The South Tyrol Model: Ethnic Pacification in a Nutshell

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Avoiding the return of tribal politics – and political tribes – by institutionalizing group diversity has become one priority in the age of re-globalization and populism. The unique diversity arrangement of the small autonomous area of South Tyrol, in the midst of the European Alps, provides a much sought-after counter-model to the return of political tribalism in the clothes of ethnonationalism. This model of ethnicity-inclusive territorial autonomy is not dependent on the daily goodwill of politicians and citizens as many others are but is institutionalized through the anchorage in the national Italian constitution and thus has the ability to impose "tolerance by law".

The international framework could not be more timely to make this model an example. The current trend of re-nationalization favors the return of mono-narratives of identity and ethnic belonging not only in Europe but on a global scale. Yet Europe, as the continent which over the past half-century has found some of the most successful models of politically and juridically arranging ethnic diversity and cultural difference, is particularly challenged by such a trend. Combined with populism and "state capturing" by groups and parties, re-nationalization favors a transnational resurgence of "tribal politics" combined with the rhetoric of "political tribalism" that threatens ethnic coexistence, especially in European border regions between different nation-states where pluricultural settings are the norm and not the exception.

Political tribalism in Europe is increasingly spurred by and enacted through – sometimes artificial – the renaissance of ethnic-nationalisms of different scales, levels, and quality. It can be observed in border regions such as, for example, the region between Flanders and Wallonia (Belgium), the area between Spain and France (the Basque region), the Catalan region (Spain), the eastern regions of Ukraine (Ukraine-Russia), the Chechnya region, the Nagorno-Karabakh area or the regions of the Hungarian minorities in adjacent nations (Hungary-Romania, Hungary-Serbia, Hungary-Slovakia). The embodiment of tribal politics in the clothes of ethnonationalism however often occurs for tactical reasons that serve specific interests rather than the well-being of the ethnic groups involved. It tends to reduce peaceful coexistence, not least by harming narratives of integration that took decades to be implemented.

Seen overall, scholars such as Jerry Z. Muller (Muller 2008) and Amy Chua (Chua 2018a, Chua 2018b) have rightly pointed out that the current interweaving between the return of political tribalism and regressive ethnonationalism could be a defining moment in the current historical passage of European (and Western) open societies, with broad long-term socio-political ramifications. Political tribalism as ethnonationalism can be exercised on all levels of governance, including the local, regional and national levels; and when it reaches the dimension of transnational relations it can lead to phenomena of spiral regression where regressive social and political patterns mutually affect each other beyond borders, reaching even to threaten the Western liberal order, as practiced since the end of the second world war.

Given these mechanisms, the question for those who want to maintain an open system of diversity based on shared values such as ethnic balancing and inter-ethnic participation, cultural interchange, diversity expressed by the rule of law, institutionalized equality, and the "normalization" of narratives of "positivity" with regard to ethic pluralism is: Where are the proven and efficient counter-models to the new tribalism in the clothes of ethnonationalism? Where in particular do we find models that integrate the positive driving forces of ethnicity and "identity politics" into a greater

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picture of differentiated modernization, scale, and institutionalized group relations while simultaneously firmly rejecting threats to diversity? Models which, last but not least, prove that "identity politics" must never be something negative, as US-theorists like Francis Fukuyama have asserted all too easily in a mostly U.S.-centric view (Fukuyama 2018), but which depend on the historical setting and context, and can in principle be something positive for specific ethnic groups sharing restricted living spaces with other ethnic groups, as it is the norm in Central and Central Eastern Europe?

To answer these questions, one model deserves particular attention: the small autonomous area of South Tyrol in the Central European Alps. Today the area continues to cultivate a special "Consociational Autonomy" (Peterlini 1997; Peterlini 2013) achieved in 1972 that is, in the eyes of many European politicians such as EU Commission (the factual EU government) President Jean-Claude Juncker, "the" European model arrangement of anti-tribal politics oriented towards positively institutionalizing the identity politics of different ethnic groups, yet with an edge. The area of South Tyrol is regarded as the current best model of how a pluri-ethnic and trans-cultural "Europe of regions" could look in the service of the greater European unification project, based not only on goodwill but on legal justice and the rule of law applied to "Cultural Democracy" (Adams and Goldbard 1995; ECHIC 2019). Many Europeans see South Tyrol as a laboratory of a "Europe made of regions", as an alternative to a Europe of culturally homogenous nation-states. It is regarded as a model of hope particularly at a difficult time of majority-minority relations, as well as "an interesting counter-example to other contested regions, such as Catalonia and Scotland" (Larin and Röggla 2017).

