy. These movements became, in some regions, political parties, playing an important role in the local administrations and obtaining a representation in the Parliament in Rome, as the Union Valdotaïne or the Sud-Tyroïer Volkspartei, mentioned in Chapter one.

The relationships between these institutions and the national governments of Rome, dominated by the Christian Democrats, were quite difficult in the post-war years, particularly in the Val d'Aosta and in South-Tyrol. Even in Trentino, there was an important autonomist movement: the ASAR, which wanted a return to the autonomist rights that the Austrian Empire granted to the towns and villages of the Trentino. The goal of the ASAR

was to create a sort of autonomous canton (on the Swiss model), from the Brennero to Ala (that is, including Trentino and South-Tyrol). In 1946 the Movimento Separatista del Trentino was founded, which fought for the reunification with Austria and in 1948, the Partito del Popolo Trentino-Tirolese was founded.

The climate changed only during the 1960s and 1970s with the creation of the first centre-left government and the institution of the ordinary status regions that signified a process of decentralisation. In the same years, the ethnic revival of minorities became an international phenomenon. Before this time, the national government of the Christian Democrats tried to limit the local autonomies and to control the regions having a special status. This project succeeded in the autonomous regions Sardinia and Sicily where the Christian Democrats succeeded in controlling the power, marginalizing the autonomist forces. On the contrary, in the border regions of Val d'Aosta and South-Tyrol, the conflict between the autonomist local forces and the Christian Democrats characterized the entire period from 1948 up to the early 1970s.

In comparison with Val d'Aosta and South-Tyrol, the conflict with the national government was weaker in the autonomous region of Friuli. We have said that in the Friuli, for its peculiar geographical and historical position, many institutions promoting local cultures had been maintained even during fascist times. During World War II, the Resistance had been quite strong and the postwar period represented an opportunity to claim more autonomy.

On 2 May 1945, the first issue of the *Libertà* newspaper was published in Udine. It became the first vehicle for the idea of autonomy. In its pages appeared articles written by Tiziano Tessitori, inviting the Friulans to fight to make Friuli an autonomous region, a corporate body able to administer, with more power of a province. In the same year, the Association for Furlan Autonomy, was founded by Hon. DC Tiziano Tessitori, Gianfranco D'Aronco and Don Marchetti as a small autonomist movement of Catholic inspiration. The Association for Furlan Autonomy picked up a good number of adhesions, but it met a strong opposition from the upper class, especially businessmen. In 1946,

some industrials from Trieste opened a daily paper, the “Messaggero Veneto”, supporting a nationalistic point of view. The Friuli became a fortress of the Triestine Irredentism as in the years prior to 1915.

In February 1946 the first number of the weekly “Patrie dal Friûl” a paper entirely written in Friulan, started fierce polemics against the conservative press, against the liberal middle class and all the other enemies of Friulan autonomy.

It took however almost twenty years to obtain some of the objectives of the movement: the autonomous region was created in 1964, just a few years before the institution of the ordinary regions in 1967 and 1968 in a climate that was completely different from the climate of the Cold War and the hysteric anti-communism that had characterized the 1950s. In 1966 the Movimento Friuli (see pag.) was established, aiming at the creation of a separate region (not independent) and a better protection of language and culture. In the same region, the Slovenians were taken into the conflict between Italy and Yugoslavia around the Autonomous Territory of Trieste, still under the administration of the Allied Forces.

In conclusion, during the fifty five years which separate the Constitution from the approval of Law 482/99, it is mainly through local policies and laws that the minorities’ languages and cultures have been protected. This has created a sort of opposition between a central state that is not really aware of the minorities’ issues and the local authorities, particularly in the autonomous regions or in areas with high sensibility towards minorities. There are very few central institutions dealing with minorities and they are not very competent in the field.

The autonomy in the Val d’Aosta

The Region Val d’Aosta, first established by a decree in 1946, was definitely instituted with the Constitutional Law no.4 on 26 February 1948.

The status of the region gave the Council of the Valley legislative competences in twenty one subjects and secondary legislative powers (that is the power to integrate and implement the Republic's laws) in thirteen other subjects. Moreover, Article 14 establishes that the territory of the Val d'Aosta is out of the customs' borders and represents a "free zone" (an article that was not implemented).

In the Val d'Aosta, the status of the French language is equivalent to the status of Italian. Public acts can be written in either one or the other language. In the schools, the teaching is both in Italian and French, with an equal number of hours. Some subjects are taught in the French language. The Head of the State, the Christian Democrat Alcide De Gasperi clarified that bilingualism was a right from the point of view of the French, but a duty from the point of the Italian, which had to be used in any bureaucratic practice. Italian had to be the official language and bilingualism compulsory. In fact, since the beginning of the autonomy of the Val d'Aosta, the government tried to contain the autonomy's rights.

The tension between the autonomous region and Rome had an important impact on the political life of the Valley and the relationships between the autonomist party, the Union Valdôtaine, on one side, and the Christian Democrats or the Communists and the Socialists on the other side. The Union Valdôtaine had different souls - the spiritual fathers to whom it referred to: Emile Chanoux, who was a progressive moderate, and Joseph Treves, a conservative priest. It had, moreover, a small component of independence fighters. The Union Valdôtaine was allied with the Christian Democrats in the elections of 1948, but, in front of the attempt, by the central government, to erode the autonomist rights, the Union turned itself towards the Socialists and the Communists. The attitude of the Christian Democrats was even denounced in France:

After the death of De Gasperi, the Christian Democrats have completely changed the trend [...] they are close to nationalists who want to eradicate the regional autonomies and would like

to suffocate the minorities' languages." (Le Monde, 24 October 1957).

In 1958, the Union Valdotaïne, together with the Socialists and the Communists, won the elections in the valley, in spite of the mobilization of the Church: the Bishop of Aosta had excommunicated the Catholics participating to the list. The Italian mainstream press described the victory of the Communists as a threat to tourism and private property.

In spite of the dramatic provisions of *Il Corriere della Sera*, the administration of the alliance between the Union Valdotaïne and the Left was one of the best in Italy: The Val d'Aosta was, in 1967, the only region where no local administration had a deficit in the budget (the second best was Trentino Alto-Adige) (Gatterer: 1999, 1202). This was possible in spite of the continuous tension with the government in Rome, in the hands of the Christian Democrats, who tried to limit the autonomies.

Since 1948, the Christian Democracy has largely destroyed, because of its wish for power and its centralism, the autonomy, which, if it had been realized according to the text of the constitutional law, could have made of the Val d'Aosta, a model of democratic self-government. (Gatterer: 1999, 1204)

*The autonomous region of Trentino-Alto Adige.
The question of South-Tyrol*

We have seen that the South-Tyrolean territory was occupied and annexed to Italy only recently in 1918, after World War I, against the will of the great majority of the population.

We have seen that the Italian fascist government has then tried to impose them its national characters, repressing the use of the original ones, through a brutal Italianization (Steininger: 2003). After World War II, the Italian government was forced by the Peace Treaty of Paris to give autonomy to this area by the De Gasperi-Gruber agreement of 5 September 1946, appended

to the Peace Treaty. But, in spite of the engagements taken, the Italian government tried to reduce the autonomy of South-Tyrol as much as possible.

The normative basis of the autonomy in South-Tyrol was the De Gasperi-Gruber agreement as well as the Italian Constitution. Or while the De Gasperi-Gruber agreement speaks of the province of Bolzano, Bozen, and of the bilingual towns in the province of Trento, the Constitution speaks of creating a unique region, Trentino-Alto-Adige, putting together very different realities and reducing the German-speaking to become a minority in the region, when they are a large majority in the Bolzano (Bozen) province.

After the tragic experience of the fascist occupation, the South-Tyrolean would have preferred to have self determination to being annexed by Austria and to reconstructing the old Tyrol. This was the proposal that the new party, founded 8 May 1945, the South-Tyrolean Volkspartei, did in the programme that was published 19 May of the same year in the newspaper, Dolomiten. The programme of the South-Tyrol Volkspartei insisted on the following points:

- After twenty five years of oppression by fascism and nationalism, to re-affirm the cultural, linguistic and economic rights of the south-Tyrolean on the basis of the fundamental laws of democracy.
- To contribute to the peace and order of the country; and
- To authorize its representatives, with the exclusion of any illegal means, to prospect the allied forces the demand of the South-Tyrolean people to enjoy the right to auto-decision.

The allied forces will decide of our destiny, but we can freely express to them what we wish" (Dolomiten, 19 May 1945)

This document was badly received by the Italians, the fascists and the nationalists, and also the partisans of the CLN, National Committee of Liberation, who supported the principle of the recognition of a special status for the German-speaking population, but didn't question the belonging of south-Tyrol to Italy.

The South-Tyrolean Volkspartei sent three representatives to Paris during the peace discussions, but they could not obtain from the Allies (U.S.A., Great Britain, France and USSR) the right to self-determination. The agreement De Gasperi-Gruber gave the South-Tyrolean only the right to have schools in the mother language, to use German in the public administration and in the toponomastic, and to the exercise of an autonomous power at local level.

The implementation of this agreement modified, however, the terms of the same agreement: what was established was not the autonomy of south-Tyrol (the province of Bolzano, Bozen), but the creation of an autonomous region, Trentino Alto-Adige, including both Trentino and South-Tyrol: in this region, the south-Tyrolean were a minority in front of the Italian majority. In order to respect the Treaty of Paris and the De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement, the status of the region, approved on 28 January 1948 divided the power between the region and the provinces. Practically the status created an autonomous Region Trentino-Alto Adige and, subordinated to the region, two sub-autonomous provinces with minor autonomies. Each province had its own government and provincial councils: in fact, the region had three parliaments, the Regional Council (meeting half the time in Trento and half time in Bolzano) and two provincial councils. It was in fact, in the words of Alcide De Gasperi, "a new formula" and "a difficult construction".

According to the status, the province of Bolzano-Bozen was given administrative and legal competence in the schools, both German and Italian, in the public housing sector and an autonomous budget. Moreover, German and Italian should have been considered equivalent. However, these competences were not implemented together with the approval of the status. For example, the competence of the province in matters of education were implemented only in 1961.

The region had been created in a climate of hostility to the German-speaking population and autonomy, in a climate of clear neo-nationalism. In the field, what happened was to maintain two groups that remained completely divided one from the oth-

er, organised in their own institutions: Sud Tyroler Volkspartei, Sudtiroler Bauernbund (The League of the peasants), founded in 1945, Katolische Verband der Werktatigen (the Catholic organisation of the workers) and Sudtiroler Gewerkschaftsbund (the South-Tyrolean trade Union), both founded in 1948, and Sudtyroler Kulturinstitut, founded in 1954.

At the national level, differently from what happened in the Val d'Aosta, the very catholic Sud Tyroler Volkspartei was a faithful ally of the Christian Democrats (the Sud Tyroler Volkspartei had three deputies in the Parliament and two senators), but even a catholic moderate party such as the Sudtiroler Volkspartei had to change its political line, in front of the non-implementation of the promised autonomy for the province. The problem of south-Tyrol was again brought to the international institutions. After the failure of the Italian-Austrian discussions, the Austrian Minister of the Foreign Affairs Bruno Kreisky presented at the National Assembly of the United Nations a protest against the non-implementation, by Italy, of the De Gasperi-Gruber agreement. In the meantime, under the new leader of the Sud-Tyrolean Volkspartei, Silvius Magnago, elected in 1957, a series of protests commenced against the policy of Rome against the German-speaking populations.

A long and complex period of conflicts started. It is in fact only in 1992 that, with the establishment of the Autonomous Province of Bozen, that this long period of controversies and fights terminated. Problems seem mainly solved, but it must be stressed that the Italian government has not yet really recognized the occupation and the repressive policy that was held for so many years. It is not to be expected that the present government manages to do it, considering the systematic rehabilitation of fascism that this government is undertaking.

During this long period of conflicts, new types of institutions appeared: the most radical ones do not consider the Italian State as a legitimate entity to have a dialogue with. This is the case, for example, of the new political party, the Union for South-Tyrol, which believes that South-Tyroleans should have the right to the self-determination or auto decision, which was denied to them

after World War II. The “Union fur Sudtiroil” was created in opposition to the SVP, considered too moderate in its claims of self-determination, autonomy and of protection of the identity of the local South-Tyrol population (German and Ladin). The Union for South-Tyrol considers it scandalous that the status of the non-Italian languages (thus of the rights for the people speaking them) is still considered a minority factor in contradiction with real numbers and proportions.

We are called a minority. [...] We are a divided people or a people without a State, like the Basques, the Catalans. We are autochthonous. [...] It is a great difference. It is clear that the Italian state gives us the corner of the minority, the German-speaking minority, in order not to give us more. We leave you your language and culture, but for the rest we don't want to discuss further. We have been put in minority by a State, which we don't consider ours. We are the majority in our territory, we are the autochthonous (natives) of our country. Forced marriages do not work [...] (interview with Eva Klotz, Union for South Tyrol).

The case of Sardinia and Sicily

In 1944, during the Resistance, the Partito Sardo d'Azione, decided to unite with the national Partito d'Azione, in which the Sardinian Emilio Lussu, who, as we have seen, had been a founder of the Partito Sardo d'Azione, played an important role. In 1945 the Partito sardo d'azione approved, in Oristano, a progressive programmemes that tried to understand the problems of Sardinia in the general Italian context:

Each reform had to be prepared in correspondence to the peculiar social and economic environment of Sardinia, where it had to be created, as in the rest of Italy, a climate of democratic freedom, in which each political, social and religious group could express and develop.” (Gatterer: 1999, 1209)

However, in opposition to the Val d'Aosta, where the autonomist party, the Union Valdotaïne played a great political role, being in the government of the region almost all the time. In Sardinia, the Christian Democrats obtained power, marginalizing the Partito Sardo d'Azione, who split in two parts, one left-oriented and one right-oriented. Two factors played a mayor role in this outcome: the historical connexions between the interests of the Sardinian ruling class and the nation and the clientele in the political life that the Christian Democrats promoted.

In this context, the Partito Sardo d'Azione split in 1948: the left part, with Emilio Lussu, abandoned the party, founding a Partito sardo d'azione socialista, which entered later into the Socialist Party. The "moderate" part of the party joined the Republic Party and participated in the Regional government directed by the Christian Democrats, who didn't change the class structure of the island, characterized by a small group of owners of the land and sheep and a large rural population of poor shepards, nor did they develop the specificities of the language and the culture. Just a part of Sardinia, mainly the coastal area, was touched by the reforms.

The situation in Sicily was somehow similar to the one in Sardinia, but much worse, because of the historical presence of the mafia, who were a real power in society. In Sicily a strong movement for autonomism and separatism had appeared during the years of the war and afterwards between 1943 and 1947. This movement however was so filled with contradictions (it was extremely divided between a left-wing part -Sicilia e Libertà- and a right-wing part- Movimento Indipendentista promoted by the barons) that could not express an intelligent political leadership. Some leaders, in order to guarantee the success of autonomy, appealed themselves to the mafia.

In this confused situation, the Christian Democrats, under the direction of Bernardo Mattarella, who was considered to have some "influence" in the mafia milieu, could conquer the autonomist movement.

The autonomous status of Sicily was one of the oldest (15 May 1946) and the largest one in matter of competences, but its results

are quite negative. The Christian Democrats absorbed what was left of the autonomist movement and remained constantly at the government of the region, using the island as an “electoral industry” for the promotion of the different politicians in Rome. In order to guarantee this electoral basis, the Christian Democrats made different compromises with the barons, the landowners and the mafia.

The situation of Sicily is extremely interesting for understanding the history of contemporary Italy, but has no interest for the topic of the report, that is institutions promoting cultural, linguistic and political pluralism. The cultural difference of Sicily is in fact presented in a folkloric way, that is sold to the tourists, by the official local authorities, but it has found no political or cultural expression in institutions.

From the return of neo-fascism to the centre-left government

Analysing the period after World War II we witnessed the hopes of the Resistance deceived. The goal of the Resistance was in fact to create an authentic democratic state. The Constitution corresponded only partially to this ideal. The Christian Democrats had completely abandoned this ideal, reconstructing a nationalist, centralist state, which repressed at the same time the working class movement and the minorities. In this context, the fascists reappeared in the political arena.

“Article 17 of the Peace Treaty, obliges Italy to forbid the reconstitution of fascist organisations. [...] The revival of fascism between 1948 and 1949 was a secondary product of the Cold War.” (Gatterer: 1999, 1274). The Constitution as well forbids “the re-organisation, under any form, of the Fascist Party”. Theoretically, this decree has never been applied. There have only been a few reconciliatory processes apologising for fascism. In fact, after World War II, fascists began to reorganise themselves in clandestine groups. The Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) was founded the 26th December 1946: MSI contains the three fundamental letters of the name of Mussolini. The return of

the fascists was tolerated by the Christian Democrats who used them as electoral support (for example, in Sicily, the Christian Democrats maintained the power thanks to the votes of the fascists). The return of the fascist signified as well the legitimating of the nationalist ideology in its worse form. Fascists were, in fact, the enemies of the Jews, but as well of the ethnic minorities. For example, in the early 1960s, neo-fascists attacked Slovenians shops, banks and institutions in Trieste, or put bombs in Austria, as revenge against the fights of the South-Tyrolean. A neo-fascist Romano Fassio (of the MSI) organised a group of green skirts (*camicie verdi*) in South-Tyrol to fight the South-Tyrolean autonomists.

It was not by chance that the towns where the MSI was strongest were Rome, Bozen and Trieste. In Bozen, MSI received 16 percent of the vote in 1960 (15.2 percent in Rome, and 13.65 percent in Trieste), while in the rest of Italy it was around 5 percent. In these three towns the population had grown during the fascist time and the newcomers had got jobs in the public service or in the industry through the fascist regime.

Let's take the example of Bozen: in 1910 less than two thousand Italians lived in Bolzano; because of the policy of Italianisation, the fascist regime had brought to Bolzano many immigrants; in 1939 48,200 Italians lived in Bolzano. These people had often enjoyed privileges in a time when the South-Tyrolean didn't dare to present themselves for the same jobs, for example in the public services (the same happened to the Slovenians in the area of Trieste). After World War II, no serious "cleansing" was done in South-Tyrol to get rid of fascists in the public administration: on the contrary, many fascist went to establish themselves there, because they could enjoy the protection of other fascists. In the 1960s, supported by the Christian Democrats in their fight against communists, financed by associations of employers and landowners, the neo-fascists maintained a climate of "national alarm" in the areas where minorities lived, through propaganda (for example they had newspapers, such as the "*Vetta d'Italia*" in Bozen), demonstrations and campaigns. Their discourses spoke

of a capitulation of the nation in front of the minority or of renouncement of the State.

