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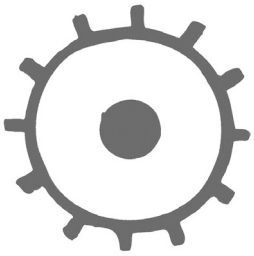

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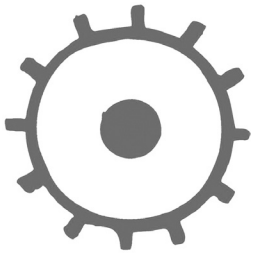
About JASS

The Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies (JASS) is a peer-reviewed, open access e-journal published by the Åland Islands Peace Institute (AIPI), Mariehamn, Åland, Finland. The journal addresses its overarching theme of peace and security from the perspectives of autonomy, demilitarisation, and minority protection.

Each issue of JASS will include scholarly articles that in some way deal with the subjects mentioned above. Before being accepted, all articles have been subject to a double-blind peer-review process. JASS issues may also include other types of contributions such as research notes, book reviews, and information on pending conferences. JASS is published twice a year – in the late spring and late autumn.

The editorial board invites articles and other contributions to JASS via the email address submissions@jass.ax and looks forward to proposals on articles, thematic issues, and other suggestions to make JASS a relevant and accessible scholarly journal in its field. It is appreciated if manuscripts sent to us have undergone language editing.



Autonomy – a concept for our time?

It is not far-fetched to assume that readers of this Journal reflect systematically on the concept of ”autonomy” and its relation to unfolding political developments in the world. The critical question is of course to what extent – if any – that the central idea of autonomy is useful in mitigating, managing and/or settling issues and conflicts that cause human suffering if unresolved. The starting point of any analysis along this line is, of course, that the state system – particularly in its more simplistic versions – is not able to deal with the multifaceted aspects of peoples' identity, traditions, and political history. The granting of ”autonomy” by a majority or a central state is in that context an expression of either self-interest or sensitivity, or maybe both. Such an assumption is a typical approach that autonomy studies take.

But ”autonomy” can also be studied from another perspective. It is also a concept for self-reflection. Any territory or group granted a degree of autonomy has to decide, and to come to terms with, what it de facto means in the specific situation. The question is then what can be done when being autonomous under a set of given circumstances? This is the inner side of autonomy, and that is a perspective that in principle cannot be replaced, or obtained, by someone from outside, and in particular not from the autonomy-granting power. Autonomies have to think for themselves about what they want and what it is possible to do.

Both perspectives – the internal and the external – are necessary for an autonomy to be effective and executed as intended. This is the challenge in analysis of, as well as in the political practice of, autonomy. If applied, ”autonomy” is probably one of the most flexible expressions available of a structural mechanism that can guide the organization of states and communities in a way that reflects respect and dignity for individuals and groups.

As this issue of the Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies illustrates, political parties are important platforms for both internal reflection and external action. Along with other texts on autonomy implementation issues, we hope this issue demonstrates the many-faceted and therefore politically useful character of the autonomy concept.

Kjell-Åke Nordquist
Editor-in-Chief

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Exploring the Role of Regional Parties in the Nordic Autonomies: Why Entrenched Self-Government Matters

Maria Ackrén and Jan Sundberg

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Abstract

In this article we combine two traditions within political science: regional party research and self-government research. The reason behind this rationale is to show that mobilization of the electorate is solely in the hands of regional parties in the three autonomous islands under investigation: the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. We use most similar systems design as an approach to look at how the different party systems have evolved over time. The degree of entrenched self-rule has been different over time but is now on a similar level. The background variables that have been held constant in this context are the population size and the degree of a distinct culture and language, which emanates from a homogenous population on the islands. A distinct party system can evolve exclusively around a national parliament and an entrenched regional assembly. In our study regional parties are members of both. Self-government has a severe impact on the birth of regional parties, and their incumbents serve in the first instance as agents for the regional government in national parliaments. In this study we have chosen to look at the impact of entrenched self-government on regional parties and regional party systems. Self-government facilitates birth of new parties, and when the devolved government is well consolidated it gives fuel to the emergence of a distinct full-scale party system.

Keywords

Regional parties, self-government, population size, language/cultural homogeneity,
the Faroe Islands, Greenland, the Åland Islands

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1. Introduction

Generally, regional and national parties compete for seats in the regional parliaments, which is the case in Catalonia and Scotland for instance. However, the mobilization of the electorate in the Nordic autonomies is solely in the hands of regional parties who are late-comers in these ethnically homogenous self-ruled territories. The aim of this paper is to explain how a limited numerical representation in national parliaments is connected by the institutional link to the entrenched regional self-government, making regional parties agents of their regional government. Regional parties with no back-up from territories with *de jure* self-government lack a distinct party system (like national systems) and are exposed to political challenges and uncertainty of a different mode. In our three regional cases they would have almost no political power in the national parliament to protect their cultural and territorial diversity. Votes count, and their small number would be totally overrun by the nation state votes and incumbents. Unfortunately, this is missing in the literature on regional parties, which we here try to discover and make understandable with our three cases. Therefore, this paper is organized to include a more extensive theoretical discussion followed by empirical evidence. In this paper two traditions meet: regional party research and self-government research. There is not much communication between these two traditions. Not a single definition of "self-government" can avoid considerable criticism. Nevertheless, we argue that definitions which underscore self-government with entrenched power to legislate best fit our cases compared to other alternatives. It is easier to find an agreement of what is considered small. Small refers to population size and homogeneous to a similar language and culture. Thus, this paper gives proof of how autonomous governments with considerable legal power, support growth of regional parties and party systems in the Nordic autonomies.

Ethnicity is said to be both broader and narrower than nationalism. Michael Keating shows that stateless movements have de-ethnicized in those cases he analysed, but in some other cases ethnic politics is evident (Keating, 2008: 160–171). Our cases include three insular territories with small populations and with strong national symbols where ethnicity is a given part of the shared nationalism. Only in the case of the Åland Islands is ethnicity much broader, as it is the language spoken in neighbouring Sweden, as well as partly in Finland. Greenlandic is linked to familiar languages in Canada, Russia and Alaska, and Faroese is solely spoken in the Faroe Islands.

An important factor in the long-run for the development and quality of self-governed territories is well-established regional parties. Recent research in relation to regionalism and nationalism shows that this type of party family is more heterogeneous than other party families on the traditional left-right spectrum. Many regionalist parties compete at more than one level in a multi-level state system – local, regional, metropolitan state and the

European Union (EU) levels – trying to press their views for better political management of their territory (Sorens, 2008; Massetti, 2009). Still, almost all studies are focused on regional parties in national state-wide elections, and much less on parties and elections to regional assemblies. In addition, we argue that it makes fundamental difference whether regional parties act in entrenched self-governed territories or not.

Another distinction within this party family is the cleavage between regionalist ('autonomist') and secessionist ('separatist') parties. While the autonomy parties' goal is a deepening and/or enlargement of the region's own policy within an existing statehood arrangement, the secessionist parties' objective is to break away from the current statehood context and create a new politically sovereign territorial state. There is also a third category of parties, which can be called irredentist parties. Irredentist movements seek to re-draw existing borders in order to transfer their region's statehood to a neighbouring kin-state with a language and culture more in line with their own identity (Ackrén and Lindström, 2012).

However, we argue that the role of regional parties in regional elections/government and in state-wide elections/government is affected mainly by the degree of autonomy and supported by population size and ethnic homogeneity in the region. A devolved government with its own power to legislate supports the birth and life of regional parties and the creation of a distinct party system. Furthermore, the discussion is blurred by diverging definitions of self-ruled territories. To make arguments clear we have chosen three small and homogeneous self-ruled territories with a high degree of entrenched autonomy (Ackrén, 2009). The Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands fulfil the criteria of small population size, a distinct ethnic homogeneity, and devolved legislative power implemented under different time periods. They fulfil the criterion for a most similar systems design where the different timings of full regional power of government give fuel to create a separate party system with parties of their own. In addition, it is only on these islands that regional parties can be found in the Nordic countries.

2. Parties in self-ruled arrangements

If there is or has been a disagreement of the definition and categorisation of arrangements between self-ruled territories and the core state, the situation is not better when we turn to regional parties. It seems like there is a lack of synchronicity between the theory development of self-ruled territories and party research focused on regional parties, on the one hand, and ethnic/regional mobilization on the other. Regional parties are sprung out from a centre and periphery cleavage where an ethnic group share a common subnational territorial border and an exclusive group identity. These parties are even called ethno-regionalist parties because they not only serve ethnic group interest but also regional

interests (Türsan, 1998: 4–6). Dandoy (2010) for example classifies ethno-regionalist parties in three overall categories: protectionist, decentralist and secessionist parties. The first category of protectionist parties addresses concerns related to recognition of linguistic, religious or cultural identity without challenging the state structure. The decentralist parties can also be labelled autonomist parties, since these parties demand enlargement of the region's own policy within an existing state, something which might lead to a reordering of the state structure, its institutions and its internal borders. The last category with secessionist parties demands separation from the state or outright independence (Dandoy, 2010: 205–206). The aims of ethnic mobilization in peripheral territories have been described in a simple way as: "to live in one's country, to speak one's own language, and to be autonomous" (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983: 140). Rokkan and Urwin underscore that increased devolvement is not the only aim; depending on circumstances, secession might be an option, as well as a demand for a larger share of state resources.

As we can see, regional parties live and act in different institutional and territorial contexts. In relation to party research, it makes analytical sense to categorize parties, and therefore regional parties are lumped together without putting much effort into whether they emerged in small or larger regions, or if the region is a *de facto* or a *de jure* self-ruled territory. This approach makes sense if a regional party competes in a constituency with other national parties or not, or if regional parties are competing in regional elections only, or if regional parties can compete both in regional and national elections or not. The latter option has been emphasized by Charlie Jeffery, who asserts that these parties have to adapt and differentiate how they present themselves simultaneously to different electorates (Jeffery, 2009: 639–650). Eve Hepburn asserts that such parties have moved from "niche" actors in party systems to mainstream political players. Many regional parties are no longer players in the periphery, they have entered government at regional and/or state level, forcing other parties to respond to their demands, and implementing their policy proposals (Hepburn, 2009: 477–499). The success of regional parties is that they have moved from protest to power and are now typical mainstream parties. Several current studies have put effort into positioning regional parties according to their altering political preferences on different electoral scenes, which may challenge their credibility (Däubler, Müller & Stecker 2018, 541–564; Alonso, Elias, Szöcsik & Zuber 2015, 839–850; Cabeza & Cómes 2015, 851–865; Alonso, Gómes & Cabeza 2013, 189–211).

Both Hepburn and Jeffery, among others, name these regional parties stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (SNRPs). 'Stateless' is used to characterize regionalist parties which operate in nations or regions that do not enjoy full statehood, i.e., they operate on a subnational level in contrast to national parties which operate on the state level. In a note to Hepburn's article, countries are listed where SNRPs are established. SNRPs include a mix

of federal states and unitary states, such as Belgium, Germany, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland and Portugal, according to Hepburn (Hepburn, 2009). No attention is given to the Faroe Islands and Greenland. After defining regionalist parties, Emanuele Massetti claims that factors such as (1) the level of self-government, (2) whether the regionalist party enjoys a mild autonomy or exists in an outright secession situation, or (3) if the territory is a region or part of a different nation-state, simply do not matter when regionalist parties are defined and classified (Massetti, 2009: 503).

However, instead of giving the degree of self-government a passive role in understanding and explaining regional parties, it should be used as an independent variable. To be sure, it will not make any sense for the definition, but it has severe implications for how regional parties act. Institutional arrangements matter as it defines under what conditions regional parties have to accommodate. Different independent variables are used such as socio-economic, centre-periphery or ideological dimensions in regional party research. In addition, institutional variables such as type of government, electoral systems and laws regulating party life are common in party research. Regional parties acting within the framework of self-government have an advantage compared to regional parties with no territorial autonomy. New parties are said to be mortal organizations, although they seldom totally disappear (Pedersen 1982, 1–16; 1991, 95–114). They have to pass thresholds which are related to the cost of registration, access to public funding, benefits from electoral office, and the probability of getting elected (Tavits 2006, 99–119). New regional parties lacking a territorial self-government are facing multiple costs to cross barriers and rules set up by the dominant cartel of national parties in government (Katz and Mair 2018, 125–150). In a self-government context all thresholds are lower and easier to reach, as national electoral rules are not in force. Rules are set up by territorial governments without any legal interference from the core state government.

In lack of a common view on how self-government is defined and understood the concept has to be problematized and cannot solely rely on party research. Charles Jeffery is aware of the problem when he states that party competition is still focused on parties that compete for state-wide office in state-wide parliaments, and not on parties competing for office in regional elections. The way from protest to power through ethno-territorial and socio-economic mobilization is more about winning regional government office than anything else on the state or EU level of government (Jeffery, 2009: 639–650). Studies show that political decentralization gives strength to regional parties by giving them a real chance of governing at the regional level (Brancati, 2008: 135–159). Decentralization is here understood as entrenched self-rule with legislative power. A study in federal Belgium shows, not surprisingly, that sub-state governments are more responsive to their sub-state voters than the federal governments (van Haute & Deschouwer 2018, 683–702). In small

homogenous self-governed regions, the gap between voters and those elected tends to be multiplied.

It is not uncommon that territorial arrangements in federal and unitary states are mixed without hesitation, and without considering what role these parties have in different institutional and cultural contexts. Therefore, we must separate types of party systems from other individual parties and their political aims. First, it makes sense to consider if parties act in an environment of self-ruled government or not. A second important distinction is between ethnically homogenous territories – where the non-core state is territorially defined as having a sole official language or is overwhelmingly dominant – and regions where the core state language is dominant and has an official status. A third important factor is whether nations have a mixed ethnic composition – that is, a mix of language(s)/culture(s) throughout the entire state. If they do, this makes possible what Giovanni Sartori calls a polarized party system of pluralism with ideological distance (Sartori, 2005: 116–154; Mair, 1996: 83–106). Party systems in federations are nationalised but give space to regional parties in state/province government elections, especially where ethno-federalism prevails. Regional parties in Quebec and Catalonia are well known examples of ethno-federalism. This depends, of course, on the extent to which votes are translated into seats in proportional systems (Sartori, 1997: 7–10).

The parties' role at the federal level is of less magnitude. In unitary states party systems are nationalised, giving restricted options to regional parties even where government functions are decentralised but not devolved. In all cases mentioned, regional parties in unitary states face the toughest cultural and institutional thresholds to overcome, facing the risks of taking costs of collective sacrifice of votes.

3. Diverging concepts of self-rule

Self-rule as a concept is complicated to define, and it is even harder to find any common ground in the literature about what it really contains. Here we will outline a short evaluation of different definitions before we come to terms with why autonomous self-government fits our cases in contrast to federal alternatives. The concept of “autonomy” is one of the most common but also one of the vaguest concepts for mapping self-ruled islands such as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands. “Autonomy” can cover features of different forms of organizations, institutions, local and regional government and entrenched self-ruled territories. Autonomy is related to territory, but also to culture in situations where minority rights are protected from the majority culture (Lapidoth, 1997: 37–47). Territorial autonomy is sometimes labelled as asymmetric federalism when a region falls under a country-wide entrenchment but enjoys different authority. If a region

receives special treatment in constitutional and statutory law it may be called a special autonomous region (Hooghe, Marks and Schakel, 2010: 29–31).

Those influenced by federalist thinking have made several classifications of federal arrangements, such as associated state arrangements and confederations. Asymmetry in federations is linked to difference, and this has been emphasized in many ways. Alfred Stepan has mapped asymmetry in two categories: monolithic federations like the US, Australia and Germany, and asymmetrical federations like the multinational Belgium, Canada and Spain (Stepan, 1999: 29–31). Multinational asymmetry seems to have inspired scholars to introduce ethno-federalism as a concept to be applied also on other types of arrangements (Hale, 2004: 165–193; Roeder, 2009: 203–219). In this case, however, diverse ethnicity is central in how different federal arrangements are classified. Daniel Elazar has used the concept of federacy to explain the asymmetrical relationship between a larger and a smaller power (Elazar, 1987: 7).

David Rezvani has brought new light to the scattered discussion about how to understand and categorize self-ruled territories. Above all, he makes a clear distinction between different federal arrangements and non-federal solutions designated partially independent territories (PIT). PITs are nationalistically distinct, constitutionally different territories that share and divide sovereign powers with a core state (Rezvani, 2014: 1–6; 93–97). They are not fully incorporated with the core state and are not member-units of federations or fully controlled parts of unitary states. The core state can be a federation, a decentralized union, or a unitary state.

From our perspective, we argue that PIT makes the distinction between what is an autonomous self-government and a federal arrangement more obvious. The self-ruled islands of the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland islands are by no means members of federations. Instead, they are separate territories with sovereign power to legislate and govern within realms of devolved entrenchment. The arrangement gives them veto rights if the core state intends to violate the rules of self-government. Decisions of that kind are based on bilateral agreements and legal acts. Moreover, the islands have a distinct national identity different from the nation state. The nation states and the self-governed islands are separate polities which are constitutionally unincorporated and have relative free hands to have control over foreign affairs.

4. Why small ethnically distinct islands?

Small states are mostly unitary states. (Exceptions can be found, such as some micro-states in the Caribbean and South Pacific). In unitary states sovereignty is centralised, and public administration is often decentralised, which therefore can efficiently be run by the government. By nature, unitary states' government decisions intend to follow similar paths around the country in a more comprehensive way than decentralised states with a federal arrangement. Ethnic diversity can be a challenge for all states, but especially for unitary states. There are different contexts where ethnic groups are living either scattered around in the country, as the First Nations in Canada, or where a group holds a territorial grip in a specific region, as do the French-speaking people in Wallonia in Belgium, for instance. Conflicts might occur where there are several ethnic groups living side by side in the same territory. How these groups are assimilated within the core state can then take various forms.

Rezvani, for example, is concerned with how to implement clear distinctions between federal and other arrangements, because PITs include elements similar to federalism. He focuses on ethnic divisions between core states and PITs. An ethno-federal arrangement allows a territorial homeland for ethnic minorities, a territory which they control. Rezvani concludes that PIT arrangements are favourable both for the core states and the PITs, because they serve as solutions for some of the world's most intractable nationalistic disputes.

Roeder states that such arrangements are more common in non-federal states with devolved autonomy (Roeder, 2007: 43–46). In such cases, Liam Anderson argues that two alternatives are available to ethno-federalism: Unitarianism, whereby power is centralized and controlled by a majority group, or a federal arrangement in which the geographical distribution of ethnic groups is irrelevant. His conclusion is that most states have adopted ethno-federalism because other alternatives have been tried, and have failed (Anderson, 2014: 165–204). In his view, more devolved power handled to homeland governments will enhance conflicts with the national identity that holds the common state together (Roeder, 2009: 203–219).

Islands *per se* assert a certain identity due to their isolation and physical location in the periphery; islanders feel that they belong to the same community due to their insularity and natural boundaries given by their geography (Olausson, 2007: 26–31). Islands are more distinct territories compared to landlocked regions. Consequently, islands are significantly more often self-governed than landlocked territories. Added to this, the distinction becomes even sharper if the islands fulfil the criterion of ethnoregional in relation to the unitary state's dominant language and culture. Many islands naturally enjoy some degree of autonomy, especially if they are distant from their metropolitan power and have a distinct society and

culture anchored in what could be seen as sub-nationalism. This could be explained as a regional or geographically anchored ethnicity (Baldacchino, 2010: 103–104).

The nation-states of Denmark and Finland have similar population sizes of around 5.5 million inhabitants, and a similar degree of ethnic homogeneity. Danish is the only official language in the core state Denmark. Finland is officially bilingual, with a small Swedish minority along the Southern and Western coasts. In practice, Finnish is the dominant language in the country. That is the explanation for why Swedish is entrenched in the constitution as the sole official language on the Åland Islands. In the Faroe Islands and Greenland, Faroese and Greenlandic are the official languages respectively, but Danish is used in communication with the core state. In terms of language and culture, these three small (in terms of population) islands stand in contrast to the homogenous and unitary core states of Denmark and Finland. The islanders constitute a *Gemeinschaft* national identity which is institutionalised and entrenched in a *de jure* self-rule.

4.1 The feature of regional parties

Given the concept of the distinct self-government arrangement, where the self-ruled territory has legislative power, entrenched to an elected assembly and a government, can parties in these assemblies still be considered regional or not? The answer depends on the arena in which they seek seats. If the entire party system in the self-ruled territory is distinct and includes parties that have no intentions to compete in national elections, the answer is no. No core state level parties compete with them in assembly elections and the legislators act independently from the state. It could apply to our three cases of small homogeneous territories with distinct language and culture only if parties exclusively compete for office in regional assembly elections and not in core state elections. This criterion does not fit to our cases as all parties included are involved in core state elections. Nor can core states act totally independently; their hands are tied with international agreements and commitments concerning commerce, defence, border protection and traffic, to mention some examples, which is also the case for countries that are not members of the European Union.