As the South Tyrol model is approaching its 50th anniversary in 2022, it is seen by its representatives and international observers as a mature and proven model of shared and joint ethnic emancipation based on the institutionalized relationship between groups that is extended to the rights of individuals within the framework of a far-reaching territorial autonomy. Yet can this model continue to grow to the high expectations of leading European statesmen, who see it as "the" example of how Europe can grow together by integrating different languages, historic remembrances, socio-political founding myths, and cultures by combining group *and* individual identity processes through the overarching and integrating narrative of "Autonomy Patriotism"? This term was coined since 2016 by South Tyrol's autonomous governor Arno Kompatscher (Winkler 2018; Nindler and Mitterwachauer 2018; UnserTirol24.com 2018) as a "glocalized" variant of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas' "Constitutional Patriotism" – part of his greater consideration of the possibility of "multiculturalism in the liberal state" (Habermas 1994; Calhoun 2002; Müller 2006).

South Tyrol: A post-tribal model to counter the mantra of European regression

One current mantra in the United States goes: "The whole of Europe is on the way to re-nationalization." Partly true. Yet the whole of Europe? No. A tiny little area withstands the pressure and insists on its unique post-national, pluri-ethnic, and post-tribal arrangement: South Tyrol in the Italian Central European Alps, located in the midst of Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.

Since 1972, the small border region of South Tyrol in Northern Italy with its three traditional ethnic groups – Austrian, Italian and Raetoroman (Ladin) – has developed and continuously expanded a special territorial autonomy arrangement with the idea of building an institutional bridge between the German- and Italian-speaking worlds as a constituent part of the European process of reordering and restructuring through transnational pacification and unification, including the institution of territorial autonomies for ethnic minorities. The special South Tyrol autonomy model proves that the fate of European diversity will continue to not only be decided by the micro-politics of equality and participation and by managing the cultural and ethnic traits of migration but also by legal group arrangements regulating multi-ethnicity by imposing the concept of "Tolerance by law" (Pföstl s.a.; Woelk, Palermo and Marko 2008). The South Tyrol model of territorial autonomy indicates that a positive alternative to tribal politics and the return of ethnonationalism is possible, a model that simultaneously integrates their potential underlying positive driving forces, as far as possible.

Perhaps most important: The South Tyrol model has the advantage of working under proven and real-life conditions and 50 years of practical down-to-earth experience. It provides a bridge between post-tribal, ethnic, group- and

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pluricultural arrangements, including a non-exclusive secular identity concept related to the territory which could become exemplary for the greater European unification concept, and perhaps even for the upcoming need for greater inter-civilizational joint identity building in a world that is getting smaller and where different people are living in closer proximity to each other every day.

"The best model of ethnic pacification in Europe": A short overview

South Tyrol is a tiny area in the Italian Central Alps in the midst of Italy, Switzerland, and Austria with a population of around 550,000 people. Since the start of the 20th century, three different historic ethnic groups have been living mixed together on its territory, in a tight space where they literally can't escape from each other: the Austrian minorities of German and Raetoroman (Ladin) speakers (68 percent and 4 percent respectively), and the Italian national population (28 percent). (These figures exclude non-national citizens, who in 2018 made up around an additional 15%.) In order to pacify their former ethnic conflicts, a model of "tolerance by law" has been developed which has now proven its efficiency over almost five decades. Indeed, according to EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker (ANSA 2016), "South Tyrol today is the best model of ethnic conflict pacification and intercultural integration in Europe". According to Juncker, this includes a model role with regard to the post-national and post-tribal "Europeanization" of traditional cultural identities. Although the South Tyrol model of how to deal with ethnic diversity by means of a legal arrangement anchored in the national Italian constitution might initially sound complex due to its high level of differentiation, it is worth looking at it in detail so that it may serve as an example for other cases of cultural and ethnic conflicts that need to be solved.

To start with the basics: the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol features an independent legislative model of regional government and self-government that is firmly established in the Italian Constitution and secured by international agreements and EU supervision. Since 1972, departing from its origins in the protection of ethnic minorities, this model has established itself through various successive phases of development as a wide-ranging territorial autonomy in the service of all three main ethnic groups living on the territory.

