



**THE TREMBLING OF A COMPLEX
REGIONAL CONSOCIATION:
2018 PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN
SOUTH TYROL**

Guido Panzano

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THE TREMBLING OF A COMPLEX REGIONAL CONSOCIATION: 2018 PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN SOUTH TYROL

Located in the northeastern part of Italy, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, also known with the historical name of South Tyrol, is one of the two provinces of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol region. It is a border region and a deeply divided place, with a majority of German-speaking population (62.3%) and minorities of Italians (23.4%), Ladins (4.1%) and past and recent migrants (10.2%). On the 21st October 2018 almost 400,000 South Tyrolean citizens (69.1% Germans, 26.4% Italians, and 4.5% Ladins) casted their vote to elect the Provincial Council. This Working Paper therefore aims to analyse the party competition in this electoral campaign, underling specificities and evolutions of such a peculiar political system. First of all, in the introduction I shall discuss historical and institutional backgrounds, underlining how power-sharing and autonomy have solved the conflict after the Italian attempt to colonize the region, accepting the German majority self-determination claims and ending a brief violent period. In the first section I shall explore the party framework focusing on this ethnic party system, segmented into three different (German, Italian and multiethnic) sub-arenas and characterized by mutually reinforcing and crosscutting cleavages. The competition in these systems is mostly intraethnic, rather than interethnic: this is tantamount to saying that we have three different sub-arenas, only partly communicating. After having retraced some recent centrifugal evolutions, I shall briefly examine each South Tyrolean party contesting the elections, through its ideology, strategy and history (in the German sub-arena, the Südtiroler Volkspartei, Die Freiheitlichen, the Süd-Tiroler Freiheit and the Bürgerunion für Südtirol; in the Italian one, the Partito democratico, Alto Adige nel Cuore, Forza Italia, the Lega and others; finally, in the multi-ethnic one, the Verdi-Grüne-Verc, the Team Köllensperger, the Movimento 5 Stelle and others). In the second section, I shall thereafter focus on the 2018 vote. Firstly, analysing one controversial minority issue, not only symbolical but with real effects in competition dynamics: the double-passport proposal for (only German-speaking?) South Tyrolean citizens, not clearly defined but openly advanced by the Austrian government, which had been initially expected to reinforce the opponents of the SVP and the Italian grievances, from which the Lega, capitalizing on its national success, could have taken the best benefits. However, these considerations only partly explain the electoral results (which saw the success of the new competitors of the Team Köllensperger



and the Lega, and the collapse of Die Freiheitlichen), more influenced by other (minority-related?) themes, shifting from a longstanding self-determination campaign to one more focused on migration and anti-establishment feelings, influenced by national and European Zeitgeist. Indeed, after having reported and commented the results, I shall thence explore the manifestos of parties represented in the new Council through content analysis criteria, as coded by the Regional Manifestos Project, to see which were the most salient issues at stake: namely, searching in the data an indication of a shift from the most classical and 'old' self-determination claims (based on centre-periphery dimension and traditional values of the region) to others more connected to a new conceptualization of identity issues (a 'new' self-determination?) and centred on migration, anti-establishment feelings and other themes, like green demands. Which have been the most successful party strategies? How do they influence the power-sharing executive formation?

Keywords: South Tyrol; regional consociations; minorities; ethnic parties; elections.

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Introduction: Historical and Institutional South Tyrolean Backgrounds. From the Attempted Italianization to a Complex Regional Power-sharing

The aim of this introduction is to frame the most recent election in South Tyrol in local historical and institutional contexts, in order to correctly understand political and party dynamics taking place in the region. Located in the northeastern part of Italy, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, embedded in the region of Trentino – Alto Adige/Südtirol, is in fact one of the two autonomous provinces of Italy. Moreover,

South Tyrol, the English translation of the German historical name of a part of the Hapsburg Empire's Tyrol province, is what is called in academic literature a 'deeply divided place' (McEvoy & O'Leary, 2013), where linguistic and ethno-national cleavages play a fundamental role in shaping political and institutional fields (Lijphart, 1977; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972). Indeed, the Province is a border region, inhabited by a majority of German-speaking population (62.3%, namely, a minority within the Italian state, at 0.53% of the national population), minorities of Italians (23.4%) and Ladins (4.1%), as well as past and recent migrants (10.2%; without the inclusion of migrants the proportions are 69.1% Germans, 26.4% Italians, and 4.5% Ladins; *Istituto*



Provinciale di Statistica, 2017). On the 21st October 2018, almost 400,000 South Tyrolean citizens casted their vote to elect the Provincial Council (*Landtag*, or *Consiglio Provinciale*) which, together with the Council of Trento, forms the regional legislative body (mainly with liaison functions between the two provinces and the central level). After the election, the Provincial Council elects the President of the Province (*Landeshauptmann*) as the head of the local government, usually the most voted candidate of the most popular party list, and then other provincial government members. Due to historical reasons, South Tyrolean executive formation is a peculiar mechanism, prescribing the presence of minority representatives in the government proportionally to the number of their mandates in the Council.

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye, South Tyrol was annexed by the Kingdom of Italy for military and economic reasons and without any respect for local nationalities (Grote, 2012; Hannum, 1996, p.436). The occupation, colonization and Italianization of the valleys, initiated by the Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando under the royal orders even before the beginning of the Fascist period, exacerbated when Benito Mussolini took power, with the prohibition of German language at schools and in the church, intense industrialization of the Bolzano area¹ and the Italianization of geographical and personal names.² In 1939, with the so-called ‘Option’, a pact between Adolf Hitler and Mussolini, the choice for the German-speaking population was either to

remain in Italy accepting the Italianization or to emigrate to the Reich: of 86% of the German speaking inhabitants of the region which decided to leave, only 75,000 in fact left and almost all returned to their villages at the end of the Second World War (Alcock, 1970). Afterwards, the Paris Peace Treaties ruled in favour of Yugoslavia with regard to the eastern regions of Istria and Dalmatia, while maintaining South Tyrol under Italian control until the Brenner Pass. In the meantime, the Südtiroler Volkspartei (SVP, South Tyrolean People’s Party) was founded with the aim of gathering the German and Ladin voters and claiming for the self-determination of this border region. Indeed, the 1946 De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement, annexed the aforementioned Peace Treaty and for the first time internationalized the question through bilateral negotiations between Italy and Austria, plus accommodated the basic non-discrimination demands of the local German minority, which were later implemented by the first Statute of Autonomy of 1948. South Tyrol was thus nested in the region of Trentino-Alto Adige with the other Province of Trento inhabited by an overwhelming Italian majority (Alcock, 1970; Benedikter, 2007, p.70; Lapidoth, 1997, p.102). Consequently, the weak competences devolved to the Province (due to the predominant position of the regional level) were considered unsatisfactory by the SVP and the German minority, mostly marginalized in labour market and civil service (Alcock, 1982; Kaplan, 2000; Wolff, 2007). Nevertheless, it was only under the charismatic leadership of Silvius Magnago, that in 1957 the SVP formally stopped its collaboration with the



Italian governing party Democrazia Cristiana (DC, Christian Democracy) and started a harsher campaign to obtain from the central government more powers separately from Trento (Lantschner, 2007). In the following years, characterized by great uncertainty created at both the national and international levels by the questions of Yugoslavia orientation in the Cold War and the independence of Austria (Grote, 2012, p.100), a brief but significant period of political violence began, targeted mainly against infrastructure rather than human beings, culminating in 1961 with the ‘Night of Fires’, when 37 electricity pylons were attacked by South Tyrolean bombers (p.102; cf. Bernardini & Pallaver, 2015). This escalation (which led to deaths among police and security forces, and rebels’ mass arrests and even cases of tortures), though never openly supported by the SVP³ and severely combated by the Italian government, therefore resulted in the establishment of a commission (the Commission of 19) to settle the conflict (Hannum, 1996, p.434). Indeed, in 1964, 136 measures were formalized in the ‘Packet’ (*Pacchetto, Paket*) including a series of legislative measures to empower the German minority and devolve considerable competences to the Province (Peterlini, 2015). After the approval, with a very slight majority by the SVP congress in 1969 (Wolff, 2007), in 1972 the second Statute of Autonomy entered into force through the vote of the Italian parliament (Alcock, 1982, p.51, 1992, p.25). Notwithstanding some resurgence of German protests, the second Statute was fully implemented during the 1980s and in 1992 a joint Italian-Austrian declaration to the UN Secretary General

affirmed that the *Südtirolfrage* was finally solved (Lantschner, 2007). Ten years later, when the salience of the Brenner border consistently decreased thanks to Austria’s integration and membership in the European Union,⁴ the Italian constitutional reforms of 2001 gave further powers and competences to both the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano (Peterlini, 2015; Wolff, 2007). The ethnonational conflict, which once saw German (and Ladin) and Italian communities clashing over the control of the land, was thus settled, because of the proneness to compromise and dialogue among Italian and Austrian governments and the SVP, by the establishment of flexible power-sharing and autonomous arrangements, and significant cross-border cooperation bodies.