However, if the self-ruled territory is given a seat(s) in the core state parliament the answer is yes, as far as regional parties actively seek and compete for office in national parliaments. The intention is more important to the definition than the outcome in terms of a seat in parliament. The elected legislators represent in the first instance their self-ruled territory, even though in practice they have to seek cooperation with a party close to their political aims. Parties in the European parliament follow a similar principle, they contest elections in member states with national party symbols, a national party organisation, and they represent their country in parliament as members of a chosen European parliament party closest to

their political aims. Thus, national parties in a supra-national context can be considered regional, depending of course on whether we accept realities and open our willingness to adjust the absolute sovereignty claim between core EU institutions and its member states. This is something highlighted recently where sovereignty in its traditional sense is claimed to have eroded. Rather, there are multiple sites of sovereign authorities and therefore the term post-sovereignty is on the way to becoming accepted (Keating, 2008: 162–163).

If a self-ruled region is culturally mixed and the core state language is dominant or at least official and commonly spoken the situation is different, as it usually is common in large heterogeneous regions. In Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia and Wales there are open doors for core state parties to compete with the regional parties in regional assembly elections. Supposing that parties still are hierarchical organizations, these parties from the core state could effectively compete in order to nationalize the self-ruled assembly elections and government. Even core state parties have to organize regionally/locally to nominate eligible candidates; no other way is possible. In addition, parties tend to take a stratarchical form in which different mutually autonomous levels coexist, including a minimum of authoritative control (Katz and Mair, 2002: 113–135). The regional branch can independently control policies, programmes and strategies without the consent of the core state party. In a self-governed arrangement, it is a question of loyalty if the party branch will separate totally from the core state party organization or pronounce its difference and devolve itself to an associated branch, or else stay formally integrated. In the first two cases elected MPs to the core state parliament are representatives of a regional interest. In contrast, the last case is not a regional party, whereas parties from the self-ruled region are to be considered regional parties represented in the core state parliament. But in the self-governed legislative assembly all parties are formally equal, though dispersed loyalties can lead to scattered fractions of parties or independents. In fact, a high degree of autonomy facilitates birth of new regional parties and separations from national party organizations. Regional assemblies have the power to support regional parties with public subsidies, media attention, and legislative protection from external party pressures.

Although parties in federations and unitary states can take stratarchical forms and adapt to regional culture, they are part of complex party organizations. Regional parties stay regional within a given territory, but in national parliaments or supra-national assemblies they share the regional party character with parties from self-ruled regions. To mix regional parties with parties in legislative self-ruled assemblies is not a feasible way to proceed. Studies show how complicated it can be when parties in self-ruled legislative assemblies are lumped together with regional parties in unitary states. To be sure, there can be some common elements such as magnitude, economic difference, cultural homogeneity, and distinct ethnicity. All these elements are important especially during a *de facto* phase

of regional mobilization and recognition, but subordinated when a given territory is entrenched in a PIT type arrangement. Protected sovereignty by constitution and/or by law within a given territory gives parties a central role in dealing with budget and legislation, like parties in core state parliaments. This is different from regional parties in federal and/or unitary state parliaments, which are small bricks in a large federal or centralized unit.

In addition, regional self-governments have free hands to legislate reforms to enlarge democracy and experiment with new forms of participation and government, provided it is not contrary to the constitution. Depending on the degree of autonomy, democracy can take different forms in the self-governed region compared to the core state. In administration it is a challenge to organize law-drafting and other administrative tasks properly where there is a lack of human and material resources. Regional parties are key actors in planning and implementing these reforms.

4.2 Who governs? The impact of regional size

Following the literature on regional parties, several observations have already been mentioned. However, there are some aspects of importance that are seldom noticed. In the arguments of *de facto* and *de jure* self-ruled regions these are mixed implicitly because it does not matter, due to the arguments already mentioned. In fact, this is something that seems to characterise regional party literature. If regional parties are in focus to be explained it works to a certain extent, but not in general. The variety of size in self-ruled territories is not fully understood and examined. Many studies put emphasis on escalating conflicts between self-ruled regions and the core state in countries such as Spain, Canada, and the UK (Keating and Wilson, 2009: 536–558; Heller, 2002: 657–685; Keating, 2008). Large self-ruled regions which demand more autonomy or even independence are of course of more interest for political scientists. Other studies have a wide comparative approach, searching for ideological constraints, cleavages, and national destabilization (Janda, 1989: 349–370; Brancati, 2005: 143–159; Brancati, 2008: 135–159; Massetti and Schakel, 2015: 866–886; Massetti and Schakel, 2016: 59–79). Regional parties have an essential role in these studies of increased decentralism.

Regional parties gain visibility when they act in national parliaments demanding extended autonomy, and even strive for independence. The profile and strategy of these parties, including their electoral strength, is essential in fulfilling their aims among national legislators. Self-ruled territories such as Scotland and Catalonia are due to their size well represented in the national assemblies in London and Madrid. In elections regional parties have to compete with national parties in their constituencies, of which some take a pro-regional stand, and in some cases the hegemony of the established party system has

been eroded by the strong influx of regional parties following regional or linguistic lines (Keating, 2013: 82–85; Scantamburlo, Alonso & Gómez 2018, 615–639). But what is the case if a self-ruled region is small and regional parties only have a minimal representation in the national assembly?

Not much is said about the role of parties in small partial independent territories. We know from studies made in micro-states that parties are not well organized and are not even necessary to run for the government (Wettenhall, 1992: 56–57; Kersell, 1992: 290–293). Dag and Carsten Anckar found that democracy manages well without parties in their study of six micro-states. The lack of parties is explained by their extreme smallness, dispersed archipelagos, and cultural resistance (Anckar & Anckar, 2000: 225–247). A study from the micro-state Palau comes to a similar conclusion where size and culture contribute to the non-existence of parties (Veenendaal, 2016: 27–36). A lack of parties was also typical in our three cases during the formative years of self-government. Evidence which dates back to ancient Greece tells us that homogeneity only can be reached in small communities. Generalisations on small size communities include that members are more homogeneous, incentives to conform are strong, open opponents to the majority view are few, and conflicts among organizations are uncommon (Dahl & Tufte, 1973: 91–94).

We are now ready to study three similar insular cases in the North which are small and homogeneous, with a high degree of self-rule which developed to full force under three different time periods. How did the empowerment of devolved self-government create distinct party systems and regional parties as agents of their regional governments?

5. Parties and party systems in devolved regions

Denmark and Finland are highly integrated and politically assimilated. Attempts have been made to include the self-ruled regions of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands into the national integration, as they were in the past. Core states protect their territorial borders and try to maintain a policy of compromise with their self-ruled regions and to settle open conflicts and avoid them drifting away from state control. The self-ruled insular regions have a national identity of their own, aiming to maximise their separate political and economic interests. This approach is inconsistent with the way a centralised unitary state works. Threats of secession with international inference faced the unitary states of Finland in 1921 and Denmark in 1944 and 1948 when they were forced to accept an arrangement of self-government (Adler-Nissen, 2014: 58–61). Greenland lived with its colonial past until 1953 but became integrated as a county before Greenland gained self-rule in 1979 (Harhoff, 1993: 50–70; Lidegaard, 1991: 179–228). The process did not stop there, but the scope of politics changed to be institutionalised and regulated in law.

From the very beginning politics was dominated with the relation to the core state, and it still is. Domestic issues in politics are important to parties but always subordinated to the self-rule status triggered by the core state or the region itself. In these homogeneous insular regions parties were not necessarily needed to defend their self-rule against the core state. More important was their regional government, which had the strongest mandate to negotiate with the core state government. Therefore, participation in national elections involving parties and voters does not have the same priority as elections to regional assemblies (see Appendix 1). Generally, voter turnout is higher in Denmark than in Finland, which tends to have a slight mobilising effect on the island electorate. Nevertheless, it is obviously clear that all three islands follow a similar pattern. National politics does not trigger islanders to the ballot box in the same manner as in the rest of Denmark and Finland. The difference is large, with some occasional exceptions when the difference is less than ten percent. Generally, the gap is 20 or more than 30 percent. Only once have the island voters been more active, which occurred on the Åland Islands in 1939, when the island was still integrated in the South West constituency and had to compete with the mainland electorate to win a mandate. The separation to an Åland constituency in 1948 calmed down the activity. In addition, separate island constituencies sorted out national party candidates from the election. National parties lost their grip on the island due to changes in electoral law. Comparing the three islands, it appears evident that voter turnout is generally higher in the Faroe Islands than in Greenland and on the Åland Islands. Geographical distance to the national mainland seems not to matter.

Most parties are relatively new; all of them are small, and weakly organized. Figures show (Tables 2, 3, and 4) that devolved self-government facilitates birth of new regional parties and actors, and the birth of a complete party system when the regional government has consolidated itself to full legislative power. None of the core state parties have access or presence in regional elections or elections to the core state parliament. This is not uncommon in territories with national minorities or distinct language communities, as is the case in our study (Keating, 2013: 82–85). Thus, regional parties act and compete distinct from the much bigger core state parties during the electoral process. It makes sense when constituency borders and the island territorial borders fit (Sundberg, 2011: 163–204). It gives more political fuel to emphasise distance from the nation state. How the elections are organised or how the islands are divided into small constituencies is of less importance. More important is the joint effect of constituency borders that fit with the regional legislative dominion.

Thus, it is the content of both that makes sense for the birth of a party system including new regional parties. Regions without devolved self-government (*de facto* regions) can give birth to regional parties, but not party systems as in *de jure* regions which have

entrenched legislative power. Party systems can take different forms and numbers of parties. According to Giovanni Sartori, two conditions must be fulfilled if a party should be counted as a part of a party system. Firstly, the party has a coalition potential as the party must be needed, on at least some occasion, for a feasible coalition that can control government. Secondly, the party has a blackmail potential as the party's existence affects the tactics of party competition of those parties that do have a coalition partner (Sartori 2005, 107–110). Saying that, the criteria are fulfilled in our three cases, and, a distinct party system cannot appear in regions which lack entrenched legislative power within their domain. The notion of party systems can be confusing in regional party research because it implicitly refers to party systems at the core state level. Therefore, we have to add that regional parties can be included in party systems on both the national and regional levels if the region follows those criteria discussed above.

As the magnitude is small in the three regional constituencies, measures had to be taken to fit into the national system with minimal exceptions. The population of the Faroe Islands was 30,000 in 1948 compared to about 50,000 today; Greenland had a population of 50,000 in 1979 and about 57,000 today; the population of Åland was about 20,000 in 1921 and is about 30,000 today. Parliamentary elections on the national level are organised by the nation state, not by the self-ruled regions. In none of the three island regions under discussion were national electoral laws an issue. It was more a concern for the national governments to minimise the parliament's influence from the islands, as MPs from the islands participate in all national decisions whereas MPs from the mainland are excluded from decisions written in the act of self-rule. In addition, concerns were met that incumbents from the islands could hold the balance of power. The electoral systems are now standardised to resemble the system on the mainland. Proportional voting is implemented, though the system on the Åland islands is odd as only one incumbent is elected. The Faroe Islands, and Greenland have two incumbents each in the Danish parliament. The sole incumbent from Åland acts alone among 199 other incumbents representing national parties, and the four total incumbents from Faroe Islands and Greenland are in a similar position among 179 MPs.

Representation in core state parliaments has never been a main issue for the self-ruled regions. The lack of conflict between the core state governments and the regional governments on how seats are distributed in national parliaments indicates its low importance in enhancing regional aims. The means of influencing decision-making in national parliaments can either be initiated within the house or externally in negotiations between national and regional governments. Regional parties with no representation in cabinet have a theoretical chance to raise an initiative in parliament, but with the support of one or two seats it is an unrealistic option. To ensure a strong regional government a

better option is how core state and regional governments come to terms. Party engagement in regional assemblies and government increases the more legislative power is devolved to the regional government and downgrades the engagement for the core state parliament. However, acts are checked before coming into force. Acts are not allowed to be against the constitution or violate the legislative competence given to the self-ruled region. Most conflicts between the core state and the self-governed region have their origins in different interpretations of legality, where the core state usually is in a more advantaged position.

5.1 Loyal regional agents in national parliaments

Given this meagre representation in these two national parliaments it seems obvious that legislation and policy matters for the three regions and good prospects are unlikely to be accomplished. Without an entrenched self-rule protected by law these territories would be totally exposed to the majority will in the national parliaments. The situation is partly different in large self-ruled territories like Catalonia and Scotland. Regional representation by national and regional parties is much bigger in the national parliaments and they have more to say by using different strategies to fulfil their aims. Still, the entrenched self-rule gives them a protection and opens the doors to deepen and enlarge their nationalist identity. Common institutions and borders matter in state-making. Nation-building takes place when the inhabitants of the state form a community marked by a *Gemeinschaft* – a feeling where members distribute and share benefits (Finer 1975, 85–86). However, territorial oppositions and waves of counter mobilization threaten the unity of the nation and set limits to nation-building (Rokkan 2009, 46–71). Entrenched self-government includes main components of state-making and nation-building which partly differ from the core state. Within its realm a regional identity and loyalty to its government and legislation can take place. This process is enhanced if the region is well governed and better off than the core state. Given that the self-government arrangement is written in the constitution or is well anchored in legislation, it effectively protects regional parties and voters from eventual core state pressures.

Protection has its limits in relatively new democracies with less consolidated procedures to handle human and civil rights. It works best in established liberal democracies where minority rights are protected in the constitution and respected by the legislators. In addition, these regional parliaments give regional parties a better platform to act and lead governments, which gives visibility and power to negotiate with the core state government. A combination of inside activity in the core state parliament and government to government debates should be more efficient than relying exclusively on regional parties in national parliaments. The Spanish core state government has made things clear. It was exclusively the Catalan

parliament which had the disputed formal power to declare independence. Therefore, the Catalan president and the government was expelled by the Spanish government, and the leading actors were prosecuted by the Supreme Court. Entrenched self-government has a coercive role in times of coexistence and conflict with the core state authorities, as it has the exclusive authority to institutionalize decisions from diverging views.

Although the one (Åland) or two (Faroe Islands and Greenland) elected incumbents from the islands are formally involved in decision making concerning the entire nation, in practice they have little to say if they lack collaborating parties. Non-island incumbents in national parliament, on the other hand, are excluded from the legislation process devolved to the island parliaments. There is no formal hindrance that an incumbent elected from the islands could be included in national cabinet, yet it has not happened. A silent agreement keeps them out as it could give too much advantage to the self-ruled regions, which is not in line with a unitary state. Fears have been raised in Denmark that the four incumbents from the two self-ruled regions could utilize their mandate if the two-party blocks in parliament are of equal strength.

This seems to be one main informal difference between federal states and our examples of self-government arrangements, that is, whether the federal states are asymmetric, or even the smallest member states, are not discriminated against when cabinet members are recruited. It is the essence of how federal states are organized and political parties behave. The unitary core states of Denmark and Finland systematically exclude their self-ruled regions from the national nucleus of government. National parties recruit cabinet members from their own active cadres with the intention to be representative for the entire nation. Incumbents representing small parties from self-governed islands are automatically excluded. This distinction shows that in practise national government parties consider elected incumbents from the self-governed regions as different "nationals" representing their partly sovereign interests.

Although the role of island incumbents in national parliaments can be discussed, they fulfil an important mission for their regions. As members of parliament they get up to date information about coming and ongoing legislation, budgetary process, and the discussion in the house. Most important, the incumbents are kind of gate keepers who alarm the national and regional governments when matters concerning the self-ruled region are neglected or violated and when proposals from regional governments are not proceeding. Regional governments find it important to assist their incumbents by the supporting service of "mini island embassies" in the respective capitals of Copenhagen and Helsinki. That would not be the case if the role of island incumbents had been neglected or considered superfluous. Compared to incumbents from other national constituencies, the island incumbents have a more strategic role as they are legislators in the national parliament and simultaneously

represent the policy of legislators in the self-ruled island parliaments. Therefore, they have been given the role as loyal agents to the regional governments, although the governments have no role in the process of nomination and election. Regional parties have nominated them, voters have elected them, but they are liable in the first instance to the regional government, not to their party or their voters. This is not a contradiction in small homogeneous regions insofar as deep internal political conflicts are avoided.

Legislatures from the Faroe Islands and Greenland have the role of distinct ethnic regional parties in the Danish Folketing. They form a parliamentary party of their own, usually representing the two largest parties from the two regions separately. The one-member parliamentary parties are members of the Faroe Islands committee and the Greenland committee respectively, together with 27 other members representing the core state parties in the Danish Folketing. The sole Åland incumbent is an independent member of the Swedish People's Party parliamentary party, with no formal connection to the party organization. So far, this concept has worked, no matter which party the sole incumbent represents on the Åland Islands. To join a parliamentary party with a similar party label would not work due to deep language and cultural differences.

5.2 Regional governments with authority

The life of regional parties is essentially different depending on the institutional context. In an entrenched self-ruled arrangement sovereignty is devolved from the core state to the regional government. This government has the mandate and authority to negotiate with the core state government resembling when two independent states negotiate. Parties behind the government, whether regional or branches of national parties, may well have different policy views, but when decisions are taken the outcome are institutionalized. The process of institutionalization gives the regional government authority to act. In regions lacking entrenched self-rule, elected authorities are subordinated to the national government. They stand weak against central authorities and are dependent of how national resources are distributed. Open opposition against national decisions is not the best option to take; it may severely harm the region. Regional parties, on the other hand, are better suited to express discontent and to mobilize voters to push their aims. Thus, the platform to act is different. Regional parties have to manage on their own compared to regional parties in self-ruled territories, who can lean on its government and administration. Studies show that it is not easy for these parties to manage on their own, and there is no wonder that protest has turned to cooperation and compromise.

The development of a distinct regional party system with no organizational links to national parties has, as already mentioned, been typical for minorities and distinct language

communities. The pay-off for national parties to compete in core state elections is minimal as the regions have maximally two seats in parliament. In addition, language and culture raise barriers to overcome. Under such circumstances a regional multi-party system can be developed only if the self-ruled territory has internal sovereignty to legislate. Elections to these assemblies can be managed without parties, but even in small communities cleavages are found which in the long run have been politicized and loosely organized to political parties. However, in major issues related to their self-ruled status all three regional governments have called for referendums.

Examples of such mobilizations are found in all three self-ruled islands. More than the other two, Greenlanders have sought popular support to enhance pressure on the core state. An example took place in 1979 as a massive percentage (70.1 percent) voted in favour of the establishment of the Greenlandic parliament, including sovereignty in areas like education, health, fisheries and the environment. In 1982, the Greenlandic government appealed to voters in a referendum whether Greenland should continue to be a member of the European Economic Community. A majority was against (53.02 percent) continued membership, which had been enforced against their will when Denmark joined in 1973, though Greenlanders were opposed at the time. After 30 years of self-rule, a new referendum was called for to enlarge Greenlandic sovereignty and to enhance plans for a future independence. A vast majority (75.5 percent) supported this referendum, which gave the Greenlandic government a strong basis for negotiations with the core state. In all three cases the popular will was approved by the Danish government and the EEC.

An independence referendum was called for in the Faroe Islands in 1946, which won a minimal majority (50.7 percent). The Danish government did not accept the result, but the Faroe Islands received self-rule as compensation. Two petitions were collected in 1917 and 1919 on the Åland Islands and handed over to the Swedish government. The petitions received massive support among the Ålandic population, who wished to reunite with Sweden. A conflict between Åland and Finland and between Finland and Sweden resulted in the Åland case being settled by the League of Nations. Åland was compensated with a sovereign self-rule against its will. In 1994, a referendum was called for in Åland regarding European Union membership. The voter turn-out was only 49.1 percent, but a vast majority of 73.6 percent voted in favour of EU membership. To their disappointment Åland was denied a seat in the European Parliament and a demand for correction is continuously on the agenda with the Finnish government.

A massive level of support for the regional government policy in a referendum widens and deepens the political demand to the core state government, similarly as the Brexit vote in the UK opened the gates for secession preparations from the EU. When the support is not massive, as in the case of the UK, deep cleavages seems to follow. Regional governments

take risks in calling for referendums if they are not ensured that the result will strongly support their political aims. Issues related to secession are subject to divide citizens in territorial autonomies. Referendum as an instrument to enhance political aims with severe impact on legislation is used both in core states and in devolved self-governments.

Although the three self-ruled regions have different histories of party systems, a similar cleavage structure is visible. One is between separatism and unionism, and the other crossing the line is between left and right. Although the former cleavage fits better to the Faroe Islands and Greenland, it can to a certain extent even be applicable to the Åland Islands (Hoff and West, 2008: 311–332). The former cleavage distinguishes the self-ruled regions from party systems in the core states. The latter cleavage follows the pattern in core states. However, the overwhelming cleavage goes between separatism and unionism, which either unite or open rifts between people on the islands. The more united the common will, the less need for a party system from the outset. The left and right cleavage grows in importance when the redistribution of welfare service dominates the budgetary process in the regional assemblies. Still, the separatist and unionist cleavages continue to shadow all parties from the left to the right.