The main aim of the South Tyrol autonomy was initially to protect the German- and Ladin-speaking Austrian minorities in Italy through the legally prescribed participation in the territorial autonomous government of all three main ethnic groups resident in the area: German-, Ladin- and Italian-speakers. The South Tyrol model of "tolerance by law" also included from the beginning

- the retention of a high percentage of the taxes levied in the province which is then assigned in proportion to the population groups, for instance by cultural and schooling sector;
- the equality of languages before the court;
- and the prescription of multilingualism for all public officials by law.

Due to its success, which made the initially poor autonomous area now one of the wealthiest in Europe, over the past decades the South Tyrol model has often been discussed by organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and International Policy Institutes as a model for the solution of ethnic conflicts in other settings, including the Post-Soviet Space (Mikhelidze and Tocci 2012), East Ukraine, West Sahara, Chechnya, and Tibet. This is why the Dalai Lama, for example, with the intention of getting a similar arrangement for Tibet from China, sent his own study groups over decades to the South Tyrol province's capital, Bozen-Bolzano, to study the South Tyrol model of autonomous self-governance and self-administration at the province's main think-tank *Eurac Research* (Eurac Research 2019).

A complex historical background

The South Tyrol autonomy builds on a complex history of ethnic conflict, as is the case in many places in Europe, particularly in former or current border regions and areas where ethnic and cultural minorities live closely together with national majorities (Gyinesi 2018; Alber and Zwilling 2016). Until the end of the first world war (1918) South Tyrol, along with what is now the Austrian province of Tyrol in the adjacent north and the Italian province of Trentino in the south, formed the "Tyrol Heartland" of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg monarchy (Österreichische Mediathek 2000).

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Ninety-five percent of the province's inhabitants were culturally Austrian, with German as their native tongue (Leidlmair 1958). Following the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the first world war, the southern part of Tyrol was annexed by Italy with the treaty of St. Germain in 1919, against the will of the population. Three years later (1922) Benito Mussolini and Italian Fascism came to power, which was hostile to all cultural diversity. Focusing on national "homogenization", Mussolini began to Italianize the annexed territory using systematic and organized violence (Steininger 1995-2011).

The methods employed – besides murder, abduction, and systematic intimidation – were an Italianization policy through mass immigration with the artificial settlement of more than 100,000 Italians within just a few years, abolishing Austrian place names and replacing them with Italian names randomly fabricated by fascist Ettore Tolomei within just a few summer months. Mussolini's methods also included banning German-speaking school lessons and the German language in public offices and court, partly also in public. It went so far that in many cases even the Austrian names on gravestones were replaced by artificially Italianized names. Through a megalomaniac building program, the provincial capital Bozen (German), now Bolzano (Italian), was conceived by Fascism as "the" fascist model city in the heart of Europe, close to the German-speaking world. After Italianizing its name, the most famous fascist architects intended to make Bozen "the" example of what fascism was capable of, adding a victory monument, including a patriotic "altar", and a statue of Mussolini "Il Duce" himself to watch over the local population. They planned to raze the original Austrian city to the ground and replace it from scratch with fascist monumental architecture. If Hitler had his model city of Linz (Austria), Mussolini's "perfect" and "total" dream city of the future was not Rome, but a completely renewed and Italianized Bozen-Bolzano (Obermair 2017).

In the 1910 census, the last before the first world war and the beginning of fascist Italianization politics, there were 17,339 Italian-speaking inhabitants registered in South Tyrol (2.9% of the population). The Italian population grew rapidly in the 1930s, when within a few years thousands of industrial workers were artificially settled, although South Tyrol historically had no mentionable industry. Sadly, in the years following the end of the second world war in 1945, the former Fascist Italianization politics continued with the artificial import of Italian migrants, now at the hands of Italy's first democratic government. It reached its peak in 1961 with 34.3% of the population. Since then the Italian percentage of the population has decreased slightly but is holding steady at around 28%.

After the defeat of national socialism and fascism and the end of the second world war (1945), representatives from South Tyrol and the provisional Austrian government began to work on the national reintegration of South Tyrol with Austria. The allies rejected these efforts mainly for military-strategic reasons, despite the demand for a referendum put forward by 80% of the population, and despite massive demonstrations. Italy was now part of the Western alliance and a strategically important factor in the dispute that was starting with the Soviet Union. Austria, on the other hand, was occupied by the Soviets and faced an unknown future between East and West. An argument escalated between Austria and Italy over the status of South Tyrol and who it belonged to (Steininger 1995-2011).

