

UACES 42nd Annual Conference

Passau, 3-5 September 2012

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Immigration and Regional Identity Politics:
An exploratory comparison of Scotland (UK) and South Tyrol (I)

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September 2012

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„We don't have to make Tyroleans out of immigrants; we should not even make Tyroleans. But everybody shall keep and protect its particularities, as long as they are in accordance with our prevailing rules”

(SVP, governor of South Tyrol Luis Durnwalder, coalition programme 2008, 15)

„it isn't important where you come from, what matters is where we are going together as a nation“

(SNP, First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, Independent, 14.02.2009)

Introduction

Large-scale immigration raises questions such as “Who are we?” and “Who belongs to us?” (Bauböck 1996, 7). Independently of immigration, these questions have been the focus of territories traditionally inhabited by ethno-national minorities - or nations-without-state (Guibernau 1999) - such as the Basque Country, South Tyrol, Scotland etc. who have always defended their particular identity within a larger nation-state. Now immigration alters the population of those regions and raises important questions regarding its impact on regional or minority identities. Thus, the research is situated where “the politics of immigrant multiculturalism meet the politics of minority nationalism” (Banting and Soroka 2012, 158).

This article seeks to contribute to this emerging research field by analyzing how immigration impacts on changes of the collective identity at a sub-national level. Thus the project looks at how ethnic identity entrepreneurs (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) and in particular (ethno-)regional parties (De Winter, Lynch, and Gómez-Reino 2006; De Winter and Türsan 1998) confronted with immigration construct and re-construct the (symbolic) boundaries of the territory and its population.

The central question is under which conditions immigration leads to a contraction, expansion or to a shift of group boundaries (Barth 1969; Wimmer 2008; Zolberg and Woon 1999) and how (ethno)-regionalist parties frame these changes. This can also be outlined with recourse to nationalism theories: Does immigration influences the development towards an ethnic vs. civic, and eventually multicultural form of nationalism, which can be defined as a “vision of a community which respects and promotes the cultural autonomy and status equality of its component ethnic groups” (Brown 2000; Hussain and Miller 2006; Sweeney 2005).

From the plethora of factors that possibly influence the direction of change the proposed explanation in this article relies on one hand on the degree of cohesion in the host society (divided society anchored in consociational power-arrangements vs. cohesive society) and on the other hand on the degree of powers to govern the territory and thus also integration.

First it is supposed that a divided society (Lijphart 2004) is predetermined to develop towards a more exclusive identity and to create strong boundaries, established towards the nation-state/majority and anchored in consociational power-sharing arrangements, and these boundaries are also reproduced in relation to immigrants. Secondly the article takes up Kymlicka's initial argument that immigration, if not controlled directly by the minority, is a threat to the distinctiveness of the minority culture (2001). This article examines whether this argument is also valid in the European context, where no region has the power to control the entry of immigrants. The article assumes that having related powers to manage and govern immigrant integration in combination with territorial autonomy, might have an equivalent effect.

The research hypothesizes therefore that if a minority community has powers to control and manage integration and at the same time enjoys a substantial level of autonomy, then it won't perceive immigration as a threat and consequently immigrants will be perceived as a community-strengthening factor and the reactions towards them will be inclusive.

The argument is developed in two parts: the first elaborates on the tensions between identity change, immigration and (ethno-)regionalist parties; the second examines that relation from an empirical point of view by comparing Scotland (UK) and South Tyrol (I), two regions characterized by strong regional identities and a wide margin of powers to govern the territory, but also increasing immigration from third countries. The political parties currently governing the territory, differ in their orientation and promote two opposing approaches towards immigration. The SNP (Scottish Nationalist Party), as left-wing liberal party aiming at the secession of Scotland from the UK promotes an inclusive approach to immigration; the SVP (South Tyrolean People's Party), a centre-right party demanding greater autonomy for South Tyrol within Italy, a rather exclusive one. The paper argues, however, that both, the SVP and the SNP, use immigration in an instrumental way: the SVP's rather exclusive approach towards immigration needs to be seen as a consequence of the continuing support for the historical division between minority and majority in South-Tyrol, which has been cemented by power sharing arrangements. And the inclusive approach in Scotland, promoted by the SNP as civic nationalism, needs a critical reading regarding its truly civic nature. It is, however, not the aim of this paper to elaborate on the question of which framework facilitates the integration of immigrants *per se*.