At the moment between six and eight regional parties contest for mandates in the legislative assemblies in the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and on the Åland Islands (see Appendix 2). Despite cleavages between the regional parties, personal image make sense, and so do kinship and informal networks including place of residence. On the individual level conflicts can escalate deeply, but between organized parties conflicts are moderate. Regional parties have little to say in relation to the core state. The best option is to maximise votes and power in order to be included in the regional government. The regional government has the legislative power and the constitutional mandate to pursue its aims for the Danish or Finnish governments.

6. Conclusions

In this paper we have tried to understand and explain the role of regional parties in small self-ruled regions. In contrast to what is explicit or implicitly said, entrenched self-government matters, but its impact on regional parties is regulated by the region's size and its distinct language/cultural homogeneity. In this paper we have selected the smallest, most autonomous, and most culturally distinct island regions to discover common knowledge of regional parties. In this setting regional parties have a function in regional assembly elections and in regional government. Additionally, regional parties also have a function in core state elections. But the main actors are the core state government and the regional government in resolving interest of conflicts, which often is a result of

diverging interpretations on the division of legislative power. In this context regional party incumbents in national parliaments function as agents for the regional government. Due to the small size and high homogeneity there is no contradiction between being an agent to the regional government or the voters. Their mandate is given by the voters, but it includes serving as loyal agents to the regional government, not to their loosely organized party.

More interesting, however, is the question on what the mechanisms behind the limited role of regional parties in core state politics are. We have in this paper operated with two background variables:

1) population size

2) the degree of a homogeneous and distinct language/culture

This is in order to fit the criteria of most similar systems design. The populations are small, and culture and language are distinct from their mainland nation states. What differs is the introduction and consolidation of the degree of entrenched self-rule.

The degree of self-rule can take different measures; however, in our cases all three regions show a high degree of autonomy. A considerable amount of legislative power is devolved to these three regions. Population size gives electoral power, but in our three cases size is small and the electoral power in core state elections is restricted. A region may be homogeneous or diverse on a scale between those two extremes. In our cases homogeneity is in the first instance focused on a distinct language and culture, but also on a relatively equal distribution of income. In diverted regions cleavages are deeper and party conflicts may take another magnitude. The situation in our study is asymmetric as the regional legislative power is strong, the electoral strength is low in core state elections, and regional party conflicts are low or moderate. However, regions with strong electoral power and low homogeneity easily give birth to disagreement on the degree of self-rule or even independence. Regional parties which act in an environment without *de jure* self-government with legislative power are in a different situation. They lack a regional assembly with the right to legislate, and one which is partially protected from the core state authority. Instead, they have to overcome the thresholds to be represented in the core state legislative parliament, and a separate party system is by definition unheard of. In our three cases regional parties paid none or a minor role in the introduction of self-government. It was a result of international events and pressures that gave birth to these self-governing territories.

However, high degrees of homogeneity and very small population sizes make regional parties in national parliaments agents of their own regional governments, which in fact maximises the regional influence on decisions made in the national parliament. It would be a mistake to dismiss our three extreme cases to a residual category of exceptions. In contrast, the choice has been made to elaborate more evident arguments. First, will the

role of regional parties increase when the degree of autonomy is low? Second, what is the linkage between regional parties, including national parties with mandates from a large multicultural region and the regional government in the national parliament? Third, to what extent are regional party and national party incumbents agents of the regional government in the first instance, and their party organization in the second instance? Fourth, who are the main actors in pursuing regional demands to the core state government: the regional government, regional parties, or core state parties? These questions and comments open up a more systematic and comparative approach for future endeavours in the field of regional party research. Finally, to what extent is entrenched self-government similarly relevant in other forms of autonomous arrangements?

[i] Secession of Iceland in 1944 and the risk of secession of the Faroe Islands in 1946.

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Appendix 1

Voter turnout: Nationwide compared to island votes

Year	Finland	Åland	Year	Denmark	Faroe Islands	Greenland
1945	74.87%	55.6%	**1945**	86.29%	57.3%	-
1948	78.25%	45.9%	**1947**	85.78%	60.2%	-
1951	74.58%	38.8%	**1950**	81.87%	22.0%	-
1954	79.90%	33.1%	**1953**	80.80%	*	68.6%
1958	74.99%	38.6%	**1957**	83.73%	37.6%	61.8%**
1962	85.09%	51.6%	**1960**	85.64%	57.1%	65.8%
1966	84.94%	50.7%	**1964**	85.81%	50.2%	48.9%
1970	82.23%	60.9%	**1966**	88.61%	48.8%	59.0%***
1972	81.40%	51.5%	**1968**	89.28%	56.6%	56.3%
1975	73.80%	58.5%	**1971**	87.16%	56.8%	52.1%
1979	75.31%	56.2%	**1973**	88.72%	54.6%	67.6%
1983	75.73%	56.0%	**1975**	88.23%	56.4%	68.7%
1987	72.06%	52.8%	**1977**	88.70%	62.9%	70.0%
1991	68.39%	50.8%	**1979**	85.62%	65.4%	50.3%
1995	68.58%	52.1%	**1981**	87.77%	55.4%	61.0%
1999	65.27%	54.8%	**1984**	88.44%	61.0%	64.0%
2003	66.71%	60.3%	**1987**	86.74%	68.9%	44.9%
2007	65.02%	57.0%	**1988**	85.70%	70.3%	57.9%
2011	67.37%	51.1%	**1990**	82.85%	54.4%	50.8%
2015	66.85%	57.9%	**1994**	84.25%	62.3%	58.7%
			1998	85.95%	66.2%	63.4%
			2001	87.15%	80.0%	61.5%
			2005	84.54%	73.0%	59.6%
			2007	86.59%	66.8%	64.5%
			2011	87.74%	59.8%	57.5%
			2015	85.89%	66.2%	49.9%

*Source: IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=74; http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=63 (accessed 14 August 2015); Folketingsvalg på Færøerne siden 1953, http://www.ft.dk/Folketinget/Oplysningen/Valg/Valgresultater_Faeroerne.aspx (accessed 14 August 2015); Folketingsvalg i Grønland siden 1977, http://www.ft.dk/Folketinget/Oplysningen/Valg/Valgresultat_Groenland.aspx (accessed 14 August 2015); ÅSUB, http://www.asub.ax/text.con?iPage=261; http://www.asub.ax/files/riksdagsval_2015.pdf (accessed 14 August 2015); ÅSUB, http://pxweb.asub.ax/PXWeb/pxweb/sv/Statistik/Statistik__VA/VA008.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=b911eedb-3596-4162-bb57-8f5ab57afbfc (accessed 16 August 2015). *Straw voting; **Straw voting in the number 2 constituency; *** Straw voting in the number 1 constituency.*

Appendix 2

Table 1: Overview of the Faroese party system with electoral results 1945–1990 (in percentages)

Party	1945	1946	1950	1954	1958	1962	1966	1970	1974	1978	1980	1984	1988	1990
Conservative Party	43.4	40.9	32.3	20.9	17.8	20.2	21.6	20.0	20.5	17.9	18.9	21.6	23.2	21.9
Unionist Party	24.4	28.7	27.3	26.0	23.7	20.3	23.7	21.7	19.1	26.3	23.9	21.2	21.2	18.9
Social Democratic Party	22.8	28.1	22.4	19.8	25.8	27.5	27.0	27.2	25.8	22.3	21.7	23.4	21.6	27.5
Independence Party	9.4	-	8.2	7.1	5.9	5.9	4.9	5.6	7.2	7.2	8.4	8.5	7.1	8.8
Independent Candidate	-	2.3	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	-
Republican Party	-	-	9.8	23.8	23.9	21.6	20.0	21.9	22.5	20.3	19.0	19.5	19.2	14.7
The Progress Party	-	-	-	-	2.9	4.4	2.8	3.5	2.5	6.1	8.2	5.8	5.5	5.9
Progressionist's Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.1	-
Socialist Separatist's Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.3
Voter turnout	**75.5**	**73.3**	**61.3**	**66.9**	**71.0**	**74.0**	**80.0**	**80.0**	**80.0**	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**87.5**

Table 2: Overview of the Faroese party system with electoral results 1994–2015 (in percentages)

Party	1994	1998	2002	2004	2008[i]	2011	2015
Conservative Party	16.0	21.3	20.8	20.6	20.1	22.5	18.9
Unionist Party	23.4	18.1	26.0	23.7	21.0	24.7	18.7
Social Democratic Party	15.3	21.9	20.9	21.8	19.3	17.8	25.1
Independence Party	5.6	7.6	4.4	4.6	7.2	4.2	4.1
Republican Party	13.7	23.8	23.7	21.7	23.3	18.3	20.7
The Progress Party	6.3	2.5	-	-	-	-	-
The Centre Party	5.8	4.1	4.2	5.2	8.4	6.2	5.5
Worker's Movement	9.5	0.8	-	-	-	-	-
Freedom Movement	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Faroese Party	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Funny Party	-	-	-	2.4	-	-	-
Upper Secondary School Party	-	-	-	-	0.7	-	-
Progress	-	-	-	-	-	6.3	7.0
Voter turnout	**82.5**	**88.2**	**91.6**	**92.1**	**89.2**	**86.6**	**88.8**

Source: Statistics Faroe Islands; available at www.hagstova.fo/en

[1] In December 2007 the proportional electoral system was changed from a system of 7 constituencies to only consist of one constituency.

Table 3: Overview of the Greenlandic party system with electoral results from 1979–2014 (in percentages)

Party	1979	1983	1984	1987	1991	1995	1999	2002	2005	2009	2013	2014	2018
Siumut	46.1	41.3	44.1	39.8	37.3	38.4	35.1	27.1	30.4	26.5	42.8	34.3	27.2
Atassut	41.7	46.6	43.8	40.1	30.1	30.1	25.2	18.4	19	10.9	8.1	6.5	5.9
Inuit Ataqatigiit	4.4	10.6	12.1	15.3	19.4	20.3	22.1	29.7	22.4	43.7	34.4	33.2	25.5
Sulisartut Partiiat	5.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Akullit Partiiat	-	-	-	-	9.5	6.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issitup Partiia	-	-	-	4.4	2.8	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alliance of Candidates	-	-	-	-	-	-	12.3	3.6	4	3.8	1.	-	-
Demokraatit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.7	22.6	12.7	6.2	11.8	19.5
Sorlaat Partiiat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1.3	-	-	-
Partii Inuit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.4	1.6	-
Partii Naleraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.6	13.4
Nunatta Qitornai													3.4
Samarbejdspartiet													4.1
Others	-	0.5	-	0.4	0.9	4.7	5.3	0.1	0.7	0.2	-	0.1	-
Voter Turnout	**69.6**	**75.1**	**66.8**	**69.6**	**67.5**	**69.6**	**76**	**55.8**	**74.9**	**71.3**	**74.2**	**72.9**	**71.9**

Sources: Maria Ackrén (2014), Table 1 and 2, pp. 176–177; Maria Ackrén (2015), Table 3, p. 332. https://www.valg.gl

Table 4: Overview of the Ålandic party system with electoral results 1971–2015 (in percentages)

Party	1971	1975	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
Liberalerna på Åland	7.6	8.2	29.6	28.9	23.7	22.9	26.6	28.7	24.1	32.6	20.3	23.3
LoS-Liberalerna[i]	-	21.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LoS[i]	57.1	29.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Åländsk Center	-	-	42.3	35.6	28.7	30.2	27.8	27.3	24.1	24.2	23.6	21.6
Åländska förbundet[i]	6.9	6.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frisinnad samverkan, framstegslistan[i]	-	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frisinnad samverkan[i]	13.8	11.8	13.9	16.6	17.3	19.8	20.6	14.5	13.6	9.6	13.9	17.9
Åländska socialdemokrater	13.1	16.4	12.0	16.5	14.0	14.5	15.2	11.8	19.0	11.8	18.5	15.8
Åländsk vänster	1.5	-	2.1	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Obunden samling	-	-	-	-	7.0	9.7	9.8	12.8	9.4	12.3	12.6	9.6
Gröna	-	-	-	-	6.7	2.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fria Åland	-	-	-	-	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ålands framstegsgrupp	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	3.4	-	-	-
Ålands framtid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.5	8.3	9.9	7.4
Hut-gruppen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.2	-	-
Hållbart initiativ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8
Åländsk demokrati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.6
Others	0.0	1.9	0.1	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	-

Sources: Ålands statistik- och utredningsbyrå (ÅSUB): Available at http://www.asub.ax/statistic_detail.con?iPage=45&m=76&sub=2; Peter Söderlund (2008), p. 132.

Publication and Collaboration Patterns in Autonomy Research – A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Research on territorial autonomy has gained new impetus in recent years. This research note presents a first comprehensive bibliometric analysis of autonomy studies. It introduces the Territorial Autonomy Literature Datasets (TALD), surveys of over 800 peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed articles published between 1945 and 2018. The study reveals significant imbalances in gender and origin of authors, methodological approaches and studied cases. While the data shows some trend towards greater diversity and team collaboration, we observe that autonomy research is still dominated by male and Western-based scholars, and by single-authored small-n studies on sub-national regions in Europe and post-Soviet Eurasia. Thematically, the analysis shows that researchers almost exclusively study autonomous regions in the context of conflict regulation and minority accommodation.

Keywords

Bibliometric analysis; Social-science methods; Author networks;
Scientific community; Territorial autonomy

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1. Introduction

Antigone buries her brother against the explicit command of the tyrant Kreon, is trapped alive in a cave as punishment, and dies because of the self-imposed law as a consequence of her personal [*autónomos*] self-determination (Sophocles 1672). The praise of the Theban elders in Sophocles' tragedy is considered the oldest use of the word 'autonomy' in literature. Since then, autonomy has become a widely used and much-contested scientific concept that comes up in a variety of fields. A Web of Science search reveals over 20,000 records in disciplines such as medicine, psychology, and robotics (Web of Science 2019). Despite its multidisciplinary use, the etymology of the word draws attention to the fact that autonomy is originally a political concept. Composed of *autos* (gr. self) and *nomos* (gr. law or rule), the term describes the right to make its own laws or to live by one's own rules (Taylor 2019).

In ancient Greek, a polis was considered autonomous if it could govern its internal affairs independently of any superior power. For Herodotus, the counterpart of external autonomy was foreign domination, heteronomy. He used (internal) autonomy as a synonym for self-determination to describe the opposite of tyranny. It was then Thucydides who applied the term only to forms of internal self-determination, and who argued that an autonomous polis does not necessarily include its own jurisdiction or financial sovereignty (see Achouri 2013, Gerolemou 2017). According to this modern interpretation, the concept describes the territorially limited self-determination of a political community within a larger sphere of power. This understanding of autonomy as *territorial* self-governance is still predominant in comparative political science and has gained new impetus with the wave of decentralization that has been affecting most countries since the 1980s.

Nevertheless, (territorial) autonomy remains a highly contested concept, with its precise definition criteria being the subject of ongoing academic discussions. The conceptual debates revolve mainly around the question whether (territorial) autonomy is a concept sui generis, which can be distinguished from other forms of vertical power division, such as federalism, decentralization, or devolution, or whether autonomy should be used as a generic term to describe the overall level of self-rule a sub-state entity enjoys (see Trinn and Schulte 2019). Many political scientists subsume forms of territorial self-governance under the broader concept of political power-sharing. Following the groundbreaking work of Arend Lijphart, regional autonomy is often considered the 'second pillar' of consociationalism next to grand coalitions and veto rights (see Wolff and Yakinthou 2012). As this literature analysis will show, the synonymous use of these concepts can be traced back to the fact that research on autonomies has dealt from the outset, and almost exclusively, with the management of ethnic diversity and severe cultural cleavages, the addressing of which is also the raison d'etre of consociational theory. However, the use of

umbrella terms such as 'complex power-sharing' (Wolff 2013), 'territorial power-sharing' (Hartzell and Hoddie 2015), or 'dispersive power-sharing' (Strøm et al. 2017) has led to some conceptual stretching and is not unproblematic, as power-sharing and vertical self-governance are institutions based on a different functional logic: while power-sharing arrangements in parliaments or cabinets aim at integrating relevant segments of society together into political decision-making processes, territorial autonomy works in the opposite direction by distributing political power away from the center and creating more or less autonomous entities with special status. Empirical cases in which both functional principles are institutionalized, such as in Nunavut (Canada), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), or South Tyrol (Italy), are empirically very rare phenomena and therefore are not appropriate conceptual blueprints. The same applies to forms of "non-territorial autonomy", for which we find almost exclusively historical examples, such as the Millets in the Ottoman Empire or the Jewish National Council in Mandatory Palestine (see Malloy, Osipov, and Balázs 2015; Osipov 2018). In addition, most such labelled cases are not really 'non-territorial' but represent situations in which group-based and area-based distinctions are fused. Also, most cases do not constitute instances of political power, that is the ability to rule, but of rather protective minority rights.

The research literature that explicitly deals with territorial autonomy as a dependent or independent variable is comparatively young. While intellectuals such as Karl Renner and Otto Bauer (Springer Rudolf (Renner) 1902) had already discussed autonomy solutions to prevent the break-up of the multi-ethnic Austrian Empire on the eve of the First World War, scientific studies on territorial autonomy only gained momentum in the mid-1980s. Milestones such as Dinstein's "Models of Autonomy" (Dinstein 1981), Hannum's "Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination" (Hannum 1996), or Lapidoth's "Autonomy - potentials and limitations" (Lapidoth 1997) paved the way for a rapidly increasing number of empirical publications dealing with autonomous regions. Figure 1 illustrates the growing number of publications since 1945 indexed with the terms 'territorial autonomy' or 'regional autonomy' in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Google Scholar (Web of Science 2019; Google 2019).

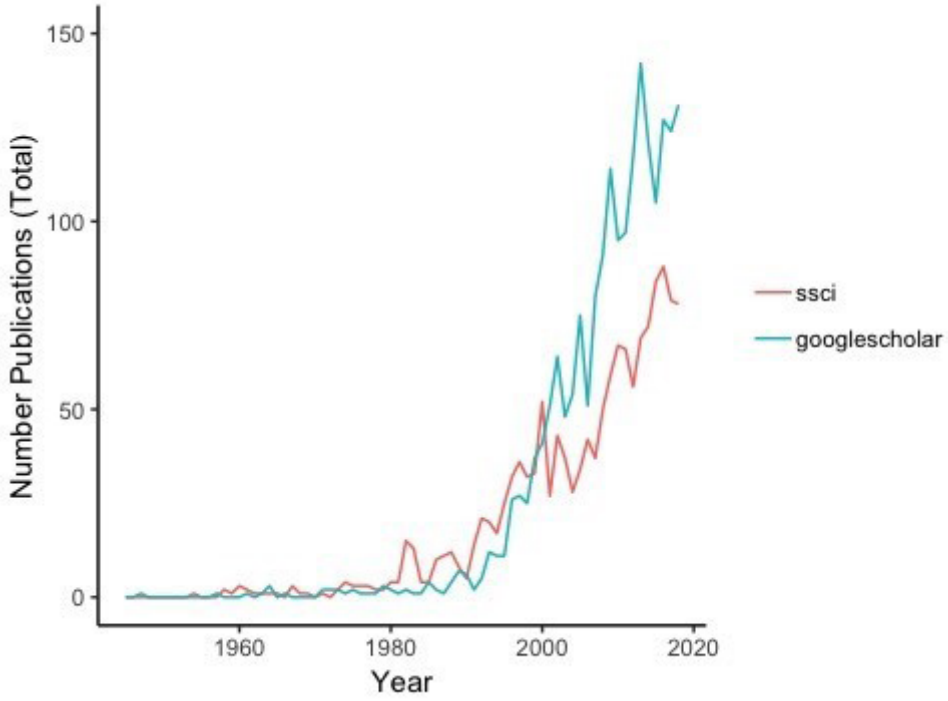

Figure 1: Autonomy publications in SSCI and Google scholar (1945–2018)

In recent decades, autonomy research has undoubtedly developed into a growing and enormously dynamic field. This paper looks back on the past decades of intensive research. Who are the autonomy researchers? Where do they come from, and in which countries do they work? What are the key publications in the field, and which cases are studied with which empirical methods? What is the central research interest of autonomy studies? To answer these questions, this research note conducts a bibliometric analysis of the relevant literature. The aim of the explorative study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research field and to assess its cooperative and communicative integration. The article proceeds as follows. The next section describes the methodology, particularly the data sets compiled for the bibliometric analysis. Section 3 looks at authors, their gender, and their origin, as well as at the academic stars in the field and important co-citation networks. Section 4 analyzes the empirical interests and research designs used in autonomy studies and shows which empirical cases have been the focus thus far. The fifth section looks at the most important journals and analyses the keywords and abstracts of the publications in order to draw conclusions about their content and thematic focus over time. The final section summarizes the main findings and draws some conclusions for the further development of the research field.