It is well known that South Tyrol is nested in Italy’s asymmetric regionalism within the region of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, (Conversi, 2007; Toniatti, 2001; Weller & Nobbs, 2010; Wolff, 2007, 2009, 2010), guaranteed by constitutional law, called ‘statutory law’ (hereinafter “Statute”). The continuous process of autonomy and self-government implementation is moreover supervised, especially in the amendment procedure, by the Commission of 6 (that becomes the Commission of 12, together with the Province of Trento), consisting of 3 members of the Italian state and 3 of the Province according to linguistic composition (Palermo, 2007; Pallaver, 2007, p.306; Peterlini, 2015, p.83). Furthermore, the institutional architecture of the South Tyrolean power-sharing among ethnic groups has been widely analysed through the ideal-types of consociational democracy and



asymmetric autonomy accommodating minority protection and self-determination demands (Markusse, 1997; Pallaver, 2014; Wolff, 2007). Indeed, some authors classify South Tyrol as a regional consociation (Woelk, 2008, pp.65-66; Wolff, 2005, p.123), with a peculiar division of competences and mechanisms of arbitration and coordination with the centre,⁵ and even a complex one, underlining the international dimensions of the conflict resolution and the whole peace process (O’Leary, 2013). Returning to the consociational model, its first element of governmental power-sharing (Lijphart, 1977; McGarry & O’Leary, 2004) can be then observed in the South Tyrolean so-called ‘implicit coalition’ (Wolff, 2007), although it instead seems to resemble an updated form of a centripetal coalition of ‘moderates’ rather than a proper consociational grand coalition (Horowitz, 1985). In fact, Article 50 of the Statute states simply that “the composition of the Provincial Government of Bolzano/Bozen must adapt to the consistence of the linguistic groups as represented in the Provincial Council”, giving the parties the possibility to decide whether to form a complete, concurrent or weak grand coalition (O’Leary, 2005, pp.3-43). In practice, this rule has permitted the predominant SVP to choose its allies (first the DC and then the Partito Democratico, PD, Democratic Party) and most notably to exclude opponents to power-sharing, autonomy and minority protection, even with relevant electoral strength, firstly in the Italian and then in the German sub-arenas (Panzano, 2018, p.160). Regarding the proportionality principle, it applies not only to the electoral law⁶ but also to the allocation

of public funds and in all civil service branches (*proporzionale etnica* or *ethnischer Proporz*, ethnic proportionality rule). As the pillar of the system, the ethnic declarations (Statute, Art.89), one for the ‘belonging’ to an ethnic group (German, Italian, Ladin, or ‘other’) and one (if a South Tyrolean declares him or herself as ‘other’) for the ‘affiliation’ to one of the three ethnic groups, have been modified to improve voluntarism and not to fix the linguistic composition in the administration, which nevertheless remains multilingual and where the ethnic principle is often smoothed (Alcock, 1992, p.32; Lapidoth, 1997, p.109; Peterlini, 2015, p.80). For the (suspensive) veto mechanisms (Statute, Art.56), each linguistic group can ask for a separate vote (especially when the budget is concerned) and, if a proposal is approved against the vote of the majority of one group, it is possible to appeal to the judiciary (first to the local tribunal, then to the Italian Constitutional Court; Toniatti, 2001, pp.64-69). Finally, in addition to the territorial autonomy, the personal principle also applies in South Tyrol, enhancing a high degree of cultural autonomy, evident in some elements of bilingualism in German and Italian schools (with mandatory study of the other tongue, although not always with satisfactory results; cf. Carlà, 2007) and in Ladin trilingual ones. In conclusion, maybe the most significant element of the autonomy is that about 90% of taxes collected in the territory are directly transferred to the regional account (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2015).



1. Ethnic Parties and Party System. Dynamics and Changes in South Tyrol

1.1 Ethnic Party Systems and Ethnoregionalism theories

In this section, I will analyse the party framework: after the theoretical context, the South Tyrolean ethnic party system will be then analysed, as it is segmented in three (German, Ladin and Italian) sub-arenas, surrounded by a multiethnic one, and characterized by mutually reinforcing and crosscutting (not only ethnic) cleavages, different from those observable at the central level. The competition in these systems appears to be mostly intraethnic, rather than interethnic: this is tantamount to saying that the competitiveness occurs in these sub-arenas that are, although not fully isolated, only partly intercommunicating. Unfortunately and interestingly enough, ethnic parties are not comprehensively, and only since very recently, analysed by the scholarly researches focused on the role of elites in consociationalism and power-sharing (Lijphart, 1969, 1977, 2007) or minority rights and conflict resolution methods (Weller, Metzger & Johnson, 2008), except for those authors analysing what can be defined as a ‘consociational party’ and some case-studies (Bogaards, 2014).⁷ Indeed, before exploring in depth the South Tyrolean case, we shall retrace some useful insights from these scholarly branches and others, perhaps sometimes more relevant for our analysis, namely from the literature on ethnoregionalist parties and party systems.

All in all, in deeply divided places, albeit ethnicity must never be considered as primordial or innate (Jenkins, 1997; Kaufmann, 2004) and we should focus on ethnic ‘border(ing)’ rather than on groups’ perceived fixity and objectivity (Barth, 1969; Brubaker, 2004), it sometimes represents the main and pervasive social organization of individual differences, and therefore a window of opportunity for political parties and ethnic entrepreneurs (McGarry & O’Leary, 2009; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972). As a consequence, an ethnic party can be defined as a party which addresses its voters as the guardian of a given ethnic group’s interests and which makes this ethnic appeal (that can be articulated in majority or minority terms) the central issue of its mobilization and political strategy (Chandra, 2005; Dandony, 2010; Zuber, 2012); or, in fewer words and considering vote distribution, the party whose boundaries stop close to those of the ethnic group, even if this group is represented by more parties (Horowitz, 1985, p.301). As often noted, in these plural societies floating votes and therefore interchangeable majorities – essential for the median voter theorem (Downs, 1957) – are extremely rare, since the vote is something similar to a census (with ethnic group members voting for *their* party, cf. Horowitz, 1985, p.348) and centrifugal and polarizing tendencies are the norm (or, better, *might* be so, as we will see in a moment; cf. Mitchell, Evans & O’Leary, 2009). Thus, if these situations take place within a region of the state, inhabited by not so modifiable and relatively stable majorities and minorities, social cleavages and party divisions are different from those of the



central polity and of other regions as well (Elias, 2011). Moreover, the right-left dimension, in every way we want to consider it, is not likely to provoke significant effects there, even if it can – especially when the salience of ethnonational issues is not so strong or is decreasing, like in the case of South Tyrol – crosscut sub-arenas or sometimes reinforce existent divisions (Horowitz, 1985, p.303). Anyhow, because of substantial incentives for voters to ethnically vote and easy polarizability of ethnic preferences by political entrepreneurs (Pallaver, 2008, pp.309-11), the most relevant competitiveness (Sartori, 1976) in these systems is considered to be held within ethnic cleavage-based sub-arenas, which – as it was already mentioned - are not fully communicating. The putative radicalising tendencies of this dynamic has been labelled with Sartori's paramount term 'outbidding' (Sartori, 1966, p.158, 1976)⁸: that is, making an offer higher than the previous one, with a bluff that cannot be seen. The idea of outbidding inside these ethnic sub-arenas means that 'moderates' (namely the most prone to interethnic cooperation) are constantly outflanked by radicals, who present themselves as the real and inflexible defenders of identity, unscrupulously accusing others of betrayal (Gormley-Heenan & McGinty, 2008).

Nonetheless, outbidding is not the unique and inevitable aspect of ethnic party competition, since these systems can show some centripetal dynamics, under certain conditions. Indeed, from a societal point of view, a more fluid structure and an *overlapping* of several cleavages could

undermine the perceived fixity of ethnic sub-arenas, that can in fact change (Chandra, 2005). Moreover, from an institutional side, even the presence of power-sharing (formal or informal) constraints can *force* ethnic parties to cooperate, thus undermining the success of outbidding strategies based on the possibility of a continuous spoiling (Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary, 2009, p.401). By the same token, some authors are of opinion that, around ethnic sub-arenas, an interethnic one may take place: a 'nested competition' can in fact occur because of the presence of interethnic parties⁹ competing transversely with all other ethnic actors, then making the competition not only 'internal' but also 'external' (referring to the ethnic sub-arenas, cf. Zuber 2012, p.928). In other words, in such a case, intraethnic dynamics are surrounded by interethnic ones: for this reason, it is crucial to understand that the electoral 'market' is not fully segmented insofar that even the 'pure' ethnic party must moderate its positions (and outbidding temptations) in order not to lose voters in favour of its interethnic challengers. To conclude on this point, when the political conflict is structured mainly along 'classical' self-determination-related issues (like in South Tyrol in the past years) and the sub-arenas are pretty divided, the overall party system (encompassing various sub-arenas) could be spatially imagined as two-dimensional. Indeed, with intraethnic sub-arenas with internal competitiveness and also opposite positions on self-determination issues (for instance, one sub-arena for the independence or self-government of a certain region, in more radical or moderate terms, while the other supporting the central state).



To the contrary, when the party competition goes beyond the ethnonational division, the political space could be even pluri-dimensional, thus encompassing several themes and different dimensions, as I will clarify in paragraph 2.3.

Anyhow, since we are analysing a regional context, it is helpful to scrutinize some insights from the literature on ethnoregionalism. Indeed, during and after the Europeanisation and devolution processes that have characterized the Old Continent, some authors observed the consolidation of a new party family: the ethnoregionalist one (De Winter & Türsan, 1998). The revival of ethnicity as a mobilising force (Smith, 1981, 1986), sometimes instrumentally galvanized by ethnic entrepreneurs (Brubaker, 2004) and encouraged by the rise of new cultural values and post-materialist beliefs (Inglehart, 1977), pushed some parties to reinforce their presumptive distinctiveness on identity themes, thus re-politicizing, though differently, the centre-periphery cleavage (Türsan, 1998; Müller-Rommel, 1998). Consequently, the ethnic identity was now related to the concept of ‘ethnoregionalism’ to “denote ethnically based territorial movements in Western European national states that aim to modify their relations with the state” (Türsan, 1998, p.5). More precisely, “ethno-regionalist parties are defined as referring to the efforts of geographically concentrated peripheral minorities which challenge the working order and sometimes even the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition of their cultural identity” (Müller-Rommel,

1998, p.19). Being more or less culturally and territorially based, the mushrooming of those particularistic actors during the 1980s then stimulated the interest of social sciences, although at least initially their effects on local and state party systems and their diverse origins had not been systematically explored. It has been also noted that little attention was paid to the (different?) way in which state-wide and autonomist parties compete in regional elections (Elias, 2011, p.3). As it is clear, both these fields (studies on power-sharing and minority rights on the one hand, and analyses of ethno-regionalist parties on the other) are, in my opinion, crucial to examine the South Tyrolean electoral context and therefore for the purpose of this paper. I shall then try to combine as much as possible both approaches, in order to comprehensively understand the dynamics of a political system at the same time delineated not only by internal and external self-determination topics (Keating, 2012) and centre-periphery dynamics, but also by other issues (Scantamburlo, 2016; Scantamburlo, Alonso & Gómez, 2018).

1.2 The Falling of the Predominant Model and the Partial ‘Nationalisation’ (or ‘Europeanisation’) of the Party Competition

For what concerns our case, the South Tyrolean party system is a combination of local German parties and Italian state-wide ones, with some exceptions regarding multiethnic actors (Pallaver, 2007, 2008, p.310): indeed, the ethnic division overlaps then with other cleavages, even within the



ethnolinguistic groups (Scantamburlo, 2016, p.52).