The MSI has always been hostile to any form of communal or regional autonomy, because the autonomies contradict the fascist concept of strong and Unitarian State. But this was not only the reason for the reject of autonomies: together with the neo-fascists (and using them), the big industry and the great capital were hostile to autonomous regions and towns, because these would have found themselves in the condition of controlling more directly their activities, forcing them to some social function. To understand what type of policy the MSI could follow, we can answer with a question: who paid? (Gatterer: 1999, 1288)

The anti-autonomy and anti-minorities policy of the MSI was particularly heavy in South-Tyrol, where ad hoc fascist associations were created, like the Comitato nazionale del tricolore per l'Alto Adige that organised demonstrations in Rome and in Bolzano (and could do these demonstrations freely, while the South-Tyrolean were forbidden to demonstrate in their own town). These activities had the result of pushing many South-Tyrolean towards extremist positions: the first bombs put by the South-Tyrolean were against fascist monuments, they were the action of dreamers, who didn't intend to harm the people. But, in the radicalisation of the positions, the situation became much worse. In the meantime, German and Austrian neo-Nazis and neo-fascists began to support the South-Tyrolean cause.

The connections between the neo-fascists and the power of the Christian Democrats were stopped in the early 1960s with the fall of the Tambroni government, who ruled with the votes of the neo-fascists. In 1963, after three years of permanent crisis, known as the transition period, when the general secretary of the Christian Democrats, Aldo Moro formed the first centre-left government called the "organic centre-left", accepting the Socialist Party into the government and the majority in the Parliament. The overcoming of the opposition between the Christian Democrats and the Left (the Popular Front) and the creation of the centre-left government began a new phase of the country, a phase opened to pluralism in general. This new climax was

favourable to autonomies: a new region was created, the Molise, the autonomous region of Friuli was finally implemented, a commission for examining the question of South-Tyrol was created (the so-called Commission of the 19) that was finally going to solve the situation with the proposal of the so called "Packet", a number of measures that modified deeply the autonomy status of the province. Finally, the institution of the fifteen regions with ordinary status, foreseen by the Constitution and never implemented again became an actuality.

The institution of the "ordinary regions" and of the autonomous region of Friuli. The question of the media.

The fifteen regions given ordinary status, foreseen by the Constitution, were instituted by the centre-left government in 1963. The left parties who were not in the government (communists and social-proletarians) were pushing for their institution. After years of ambiguity, the left parties had finally chosen the field of the autonomies: in the case of ordinary regions, the goal of their institution was not so much the idea of promoting cultural diversity, but guaranteeing of the Constitutional principles in front of the central state, the progressive transformation of the centralised state and its bureaucracy, the formation of a new ruling class closer to the local needs.

The majority of the parties were now in favour of the institution of the regions: the Christian Democrats, the Social democrats, the Socialists, the Republicans, the Communists and the Social proletarians. Of course the parties representing the minorities such as the South-Tyrolean Volkspartei and the Union Valdotaïne also supported this move. The opposition came from the right-wing forces, liberals, neo-fascists and monarchists, who fought in parliament against the regions. But the right-wing parties had the support of the biggest Italian newspapers, as *Il Corriere della Sera* was an enemy to the regionalization of the Italian State. The arguments used by the *Corriere della Sera* were the same of the neo-fascists: abdication of the State, danger of

the dissolution of the State . The attitude of *Il Corriere della Sera* and of other newspapers reflects the positions of the big companies, the groups of economic pressure that, at time, didn't want any form of decentralisation, which they perceived as a threat to their power.

The law for the institution and the elections of the regional councils "at normal status" was presented in parliament in 1967. The law was voted in the Senate in February 1968, and a new period began for the minorities that were not living in the autonomous regions with a special status. The regions were able to implement regional laws for their recognition and protection.

A few years before, the last autonomous region, Friuli, had been instituted. The new Region was born with the majority of the newspapers, starting from the *Corriere della Sera* that were opposed to it. The *Corriere della Sera* wrote in 1959: It should be remembered that around sixty-thousand citizens of the Slavonic language live inside the borders of the region, which could make of them an electoral bloc. [...] Minorities have always been a cause of problems and often of troubles in international relations. Who can exclude the hypothesis that the vote of the represent ants of the Slavonic group can one day be dominating in the Assembly? (*Corriere della Sera*, 20 October 1959)

According to the *Corriere della Sera*, the best way to solve minority problems is to not allow them to express themselves, denying them local autonomy.

In fact, one of the objections to the creation of the autonomous region was the presence of the Slovenian minority. Other objections concerned the feigned lack of homogeneity in the region, which would have included Trieste and the Friuli area, a mainly rural region that had nothing to do with the harbour on the Adriatic.

In spite of these oppositions, the different parties proposed a status for autonomy and finally approved by the Parliament and Senate in 1962. The status was finally implemented on 31 January 1963 (Special Status of the Autonomous Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia). The question of the different minorities and languages was not really developed in the status: Article 3

states: "In the region it is recognized equality of rights and treatment to all citizens, independently from the linguistic group to which they belong, with the protection of the specific ethnic and cultural characters."

The status doesn't foresee any special article for the Slovenian minority that is in fact less protected than the South-Tyroleans. However, it allowed for the development of new dynamics. The Friuli region became particularly active in initiatives in the revitalization of the Friulan language, which was finally recognized as a language and not as an Italian dialect by linguists: a chair of Retoroman languages was in fact established in 1966 at the University of Padova. The promotion of the Friulan language and culture was accompanied by a militant engagement in the cause of the recognition of all minorities. In 1945 the Association for the Furlan Autonomy had been established and, later, from the review "Patrie dal Friul" a small autonomist movement of Catholic inspiration had developed. After the creation of the region, in 1966 the Movimento Friuli was established, aiming to obtain more autonomies and a better protection of language and culture. After the earthquake of 1976, the Movimento Friuli had some electoral success: in 1989 the movement participated in the elections under the name of Union Furlane in an electoral group in support of federalism together with the Union Valdotaine of the Valle d'Aoste.

"Friulans are the best in the defence of minority languages" claims Domenico Morelli, president of the COMFELIMI, the umbrella association for all minorities' associations. The institution of the Friuli region was a positive thing for the development of cultural and linguistic problems.

To conclude, we must raise the question of the Italian media. We have remarked the hostility of the *Corriere della Sera* to minorities: in fact all the major newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Il Messaggero*, *La Nazione* represented the interests of the big industry against the regions and of the "nation" against the minorities. But state media such as radio and television didn't offer any objective information on minorities' issues. Representatives of the South-Tyroleans, Slovenians, Valdotains,

Ladins were never invited into a public debate on television or radio. For the majority of the Italian population, minority islands were areas in the dark, on which there was little or no information. This media attitude resulted in a lack of information, prejudices, and misunderstandings.

**The “Ethnic Revival” and the Minorities’ Movements in Italy.
The Arfe Resolution of 1979.**

The debate on minority languages during the 1960s and 1970s. Minorities, trade-unions and leftist groups

After World War II, the Christian Democrats, despite of its decentralist tradition, tried to impose centralism, with some exceptions such as Sicily, where it had complete political control. Nationalism and centralism were as well defended by the neo-fascists, whose comeback was supported by the Christian Democrats. On the other side, the Left, represented by the Socialist and the Communist Parties, had maintained an ambiguous attitude in front of the autonomist movements. The Left was allied with the Union Valdotaïne in the Val d’Aosta, but had no relationship with the Catholic South Tyrolean Volkspartei. In general, the same communist ideology, focusing on the working class and modernisation didn’t correspond easily to the discourses of the minority groups.

In a context where even the autonomous regions had to fight for the implementation of their status, the minorities, who lived outside the autonomous regions, were completely abandoned to themselves. A legal proposal for the protection of the Albanian-speaking minority was presented to the Senate of the Republic on 18 February 1958, but the document was not debated.

We have seen that the situation changed during the 1960s because of the changes in the political life that brought to power a centre-left coalition between the Christian-Democrats and the socialists, and the institution of the ordinary regions. These can

be considered “endogenous”. There were, however, exogenous factors that influenced Italian policy, the cultural climate, and social movements that started to develop in the peninsula.

The exogenous factors are represented by a new international sensibility towards cultural difference and minority issues that started in the United States and spread all over Europe with the development of regional movements. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the “ethnic revival” on which thousands of books have been written. It was, however a world phenomenon that saw minorities mobilizing for their rights. In Europe, where there are numerous minorities in every country, Catalans and Bretons, Scots and Corsicans, Occitans and Basques appeared as political and cultural actors. In Italy, minorities that had been invisible, such as the Arberesh in southern Italy or the Occitans in Piedmont mobilized around cultural claims.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a sort of rediscovery of the regions and of their cultural specificities. In this new context, changes took place as well in the traditional left movement, who became more aware to the cultural issues: new leftist movements appeared that were more open to regional movements.

In the meantime, international organisations started to produce directives and recommendations, going in the direction of recognizing to minorities the right to express their cultural and linguistic difference. We have noticed that after World War II, in matters of minorities’ rights, the conceptual and legal trend was going in the direction of the protection of individuals’ rights, rather than the rights of minority groups as such. This was the tendency that dominated not only in the Italian Constitutional Assembly, but also in the United Nations. In the 1960s, this principle was modified with the recognition of the threats to collective identities. At the December 1966 General Assembly of the United Nations, Art. 27 of the international pact for political and social rights, the principle of the protection of the collective rights was accepted. This new trend pushed member states to modify their legislation in matters of minority protection.

Recommendation no.814 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on the study of the modern languages

recognized the cultural utility of preserving linguistic minorities in Europe.

In Italy, the need for a new type of legislation protecting all the minorities and not only the two recognized by the international treaties (Germans of South-Tyrol and Slovenians), the ones having cultural and linguistic boundaries with foreign nation-states (Val d'Aosta) and the ones living in the autonomous regions began to be supported by different politicians and political parties. Laws proposals were written. At the same time, some minorities that had not been visible in the Italian landscape and relied on Article 6 of the Constitution mobilized to claim the recognition of their cultural, linguistic and political rights.

One of the first institutions that promoted the defence of the minorities was the Aidclm-Associazione italiana per la difesa delle lingue e delle culture minacciate, which did an excellent work of documenting, supporting and denouncing minority conditions in Italy. This association joined an international non-governmental organisation, the Associazione per i popoli minacciati, present in several European countries recognized by the ONU. The APM was established in 1968 as a student movement against human rights violation, striving for the recognition of linguistic rights for the minorities and aiming at the immigrants' political representation.

In 1968, the Italian headquarters of the Associazione per i popoli minacciati were opened in Bozen. The defense of the Ladin population became the main task of the Bozen offices.

Today the offices of APM are placed in several European countries (Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg, Bosnia). The Italian headquarters are in Bolzano and they continue to follow up strictly the Ladin minority cause, publishing a review in three languages (Italian, Ladin, German). Besides the headquarters in Bozen, there are also representatives of the association in other towns such as Florence, for example.

The objectives of the association are:

- to preserve the linguistic culture, tradition and rights of the Ladin minority;
- to organise training and dissemination activity (conferences, seminars, demonstrations) to inform and involve the public opinion;
- to organise fund-raising and solidarity actions in support of oppressed minorities (communities, associations), aimed at the immigrants' integration by the recognition of languages as a social rather than political tool;
- to bring the violated human rights causes up to the political level and discussion; and
- to gather and make data and information available on the populations threatened.

In the debate on minorities and languages that took place in the 1970s, education became an important topic. The fact that speaking a minority language as mother tongue could represent a problem for the schooling began to be perceived by the minorities as an injustice. In this fight against discrimination, minorities found an alliance in the left-wing movements and the trade unions. This topic was debated in a conference that took place in Gradisca, a province of Gorizia, between 28-30 January 1978, organised by the CGIL, Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (the main Italian trade union)-School and ECAP-CGIL (the training centre of the trade union).

The main Italian trade-union entered in the debate on minority languages. Let's quote the discourse of Saul Meghnagi, the full time researcher at the research centre of the CGIL, denouncing the marginality of those who use a minority language or a dialect:

The linguistic plurality of our country demands the promotion of minority languages, if it is true that the linguistic facts have a great importance in the formation of human societies and in their various developments. In this goal, there is no demagogy, if the development of all the possibilities of the individuals and the

groups goes with the knowledge of the national language, as a door to the popular acquisition of the scientific and cultural patrimony expressed mainly in the national language. The goal and the respect of the minorities' languages must be implemented through a democratic linguistic education.

Minorities' movements found as well an alliance with the left-wing groups that were developing all over Europe in the hope of changing society. The relationship between minorities' claims and left-wing movements was clear in Sardinia, where the independence political movement merged from the fight of the extra-parliamentary groups. In 1972, a political movement was established with the name of "So Populu Sardu", initially merging the two fights of political extra-parliamentary activism for socialism and self-determination. The movement split after the quick shift of one of its wings towards the institutional socialist party of the old leader of the Partito Sardo d'Azione, Emilio Lussu, changed the name to "Partidu Sardu Indipendentista". During the 1980s, this party stressed the goal for independence as the crucial issue, almost abandoning other political beliefs for a more activist approach that provided the movement with a new and wider mass appeal. But in a few years, the proposal was abandoned. The name of the party was changed to : "Sardinia Natzione".

The National Coordination is the highest board, formed by around 40 people coming from the different districts, each of which has a local assembly used for open discussions and organization of demonstrations and protests, for which a non-violent group of volunteers called "Chentu Berrittas" was formed.

The objectives of the movement are:

- to gain independence for Sardinia;
- to network with other local, national, international movements aiming at Sardinian independence;
- to overlook and strictly follow-up the Italian politics re. Sardinia; demonstrating against eventual offences or illegal acts or discourses; and

- to build up a theory apparatus supporting and promoting the preservation of the Sardinian language.
- Four ideological congresses have been organised;
- Several demonstrations of protest have been carried out against the presence of foreign military bases as well as against nuclear tests in Sardinia: an outcome of these awareness-raising campaigns the movement gained more and more mass appeal and popular feedback;
- The “Congresso dei Sardi” is a committee of intellectuals actually shaping the base-concepts and criteria of Sardinian ethnicity, and above all of Sardinian language for it to be preserved.

The ethnic revival, the minorities and the language issue

The ethnic revival interested more or less all the minorities living in Italy. Until now, the minorities had mainly claimed for political autonomy: the protection of the minority language was a crucial part of the struggle, but the general goal was political. Or, from the 1970s onwards, minorities mobilized based on cultural and linguistic issues.

In order to understand better the debate during this period, we must mention the development of the Italian linguistic research. We have seen that, during the Risorgimento, language has been important as mobilising agent: for this reason, the development of the University linguistic research has been strongly influenced by the linguistic ideology promoting linguistic unification and fight against dialects. The term dialect has ended up for assuming a negative connotation. According to Wright (2001), the distinction between language and dialect in the Italian case corresponds exactly to the national project of the people who wanted the unification of Italy. “Linguistic theories can be seen as a support for the nationalist movement: the nation-building in Italy was in fact bringing together “under one umbrella, groups along the dialect continua.” (Wright: 2001).

There have been, of course, exceptions, as the mentioned Graziadio Ascoli. However, it was only in the 1970s, that linguistics has definitely abandoned the Unitarian ideology, insisting on the linguistic fragmentation of Italy, considered a precious heritage from the linguistic point of view: Tullio de Mauro wrote a book entitled: "The Italy of the Italies".

The Friulan minority was one of the first that mobilized for keeping the language, raising a "Friulan question". In fact, even after the establishment of the autonomous region, only one of the minority languages spoken in the region, Slovenian, got some form of protection, on the basis of the international treaties (the London Memorandum of 1954, whose principles were included in the Osimo Treaty of 1975). Schools, where the Slovenian language was taught, functioned since the end of World War II: they had been officially established, only in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia, in 1961, with the Law 1, of July 1 no.1012, integrated into the Law 932 on 22 November 1973.

All the other minority languages of the region -first of all Friulan, then Ladin and then German were not taught. The "questione friulana" appeared in political terms in the mid-1970s: the positions were quite different, going from more radical positions which made it an ethnic issue to the moderate ones limited to the linguistic question.

The distinction between the ethnic and the linguistic appears clearly in the debate of the time: there is "linguistic Friulan territory", that includes territories where the Friulan speaking community lives, and an ethnic Friulan territory, which includes the provinces of Gorizia, Pordenone, Udine, Venezia-Portogruaro where the use of the Friulan language was been historically proven to be in use before the beginning of the 20th century. This distinction appears in a constitutional law proposal no. 1884 on 15 July 1980 presented by Benco Gruber and entitled Norms for the Defence of the Ethno-Linguistic Minorities, Friulan, Slovenian and German in the Autonomous Region, Friuli-Venezia Giulia. This distinction between the linguistic and the ethnic expresses the need to recover: in fact minorities became aware of the fact that they had lost their heritage because of the violence

used by the “national culture” and the “national language” and they claimed a recovery of what they had lost.

Moreover, to the loss of the language didn't correspond necessarily a loss in the sense of belonging to a minority community. For example, what clearly appeared from the researches among the Friulan population was that the bilingualism Italian-Friulan was still largely spread and that, even in areas or among people, where its use was reducing itself, the interest for it was still very strong (De Marchi: 1982, Meghnagi: 1982).

The ethnic revival focusing on cultural and linguistic issues interested as well the Arberesh-speaking minorities in southern Italy, who had arrived in the 15th century escaping Turkish domination. Until the 1960s and 1970s, it was the Church that defended the language, the tradition and the identity of the Arberia. This avoided the development of secular associations: the ethnic revival started in 1968, the anniversary of the death of the Giorgio Castriota Skanderberg. In 1970 the Unione Comunità Italo-Albanesi was founded in Cosenza. The revival of this minority will be analysed in the next paragraphs.

The Arberesh are a minority that never had a political or ethnic controversial with the Italian state, but that wanted to preserve its language and culture and asked for the means allowing this goal. In this sense, their movement is very different from the one of the South-Tyrolean or the Valdotains.