This paper forms an explorative part of a larger Ph.D project comparing South Tyrol (I), Corsica (F), the Basque Country (ES), Scotland and Wales (UK) for a period of 20 years (from 1990 – 2012). This period has been chosen due to the fact that, on the one hand, the selected regions experienced the peak of their migration history in the last 20 years and the political elite enjoyed enough time to react to these phenomena and develop an approach towards the integration of immigrants in their regions. On the other hand, the processes of decentralization and regionalism, which recently started in Great Britain, Italy and Spain, gave regions further strength and led to a revival of regional identities. Thus also minority nationalism increased substantially in the last 20 years.

For this paper Scotland and South Tyrol have been selected as the two most distant cases in relation to the degree of cohesion within the host society: the South Tyrolean society is fragmented along ethno-linguistic criteria, whereas ethnicity is not (anymore) a criteria for the Scottish identity, as argued by the political elite. In relation to the powers to manage immigration/integration, Scotland and South Tyrol share many aspects: both regions have aspirations for greater autonomy, eventually leading to independence and, although both regions have already certain powers in the field of integration, greater autonomy to govern it together with direct influence on immigration (entrance and access) are demanded by the governing parties. Nevertheless, there is a great difference between Scotland and South Tyrol in terms of position towards immigration and integration: the governing SNP actively seeks to catch immigrants as "New Scots" to include them in their nationalist project whereas the SVP (and even more the other nationalist parties in South Tyrol) hesitate to include immigrants in the South Tyrolean Society, as will be shown below. Thus the case of Scotland and in particular the SNP, as Hepburn and Rosie argue, "confounds the assumption that 'minority nations', and in particular, minority nationalists, view immigration as a threat to their indigenous culture and traditions" (Hepburn and Rosie 2012, 1). However, it needs to be seen whether the inclusive and multicultural elite discourse is first of all equally inclusive

vis-a-vis all immigrant groups or whether certain groups are more welcome to form part of the Scottish nation than others, as suggested by Hussain and Miller (2006) and secondly whether this inclusive approach is also reflected by attitudes of the mass population¹.

The paper relies on data from party manifestos for regional government elections. Thus for the SVP² the party manifestos from the 1992, 1999, 2002 and 2008 elections and for the SNP the manifestos from 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 are analyzed and compared using NVivo as a tool for qualitative data analysis. These data allow a first insight into whether the parties changed their approaches towards immigration in that period and whether and how the topics of immigration/integration are linked with the identity of the region.

A) The theoretical framework

Identity, immigration and nationalism

Identity, personal as well as collective, social as well as cultural, national as well as local, is widely discussed across the social sciences but remains a blurred concept: Brubaker and Cooper note that “Identity tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense) or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)” (2000, 1). Therefore it is imperative to shortly set the frame of how identity is defined in this article, how identity change is measured and how it relates to immigration. The article looks at changes in the construction and definition of group identity once confronted with immigration from the perspective of the political elite, in particular the ethno-regionalist parties and the territorial government. Thus first of all it is not individuals, but groups that are the focus of this research and consequently not personal, but collective identity: it is not the individual and subjective understanding of identity, but how the collective is presented, defined and constructed by, amongst other types of elite, political parties. The article is therefore not looking for the hermeneutical meaning of identity, or “on the way individual agents move about in this background of understanding, on how they interpret themselves in light of it” (Wagenaar 2011, 40) but trying to uncover the underlying concepts and approaches communicated by the political parties following their prescribed role of ethnic identity entrepreneurs (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) in order to construct and define the identity of national minorities.

Since group identity is analyzed in this article in relation to immigration and thus to an “Other” (Triandafyllidou 1998), theories about boundaries between groups (Alba 2005; Barth 1969; Zolberg and Woon 1999) provide a valuable frame for the explanation of identity change: Zolberg and Woon, by assuming that “collective identity formation [...] usually also involve self-conscious efforts by members of a group to distinguish themselves from whom they are not, and hence it is better understood as a dialectical process whose key feature is the delineation of boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘not us’” (1999, 8), suggest three patterns of negotiation around the boundaries between newcomers and hosts: individual boundary crossing, which leaves the structure of the receiving society unaffected; boundary blurring, whereas the structure of the receiving society changes as well, and boundary shifting, which includes a reconstruction of the group identity. Since Zolberg and Woon remain silent on the direction the change of

¹ However, the verification of identity change at the mass level is not the focus of this paper.