2. Methodology

Bibliometric analyses have been conducted to analyze the influence of scholars and their publications, to explore publication trends, or to study collaboration patterns and citation networks in political science in general and its various sub-fields (Fisher et al. 1998; Pehl 2012; Metz and Jäckle 2017; Goyal and Howlett 2018; Pelke and Friesen 2019). The statistical analysis of publication data enables researchers to systematically examine a large number of publications and to identify strategic and thematic changes in a research field over time. Therefore, it usefully supplements classical literature overviews that usually concentrate on the most influential publications of a literature strand and summarize substantive findings to a particular topic.[1]

This research note focuses on journal articles, which represent the primary form of scientific publication. In addition, scientific articles are suitable elements for bibliometric studies as they are usually of comparable length and text structure and provide readily extractable abstracts and keywords that can be easily analyzed. As a first step, all articles in the Web of Science (WoS) that are found with the search terms 'Territorial Autonomy', 'Regional Autonomy', 'Political Autonomy', 'Cultural Autonomy' or 'Power-Sharing'/ 'Power Sharing' are selected. As a second step, all articles which do not fall into social science disciplines are excluded from the sample. All remaining texts are combined into the *Territorial Autonomy Literature Data Set* (TALD1). TALD1 contains 827 articles published between 1945 and 2018. This data set provides full bibliographic information, such as names of authors, co-authors, full references, keywords, and abstract texts, and is thus ready-to-use for all bibliographic analyses, such as Co-Authorship Network Analysis (COA) and Author Co-Citation Analysis (ACA) to analyze cooperation and citation patterns in autonomy studies.[2] The WoS does not provide for data on gender or origin of authors, empirical methods, or cases. In addition, some journals in the research area, such as 'Ethnopolitics', the 'Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe', or the 'Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies' are not listed in the WoS, which possibly excludes relevant articles from the analysis.

For these reasons, a second data set (TALD2) is compiled, which contains the missing information and promises more robust results. For TALD2, all articles published between January 1980 and December 2018 in political science journals and listed with the keywords

1 In autonomy studies a plethora of thematically more or less specific literature overviews are available (Brancati 2008; Bednar 2011; Gagnon and Keating 2012), which are not discussed in greater detail here.

2 COA takes into account the frequency of author collaborations. ACA, in contrast, analyzes citations and can thus draw conclusions about the relative importance of individual authors for the research field as well as their thematic "distance". If two authors appear in the same bibliography of a publication, they are co-cited. The more co-citations exist, the more likely it is that the research content of the authors is similar (Wang, Bu, and Huang 2018).

'Territorial Autonomy' or 'Regional Autonomy' in the title or free text in the Social Science Citation Index (SCCI), POLLUX (Informationsdienst Politikwissenschaft) or HEIDI (Bibliographic catalogue Heidelberg University) are selected. TALD1 and TALD2 exclude book reviews but include articles in non peer-reviewed journals. This is done to reach the aim of mapping the research field as comprehensively as possible. Assuming an ideal scientific world with a barrier-free exchange of ideas and knowledge between well-connected scholars, we expect authors to be influenced by texts in both peer-reviewed and non-reviewed journals.

TALD2 contains 588 articles in 228 journals and provides information for each publication on the number of authors (*number_aut*), their biological gender (*gen*), their regional origin and current domicile (*origin* and *home*), as well as the ethnic heterogeneity of this country (*heterog*).[3] The variable *interest* states the primary research interest of the respective article. A distinction is made between a) primarily theoretical work or work that is interested in legal aspects, b) primarily empirical-analytical work that, however, does not develop original theoretical arguments, c) articles that develop both a theoretical argument and test devolved hypotheses empirically, and d) methodological studies that primarily concentrate on methodological questions and the implementation or application of empirical methods. Furthermore, the data set provides information on whether the article makes a causal argument (*causal_claim*) and which empirical methods authors apply. The variable *method* indicates whether the article uses descriptive or inferential statistical methods, applies set-theoretical methods such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) or Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA), is based on comparative or single-case studies, uses a mixed-methods research design, or does not apply any empirical method in the proper sense. The variables *cases_region* and *number_cases* provide information on the regional focus of the study and the number of cases investigated. The codebook in the Appendix gives a detailed overview of the variables included in TALD2.[4]

3 Heterog1 describes the number of relevant ethnic groups in the respective country (home) based on information in the EPR data set (Wimmer, L.-E. Cederman, and Min 2009); Heterog2 describes the occurrence of violent self-determination movements in the respective country during the period under study (Sambanis et al. 2018); Heterog3 describes the number of ethnic autonomies in the respective country (Panov and Semenov 2018).

4 Both datasets can be downloaded here: https://www.felix-schulte.de/data/tald/

3. Authors and author networks

3.1 Gender and origin

Testing the ideal of a vibrant and well-connected intellectual community, the empirical evaluation of the data sets shows that jointly written contributions are not the predominant pattern in autonomy research. While the average number of authors per article has slowly yet steadily increased from 1.0 in 1980 to around 1.5 in 2018, a large majority of articles (71.6 percent) is single-authored. Only 8 percent of the articles in TALD2 are written by three or more authors. This is not untypical in political science literature, with similar numbers being observable in various sub-fields and countries (Arzheimer and Schoen 2009; Cancela, Coelho, and Ruivo 2014; Leifeld and Ingold 2016; Pelke and Friesen 2019). The analysis of the author's gender clearly shows that autonomy research is a male-dominated research field, with 68 percent of first authors and 75 percent of second authors being male. However, the percentage of female authors has grown significantly from 17 percent in the 1980s to around 30 percent in the 1990s, and 36 percent in the 2000s (Figure 2). Even though in the 1990s the proportion of women as co-authors was even higher than their proportion as first authors, the ratio has reversed in recent years.[5] The under-representation of women becomes particularly clear when we look at the number of female-only articles, which make up just 3 percent of the sample. Although a slight increase can also be observed here, female author teams, such as Szöecsik/Zuber (2015), Åkermark/Stephan (2013), or Willett/Giovannini (2014), are still rare.

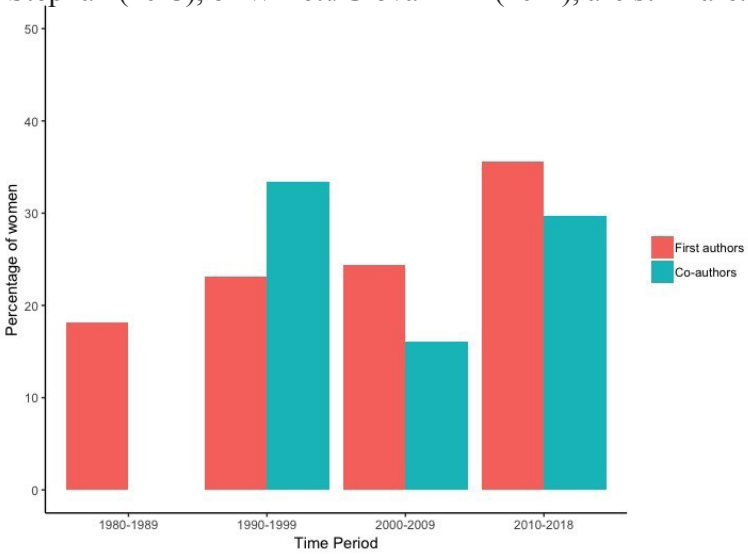

Figure 2: Percentage of women as first authors and co-authors

5 First authorship is determined by which author is named first in an article. A closer look reveals that the order of names is usually not purely for alphabetical reasons. It is much more common for men to be listed as first authors and women as second authors than vice versa.

Also notably underrepresented in the field are non-Western authors. 71 percent of the publications stem from authors from Northern, Western or Southern European countries, North America, and Canada. Their home institutions are usually large, research-strong universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Research institutions in Australia, Germany, and Switzerland are also widely represented. 13 percent of first authors come from post-Soviet countries, including the Balkans and Russia. Authors from other world regions together account for just 16 percent. While authors from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have a share of 4 percent, scholars from Oceania, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia account for only around 3 percent of the sample. Publications by scholars from South Asia, East Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean are hardly to be found in the research field. They each make up only about 1 percent of the total. While publications by non-Western authors before 1990 are practically non-existent, their share is continuously rising. Nevertheless, the analysis of the data set shows that the regional imbalance remains very much in favor of Western institutions and authors.

3.2 Academic stars and author networks

Co-authorships imply direct communication and intellectual debate between individual scholars and can therefore serve as an indicator for scientific collaboration and an intensive exchange of ideas and knowledge (Leifeld et al. 2017). The above-mentioned average number of authors per article already suggests that autonomy studies are a rather fragmented and less-cooperative field lacking extensive author networks. This assumption is confirmed by a systematic co-authorship (COA) analysis. While a rather low degree of author cooperation is typical for the social sciences compared to the natural sciences, it is remarkable that more or less no distinctive cooperation networks can be found in the data. The research field appears to be a collection of smaller, loosely coupled intellectual islands rather than a cohesive and well-connected scientific world. This may be due to the fact that autonomy research is still a cross-cutting issue that attracts researchers from many other sub-fields, such as comparative politics, legal studies, or conflict research, while only very few researchers focus exclusively on autonomous regions as a research topic. It seems that there is a wide gap in terms of professional backgrounds, theoretical positions, or methodological approaches that prevents autonomy researchers from publishing together. A notable exception is a collaboration network of conflict researchers at the ETH Zurich in Switzerland, including Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Simon Hug, among others, which has published several influential journal articles (Cederman et al. 2015; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Wucherpfennig 2017; Cederman, Skrede, and Wucherpfennig 2018). When writers cooperate, they mostly do it in duos. Some of the two-writer teams

have built remarkably durable cooperations and have contributed substantially to the field. Examples include the highly successful cooperations between Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, or Arjan Schakel and Emanuele Massetti.

Citations indicate not only an intellectual relationship between citing and cited source, but also thematic relationships. The author co-citation analysis (ACA) draws a rather different picture than the co-authorship analysis. It shows a very integrative network with a dominant epicentre consisting of a single academic – Arend Lijphart. A graphical illustration of the ACA illustrates his outstanding position (Figure 3).[6]

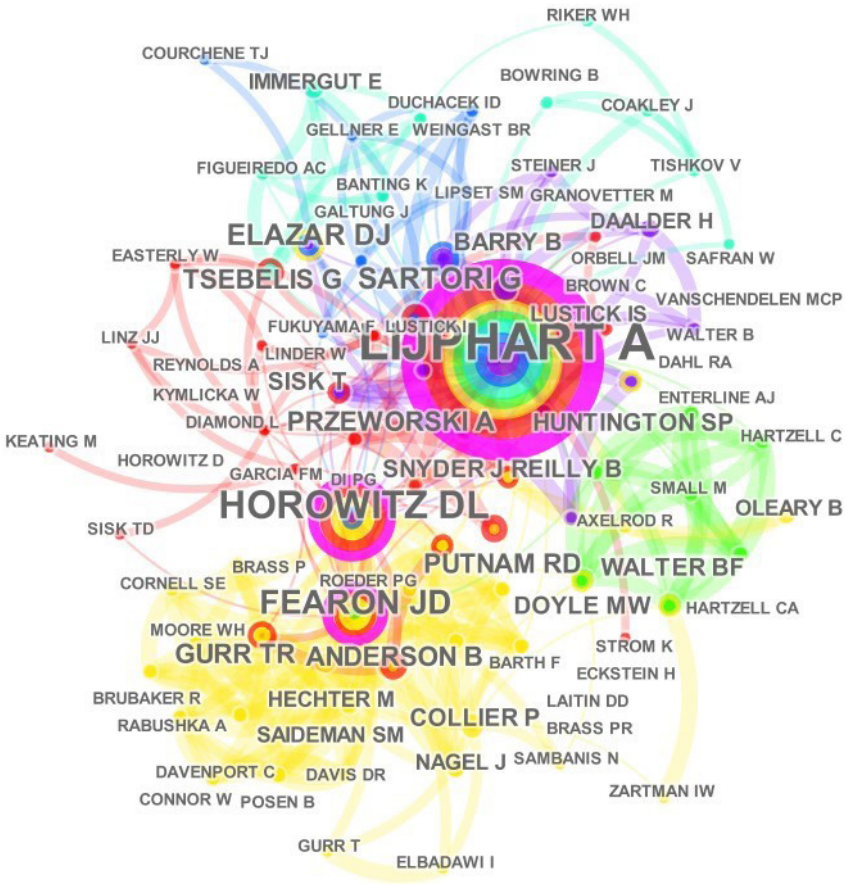

Figure 3: Author co-citation network

6 It must be noted, however, that the ACA does not take into account whether a source is cited agreeingly or critically or whether it is only referred to for strategic reasons. CiteSpace in Version 5.5 (2018) is used for analysis (Chen 2018). Thresholds are set x > 2 for cited references, x > 3 for co-citations, and x > 0.2 for the co-citation coefficient. For illustrative reasons, only a part of the co-citation network is displayed, which, however, shows the most important authors.

Lijphart is the most prominent academic in the field, who has an outstanding citation record, and whose work connects many different scholars in the field through co-citations. Lijpharts ideas on consociational democracy provide the central theoretical framework to which almost all authors in the research field refer to a greater or lesser extent. His "Patterns of Democracy – Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries" from 2012 alone reached more than 10,000 Google Scholar citations in August 2019 (Google 2019). Close to the Lijphartian center, we find several smaller thematic clusters driven by other academic stars, most notably Donald Horowitz and James Fearon, who both have produced pioneering studies on ethnic conflict and its regulation. They are the connecting points to another important co-citation network consisting of Ted Gurr, Benedict Anderson and Michael Hechter, among others. Another highly interconnected co-citation network consists of Barbara Walter, Caroline Hartzell or Brendan O'Leary, which also deals thematically with majority-minority conflicts and post-conflict institutions. Other networks, such as those around Daniel Elazar or Giovanni Sartori, are far less substantial. On the basis of these groundbreaking works, many others have decisively contributed to the research on autonomous regions. They constitute the many, more or less connected nodes of the intellectual network.

The importance of individual scholars can be measured with the h-index, which takes into account their citation impact as well as their overall productivity.[7] Figure 3 gives an illustrative overview of the 2019 h-index of some of the most important scientists in autonomy studies.[8]

7 The index can be calculated as follows: h-index (f)= $\max_i \min (f(i),i)$ with f being the number of citations for each publication (Hirsch 2005).

8 Since the data was automatically extracted from Google Scholar, the h-index can only be used for authors with a Google Scholar profile.

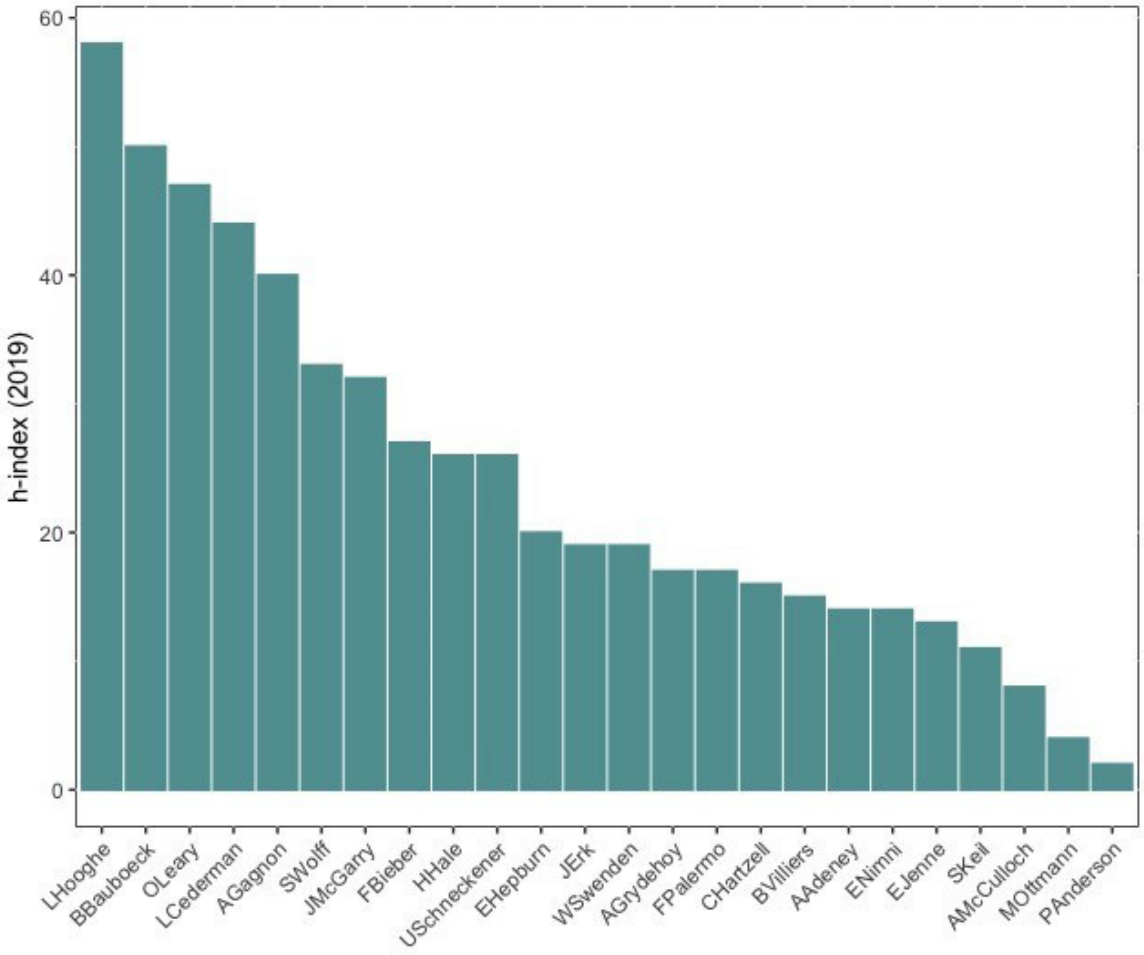

Figure 4: H-index scores (2019)

4. Empirical cases and methods

The research interests in autonomy studies are relatively balanced. Primarily empirical, hypothesis-testing studies form a small majority compared to primarily theoretical and inductive studies. However, the proportion of primarily theoretical works is relatively high at about 30 percent, which has not significantly changed in recent years. Obviously, there is still relatively much conceptual work going on in the research field. What are the necessary and sufficient definition criteria for territorial autonomy? How can different sub-types be distinguished? Which cases fall under a specific definition? At the same time, de jure analyses and questions of international law also play a central role in autonomy studies when it comes to legal guarantees for autonomous regions or the transferred level of powers. About a third of the works contain both inductive and deductive elements and thus genuinely extend the borders of the field. About a quarter of the studies define dependent and independent variables and investigate causal relationships in an x- or y-centered

manner. In contrast, studies that are primarily methodologically oriented are practically irrelevant. The implementation and application of new empirical methods obviously takes place in more established fields. Figure 5 gives an overview of the development of research interests in recent years.

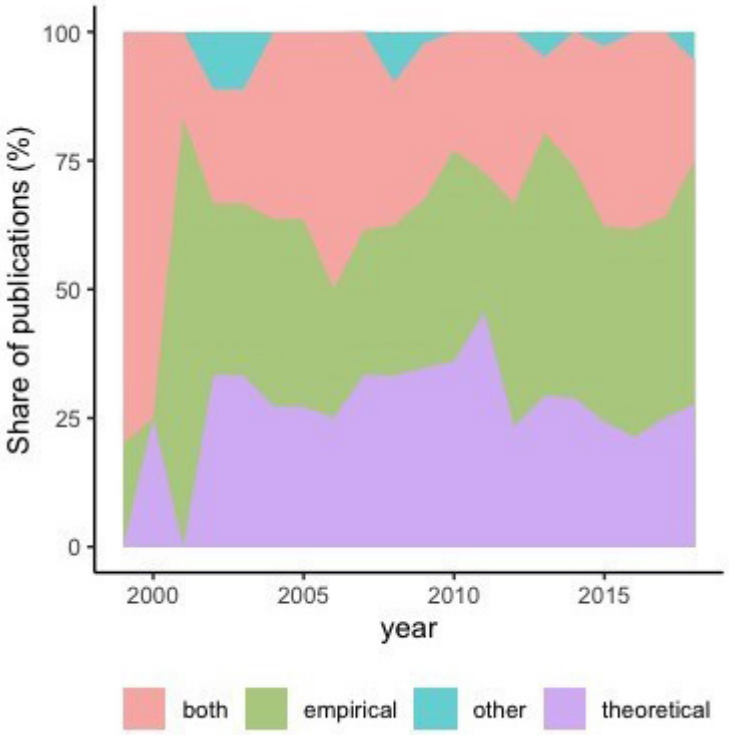

Figure 5: Research interests over time

A closer look at the research designs reveals that authors with a primarily empirical research interest mostly use qualitative methods on the basis of a small number of cases. Autonomy research is highly case-oriented and is more focused on the lower steps of the "ladder of abstraction" (Sartori 1970). Nearly 60 percent primarily study a single case. About 11 percent of articles are medium-n studies with a case number between 2 and 6 cases. The rest of the publications analyze 6 or more cases, with 18 percent reaching the number of 30 or more cases necessary for statistical analysis. While the methodologies of some rely on within-case process tracing, variable-based cross-case comparison or congruence analysis, a broad majority answers their research question in a descriptive and more illustrative manner. While these studies do often not develop new empirical hypotheses, these publications, such as John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's work on Northern Ireland or Rajat Ganguly's on South Asian autonomies constitute the central repository of knowledge of autonomy research and reach relatively high citation scores (McGarry and O'Leary 2004; Ganguly 2013). 16.3 percent of autonomy studies use

descriptive statistics or regression-based analyses. Interestingly, almost all large-n studies belong to broader peace and conflict research that tends to look at autonomy arrangements as an independent variable for the (re-) occurrence of violent intra-state conflicts.