The problem minorities had to face in their linguistic claims is the fact that they speak languages which have very different history and status. Some languages are official nation-state languages, some just oral, others have been written for centuries, some are still communication languages, some others are “iconic” languages, which are mainly an instrument for community identification. Many languages do not have a “koiné”, no written codified norm, in which the different speakers recognize themselves. There are different variants, according to the local areas: for example, the Sardinian language has a logudorese variant and campidanese. The Arberesh spoken in Piana (Sicily) is a different variant from the one spoken in the villages of Puglia. The work that linguists should make in order to preserve

the huge linguistic patrimony of the minorities in Italy is huge. This means that the investments the State should do to preserve these languages (for example the ones that do not have a koiné) is consistent and that the political will is not clear.

In the next paragraphs, we will describe the ethnic revival of a few groups, the Arberesh, the Walser and the Mochen, whose claims have been exclusively linguistic and cultural.

The "ethnic revival" of the Southern minorities: the Arberesh

The Arberia is the ensemble of Arberesh language communities in southern Italy, covering an area of around 1430 kmq, between Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily, Puglia, Molise: it is not a continuous territory, but a real archipelago of communities far away one from the others (Toso: 1996). The main towns are: Greci in Campania, Portocannone in Molise, Ururi in Basilicata, Castrovillari, Caraffa, Lungo and Frascineto in Calabria, Casalvecchio in Puglia, and Piana degli Albanesi in Sicily.

The presence of Albanian communities in Italy goes back to the 15th century, when Alfonso of Aragon encouraged immigration into the Kingdom of Naples, offering forms of autonomy and the permission to use the Greek-Catholic rite during liturgy. Because of the Ottoman pressure on the Balkans, immigration continued until the 18th century. In the Kingdom of Naples, each community had a form of autonomy. Authority was represented by local families, while the general administration was handled by the Church, with the institution of two archbishops, one in Piana degli Albanesi, for the Albanians in Sicily and one in Lungro, Calabria, for the Albanians of the continent.

There were seven main Albanian migrations towards Southern Italy:

- the first migration was in 1435 during the reign of Alfonso of Aragon. Albanians came as soldiers; - second migration occurred between 1459-1462, and was historically better documented. It was led by Giorgio Castriota, Skanderbeg. Two

Albanian archbishops were created in southern Italy, one in Sicily and one in Calabria. In this period, Ferdinand I, to stop a revolt of Barons, asked for help to Skanderberg. Around 5,000 Albanians arrived at that time;

- third migration occurred between 1467 and 1514 following the death of Skanderberg and the Albanians' defeat by the Ottomans, who conquered the fortified town of Cruja in 1478.
- the fourth migration took place in 1534, when the Ottomans conquered as well Coronei, in the Morea (Peloponneso). Albanians were received and given privileges by Charles V, Emperor of Spain and of Naples. The hypothesis is that they took the place of the old Jewish communities, which were sent away from the dominions of Spain.
- the fifth migration took place between 1604 and 1647, under the reign of Philippe IV;
- the sixth migration date back to the period between 1743 and 1759, during the kingdom of Charles III. Albanians came from the canton of Piquernon; and
- the seventh and last migration to Italy took place towards the end of the 18th century, under the kingdom of the Ferdinand IV of Borbon.

Arberesh have never claimed or desired separation, but they have always considered themselves Italians who in addition have Albanian origins. One of the first Italian Prime Ministers after the unification of Italy, Francesco Crispi, was of Arberesh origin. Dehremi (2002), who has done the most recent research on this minority in the village of Piana degli Albanesi in Sicily, writes:

The Pianioti (as the residents of Piana are called) have never claimed or desired separation, as has been the case with other minorities in northern Italy. The Arberesh of Piana have always considered themselves to be Italians who in addition have Albanian origins, although they still feel a little discomfort at being considered Sicilians.

In her research, Dehremi interviewed 100 Arberesh in Piana, between 15 and 65 years old: 90 claimed that they feel proud of being Arberesh and not just Italian. 6 people did not answer the question and only 4 would have preferred to be just Italians instead of Italo-Albanian.

This acceptance of belonging to Italy is combined with linguistic and cultural awareness that appeared openly during the “ethnic revival” in the 1960s and 1970s.

In fact, Arbëresh is a minority language, not a dialect of Albanian. It is a language transmitted through the centuries, strongly influenced by the dialect of Calabria. This means that there are different variants of Arberesh, according to the regional areas where the Arberesh live. There are multiple versions of a great numbers of words and grammatical structures, and a high degree of variability on the actual use of the language. The very sparse knowledge of written Arberesh and Arberesh grammar was once transmitted to the community through the Church. According to linguists and activists in associations and schools, there is a need for creating linguistic norms for Arbëresh. In fact, at the moment, in absence of a codified language, every writer has followed personal views about the choice of alphabet and correct forms.

Arberesh is as well related to the language of another nation-state, Albanian, which is called the roof-language. The teaching of Albanian is also considered as a strategy in the linguistic policy to preserve Arberesh. In fact:

The only exception to variability of forms and systems is the writing of some poets over the last three decades, who have used Standard Albanian instead of Arberesh, and then show a normative consistency and lack of grammatical deviance (Dehremi: 2002, 12).

Nowadays, the Albanian minority is estimated to be 90,000-100,000 people scattered in the southern part of Italy, between Campania, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata, Sicily and Calabria. The lack of serious studies doesn't allow us to say how many

people speak Arberesh. Estimations are high: around 80 percent for the all Arberia (Toso: 1996). One of the biggest concentrations is in Sicily, in Piana degli Albanesi, a community of 7,000 people, of whom about 90 percent speak Arberesh. This data is confirmed by Dehremi (2002). To the populations in the southern villages, the Arbëresh speaking people who live now in other regions of Italy should be added. In fact emigration has touched all the regions where Albanians live, forcing these communities as well to leave. If we consider the Arbëresh who have migrated to the industrial areas of northern Italy and big northern and central cities, we can estimate a population of 200,000 people (data given by Papàs Antonio Bellusci, Associazione culturale Centro ricerche G. Kastriota). But this data is not precise and today, however, there is a real risk of linguistic decay.

The Albanians communities have maintained their language, culture and traditions for a complex combination of factors: specific for of the community, local autonomy, different religion. The intergeneration linguistic transmission is described in an interview:

Here, in Caraffa, a group of Albanian soldiers whose captain was Demetrio Reres settled down in 1448. They were four or five families. We still have their names...[...] these families have continued to keep traditions, culture and the language. After five or six centuries, certainly, many things have been lost, but still old people speak Albanians [...] until the middle of the 1800s they wore Albanian clothes [...] then they absorbed the local Calabresi habits [...] but the feasts are still the Albanian feasts (Giulio Peta, President Proloco and Anziani of Caraffa)

However, the main factor for the maintain of the cohesion of the Albanian communities has been the Church, as states clearly Papàs Antonio Bellusci, priest of the Arbëresh community of Castrovillari and responsible for the Cultural Association "Centro Ricerche G. Castriota". According to Papàs Antonio Bellusci, the religious specificity of the Albanians has helped them to maintain language and identity. The Catholic Church recognized the

importance of this role, allowing the maintain of specific traditions (Arberesh priests can marry) and rituals (the Mess in Greek language): on the institutional field, it can be said that in Italy the Catholic Church has been the only subject that has so far recognized and protected the Albanian minority.

The fact that it was the Church, which defended the language, the tradition and the identity of the Arberia, has avoided the development of secular associations: the ethnic revival started in 1968, anniversary of the death of the Giorgio Castriota Skanderberg. In 1970 the Unione Comunità Italo-Albanesi was founded in Cosenza,

The role of the religion and of the Church. The revival.

The Albanians who arrived in Italy followed the religious Byzantine rites in Greek: this represented an important element of cohesion of their communities because the Catholic Church is the only institution that recognizes the Arbëresh community as a particular group, has allowed them to maintain their rite and the right for priests to marry (with the exception of the superior grade). These characteristics that contradict the image of the priest mostly enrooted in Italian stereotypes contributes to maintaining the difference between themselves and the Italians (Papàs Antonio Bellusci, Associazione Culturale Centro Ricerche G. Castriota).

The celebration of the Mess is an element that differentiates clearly the Albanians (or Italo-Albanians, as they define themselves) from the Italians: according to the Greek Byzantine rite, there is a constant dialogue between the one who celebrates and the people through singing in Arbëresh. This religious rite is the sign of the resistance to homogenisation. Unfortunately, under the pressure of the Catholic Church and the Italian authorities, about half of the Albanian communities have lost the rite, which is still maintained in the Cosenza province, in Calabria and near Piana degli Albanesi, in Sicily, near Palermo. In these two areas, the language of religious functions is now Arbëresh: after the

Ecumenical Vatican Council II, the Greek language was abandoned for Arbëresh. In short, the Catholic Church recognized the Albanian language as the language for religious practices.

The religious factor, together with the language, has been central for maintaining cohesion of the group and identification. The clerical representatives have played a very important role in defence of the rights of this minority: in two seminars, Saint Adrian (1732) in Calabria and the second in Palermo (1734) in Sicily, the Arbëresh intelligentsia was formed. The institution of the Eparchia of Lungro (1919), which included the communities of Calabria (continental Italy) and the one of Piana degli Albanesi (1937), which included the communities in Sicily, has been very important for the maintain of the Arbëresh identity.

In the religious seminars of Saint Adrian and Palermo, Greek Albanian colleges, it is not only a clerical, but a secular intelligentsia that was formed: this intelligentsia would show progressive ideals in the 19th century, participating in the Risorgimento (among them two Ministers of the Garibaldi government in Sicily in 1860). The most famous Arbëresh in the political history of Italy is Francesco Crispi, Minister in 1878. Other intellectuals fought for the political rights of Albania, still under the Ottoman domination.

Fascism had a negative impact as well on the Albanians, encouraging a progressive Italianization:

During the fascist period it was forbidden to our citizens to speak Albanian. For this reason, the value, the sense of our language was lost and the following generation has suffered because of this (Interview with Giulio Peta, President of the Proloco and Centro Anziani of Caraffa).

After the fall of fascism, nothing was done to protect the Arbëresh language: monolingual school and the media continued the destruction of the Arbëresh culture and language. Emigration to northern Italy, northern Europe, Canada and Australia, which affected all the regions where the Arbëresh were, brought the language towards a sort of pre-agony, according to the terms

of Giulio Peta. It was precisely at this moment in the mid-1960s, that there was a reaction.

The linguistic revival of the 1960s tried to respond to the risk of disappearance:

The lack of a policy of protection by the State, the scattering on a large territory, the mass alphabetisation exclusively in Italian, the influence of mass media, which speak and write only in Italian and emigration are the main causes of the regression of Albanian communities in Italy, which have been expropriated of their cultural and ethnic identity and relegated in a condition which is more and more subordinated and marginal. (Papàs Antonio Belusci, Associazione Culturale Centro Ricerche G.Castriota).

This information is confirmed by researchers who have studied this minority:

From about 100 small Arberesh communities recorded in eight Italian regions in 1837, only 50 were recorded in 1963, and 40 after another three years, in 1966 (Gjinari and Shkurtaj: 1997, 255). From my observations during fieldwork in Italy between June 2001 and January 2002, more than half of these communities have lost their languages. In most cases, the particularities of their dialects and cultures died uncollected and unstudied. Those that still maintain their language have lost a great number of speakers and use Arberesh in restricted situations and settings. In some dialects, the language is near complete death. A concomitant of Arberesh language loss is a gradual shift to the dominant language, Italian. (Derhemi: 2002)

In this context during the 1970s and early-1980s, the first associations for revitalizing Arbëresh language and character were created. In 1966 the magazine "Vatra Jonë (Our Fireplace)" was founded in S. Costantino Albanese (Potenza). In Carafa (Calabria), in 1975, the first centre for the promotion of the Arbëresh language and culture among the young people was created. The circle would later become the Proloco- Centro Anziani di Carafa, a non-governmental cultural association established in 1985,

then renewed and adapted to the new regional system in 1995, in order to preserve the local cultural traditions connected to the historical presence of the Albanian community.

The objectives of the Proloco are:

- to preserve the local Albanian language and traditions;
- to collect and analyse historical and folkloristic material about the traditional and cultural features of the Albanian community presence in the region; and
- to raise awareness among local populations and institutions on Arbëresh culture and history by organizing activities, excursions, and plays.

In Frascineto (Calabria), in 1980, Papàs Antonio Bellusci funded the review *Italo-Greek-Albanian Lidhja* (Boundary Union), as an organ of information. In 1982, the cultural association “*Centro ricerche socio-culturali Giorgio Kastrioti*” was established with the objective of carrying out ethnographic research and dissemination activities regarding the Albanian communities and culture in Italy. Mister Papàs Antonio Bellusci is the main promoter of the various activities of the centre: as he says, his personal research began autonomously in 1950 by collecting valuable ethnographic material then developed to other personal initiatives, as below.

The objectives of the Centre are:

- to promote research and knowledge about the cultural characters of the Greek-Albanian communities in Italy.
- to set up Albanian language courses (reading, speaking, writing).
- to organise meetings, workshops, conferences and debates about the Arbëreshë issues.
- to publish the outcomes of field researches about the cultural and traditional characteristics of the Arbëreshë community.

In 2001 an international library with more than 10,000 books and around 450 periodicals and a museum was established in Frascineto.

Now Calabrian regions and the towns are beginning to finance the associations, which also have the function of promoting the area, from a tourist point of view. This is, for example, one of the functions of the Proloco of Caraffa. The local authorities collaborate with the associations that want to promote the Arbëresh culture and language.

The creation of the University of Calabria, with a Arbëresh Studies department was another important moment for the preservation of language and culture.

In 1998, Sicily passed Law no. 26 for the protection of linguistic minorities, but it was amended and weakened by the State Commissar who thought that certain rights should remain within the competence of the State rather than the region. (see next paragraph Finally Law 482/99 passed.)

As a sign of the vitality of the movement of the Arbëresh, the President of the CONFEMILI, the association that gathers all the associations dealing with minorities, Domenico Morelli is an Arbëresh.

The complex situation of the German-speaking minorities outside South-Tyrol

The majority of the German-speaking minority is established in South-Tyrol, where it is the majority, but outside South-Tyrol there are different German-speaking minorities with a completely different history, having settled in Italy in different historical periods during the Middle Ages.

The situation of this minority is complex, because there are different groups, expressing different types of demands and different language variants. The German-speaking minority has a different status in South-Tyrol and in other northern Italian regions.

In 1861, the German-speaking minority was considered unique: in fact, the minority generically called 'Germans' comprises at least four linguistic sub-groups. The German-speaking minority didn't include the people of South-Tyrol who were not yet part of Italy. It is important in fact to make a distinction between the South-Tyrolean minority, which is German-speaking and concentrated in a territory which became part of Italy in 1918, and the small German-speaking minorities scattered in the Alpine valleys, the micro-minorities. It was precisely because of their geographic location in mountain areas isolated for long months during the winter, that they maintained, during centuries, their minority languages.

These German-speaking micro-minorities do not represent more than 10,000 people all over Italy, and the estimate is optimistic (Luis Thomas Prader, Unitarian Committee of the Linguistic Islands Historical Germanic in Italy). Each minority counts between a few hundred to some thousands of speakers. These Germanic minorities speak old forms of German, an archaic language, which is not even written. They are the Walser in Val d'Aosta and Piedmont, Mochen and Cimbri in Lusern, Trento, and in the province of Verona, plus other small groups in Sappada/Pladen, Sauris/Zahre, Timau/Toschlbing and in Valcanale/Kanaltal.

Even if these minorities are very old, being the descendents of German populations who settled in these villages for military or commercial reasons around the year 1100 (it seems that some of them were invited by the Pope, during the second half of the 19th century) associations developed in the 1970s during the minority languages revitalization period, which corresponds to the time when the people having "active competence" of these languages were constantly diminishing, being reduced in some areas to 20 percent.

The most active among the German-speaking micro-minorities are the Walser, who are settled in Piedmont and Val d'Aosta, concentrated in different valleys. They originated from Switzerland, Canton Vallese, and have settled in the Piedmont through

migratory movements, which took place since the 12th-13th centuries.

The revitalisation of their tradition took place in the 1970s: a museum of the Walser traditions was created in Alagna, the Walsermuseum. In the same years, a movement of revitalisation, encouraged from outside, interested the German-speaking minorities of Trentino, Veneto and Friul.

It must be said that in opposition to minorities like the Ar-bëresh or the Catalans, the members of these minorities didn't consider their minority language as a language that deserved to be preserved for the future generation. Some of the interest for their language has been suggested from outside, from the Vereine Spracheninselnfreunde of Wien, which has financed associations like the "Circolo Culturale di Timau Gi Unfer", founded in 1979.

At the beginning our centre was a social structure for young people. In the following year, in 1980, after a trip to Vienna at an exhibition on the linguistic islands in the alpine arc we have realized that what we had was a richness, and the importance of our language, because there were professors who studied it and there was a museum which was collecting objects of our life, materials of this area [...] and we wondered why this importance and then we understood what we were speaking, that is, that we had a treasure at home [...] and since 1980 we started taking care of the problems of the language, more and more (Mauro Unfer, Circolo Culturale di Timau Gi Unfer)

The Italian authorities had done nothing until then (and have done nothing, until now), in order to preserve this treasure represented by an old Germanic language. From the 1980s onwards, the members of the Circolo Culturale di Timau Gi Unfer have started to use their language for poems and theatre.

In a second phase, the associations of the Germanic minorities have got and have created together a Unitarian Committee gathering them all, which is in direct contact with the CONFEMILI, an umbrella organisation where all the minority associations are represented.

In spite of a more and more structured organisation, these scattered minorities do not have any political claims.

We culturally and socially feel in any aspect Italians, we do not have any political or ethnic claim... Historically, we have been part of the Patriarchy of Aquileia, of the Republic of Venice, for a short time under the Austrian empire, and, after 1866, under Italy. Therefore we don't advance any of these nationalistic claims that somebody want to attribute to us. Sometimes we reject even the idea of "roof language", which is German, because we think that it is corrupting the old German we speak..." (Interview with Mauro Unfer, Circolo Culturale di Timau, Gi Unfer).

It is difficult to answer to questions about our "policies". We do not have the same characteristics of the "big" minorities. (Luis Thomas Prader, Unitarian Commite of the Linguistic Islands Historical Germanic in Italy).

However, they strongly protect their languages in schools, through regular courses on language and local history, in the media, which is denounced as monolingual, and ask for financial support for projects related to their language and culture. At the moment the majority of the activities are done on a voluntary basis.