Firstly, and diachronically analysing the Italian side, after decades of traditional Italian parties the fragmentation escalated during the 1990s, without any capacity to counterbalance the predominant position of the SVP with a strong and catch-all Italian party, like perhaps the DC and other Italian parties were at least until 1980s. Anyway, before that involution, the party system within the Italian arena was one of a moderate pluralism, with between four and five parties, the DC, the Communist Party, the Socialists composed of the Socialist and the Social Democratic Party (out of the Council since 1983), and the neo-fascist (and then ‘post-fascist’) Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI, Italian Social Movement). However, the polarization of the system was probably not due to the local branch of the Communist Party (which, at least formally, could even show some interethnic features) but most notably due to the increasing significance of the Italian extreme right. Indeed, even though it was always excluded from negotiations for the power-sharing executive, the MSI had obtained the plurality of the Italian vote since 1988 and could be clearly considered as an antisystem party, in the ‘local’ sense of being against the autonomy and power-sharing embedded in the Statute, considering it skewed against the Italian minority within the Province (for the application of the proportionality rule in the civil service and the necessary bilingualism, for instance; cf. Lapidoth, 1997; Markusse, 1997). In short, between 1948 and the 1990s the Democrazia Cristiana was, together with the SVP on the

German side, the stabilizing actor of the system, allowing the SVP to smoothly apply Article 50 of the Statute without excessive efforts, plus also because of common ideological Catholic roots of both parties.¹⁰ Afterwards, the Italian right-wing parties benefitted from the DC collapse – the rest of which continued to be coopted to the executive, together with other centre-left small ‘corpuscles’ – successfully playing the ethnic-outbidding card by presenting themselves as the unique defender of the Italian group, maintaining the majority of the assembly seats between 1993 and 2008 (firstly with Alleanza nazionale, AN, National Alliance, then united with Forza Italia, FI, Go Italy, in the Popolo della Libertà, PdL, Freedom’s People, cf. Table 1, p.28). Only in 2013, and after the consolidation of the centre-left around the Partito Democratico in 2008, for the first time the right and the centre-right entered the Council with two mandates only, though remaining quite strong in Bolzano. At that time another crushing factor was the success of the populist (and interethnic) Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S, Five Star Movement), which won one seat in 2013 with a German-speaking candidate. Moreover, due to the presence of a long list of parties in the Council and even more contesting the elections, counting also the Lega Nord (LN, Northern League, in the council with one mandate since 1993, except between 2008 and 2013, when it obtained a seat in coalition with FI), the number of Italian members in the Council severely diminished, shifting from 11 in 1973 to only 5 in 2013, out of 35 seats, thus provoking a sense of dissatisfaction within the Italian population,



which perceives itself as a disadvantaged minority in the South Tyrolean system that aims at the protection of the German group (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2014).

Analysing now the German sub-arena, as already anticipated, the SVP, locally known with the name of its symbol, the *Edelweiss* (Alpine star), was able for many years to attract almost the totality of the German and Ladin voters, positioning itself as a religious mass (of course in the provincial context only), an ethnoregionalist catch-all and ‘tribune’ party (Holzer & Schwegler, 1998; cf. Mitchell, Evans & O’Leary, 2009). Capitalizing on and fuelling its longstanding image of the main actor of the struggle for internal self-determination and thus the true defender of German minority rights, the SVP indeed kept its predominant position for a long time, until losing the majority of German votes in 2008 and of Council seats in 2013 (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2014, 2015). Anyhow, its support towards autonomy, power-sharing and minority rights was and effectively remains the stabilizing pillar of the political and party system (Pallaver, 2014; Schmidke, 1998). Although commonly and maybe erroneously described as a ‘hegemonic’ force, in fact its position has to be identified as *predominant*, within the German arena as well as in the entire party system. According to Sartori, the predominant-party system is in fact “such to the extent that, and as long as, its major party is consistently supported by a winning majority (the absolute majority of seats) of the voters” (1976, p.174). Even though the dynamics of this local system consistently diverge from those of the national one, it is

indeed possible to apply for South Tyrol the predominant party category developed for state-wide party systems, precisely because of the peculiarities of this context as described in the introduction. As anticipated, the successful position of the SVP has been seriously undermined since the 1990s by other German parties adopting clear outbidding techniques in order to delegitimize the SVP for its alleged too accommodating behaviour. Furthermore, the party itself recently had to deal with significant corruption problems. Indeed, the loss of the majority of seats and thus of the predominant position in 2013,¹¹ were also the result of scandals concerning the management of public contracts of the hydro-electric sector by the provincial administration. This discrediting of the SVP as a governing force pushed then for a change of the leadership of the party and for the replacement of the Provincial President Luis Durnwalder, after more than 25 years in charge, with the young Arno Kompatscher. Moreover, austerity policies imposed by Rome made the secessionist hypothesis tempting again for new and old voters (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2014, 2015). The actors rewarded by these dynamics were two parties, generally with strong identity claims (that position them generally closer to the right angle of the political spectrum), Die Freiheitlichen (DF, The Libertarians) and the Süd-Tiroler Freiheit (STF, South Tyrolean Freedom), the former is a populist radical right party, a twin brother of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom’s Party), the latter a more single-issue one (supporting the re-annexation to Austria).



Finally, we have the interethnic sub-arena, which is rather stable from the electoral point of view, and for many years consisted only of the Green party. Now it seems to be joined by the Movimento 5 Stelle and its recent and relevant offshoot, the Team Köllensperger, named after the previous M5S German Council member (in the next section it will be discussed and problematized in detail). The placing of these parties in an interethnic arena, as I have theoretically underlined before, helped then to make the intraethnic competition ‘nested’ and to moderate the consequences of the outbidding drift. In this case, the Greens were able to contest, mainly from the left, the SVP, while the M5S and its German strong offshoot, as I will explain in a moment, succeeded in attracting the dissatisfaction and anti-establishment resentments (the latter in the German sub-arena only) towards a party continuously ruling for more than seventy years.

As a concluding point, it has to be mentioned that during the recent years, even in the Alpine province, new themes were more tellingly politicized and entered the public debate. I have already highlighted the new importance (since the 1990s) of anti-establishment feelings against power monopolized by the SVP observable within the German population, which increased the vote-share of the opponents of the ruling party. A similar process takes place also within the Italian population, thanks to which the new political organizations of the right – firstly through Alleanza Nazionale, Forza Italia and later under various lists – could take consistent electoral benefits, albeit never entering the government, since the Italian

‘co-optation’ was limited to the heirs of the DC and the centre-left, then compacted in the PD. This orientation was even reflected in the support towards European integration, enthusiastically sustained by the SVP (and, even if less significantly, by its executive partners), which saw the European Union as an opportunity to influence and rule independently from the central state on a new layer of authority (thus reinforcing cross-border cooperation bodies)¹² and to tighten linkages with other minorities all over Europe, through an active participation in the European Committee of the Regions and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). Conversely, this enthusiasm was more half-hearted among other local parties, which in some cases embraced clear Eurosceptic attitudes, present in the Province as well as in other European countries. By the same token, during the last years, another European and surely also Italian *Zeitgeist* (cf. Mudde, 2004) contaminated the political competition, most notably the politicization of perceptions on migrations. Always a land of transit, South Tyrol is indeed inhabited by around 47,000 foreign resident people, a share close to the national average (less than 10% of the population of the Province, and more than half from European countries, *Istituto provinciale di Statistica*, 2017). In recent years, the Province received less than 1,400 asylum seekers (0.9% of the Italian amount, in the Austrian Tyrol the number is around 5,000), distributed in different municipalities (*Provincia di Bolzano. Richiedenti asilo e rifugiati in Alto Adige*, 2017, p.4). Despite these small numbers, South Tyrol saw a change in its party system, increasingly characterized by harsh and



rough discourses against ‘migrants’ in general, emphasizing the situation of the crowded train stations of Bolzano/Bozen and Brenner as ‘full of people ready for an invasion’, while in reality these places are on a transit route towards northern European countries (pp.4-5; cf. Medda-Windischer & Carlà, 2015). Notwithstanding this evidence, new ‘outbidding’ dynamics on migration, fuelled by the action of radical right populists, transversally appear among almost all parties, changing the structure of the party system and shaking even the most powerful actors, as I will describe in the next paragraph.

1.3 Brief Overview of the South Tyrolean Parties in Competition: Analysing the 2018 Opponents

In this part of the paragraph, I will briefly retrace the history, ideology, and recent ideological positioning of parties contesting 2018 elections, trying to apply categories provided by literature previously explained and then to expand my analysis.

Starting with the once predominant and still the largest party, the Südtiroler Volkspartei combines a strong self-government protective aim within the European project and a strong social organization along ethnic terms. As an aggregator of interests and interest groups, the SVP remains a force of ethnic mobilization based on a rural, agricultural and regionally-based conception of identity (Holzer & Schwegler, 1998; Schmidke, 1998, p.6), notwithstanding the fact that the South Tyrolean society has deeply changed, when compared to the past. In this primordial identity, Schmidke

underlines the features of communal organization based on the ‘natural givenness’ of a territorial community and demarcation of an unalterable difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (1998, p.6; cf. Pallaver, 2005, pp.188-206). At the same time, alternating a protectionist-conservative to a (more) decentralist-autonomist approach, after the 1990s the SVP radicalized its positions through the proposal of a devolution max, or full autonomy (Keating, 2012; Scantamburlo, 2016, p.48), to avoid the risk of being the ‘victim of its own success’. However, during the same years the competition between the SVP and its German right-wing secessionist challengers increased, reaching its peak at the 2013 provincial election, when almost a third of the German electorate casted its vote for a secessionist force (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2015, p.2). The answer of the SVP was thus to improve its image of a successful, stabilizing and credible actor of the South Tyrolean autonomy, changing the strongest point of its manifesto from a ‘dynamic’ (namely, within a European framework, strengthening the competences of the Euroregion) to a ‘full’ autonomy, essentially based on the following demands towards the Italian government: the transfer from the region to the autonomous provinces of all the competences not directly reserved for and assumed by the state; the collection of all direct taxes; the establishment of an internal security force; the granting of the competence to conclude international agreements to the Province; and, last but not least, the granting of a double (Austrian) citizenship for South Tyrolean German speaking citizens (although this measure was not considered a priority by SVP). In fact,



these requests were partly accommodated by the Italian central government in 2015.¹³

Until 2018 election Die Freiheitlichen were the most important opponent of the SVP. Founded in 1992 by a split from the SVP youth association and modelled on the example of Jörg Haider's transformation of the *drittes Lager* (third camp) of Austrian politics, the aims of this party include self-determination issues, including the proposal of Austrian passport for German population and a possible union with North and East Tyrol through a referendum, in addition to other 'classical' populist radical right-wing proposals.¹⁴ After a sharp dip in 1998, because of an 'internal' assassination of one of its first leaders,¹⁵ the DF continuously grew in electoral terms – again, until 2018 – and become the second most voted German party, while also reinforcing its Eurosceptic profile. Afterwards, the party formed an alliance with the Northern League for the 2014 European elections, confirming itself as a Eurosceptic, ethnoregionalist, secessionist and pro-self-determination (the future status of the Province had to be decided by a referendum) party (Dandony, 2010, p.213), with a platform similar to those of other European populist radical right actors, especially when severe anti-migration proposals are taken into account. But the main purpose of DF during the campaign, in conclusion, was to challenge the SVP with a broad platform based on ownership of the German self-determination issue (Elias, 2011; cf. Meguid, 2005).