The only way to resolve the dispute was now through direct negotiations between both countries over an exemplary compromise: wide-ranging autonomous self-regulation for South Tyrol within the framework of Austria's role as "protecting power", while still belonging to Italy. On September 5, 1946, the so-called "Paris Treaty" was signed by the Foreign Ministers of Austria and Italy, Karl Gruber and Alcide Degasperi. Through its own laws and decrees, the province's original Austrian population would be guaranteed equality of the German language with the Italian language in all public matters as well as the preservation of its culture, ethnic customs, and traditions.

In the following years, however, Italy did not fulfill its obligations of the Paris Treaty. The province of South Tyrol was incorporated into a greater region, the Autonomous Region of Trentino-South Tyrol, where the Italian population was in the majority, overriding the Austrian minority's rights to autonomy. The key issue was that the South Tyrol *province* had no sufficient sub-autonomy within the autonomous *region*. At the same time, Italianization politics continued with robust residential construction and immigration. This led to civil war-like unrest at the end of the 1950s. Therefore, in September 1959, the then Austrian Foreign Minister, Bruno Kreisky, brought the so-called "South Tyrol Question" before the UN Security Council in New York. At the same time ethnically and nationalistically motivated secession efforts increased. In 1961 pro-Austrian separatists carried out a series of bomb attacks to try to reunify South Tyrol with Austria by force, with 37 attacks in the night of 10-11 June 1961 alone, the so-called "South

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Tyrol Night of Fire"(*Südtiroler Feuernacht*) (Steininger 1995-2011).

Negotiations between Italy and Germany were subsequently intensified and soon reached a provisional, amicable conclusion. A better solution for *provincial* autonomy was found, which provided that South Tyrol should gradually attain wide-ranging self-government in the form of a strongly developed sub-autonomy within the autonomous region of Trentino-South Tyrol, while at the same time remaining both parts of this region and the nation-state of Italy. This solution for provincial autonomy was supported on 23 November 1969 by the ethnic-cultural "collective party" (*Sammelpartei*) of South Tyroleans of Austrian cultural origin (i.e. German- and Ladin-speakers) founded in 1946, the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP). This support nevertheless was achieved only after serious internal disputes which brought the party to the brink of breaking apart, since around half of its representatives were of the opinion that a clear split and return of the province to Austria in the framework of the right of self-determination (UNPO 2017a; UNPO 2017b; Danspeckgruber 2002; Danspeckgruber 2017) as coined by 20th-century political leaders such as Lenin, Wilson, Roosevelt and Churchill and later adapted by the United Nations Charter (United Nations 1945) would be preferable. The solution of a far-reaching provincial autonomy for South Tyrol within the Italian national state was subsequently also endorsed by the Italian and Austrian governments. In 1972 the so-called "new" or "second" *Autonomy Statute* came into force which – and this remains exemplary internationally to the present day – is a constitutional law of the Italian Republic and can only be changed with a 2/3 majority vote of the national Parliament, and with the international agreement of the European Union under the auspices of the UN.

Over the following 20 years, from 1972 to 1992, these legal foundations were managed by Italy little by little with some tough wrestling at times between South Tyrol's ruling SVP party, i.e. the (formally) meta-ideological representative of South Tyrol's Austria-stemming minorities, the "protecting power" Austria and rapidly changing governments in Rome. Since the provincial autonomy started to guarantee South Tyrol effective self-management in some of the most important "identities" areas such as culture and schooling, in 1992 there was a declaration of dispute resolution by mutual agreement between Austria and Italy. Consent from the Austrian minority ethnic collective party, the SVP, for this declaration followed after a formal diplomatic note, in which Italy delivered its official report on the implementation of the South Tyrol provincial Autonomy Statute, making explicit reference to the Paris Treaty of 1946 and thus ensuring that any breach of the agreement remained actionable before international judicial authorities.

Since then, the declaration of dispute resolution has marked a provisional conclusion to the South Tyrol dispute, although the autonomy regulation for the province is still developing dynamically in terms of application, scope, legitimacy, public involvement, and self-identity. Recent reforms of the Italian constitution, among others initiated by the government of premier Matteo Renzi (2014-16), have, however, put some question marks on aspects of it, making adaptations necessary. The exact extent of such modifications remains open due to the repeated delay and postponement of Italian national systemic reforms (Eurac Monitoring Centre on Autonomies 2019; Benedikter 2016; Woelk, Palermo and Marko 2008).