There is a difference among the status of the different minorities: the Walser of Aosta and the Germanic communities in the province of Trento are well protected because of the specific laws of the autonomous regions while other minorities are completely abandoned by the State and the region:

In fact, Regions have voted norms of protection of minority languages, but generally the funding is quite limited. The representatives of the single minorities consider that the sums are highly insufficient, it depends from the political situation, not always in favour of the protection of the single minority (Luis Thomas Prader, Unitarian Commite of the Linguistic Islands Historical Germanic in Italy.)

The claim for a support is particularly crucial, considering that in many villages there is a relevant emigration, which is as well

a cause of loss for language and tradition. The precarious condition of the language could be solved with a sort of measures or interventions that even the Law 482/99 has not implemented, in spite of the great expectations it has raised.

There is a complete dark, in relationship to the media, television and radio. Only in the Trentino Region – South Tyrol, there is the presence of the RAI with the Mochén community...For the paper or printed media single communities take care of publication of linguistic-cultural character, but the financing of these publications comes often by private sponsoring (Luis Thomas Prader, Unitarian Commite of the Linguistic Islands Historical Germanic in Italy).

In fact the Timau community has been able to make a television journal of one hour in the Furlan television, then an Internet web-page, an initial version of a dictionary and then opened a service for Timau speakers.

*The Arfe resolution and the legal debate in the 1980s.
The European Union and minorities.*

We have said that in 1977, recommendation no.814 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on the study of the modern languages: at comma 9, a,iii, it recognizes “the cultural utility of preserving linguistic minorities in Europe”. Two years after, in 1979, European Parliament Member Gaetano Arfé, an Italian depute, prepared a resolution on a chart for the ethnic minorities. In 1980, the European Parliament established a research (indagine conoscitiva), concerning minorities. On 16 October 1981, the European Parliament undertook a resolution on a community chart on regional languages and cultures and on a chart on the rights of the ethnic minorities.

When Gaetano Arfé, a socialist, presented his resolution at the European Parliament, in Italy the sensibility to the issue of the minorities reached different members of the political world, be-

longing to left-wing parties (radicals, socialist and communists). Various bills and proposals for the protection of the minorities were put forth between the late-1970s and 1980s. Some of these bills concern specific minorities (Sardinians, Ladins, Friulans), others are global. The first global proposal was presented by the Radical Party, 20 June 1979: *Tutela dei diritti dei cittadini della Repubblica di lingua diversa da quella italiana e delle minoranze linguistiche*; the second one, in chronological order, is the proposal of the Socialist Party, *Norme in tutela delle minoranze linguistiche* on 24 October 1980 and the third was proposed by the Communist Party, the 4 February 1981, *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche*. The three global laws expressed, however, very different points of view:

In the meantime, the Constitutional Court had produced sentences recognizing the minorities the right to express themselves in their language in courts: sentence 28 of 1982 calls the Slovenians, a recognized minority, with the right to express themselves in their language, even if their region, Friuli, an autonomous region, doesn't have the same special status for the use of the language that South-Tyrol or Val d'Aosta.

Nevertheless, the legislative intentions are fated to be aborted. Ten years after, in 1991 Italy still did not have a general protection law for its linguistic minorities. Another proposal reached Parliament but not the Senate: Bill 612 "*Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche*" met the same fate. Despite the inflamed critics of some intellectuals, [...] who feared that this measure would encourage "municipalisms" and "localisms" [...], the bill was passed in November 1991 by the Chamber by [almost] all the parties [...], but did not succeed in reaching the Senate, owing to the anticipated closing of the legislature." (C. Marta: 1998, 6).

The global legal proposals are the indications of a new mobilisation on the issue by the associations, the scholars (as we have said, the linguistic research has become very important in these years), the trade unions and the political parties.

Moreover, during these years, the main issue concerning the protection of the minorities were raised: what are the “individual rights” given to the minority members and what are the rights (and the tasks) of the communities? Should the minorities who are due special rights be listed or should the rights be recognized to the minority groups that claim for them? Which institutions should implement the minorities’ protection? Should the minority language be compulsory at school? Should bilingualism be promoted in the minority area? All these questions found different answers in the various legal proposals. A larger debate among the minorities’ community and, more in general, in the civil society, was necessary.

The development of institutions and associations for the defence of the rights of minorities was an interesting outcome of this period. Following the Arfe Resolution, the first big national association for the defence of the rights of the minorities, having the ambition of influencing the national policy was created: the CONFELMI, Comitato Nazionale Federativo delle Minoranze linguistiche italiane, in English CONFEMILI. It is the main organisation representing linguistic minorities in Italy, gathering around 100 associations and local administrators (for example, the Regione Autonoma Trentino Alto Adige, which is member of CONFELMI since 2001. The large representation of minorities in the CONFEMILI is seen by the composition of the board: President Domenico Morelli is Arberesh, the Vice-President Bojam Brezigar is Slovenian, the counsellors: Fabio Chiocchitti (Ladin), Carles Secchi (Catalan), Sergio Bonato (Cimbri), Giampiero Boschero (Provençal), Tomas Prader (German).

The CONFELMI was born twenty years ago, following the Arfe decision. It has three main sectors of activities in order to support the protection and the diffusion of minority languages:

- Education;
- Mass media; and
- Use of the minority language in the public administration.

Education

This is the field where the CONFEMILI is most active, considering as well that the majority of the members are teachers. That's why the group on education is functioning quite well, in spite of the limited financing of the Ministry of Education and the local authorities.

The CONFEMILI has established a network of teachers, exchanging experiences. Law 482 has contributed to reinforce a movement which already existed. The group has also important links with the Universities of the linguistic minorities' areas: Cosenza (Calabria), Udine (Friuli) and Bolzano (Sud Tyrol) and with academics in the field of linguistic and education (Prof. Tullio De Mauro, Prof. Aldo Visalberghi, Prof. Antonio Pizzorusso, Prof. Petitone). These academics are counsellors of the education group of CONFEMILI.

The group has started to work with the "small" languages (Arberesh, and Greek) and now includes also representatives of the "great" languages, like German in South Tyrol and French in Valle d'Aoste.

The regional laws for linguistic minorities' protection. LAW 482/99 and its development

The regional laws for linguistic minorities' protection

In absence of a national law on linguistic minorities, implementing Article 6 of the Constitution, the regions (both the one at ordinary and at special status) started to produce bills and law proposals concern specific minorities at the regional level.

The bills and law proposals at regional have a better chance. Thanks to the regions at ordinary status, regional laws aimed at the promotion of cultural and linguistic autonomy were implemented during the 1980s and 1990s. While the national overall

law did not reach Parliament for a debate, many laws aimed at protecting linguistic minorities were voted at the regional level.

As we have seen, one of the regions where the ethnic revival was more important was the Friul Venezia-Giulia. It is not by chance then, that the Friuli-Venezia Giulia was a pioneer region in matter of legislation on minority language and culture protection. Regional Law 68/1981, in Title VI, provided for contribution aid to support "activities intended to protect and promote the Friulan language and culture and other local cultures and languages", identifying, in addition to the Friulan language, language and culture of Slovenian, German and Venetian origin.

This law was improved by another one on the protection of the linguistic minority in 1988. The other regions followed the Friulan example: the majority of the regional Laws protecting minority languages and cultures were approved in the 1990s.

A further push to the regions to make their own laws came from the European Community and from the Treaties of the European Union. With the 1990s and the process of European unification, further rights and freedoms were introduced. Free circulation for Europeans was implemented, and the Schengen Space abolished internal borders. Apart from a larger possibility of movement, this fact entailed greater economical, as also cultural, social and linguistic exchange.

The unification of the European States implied also the need to formulate new unitary (European) laws, along with educational programmes addressing various types of minorities present in the new European formation. In this context, next to the historical national minorities, the transnational or non-territorial ones appeared as pan-European minorities, and they are perhaps on the point of "finding a motherland". As to the status of immigrated minorities, it seems that they, in many European countries including Italy, still do not find a place among the minority formations, still being treated as a separated and unsolved subject.

The European community continue to pay attention to the topic through a unitary legislation. Thereby, it is essential to study the impact of the Italian legislation with the European one,

given that the regulations of single member states should follow the common European legislation. Three principal international documents concerning the minority rights are:

- 1992 – Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (United Nations);
- 1992 – European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe); and
- 1995 – Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe).

In Italy, waiting for a comprehensive national law on linguistic minorities, the regions moved alone, promoting interventions and regulations on the strictly regional level.

Ten years after Friuli had voted his first law on the language and one or two years after that Friuli had voted the second, the other two autonomous regions, having a special status voted laws to promote minority languages Sardinia and Sicily. The regional law of Sardinia no. 26 from 15 October 1997, aimed at the promotion and increase in value of the culture and language of Sardinia. With this law, the region assumes the cultural identity of the Sardinian people as the main public goods to give value to and to promote, and it sees its evolution and growth as the basis of any intervention aiming at activating personal and social progress, economic development processes and internal integration inside an European construction based on diversity in regional cultures. In this respect it guarantees, protects and gives value to free and multiform expressions of identity, needs, languages and cultural productions in Sardinia, in conformity with the principles of the special status.

On the contrary, the law of Sicily is not aimed at promoting Sicilian language and culture in spite of the existence of associations defending the status of Sicilians as language (Movimento Trinacria), but the minority languages inside Sicily, like Arbëresh. The regional law of Sicily, from 9 October 1998, no. 26, states:

Measures for the safeguard and increase in value of the historical, cultural and linguistic heritage of the Sicilian communities of Albanian origin and of other linguistic minorities. Contributions to the regional provinces for the direction of university curricula. Increase of the contribution as in Art.1 of the regional law of 4 June 1980, no. 52.

Here is the list of these laws approved in seven Italian regions; as to their contents, they can in some cases be obvious from their very titles:

- 1988 - the Friuli-Venezia Giulia regional law, 9 March 1988, no. 10, later superseded by the law of 22 March 1996, no. 15: Regulations for the Protection and Promotion of the Friulan Language and Culture, and Institution of the Service for Regional and Minority Languages;
- 1990 - the Piedmont Regional Law of 10 April 1990, no. 26, amended by the regional law of 17 June 1997, no. 37; with these regulative acts the following languages are protected: Piedmont's, Occitan, Francoprovenzale and Walser;
- 1994 - the Veneto Regional Law, 23 December 1994, no. 73: Promotion of the Veneto Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities; with this regulative act the following minority language communities are protected: the Dolomite Ladinians of Veneto, the Cimbris and the German-speaking communities of Sappada;
- 1996- The Basilicata Regional law, 28 March 1996, no. 16: Promotion and Protection of the Ethnic-Linguistic Minorities of Greek-Albanian origin in Basilicata; in order to improve the law and correct some inaccuracies, as well as to precisely defining the beneficiaries, the region approved a new regional law no. 40, on 3 November 1998: Regulations for the Promotion and Protection of the Arbëreshe Communities in Basilicata;
- 1997 - the Molise Regional Law, 14 May 1997, no. 15: Protection and Increase in Value of the Cultural Heritage of the Linguistic Minorities in Molise; with this regulative act protects the Croatian and Albanian languages;

- 1997 – the Sardinia Regional Law, 15 October 1997, no. 26: Promotion and Increase in Value of the Culture and Language of Sardinia;
- 1998 – the Sicily Regional Law, 9 October 1998, no. 26: Measures for the Safeguard and Increase in Value of the Historical, Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Sicilian communities of Albanian origin and of other linguistic minorities. Increase in the contribution referred to in Article 1 of the regional law of 4 June 1980, no. 52.

The debate on minorities in Italy was further developed by the local government reform in 1990, and, at the end of the 1990s by the school reform, which gave more autonomy to the schools, offering the possibility to present specific programmes.

Some Italian regions passed specific laws in favour of the Roma and Sinti communities to protect and safeguard their language and culture. They deserve to be mentioned even if Municipalities all too often show a resistance to their implementation. (C. Marta: 1998, 5). Nine Italian regions adopted them, the first one being the Veneto region with its regional law no. 41, entitled *Interventi a tutela della cultura Rom* (Interventions for the protection of the Roma culture), issued on 16 August 1984. During the second half of the 1980s, similar regional laws were promulgated by the Lazio Region (1985), the autonomous Province of Trento (1985). The Piedmont Region (1986), the Sardinia Region (1988), the autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (1988), the Tuscany Region (1988), the Emilia-Romagna Region (1988), the Lombardy Region (1989). However, the non-recognition of their language as a minority one represents the main reason for their difficult integration in the country's mainstream society.

In front of these activities of the region, the national level, with its institutions, was completely inadequate. In 1994, the Ministry of the Interior produced the First Report on the State of Minorities in Italy, edited by the Central Office for the Problems of Boundary Zones and Ethnic Minorities, for the purpose of furnishing a historical, cultural and social radiography on the situation of each single minority [...] (Ministry of the Interior

1994:4). With this act, the aforesaid Office tried to consider the cultural diversity, not as an element of discrimination, but as contribution to the richness of the national and European community (ibid.:5). (C. Marta: 1998, 6). Nevertheless, “the protection of the Gypsies’ diversity, was presented in the report as very problematic (id., p. 6).

The report was quite criticized by the people, who had been working on minority issues for years. At a Conference Gianni Matalon Nazzi, of the Friulan linguistic minority: the First Report on the State of Minorities in Italy, written by the Ministry of the Interior in 1994, edited by the Central Office for the Problems of Border Zones and of Ethnic Minorities. To state that it is a scandal that we waited 50 years from the proclamation of the Italian Constitution to write the first report is really not enough. Even more shameful is the content of such a report [...] there are so many silliness (sciocchezze) to make you shiver.

This critique indicates the incompetence of the central institutions. The relations between the central authorities and the minorities had not improved, even during the 1990s

Languages, dialects, bi-and plural-lingualism

The laws passed by the regions concern only recognized minority languages. The linguistic distinction between languages and dialects affected the legislation. We have seen that even contemporary linguistic, whose main representative is Tullio De Mauro, considers a dialect as a geographical diversification of a language. Tullio De Mauro, defines the dialects as “languages associated to the Italian”, because they descend all from the Italian “vulgar” (the language which appeared in Italy in the 11th century, spoken by the people – vulgus) (De Mauro: 1987).

In fact, the distinction between languages and dialects doesn’t satisfy everybody: in different Italian regions, associations and cultural groups ask for the protection of the Piemontese, the Ligure, the Venetian, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian dialect [...] all considered languages by the speakers. We can just quote

some cultural associations which try to revitalize the regional languages and cultures: the Centro Studi Piemontesi, founded in Turin in 1969, the Associassion Coltural Piemontèisa and Gioventù Piemontèisa, in Piedmont; the Consulta Ligure, in Liguria. We will go back to the when we will talk of the Northern League Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania.

In Sicily the "Movimento Trinacria - Antenna Trinacria" association, in favour of the independence of the island strongly defends the principle that the Sicilian is a language. This movement has as well a broadcasting station founded in early 1978 by pacific professionals and entrepreneurs from Catania and active in the independentist political area. Primary objective of the station was testifying the presence of this group in the interest of the community. At the end of 1978, with the adhesion to the Movimento Politico Fronte Nazionale Siciliano di Catania, R.T. - Trinacria, became Antenna Trinacria "Radio d'Assalto" (Radio of Assault). It improved the political line of the adherent ones and Antenna Trinacria became a movement of opinion (in the meantime it detaches from the F.N.S. and all the adherents to the political movement remained with the new project with the predictable closing of the Catanese Centre of the F.N.S.). The movement of opinion grew and illustrated characters of cultural Sicily took space in the broadcasting station. The members of the Sicilian Historical and Social Study Centre stuck to it and the association becomes the cultural soul of Antenna Trinacria. The persons responsible of A.T. were contacted by the Libyan Prime Minister interested in collaborating with a Broadcasting Station (Radio Sicily International) entertained inside the Libyan Consulate in Rome and championed the Libyan cause through the "Green Book" of Gheddafi. With the success arrived the troubles as well. A pylon with the antenna was uprooted in Valverde, oral and writings menacing arrived every day. It was the epilogue of the tragedy. An ugly day A.T. suffered a real attack: four covered persons entered the studios and hurled out the conductor, they broke four disks and they voluntarily left a rifle and a gun. The intervention of the headquarter was rapid: provisional seques-

tration of the space and investigations in progress. And Antenna Trinacria was left in silence, forever.

In 1989 the 94 MHz frequency was abandoned after the transmitter and the antenna were stolen. Antenna Trinacria kept on transmitting on 89 MHz.

The debate on languages or dialects has both political and linguistic aspects: there is no clear scientific answer from the scholars. In fact, the difference between language and dialect concern as well the same minority languages. Linguistic minorities in Italy speak languages which have a very different history and status. Because of this lack of studies on minority languages in Italy, there is nowadays a great confusion between minority languages and dialects, which end up to be either one or the other according to the type of minority mobilization and a debate on which languages should be normalized and if they should be normalized.

In the 1990s together with the regional laws, the long controversial of South-Tyrol was finally considered closed, after the acceptance of the packet on the autonomy by the Sud Tyroler Volkspartei in 1969 and the vote of the law in 1972. It took a long time for the implementation of the new status, which, by the way, foresees a strict distinction between the linguistic groups, who must be proportionally represented in the public offices.

In spite of some residual problems, the controversial with Austria was declared closed in 1992.

The same year, a research institution on minorities was created in Bozen: the EURAC, the European Academy, specialized in minority issues. Established by local law, initially to avoid the creation of the University, seen as a menace of "Italianization", the EURAC has become one of the main institutions that promotes cultural pluralism in Italy.

The European Academy (EURAC) promotes studies and researches in the field of minorities, cultural pluralism, bilingualism, and multilingualism. Our message is to value our "patrimony" of tri-lingualism in European integration, because this brings advantages to development." (K.Reiner, EURAC)

Training and research are provided with a range of subjects related to the local and regional needs and characteristics (linguistic studies, legislations about minorities and autonomy). After the national reform for the university, the roles between the university and the EURAC are clearly divided: the university manages and deals with teaching and does not conduct research, the academy manages and deals with research and does not teach.

Another important institution is the Centre for Plurilinguism "Centro Internazionale sul Plurilinguismo", a special structure of the Udine University active since 1993, in response to Italian Law 19/'91 on border zones and the possibility of economic and financial collaboration with trans-border countries, aimed at researching, documenting and training in the field of pluri-lingualism (understood generally as the simultaneous presence of more languages or linguistic variants in the repertory of a single or of a community).

The Centre for Plurilinguism in Friuli is the only centre in Italy that promotes multilingualism.