The other German actor is the Süd-Tiroler Freiheit, founded in 2007 by a splinter group from the old Union für Südtirol (Union for

South Tyrol, formed by a separatist SVP's split at the beginning of the 1990s) and previously headed by Eva Klotz (daughter of the leader of the South Tyrolean terrorist group in the 1960s). The STF is a single-issue party, most notably a rattachist one (Dandony, 2010, p.213), with the main aim to reannex South Tyrol to the Northern Land Tirol of Austria (the hyphen in the party name is emblematic in this sense). The STF 'identity' (Elias, 2011, p.5) is indeed associated with the request of double-citizenship for German speaking South Tyroleans and for self-determination which, similar to DF's, to be exercised through a provincial referendum (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2015, p.2). The party, a full member of the European Free Alliance group, is generally considered to be close to the right, even if in a way it refuses this ideological connotation by making the local identity the most important theme of its agenda.

Finally for the German arena, among parties contesting elections we could find the Bürgerunion für Südtirol, renamed heir of the Union für Südtirol, and a small Ladin party, with no political relevance at the provincial level, which shifted its position towards social issues, in order to achieve Ladin representation, remaining in the Council with one mandate until 2013.

By contrast, Italian parties represent local branches of state-wide actors. After the DC dissolution and the right-wing votes consolidation in the 1990s, in 2008 many centre-left small actors reunified around a single coalition and then a unique party, the Partito Democratico, which became the SVP stable coalition partner. Its position towards



autonomy and power-sharing is in fact favourable, emphasizing the reasonable accommodating process in the Province, but also the new need for more tolerance and dialogue among linguistic groups. Its other proposals were nevertheless perceived as unclear during 2018 election, when the party centred its position mainly around the consideration of itself as the inevitable and best coalition partner of the SVP. But its electoral force was thus severely diminished, especially after negative national tendencies inaugurated by the Italian general election in spring 2018. The new strategy for the 2018 vote was then to complement the PD with other civic lists, with non-politicians or members of small centrist parties in order to reinforce its calls for the creation of a multiethnic society.

The main actor within the Italian sub-arena was however the Lega. In fact, the party contested the local election significantly without 'Nord' in its name, after the controversial shift from being an ethno-regionalist party representative of the interests of the wealthy regions of northern Italy (although with many peculiarities distinguishing it from other ethno-regionalist actors in Europe) sometimes even allied with the local German separatists to becoming a national force of populist radical right, never so strong in the Province until 2018. The decision to compete alone in the Province of Bolzano – but as a part of the centre-right coalition in the Province of Trento with its own candidate for the Presidency – and frequent visits of its national leadership, were indeed the evidence of the strategy of presenting the party as a possible and credible

next coalition partner to the SVP, collecting all right-wing Italian votes, historically abundant in Bolzano and other cities. The League had then set up a campaign shift from mainstream (German and Italian) local politics to a strong and paradoxically overarching anti-migrant race, incredibly rewarding in terms of votes and in line with the ethnocentric and nativist (re)orientation of right-wing parties (cf. Mudde, 2004), grasping the fears and anxiety of the closest elements of the electorate and influencing other party agendas and manifestos.

Continuing the analysis of the Italian spectrum, affiliated to Lega's positions but not so skilled when it comes to presenting themselves as the 'originals' in this sense and more linked to the classical Italian right-wing nationalism, we can find the party of the Alto Adige nel Cuore – Fratelli d'Italia (AAC-FdI, Alto Adige in the Heart – Brothers of Italy, a local list affiliated with the statewide right-wing party of Fratelli d'Italia) and the personalistic Forza Italia (supported by politicians native of the Province, but more influential at the national than at the local level), which 'simply' and generally campaigned for the protection of the Italian minority and Italian traditional values. Other actors which fragmented the Italian vote were Noi per l'Alto Adige (NAA, We for Alto Adige) a civic and centrist small list and Casapound, a local branch of the neofascist Italian movement, quite relevant (and mediatized), but only in the city of Bolzano.

Finally, we have the multiethnic sub-arena, with *prima facie* three parties contesting the elections. The Greens, one of the oldest parties in the Council,¹⁶ had the possibility to



maintain and maybe even increase their representation in the assembly or anyway a chance to enter the provincial government (therefore it included Italian candidates in the first positions on its list). Then, there was the Five Star Movement, which entered the Council in 2013 and increased its votes in the 2018 Italian general election, until having seen a significant split after severe disagreements between the party's national leadership and its German-speaking Council member Paul Köllensperger. Since he wanted a more autonomous local section of the party, he founded a movement of his own, maintaining generally anti-establishment feelings and packaging them in a platform more attractive to German voters. The Team Köllensperger, which seemed to be very high in some polls and surveys since the summer (*Stol.it*, 2018) and therefore surprised all the observers at the election, combined typical anti-establishment positions with a general negative attitude towards migrants and appeals to the personal competences of the leader of the movement (who opposed the central government coalition between M5S and League). Finally, also a leftist multiethnic list, Sinistra unita-Vereinte Linke contested the elections.

2. 2018 Provincial Election: The Trembling of a Complex Regional Consociation

2.1 Some Considerations Before the Vote on the Double Passport Question: Between Symbolism and Political Realism

Conflicting views around the double citizenship question for the South Tyrolean German minority are long-established and deeply rooted in the complex history of this territory. Indeed, because of the consequences of the 1918-19 annexation and the 1939 Option, they were originally related to the difficult readmission to Italian citizenship for people who had decided to move to Germany. Many years later, in the 1990s, notwithstanding the successful efforts to open the border with Austria in the framework of the European Union and the overall conflict settlement, the double passport proposal was introduced by the SVP and therefore adopted also by German secessionist right-wing parties. However, this plan was galvanized by the general process of reforming the Italian citizenship measures. Started in the late 1990s and continued until the beginning of the 2000s, these reforms were in fact inspired by a state-wide ethnocentric (re)consideration of citizenship, establishing the predominance of the *ius sanguinis* principle over the *ius soli*. The Italian citizenship was then conferred to Italians residing abroad, including some minority communities in Slovenia and Croatia (Ferrandi, 2018): since the Italian Law on Citizenship 91/1992, it is then possible to obtain an Italian passport even if



one has only an Italian grandparent, thus facilitating the citizenship granting for descendants of old Italian migrants spread all around the world. Most significantly, after this reform, the Constitutional Law 1/2001 and law 459/2001 enshrined different electoral constituencies for Italians living abroad, which effectively elect members of the Italian parliament. Afterwards, the law 124/2006 introduced special provisions even for Italian minorities in Croatia and Slovenia, giving citizenship to those residing in Istria, Dalmatia and Fiume between 1940 and 1947, their descendants of “Italian language and culture” and finally even those who lost their citizenship with the 1975 Treaty of Osimo (which fixed the borders between Italy and the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, provisionally drawn after the Second World War). As correctly noted, among others, by Ferrandi (2017, 2018), these measures were influenced and inspired by the revanchist mindset of the National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale), at that time a junior partner in the (centre-?) right coalition government in Rome with Forza Italia and heir of the neofascist MSI, which had been always vigorously opposing the eastern border arrangements between Italy and Yugoslavia established by the Treaty of Osimo.

Returning to our South Tyrolean context, the double passport proposal was *de facto* considered by the Südtiroler Volkspartei as a non-priority, but rather as a symbolic and emotional request, an *Herzensangelegenheit* (a matter of the heart), connected to that party’s historical origins, ethnic identity, cultural linkages with Austria and self-determination struggle. In so doing, the SVP

constantly hoped for a constant rejection of the double citizenship by the Austrian government and of dampening the enthusiasm raised by this proposal through emphasizing the South Tyrolean role into European integration. However, in 2017 this issue was effectively included in the coalition agreement between Sebastian Kurtz’s Die Neue Volkspartei and Heinz-Christian Strache’s Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, as a part of an ethnocentric nationalism rediscovered by the European centre-right-wing and populist radical right-wing parties (cf. Palermo, 2018a), and thus favouring the outbidding strategies of German right-wing secessionists in the Province. After protests of the Italian government bringing up the lack of any common procedure and dialogue, a well-established practice since 1946, the Chancellor Kurtz clarified that he would not have acted without the consent of Rome. In spite of this, the issue entered the political campaign, refuelling the debate. Consequently, on one hand the SVP included this proposal in its platform, at the same time alternating a dismissive and an accommodating strategy towards the strong actions of its German opposition (Meguid, 2005; cf. paragraph 2.3). On the other hand, other German parties had been underlining their position as the real supporters of the double citizenship initiative. Nevertheless, too many legal problems made the potential introduction of such a project unlikely, at least in the short run. Indeed, as indicated by Palermo, these complications could occur not only approaching the issue from the point of view of international law, e. g. the 2008 OSCE soft law instrument of Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in



Interstate Relations, which advice against unilateral conferral of citizenship on an ethnic base (2017, 2017a). Moreover, even the Austrian citizenship law – which does not prescribe the possession of a double passport – and Constitution seem to be completely at odds with this proposal: for example, the probable provision of a foreign electoral constituency for German speaking South Tyroleans would require the amendment of Article 26 of the Constitution regarding the election of the National Council. In addition to that, South Tyroleans possessing a double passport would not have been allowed to join Austrian army and would have faced many other discriminating situations, when compared with ‘normal’ Austrian citizens, only because of the place of their residence.¹⁷ Furthermore, from the local point of view, and unsurprisingly, the proposal would undermine the difficult and delicate balance between territorial and minority protection principles, that is the core features of South Tyrolean autonomy and power-sharing institutional design and model (Marko, 2007; Palermo, 2017a). Finally, considering even practical aspects of this initiative, it ought to be acknowledged, that for South Tyrolean students and workers it is already possible to have access to Austrian universities and labour market thanks to the European Union legislation.