Organizing diversity, the South Tyrolean way

Summing up, the key to pacification was the implementation of the so-called "Second Autonomy Statute", a kind of special sub-constitution anchored in Italy's national constitution, in 1972. Since then, as mentioned, a "dynamic autonomy" has been practiced, meaning that the autonomous province subsequently gained power. In 1992, the declaration of the end of hostilities between Austria and Italy made the province definitely "the" example of how the institutionalization of different ethnocultural and ethnohistoric diversity can be fruitful to pacify ethnic identity conflicts in Europe through "tolerance by law", i.e. by means of a far-reaching self-administration including partial financial, political and educational autonomies for the ethnic groups represented in the province's autonomous parliament. This remains *de facto* independent of the autonomous region's joint parliament of the two provinces Trentino and South Tyrol, which together constitute the autonomous region of Trentino-South Tyrol.

Seen from the current view, the decisive aspect of South Tyrol's special arrangement is that its autonomy is *consociational* to its core (Peterlini 2009; Peterlini 2013). Among other regulations, all three ethnic groups must be included by law in the autonomous provincial government. As mentioned, public money and offices are distributed

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among the ethnic groups according to census percentages – the so-called "proportional" system. It means that in principle an ethnic group gets money for its specific purposes (such as culture or schooling) according to its share in the population living on the territory. There are three different school systems allowing for every ethnic group to have public education for free in their own mother tongue. Yet every citizen is free to send their children to any school they want to. Many Italians nowadays send their children to German-speaking public schools, creating the paradoxical situation that in some cases there are more native Italian speakers in German-speaking schools (meant for the preservation of the language and culture of the Austrian German-speaking minority) than native German speakers. Given that all citizens on the territory have to speak at least two languages to access public posts, this prevents the Italianization or Germanization of the public administration.

Most important: the benefits of autonomy are shared, with all citizens living in stability on the territory, transforming the initially ethnically motivated autonomy arrangement *de facto* from an *ethnic* to *territorial* autonomy. This benefits the Austrian-stemming minorities and the Italian national population living on the territory equally, and in this sense, there is no difference between the rights and duties of minorities and majorities living in the area.

Such systemic consociationalism which simultaneously *unifies and differentiates* the needs of the three main ethnic groups has led to the peaceful coexistence of previously conflicting identities. The result is that the province of South Tyrol, one of the poorest areas in Central Europe at the end of the second world war, has transformed into one of Europe's most prosperous areas, socially and economically.

Aspects of critique

Nevertheless, critics have pointed out that such *institutionalization of ethnic-cultural differentiation* may have the negative effect of hindering the development of a *joint overarching identity*, as well as preventing the emergence of a more fluid concept of territorial "trans-locality" (Guelke 2012). In addition, South Tyrol's special arrangement since the 2000s and particularly since Europe's refugee and migration crisis since 2015 faces the new challenge of strong non-EU immigration, which is creating a situation of traditionally-local ("old") versus incoming-global ("new") minorities (Carlà 2018) of very different identity patterns, including, in particular, cultural and religious differences causing fears of discontinuity in the system (Rautz 2015; Rautz 2017). Additionally, the ethnic identities on which the South Tyrolean model has been based are challenged by continuing individualization and "glocalization", i.e. the trend towards the dissolution of ethnic belonging and territorial binding, which is also a trend in the development of European Union law. It is rarely explicitly considered that a large part of the migration, particularly to the Alpine mountainous zones which are to some extent detached from the urban centres of attraction, is forced migration, with different causes and driving forces still to be fully understood in both the origins and effects (Membretti, Dematteis and Di Gioia 2018).

While some believe that the solution is a new, more "neutral" European meta-identity concept where each and everybody conceives themselves as "minorities" and where there are no more majorities in perception at all, creating a basic attitude to which some Central Eastern and Eastern European areas were used to for centuries ("subcutaneous identities"), others point out that the future of the term "consociational" in Europe may rather lie in a balance between – and in the ideal case integration of – both ethnic and meta-ethnic identities.