The objectives of the centre are:

- to gather (and make available) documentation related to pluri-linguist situations, resulting phenomena and scientific researches in the field;
- to promote autonomous scientific surveys on the subject, collaborating with national and international institutions and initiatives alike;
- to organise workshops, seminars and conferences in order to promote a smooth and quick flow of information and experiences among the concerned researchers; and
- to disseminate the results of these researches in the most convenient way.

The research centre is formed by a scientific committee of 9 people, 2 managing boards (assembly and executive) of 30 and 9 people respectively, a director and a vice-director: support is given by internal and external collaborators.

The centre hosts workshops, seminars and conferences; training courses; publication of the periodical "Plurilinguismo" and of several studies and books; library service and Internet site providing valuable resources and links.

Trilingualism is among the proposals of the Centre for Plurilinguism. As it is suggested by some experts, it seems that the safest way to conciliate the different local, regional and supranational needs of citizens would be to elaborate a general education law in three languages. The particular form that we should adopt in this trilingual education law could and even should vary from one region to another. Some take for example the trilingual educational law adopted by the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. It is an interesting case, because they are trying to maintain the Luxemburg's identity, the integration of a population of different origins and the opening towards other nationalities. (Baetens Beardsmore: 2003)

Research on the issue of cultural pluralism, bilingualism, plurilinguism, minorities, promoted in these centers might offer new ideas for a better way of dealing with the rich ethno-cultural fragmentation of Italy will be developed. It must be stressed, however, that, these institutions are the result of activities and policies of the minorities, beyond or even against national Italian policies. In fact, these institutions are not in Rome, but in the areas where minorities live.

Institutional development in the 1990s. Law no. 482 of 1999: Regulations on the Protection of Historical Linguistic Minorities). The emergence of the Northern League.

We have mentioned the fact that, in the 1990s, the interest for minorities became crucial at a European level, affecting Italy in the framework of the European Union. The climate of unprecedented European support for multilingualism and an overspill of protective enthusiasm for smaller languages made it possible that even minority languages within the EC countries gained a

certain recognition and at least a few economic benefits. (Dorian: 1998, 19)

We have already mentioned the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages (Council of Europe) dating back to 1992, which represents the most important document in this field. Through the Schengen Agreement, borders were cancelled, a fact which implies a greater ease of movement but which requires new unitary and local laws towards various types of minorities present in the new European context.

In the meantime, Italy had no yet a general law on the protection of linguistic minorities, in spite of the growing debate, including inside the academic world and the development of institutions promoting the multilingualism, as already mentioned EURAC in Bolzano and the Centro Internazionale sul Plurilinguismo of Udine.

Finally, the opening to the issue of minorities responded to internal political changes: the development of the Northern League movement and the arrival into power of the Prodi government, an experience of centre-left government (the Olive Tree), where the right-wing part of the Christian Democrats were absent (the party had split, following the season of Mani Pulite, anti-corruption movement, into a left part and a right part).

The emergence of the Lega Nord, a populist party exploiting the socio-cultural differences of the peninsula (Rumiz: 2002), focusing especially on the opposition between the North and the South and demanding either the independence of the "Padania" (a part of northern Italy) or a federal state has further complicated the issue of the minorities in Italy. In fact, the movement of the Northern League represents a new form of the old North-South opposition. The Northern League cannot be considered a minority movement, because of the confusion of the ethno-linguistic and cultural characters it claims. The Northern League is in fact a political movement fighting for a different form of a federal state which can give more autonomy, mainly to the rich northern regions, against the poor south. For this reason, it cannot be mixed with the historical minorities. In some regions, however, the Northern League has found supporters among

regional movements, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, like, for example in Piedmont, Lombardy and Friuli.

Even if the experience of the Northern League has nothing to do with linguistic and cultural minorities, whose traditions are embedded in history, this movement is opposed to a centralised state had provoked a large debate on the form of state that is more suitable to the Italian context. Among the possible models for the nation-state, the Northern League has first claimed for the independence of the Padania, while now, it is in favour of federalism or devolution.

In front of the League, the left parties were proposing a real federalism that gives more autonomy to the Regions, preserving an equal distribution of the resorts and promoting pluralism – that is promoting all the cultural diversities (including the new minorities represented by the immigrants) – before the racist localism represented by the Northern League.

In this context, the Italian Legislative Chamber finally agreed to pass a law on the specific matter of linguistic minorities: Law no. 482, entitled Regulations on Protection of Historical Linguistic Minorities, that is regarding the historical minority languages spoken on the territory of the Italian State.

Elisabetta Palici di Suni Prat comments on the current law on linguistic minorities:

The passage of this bill was rather tormented and reflects the contradictions in the evolution of the legislation on the protection of linguistic minorities in Italy. The bill was tabled in the Chamber of Deputies on 9 of May 1996 [...], simultaneously with other bills. The text approved by the Commission introduced numerous changes to the original proposal. It went back to the Assembly in May 1998 and [...] there were several amendments before it was approved on 17 June 1998. It went on to the Senate and on 25 June 1998 [...] to the United Committees for Constitutional Affairs and Public Education, which began to examine it in November 1998. (E. Palici di Suni Prat: 1999, 92-93).

The 20 articles of Law no. 482 regulate the following issues: the status of the official national language, i.e. Italian (Art. 1); the minorities whose languages and cultures are protected by the Republic through the present law (Art. 2); territorial delimitation in which are applied the regulations of protection of the historical linguistic minorities concerned by the law, and the conditions of this delimitation (Art. 3); teaching activity of/in the recognised minority languages, scientific research, cultural projects and activities aimed at them (Art. 4-6); the question of public use of the recognised languages in town councils, various administrations, tribunals and other public bodies (Art. 7-9); toponymy (Art. 10); recognition and reinstatement of original names and surnames (Art. 11); the mass media system and the public radio-television services in minority languages admitted to protection (Art. 12); their own legislation (Art. 13); publishing activity, press, private radio-television broadcasting stations, as well as the associations aiming to safeguard the linguistic minorities (Art. 14); the forecast of the “expenses borne by the local bodies” (Art. 15); “the creation of special institutes for the protection of linguistic and cultural traditions of the populations considered by the present law” (Art. 16); the law’s implementation (Art. 17); its application in the regions with special status (Art. 18); promotion of inter-regional and abroad cooperation, particularly with the states “in which the citizens of the relative communities maintain and developed the socio-cultural and linguistic identity of origin” (Art. 19); the last article deals with “the burden deriving from the implementation of the present law” (Art. 20).

The law doesn’t make particular hints on the regions with special status or on single minority communities, except for the Autonomous Provinces of Trent and Bolzano concerned by Art. 18:

“Art. 18. - 1. In the regions with special status, the application of the most favourable provisions predicted by the present law is disciplined with implementation regulations of the respective statutes. The protection regulations, existent in the regions with

special status and in the Autonomous provinces of Trent and Bolzano, remain steady.

Before the implementation regulations come into force [...], the provisions of the present law are applied in the regions with special status, whose legal system does not predict protection regulations." (Law no. 482, 1999, Art. 18).

The legislator's solicitude in promoting the protection and safeguard of the country's linguistic-cultural peculiarities of historical linguistic minorities is evident, as well as the preoccupation to avoid damaging the integrity and autonomy of the regions with special status. On the whole, it is necessary to point out the importance of having at last a law on this specific topic.

But even with the present law, recurrent questions remain unsolved both in the international and national legislation: for example the definition of the concept of minority – in this case linguistic – is still missing; some minorities are excluded; the transnational and non-territorial minorities (Roma, Sinti) are ignored.

Moreover, when the Law 482 was finally approved, it was probably already too late for the preservation of the richness of minority languages in Italy. According to the EUROMOSAIC, of the 13 minority languages in Italy, more than half have no capacity to survive. As Dehremi writes:

A minority discourse can vanish not only when there are political groups that actively and deliberately fight the existence of a certain language and culture. Minority languages can also die when societies that use these languages are indifferent and lack effective institutional intervention to protect them. (Dehremi: 2002, 3).

State Institutions for the Implementation of Law 1999. The Central Office for the Problems of Border Zones and of Ethnic Minorities.

Law 482/1999 was approved too late to save many minority languages in Italy. It was as well approved too late to be implemented

before the political change that took place in 2001, meaning the end of the centre-left government.

In order to have an effective implementation, Law 482/99 should be part of a more general project on cultural pluralism in Italy. Or the implementation of the Law 482/99 and the debates it has raised have taken place in a country deeply divided on basic issues like the relationship between the central government and the regions: federalism or devolution (the two terms are often confused) are presented by the Northern League as a political flag, while the principle of cultural pluralism was rejected by the same Northern League, with racist discourses, in the name of local exclusive invented identities. In the rejection of cultural pluralism, the Northern League found an ally in National Alliance, the heir of the neo-fascists, and of Forza Italia (the party of Berlusconi). These parties reject pluralism in name of neonationalism.

Given the conflictive history of the relationship between the Italian central state and the minorities, the national institutions in charge of dealing with minorities and of implementing the law are not adequate.

We have spoken of the Central Office for the Problems of Border Zones and of Ethnic Minorities, dependent on the Ministry of the Interior, which published the First Report on the State of Minorities in Italy in 1994, a report that was so criticized by Gianni Matalon Nazzi.

The office is divided into the coordination office and general affairs; office border areas; office linguistic minorities and groups of old settlement; office inter-border cooperation; and the central office.

Theoretically, this office should:

- deal with the issues of linguistic minorities settled in the border areas;
- studies and researches minorities;
- counsel and support the preparation of normative acts;
- conduct European and international activity supporting minorities; and

- deal with the inter-border cooperation.

In fact, the office mainly takes care of border issues with Slovenia: its main task is, in fact, a security issue.

In 2001, the same Office of the Ministry of the Interior, charged a research in 1994, carried on one more research which gave rise to another report entitled *Culture and Images of Linguistic Groups of Old Settlement Present in Italy, First Report*. The initiative was conceived with the intention of making known to the youth the diverse reality of the ethnic-linguistic minorities present on the national territory, as well as of sending out a message of tolerance to new generations. The research dealt at the time, with only nine linguistic minorities present in our country: Walsers, Mòchens, Cimbris, Carinzians, Occitans, Croatians, Catalans, Greeks and Albanians, but the study will be extended to the remaining minorities in the future (web page of the Central Office, Ministry of the Interior). We are still waiting for the second part of the report that should present the other minorities.

In the absence of researches, the 2001 Report is interesting, but the approach is not deeply scientific. The report does not represent a step in promoting cultural pluralism or in pushing towards the implementation of Law 482/99.

The issue of the Slovenian borders interest particularly the present government, in a sort of “anti-communist propaganda”. The present government is in fact engaged in the historical revision about the Italian minority expelled from former Yugoslavia and the massacres of a part of them in the “Foibe” (grottos in the mountains of Carnica) after Tito’s liberation of Yugoslavia.

The Ministry of the Regional Affairs (present Minister Enrico La Loggia, who was been recently denounced for corruption in relation to the Parmalat Affair) coordinates the work-group that is in charge of writing the rules for implementing the law. The CONFEMILI that is the main organisation that is most heavily represented. According to the CONFEMILI, the results of the work of the group for the implementation of the law in the school are satisfactory. One of the most significant education programmes and experiences has been developed in Friul

and three other areas. It is the mentioned project: “Le piccole stelle del carro dell’orsa,” (see next Paragraph). These positive results may be due to the fact that the majority of the members of CONFEMILI are teachers. That’s why the group on education is functioning quite well, in spite of the limited financing of the Ministry of Education and the local authorities.

They have an established network of teachers, exchanging experiences. Law 482 has contributed to reinforce a movement that already existed. The group has also important links with universities in linguistic minorities’ areas: Cosenza (Calabria), Udine (Friuli) and Bolzano (South Tyrol) and with academics in the field of linguistic and education (Prof. Tullio De Mauro, Prof. Aldo Visalberghi, Prof. Antonio Pizzorusso, Prof. Petitone). These academics are counsellors of the education group of CONFELMI.

In the public administration, the experience of implementation of the law is quite positive. On the contrary, the situation is very problematic in the media. The access to the media is very difficult for the minorities, who are completely invisible in the present television programmes.

The CONFEMILI could have an important impact for the implementation of the law. The problem is that Law 482 doesn’t foresee money for the associations. The CONFELMI is not financed through Law 482.

Minister La Loggia did not answer the five requests (fax, telephone, e-mail) concerning an appointment to discuss the law. From internet research, it would seem that the activities of the Ministry of Regional Affairs, as far as the minorities are concerned, are concentrated towards the eastern border area in the attempt of obtaining a protection for Italian linguistic minorities in Slovenia and Croatia, through bilateral agreements.

The implementation of the law concerns as well the Presidency of the Council, the Ministry of Education, of the University, of the Foreign Affairs and of the Communication (because of the media). The other Ministers do not seem especially active in minorities’ issues. However, none of them seems particularly active.

Law 482/99 and Education. The Office 10 for the School Autonomy area at the Ministry of Education

In spite of this diversified linguistic landscape, in the Italian education system, little attention has been given to the bilingualism or multilingualism of the students, except for few areas where a bilingual or multilingual education is foreseen.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, these areas are represented by the two autonomous regions of Val d'Aosta (where it is spoken a Franco-Provençal dialect and the bilingual education is done in French) and of Trentino-Alto Adige (where in the province of Bolzano people speak German and Ladin and where the teaching and learning are done in Italian, German or in trilingual schools). In Friuli Venezia Giulia Friulan is taught thanks to the regional law and in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia there are state schools that teach Slovenian.

Isolated and sometimes sporadic initiatives have been taken even at a regional and local level in some southern regions for Albanian and Greek languages. In the cases of these minorities, Law 482/99 has been extremely important.

The inattention towards the linguistic pluralism of the Italian nation appeared as well in the approach used to teach the Italian philology and the Italian literature. In the last decades there has been some improvement both in the contents taught in schools (the introduction of authors who represent 'minority' linguistic tendencies) and in a new attention towards the psychosocial aspects of the language teaching.

Law 482/99, combined with the school reform that has given more autonomy to the institutes has allowed the development of new activities. In the promotion of these activities, a main role has been played by the Office 10 for the School Autonomy area at the Ministry of Education. The office's main task is to continue the dissemination and the implementation of activities and procedures related to the school autonomy, with a certain regard to the curricula quotes (national and local). In this field, the role of the law has been quite important.

The objectives of the office are:

- to monitor the autonomy process in the schools, by checking the status and progress of ongoing national projects and activities;
- to promote a diffuse responsibility, through the school collegial bodies, over the educational choices concerning the curricula at a local and national level;
- to develop and keep up an effective network among the schools applying innovative curricula and programmemes, in order to reach a good coordination and communication among them;-to promote, in coordination with the national research bodies and directives, research and partnership initiatives among schools, private donors and other organizations, for them to reach and stipulate memorandums of understanding in the educational/training field; and
- to promote and ease initiatives that implement the principles included in the law 482/1999 in the area of minority languages.

Three people manage the Office 10: a person is responsible of the department for the development of instruction, another one for the school legislation and rules, Ms. Davoli as the director. The office is supported by twelve collaborators.

Regarding the minority languages in the schools, this office is the main responsible for a committee gathering periodically to evaluate and discuss proposals for national or local initiatives and programmemes: the committee is composed by a CONFEMILI representative, field experts, three administrative, one responsible for the communication and external relations, technical inspectors by the institutions implementing innovative programmemes.

As far as the minority languages are concerned, projects have been approved, funded and monitored since 2001. The office has carried out a monitoring action covering the first three years (2001 - 2003) useful for the presentation and implementation of minority languages / school autonomy projects, the criteria for the funding of which were: 1) to create a network among

schools interested by this kind of programmemes; 2) to establish a strong and sustainable link with the territory; 3) to proactively short-circuit with the remaining subjects and path included in the general curricula; 4) to plan training of trainers activities, in order to provide the good ground for a wide number of available and skilled field operators. The outcomes showed a good set of project proposed, matching these criteria, but it showed as well a difference between the “strong” minorities – mainly in the north (e.g. the Furlans): strongly rooted in the territory and the people’s mentality, deeply interacting with research scientific centres, developing cross border initiatives – and the “weak” ones – (e.g. the Greeks) less structured projects presented, less links and support by research or cross boarder centres.

Law 482/99, has aided in many projects having been approved, funded and monitored since 2001.

Le Piccole Stelle del Carro Minore (the small stars of the minor char) is among the most interesting projects. The name is a metaphor that sees the four linguistic islands/ minorities in Italy (Albanian, Greek, Furlan, Walser) as the four stars in the minor polar constellation, itself included in the wider sky, i.e. the other European “majority” languages and stars in the EU flag. The project started with the law issued on 15 December 1999 for the preservation of minority languages and traditions, and aims at establishing a link for constant confrontations among them.

The project has established a platform among schools teaching minority languages in four Italian regions (Calabria, Puglia, Friuli, Val d’Aosta), allowing through discussion and confrontation to build up a shared and professionally skilled pedagogical framework (method and contents).

The idea is to study these languages and use them daily, conceiving them both as a teaching tool and a subject to learn for youngsters and elders. The specific characters of each language and culture are studied by organizing training activities for teachers, by involving the media, by creating a database collecting all the experiences carried out within the project, by constantly feeding back to umbrella organizations such as CONFEMILI, as a national network of different minorities’ associations.

The management structure of the project is led by one of the participating schools, in charge of collecting and distributing all the documentation, linking among schools and institutions.

A coordinating group, composed by school directors and teachers representatives, operates on a national level, also supported by a team of consultants coming from CONFEMILI and other international validating institutions. Financing comes from the Italian government.

Given the good result of the activities carried out during these three years (e.g. *Le Piccole Stelle del Carro Minore*), the idea for the future planning is to split the funds and assign: half of them to projects aiming at strengthening the network among the “weak” minorities and at creating valuable research centres for the languages they cover; half of them to the already “strong” ones for the involvement in EU networks and programmemes (e.g. *Comenius*).

According to these outcomes and Law 482 / 1999, the actual Minister of Education, Letizia Moratti, declared her support to the driving principle of the reform, i.e. continuing giving value and promoting the minority languages through implementation of this kind of programmemes: the purpose of linking the national projects with wider or similar projects in the European frame will be applied to all the minorities. The objective is that of gradually reducing the role of the State in this dynamic process, handing over to the local actors the responsibilities of networking nationally and internationally, presenting and implementing projects, thus preserving a sole mediation function between the national and wider (European / transnational) frameworks.