² All translations from German to English are by the author.

the receiving society, Wimmer's re-formulation of this initial typology is used to explain whether the identity of the national minority moves towards an inclusion of immigrants into their identity or whether they are excluded from this common project: boundaries can be shifted through expansion (including new people into the already existing boundary) or contraction (excluding people from already existing boundaries), the inversion of boundaries (changing the hierarchical order of ethnic groups), the re-positioning (actors seek to change their position within an existing system of boundaries) and the blurring of boundaries (ethnicity as a marker of boundaries is exchanged with other markers) (Wimmer 2008, 2008).

Thus the article tries to map whether the SVP for the South Tyrolean society and the SNP for the Scottish society promote an expansion of group boundaries including the additional diversity stemming from immigration into their group identity and thus into their national project or, whether this additional diversity is rejected and thus excluded from their common projects. Boundary making and the construction of a common group identity for a particular territory is linked to nationalism theories and therefore the research question can also be framed around the dichotomy of civic and inclusive vs. ethnic and exclusive identity ethnic' (Ignatieff 1993; Kellas 1998, 35; Kohn 1944; 1967): boundary contraction leans towards a focus on ethnic elements within the identity construction whereas boundary expansion highlights civic elements. A third alternative, Wimmers's blurring of boundaries, could be expanded following recent developments in nationalism theories arguing for a multicultural nationalism (Brown 2000; Hussain and Miller 2006; Sweeney 2005): boundaries are expanded by keeping the initial boundaries based preliminary on civic or ethnic elements by adding new features stemming from immigration-based diversity and by weakening the boundaries' importance of separating groups.

The article uses this theories to evaluate the approach towards immigrants taken by the two parties: Is there a boundary expansion and the development towards a civic nationalism or is there a boundary contraction and thus a development towards an ethnic nationalism. As a third alternative it needs to be seen if boundary blurring, which could be described also with the concept of multicultural nationalism, is proposed by the parties.

The role of ethno-regionalist parties in migration – triggered identity change

Immigration and integration have traditionally been topics extreme right wing parties engaged with on a national level, but integration is increasingly governed at a sub-national level, where it has also the most direct effect on the society and the policies. Ethno-regionalist parties, whose prime objectives are defined as defending the identities and interests of 'their' region (Massetti 2009, 503) therefore necessarily need to engage with the implications stemming from increased immigration, which alters the population and thus has a direct effect on the identity of the society.

Dandoy (2012) and Hepburn (2012) argue correctly that the necessity for ethno-regionalist parties to engage with the topic in order to promote an approach that might differ – due to the distinctiveness of the regions represented by the parties – from the approach taken on a national level increased substantially. Hepburn argues that immigration can be seen by ethno-regionalist parties always from two opposing perspectives: it is used either to strengthen the demands for territorial self-determination or to weaken demands for autonomy or independence; as a threat or as enrichment of the culture; as an advantage to fill particular skills in the regional labor market or as taking jobs from the locals (2012, 2). This perspectives apply, however, to each party independently of whether it acts nationally or regionally. An important

difference between parties operating on a national or regional level and forming part of the national or regional government is, though, their possibilities of influence: no government of a European region has a direct and immediate influence on the immigration policies and in particular on regulating entrance criteria and access to citizenship, which are so far regulated by the nation state. Thus ethno-regionalist parties can only engage with integration policies, which are crosscutting a number of important issues for the regional population, such as health, labor market and housing, but also education and culture, which are particularly crucial in regions inhabited by linguistic or cultural minorities.

How ethno-regionalist parties have dealt with integration, is not yet fully researched. Kymlicka argued already 10 years ago that immigrants are perceived as a threat to the minority culture if the region has no powers to govern integration policies (Kymlicka 2001). The need to protect the minority culture is for him thus also the justification for illiberal practices in the integration of immigrants into minority societies. By this he justifies adhering to the already established boundaries of the minority group and its identity, thus defining it as a static concept. However, groups and identities are never static but constantly evolving and thus also the boundaries of the minority group are due to continuous negotiation and re-negotiation between the actors.

An empirical verification of Kymlicka's argument can only be found for Quebec, which, in contrast to regions in Europe, has direct powers to influence immigration policies, and uses those powers to integrate immigrants into the Francophone community. Thus Quebec presents itself as open and welcoming to immigrants as long as they contribute to their own nation-building project. It is the aim of this research project to verify this prominent argument for Europe, taking however powers to influence integration policies as the explanatory factor: the more powers to influence integration policies a region has, the more it should be open towards immigration and the more it should try to include immigrants into the regional society. If that is then an inclusion for instrumental purposes, as it is in the case of Quebec, needs to be assessed in a second step.