Seen from such a viewpoint, the territory-centered approach of "Autonomy Patriotism" (Winkler 2018; Nindler and Mitterwachauer 2018; UnserTirol24.com 2018) could become a new, programmatically transcultural – and inclusively meta-ethnic, yet non-culture-neutralizing – the concept of civil religion dedicated to implementing an overarching secular sense of belonging to a territory, while not reacting aggressively against more traditional ethnic identity concepts, rather including them in a greater joint vision. In essence, such meta-ethnic identity in the sense of "autonomy patriotism" would be explicitly *not* conceived as non-ethnic or post-cultural identity. Its main aim must be to pave the way for a greater European identity concept of "unity in diversity" – with both poles "unity" and "diversity" in continued and stable balance – following the outline of the EU motto "Unity in diversity". "Unity in diversity" is, for the time being, not a path towards a specific goal or final space, nor to a precisely circumscribed, explicit identity concept (Karolewski 2016), but rather a levitation concept, with an open outcome.

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Implications and perspectives

In recent years, the South Tyrolean autonomy has been regarded as an exemplary response to questions of tension between re-nationalization and re-localization, which seems to have become one of the core conditions to be dealt with in the greater European context. South Tyrol's developing administrative and governmental cooperation bonds with the Austrian Tyrol province in the north and the Italian Trentino province in the south aim to create a trans-border region called the "European Region of Tyrol", which in the future could include certain joint governmental decisions. The "European Region of Tyrol" is regarded by many as an exemplary transnational model of how a united Europe could work by the means of denationalization and regionalization. In the coming years, the concept of "Autonomy Patriotism" coined by South Tyrol's governor Arno Kompatscher (Nindler and Mitterwachauer 2018) could also be applied to this greater framework. Since 2017 a debate has been running over the issuing of dual Austrian-Italian passports for members of South Tyrol's German and Ladin ethnic groups. The question is if this may help the transnational unification and "Autonomy Patriotism" or not.

It would be reductionist and too much of a simplification to say that the South Tyrol model overcomes the negative sides of tribalism by keeping and valorizing its positive aspects. Rather, this model suggests that as a trans- and to a certain extent meta-cultural and pluri-ethnic *model of territorial belonging* it does not believe in the supremacy of culture over politics. On the contrary, the concept of "Autonomy Patriotism" tries to balance both, without privileging one at the cost of the other. If there is currently a revival of the Gramsci tradition both on the left and right wings of populism (Benedikter 2017) interpreting culture as the prerequisite of politics (BBC radio on populism) and thus implicitly making the case for a revival of culture (and ideology) both within politics and as a means of politics with a particular trend toward populist positions, the South Tyrol model suggests the opposite: that politics can valorize and at the same time master cultural differences, including ethnic ones.

In turn, since South Tyrol is considered a European model region of ethnic and transnational integration, it is and remains more dependent on the European unification project than other regions and territories. While after decades of efforts South Tyrol feels in many ways more European than surrounding spaces such as East Switzerland, Northern Tyrol or Trentino, it is in turn also more affected by European and global developments. For example, South Tyrol currently seems to have become the main target of Chinese investment, since the area is located directly on the south-north passage of the so-called New Silk Road between the port of Trieste, a strategic goal of China's investment initiative, and Munich, one of its main destinations. At the same time, South Tyrol remains among the few dozen wealthiest European regions precisely because of its territorial autonomy, which remains one of the farthest-reaching and most efficient in European history for the benefit of all citizens on the territory. To further develop the model, both continued participation "from below" through involving the civil society comprising all ethnic groups, and constant "ethnographic repair work" must be implemented as a never-ending process.

Outlook

All in all, South Tyrol's consociational autonomy is a post-national model arrangement of multiethnicity, pluriculturally, and European diversity management, in a nutshell, enacted through "tolerance by law", currently developing toward the overarching identity concept of "Autonomy Patriotism". Its decades-long evolutionary history can serve as a storehouse of experience for other multi-lingual and transnational experiments with diversity and difference. Yet it is just one – quite specific – model among others, and it presents its pros and cons like all other approaches. Given that history is and remains a superhuman process made by humans, which cannot be completely mastered, but just influenced, as much as possible, by rational and humanistic considerations following the teachings or the enlightenment tradition, politics can only be optimistic, although it cannot control everything. This remains true also for European diversity and complexity management as a whole. It remains true in particular for the socio-culturally and socio-politically often over-complex pluricultural and multi-ethnic environments in Europe, which are partly also specific to Europe and present profoundly different characteristics compared to the ethnic and identity questions in other parts of the world, for example in the United States, central China or Russia.

Parts of this text are based on the official information on the South Tyrol Autonomy model provided by the Autonomous Government of South Tyrol, for example at: "This is South Tyrol", accessed 16 July 2021, and earlier

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versions and editions.

Figure 1: South Tyrol – Image by TUBS/Wikimedia Commons

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