The major obstacle to the optimal evolution of the autonomy process was identified by Ms. Davoli as the actual lack of skilled teachers, a problem so far solved with temporary contractors who cannot grant continuous and coordinated presence nor methodology. In order to avoid this dangerous fallout, the first priority for her office will be thus of concentrating the efforts in the provision of training for operators, hopefully leading to the creation of a proper number of experienced and competent teachers.

Another interesting project that can be mentioned is “Alghero tra Mito e Storia”: starting in 2000, the project aimed at giving value (by the local population) and at promoting (by external visitors and tourism) culture, history and traditions of Alghero (Sardinia) by the establishment of a network among all the schools of all degrees and at all levels.

The objectives of the project are:

- to link all the local schools and encourage networking by teaching activities regarding the local tradition, culture, history;
- to promote the traditional features of the town by the local population and institutions as well as by the external visitors and tourism; and
- to experiment, develop and enlarge the training / teaching curricula and skills offered by the schools.

The project relies on the support of physical structures offered by local institutions (spaces, workshops, equipment of schools, theatres).

It is financed by the government through local municipality and regional administrations, and by voluntary donations and efforts of private institutions, experts, consultants.

Several teaching materials developed and taught throughout the school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 covering the analysis and study of traditional dresses, myths, traditions, music, architecture, food by the accordingly concerned institutes (primary, secondary, vocational tourism).

Law 482/99 and the minorities' associations

The law has certainly had a positive role in promoting the development of associations: it has given a role to umbrella organisations as the CONFEMILI, it has supported small minorities, who had not organised themselves before, as the Greco or German-speakers living outside South-Tyrol, and it has encouraged

associations which wanted to be more “transversal” that means that they wanted to represent a bridge between the different minorities and refused to represent just one minority.

The issue of multi-minorities associations appeared quite late in Italy, because of the permanent tensions each minority had with Rome, but it developed after the 1970s. The CONFEMILI represented an attempt of collaboration among the minorities. In the ethnically divided South-Tyrol, some experiences of a pluralist approach were developed by Alexander Langer, representative of the Green Party and by some associations. For example, the Convivia: a non-governmental and apolitical organization established in Bolzano in 1996 requested changes in the ethnic census and works mainly for the teaching of the second language in the schools (bilingual schools) of the region. The initiatives of Convivia are connected to a bi/multi-language approach in the schools and theatre, bringing about a political tension stemming from the issue of the recognition of the language as a tool for wider recognitions and rights.

Maybe the most interesting experience, direct consequence of the Law 482/99 is the “Comitât / Odbor / Komitat / Comitato 482”, established on 5 April 2002, in reference to Italian Law no. 482/1999 on the preservation of linguistic minorities and to push forward its implementation: it gathers various associations representatives of the Furlan, Slovenian and German-speaking communities in the Friuli region.

The Comitato 482 wants:

- follow up the implementation of the 482/'99 law and all the other state/ regional/ local laws and regulations related to preservation of minorities, and verify its/their proper and full implementation.
- intervene by the competent authorities – also on an international level – in case of mis/non-application or violation of the mentioned laws.
- sustain initiatives for the acknowledgement of the of the professionalism for those who are appointed to the application of the law.

- fund-raising through self-financing or donations to afford the legal costs of the trial in case of law violation.
- intervene in case of any discriminatory action taken towards the members of the linguistic minority.

Comitato 482 is a free association of singles and organizations (more than 30, working for the protection of rights for Furlan linguistic groups, preservation of the languages and information), not officially recognized, with no public funding and not political affiliations.

Decisions are taken after discussion in regular meetings by a majority vote, and the coordinating board is composed by four representatives from the Furlan communities and two from the Slovenian ones.

As mentioned before, the financing is based on fund-raising or self-financing activities, therefore the management and organization is covered by the voluntary work of the members.

The documents issued by the committee are normally tri-lingual (Furlan, Slovenian, Italian, sometimes German as well).

With the overall aim of strengthening the local languages and in the framework of the general objectives (point 2), the fields covered by the initiatives of the Committee were mainly:

- the teaching of the languages in the schools;
- their presence in the media; and
- their presence in the public institutions.

Several campaigns were successfully carried out to raise awareness by political representatives on the local, national as well as international level, obtaining so far a public declaration of intent.

The existence of the committee itself is a proof of the realistic possibility of a peaceful coexistence of historically hostile communities, moreover its membership growth provides further signs of the success of their initiatives by the citizens and public opinion.

Some informal contacts have been taken with other groups and committees around Italy covering similar issues; each organization partner in the committee is autonomous when taking networking initiatives in this respect.

Other interesting institutions created after Law 482/99 concerning the smaller minority groups that had never had official representatives, such as the small German-speaking minorities of Walser, Mochen and Cimbri. They established a "Comitato Unitario delle Isole Linguistiche Storiche Germaniche in Italia" a non-profit organization established in Luserna on 25 May 2002 after the issuing of the law 482/'99, aimed at the preservation of the German language and culture represented by the German-speaking islands: Walser in the Val d'Aosta and Piedmont regions, Mochen in the Trentino Alto Adige region, Cimbri in the Trentino Alto Adige and Veneto regions, and other minority groups in the mountains of the northeast (Sappada, Timau, Valcanale, Sauris). The committee adheres to the CONFEMILI.

The objectives of the Comitato are:

- to establish a common referent for the various German-speaking islands scattered in the Alps in order to set the basis for a valuable cooperation and network among them;
- to coordinate the activities of the different associations / organizations also aimed at preserving the German language;
- to avoid duplication or dispersion of work and activities; and
- to achieve a stronger and more effective position on a political and institutional level.

Members of the committee are the representatives of the associations and institutions of the German linguistic and cultural communities. Decisions are taken after discussion in regular meetings by a majority vote: there are two managing boards and one coordinator (elected each two years) The committee is voluntary-based; financing is provided by the Regione Trentino, by subscription fees and donations.

A guide to the German-speaking islands in Italy is going to be ready and published both in German and Italian;

A site is under construction, and a network established and running, in Italy and abroad.

The “Circolo culturale di Timau Gi Unfer” is a non-governmental cultural association established in 1979 and active since 1980, aimed at the preservation of the Carintian language spoken in Timau, Valcanale, Sauris (Friuli region) and in Sappada (Veneto region).

The local language comes from a Carintian language stock, the association doesn't claim a specific ethnic diversity, only a linguistic one, so they consider themselves Italian citizens “speaking a different language”.

The objectives are

- to preserve the local Carintian language;
- to raise awareness among local populations and institutions about the Law 482/'99 and other laws and regulation related to the preservation of minorities' culture and rights; and
- to organise and start-up activities and services by the local institutions dedicated specifically to the local German-speaking population.

The association is a cultural one, therefore all the local institutions or other association willing to support the general objectives are free to join.

Financing is provided by the local municipality and by the Austrian cultural association “Vereine Spracheninselfreunde”, caring for the German-speaking islands.

Activities consist in editing a news programmeme in the Carintian language; research on historical and folklore material; networking with other similar associations;

An Internet site; an office providing linguistic services for German-speaking people.

Immigrant Minorities' Formation and Institutions

The shift from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. The developing of an immigration policy.

Historically an emigration country, in last 25 years Italy has become the destination of new migratory movements from Africa, Asia and eastern Europe.

The shift occurred in the late-1970s and early 1980s when northern European countries were closing their borders to foreign workers and introducing policies of strict control over migratory flows.

Was it reasonable to expect that, in a country where the relationships between the State and the minorities had been so difficult, the arrival of immigrants could become an opportunity to further develop cultural pluralism? Looking at the recent history of Italy, it was not reasonable. At the beginning of the flows, the reception of the immigrants by the Italian society was characterized by a superficial "social tolerance", a concept developed Franco Ferrarotti, one of the main Italian sociologists. It is important to stress that this attitude characterized the Italian society: the central government didn't develop any reception policy. The reception activities were left to NGOs, which began to play an important role in the immigration issue, and to local authorities (Regions, Provinces and Towns). The Catholic NGOS were the first active in the field of immigration, starting with CARITAS of Rome, guided by Monsignor Di Liegro. Caritas is an international organisation that was started in Freiburg, Germany, in 1897. Other national Caritas organisations were soon formed in Switzerland (1901) and the United States.

Caritas International is a confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working to build a better world, especially for the poor and oppressed, in over 200 countries and territories. Caritas works without regard to creed, race, gender, or ethnicity, and is one of the world's largest humanitarian networks. Caritas' mandate includes integral development, emergency relief, advocacy, peace building, respect

for human rights and support for proper stewardship of the planet's environment and resources. CARITAS Rome, thanks to the personality of Di Liegro, has become a point of reference for immigrants in need of assistance and for politicians for knowledge of the migratory phenomenon. CARITAS Rome produces as well a statistical dossier that is the main source of information on immigration in Italy.

After Caritas, a few secular NGOs started to support the migrants: among them, we can mention one of the first, SENZA CONFINE, whose leader was, for many years, Dino Frisullo. The three main trade unions, CGIL, CISL and UIL, were also among the first institutions to deal with immigration.

The first measures concerning non-EEC immigration were implemented by the Italian government in the mid-1980s. In 1986 the first immigration law (Law 943 of 30 December 1986) was enacted, allowing illegal workers to register legally and establishing some general principles for the regulation of the conditions of non EEC-workers. The law focused mainly on labour issues.

The tasks of promoting cultural integration were left to the regions, who had the task of organizing ad hoc courses of Italian language and culture in order to encourage integration. These courses were mainly addressed to adults, who could learn Italian.

Law 39 was the first attempt of establishing a coherent migratory policy, including integration. Law 39 of 28 February 1990 has two faces: a restrictive approach for labour immigration and the integration pact for the immigrants who settled in Italy. It must be stressed that Law 39 has a restrictive approach.

It introduces, however, a few dispositions concerning the residence permit and the financing of the reception structures. In the debate around Law 39, especially during the First Conference on Immigration in June 1990, the issue of insertion and integration of foreigners with their cultural differences is discussed for the first time (see *Atti della Conferenza Nazionale dell'Immigrazione*, Rome, 4-6 June 1990). During the conference, expert commissions were asked to discuss legislative proposals aimed encouraging the insertion and integration of foreigners with respect to

their cultural differences (CNEL: 1990). For a short time, the idea of multiculturalism seemed accepted by a large part of the political establishment (with the exception, of course, of neo-fascists, the Northern League, and some small parties like the liberals or the republicans): these multicultural ideas were reflected at least in the directives of the Ministry of Education on foreign children reception and intercultural education.

However, the integration measures foreseen by Law 39 have not been implemented. As it was before the approval of the law, the Italian State continued to let the NGOs, particularly the Catholic one like CARITAS to take the place of public services in the work of assistance and support for the immigrants. Local authorities were left alone in developing measures promoting integration: the consequence was local integration models, in absence of a national integration model.

During the 1990s, the Italian State, which had entered in a deep political crisis because of the corruption scandals that swept away the main Italian parties, the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, appeared incapable to face the immigration phenomenon.

The implicit refusal by the last Christian Democrat governments to consider immigration as a structural phenomenon; the growing numbers of people from eastern Europe and the Balkans after the fall of the Berlin wall and the break out of the war in Yugoslavia; the political exploitation of immigration by xenophobic forces that developed in the 1990s like the Northern League and the National Alliance which took the place of the MSI; the growing anxiety in front of immigrants' presence by the Italian population, responding, at the same time, to the lack of coherent policies and to the xenophobic discourse of some political forces: all these factors maintained the immigration issue in a "emergency" approach, unfavourable to systematic integration measures and initiatives.

Between 1996 and 2001, the centre-left government (Olive Tree Coalition) tried to establish a coherent migratory policy, but the anti-immigrants climate created by the right-wing parties that exploited the inadequacy of previous state policies made them

unfeasible largely these attempts. The political exploitation of immigration by the political forces of the centre-right parties expressed itself in racist discourses and discriminatory practices that are “unthinkable” in any other European country. There is no doubt that the anti-immigrants propaganda conducted by the neo-populist parties and the media is controlled by them (it must not be forgotten that Mr. Berlusconi is the owner of three television networks and of several newspapers, like *Il Giornale*, *Libero*, *Il Foglio*, characterized by the anti-immigrant discourse), have influenced Italian public opinion. The public opinion, however, has also been frightened by what seemed an “uncontrollable” phenomenon.

It is true that, in the same, years, an anti-racist movement developed, the RETE ANTIRAZZISTA, created in the mid-1990s as a coordination centre for all the anti-racist local movements, but its impact was not strong enough in the general opinion, too influenced by the right-wing propaganda...

In conclusion, immigration, instead of an occasion to develop cultural pluralism, became an occasion where the Italian state showed its deep incapacity to deal with cultural and religious pluralism and the right-wing parties exploited nationalism, under different forms, in order to maintain a sort of “national alarm” to exploit for electoral reasons. This was the same practice the right-wing forces had conducted against minorities all over the recent history of the country. At the same time, the left or centre-left parties were not able to propose any coherent integration model nor have not dared to implement measures in favour of the immigrants, like the vote at the local elections, fearing to lose the consensus.

Suspicion or hostility towards multiculturalism has been expressed by progressive thinkers. Even the counsellor of the left-wing Minister for Social Affairs, Livia Turco, who prepared a new law on immigration, criticized multiculturalism.

Law 40/1998: the Italian integration model

The centre-left government, in power between 1996 and 2001 tried to establish a migratory solid legal frame and to elaborate a model of integration, based in the respect of diversity: Law 40/1998, called as well Turco-Napolitano, because of the ministers who prepared and proposed it, which was voted during the government of the centre-left coalition led by Romano Prodi, represented the first serious attempts of establishing integration policies directed to immigrant workers and their families.

The Unified Act on Migration gave a central role to the prime minister who had the power to prepare the three-year document for migration policies (Art.3 Consolidating Act), the decree creating local migration councils (Art.3 Consolidating Act) and the decree for the allocation of the National Fund for migration policies resources (Art.45 Unified Act).

The National Fund, the National Committee for integration policies, (Art.45 Unified Act), the Committee for the problems of migrants and their families (Art.42 Unified Act), the Committee for minors (Art.33 Unified Act) and the registry of agencies working in the field of migrants' socio-cultural integration (Art.42 Unified Act) were the institutions created. They were located in the prime minister's office. Still there was no administrative concentration of all competencies concerning migration in a single body; other ministries carried out many other functions consequently with a lack of connection among each other.

Concerning integration policies the Unification Act proposed a model of reasonable integration based on two fundamental interconnected principles: integration as respect for the person's integrity and a low conflict-potential integration.

Respect for a person's integrity made reference to the protection of inalienable human rights and extended them to illegal migrants. Foreigners lacking a regular residence permit were granted the fundamental human rights (Art.2) and necessary medical care, provided that these medical measures are continuous (Art.35). Strong protection was also exerted in favour of

non-regular minors: they could not be repatriated (Art.19) and school attendance was made compulsory for (Art.38).

Migrants with a regular residence permit were granted full integrity: they were entitled to the enjoyment of civil rights (Art.2) and some social rights as well. The Italian legislator made an accurate choice among the various options differentiating rights and equality with Italian citizens in the enjoyment of social rights. Migrants with a regular residence permit were granted equal access to the medical services of the National Health Service (Art.32); equal pension conditions and the possibility to maintain social insurance contributions even in case of repatriation (Art.40) and finally they were equivalent to Italians as to supplementary benefits and social assistance (Art.41). The latter was modified by the 2001 finance bill, which limited access to social assistance benefits to those foreign citizens possessing an unlimited residence permit.

These concessions were however paralleled by a very strict regulation of the renewal of residence permits that could be allowed only if migrants had the prerequisites for the first residence permit. In particular, they had to show that they could fend for themselves. In cases of residence permits granted for employment reasons there was an exception allowing unemployed foreign citizens to be granted renewal of the residence permit for a maximum of one year (Art.5).

In an economic system characterized by a large quota of informal economy – such as the Italian one – the link between employment and renewal of the residence permit represents a continuous risk of relapse in the field of illegality. According to the data of the work inspectorate, 26.1 percent of migrants employed in the black economy would have a regular position as regards the residence permit (Zincone: 2001, 28).

In order to promote integration, Law 40/98 or the Unified Act on Migration, Law Decree no. 286/98, gave special attention to the education of foreign children. In Article 36 of this law, there is an explicit reference to the right to education of foreign children and to the preservation of the languages and cultures of origin:

Art.36, (38) comma 3:

School community receives linguistic and cultural differences as a value to establish as a basis for reciprocal respect, exchange among cultures and tolerance; in order to reach this goal, it promotes and encourages initiatives aimed at reception, protection of culture and language of origin and implementation of common intercultural activities.

We will come back to the importance of this article in the further analysis of education policies for foreign children.

Art.45 of the same Law establishes that foreign minors in compulsory education must attend the classroom corresponding to their biological age. This article intended to fight against the common practice, to insert foreign children, who don't speak Italian, in the first year of the compulsory school, independent of their age.

Another interesting result of Law 40/1998 were the proposals of the established commission for the integration policies of immigrants, directed by Professor Giovanna Zincone, with task of referring on the status of integration policies of immigrants in Italy. In the first report, published in 2000, the commission analyses different aspects of integration: labour market, education, health, housing, political participation, discrimination. The commission proposes as well a model of "reasonable integration", in which education plays an important role.

In the field of education, it is particularly interesting to notice the proposals of the commission for integration in matter of maintain of languages and cultures of origin.

The commission insists on the importance of teaching Italian as L2 in the schools (insertion courses, afternoon courses, support teachers, and specific didactic instruments). Linguistic incompetence is underlined as one of the main reason for exclusion and difficulties. This problem concerns as well adult immigrants, who are interested in the learning of the language and have no time, because of the work, to follow the public courses of the CTP. They must address themselves to private institutions or

NGOs that organise courses in a more flexible way, for example even on weekends.

The commission insists as well on the importance of the languages of origin of the immigrants:

For an economy as the Italian one, which looks at the foreign markets, and that has an important tourist sector, being able to count on minorities capable to speak Chinese, Arabic, Spanish might represent, in the future, a great resort. The commission considers that what is spent for the teaching of the language of origin should be considered not only an element of respect of diversity, but a useful economic investment. (Zincone: 2000, 81)

It is sad to admit that this idea has not been taken by the political forces to implement the teaching of the languages and cultures of origin in the schools. Nor have the two proposals suggested by the Commission:

- to continue to maintain, where possible, the study of the languages of the main communities that are present in Italy; this might be an useful resort in the future for an economy as ours, open to international exchanges and characterized by an important tourist sector; and
- to form a considerable number of teachers (pilot teachers) to the knowledge of the structures of minority languages and the cultural heritage of the countries of origin of the main communities of immigrants. These teachers should afterwards support the others. To encourage the offer of “pilot-teachers” through the increase of salaries and reduction of teaching-time (Zincone, 2000, p.81).