Anyhow, it is paramount to underline that the double citizenship question is not only symbolically and historically relevant. Indeed, it could become of a significant importance in the context of, not so impossible to predict, future frictions between Italy and the European Union and in

the case of a potential Italian exit process. In this case, the double passport would then be part of a broader request for self-determination of the Province, namely the desire of remaining in the Union. For this aim, with a double passport German South Tyroleans would be anchored to a historically, culturally and geographically close European member state, namely Austria. Anyway, this question is extremely relevant from a realistic point of view, even in the possible formation of cleavages among diverse and differently attractive “Europes”, thus re-bordering Austria and Italy at the Brenner Pass (Palermo, 2018). Indeed, during the 2018 campaign, as reported by the *Wahllokal* project of *Salto* (an online survey collecting party positions on the most relevant themes of the campaign), the position of German parties towards the double passport proposal was more or less unanimous: from the SVP which pushed for this measure in favour of Ladin and German populations, expressing that the double passport would express a sort of European spirit (*europäischen Geist*) but at the same time considering it as ‘important’ only, compared to DF and the STF which both recognize the matter as ‘very important’ emphasizing, respectively, the patriotic relevance for self-identification as Austrians and the European meaning of this identity. Among Italian and multiethnic actors, the positions were more or less unanimously against this project, some parties considering it ‘very important’ (for opposite reasons, the Italian right and the Greens) and others ‘less important’ (TK, League, PD and M5S), some even highlighting the possibility of double passports for all South Tyrolean inhabitants



(League, TK). Finally, during the campaign the importance of this issue contributed to the ‘internationalization’ of the 2018 provincial election through the visits, not only of the most important Italian leaders, like Matteo Salvini or Silvio Berlusconi, but also of the President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, the Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurtz (campaigning for the SVP), and his FPÖ Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache (supporter of DF). In other words, the question of double-passports for (only German-speaking) South Tyroleans had been initially expected to reinforce the opponents of the SVP, the radicalization of the *Edelweiss* and the Italian grievances, from which the Lega, capitalizing on its national success, could have taken the best benefits. However, these considerations only partly explain the electoral outcomes. Indeed, contrariwise to DF and STF expectations, which more than in the past years focussed their platforms on the double passport theme, the electoral campaign was only to a certain degree (and surprisingly enough) focused on this issue, not easily but definitely controlled by the Südtiroler Volkspartei, while the attention of voters was shifting towards migration and general protest against the establishment, as it will be clarified by the empirical analysis in paragraph 2.3. Whether these trends will change in the future depends on the forthcoming actions of the Italian government in the European Union.

2.2 The Results: Winner, Loser, and ‘Safe’ Parties

In this section, I will report and discuss the result of the election, comparing it to the

previous ones and the compositions of the Council since the first vote after the approval of the Second Statute of Autonomy (‘Table 1. Electoral results of Provincial elections and Council seats of South Tyrolean Parties, 1973-2018’, p.28 and ‘Table 2. Electoral results of 2018 South Tyrolean Provincial election, with all parties’, and abbreviations at the end, p.29).

It can be argued that many elements of the 21st October 2018 electoral results were foreseeable, many others not. As confirmed by previous surveys (*Stol.it*, 2018), the SVP continued its slow and continuous decline, falling from 47.5% (in 2013) to 41.9% of votes (and 15 seats in the Council) but avoiding the risk of finishing under the psychological threshold of 40%, the real purpose of both the President of the Province Arno Kompatscher and the young and ambitious President (*Obmann*) of the party Philipp Achammer. Its repositioning for a strong devolution-max and the accommodating strategies towards the double passport question (favoured by the support of the Austrian Chancellor Kurtz) could indeed have helped to avoid disaster, not losing German votes in favour of the secessionist right-wing parties – the main preoccupation of the SVP leaders over the last 30 years – but rather of the Team Köllensperger and probably even the Lega, among Italians residing in urban constituencies (who in the previous years have voted for the SVP). However, the incredible result of the new challenger Team Köllensperger, which became the second party with 15.2% of votes and 6 seats, was unexpected in these proportions and



surprised everyone in the Province. While still waiting for other analyses comparing the electoral streams among parties, it can be already argued that the TK seemed to be more attractive for German voters. Nonetheless, it betrayed its founding interethnic origins, electing only German speaking candidates to the Council, thus becoming not available for forming a new local government, according to Article 50 of the Statute and the implicit coalition rule. In detail, TK's votes were supposed to come especially from DF and only secondly from the SVP and are evenly distributed over the Province.¹⁸ In so doing, its electoral campaign has been successful in giving voice to the anti-establishment feelings against the SVP German monopoly in the government, through an all-encompassing and catchy manifesto, including some (however 'mild') anti-migrant proposals and other more moderate and general value orientations, remaining vague in many controversial themes. Regarding the old independentist adversaries of the SVP, the STF did not lose many votes in absolute terms,¹⁹ arriving at 6.0%, but significantly failed to obtain a third mandate. However, the most impressive and real collapse was that of DF, which in fact decreased by 11.7%, from its previous figure of 17.9% and 51,505 votes, down to 6.2% and 17,620 votes, returning to averages of the late 1990s when the party was destabilized by internal troubles. The Libertarians did not benefit from and perhaps never had the issue ownership of the double passport question (which the SVP could indeed include in its manifesto), which anyway did not shape the electoral campaign – more focused on migration – contrary to DF's expectations.

Moreover, DF lost its 'protest' votes against the monopoly of power of the *Edelweiss* in favour of TK and anti-migration ones of the League, which strategically adopted a bilingual manifesto.

As extensively reported by local newspapers, the League, *par excellence* anti-immigrant party, due to strong results not only in Bolzano²⁰ and other cities of the Province, consolidated itself as the third electoral force with 11.1%, attracting some votes even from German and especially Ladin communities (although the first and rather unsurprising declaration after the vote by the party's local leader emphasized the 'defence' of the Italian group interests). The harsh electoral campaign against migrants, strongly supported by visits of the national ('federal', according to the statute of the League) secretary Salvini, and the significant and impressive success also in the Province of Trento (for the first time after the Second World War conquered by a right-wing coalition) seemed in fact to affirm the position of the Lega as a possible next SVP coalition partner. At the same time, the Lega did not become the 'gathering party' (*partito di raccolta*) of the Italian community. Indeed, it collected almost all the votes received in the past by the Italian right-wing parties, from the MSI or AN (which in 1993 obtained 11.6% of the votes, albeit remained excluded from the local government, due to the flexibility of the implicit coalition clause) to FI and their heirs, thus unifying and consolidating this *already* existing electoral space.²¹ However, with six mandates the League re-increased the Italian composition of the Council (with 9 Italian Council



members, while they were only 5 in the past assembly) and probably stopped the Italians' turnout decline. Concerning now the Greens, this multiethnic party obtained 6.2% of the votes, less than in 2013 elections (8.7%), but at the same time maintained three Council seats, as in 2013. Its mandates would indeed be crucial in order to offer the SVP a possible coalition alternative to that with the League, together with a single seat conquered by the Democratic Party, reduced by half (with one mandate and 3.8% of votes). The composition of the Council is simpler after the last elections, and only two other political forces are represented in the assembly: with one seat the Movimento 5 Stelle, which obtained almost the same number of votes as in 2013 and the civic list Alto Adige nel Cuore, in this election affiliated with the national right party Fratelli d'Italia. No seats were won by Bürgerunion für Südtirol, Noi per l'Alto Adige, Sinistra unita, Casapound and very intriguingly and more significantly by Forza Italia, which made consistent endeavours during the campaign, trying to maintain the representation in the Council (always achieved since 1998) and, as I have already reported, involving national leaders and even the President of the European Parliament in its electoral events.

2.3 Analysing and Measuring the Salience of 'Old' and 'New' Self-determination Issues in the Manifestos of Parties in the Council: The Reason of Success?

How were the double passport question and other issues concerning self-determination and minority rights represented in party

programmes? Which were the most salient themes shown by party manifestos? And moreover, was the local party competition changing and restructuring itself along directions more similar to national and European ones? These are the questions the present part of the Working Paper would like to answer. For that aim, I have collected the party manifestos, found on internet or requested by email (see the online appendix for all coded manifestos), of the electoral competitors in South Tyrol and examined those of the parties which obtained seats in the Provincial Council. In doing so, I have used 'qualitative-quantitative' content analysis, relying on the methodology and codes provided by the Regional Manifestos Project (RMP) Handbook (Alonso, Volkens, Cabeza & Gómez, 2011). Indeed, this research group has elaborated a further specification of the categories provided by the Comparative Manifesto Project to deconstruct party programmes and codify their issues in diverse domain, applying them to regional elections in Spain, Great Britain and partly Italy.²² Afterwards, Scantamburlo (2016) has employed a similar methodology to analyse the South Tyrolean German parties' manifestos until 2013. The purpose of this section is then to update and integrate these examinations with a wider amount of parties, in relation to the 2018 election. This is a primary analysis, namely a direct codification of nine manifestos of the Südtiroler Volkspartei, Die Freiheitlichen, Süd-Tiroler Freiheit, Team Köllensperger, Movimento 5 Stelle, Grüne-Verdi-Verc, Lega, Partito democratico and Alto Adige nel Cuore/Fratelli d'Italia, that I have more in depth examined in the previous part of the



article (section 1.3). After the first codification, using the codes regarding the level of authority and those of the domains and their different specifications (see the appendix for the comprehensive list of categories), I have chosen to analyse and select two different ‘dimensions’, calculating the salience with the sum of percentages of some issues from diverse domains (see ‘Table 3. Old and new self-determination dimensions – selected codes’, p.30, ‘Table 4. Salience of old and new self-determination and migration issues in the Provincial Council parties’ manifestos’ and ‘Table 5. Complete data of old and new self-determination dimensions aggregation’, p.31).²³ For the aims of this work, I have in fact decided to analyse the salience of these aggregated issues, not the positioning of the parties and the interaction with other dimensions, which is postponed until further research projects within the present field.