Hepburn proposes a series of additional factors that can be responsible for a more open or more restrictive approach ethno-regionalist parties develop in relation to immigration: factors related to the characteristics of the region such as the demography and the speed of population increase due to immigration; the economic situation and necessities on the labor market; factors connected to the immigrants themselves, such as their composition and finally also factors based on the parties themselves: their ideology, the electoral system and party polarization (Hepburn 2012, 10-13). She also contrasts with Kymlicka's argument of more control leading to more willingness to integrate, because, according to her, more powers to influence the topic lead to a higher polarization and contestation on that issue and thus to a more negative perception of immigration by ethno-regionalist parties. It is not clear, though, why polarization automatically should lead to a negative view on immigration and why it could not also lead to a competition for the most open integration approach amongst parties. This suggests that all those factors might explain particular cases, but still there is no general pattern found yet, and thus further research is needed.

One way further is the proposed analysis of the political-institutional and social structure of the regional society. This gets particular importance in regions inhabited by groups who differ - due to their culture, language, religion or history - from the majoritarian state population, because those groups have undergone already a process of integration - or in the worst case assimilation - of their diversity into the nation state. In order to solve or prevent a conflict between state majority and minority, this process of

integration has often resulted in power-sharing mechanisms between minority and majority and in the creation of parallel institutions in particular in identity-sensible areas in order to guarantee the protection of the distinctiveness of the minority group. This caused the establishment of clear boundaries between minority and majority. With the influx of immigrants into the territory traditionally inhabited by minorities, these already established boundaries are now re-questioned: do immigrants integrate into the state majority or into the minority? Does this mix up the demography and thus the established balance of powers? And how do ethno-regionalist parties, representing the minority, react?

It is argued that divided societies or societies characterized by a cleavage based on ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural characteristics, which is entrenched in the institutional design, reproduce this cleavage also in relation to immigrants and thus the ethno-regionalist parties promote an exclusionary development of the identity. Contrary, it is argued that in a cohesive society, where there are no already established boundaries, ethno-regionalist parties focus more on the protection of the society as a whole and not only on the protection of a particular group and the defense of its particularity against another groups. This might facilitate the inclusion of immigrants into a common vision of the territory.

B) An exploratory comparison

Scotland and South Tyrol: a first contextualization

Before analyzing the parties' positions on immigration and how they reflect the group identity, it is imperative to contextualize the two territories. First of all similarities and differences in relation to the regional history and population, in relation to migration as well as in relation to the party system and development of ethno-regionalist parties operating in the regions will be laid down. Secondly, an overview on the discussions around the regional identity will be given and finally the position of the SVP and the SNP regarding immigration and integration will be presented.

South Tyrol is the most northern province of Italy, sharing borders with Switzerland and Austria. It constitutes with the province of Trento one of the five autonomous regions in Italy and has currently a population of 505.067. Nearly 70% of them are German speakers, 26% Italian speakers and 4.5% Ladin speakers.³ The flourishing labour market with an unemployment rate of 3.3% (2012) and the good economic situation⁴ were among the reasons for the a rapid and substantial diversification within the South Tyrolean population since 1990: immigrants especially from the former Yugoslavia, North Africa – and only recently from Latin America – settled in the province (Medda-Windischer and Girardi 2011, 16). In 2011 44,362 immigrants (8.7% of the South Tyrolean population) from 134 countries have been registered: one third of them are from EU countries, one third from other European countries (especially the Former Yugoslavia and Albania), 16.5% from Asia, 12.7% from Africa and around 5% from the Americas. The largest groups residing in South Tyrol are the Albanians with 5,500 persons, followed by the Germans with 4,700, the Moroccans with 3,600 persons, the Pakistani with 3,032. Thus in only 20 years the percentage of immigrants within the South Tyrolean society grew from 1% to 8.7%.

³ Ladin is a Raetho-Roman language spoken in some valleys in the Dolomites in Italy. The language is comparable to the Romansh in Switzerland.

⁴ In 2009 the GDP per capita in South Tyrol was 32.000€(EUROSTAT).