These proposals are interesting: nevertheless, they don't suggest a systematic teaching of the languages of origin (it is precise, where possible) and do not make any reference to possible bilateral agreements for the teaching of the languages of origin, as it had been the case in old immigration countries, with the expe-

rience of the ELCO, Enseignement des Langues et des cultures d'origine.

The Commission was, however, closed after the victory of the centre-right coalition.

Immigration and populism. Hostility to multiculturalism

Unfortunately, because of the political pressure of the right-wing parties and the general climate of hostility towards immigrants by a part of the population, many good proposals of Law 40 had to be abandoned in the legal discussion and, later, after the law's approval, practically only the "repressive" part of the law was implemented, while the integration measures have been postponed.

In fact, the debate on Law 40 took place in a very conflicted climate, in which the right-wing parties exploited the topic for electoral reasons and the left parties had no courage to defend the choice of a multicultural open society.

Incredibly, the counsellor of Livia Turco, Guido Bolaffi declared:

The threatening and irresponsible prophecy of our national culture favouring a confused multiculturalism is increasingly causing uncertainty among the citizens and determining an attitude which encourages a drastic and sometimes illusionary reduction of entry permits (Bolaffi: 2001, 2).

During the late-1990s, migration was considered by all political forces a potentially conflicting phenomenon. During the same period the economic world press for a further opening towards legal migration due to the continuous need for a foreign work force (Zincone: 2001), but the slogan "the economy wants them, society does not" (Bolaffi: 2001, Turco: 2002) was used by the right-wing forces. In this context, the centre and left-wing parties proposed a model of migration policies swinging between a partial opening towards entry permits and a control system that is

not even functional to the Italian labour market and encourages in practice the increase of illegal migration.

The victory of the populist coalition guided by Mr. Berlusconi in May 2001 ended the integration process that Law 40 was supposed to begin. Since 2001, immigration has become the favourite argument of the Northern League to support its xenophobic discourses and gain some votes. It is particularly interesting to notice that the Lega Nord Party, which presents itself as a “minority movement”, fighting for the recognition of the “nationhood” of the Padania, in northern Italy, and that is allied with movements trying to revitalize local languages (or dialects) like the Liga Veneta, the Lega Ligure and the Lega Nord Piedmont, has acquired the role of protector of the national identity (Christian and popular) which is in contrast to its local orientation. For this reason, it is openly against the immigration of people of different cultures:

Our model of Europe is based on the supremacy of the nation, which is able to free itself from Statism through the crisis of the national state that is the Nation as the defence of European culture. The quantity of migrants is not functional to the preservation of the State but it is evaluated in relation to the survival of the Nation. We do not think the right to be migrant is a pre-existing right, it must be acquired by means of working commitment and civil behaviour. The key to have access to our nation is work (Mr. U. Bossi, Introductory Speech of the IV Ordinary Conference of the Lega Nord Party, held in Assago May 2002).

Law no. 189, of 30 July 2002 called Bossi-Fini, from the name of the two ministers who prepared it, was voted. The two ministers belong to parties that are more hostile to immigration, the National Alliance, the heir of the neo-fascists of the MSI, Movimento Sociale Italiano, and the Northern League.

The law reflects an ideology, which rejects immigration as a structural phenomenon and develops a repressive approach: in spite of the well-known needs of the labour markets, to which quotas respond only partially, the new law has introduced the

residence contract, which makes the residence permit dependent upon having a job; the law has eliminated the permit for searching for a job and the possibility of sponsorship, has moved from five to six years the time necessary to ask for a residence permit, cancelled the possibility of sponsorship, has reinforced the measures of expulsion, has created new detention centres for illegal immigrants, has reduced the possibility of obtaining the Italian citizenship and, finally, has strictly regulated family reunification. The introduction of photo-dactyloscopic exams (fingerprints) at the moment of the request of renewal of the residence permit is a symbolic act of humiliation for immigrants, who are regular residents (Caritas: 2002, 79-80).

As far as education is concerned, even if Article 36 of Law 40 has been maintained, the Ministry of Education is not any more encouraging the development of intercultural education projects. On the contrary, the new school programmes imposed by the Minister of Education, Letizia Moratti, are based on a mono-cultural vision of history, inspired by a sort of "Christian anthropology". No encouragement is done to the preservation of languages and cultures of origin. Foreign children have to assimilate into the Italian school system.

In fact, when Mr. Gianfranco Fini speaks of the integration of settled immigrants, he means in fact assimilation to supposed "Italian values". What are Italian values for Mr. Fini? The Christian tradition of Italy -and of Europe, for which he fought in the European Convention for the Constitution-, the centrality of the family-and homophobia, which made him declare a homosexual should not be a teacher-, and patriotic nationalism- that he proposes to defend with the weapons against the despised pacifists. The heir of the neo-fascists, who had fought strongly against the autonomies in South-Tyrol, Friuli and Val d'Aosta has now an internal enemy: the immigrants.

The centre-right government is not encouraging integration of the immigrants and is even more hostile to cultural pluralism. Because of this hostility to multiculturalism, the centre-right does not want to consider immigrants as a minority.

In recent conferences, one in Venice on linguistic minorities, titled "Ethnicities Looking for Common Principles" and one in Capomarino, Carlo Giovanardi, Minister for the Relations with the Parliament has openly declared that only autochthonous ethnicities have to be supported and that immigrants should not be considered a minority.

The minister has underlined that it is necessary to clarify the issues concerning the situation in matter of minorities' rights, given the evolution of the last years.

New immigration in Europe creates new problems in comparison with the past. It is necessary to deepen the role and the position of historical minorities and of new minorities formed by the immigrants. The problem becomes more complex if languages spoken by those who have come into the old continent are taken into account.

In front of this the minister has proposed that in the concept of protection of linguistic minorities should be included only the ethnic groups who have roots in the territory, who are native and who can refer to a nearby country. In the concept of protection of linguistic minorities, new ethnic groups, resulting from immigration, should not be included.

It is a very clear position, corresponding to the approach of the Northern League, defending the "purity" of the "razza Piave" (Piave race, from Piave, a river in Venice).

At the moment immigrants are not considered in the legislation on minorities, and, as long as this government is in power, it is quite clear that they will not be.

In spite of the internal differences, which should suggest promoting a general multiculturalism or intercultural processes, the general policies towards immigrants seem copied on the old Gastarbeiter model of the 1960s.

Pressed by the right-wing parties' propaganda, the attitude of the Italian people has shifted from indifference and general tolerance to an everyday racism, which is shown by the frequent attacks to immigrants. The racist discourses of the politicians legitimize brutal aggressions, which are reported almost everyday by the newspapers.

A recent report of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia shows that Italy is one of the countries which are more “at risk” as far as Islamophobia is concerned. Moreover, a recent report prepared for the same Centre by the Raxen experts (network of NGO, monitoring racism in Europe) presents a frightening reality.

This new situation has two faces: the everyday racism showed by the Italian population and the racist discourses which politicians of the centre-right parties do not hesitate to do for electoral reasons. One of the parties who are presently in the government coalition, the Northern League is openly racist: they even speak about “razza Piave”, a race of Northern Italians, having taken the name of the Piave river, between Veneto and Friuli.

Paradoxically, it is precisely under the right-wing government that the migratory phenomenon has most increased. The migratory phenomenon in Italy is, in fact, in full evolution. The number of immigrants has doubled in a few years; the settlement of the families concerns more and more communities, thanks to the family reunification process; there are more and more foreign minors attending the Italian schools. Italy has become, for many immigrants, not only a working and residence place for a predetermined period of time, but also the country to settle in. Immigration in Italy has definitely become a structural phenomenon.

NGOs, local authorities, anti-racism and cultural pluralism

If the general frame for integration and development of cultural pluralism is worse than unsatisfactory, because the government is playing the “social alarm” against immigrants for electoral purposes, this doesn’t mean that interesting experiences have existed in different areas of the country for the promotion of cultural pluralism. Local, provincial and regional agencies, NGOs and immigrants’ associations operating in the territory to such experiences have contributed.

Given the lack of reference to a common national policy on the matter, local agencies apply their own integration processes, according to local different approaches. This causes a wide variety of intervention policies and of processes of acknowledgement of rights. Such a variety is not due to the different quality and quantity of migration flows but rather to the uneven efficiency of public administrations and to the presence of private social bodies whose action was stronger in some areas of the country (Zincone: 1994).

The importance of the NGOs in the activities connected with the support and integration of the immigrants hasn't diminished. Since the early 1980s, their number has grown: they are Italian, mixed (Italian-immigrants), ethnic and inter-ethnic. They belong to different political orientations, generally inside the Left (including left-Catholic), but, recently, some associations belong as well to the right-wing parties that have as well supported some immigrant associations (mainly from eastern Europe). Some associations are national, other local.

We have already mentioned the oldest ones: the catholic CARITAS, SENZA CONFINE.

Since the early 1990s, a secular institution that has become very active is ARCI, Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana. In 1956 the national convention approved the statute of the ARCI and elected a national directive suggestion of 35 members. The convention is the first national congress of ARCI.

The ARCI is heir of the traditional cultural associations of the Left, but it had renewed its type of activities and vision of the world. It is constituted as a network culturally oriented that promotes the topics of solidarity and rights.

The discourse of ARCI focuses mainly the issue of the rights, considered as an instrument of social inclusion of the immigrants. In the anti-racist meeting held in Cecina, Livourne in July 2002, a ten-year appointment of the Italian anti-racist movement, the document "Migrants and Rights" criticizes security policies of European governments and the construction of "Fortress Europe". The proposals included in the document concern the fundamental rights (asylum, minors, family reunion), the extension

of social and political rights (including the vote in local elections), access to work and integration and the issue of citizenship.

NGOs like the ARCI find a support in local authorities in left-wing towns and regions that are developing institutions promoting the integration of immigrants, but also expressing new visions of cultural diversity as a positive character for the society.

Local and regional experiences in Tuscany are particularly interesting. We mention a local experience in Prato, referred to as Assessorato alla Città Multi-etnica e Multiculturale (Mayoralty service to the multi-ethnic and multicultural town.) Shifting from an “emergency” perspective to a “coordination” one, the municipality of Prato established this experimental office after the experience of a service centre for immigrants with the aim of coordinating the present social policies for immigration (education, culture, social services, Y) and the related work of other institutions, associations (for/of immigrants) and authorities (police).

The biggest immigrants’ community in Prato is the Chinese one, established and developed mainly around economic lobbies, thus not really interested in spreading or preserving their cultural traditional characters: the Chinese language has been gradually abandoned by the new Chinese-Italian generation.

The objectives of the institution are:

- to coordinate the local social services for immigrants and the work of other concerned authorities;
- to circulate by the municipal public relation desks and services all the useful information (especially legal) related to immigration issues and its link with the social services;
- to develop and keep up an informal – but effective – network with the other municipal services/offices also dealing with immigration issues; and
- to provide structurally coordinated services for immigrants and future local generations.

Its activities include: maintaining an Internet site providing valuable information and resources on social services and legislation; language courses (Chinese and Arabic among others), alphabetization courses, original language preservation courses and other related services; constant link and cooperation with the police and legal bodies; establishment of a research centre within the municipality providing information and operational services by the municipality public relation desks; coordination and networking with other concerned authorities and services.

At regional level, we mention one of the few Italian projects that develop a certain idea of multiculturalism and intercultural relations: the PROJECT PORTO FRANCO is a regional activity promoting an intercultural Tuscany.

The project Porto Franco

We are on a journey. And we carry with us our history, both past and present.

So that we can experience it together in the most varied of ways [...] because culture is a place of exchanges. So that Tuscany might consciously be a "porto franco", a free port of peoples and cultures. Women, men, children, the elderly, each one of us is an entire world in and of himself, but we have yet to know each other. Each one of us is different, and not only for the traditions that we each carry inside. We have in common the diversity of our different perspectives [...] and the need for them to come together, with respect and curiosity, with passion and intelligence.

This journey will make us both more similar and more diverse, and the great Babel of cultures and languages will be transformed into a collective laboratory of new cultures and new languages. Affirming the right to be different, with equal opportunity for all. Affirming the values of culture and civilization against ignorance and barbarism.

Theoretical justification of the project is provided by the following:

Tuscany: a multicultural region

The Etruscans were culturally Greek. Medieval Tuscan culture was enriched by the contributions in science, philosophy and the arts that came from Arabic civilization. Historically the migrations of peoples in the mediterranean region have always brought about processes of comparison. Historically the comparison and exchanges among different cultures have always represented a positive resource for Tuscany, elements of cultural and economic growth.

In the age of globalization and communication this process is rapidly becoming more accentuated. On the strength of its multicultural past, Tuscany is today choosing to meet this challenge through the development of active strategies of encounter and contamination, with the goal of a cultural growth that profoundly involves the entire fabric of the civil society. It is a question of looking deeply into one's own cultural identity, opening up at the same time to an active, critical encounter with the "diversities," and the cultures of the others.

Contemporary culture is multicultural

In the age of globalization, every culture tends to abandon the traditional means of self-oriented reproduction. The material and immaterial processes, economic production and knowledge establishes new relationships. The immaterial (i.e., knowledge and culture) becomes material, a foundation for processes of transformation. Everything interacts and is transformed.

The languages of communication and exchange (the languages of information) as well as the communication of use (the languages of the arts and sciences), responds to the new reality of contamination everywhere. Multiculturalism is therefore not a social emergency to be faced in terms of public order, tolerance

and integration, as much as it is to be faced in terms of putting into action knowledge, cultures and experiences. The network of peoples and cultures, existing in reality as a new scenario of the world in the age of globalization must nevertheless connect with occasions and instruments that are at a “high-level” of encounter and consciousness. Only in this way can a great opportunity for “living the future” be investigated and experienced positively, avoiding the setbacks represented by the barriers of a losing self-defence and of a rejection of the “other” and of diversity.

From multiculturalism to “interculture”

In the multicultural landscape of Tuscany today characterized by the coexistence of peoples and cultures in an apparently formless, fortuitous and unwitting mosaic, it is necessary to project and develop strategies aimed at the objectives of conscious intercultural encounter. ‘Intercultural’ means in essence the encounter between different conditions and points of view, with full respect for the diversity of each one of us. It means developing strategies for action on three main levels:

- the encounter of gender between women and men;
- the encounter between generations (the elderly, youth); and
- the encounter between the cultures of different peoples.

These three levels of intercultural encounter are inseparable today and belong to the same universe of discourse. It is not possible to face the encounter of gender between women and men without contextualizing it within the concrete reality of multiculturalism. Neither is it possible to face the encounter between the cultures of different peoples eluding the concrete realities of the women and the men in the ambit of each culture. Nor is it possible to face the difficult relationship between generations ignoring the cultural models and the languages that have formed and form every generation.

“Interculture” means above all learning to decentralize points of view: to become aware of the partiality of one’s own point of

view so as to learn to free oneself from the eurocentric deformations of one's own culture, to listen to and know other languages, other cultures. And it means learning to move consciously within the complexity of contemporary culture so as to develop new knowledge.

The Regional project "PORTO FRANCO: Tuscany, Land of Peoples and of Cultures" aims to be an instrument for a meaningful phase of transition: from the "extraordinary" to the "ordinary," from the occasional to the organised, from volunteerism to programming, with the objective of a cultural growth which is both ample and profound, strongly rooted across the region through facilities, structures and services. The active encounter with the reality of multiculturalism cannot fail to affect the entire system of culture in Tuscany: from the theatres to the libraries, from plazas to museums, from the schools to the cities. Policies must be developed that are effective in promoting intercultural encounter and contamination, along itineraries of experimentation and programming capable of producing models and outlines for action.

Schools are the fundamental domain for the formation of intercultural consciousness, in the long term but also here and now. The regional project of "Porto Franco" is especially directed to the central role played by the students and teachers of the elementary and middle schools. In the interrelations among the different peoples of Tuscany, women occupy a fundamental role of intercultural mediation. All of Tuscan society can be the target of specific programmes of intercultural formation, both in the places of "culture" and through the languages of the different traditional genres (from music to theatre, and to the arts and sciences) which are already participating - with significant results - in the new reality of the mixing between genres and languages. Alongside and in support of the activities carried out in the schools and in the places of culture, certain specific instruments can assist in the acceleration and qualification of the intercultural network, rapidly inserting the Tuscan network in the wider international one.

A project of transformation of mentalities

The Tuscan project is aimed at making the most of all the different realities and activities which can favour the encounter between different peoples and cultures, in such a way as to make Tuscany a bridge in time (between the old and new centuries and millenniums) and in space (between the North and South; between East and West). In the current Tuscan reality, this means promoting a free and open encounter between languages and cultures, with the aim of bringing out identities and differences, conflicts and reciprocal influences. On this terrain the provinces, the cities, the universities, the schools, the cultural institutes and associations (Italian and not), have all been active for quite some time, with a great variety of experiences in every cultural sector (cultural activities, performances, research and didactics, libraries, etc.) as well as in the "social" sphere in its interconnections with different cultures.

The project is developing at the same time in three different areas:

- the production of contemporary culture;
- the experimentation of intercultural instruments and initiatives in the different structures of the system of culture in Tuscany; and
- the experimentation of "intercultural centres" with the prospect of creating a stable network of such centres firmly rooted throughout Tuscany.

The regional project's main instruments are essentially for:

- a programme of theatrical and musical performances, conferences, etc. that covers the entire regional territory. This programme took place in the year 2000, with some significant events already scheduled for 1999; and
- the production of didactic instruments, both printed and multi-media, directed at the teachers and students of the public school system, which provide information, knowledge

and further educational opportunities in connection with the current multicultural composition of the Tuscan population. The Regional Conference on "School and Intercultural," held in Florence in the winter of 1999, identified strategies and instruments to produce during the year 2000.

The experimentation starting from pre-existing realities (progressive social associations such as the Casa del Popolo, Casa della Pace, Centri di Documentazione, etc.), of "intercultural centres" as places of active encounter and as the central components of an information network.

The experimentation of the models for these "centres" permitted the implementation of a project, in 2000 of a stable network of centres of intercultural encounter and initiative.