In fact, in a border region and a deeply divided place like South Tyrol, we can hypothesize that the party competition – as recognized by literature and retraced in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 on minority border regions, power-sharing contexts and ethnoregionalist parties – can be centred on a ‘classical’ or ‘old’ self-determination conception, based on centre-periphery themes, autonomous claims, emphasis of identity issues like the protection of local or national values and, in this case, protection of vernacular language or request for improvements regarding bilingualism (as summarized by Table 3, p.30). As I have tried to show in this Working Paper, in ethnic party systems the competition can be

bidimensional (divided itself in different ethnic sub-arenas surrounded by an interethnic one), where actors can side and divide each other on specific themes or issue agglomerations (for instance, in favour of decentralization, even pushing for the double citizenship of a kin state, or centralization, and so on). But sometimes, especially when the salience of old cleavages is not (or no more) so elevated, other themes can characterize the party system, and if their relevance becomes continuous and pervasive, even constitute another competition dimension. The hypothesis of this part of the Working Paper is that a consistent salience of issues, measurable through the frequencies of their codes in party manifestos, could be retraced outside the ‘old’ self-determination dimension. I shall indeed propose to consider the *emergence* (since we should need a process lasting more than one election to confirm it) of a ‘new’ self-determination dimension, based mainly on parties’ considerations regarding migration (and its impact on welfare state, ‘law and order’, and social living together in general; see again Table 3, p.30), but also on new sensitivity towards anti-establishment feelings, for instance the critique towards political corruption and the preference for participatory democracy instruments, and green policies as well. Why use the term ‘self-determination’ for these issues and then why aggregate them? For the first point, the answer is that in this way I shall deal with self-determination as a general concept, encompassing not only claims for sovereignty or self-government by a people, be it a minority or a majority in that territory, but also other elements related to the



boundaries of this community (like the perception of the other, in this case the migrant) plus other '(post?)modern' non-economic requests towards the political power. These considerations could then be helpful to explain some of the reasons of success of new and less new political parties in this South Tyrolean election and the instability which started to characterize the region. In a few words, the main hypothesis of this sections is the following:

H1: The more the parties emphasized issues related to the dimension of 'old' self-determination, the more they have lost in terms of votes and *vice versa*; the more they emphasized issues connected to the dimension of 'new' self-determination, the more they have gained in the electoral competition.

In order to show an empirical tendency proving this hypothesis, without demands of statistical relevance, I shall show in the following two pages the result of my empirical analysis on party manifestos. After having coded the manifestos, I have in fact calculated the percentages of the categories gathered by the two, old and new (with a specific reference to migration issues), self-determination dimensions, of which codes are reported by Table 3 (p.30). The salience of each dimension (old and new self-determination, with a specification on themes referring to migration) is then reported in the following Table 4 and Table 5 (p.31). I have ordered each party in accordance to its electoral performance, from +15% of TK and +11 of the Lega to -5.6% of the SVP and -11% of DF, and so on (in order to visually

show the application of H1 to the collected and aggregated data). I shall now comment the results of this analysis, connecting them to other scholarly findings.

As is observable in the chart in Table 4 and in Table 5 (p.31), our data examination seems then to confirm the initial hypothesis. As shown in the manifestos coding, the salience of the 'old' self-determination dimension remains indeed prominent among the German parties (for the SFT, with almost 24% of its programme; for DF, more than 30%; and around 25% for the SVP; saliences, respectively, 0.239, 0.303, and 0.258 in Table 5, p.31), nevertheless it is not beneficial in terms of votes (-11% for DF, -5 for the SVP). The partial exception to this correlation could be the SFT, which was able to keep its independentist position and its core supporters (only -1.2% at the election), by positioning itself at the 'crossing point' of the graph of Table 4 (p.31). By the same token, if we look at the dimension of 'new' self-determination, and in particular at the salience of themes concerning migration, the TK and the Lega stand out. The former focused more than 27% of the manifesto on new self-determination issues (saliences: 0.277) and less than 10% on old self-determination ones (saliences: 0.100, in Table 5, p.31), and obtained 15% more of the popular vote. The latter could count more than 31% of its programme on new self-determination issues, of which 25% concerning only migration (saliences, respectively, 0.319 and 0.250; practically acting almost like a 'niche party' as we will see in a moment; cf. Marini, 2018), and 11% more votes at the election. The Movimento 5



Stelle, Partito democratico and Alto Adige nel Cuore are in the middle between these two ‘poles’, following the dynamics of other actors. The M5S succeed at not losing in term of votes (-0.1%, not obvious considering the result of the TK) with 28% on the manifesto on new self-determination issues, while the PD severely decreased (-2.9% of vote lost), encompassing a low salience in both dimensions (0.151 on old self-determination and 0.009 on new self-determination). Pretty near to the fulcrum we can find the Greens, with a high score on new self-determination mainly because of the prevalence of green proposals in their agenda (indeed, of 0.34 of salience individuated, more than 0.24 is composed by codes related to green categories, see again Table 5, p.31). To conclude this point, the two arrows in Table 4 (p.31) suggest the confirmation of the hypothesis previously exposed, that the success of local parties can be associated to the salience of new and old self-determination issues. In a nutshell, the more the manifesto encompasses themes regarding new self-determination issues, and especially migration, the better is the party result, and the opposite happens when old self-determination themes are concerned.²⁴

Quite in line with these considerations, some scholars are very recently noticing the “emergence of new politics” even in peripheral and historically peculiar regions of Europe, like South Tyrol (Scantamburlo, Alonso, & Gómez, 2018). In fact, in their empirical analysis, Scantamburlo, Alonso and Gómez have shown that some regional political spaces of competition have been transformed by the emergence and electoral

growth of challengers which emphasize what they called ‘new politics’ issues (mainly the new focus on the European Union and austerity plans). Looking at some regions in Italy, Spain and Great Britain they note that “old regionalist parties continue to emphasize centre-periphery issues more than any other type of party whereas new regionalist parties give more relative weight to the new politics dimension than to the centre-periphery one” (2018, p.17). In our case, what has been the new politics of this election? In this regard, it could be helpful to refer to Meguid’s theory of issue competition, which divides political agency in mainstream and niche competitors (2005; cf. Elias, 2011, p.6; Scantamburlo, 2016, p.7). Indeed, according to Meguid, mainstream actors dealing with challenging ones, which introduce new sensible issues into the party competition, can adopt different strategies. The first is the ‘dismissive’ one, when the mainstream actor rejects the issue raised by the niche party considering it as non-relevant. It is usually successful, when the niche electoral support is minimal. The second strategy is the ‘accommodative’ one, when the mainstream party similarly sides with the niche concerning that issue. It can be rewarding if the niche actor is not so significant, or reversely detrimental for the mainstream party if the niche party succeeds in maintaining the issue ownership of that theme. Finally, the third strategy is called ‘adversarial’, and prescribes that the mainstream party adopts an opposite position concerning the issue raised by the niche. Moreover, as correctly pointed out by Elias (2011), autonomous and regionalist parties can be themselves mainstream as well within



their local context, as it is in South Tyrol (thus correcting previous assumptions, widely present in literature, considering ethnoregionalist parties necessarily as niche).

We can very briefly consider the attitudes of some South Tyrolean parties in this framework. First of all, the strategy of the mainstream SVP towards the secessionist parties can be described as accommodative and was partly successful. Indeed, DF and the STF lost the issue ownership of the double citizenship proposal, which nevertheless remained for them (and for the SVP as well) a *wahlverlierer* (loser at the election) issue. For the DF, its position on new self-determination issues like migration, albeit very consistent (11% of the manifesto), did not prevent a significant loss of votes, because that party was considered as ‘more mainstream’ than the others strongly focused on the same topics (like the Lega for migration, but especially the Team Köllensperger for the anti-establishment attitude). For what concerns the success of the Lega and the Team Köllensperger, both their results could in fact be interpreted in this sense, most notably as a niche strategy to enter the political debate, bringing and politicizing new issues (anti-migration and anti-establishment attitudes respectively) and successfully imposing them on the party competition.

2.4 Post Scriptum: The New Coalition Government

When the drafting of this Working Paper reached its final stages, intense negotiations between the Lega and the SVP seemed to lead towards the formation of a new provincial

government. The coalition between the Lega and the SVP has been in fact presented as ‘inevitable’ by the SVP. Nevertheless, this consideration would overlook a history also made of exclusions of very powerful radical (in South Tyrol, against autonomy and power-sharing) parties. This exclusion, which regarded firstly the right-wing parties in the Italian sub-arena and secondly the German secessionist ones, could be possible thanks to the flexibility of the implicit coalition rule. A new coalition government would however confirm the pragmatical (we will see if still successful) strategy of the *Edelweiss* of being (almost) always allied to a party participating in the central government (and now in the government of the Province of Trento too). Finally, it can be explained also through the pressure exerted by the influent farmer associations against a possible agreement with the Greens (and the PD), the other real alternative. Anyway, the old and new establishment of the SVP, with an overwhelming majority, decided to follow the example of other people’s parties across Europe, significantly shifting to the right-wing fringe of the political spectrum and thus chasing the (outbidding?) pressures of populist radical right-wing parties, despite their Euroscepticism and harsh orientations towards migrants. Further research should demonstrate, whether the institutions of power-sharing and autonomy, which for many years guaranteed a peaceful (and prosperous) coexistence of the whole population of South Tyrol, would be destabilized and changed by these evolutions, or whether they would be closed and reserved in order to privilege some exclusive groups, discriminating others.