Statistical	Set-theoretical	Comparative	Single case	Mixed	Others	No Method
16.39 %	0.81 %	13.16 %	37.85 %	0.61 %	2.63 %	28.74 %

Table 1: Empirical methods in autonomy studies

Studies that use cross-case research designs to compare a medium number of cases on the basis of theoretically selected variables are relatively rare, with a total share of just over 13 percent. Such designs are able to provide for deep insights and to take the usually high diversity of autonomous sub-state regions into account. At the same time, since they reach a certain degree of generalizability of empirical findings, there seems to be some untapped methodological potential here. The same also applies to set-theoretical methods, which are hardly applied so far. Very few researchers use mixed-method designs and combine qualitative and quantitative methods to answer their research question. This may be a direct consequence of the low level of author networks and the resulting smaller repertoire of methods mastered by individual scientists. Here, too, an uptrend would be desirable in order to compensate for the disadvantages of methodological approaches and to increase the robustness of empirical findings. The proportion of publications that could not be assigned to a specific method type in coding process is comparatively high (28.74 percent). This again reflects the high proportion of purely theoretical studies that represent conceptual or legal papers and do not test empirical hypotheses in a strict sense.

The main focus of autonomy research is on sub-national regions in Western, Northern and Southern Europe, post-Soviet Eurasia, and the Balkan states, where a total of 57 percent of the cases are located (Figure 6). Sub-state regions in other parts of the world are studied far less frequently. While just under 10 percent of selected cases are to be found in Latin America/the Caribbean, the share is 8 percent in Southeast Asia and only 7 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Cases of regional autonomy in East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as North America and Oceania, each reach shares of only between 2 and 4 percent.

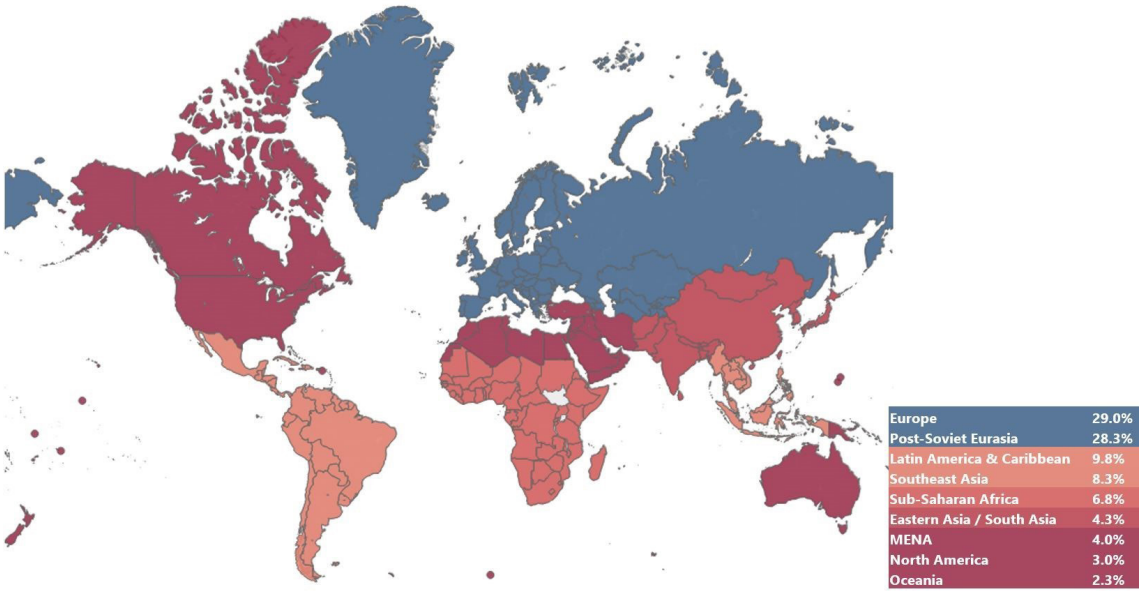

Figure 6: World map on regions of cases

Empirical research has shown that territorial self-governance is unequally distributed, with some world regions being significantly more decentralized than others (Trinn and Schulte 2019). While we find a disproportionately high number of autonomies in post-communist states, territorial self-government is indeed an empirically rather rare phenomenon in the Middle East, North America, or Oceania. A comparison with the Ethnic Regional Autonomy data set (ERAD, Panov and Semenov 2018) reveals that the current empirical focus is only partially related to the actual occurrence of forms of territorial self-government (Table 2). There is a clear misfit between empirically existing and scientifically studied cases when looking at Europe, sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia. While European autonomies are disproportionately often investigated compared to their actual number, South Asian and African cases are clearly underrepresented in the literature.

	Europe	Eurasia	L.-America	S-E-Asia	Sub-S.Africa	E-Asia	S-Asia	MENA	N.America	Oceania
Investigated (%)	29.0	28.3	9.8	8.3	6.8	4.3	4.3	4.0	3.0	2.3
ERAD (%)	13.7	28.1	5.0	8.6	19.4	3.6	16.5	0.7	1.4	2.9

Table 2: Investigated and existing cases in autonomy studies

It seems that autonomy scholars tend to study autonomous territories in the world region from which they themselves originate and of which they have a good case knowledge. Fisher's exact test, which assesses the significance of the association of two nominal variables, shows that the variables *origin* of first authors and the geographical location of the investigated cases (*cases_region*) are not independent of each other (p=0.0004998). Since most authors come from Western countries, sub-national entities in this part of the world are more frequently investigated. Selecting cases based on personal preferences and regional focus is a pragmatic and conventional practice and, at the same time, in-depth case-knowledge is indispensable. However, a too strong (eurocentric) bias on case selection can become problematic in the long term, especially if an external perspective is completely absent and even large-n analyses exclude non-European cases. Hence, a more systematic and theoretically meaningful case-selection is desirable.

77 percent of publications in TALD2 stem from authors who currently are employed at an institution in a country which is home to three or more politically relevant ethnic groups.[9] A third of the home countries were affected by one or more ethnic self-determination movements since the Second World War. While this even constitutes a (weak) correlation between the proportion of authors from a country and the number of self-determination movements in that country, there is no evidence of a "personally-affected"-bias in autonomy research. Deviant cases such as China, India, or Russia, each with a high number of relevant ethnic groups and a correspondingly high number of self-determination movements, make up only a small proportion of the authors in TALD2. As already mentioned, high proportions are held by states such as the USA, Great Britain, and Canada, which are home to ethnic minorities and have experienced self-determination movements, but which are above all rich democracies with high educational expenditures and corresponding research opportunities and freedoms.

5. Topics

As argued above, research on territorial autonomies is a cross-cutting issue that is studied by many scientific disciplines. A Journal Co-Citation Analysis (JCA) demonstrates that autonomous regions as research subjects have made it into all major flagship journals of political science.[10] Articles with the most citations have been published in the American

9 According to the Ethnic Power Relations Data Set (EPR) an ethnic group is politically relevant "if at least one significant political actor claims to represent the interests of that group in the national political arena, or if members of an ethnic category are systematically and intentionally discriminated against in the domain of public politics" (Lars-Erik Cederman, Brian Min, and Andreas Wimmer 2009)

10 The unit of analysis for co-citation analysis can also be scientific journals. JCA detects clusters of journals in which co-cited papers are published.

Political Science Review (48), the American Journal of Political Science (32), World Politics (38), the British Journal of Political Science (23), or the Journal of Democracy (22). A graphic illustration reveals several sub-clusters. The Journals African Affairs, Governance, as well as Publius - The Journal of Federalism, among others, form citation networks which have only limited connections to the dominant general-interest journals of the discipline.

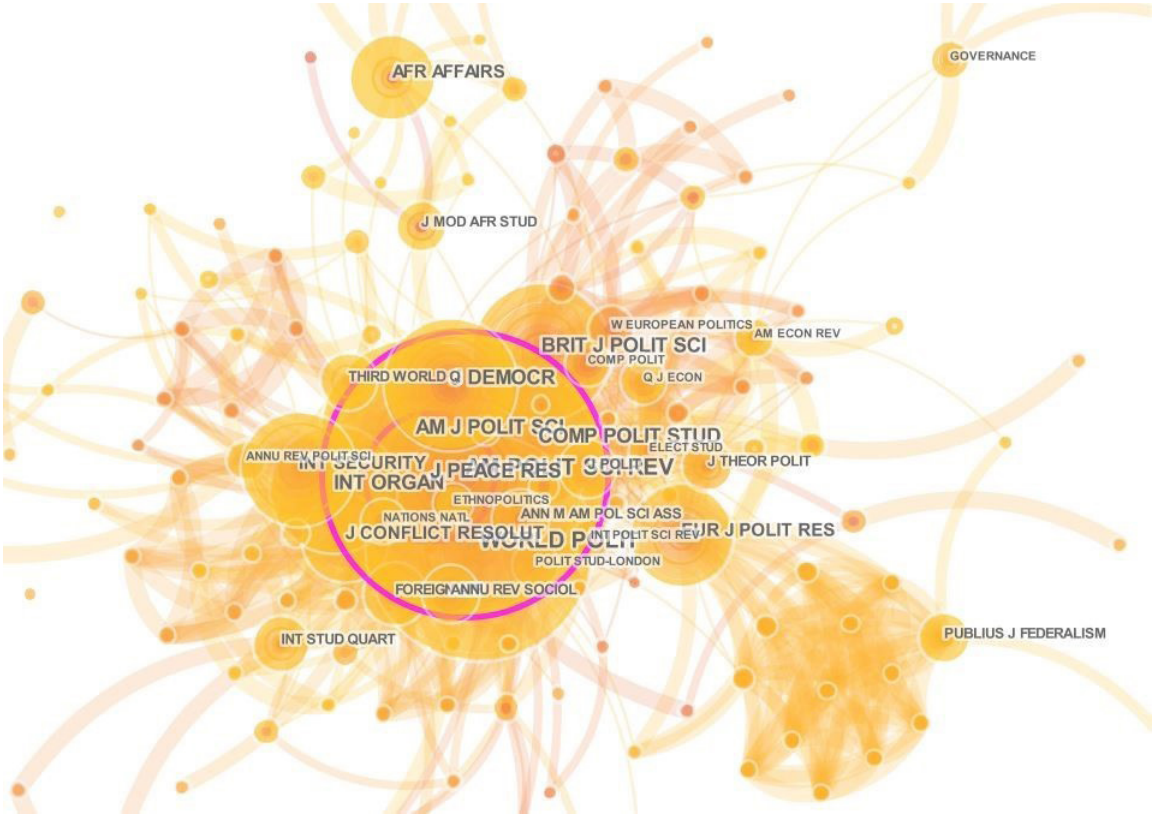

Figure 7: Journal co-citation network

This indicates a diverse and sub-field spanning usage of autonomy as a concept in political science research. Autonomy is included as a dependent or independent variable, as a broad or narrow concept, subsumed under different definition criteria, and studied in various contexts. To further test this assumption, all keywords assigned by the authors are collected and divided into subgroups based on their similarity using a clustering algorithm.[11] The results are displayed in a dendrogram (Figure 7).

The dendrogram seems to illustrate a high thematic diversity of the articles included in TALD2. Thematic agglomerations include clusters of *Europe/European Union/*

11 The R package cluster in Version 2.1.0 is used for analysis (Rousseeuw et al. 2019)

Europeanization (blue), of *Region/Regionalism/Regional identity* (green) and *Language/ Language Rights/ Language Policy* (brown). A closer look, however, reveals that most clusters are thematically relatively close and revolve around a specific higher-order topic, namely multiculturalism and politics in deeply divided societies. Despite the rather broad application of territorial autonomy as an empirical concept, the research field follows a very clear thematic direction, which is addressed by almost all publications covered by TALD and, as outlined above, largely influenced by Lijphart's work as a key driving force. A simple frequency analysis of the article abstracts supports this assumption. Among the 10 most frequent nouns in the article abstracts, the terms *state*, *minority*, *government,* and *conflict* are found (Figure 9).

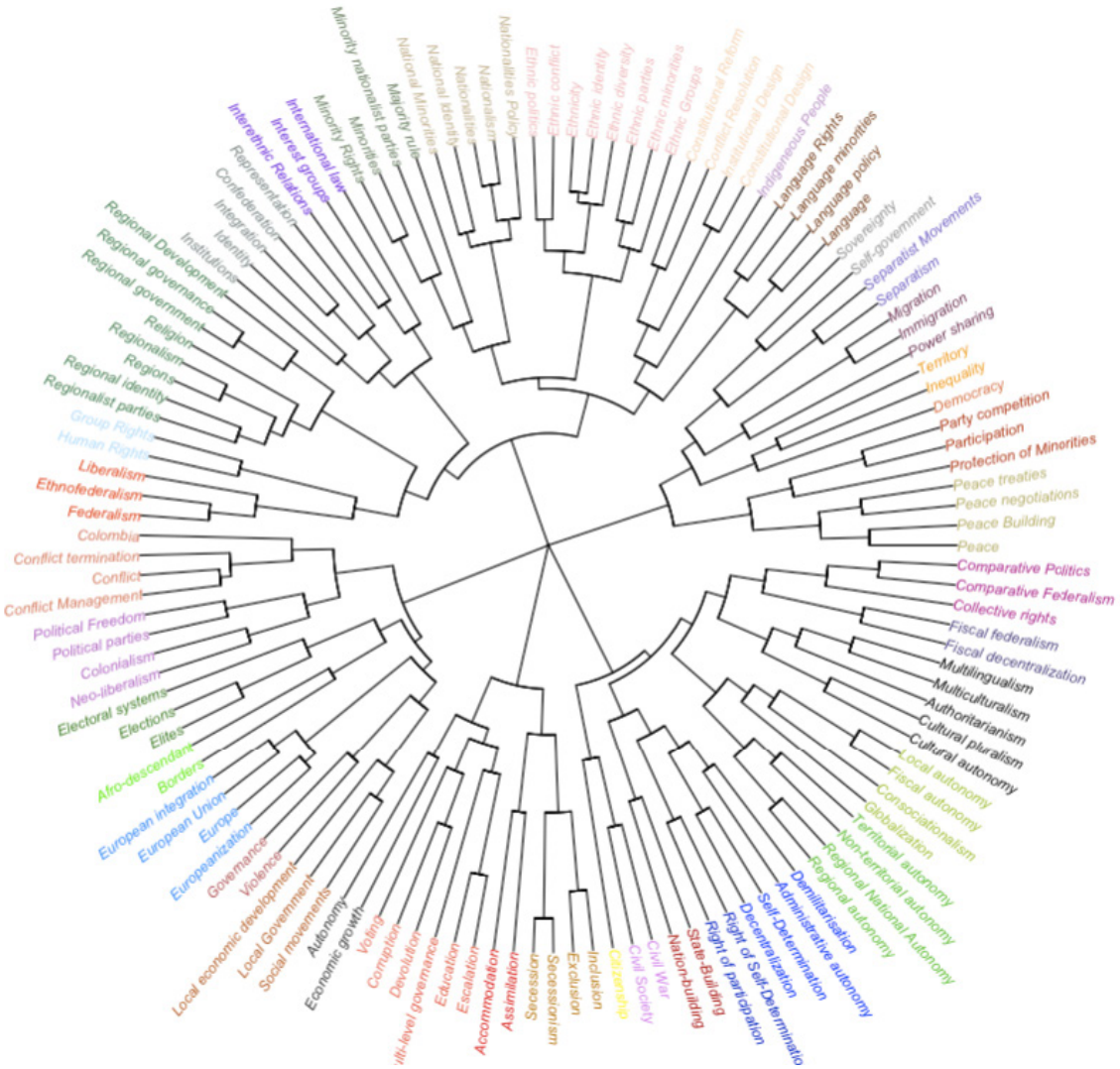

Figure 8: Dendrogram of keyword clustering

Ethnic, regional, *national* or *cultural* are among the most often used adjectives. The most often occurring noun phrases, text sequences comprising an adjective and a noun, are *territorial autonomy* and *regional autonomy*, followed by *ethnic group*, *civil war* and *international law*.[12]

Frequency analyses are a suitable, yet imperfect way to assess the main topic in a research field, as it may be the case that authors assign different keywords to thematically similar articles or select keywords on a strategic basis. An alternative way is to determine the content of research texts by automatically generating keywords from them. Therefore, the RAKE algorithm (Rapid Automatic Keyword Extraction) is applied to all article abstracts included in TALD2. RAKE produces keywords by analyzing contiguous word sequences and excluding irrelevant terms. Each candidate keyword or parts of such gets a score based on its frequency and co-occurrence frequency in the texts.

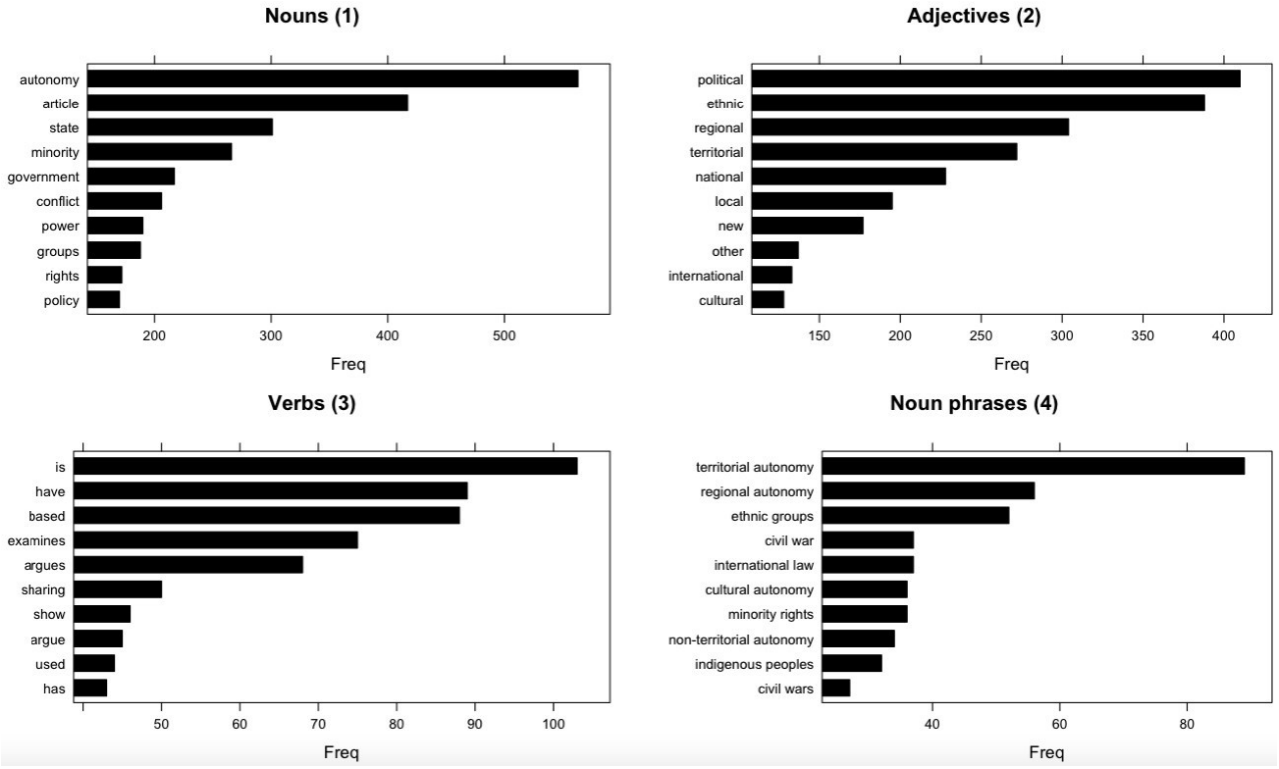

Figure 9: Frequency analysis

12 The natural language processing R toolkit UDPipe in Version 0.83 is used for analysis (Wijffels, Straka, and Straková 2019).