Each centre must perform the following functions:

- an organised centre for intercultural exchange on the basis of specific strategies and programmes of initiatives;
- a place of education about diversity and for the development of knowledge and collective consciousness;
- a place of everyday active encounters for all citizens, of every age, sex and origin. A structure of this type requires an organization which guarantees real equal opportunities among women and men, between the youth and the older generation, among "immigrants" and "Italians," operating at the same time on the three levels of "intercultural": an encounter of gender between women and men, supporting processes of self-organization and empowerment of the presence of women;
- an intergenerational encounter, by first of all recognizing and making use of the valuable experiences of the older generations;
- a cultural encounter of different peoples, with an attitude of systematic attention toward the cultures of immigrant citizens, and through the programming of initiatives to be projected and built together with them. In the initial experimental stages (the Casa del Popolo of Florence, Scandicci,

Prato and Poggio a Caiano; the immigrant women's service centre CESDI in Leghorn (Livorno); the Casa dei Diritti e delle Culture of Carrara; the documentation centre of the city of Arezzo; small theatres in Florence and Poggibonsi) the process will develop through working groups whose methodology will be oriented by regional guidelines and by training and education the experimentation, starting from already existing realities (progressive social associations such as the Casa del Popolo, Casa della Pace, Centri di Documentazione, etc.), of "intercultural centres" as places of active encounter and as the central components of an information network.

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It was a "campus-network" including residential situations and interrelations throughout the entire region. The campus activities took place according to specific thematic areas (the cultures of housing, theatre, music, science, contemporary art, economics, cinema, writing, the rights of citizenship, etc.) and responded to two essential criteria:

- the direct encounters of guests belonging to peoples currently in conflict (Israelis and Palestinians, Moroccans and Saharans, Kurds and Turks, Serbs and Albanians, etc.);
- the "high-level" encounter between cultural exponents and professional figures, above all in interrelation with "the peoples of Tuscany." The campus activities took place at the same time both at "high" and "low" levels: on the site of cultural elaboration and production on specific themes, and in the various places of the cultural system in Tuscany (meetings with guests in the libraries, museums and schools).

In Tuscany, at the local level, the town of Prato has chosen a multicultural approach to the issue of immigration, through the Assessorato, Prato multi-etnica (see description).

These types of activities are often done against the national policy. The same cannot be said for the areas where the Northern League is in power, as in Veneto and Lombardy!

The next paragraph discusses the experience of the intercultural centres. The intercultural centres are mediation, vocational, experiences exchange places and at the same time a place for producing didactic materials that could be a support for all the educators who deal daily with the many differences of people coming from the immigration world. It is about areas to create a link between the different initiatives in the territory putting them in the net. To guarantee their survival and to give them the ability to operate the financial sources originate from local agencies (by province and region) but sometimes they get funds on a European level by participating to the many programmes in the European framework.

The Intercultural Centres, Centri interculturali; the Territorial Permanent Centres, CPT, Centri territoriali Permanenti; the IRRE Regional Educational Research Institute, Istituti Regionali Ricerca Educativa.

In the field of intercultural education, it must be noticed that, beyond the activities of the single schools, networks have been created such as the Intercultural Centres (Centri Interculturali). They are inter-institutional networks, promoted by local authorities and associations, but sometimes as well by the Education Academies (Provveditorati) that are dependent on the Ministry of Education.

The three historical models of the Intercultural Centres have been the Cidiss of Turin (Centro Interculturale Città di Torino), supported by the town; the Cdlei of Bologna (Centro Documentazione e Laboratorio per una educazione interculturale), created through an agreement between the academy, the university, the town and the province; the COME Centre of Milan, connected

with CARITAS. The goals of the first centres have been the collection of documents, orientation, teachers' training, networking among the different institutions that work on the territory. Their example has been followed by others, almost exclusively in northern and central Italy, like the Centro Interculturale Millevoci in Trento or the experience of Porto-Franco in Tuscany, which will be largely described in workpackage 4.

The intercultural centres have become a place of documentation, training, intercultural mediation and, at the same time, the production of didactic materials that represent a fundamental support for all the educators who deal daily with the children from the immigration world. They create and maintain links between the different initiatives in the territory. Financial sources to guarantee their survival and to give them the ability to operate come mostly from local authorities, towns, provinces and regions. Sometimes they get funding on a European level by participating to the many programmes in the European framework.

The intercultural centres work in synergy with the schools, allowing to maintain the attention on intercultural themes and making it easier to translate into practice principles stressed in ministerial directives.

The different centres were created spontaneously but they soon felt the need to networking among themselves:

The need of models of reference, of telling its own experience, of knowing more and better, of exchanging, creating spaces of documentation, projects and analysis on the topic of reception and intercultural; the birth of new intercultural centres in medium and big towns has brought to the organisation of the first National Meeting at the end of the 1990s (1998, Milan, Centro COME). (Ferrero-Luatti: 2004, 356)

Other meetings followed, in Venezia, Trento, Arezzo and Fano. The centres represent an important point of reference for all the teachers, who were interested in the topic. At the second meeting, in Venice, in 1999, one of the topics was the teaching of the

second language (L2) and the maintenance and development of the first language (L1).

However, the most important issue today is teaching of Italian as a second language: for this goal, many new didactic tools (even if most of them are still experimental) have been created: in Milan, the Come Centre has created very useful didactic grants; the same has been done in the area of Prato and Florence, where the COSPE of Florence operates, and even in the area of Arezzo where the referent centre is the Documentation Centre of Arezzo (Centro di Documentazione Città di Arezzo).

The materials prepared for the teaching of Italian as L2 take into consideration the research results done by university centres specialised in teaching Italian as a foreign language which, after the immigrants permanently settled in the territory, took care of the Italian learning/teaching as second language (the Alias Project of Venice University and the materials from the CILS Certification Centre of the Siena Foreign University which can be viewed at <http://helios.unive.it/~aliasve//> and Barni - Villarini, 2001).

The teaching of Italian as a foreign language also concerns immigrant adults, who can study in the Territorial Permanent Centres, Centri Territoriali Permanenti, established by the Ordinance 455 of the Ministry of Education in 1997.

Besides the Intercultural Centres, an important role in the development of projects of intercultural education has been played by the IRRE Regional Educational Research Institute, Istituti Regionali Ricerca Educativa.

The IRRE have been among the first institutions that have tried to translate into concrete educational practices the principles announced in the Ministry of Education Directives and Memorandums. For example, in 1991, the IRRSAE-Puglia has started a European Project on Intercultural Education, directed by Professor Franca Pinto Minerva of the University of Bari, with strategies for the insertion of Albanian pupils in the compulsory school. The project has experienced curricula in the field of language teaching, history, music, religion, geography, multimedia and mathematics. In 1994, it entered the network of the SOCRA-

TES programme (Comenius 2). Another IRRSAE that has been very active has been the Tuscan one. They have produced different models for intercultural education in teachers training and formed many teachers.

Religious minorities and immigrant minorities: the development of new forms of Italian nationalism

The arrival of the immigrants has meant as well the raise of the issue of religious pluralism, which had never appeared before, the ethnic minorities being mainly Catholic (like the South-Tyroleans or the Slovenians) or accepted inside the Catholic family (as the Arbëreshe). The arrival of the immigrants has meant the arrival of Muslims. This new datum has showed clearly that it is not easy to be a religious minority in Italy.

The leaders of the Lega Nord Party are shouting every day against the Muslim invasion (they even demonstrate against the entry of Turkey in the EU): their local majors made regulations forbidding Muslims to approach churches, their elected parliamentarians organise demonstrations against mosques and threatened Muslims to bring pigs on the areas where mosques should be built. Incitation to hatred against Muslims comes as well from right-wing newspapers paid by Berlusconi, who is not only owner of three television stations, but also of three national daily newspapers, *Il Giornale*, *Il Foglio*, *Liberio*. This last one, after the kidnapping of three Italian hostages in Iraq, published this title on the first page: "We have 800,000 hostages", referring to the 800,000 Muslims who live in Italy. This is the normal climate in Italy against Muslims.

Muslims are in fact a new religious minority: their presence is the result of immigration. The hostility towards Muslims is connected to the hostility against immigrants. The arrival of Muslim immigrants has completely changed the situation as far as religious minorities are concerned. Before the arrival of the Muslims, Italy was almost an entirely Catholic country. 30,000

Jews, a few thousand Protestants and a few thousand Albanian orthodox.

Traditionally there was no ethnicisation of the religious minorities, which did not speak different languages. In the Middle Age, Italian Jews used to speak an Italian language, which has today completely disappeared. Jews were considered a religious minority as well as the protestant Valdese. Before Fascism, which introduced Race Laws against the Jews, there was no ethnic spread or racial ideas of the Jews in Italy. Italian anti-Semitism was a Catholic anti-Semitism, not a racial one.

The Jewish presence in Italy is very old, dating back to ancient Rome. Even if for centuries they were forced to live in the ghettos where the doors were closed at night and they were victims of various discriminations which lasted longer than in other countries (the last ghetto, in Rome, created as late as 1870); the Jews of Italy had, according to scholars, a relationship of osmosis and harmonization with the local culture they were living in. Jews participated in Risorgimento: the doors of the ghetto of Rome were opened in 1870, after the "bersaglieri" took Rome.

After unification, the full participation of the Jews to the social, economic, civic and national life grew (Bidussa, and others, 1992). They were not very numerous in Italy compared to other European countries: in 1938, when the racial Laws of Fascism were passed, there were 58,412 Jews. 8,000 of them were deported and died in concentration camps. Today Jews are 30,000, divided in 15 communities, the most important being the one in Rome with 15,000 members and Milan with 10,000.

The Valdese were a small religious minority of Protestants who lived mostly in some areas of Piedmont and had been discriminated in the same way as the Jews. Like the Jews in ghettos, the Valdese had to live in specific villages in the countryside, and could not settle elsewhere. For centuries, because of the Counterreformation, Protestants were not authorised to develop their churches in Italy. After unification, they gained their freedom.

The Italian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion in Article 2 and 3 of the Constitution - fundamental for the discrimination issue - recognize and guarantee the inviolable

human rights. Article 3 concerns, more precisely, the religious differences. Article 3 establishes that: all the citizens have the religious freedom right, either individually or associated, to make propaganda and to practice, privately or public ally, religion, as long as it is not contrary to common sense and habit.

Concerning specifically the protection of religious minorities, Article 8, 2 comma, of the Constitution establishes that religious beliefs different from the Catholicism have the right to organise themselves according to their statutes as long as they are not against the Italian juridical system. The 3° comma establishes that any law based on agreements with relative representatives regulates their relationships. It is starting from those articles that it has been possible to initiate an agreement policy between the State and the Catholic Church, and between the State and the other religious minorities.

In spite of these guarantees, it appears quite clearly that such tiny religious minorities couldn't represent, in any way, a threat to the dominant Catholic religion. The arrival of the Muslims, with the immigrants, has changed the situation. Italians are confronted, for the first time, with a large religious minority. With this new fact, populist parties have played a political game in order to gain electoral consensus.

The hostility towards Muslims, nourished by the political representatives of the populist right, has a more general impact on the attitude towards other religious minorities and towards minorities in general. A new form of nationalism is developing in Italy, identifying the Italian culture and identity with Catholicism and Catholic symbols. This neo-nationalism refers to Catholicism (and not Christianity, including Orthodox and Protestant Traditions), its symbolism and its rules.

Two recent events show this trend towards an idea of national identity identified with Catholicism. The whole country has been mobilized around the affair of the crucifix, hanging in a school room (as it is in the majority of the schools and public offices), that a Muslim father of two pupils wanted to be removed in name of the respect school should have for all religions. The majority of the people, including intellectuals and politicians of

the left-wing parties, normally in favour of secularism, stated that the crucifix is a sort of symbol for Italian culture. Convinced atheists protested for this discrimination, but they appeared to be a minority in a country where the populist government is often playing the card of the Catholic religion as part of the Italian identity to obtain consensus. The representatives of the Jewish community have as well pointed out that religious symbols like the crucifix shouldn't be exposed in schools, because the school should be secular, open and tolerant, as the Constitution states. However, on this point, the Jewish community has not found large support among the politicians.

The second event is even more significant, because it doesn't involve religious minorities: in a school of Pozzuoli, a Mess has been celebrated during the school hours, during compulsory hours of teaching. Some parents have protested for this school initiative and have found a support in the secular newspaper "La Repubblica". Nevertheless, the letters of support to the school director, who wanted this Mess, have been numerous, precisely in name of the identification between Catholic religion and Italian culture. This is the tone of them: It took us two thousand years to build this "our" society, we should now dissolve it in order not to offend the religious sentiments of those, few or many, who come as guests, looking for a wealth and welfare that they cannot have in their countries, which are still at the time of Mohammed. The author of this letter is the president of a parents' association. The answer of the journalist of the Repubblica is the defence of secularism in the name of Voltaire, defending the freedom of being religious and the one of not being religious. "Je ne suis pas d'accord avec vous, mais je suis prêt à me battre jusqu'à la mort pour votre droit à le dire". The problem is precisely the fact that Voltaire is not highly appreciated by those who want Catholicism to be the main axis of education in Italy.

In other terms, the hostility towards Muslims has revitalized a form of national identity, represented by a traditional and popular Vandeian-style Catholicism. In fact some representatives of the populist power claim, as example of the fight for the "genuine Italian tradition", the fights against the French at the

end of the 18th century, particularly the Sanfedista movement of Cardinal Ruffo, who destroyed the Republic of Naples, hanging and killing hundreds of people. This “revisionist” lecture of the history of Italy would be ridiculous, considering the low intellectual quality and the lack of international prestige of the opinion-makers who are spreading such discourses. The real problem is the fact that the reaction of the “secular”, democratic, anti-populist part of Italy is quite weak. The fear of alienating Catholics, who are an essential part of the centre-left coalition probably plays a role in the weakness of the reaction in front of this attack to secularism.

The present Minister of Education is doing everything in her power to destroy the secular character of the Italian school, introducing more hours of religion and eliminating the evolutionary theory from the programmes. In Law 53/2003 the religious dimension is indicated among the cultural competences schools have to develop.

These trends have a very negative impact on the religious minorities in Italy, in general, which are rarely represented in media, who dedicate hours and hours to the Pope and the Vatican. The secularism of Italian society is strongly questioned by the choices of the government, for example, in matters of “assisted procreation”.

The claim for a sort of national identity, of which the Catholic religion is a basic pillar in strong opposition to Muslim religion and to immigration, is a dangerous trend in the Italian society. Even more dangerous is the fact that this trend is pushed onwards by the political forces in power. This involution process doesn't encourage the development of cultural pluralism.

Conclusions

Italy has an importance presence of regional minorities living on its territory: they represent 5 percent of the population, have preserved languages, old cultures that represent the variety and the complexity of the European history. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem that the Italian governments have been – so far – aware of this richness and have implemented consequent policies.

Border minorities have been victims of Italian nationalism since the 19th century and have conquered autonomy status only thanks to long fights and the international protection. Other minorities have fought to preserve their language and culture without having any help or support by the State. Their official recognition is recent.

The first national law for the protection of minorities (482/99) was voted only five years ago and has not yet been fully implemented. According to EUROMOSAIC, the majority of the minority languages in Italy, which are not strong languages, official or protected in other nation-states, are at risk of disappearing: variants of Arbëreshe, Greeks, and German dialects have already disappeared.

Institutions that are active in the defence of the minorities belong mainly to the minorities themselves. No project to implement the cultural pluralism all over the country, giving more value to the plural heritage of the country, possibly combined with the emerging of new immigrant minorities is at the horizon. The present debate on federalism is not accompanied by a debate on cultural pluralism, but is dominated by the arguments of the Northern League, which is explicitly racist against southern Italians and against immigrants.

Xenophobic parties have grown in Europe in the last years. The interpretations given to such phenomenon are very complex, and have their roots in each national reality, in the frame of general reactions to changes produced by globalization, affecting lower classes, and to the crisis of the nation-state in front of the global world and the European Union.

However, the Italian situation seems quite specific, for the combination, in the present new right government, of racist arguments, based on one side on the neo-nationalist idea of the post-fascist party of National Alliance and on the other on the secessionist idea of the Northern League supporting a local-ethnic identity, excluding others, southerners, Romans and immigrants.

Our hypothesis is that the present development of populism, using racism and exclusive localism as a political discourse, are embedded in a long historical process: since the unification of the country, different governments have been unable to deal with the structural cultural and linguistic pluralism of the peninsula, in a different way than ignoring it or even repressing it. The legislation that has taken into account the needs of the minorities has been the result of fights “against Rome” held by the minorities themselves.

The shift from an emigration to immigration country has marked the entrance of Italy into the global economy. In 1990, the Minister Martelli, who prepared one of the first general laws on immigration, Law 39, considered this shift as a sign of the modernisation of Italy, which had become the fifth economic power of the world. But the process of modernization has not cancelled the local identities and has not developed tolerance.

On the contrary, the arrival of immigrants has exacerbated the defence of “mono-culturalism”, both at a national and at a local level. Tragically, this defence has become the official government discourse, which is openly hostile to multiculturalism and proposes the old “Gastarbeiter system” to immigrants.

The failure of Italy in officially recognizing its oppressive role in South-Tyrol, against the Slovenians and even in the Val d’Aosta is a clear example of the incapacity both to accept deeply cultural pluralism (not imposed by outside) and to look at its own past (and, with the past, the construction of the nation and the national identity). The necessary critique of the Italian nationalism, which has been at the origin of repression against minorities, colonialism, wars had not yet been done.

This type of nationalism has been identified with fascism: fascism was its worst expression, but it existed even before and after. Today acritical nationalism is proposed by the right-wing government, which accuses the Left of not being nationalist, while the Northern League proposes a Vandeian Catholic localism. Unluckily, the Left is not capable to react, following passively the words of President Ciampi, who is as well proposing a nationalist discourse in name of the National Unity, only balanced with the European discourse.

The building of a national identity based on cultural pluralism (which might be possible, given the history of the peninsula) is still a future task for Italy. The idea of the country where autonomous minorities, with their languages and cultures, should be part of the nation, a nation which should be seen as plural, multicultural, and multiethnic, but kept together by common democratic values of respect and tolerance is promoted, at the moment, only by the minorities themselves.

From a general rethinking of the Italian national identity and from the establishment of a new relationship majority-minority within a frame of cultural pluralism and in the idea that Italy is the sum of a plural, mixed and open identity, could help overcome the xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants.

However, this will be possible only with another government, not with the present populist, neo-nationalist government that is now in power. However, the elections are close.

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