Conclusions

This Working Paper aimed to examine the 2018 local election in South Tyrol, underling the specificities and changes in the party system of this peculiar border region. As I have in fact tried to show, in this context, minority issues diversely involve many and different groups, from the local German majority and Italian and Ladin minorities, to the orientation of these groups towards new minorities, like migrants. In this framework, after a contextual and theoretical part on the history, institutional architecture and political and party systems of the Province, I have identified and later analysed the emergence of a political and party shift in South Tyrol, from a region based on institutional dialogue and compromise between groups, to a polity more resembling other European countries and regions and political dynamics present there. Indeed, as observable in the empirical analysis, the salience of themes connected to old self-determination claims is no more rewarding in terms of vote. This process was evident in the proposal of the double citizenship, which nevertheless remains in the political debate, ready to be again employed and re-politicized. At the same time, a parallel increasing could be observed in the salience of issues connected to anti-

establishment and migration feelings. In conclusion, it can be noted how the study of difference and minority issues, in this Working Paper articulated in an analysis of a peculiar local election, could in fact reveal intriguing cues and new features of the whole, showing its dynamic, changing and crucial details.

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Appendices

I. Online Appendix: Coded manifestos, the complete dataset comprehensive of all data, and other helpful documents are collected in the online appendix, available at: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PbWHum9jTTfJEJfGJaUGzdGI7rWcKla2> (last accessed on 20th December 2018).



II. Tables

Table 1. Electoral results of Provincial elections and Council seats of ST Parties, 1973-2018

Party	1973	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008	2013	2018
SVP	56.4 (20)	61.3 (21)	59.4 (22)	60.4(22)	52.0 (19)	56.6 (21)	55.6 (21)	48.1 (18)	47.5 (17)	41.9 (15)
SFP	1.7 (1)									
SPS(1978,SFP)	5.1 (2)	2.2 (1)								
FPS				1,3 (1)						
PDU		1.3 (1)	2.4 (1)							
DF					6.1 (2)	2.5 (1)	5.0 (2)	14.3 (5)	17.9 (6)	6.2 (2)
WdH,SHB(1988)			2.5 (1)	2.3 (1)						
UFS					4.8 (2)	5.5 (2)	6.8 (2)	2.3 (1)		
STF								4.9 (2)	7.2 (3)	6.0 (2)
L					2 (1)	3.6 (1)				
BBLD-BFS(2018)									2.1 (1)	1.3
NL/NS-ALFAS(1983)- GAL/LVA(1993)-VS/GS- VGVS(2008)-VGV(2013)		3.7 (1)	4.5 (3)	6.7 (2)	6.9 (2)	6.5 (2)	7.9 (3)	5.8 (2)	8.7 (3)	6.8(3)
M5S									2.5 (1)	2.4 (1)
TK										15.2 (6)
DC-DC/PPAA (1993)	14.1 (5)	10.8 (4)	9.5 (3)	9.1 (3)	4.4 (2)					
Popolari-AA Domani						2.7 (1)				
PRI			2.0 (1)							
PSI	5.6 (2)	3.2 (1)	3.9 (1)	4.0 (1)	1.2					
PSDI	3.4 (1)	2.3 (1)	1.3							
PCI/KPI	5.7 (2)	7.0 (3)	5.6 (2)	3.0 (1)						
PDS					3 (1)					
Centrosinistra(1998)-PD/FG-Pace e Diritti(2003) PD(2008)						3.5 (1)	3.8 (1)	6.0 (2)	6.7 (2)	3.8 (1)
UCAA(1993)-UDA(1998)-UA(2003)					1,7 (1)	1.8 (1)	3.7 (1)			
MSI/DN(1993) - AN(1998,AN- IL)	4.0 (1)	2.9 (1)	5.9 (2)	10.3 (4)	11.6 (4)	9.7 (3)				
UFT(1998)-UMAI(2003)						1.8 (1)	1.5 (1)			
AN-UMIS(2008)							8.4 (3)	1.9 (1)		
FI						3.7 (1)	3.4 (1)			1.0
PdL								8.3 (3)		
LN - L (2018)					3.0 (1)			2.1 (1)		11.1 (4)
FAA-LN									2.5 (1)	
AAC – AAC-FdI									2.1 (1)	1.7 (1)
Others	4.0	5.3	3.0	2.9	3.3	2.1	3.9	6.3	2.8	5
Total	100 (34)	100 (34)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)	100 (35)

**Table 2. Electoral results of 2018 South Tyrolean Provincial election, with all parties**

Party	Votes	(Seats)	Difference 2013
SVP	41.9	(15)	-5.6 (-2)
TK	15.2	(6)	+15.2 (+6)
L	11.1	(4)	+11.1 (+4)
VGv	6.8	(3)	- 1.9 (0)
DF	6.2	(2)	-11.7 (-4)
STF	6.0	(2)	-1.2 (-1)
PD	3.8	(1)	-2.9 (-1)
M5S	2.4	(1)	-0.1 (0)
AAC- FdI	1.7	(1)	-0.4 (0)
BFS	1.3	(0)	-0.8 (-1)
NAA-ST	1.2	(0)	-
FI	1.0	(0)	-
CPI	0.9	(0)	-
VL-SN	0.6	(0)	-
Total	100	35	-

Sources for Tables 1 and 2:
personal elaborations from the
official website of the Province
<http://www.consiglio-bz.org/it/banche-dati-raccolte/risultati-elezioni.asp> (last
accessed on 20th December 2018).

Abbreviations of parties mentioned by Tables 1 and 2, English translation in the text

German and Ladin parties: SVP, Südtiroler Volkspartei; SFP, Soziale Fortschrittspartei Südtirols; SPS, Sozialdemokratische Partei Südtirols; FPS, Freiheitliche Partei Südtirols; PDU, Partei der Unabhängigen; DF, Die Freiheitlichen; WdH, Wahlverband des Heimatbundes; SHB, Südtiroler Heimatbund; UFS, Union für Südtirol; STF, Süd-Tiroler Freiheit; L, Ladins; BBLD, Bündnis BürgerUnion-Ladins Dolomites-Wir Südtiroler; BFS, Bürgerunion für Südtirol.

Multiethnic parties: NL(NS), Neue Linke/Nuova Sinistra; ALFAS, Alternative Liste für das andere Südtirol; GAL/LVA, Grüne-Alternative Liste/Lista Verde Alternativa; VGv, Verdi-Grüne-Vèrc; VS, GS, Verdi del Sudtirolo/Grüne Südtirols; VGVS, Verdi Grüne Vèrc Bürger-Liste Civiche/SEL; M5S, Movimento 5 Stelle; TK, Team Köllensperger; VL-SN, Vereinte Linke-Sinistra unita.

Italian parties: DC, Democrazia Cristiana; DC/PP(AA), Democrazia Cristiana/Partito Popolare Alto Adige; Popolari-AA, Popolari-Alto Adige Domani; PRI, Partito Repubblicano Italiano; PSI, Partito Socialista Italiano; PSDI, Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano; PCI, Partito Comunista Italiano; PDS, Partito Democratico della Sinistra; Centrosinistra, Progetto Centrosinistra; Pace e Diritti, Insieme a Sinistra-Pace e Diritti; PD, Partito Democratico; UCAA-UDA, Il Centro, Il Centro-Unione Democratici Alto Atesini; UA, Unione Centro Alto Adige; MSI/DN, Movimento Sociale-Destra Nazionale; AN(- I Liberali), Alleanza Nazionale - I Liberali; UFT, UMAI, Unitalia Movimento Alto Adige, AN-UMIS, Alleanza Nazionale, Unitalia Movimento Iniziativa Sociale; LN, Lega Nord; L, Lega; FI, Forza Italia; PDL, Popolo della Libertà; FAA-LN, Forza Alto Adige-Lega Nord; AAC, Alto Adige nel Cuore; AAC-FdI, Alto Adige nel Cuore – Fratelli d’Italia; NAA-ST, Noi per l’Alto Adige-Südtirol; CP, Casapound Italia.



Table 3. Old and new self-determination dimensions – selected codes

Saliency: sum of frequency percentages of quasi-sentences with these codes (_xxx), with whatever territorial authority claims (xx_ ; ‘regional’ is here understood as ‘provincial’). Source: RMP.

0. Territorial authority

10_ Local level	91_ Less authority for the international level
11_ Less authority for the local level	92_ More authority for the international level
12_ More authority for the local level	01_ In favour of subsidiary principle
20_ Regional level	02_ In favour of clear (jurisdictional) distinction between levels (accountability)
21_ Less authority for the regional level	03_ In favour of shared authority between some levels, including explicit calls for cooperation or coordination between higher and lower levels (vertical cooperation).
22_ More authority for the regional level	09_ More than one level addressed at the same time, all levels addressed at the same time.
30_ National level	00_ No level of government, no explicit claim for more or less authority
31_ Less authority for the national level	
32_ More authority for the regional level	
80_ European level	
81_ Less authority for the European level	
82_ More authority for the European level	
90_ International level	

1. Old self-determination dimension

_101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive	Negative
_102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative	_3014 Differential Treatment among Regions: Positive
_1017 Interregional Relationships: Positive	_302 Centralisation: Positive
_1027 Interregional Relationships: Negative	_305 Political Authority
_108 European Community/Union: Positive	22_4111 Management of Natural Resources
_110 European Community/Union:	_601 National Way of life: Positive
_203 Constitutionalism: Positive	_6015 Promotion and Protection of Vernacular Language(s)
_204 Constitutionalism: Negative	_602 National Way of life: Negative
_301 Decentralization: Positive	_6017 Bilingualism: Positive
_3012 Sub-state Finance	
_3013 Differential Treatment among Regions:	

2. New self-determination dimension

_2025 Participatory Democracy	_5062 Education Expansion for Immigrants
_303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency Regions: Negative	_5071 Education limitation for immigrants
_305 Political Corruption	_6051 Immigrants’ negative impact on law and order
_501 Environmental Protection: Positive	_607 Multiculturalism: Positive
_5032 Equal Treatment of Immigrants	_608 Multiculturalism: Negative
_5042 Welfare for Immigrants	_7053 Immigrants: Positive
_5051 Welfare Limitations for Immigrants	

2.1 Migration

_5032 Equal Treatment of Immigrants	order
_5042 Welfare for Immigrants	_607 Multiculturalism: Positive
_5051 Welfare Limitations for Immigrants	_608 Multiculturalism: Negative
_5062 Education Expansion for Immigrants	_7053 Immigrants: Positive
_5071 Education limitation for immigrants	
_6051 Immigrants’ negative impact on law and	



Table 4. Saliency of old and new self-determination and migration issues in the Provincial Council parties' manifestos