The RAKE score is then the score of each of the words which define the keyword. (Smith, Phil, and Jones 2017). The list of the 15 keywords with the highest RAKE score contains more or less exclusively terms that relate very closely to the aforementioned topic of minority protection and constitutional or institutional engineering in multi-ethnic contexts. In addition to the automatically generated keywords *civil war*, *armed conflict* or *ethnic conflict*, the terms *international law* or *institutional design* also receive high RAKE scores. The equally frequent occurrence of definitory terms (e.g. *cultural autonomy*, *local autonomy* or *local government*) once again makes it clear that the conceptual debates in the field have not yet ended and scholars tend to use different terminologies when studying autonomous regions.

By extracting the vocabulary of the abstracts, we can analyze the correlations between word pairs to see how strongly two terms are linked within a sentence in an abstract.[13] The word pairs "self-determination" and "civil war", but also "power-sharing", reach high co-occurrence scores (cooc). The latter, as argued above, is a derivative from consociational theory, and is frequently used to describe territorial autonomy arrangements (Wolff 2013; Graham, Miller, and Strøm 2017; Cederman, et al. 2015). Highly correlated word pairs illustrate the basic cornerstones of the thematic map of autonomy studies: their primary focus is on autonomy solutions in the context of intrastate conflicts ("*civil war*(s)") in deeply divided societies between the majority population and regional minorities ("*center – periphery*") over self-determination ("*self – determination*") and minority rights, which are often caused by marginalization ("*deprivation –rebellion*"; "income – inequality") assimilation or majority dominance.

Keyword	Frequency	RAKE
civil war	31	2.589
ethnic minority	26	2.233
ethnic group	42	2.170
international law	33	2.134
national identity	17	2.124
institutional design	16	2.080
armed conflict	17	2.068
regional autonomy	41	2.050
local autonomy	21	2.044
ethnic conflict	25	2.026
non-territorial autonomy	27	2.002
territorial autonomy	72	1.986
minority rights	23	1.981
local government	24	1.971
cultural autonomy	27	1.899

Table 3: Automatically generated keywords

13 Excluded are trivial word pairs such as "GDP per capita" or "20th century.

Finally, this raises the question of whether the thematic focus of publications has changed over time, whether new topics have been addressed, and whether the field of research, like many others in political science, has become more diverse and fragmented. For this purpose, the sample is split in two: a sample of texts published between 2000 and 2010, and a second sample of articles published between the beginning of 2010 and the end of 2018.[14] In order to compare the contents of the publications in both investigation periods I again count word co-occurrences and explore the frequency of nouns and adjectives in the paper abstracts. In order to test the robustness of the analysis, it is also examined for both periods which words follow each other how often. Both analyses can be graphically illustrated using a word network, whereby the thickness of the lines indicates the relative frequency of a word pair (Figure 10 and 11).

Both word networks show a very similar picture. It provides no indication that the thematic orientation of the publications has changed substantially in the past decades, nor is there any evidence of any greater thematic fragmentation over time. While the top six co-occurrences are identical in both time periods, this also applies to almost 70 percent of word sequences. This is quite remarkable in spite of the short period of investigation, especially since "unequal" sequences are quite similar in terms of content, as e.g. *ethnic group* instead of *minority group*, etc. Despite the rather sparse cooperation networks, the degree of thematic fragmentation is surprisingly low. In this respect, autonomy research appears as a rather coherent and small intellectual world.

14 Since before 2000 substantially fewer articles were published and therefore no comparable sub-samples can be compiled, the analysis is limited to a rather short investigation period of 18 years.

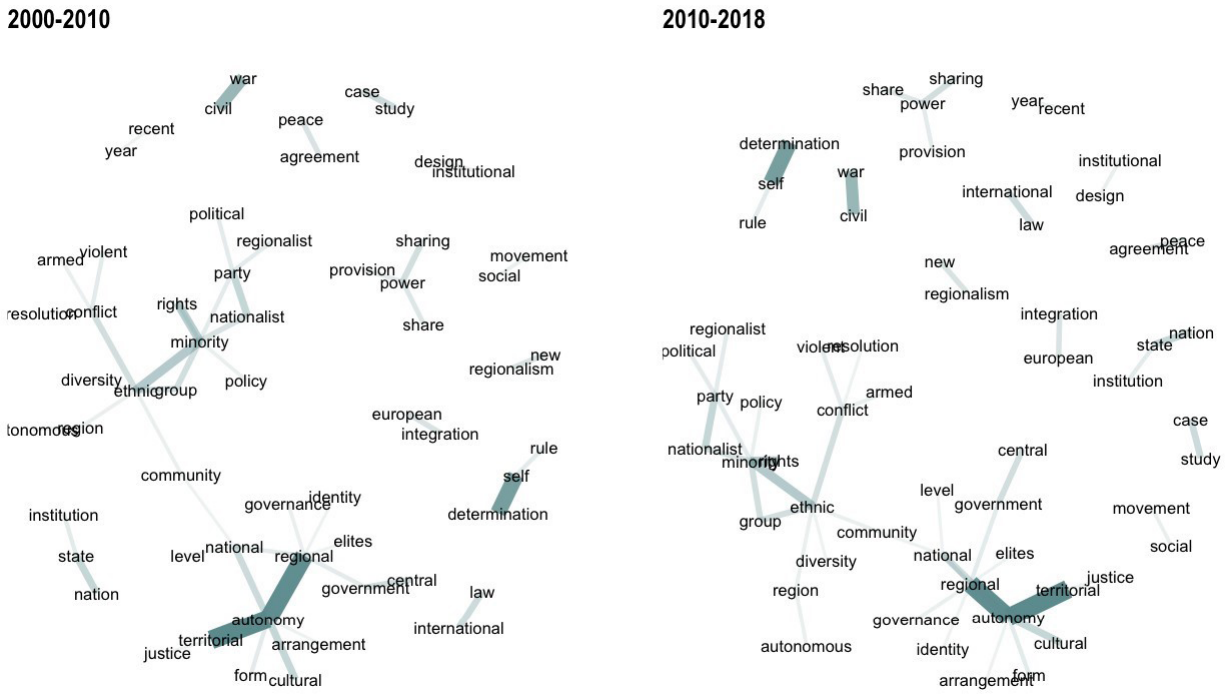

Figure 10: Word co-occurrences (2000–2010 and 2010–2018)

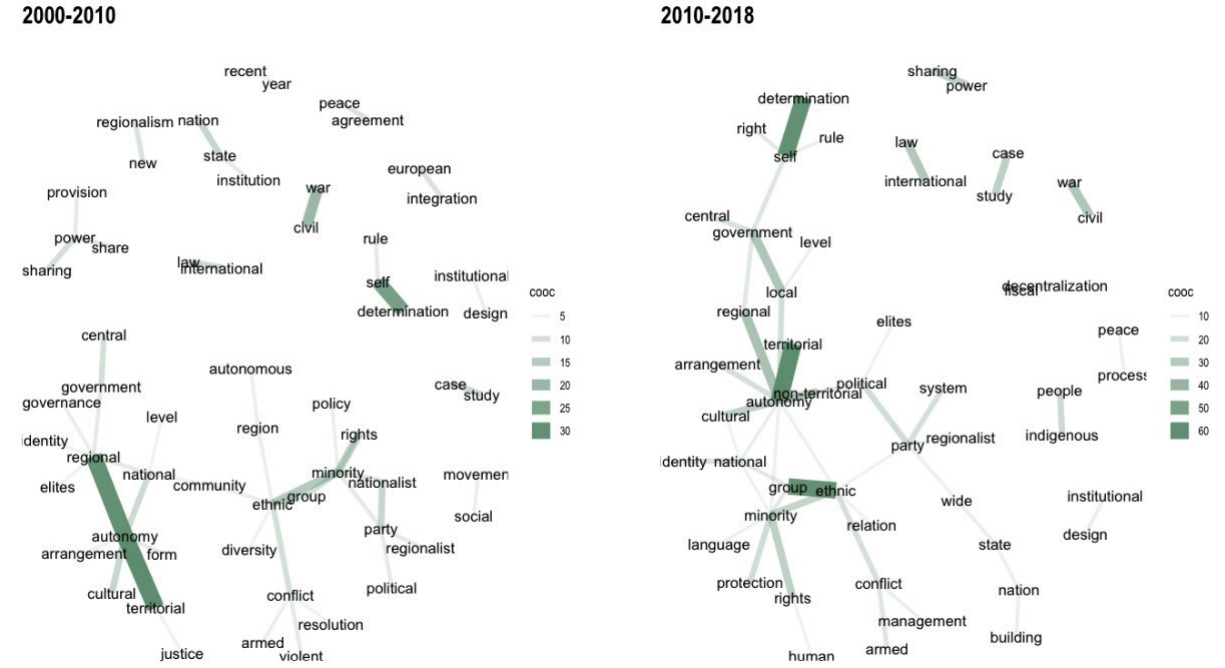

Figure 11: Words following one another (2000–2010 and 2010–2018)

Term A	Term B	Correlation
self-	determination	0.757
civil	war	0.697
turnout	variation	0.566
constituent	unit	0.529
power	sharing	0.469
center	periphery	0.449
geographical	distance	0.432
deprivation	rebellion	0.423
immigrant	citizenship	0.402
education	school	0.389
native	titular	0.386
civil	wars	0.353
income	inequality	0.348

Table 4: Word co-occurrence scores

6. Conclusion

Scientific progress presupposes a certain degree of self-reflection. This requires discussing not only cutting-edge findings and theoretical controversies, but also to critically debate methodological developments and trends in collaboration and publication. As far the author is aware, this research note provides the first comprehensive bibliometric analysis in the field of autonomy studies. It has introduced the Territorial Autonomy Literature Data Sets, TALD1 and TALD2, which include several hundred peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles from 1945 to 2018, and which provide us with the necessary data to discuss the thematic, as well as methodological directions and to detect fruitful avenues for further research.

The analysis has shown that since the 1980s, autonomy studies have developed into a highly productive and dynamic field of research. Territorial autonomy is a widely used concept in political science and has entered the flagship journals of the discipline. Based on the seminal works by Hurst Hannum, Ruth Lapidoth, Stefan Wolff, John McGarry, and Brendan O'Leary, many have collected and analyzed examples of autonomy arrangements. The field is very much dominated by single-authored and small-n studies. Most autonomy scholars focus on the in-depth analysis of single cases or a very small number of sub-state regions in Europe, post-Soviet Eurasia, and the Balkans. There is evidence that the case selection is heavily influenced by the author's country of origin. While some progress towards greater diversity can be observed in recent years, research on territorial autonomy is still dominated by male and Western-based political scientists. With very few exceptions, the research on regional autonomy concentrates on minority rights and diversity management and is heavily guided by Lijphart's ideas on democracy in deeply

divided places. Consociationalism provides the fundamental theoretical basis for almost all scholars in the field, whether they are comparativists, peace researchers, or scholars who study autonomous regions from an international law or philosophical perspective. However, the rather vague conceptualization of the autonomy concept in the original consociational theory seems to have led to a certain conceptual ambiguity, demonstrated by prominent word creations such as 'complex power-sharing' (Wolff) or 'territorial power-sharing' (Cederman et al. or Hartzell and Hoddie) for sub-national entities with a special status. From an ontological point of view, further research should draw a clearer line between forms of integrative power-sharing and forms of power-dividing, as well as combinatory institutional arrangements.

While a frequently recurring methodological discussion revolves around the increased prevalence of mixed-method research designs in the social sciences, autonomy studies are still primarily oriented towards case-based qualitative methods and hardly rely on multi-method approaches. This may be due to the fact that it is a comparatively young field which deals with a truly cross-cutting issue, and which is also often examined from less empirically oriented legal or philosophical perspectives. As mentioned above, ongoing conceptual debates make up a significant part of the literature.

The research field attracts more and more authors who produce an increasing number of publications. Authors have become more diverse in recent years when it comes to the proportion of women in first authorship or the proportion of non-Western authors. Interestingly, there has been no significant diversification in methodologies, research interests, or topics covered. From a methodological point of view, a trend towards more cross-case comparisons or quasi-experimental research designs would be particularly beneficial to address the trade-off between generalizability and in-depth case analysis. The combination of qualitative case studies and regression-based analyses also offers untapped potential for further developing research on autonomous regions. More attention should be paid to detailing the case selection procedures in small-n research articles, which are not fully documented in many publications. A large number of articles study 'typical cases' when testing theoretical arguments, which are often the well-studied European cases such as Åland, South Tyrol, Northern Ireland, or Spain's autonomous regions. Including less considered cases of territorial autonomy in Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa would benefit the robustness and generalizability of empirical findings. I, therefore, encourage the development of stronger international and interdisciplinary collaboration networks in autonomy research.

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Appendix

Variable	Decription
origin1	The origin of the first author coded by region. (1) Northern, Western and Southern Europe (2) Post-Soviet Eurasia (3) North America (United States of America, Canada) (4) Latin America and the Caribbean (5) East Asia (China, Taiwan, Koreas, Japan) (6) Southeast Asia (ASEAN 10, Timor) (7) South Asia (incl. Afghanistan) (8) Middle East and North Africa (incl. Israel, Turkey) (9) Sub-Sahara Africa (incl. South Africa) (10) Oceania (AUS, NZ, PNG etc.) (99) missing
origin2-5	The origin of the second/third/fourth/fifth author coded by region
number_aut	number of individuals listed as article authors
gender1	The gender of the first author (1) male (2) female (99) missing
gender2-5	The gender of the second/third/fourth/fifth author
Home	Country of home institution (university, research institute)
Heterog1	Number of relevant ethnic groups in country of home institution (EPR)
Heterog2	Country of home institution of first author was affected by violent self-Determination movement since 1945 (Sambanis et al. 2017) (1) Yes (0) No
Heterog3	Number of ethnic autonomies in country of home institutions (Panov/Semenov 2017)
Interest	Primary research interest of article (1) theoretical or legal The research agenda primarily focuses on theoretical problems or legal issues without empirical tests (2) empirical The research agenda primarily focuses on one or more empirical phenomena. No original theory is developed. (3) theoretical & empirical The research agenda focuses on both theory or conceptual design as well as testing the theoretical arguments through empirical analysis. (4) methodological The article primarily focuses on methodological questions or the implementation and application of methods. (99) other primary research interest.

Causal claim	Causal claim (1) Descriptive: No attempt is made to identify causal relationships between independent and dependent variable(s). (2) Causal: The article aims to identify causal relationships between independent and dependent variable(s). (99) missing
Method	(1) statistical analysis (descriptive or causal) (2) set theoretic methods (including QCA) (3) comparative case studies (4) single case study (5) mixed methods design (6) others (7) no method
Cases_region	The world region of focus included in the empirical study. (1) Northern, West and Southern Europe (2) Post-Soviet Eurasia (3) North America (United States of America, Canada) (4) Latin America and the Caribbean (5) Eastern Asia (China, Taiwan, Koreas, Japan) (6) Southeast Asia (ASEAN 10, Timor) (7) South Asia (incl. Afghanistan) (8) Middle East and North Africa (incl. Israel, Turkey) (9) Sub-Sahara Africa (incl. South Africa) (10) Oceania (AUS, NZ, PNG etc.) (11) Interregional (Study includes two or more world regions) (99) missing
Number_cases	Number of countries included. (1) number of cases 1 (2) number of cases 2 (3) number of cases 3-5 (4) number of cases 6-30 (5) number of cases 31+ (99) missing
Keyword1-5	Keywords assigned by author(s)
Abstract	Article abstract

Table 5: Codebook for TALD2

Consensus Impossible? South Tyrol's Autonomy Convention and the issue of Self-determination

Marc Röggla

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
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URL: http://jass.ax/volume-3-issue-2-Roggla/

Abstract

South Tyrol is an autonomous, predominantly German-speaking province in Italy with one of the most successful autonomy arrangements in Europe. The basis of autonomy and the main legal document is the Autonomy Statute of 1972. The autonomy of South Tyrol evolved during the last decades and the need for revision and adaptation became more striking.

Therefore, the Provincial Council (*Südtiroler Landtag*) in 2016 initiated a participatory democratic process to draft a proposal for the revision of the 1972 Autonomy Statute. One of the most controversial topics debated in the so-called 'Autonomy Convention' has been the right to self-determination.

This paper gives an introduction to South Tyrol's Autonomy model and proceeds with a description of the participatory process. This initial part is followed by a section analyzing the debates of self-determination in South Tyrol in general, and within the Autonomy Convention in particular. The final part argues that the debates in the Autonomy Convention show certain contrasts between the language groups living in South Tyrol. Nevertheless, the debates did not influence public life, nor the outcomes of the elections of the Provincial Council 2018.

Keywords

South Tyrol, Autonomy Convention, self-determination, participation

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1. South Tyrol's history and autonomy arrangement

South Tyrol was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of the First World War (WWI). In 1919, with the Treaty of Saint Germain, South Tyrol was annexed to Italy. Due to the annexation process the German-speaking inhabitants of the territory became part of Italy, and until this very day the population of South Tyrol, the northernmost province of Italy, is characterized by a German-speaking majority and a small Ladin community. According to the official language declaration[1] 2011, South Tyrol has a population composed of 69.4 percent German, 26.06 percent Italian, and 4.53 percent Ladin speakers.[2]

The fact that today most of the population is German-speaking is even more remarkable when learning about the difficult historical past of the territory.[3] Especially after WWI, due to the Fascist repression and a diligent program to assimilate the German-speaking population and to 'Italianize' the territory, the German-speaking population faced difficult times. From one day to another, the German language had been pushed out of public life, it was forbidden to use German in schools and in the communication with public authorities. Strategically, teachers and public officials were dismissed or transferred and replaced by Italian-speakers. To enhance this process, the Fascist rulers have built impressive industrial zones and apartments for Italian workers from other parts of Italy in order to create jobs in South Tyrol. A strong Italian immigration had been initiated and the Italian population in South Tyrol rose significantly.[4]

The situation of the German-speaking population deteriorated further when Hitler and Mussolini reached an agreement of forced emigration, the so-called *Option*. The agreement forced German speakers to choose between moving to the *German Reich* and becoming German citizens or remaining in South Tyrol with the perspective of losing their identity and with an uncertain perspective to be displaced in the southern parts of Italy. The *Option* has split up many families and is for sure one of the darkest memories in South Tyrol. Due to Second World War, only around 80,000 people left South Tyrol and a great number returned home at a later stage.

1 Citizens aged 14 and residing in the province of Bolzano must declare their affiliation to one of the three language groups. The language declaration is important for the proportional system in South Tyrol, a system considering the strength of the language groups, especially for the distribution of public posts and public funds. Of course, the society in South Tyrol is much more diverse and according to data of the Statistical Office South Tyrol (2018) 9.5 percent of the population are immigrants.

2 ASTAT – Statistical Office South Tyrol, 2012.

3 The historical background given in the next paragraphs is to provide the reader with the necessary information on South Tyrol's past. To receive a far more detailed overview on the history of South Tyrol please see Grote, 2012, in the English language, or Steininger, 2016, in the German language.

4 While in 1910 7,339 Italian speakers lived in South Tyrol (2.9 percent of the population), in 1921 already 27,048 Italians lived in South Tyrol (10.6 percent of the population) and in 1961 128,271 Italian (34.3 percent of the population). See Astat, 1991.

After World War II (WWII) South Tyrol remained part of Italy, but with the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement[5] the plan was to improve the situation of the German-speaking minority in Italy by guaranteeing the population autonomous rights and linguistic and cultural protection. In practice, the agreement foresaw equality of rights for the German-speaking population and equality of language, special provisions to safeguard the minority, autonomous legislative and executive powers, ethnic proportion in employment, and education in the mother tongue. Thus, the agreement guaranteed on one hand legislative and administrative autonomy for South Tyrol, and on the other, minority protection provisions.

Unfortunately, the provisions of the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement had been enacted only to a certain point with the so-called First Autonomy Statue of 1948. The First Autonomy Statute did not significantly improve the situation of the German minority in Italy. First, the Autonomy Statute granted territorial autonomy to the whole Region of Trentino Alto-Adige/Südtirol and not to the Province[6]. Therefore, the German-speaking population was still a minority and was overruled in important decisions by the Italian-speaking majority. The consequence has been unrest and protests, and even some bomb attacks and violence[7]. Because of the unrests, in 1960 and 1961, the Austrian government brought the conflict in South Tyrol to the United Nations' General Assembly where Italy and Austria were pressured to find a peaceful solution.

After years of negotiation within commissions composed by representatives of the Italian and the Austrian governments and representatives of South Tyrol, the result was the enactment of a new Autonomy Statute: The Second Autonomy Statute of 1972. With the new Statute most of the legislative and administrative competences have been transferred from the Autonomous Region to the two Autonomous Provinces of Bozen/Bolzano and Trient/Trento. Since then, the two Autonomous Provinces have most of the competences and the Region can be described today as a 'toothless tiger' with very few competences. In concrete, the 1972 Autonomy Statute enshrines legal provisions concerning the Autonomous Region, provisions concerning the two Autonomous Provinces of Bolzano and Trento, and special provisions concerning only South Tyrol. As a result of the step-by-step implementation of the Autonomy Statute, in 1992, the South Tyrol conflict had been officially settled with a note from Austria at the United Nations.

5 The agreement was signed on 5 September 1946 by the Italian Prime Minister De Gasperi and the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gruber.

6 According to the Italian Constitution, Italy is a centrally ruled state composed of 20 Regions. Out of these 20 Regions five Regions are Regions with a special form of autonomy: Friuli - Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino - Alto Adige/Südtirol and Aosta Valley/Vallèe d'Aoste. The Region Trentino - Alto Adige/Südtirol is composed of the two Autonomous Provinces Bolzano/Bozen and Trento/Trient.

7 To learn more of the unrests and the bombings and their influence on South Tyrol's political decision please refer to Peterlini, 2011.

Still today, the Second Autonomy Statute is seen as the basis of the South Tyrolean Autonomy, and many refer to it as South Tyrol's constitution. Legally speaking the Autonomy Statue is in the rank of a constitutional law. To revise it, a similar special procedure is needed as if the Constitution of Italy was to be changed. The right to make a proposal to amend the Statute is within the Regional Council after consultation with the Provincial Council of the Autonomous Provinces of Bolzano/Bozen and Trient/Trento.[8] In order to change the Statute, both national parliamentary chambers have to approve the changes twice, with an interim period of at least three months and an absolute majority of votes.[9]

This does not mean that all the provisions of South Tyrol's autonomy will be found in the Statute. The autonomy powers of South Tyrol will be found in a variety of legal sources: constitutional regulations, ordinary law, and especially in a special form of legal source, the so-called enactment decrees. The enactment decrees, as the name says, are enacting or implementing the Autonomy Statute, and in recent years they are also complementing the Autonomy Statute. The enactment decrees gain their specialty by the process through which they are evolved. The enactment decrees are discussed, drafted and produced by special commissions (Commission of 6 on a provincial level, Commission of 12 on regional level) composed by members nominated by the State and the Province (Commission of 6) or Region (Commission of 12). Also, on a hierarchical level, the enactment decrees are special: they are in between constitutional law and ordinary law, which means that they cannot be amended by ordinary law of the provincial or the national parliament. Therefore, the legal design of South Tyrol's autonomy is very dynamic to this day, and new legislation enacts or influences the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972.[10]

The autonomy arrangement is characterized by a territorial autonomy for the Region and consociational power-sharing between the German, Italian, and Ladin speakers who live in South Tyrol. Nowadays, South Tyrol has many exclusive powers ranging from housing policy to local culture.[11] Aside from the institutional relations, the living-together of the language groups is regulated by balance of powers: political and administrative positions are allocated according to a declaration of linguistic affiliation. This means that in most

8 Art. 103 ASt.

9 Art 139 ItaConst.

10 To learn more on the special autonomy arrangement of South Tyrol please refer to Woelk and Palermo, 2008, and Marko, 2008.

11 To receive an overview of the competence of the Region please refer to the following articles (1) Article 8 ASt for the exclusive powers, http://lexbrowser.provinz.bz.it/doc/de/dpr-1972-670%c2%a720%c2%a7120%c2%a7130/dekret_des_pr_sidenten_der_republik_vom_31_august_1972_nr_670/i_abschnitt_errichtung_der_region_trentino_s_dtirol_und_der_provinzen_trient_und_bozen/3_kapitel_befugnisse_der_provinzen/art_8_span_span.aspx; (2) Article 9 ASt for the concurrent powers, http://lexbrowser.provinz.bz.it/doc/de/dpr-1972-670%c2%a720%c2%a7120%c2%a7140/dekret_des_pr_sidenten_der_republik_vom_31_august_1972_nr_670/i_abschnitt_errichtung_der_region_trentino_s_dtirol_und_der_provinzen_trient_und_bozen/3_kapitel_befugnisse_der_provinzen/art_9_span_span.aspx. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

political bodies or positions all language groups have to be represented in proportion to the strength of the language groups. The same goes for openings in public administration.

Within the public administration bilingualism (and in the Ladin valleys[12] even trilingualism) must be guaranteed. This means that public officials must be able to speak both German and Italian (and in the Ladin valleys also Ladin). To guarantee the language proficiency officials must be in possession of a certificate confirming their knowledge of the languages.[13] Every language group also has a high degree of cultural autonomy, and funds in sectors such as culture or housing are distributed according to the strength of the language group.

These aspects, bolstered by good economic development, clearly helped to improve the situation in South Tyrol significantly. The living-together of the linguistic groups can be described as peaceful, and the Autonomy Convention, which will be explained in the next paragraphs, strengthens this view.

2. The Autonomy Convention[14]

As described in the previous part, in the past, consultations regarding the Autonomy Statute were of elitist and exclusive character. Since 1972 not only South Tyrol's autonomy has changed significantly. From a legal perspective, the Statute has been affected by new legislation and jurisprudence of the constitutional court, but especially due to the reformation of the Italian Constitution in 2001.[15] Furthermore, since 1972 South Tyrol has also changed on socio-economic aspects due to the improvement of the economic situation and due to political and demographic changes.

Thus, already in the coalition program for the 2013–2018 parliamentary term,[16] the newly-elected South Tyrolean government envisioned the establishment of a participatory

12 The Ladin population in South Tyrol is concentrated mostly in two valleys: Grödnertal/Val Gardena and Gadertal/Val Badia.

13 In order to guarantee the right of bilingualism a special examination on a Provincial level was introduced. The so-called exams of bi-and trilingualism had to undergo different reforms. While at the beginning comprising two translations, since 2014 the exam has consisted of four modules: listening comprehensions, reading comprehensions, cloze test and writing, and speaking. There are four different exams according to the Common European Framework for languages. Since 2017, South Tyrol recognizes also equivalent international language certificates of the same level.

14 The Autonomy Convention was scientifically supervised by EURAC Research. The author was one of its coordinators, and observations made in this section are based mostly on direct observation made during the process and the documentation of the proceedings.

15 Extremely relevant regarding the Autonomy Statute was the reformation of Section 5 of the Constitution by the introduction of institutional changes regarding Regions, Provinces and Municipalities and the introduction of federal aspects.

16 Koalitionsabkommen zur Bildung der Landesregierung für die Legislaturperiode, 2013. http://static1.squarespace.com/static/514dcba2e4b023ca28fbed3e/t/52c1d57ce4b0491644559b2b/1388434812383/Koalitionsabkommen+DE.pdf. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

process tasked with the elaboration of a proposal for the reformation of the Autonomy Statute. The government wanted to express a more participatory approach in contrast to the elitist negotiations of the past and involve South Tyrol's citizens in the process of revision of the Statute right from the start. The main goal of this initiative was to revise the Autonomy Statute, together with the engagement of the South Tyrolean population, and to make considerations for the future autonomy arrangement in South Tyrol in order to receive legitimization for future considerations and negotiations with Italy from the population.

Finally, to implement the process, in April 2015 the governing parties *Südtiroler Volkspartei (SVP)*[17] and the Italian *Partito Democratico (PD)* adopted a law to introduce a participatory process to revise the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972, the so-called 'Autonomy Convention'. As already mentioned in the coalition program, the Provincial Law No. 3/15 had the aim to guarantee the full participation of the civil society of South Tyrol in the revision of the Autonomy Statute. The main task foreseen in the law was the submission of a written proposal dealing both with institutional adjustments and necessary revisions of the Autonomy Statute. Accordingly, the outcome of the Process had to be submitted to the Provincial Council. The law was adopted by 18 votes by the two government parties only, while the opposition parties either voted against or abstained from voting.

At this stage it needs to be underlined that the Autonomy Convention was a participatory process with some peculiarities. The fact that it took place on a subnational level in a minority area with consociational institutions had to be considered when designing the Convention. Needless to say, it was essential for the legislator to guarantee the participation of all three language groups. Besides that, the Convention should work in full transparency, therefore all working documents and minutes of the meetings were published on the Convention's website, and all meetings had to be open to the public.

The Autonomy Convention continued for almost two years. The first meetings of the Autonomy Convention took place in January 2016, and the results of the Convention were handed over in September 2017 to the Provincial Council. To involve South Tyrol's population, at the beginning of the process nine Open Space events were organized in different locations over the territory. The main aim of these meetings was to give South Tyroleans the opportunity to express their opinion and make proposals for the revision of the Statute of Autonomy, but also beyond. Therefore, the guiding question at the meetings did not mention the Autonomy Statute explicitly, but the participants were invited to discuss the future of South Tyrol in general. [18]

17 The Südtiroler Volkspartei (South-Tyrolean Peoples Party) was founded after WWII and defines itself as representative party of the German and Ladin minority in South Tyrol. The SVP governed South Tyrol for the past year and has held the absolute majority of votes since 2013. For an overview of the political landscape in South Tyrol, see Pallaver, 2018.

18 The guiding question of the Open Spaces in the Autonomy Convention was „Südtirol mitdenken: Welche Zukunft für unser Land? " (Re-thinking South Tyrol: What future for our territory?) .

The meetings followed the Open Space Technology introduced by Harrison.[19] In concrete terms, the participants had the opportunity to discuss all those topics that were of importance to them following the general guiding question. The Open Space Technology foresees a pre-defined structure of workflows: for each topic introduced by the participants, a working space and a time window of 45 minutes were provided. The results of the discussions were recorded by the participants of the working group according to the principle of consensus. The topics were freely chosen by the participants at the beginning of the working day, therefore there was neither a planned agenda nor the need for the participants to register. Participation in the individual working groups was completely free.

Trained facilitators and researchers followed the single Open Space events but did not analyze or filter the results. All minutes of the workshops have been collected in the plenary hall and were published on the Autonomy Conventions Website for transparency reasons[20]. On the website, the public could comment on the minutes or write a blogpost with considerations and concrete recommendations for action. The minutes and online posts varied a lot, but the following topics were the most recurrent and discussed prominently:

Topics	**Number of discussion rounds**
Expansion of provincial competences/autonomy	64
Self-determination/independence	28
Educational System	24
Multilingualism and Proportional System	17
Relations between language groups	14
Environmental sustainability	14
Social issues	13
European Region Tyrol–South Tyrol–Trentino	13
Civic participation	11
Toponomy	10
Ladins	9
Culture	8
Relationship with Austria	7
Immigration	5
Politicians/politicians' salaries	2
Pardoning militants 1960/bombings	2

Note: Author's own elaboration by considering the data of the Open-Space brochure by the Autonomy Convention

19 See O. Harrison, 2008.

20 The Autonomy Convention Website is still online, but only as an archive: www.konvent.bz.it. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

In total, around 2,000 people participated in 258 discussion rounds[21] and 181 online posts[22] were written. Participants differed demographically and politically across the venues at this stage of the process, but in general it was observed that the Italian-speaking population, which according to the language group affiliation in South Tyrol accounts for 26 percent of the population, was significantly underrepresented in the roundtable discussions.[23] Further evidence has been provided by the online posts on the Autonomy Convention's website: out of the 181 posts, 162 have been written in German, 18 in Italian and 1 in Ladin. According to the observations of the author, not only was the Italian language group underrepresented, but also younger generations.

The results of the Open Space discussions were then collected and handed over to the two main bodies of the Autonomy Convention: the Forum of 100 and the Convention of 33. The Provincial law for the Autonomy Convention regulated that both bodies have only an advisory role in the revision of the Autonomy Statute, and no decision-making powers. The Provincial council will review their proposal for the revision of the statute and then decide to what extent to take the results into account.

According to the law, both bodies had to follow the principle of consensus. This means that provisions and measures not having the consensus of every single member should not find their way into the final documents. Nevertheless, for the Convention of 33 the law foresaw the possibility to hand over minority reports aside to the final document. This provision of course weakened the principle of consensus, and as we can see at a later stage influenced the discussions very much, especially regarding self-determination.

The composition of both bodies had to respect the proportional representation of the language groups in South Tyrol. The more prominent body, the Convention of 33, was appointed directly by the South Tyrolean Provincial Council and was composed as follows: four persons proposed by the Council of Municipalities; two persons proposed by the employers' associations; two persons proposed by the trade unions; five legal experts; 12 persons representing both the political majority and minority; and eight persons elected by the Forum of 100 and sent to the Convention of 33. The Convention of 33 met on average twice a month over an entire year. Similar to the Open Spaces, all meetings were public in the interests of transparency, and the meetings of the Convention of 33 were streamed on the website of the Autonomy Convention.

Instead, the Forum of 100 was intended by design to be the connecting element between the Convention of 33 and the South Tyrolean citizenship. Therefore, as already mentioned,

21 Autonomy Convention, So denkt Südtirol, 2016.

22 See www.konvent.bz.it. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

23 Taking into consideration that no registration was foreseen, there is no possibility to verify these observations. Nevertheless, according to different media outlets equivalent observations have been made by journalists, see Alto Adige, 2016a, Adige, 2016b, Pitro, 2016.

eight representatives of the Forum of 100 were part of the Convention of 33. To guarantee that the Forum of 100 will represent South Tyrol, the members of the Forum of 100 were chosen by a sample, considering language group, age and gender. All residents of South Tyrol over the age of 16 could register for the Forum and were eligible for the sample.[24] The final composition of the Forum of 100 according to the sample taking into account the criteria was the following: 51 women and 49 men between the age of 16 and 83, 69 Germans, 26 Italians and five Ladins.

The Forum of 100 met six times and decided to work in groups considering the topics raised in the Open Space events. Therefore, on the initiative of the one hundred members the following eight working groups were formed:

1.	culture, education, and toponomy
2.	democratic participation
3.	environmental sustainability, economy, research, labour
4.	expanding autonomy, role of Region, relations with Rome and Vienna, dual citizenship
5.	group affiliation, proportional system, languages in public administration, Ladins
6.	migrants, cohabitation, multilingualism
7.	self-determination, European region, 1960s militants
8.	social welfare, health care, sports

The members could freely choose their participation in the group discussions. Only the eight members elected in the Convention of 33 took the positions of group leaders and were therefore distributed in different groups. The Convention of 33 instead preferred to discuss all the topics in plenary. Both bodies had the possibility to invite experts and organize hearings on different topics.

The main goal of both bodies was to elaborate a proposal for the Provincial Council. According to the law of the Autonomy Convention, South Tyrol's Provincial Council must find a common proposal for the amendment of the Autonomy Statute with the Provincial Council of Trentino[25]. According to Article 103 of the Statute, the initiative to amend

24 According to the organizers 1,829 people registered for the sample. Out of these 1,331 were men (73 percent and 498 women (27 percent). In addition, 1,518 registrations were made by the German language group (83 percent), 245 of the Italian language group (13 percent) and 66 by the Ladin (4 percent). In total, citizens out of 112 of the 116 South Tyrolean municipalities are among the registered. See also Autonomy Convention, So denkt Südtirol, 2016.

25 In the neighboring Province Trentino, a similar process took place, the so-called 'Consulta'. The process was less participatory and from the design quite simple. One body, the 'Consulta', worked for more than a year on a proposal on the Statute. The members were nominated by the Provincial Council and were mostly politicians and legal experts. After the proposal was drafted it was proposed to the public in different occasions. After these presentations, the body revised its proposal and handed it over to the Provincial Council. Because of the design the 'Consulta' was not only less participatory, but the discussions also more technical and less controversial. For an analysis and the design of the 'Consulta' please see Alber, Röggla, Ohnewein, 2018 and Woelk 2018.

the Statute is with the Regional Council, which is composed by the members of both Provincial Councils.

The Forum of 100 and the Convention of 33 presented their final reports jointly on 22 September 2017 and handed them over to the Provincial Council. While the working groups of the Forum of 100 managed to produce a final document based on a high consensus[26], the Convention of 33 produced a final document with four minority reports. Especially, on the topic of self-determination consensus was politically impossible. But also, to not include it in the final document was not an option for the majority within the Convention of 33. Therefore, the inclusion of the proposals in the final document made in reference to the right to self-determination triggered the elaboration of four minority reports by members of the Italian linguistic group.

3. Self-determination in South Tyrol

Self-determination is a principle in international law and was guaranteed internationally in 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations.[27] The principle allowed people to freely choose their political status and their sovereignty. Nowadays, the right to self-determination is widely accepted, although there are some unclarities in the adoption and meaning of the norm. It can be applied in different forms, varying from internal self-determination in the form of autonomy and political participation or in the external form such as secession, independence or integration in another state.

When we look in the past, self-determination was often connected with power, and often with the geopolitical and strategic interests of the winning parties in wars. Other factors such as political instability, the definition of the concept 'people' and the mere consequence that new borders create new minorities[28] often prevented a universal application of the principle.[29] Internationally the principle has developed as a result of growth of nationalism in the ex-colonies, while in Europe it has been seen, for a long time, more as a political concept than a legal formulation.[30]

This changed in 1976, when the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights came into force and the right to self-determination was included by the UN in Article 1 of the ICCPR,[31] and with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975 where the present states confirmed

26 Only the working group "culture, education, and toponomy" did not find consensus and therefore presented two different proposals.
27 Article 1, 2 and Article 55.
28 As can be seen very well in the dissolution of former Yugoslavia.
29 Hannum,1990, pp. 27-31.
30 Musgrave, 1996, p. 96.
31 1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

the "principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status …"[32]

Nevertheless, the formulation and the missing definition of 'people' affects the adoptability of the right to self-determination and gives room for interpretations. Legal scholars and state practice were and are very reluctant in defining people. In literature, on the one hand the term people has been seen in the contextualization of colonialism in the sense of the population of a non-self-governing territory, and on the other hand the universal definition of people in the sense of the population of sovereign, independent states or non-self-governing territories.[33] Both definitions lack the ethnic affiliation and identification of groups. Therefore, other definitions take into account ethnic elements such as language or religion and therefore reflect a distinct character.

The literature is still unclear whether people can exercise the right to self-determination and under what circumstances, especially when expanded to a context beyond decolonization. Some scholars argue that the right to self-determination can be seen as a last resort to prevent the abuse of minority rights and to preserve human rights and democracy.[34] Others underline the evolving character of the right to self-determination and its dynamic applicability "to match the needs of time"[35]. If we combine these two premises, besides that minorities should be a distinct group which occupy a distinct territory,[36] it is difficult to argue that South Tyrol, at this moment of history, sustains discrimination or oppression.

Still, before analyzing the debates of self-determination within the Autonomy Convention, it is crucial to underline that self-determination has been an issue in South Tyrol since the annexation to Italy. In 1969, the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* had to vote for a set of 137 measures (*Paket*, package) which was proposed by the Commission of 19, a commission with Austrian and Italian representatives, as a solution to settle the conflict. These measures became the basis of the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972. By voting in

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2.All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

32 Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe, Final Act, Helsinki 1975, art. 1 VIII.

33 *Ibid*, p.149-153.

34 Knop, 2002, p. 77.

35 Ghanea and Xanthaki, 2005, p.32.

36 See also Brilmayer, 1991.

favor of the *Paket*,[37] the South Tyrolean Peoples Party opted for the path of internal self-determination and a strong autonomy within the Italian State and gave up the claims for external self-determination. Nevertheless, since then there have been repeated claims that South Tyrol would be better off as an independent *"Freistaat"* or even a reunification with the kin-state Austria had been promoted. Especially towards the end of the 1980s, new secessionist movements emerged and claims for secession became more prominent.[38]

These claims have been promoted mostly by two other parties of the German minority, the *Südtiroler Freiheitliche Partei* and the *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit.* The *Freiheitlichen* can be defined as a patriotic-right wing party with very close links to the Austrian *Freiheitliche Partei* Österreich. The *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit* instead is promoting the idea of a reunification with Austria or an independent country by referendum. In 2013, the party even held an unofficial referendum, where people could decide about the future of South Tyrol. The party announced that the voting participation was 15 percent and that 92.17 percent of South Tyroleans voted for self-determination. Of course, this referendum cannot be taken as a representative referendum.

At the last elections in 2018 the *Freiheitlichen* received 6.2 percent of the votes (two mandates in the Provincial Council) and the Südtiroler Freiheit 6.0 percent of the votes (also two mandates in the Provincial Council). This means that since 2013, when the last Provincial elections before the Autonomy Convention took place both parties lost votes: the *Freiheitlichen* in 2013 received 18.0 percent of the votes (6 seats) and the *Südtiroler Freiheit* 7.2 percent of the votes (3 seats).[39] It remains difficult to say how many South Tyroleans would opt for external self-determination, but the voting results of these two parties may give evidence that within the current political situation there is no realistic majority for these claims in South Tyrol.

Nevertheless, distinct from the party level there is an organization which is very active in promoting the claims for external self-determination. This organization was very active during the Autonomy Convention, as will be explained in the following paragraphs: the so-called *Schützen*.

The *Schützen* define themselves as an organization which promotes traditions and the preservation of the *Heimat* (the homeland) and the German and Ladin Minority. They honor the Christian roots of the territory and they are promoting a reunification with the Northern Part of Tyrol in Austria or, as mentioned, self-determination. The *Schützen*

37 In 1969 the voting of the Paket ended with a close result: 583 in favor, 492 against and 15 abstentions. At that time, the Paket and its measures for full autonomy had been seen by a few as a feasible alternative to independence. For historical insights on the voting and an evaluation of the bombings in South Tyrol, see Peterlini, 2011.