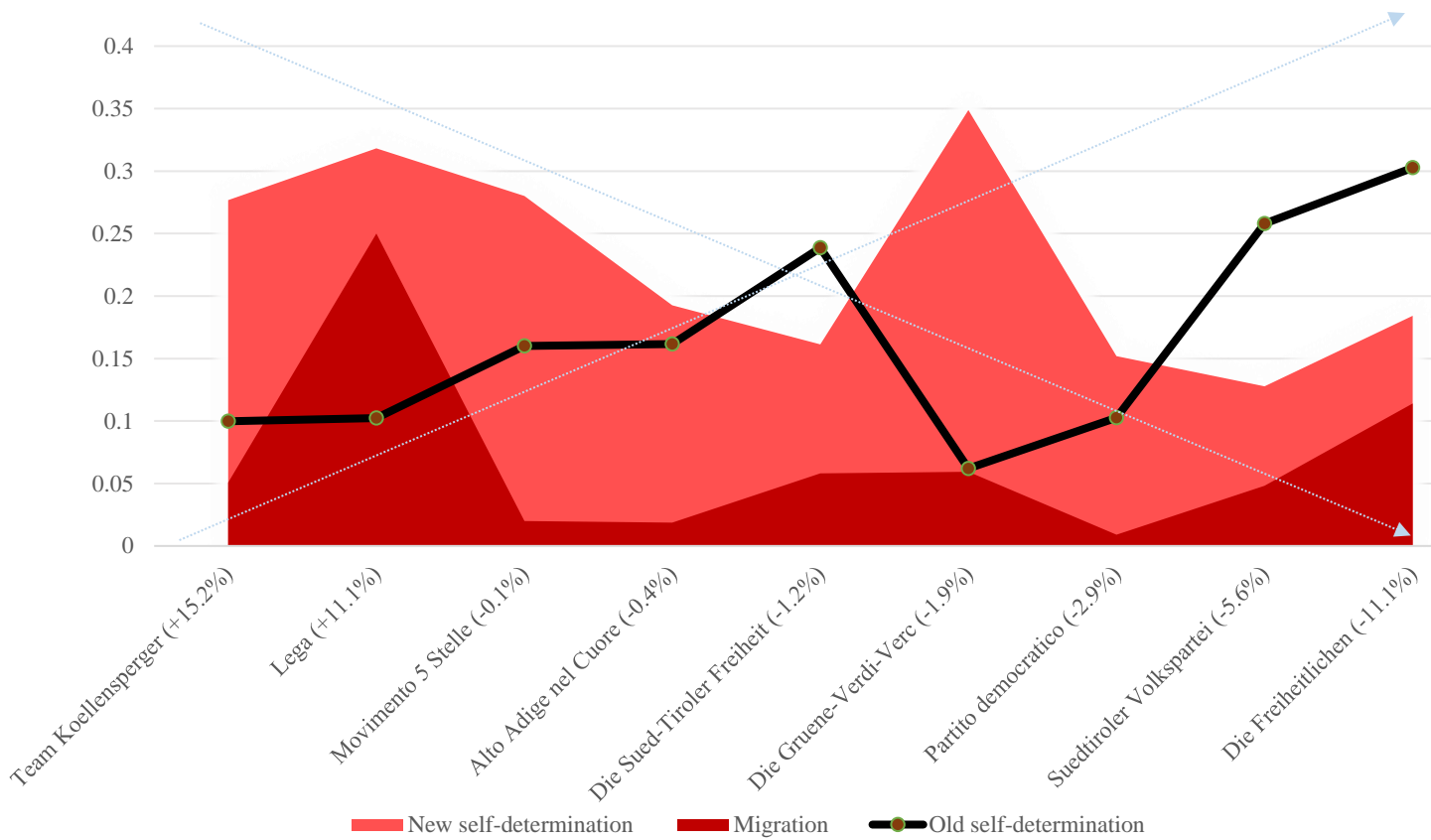


Table 5. Complete data of old and new self-determination dimensions aggregation

Party	New self-det.	Migration	Old self-det.	Manifesto	Vote diff. 2013
Team Köllensperger	0,276708	0,050788	0,099825	1	+15.2 (+6)
Lega	0,318182	0,250000	0,102273	1	+11.1 (+4)
Movimento 5 Stelle	0,280000	0,020000	0,160000	1	-0.1 (0)
Alto Adige nel Cuore	0,192547	0,018634	0,161491	1	-0.4 (0)
Die Süd-Tiroler Freiheit	0,161290	0,058065	0,238710	1	-1.2 (-1)
Grüne-Verdi-Verc	0,348837	0,059432	0,062016	1	-1.9 (0)
Partito democratico	0,151786	0,008929	0,102679	1	-2.9 (-1)
Südtiroler Volkspartei	0,127711	0,048193	0,257831	1	-5.6 (-2)
Die Freiheitlichen	0,184211	0,114035	0,302632	1	-11.1 (-4)

Sources: personal elaboration from coding party manifestos, retrievable on-line or requested by e-mail.

Coded manifestos and complete dataset are in the online appendix:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PbWHum9jTTfJEJfGJaUGzdGI7rWcKla2>

(last accessed on 20th December 2018).



Notes

¹ That encouraged an intense Italian migration, especially after 1934, when Italians increased from 4% to 24% of the local population (Alcock, 1970; Kerschesteiner, 1926; Markusse, 1997).

² Translated from German into Italian or simply reinvented by the nationalist geographer Ettore Tolomei, which renamed South Tyrol “Alto Adige” (Lantschner 2007).

³ Albeit tolerated by the Austrian executive, which intervened at the UN as ‘protecting power’ in favour of South Tyrolean self-determination (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2014).

⁴ Which had been previously blocked by the Italian veto in 1967 (Alcock, 2001, pp.165-8).

⁵ Structured as an exclusive quasi federal bond with the central state, like a ‘federacy’ (Elazar, 1987; O’Leary 2013, p.403; Rezvani, 2003; Stepan, 2013).

⁶ A proportional closed-list single constituency with up to four preferences system to elect 35 Council members, with additional provision for granting Ladin representation.

⁷ Cf. also Deschouwer and Luther (1999), though with a questionable case selection, based on ‘old’ and moreover dubious cases of consociational democracy.

⁸ This term has been originally formulated for polarized extreme pluralism contexts and not for ethnic party systems, and it was not so examined in depth in the analysis of the Italian political scientist.

⁹ Those actors which try to attract transversal votes, can appeal to groups’ integration, totally dismiss identity politics, or even are centred on other kinds of ‘identity’.

¹⁰ The SVP was in fact founded in conjunction to the Austrian People’s Party (Österreichische Volkspartei) and is an observer of the European People’s Party, whose activities can be attended by SVP delegates, but without voting rights.

¹¹ When it was necessary to include Italian parties not only to fulfil the implicit coalition rule, but also to form a minimum winning coalition, since the SVP reached 17 seats out of the majority of 18.

¹² With the instauration of the Euroregion of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol and the Austrian Tyrol.

¹³ Concerning tax collection and other financial competences, most notably establishing the exemption from transferring to the state the budget surplus of the province and also from electoral and constitutional reforms (Scantamburlo & Pallaver, 2015, p.4) – the former then repealed by the Italian Constitutional Court and the latter by a popular referendum.

¹⁴ Like the preservation of the local nativist culture against migrants, a support for a chauvinist welfare state, and so on (cf. Mudde 2007).

¹⁵ Christian Waldner, murdered in 1997 after his transit to the Northern League.

¹⁶ With seats since 1983, but in other form even since 1978, originally under the charismatic leadership of Alexander Langer, one of the founders of the European Green Party and in 1989 the first president of its parliamentary group at the European Parliament.

¹⁷ And even concerning other Austrian minorities in Slovenia, Hungary and so on. Could they obtain a double citizenship on the same ground of the South Tyroleans?

¹⁸ See the electoral maps, retrieved from http://elezioni.provincia.bz.it/grp_ld_vg.htm (last accessed on 20th December 2018).

¹⁹ That is evident if we compare its votes to those obtained in 2013 in the most northern and remote valleys of South Tyrol, where the numbers are almost identical; see again the electoral map at http://elezioni.provincia.bz.it/grp_ld_vg.htm (last accessed on 20th December 2018).

²⁰ When it obtained more than 27%, almost the same share of the whole right coalition at the national level in the general election of 2018 spring, cf. *Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e territoriali, Archivio storico delle elezioni, Circonscrizione Trentino - Alto Adige/Südtirol*, (2018), retrieved from <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/index.php?tpel=C&dtel=04/03/2018&tpa=I&tpe=M&lev0=0&levsut0=0&lev1=28&levsut1=1&lev2=1&levsut2=2&ne1=28&ne2=281&es0=S&es1=S&es2=S&ms=S> (last accessed on 20th December 2018).

²¹ In my opinion, the same point could be valid for the national level, in spite of the commentators supporting the thesis of a new and ‘transversal’ constituency (especially in central and southern Italy)



created by Salvini's Lega, who in reality imposed the party as the unique and unifying actor of the right-wing part of political spectrum, articulating its rhetorical discourse in current populist radical right terms.

²² For a constant update of data by the RMP see <http://www.regionalmanifestosproject.com/> (last accessed on 20th December 2018).

²³ A comprehensive dataset could be found in the online appendix: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1PbWHum9jTffJEJfGJaUGzdGI7rWcKIa2> (last accessed on 20th December 2018).

²⁴ It could be helpful to bear in mind that I am referring to the salience of the dimensions, not the party positioning. For instance, for the salience of the new self-determination issues both statements against and those in favour of welfare state for immigrants are counted (see Table 3, p.30).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guido Panzano

Political Science Master's student at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies of Pisa and the University "Cesare Alfieri" of Florence. He holds a BA in Political Sciences at the University of Pisa (2017) with a thesis on power-sharing executives in Northern Ireland and South Tyrol. He attended several summer schools and periods of study abroad. Among his research interests: power-sharing, territorial pluralism, minority rights, ethnic domination, ethnic parties and party systems. As an ECMI intern (October-December 2018), he worked under the supervision of Dr. Bober, head of the research cluster "Politics & Civil Society".

*Contact: g.panzano@santannapisa.it.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES (ECMI)

Schiffbruecke 12 (Kompagnietor) D-24939 Flensburg

☎ +49-(0)461-14 14 9-0 * fax +49-(0)461-14 14 9-19

* E-Mail: info@ecmi.de * Internet: <http://www.ecmi.de>