38 Scantamburlo and Pallaver, 2015.

39 The results of the Provincial elections 2013 and 2018 can be accessed and compared at http://www.buergernetz.bz.it/vote/landtag2018/results/dlistvt_ld_vg.htm . Accessed October 31st, 2019.

are well-organised over the territory, as in almost every municipality there is a branch of the *Schützen*. They number around 5,000 members, and, although not having a party affiliation, they still have clear political goals.[40]

In general, it is difficult to show representative numbers of how many South Tyrolean's would be in favor of an independent South Tyrol or a 'return' to Austria. This is so in particular because percentages could change quickly due to the development of the political contexts in Italy, Austria and Europe in general. On the other hand, the election results may suggest that at this moment in history there is no majority for external self-determination in South Tyrol.

4. Self-determination in the Autonomy Convention

In the Autonomy Convention the issue of self-determination was quite prominent, especially compared to the general political discourse in South Tyrol over the last years. Especially in the nine Open Space[41] events organized within the first two months of the Convention, it was discussed in numerous discussion rounds. In concrete, members of the *Schützen* strategically brought the topic of "self-determination" or "independence" to the table. According to the minutes, self-determination was at the center of the discussion in at least 28 sessions. This was not only because the *Schützen* recognized the Autonomy Convention as a valuable platform to promote the right to self-determination in South Tyrol and sent hundreds of their members to the different Open-space events.[42] Consequently, after the topic of self-determination was prominent in the Open-Space events it has been discussed prominently also in the Forum of 100 and in the Convention of 33, where not only members of the *Schützen* but also members of both *the Südtiroler Freiheitlichen* and the *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit* were present.

The right to self-determination was discussed in the Autonomy Convention mostly under political or legal aspects:

1. **The legal 'right':** On several occasions the UN Human Rights Pacts of 1966 were mentioned as a legal basis. As Italy has signed and ratified the human rights pacts in 1977, the right to self-determination is seen as an international legal obligation. In addition, the term "peoples" was discussed. It was mentioned that not states,

40 Schützen website, www.schuetzen.com. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

41 The following sections are taking into account the suggestions made within the Open Spaces, the Forum of 100 and the Convention of 33. They focus on the Open-Space brochure as the final document of the Forum of 100, 2017 and the minutes of the Convention. The single minutes can be accessed partly at the website of the Autonomy Convention www.konvent.bz.it. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

42 Press release of the Schützen, https://schuetzen.com/2017/06/27/autonomiekonvent-setzt-zeichen-fuer-ein-selbstbewusstes-suedtirol/, 27 June 2017. Accessed October 31st, 2019.

but rather peoples and ethnic groups have the right to self-determination. South Tyrol's autonomy can only be an intermediate stage to external self-determination. The people are free to decide on their political status. The South Tyroleans have never had the right to decide whether South Tyrol should stay with Italy or not. The right to self-determination of the South Tyroleans is therefore not consumed for the sole reason that it has not been exercised. As a permanent right, however, the right to self-determination is basically not consumable, but always applicable. On the other hand, it was pointed out that in South Tyrol there are no human rights violations and that South Tyrol's situation can never be compared with colonized peoples, and that for South Tyrol the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement and its international obligations are more relevant.

2. **Self-determination as a democratic process**: On several occasions it was underlined that self-determination should be seen as an open, democratic process in which the whole population of South Tyrol should be involved. The possible outcomes may include maintaining the status quo, integration or re-integration in another sovereign state (e.g. Austria), forming a sovereign state of its own, or any future political status.

   As a possible design of a referendum, a two-step process was proposed. First, the population should decide whether a change of the status quo is necessary. If the result would be positive, a second referendum on the future status should be initiated. Before the first referendum, the populations should be informed about the procedure and the effects of their decision. On different occasions there have been references made to the independence movements in Catalonia and Scotland.

3. **Self-determination and the European Union:** Critiques and skepticism were raised regarding EU membership: before starting a process of self-determination the relationship with the EU should be clarified. Some participants feared isolationist tendencies and questioned the economic feasibility of an independent South Tyrol.

4. **Self-determination in the preamble of a future Autonomy Statute:** In the final document of the Convention of 33 the right to self-determination was introduced in the proposal for a preamble of a future Autonomy Statute.[43] If, from a legal

43 The wording of the proposal: "to include a reference to the right of self - determination of peoples as in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, ratified by the Italian Republic and implemented by Law No. 848 of 17 August 1957, in Art. 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, ratified by the Italian

> perspective, this is not realistic because it would stand against the principle of unity of the Italian Constitution, from a political standpoint it can be seen as the main achievement of the supporter of self-determination for South Tyrol. This is because within the Convention of 33, members of the governing party *Südtiroler Volkspartei* bolstered the proposal to introduce the right to self-determination in the preamble. This is particularly interesting, as the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* has been promoting internal self-determination in the sense of a dynamic autonomy since 1969.This does not mean that the *SVP* ever resigned on the right to self-determination, but they never gave it such a prominent space in their political discourse.[44]

It has been seen that the right to self-determination was the most controversial topic in the whole Autonomy Convention. To include it in the final document of the Convention of 33 was against the principle of consensus foreseen in the law of the Autonomy Convention, because on the issue of self-determination no consensus had been reached. It was not the only point of the discussion which found its way in the final document without the necessary consensus, but it was certainly the most controversial one. As the law of the Autonomy Convention foresaw the need of consensus with a possibility to draft so-called 'minority-reports' the principle of consensus was weakened by the legislator right from the start. In particular, towards the end of the discussion the members of the Convention no longer tried to find consensus, but already announced that they would make use of the minority reports.

Accordingly, four minority reports were drafted, all by members of the Italian language group. Therefore, the final document has not been perceived as a document based on consensus, but as the document of the German majority. The withdrawal from the right of consensus in favor of the right to self-determination by the German majority lead to a general de-valuation of the Autonomy Convention's work. In addition, South Tyrol's media landscape was reporting intensively on the discussions within the Autonomy Convention on self-determination with the consequence that other prominent topics, where a consensus was found, did not find their way in the media and did not receive the necessary attention.[45]

The fact that the four minority reports were written by members of the Italian language group is remarkable. In particular, the four reports heavily criticize the inclusion of the right to self-determination in the preamble of a future Statute. The authors of the reports mention that it would go against the chosen South Tyrolean model of internal self-governance and it could lead to tensions between the language groups and the dominance

Republic and implemented by Law No. 881 of 25 October 1977."

44 See also Scantamburlo, 2016.

45 Röggla, 2018.

of the German majority in South Tyrol.[46] It would conflict with the agreement taken within the Gruber-Degasperi agreement and therefore be a paradigm shift in the consociational model in South Tyrol.[47] This does not mean that self-government was the only issue where there were huge discrepancies between the language groups.

The results of the Autonomy Convention were handed over to the Provincial Council in September 2017, and since then they have been swept under the carpet. For the last two years no steps have been taken by the Provincial Council to find an agreement with Trento, and it seems unlikely that this will happen soon. It remains highly doubtful that the Autonomy Statute of 1972 will be revised in the near future. The failed constitutional reform 2016 in Italy has stolen some thunder in the need of reformation. In addition, as the Convention is finished, the population will not be involved anymore, and it is foreseeable that the next steps in this long journey will again be marked by elitist negotiations with Italy and sensitive political debates in the Provincial Council. In October 2018 elections were held in South Tyrol and the political spectrum changed. The *Partito Democratico (PD)* lost significantly and is no longer part of the government. As mentioned above, the *Freiheitlichen* and the *Südtiroler Freiheit* also lost significantly. These political changes have been related mostly to other topics, the Autonomy Convention was not an issue in the electoral debate. Therefore, also after the elections, the results of the Convention and the intensively discussed topic of self-determination neither had a major impact on the electoral campaign during the Provincial elections 2018, nor on the living-together in the Province.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, what remains is the fact that some groups and parties took a participatory process, namely the Autonomy Convention, as a chance to promote external self-determination in South Tyrol. This issue was always present in South Tyrol, but was not a pressing one. According to how politics dealt (or did not deal) with the result in general and the outcome of the Provincial Elections, at least three things can be learnt from the Autonomy Convention and the discussions on self-determination:

The Autonomy Convention is evidence for a resolved conflict in South Tyrol and the peaceful co-existence of the language groups[48] due to the autonomy arrangement.[49] The mere fact that the Autonomy Convention took place and topics such as the right to self-

46 Minority Report Bizzo, Final Document C33.
47 Minority Report Dello Sarba/Polonioli, Final Document C33.
48 See Larin and Röggla, 2019.
49 See Schulte, 2019.

determination were openly discussed gives evidence of the peaceful situation in South Tyrol. The discussion on the right to self-determination within the Convention shows that the situation in South Tyrol permits the discussion of very controversial topics in a respectful manner, without fueling new tensions between the language groups or South Tyrol and Italy.

Nevertheless, the Convention also showed that there are still dividing lines between the language groups, and South Tyrol's consociational system may hinder the integration of society[50]. The fact that the minority reports have been drafted by the Italian members of the Convention and the 'final document of the Convention of 33' was drafted by the German majority in the Convention clearly indicates that there are some topics where these dividing lines in South Tyrol are still in place, consensus is impossible, and considerations on the future development of South Tyrol vary. This underlines the necessity that new considerations must be made to further overcome these dividing lines, and new solutions to make South Tyrol more inclusive have to be addressed.[51]

The results of the Autonomy Convention did not receive much political attention after the end of the Convention. Until now the results mostly remained under the carpet, and no concrete action to deal with the results of the Convention has been undertaken by the provincial government. The results of the Autonomy Convention will remain under the carpet. Because of the strong institutionalization of the participatory process and the Provincial Council's role as organizer, a citizens' movement to pressure the politicians to action is lacking. In sum, there is no bottom-up pressure to take the results of the Autonomy Convention into consideration. Especially, the Provincial Elections and the newly elected government will not give the results of the Convention a lot of credit. In order to revise and to re-elaborate the Autonomy Statute the next step would be to find a common proposal with the Autonomous Province of Trient/Trento and to start negotiations with Italy. It goes without saying that this would be a Herculean political task, and therefore is not a pressing issue for the government.

This may be one reason why the discussions of self-determination remained a minor issue in South Tyrol, and in general the discussions within the Convention did not have an impact on the society and the co-existence of the language groups. In addition, as explained above, the debates on self-determination have been present in South Tyrol for a long time, but it has never been an issue the majority of South Tyroleans would support. For the moment any claims for external self-determination seem off the table and are not perceived as relevant in South Tyrol. This does not mean that it will not become relevant in the future, depending mostly on the dynamics of Italy's political situation.

50 See Pallaver, 2014 and Carlá 2016.
51 See Larin and Röggla, 2016.

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Oil on Water:
Some Personal Musings on Hong Kong's Summer of Protests

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Oil on Water

"Be water" is the nature of Hong Kong's protests in the summer of 2019. That is, they are like H_2O in all its forms: strong like ice, fluid like water, gathering like dew, and ethereal like mist. For as Bruce Lee, the martial arts icon, once said "be formless, shapeless. Now if you put water in a cup it becomes the cup, put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot." In practice, this philosophy means you are adaptable in any circumstances.

The maxim "be water" is rather Zen-like and is complementary to the concepts of Daoism as well, with the "way" (the *dao*, 道) being fluid, un-striving, and formless. But it also falls into what Hongkongers like to consider themselves as being – pragmatic and rational, who make the most of what they've got to reach their ultimate goal (that is, they "go with the flow").

In Hong Kong's current situation, it means that protests take many forms, and are adaptive (and reactive) to events on the ground. Initially, the first few protests were against a potential extradition law that would see people convicted of certain crimes being repatriated across the border, where justice is meted out rather differently to Hong Kong's common law system. Now, the protests address wider concerns like lack of political reform, potential limits on freedom of speech, and the rule of law. You could say that the Hong Kong "water" is filling multiple channels that have gradually opened up over the last 22 years of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China (SAR) due to the conflicting nature of its "One Country, Two Systems" governance framework.

Protests are held all over Hong Kong, they are not static like the Occupy Central/Umbrella Movement that was fixed in only a few locations. Protest schedules are continually updated on social media. And these protests take many forms: traditional "big marches" like the annual 1st July march, commemorating the date that Hong Kong became an SAR. There are singalongs of a newly written Hong Kong "anthem". There is the joining of hands across Hong Kong in a "Hong Kong Way", mimicking the "Baltic Way" of 1989. And there are "Lennon Walls" of post-it notes all over the city, also harking back to the late 1980s and the original Lennon Wall of Prague.

The Hong Kong protests have been acknowledged as "leaderless", in part because of the targeting of leaders in 2014, several of whom are now serving jail sentences. They are leaderless, yes, but in an East Asian society like Hong Kong, decisions were still made collectively. This was done through the various social media platforms, especially the Reddit-like LIHKG forum; decisions about what to do next were made by consensus. You could say this is a kind of informal "universal suffrage" or direct democracy.

Solidarity building with slogans and memes such as "be brave Hongkongers", "come together, stay together", is a continual process as an important means to keep people together, important in any social movement, especially "leaderless" ones.

The term “hand and feet” (手足) is used to refer to people taking part in protests and conveys the idea of unity. When the hands and feet of a protester are injured, other protesters feel his or her pain. A young female first-aider during an August protest got hit in the right eye with a projectile fired by police. This lodged inside her safety goggles, leaving her right eyeball ruptured. We all “became her”. The incident sparked a campaign that called for people to cover their right eye and post a photo on social media (#Eye4HK campaign). Many memes arose which featured a figure with the right eye covered.

There have also been several “Memorials”. One was for a protester who had accidently fallen from a height, and others were for those who were considered to have taken their own lives in despair over Hong Kong’s situation. This also served to bring people together. The traditional colour of mourning, white, was worn by protesters on one memorial march, and for flowers placed at the sites of those who had lost their lives.

Ironically, a favoured response to the shout-out at protests of the phrase “Hong Kong Person” (香港人) is to “add oil” (加油) , which means to “keep going, be strong, and don’t give up”. This call-and-response dyad builds solidarity amongst the massed group and renews hope when energy flags. And as we know, oil floats on water, and in Hong Kong now this acts as the “current” of encouragement, complementing the water (a particular protest action) below it, a particularly necessary energizer on the hot sticky days of a Hong Kong summer.

In some respects, the Hong Kong government, the elites (tycoons and others), and Beijing add their own “oil” to the protests by their actions towards the people. But this is not good oil. It is the oil of anger, which ironically also sparks up the indignation of the protesters to come out and protest once again.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s head of government said in June:

> If the young people have walked, and acted, and you still don’t give them what they want. Then what? The metaphor that I use is that I’m a mother who has two sons. If every time my son tells me he wants something and I acquiesce to his wishes, for a short time our relationship between mother and son will be very good, but once this child is grown, he will have regrets. He will ask “Mother, why didn’t you remind me then?”

Basically, to Carrie Lam, Hongkongers were unruly and wayward children. Mother knows best!

This statement could be classified as “traditional” Chinese thinking. That is the “strict father” or in this case it is the “strict mother” who knows what is best for his or her children. Children should obey. Needless to say, this didn’t go down well with the people of Hong Kong, particularly the younger members of society who were emboldened and politically awakened during the Occupy Central/Umbrella Movement of late 2014.

Later on a group of mothers calling themselves the "Hong Kong Mamas" quickly came together in response to the violence they saw meted out by the police in subsequent protests. They held their own rally, holding emotional signs such as "don't shoot our kids". Later on, a group of elderly persons formed a "Protect the Young People Group", putting themselves in between the police and younger protesters.

As a predominately Chinese population whose familial origins lay in China but was governed under so-called benign liberal authoritarianism as a colony of Great Britain, this intersecting of Chinese cultural thinking and Western influence naturally had an effect on discourse vis-à-vis political change.

Typical rhetorical topics in Chinese discourse throughout the centuries have involved *harmony* (e.g., a harmonious society, illustrating continuity with the past; the need for consensus), *loyalty* (individual subordination to the collective), *Chinese vs. foreign* (outside forces threatening Chinese territory/sovereignty and the fostering of togetherness), and *stability* (which is connected to harmony and consensus). Hong Kong protesters have shown evidence of these in their actions – some of which have been discussed above – but with a unique Western-influenced slant.

The Hong Kong people, who had been promised a "high degree of autonomy" and that it would be "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" once it became an SAR of China on 1st July 1997, now know that these promises are to be taken with a grain of salt.

But over time, and with increasing incidents like the "eye girl" incident, the "ethereal mist" mentioned earlier has become something more potent: steam. For as one person said in a post in one of the protest-related Facebook groups that I belong to had said, "we now not [cold] water, but hot water". As we know, water heated to 100 degrees Celsius becomes steam.

Actions on the part of the Hong Kong government that have raised the temperature of protesters in Hong Kong relate to the excessive reaction and violence of the Hong Kong police in dealing with protesters. Videos abound of extreme overreaction to protestors' actions. For example, the "kettling" of protesters in MTR stations (leaving people with no way to exit an area), beating an intellectually disabled man, a policemen saying that a video shows police "kicking a yellow object" (when actually it was clearly a human being), and so on. The riot squad known as "raptors" (in Chinese, literally "fast dragons") is rumoured to be infiltrated with paramilitaries from Guangzhou. It is hard to believe that police in Hong Kong were once largely praised as "Asia's finest". Now, their reputation has almost been totally destroyed in the eyes of the general public.

But violence arose in the normally peaceful protests too. On 1st July 2019, early evening, many watched in shock as demonstrators stormed the Legislative Council complex, set about writing graffiti on walls, and draping the colonial-era flag of Hong Kong over the

President's chair. One particular piece of graffiti caught the eye – written in English – "You taught us that peaceful protests are useless." These peaceful marches had taken place ever since the SAR was founded. No violence. But not much real political reform either. Earlier in the day a huge crowd had walked peacefully from Victoria Park in Causeway Bay to the council complex.

Martin Luther King Jr. is often considered to be synonymous with peaceful protest. In 1966 he explained that "non-violence is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom and justice." Some felt that the protesters had lost the moral high ground with this latest action. As Chief Executive Carrie Lam herself put it in her 4am speech to the press on 2nd July 2019, the activity at the Legislative Council was an "extreme use of violence and vandalism" that shocked and saddened many.

If people find themselves being ignored continuously by their representatives, peacefully, what else can they do? Is it any wonder people are frustrated at being unheeded? Discussions about tactics, peaceful or violent, have continued ever since. The water has become a little choppy and rough. Then again, we know that police have gone undercover, dressing in black, the colour of these protests, pretending to be protesters, and we also need to mention the involvement of criminal gangs (triads). I don't discount that there are some "radical protesters" doing some violent acts. It's so hard to get a clear picture of what's going on.

"Apologies" and "thank yous" were especially given in the early days in the form of memes and posters, showing the protesters' concern for others: "We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience caused at this peaceful protest", one such poster read. Apologies were given to various sectors of Hong Kong society when they were inconvenienced, but it was emphasized that the inconvenience was for the greater good. At airport protests, where international travellers were involved, efforts were made to make the travellers aware of Hong Kong's situation and assistance was made available them where necessary. There seem to be fewer apologies given now as things have escalated, and there is more anger and violence.

To summarize, the Occupy Central/Umbrella Movement, which began five years ago on 28th September 2014, ended without any major government concessions. But it was a political awakening of sorts. The younger generation stepped up to become much more politically involved, while the old guard retreated to a certain extent, still playing a role, but no longer on the frontlines. The stagnant water had been replenished with sweet spring water.

The water is still flowing, and oil of various types is continually being added to it. Nothing has been settled yet, but "hell money" (fake money burned to help the deceased have a good life in the underworld) was seen strewn across the streets of central Hong Kong on 1st October 2019, the national day of China.

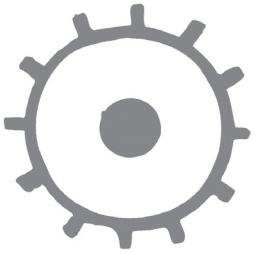
Hong Kong's summer of protests is now turning into an autumn of protests. No end in sight.

Note: This commentary was last edited on 15th of October 2019.

Call for Papers

The editors welcome submissions of manuscripts that focus on, or relate to, the topics and intersections of security, autonomy arrangements, and minority issues. Apart from reviewed articles, JASS also welcomes other kinds of contributions, such as essays, book reviews, conference papers and research notes. Articles and research notes should preferably not exceed 12 000 words (excluding references) and be written in British or American English. For other contributions, such as book reviews, conference reports, project notes, the maximum length is 4 000 words. The layout of the text should be in single-column format and kept as simple as possible. Manuscripts to be considered for Issue I/2020 should be submitted by 30th of March 2020.

Further details on the submission process can be found at:
www.jass.ax/submissions



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