South Tyrol belonged until 1919, as part of the historical Tyrol, to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and 89% of its population was German speaking (Rautz 1999, 191). Since then not only the population changed significantly, but also the state borders and the legal status: during WWI the German speaking South Tyrol was promised to Italy as a compensation for joining the war on the side of the *Entente*. The territory was finally annexed in 1919 according to the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye (Lantschner 2008: 5). Although the Italian government in the immediate post-war period promised to protect its new linguistic (German) minority, no measures were taken to ensure this. The following Fascist government, which ruled the country from 1922 until 1943, openly and aggressively acted against the German speaking population trying to Italianize the territory by “means of repression of the German language and culture, mass migration of Italian speakers into the province, encouraged mainly through industrialization, and, finally the resettlement of the German-speaking population” (Lantschner 2008, 6). Also after WWII the Italian authority over the territory of South Tyrol was re-confirmed and direct negotiations between Austria and Italy led to an agreement on self-government for South Tyrol (the Gruber-Degasperi Agreement) in 1946 in order to protect the German speaking population. Due to the lack of proper implementation increasing dissatisfaction among the German speaking population led in the mid 1960s to constant clashes and violent incidents between the South Tyrolean population and the Italian government so that Austria - as the kin-state of the German minority – passed the case to the attention of the UN. Thus a second Autonomy Statute was passed in 1972 leading to the formal settlement of the dispute between Italy and Austria before the UN in 1992. The Autonomy Statute was amended again in 2001 and grants now a catalogue of rights and liberties to the province of South Tyrol enabling it to effectively protect the German and Ladin minority – attributing to South Tyrol the statutes of “one of the most successful examples of the accommodation of minorities” (Woelk, Marko, and Palermo 2008, xi).

The Autonomy Statute regulates the living together of the three autochthonous linguistic groups and is the basis of the territorial self-government of the province of South Tyrol. It provides the province with a large variety of legislative and administrative powers covering almost any area of importance with the exception of the army, the administration of justice, the police and few additional minor issues. The basic principle of the Autonomy Statute is the cultural autonomy granted to the German and Ladin speakers, the parity of the three languages (German, Ladin and Italian) granting all citizens equal rights irrespective of their belonging to a linguistic group, the principle of proportionality regulated by a quota system and veto rights as the ultimate weapon of the minority. The institutional setting in South Tyrol is thus a power sharing based on “strict separation and forced cooperation of the two main linguistic groups, German and Italian speakers” (Wolff 2008).

The South Tyrolean system of self-government is organized along ethno-linguistic lines: the quota system as a mechanism to regulate - proportionally to the strength of the linguistic groups – the distribution of posts in the public administration and of financial resources especially in the field of housing and culture as well as the composition of various political bodies, in particular of the provincial government is the heart of the living together. For the successful implementation of the quota system a personal as well as a census-related declaration of linguistic affiliation or aggregation has been foreseen.⁵ Furthermore there exist two separate and parallel school systems from pre-school to secondary school, with pupils taught in

⁵ Art. 18 of the Autonomy Statute.

their mother tongue and by teachers of the same language⁶ as well as three (one for each group) administrative systems and consequently also three educational policies. However, parents are free to choose the educational system they prefer for their children. The two main linguistic groups have also established their own private and public monolingual media system.

The division along ethno-linguistic lines at the political-institutional level and at the educational level is mirrored also at the societal and geographical level: a low proficiency of the other language is also the result of the concentration of Italian speakers, due to the industries build during Fascism and afterwards, on the city of Bolzano/Bozen and the neighbouring towns. Thus it is no wonder that “one quarter of the Germans and 12% of the Italian pupils say that, in the last year, they have never or only very rarely had relations of friendship with members of the other group” (Abel, Vettori, and Forer 2010). It can be summarized that in South Tyrol there is a low degree of inter-group contact or a substantial degree of division in the society.

This mechanism of power sharing and division is reflected also in the party system which is dominated by the ethnic cleavage (Pallaver 2009, 246) superposing and cross-cutting all other traditional cleavages (Pallaver 2010, 212). Thus the presence of ethno-regionalist parties has dominated the political landscape of South Tyrol already since its very beginning. The Südtiroler Volkspartei – South Tyrolean People’s Party (SVP) was founded on the 8th of May 1945 in order to give the German and Ladin speaking population in South Tyrol a voice: it considered itself from the very beginning until now as the ethnic representation of those autochthonous linguistic groups. The relevance of the party can be understood not only by its role in the negotiation of the legislative framework of South Tyrol but also by looking at its electoral success: from the first elections in 1948 until today the party was able to secure the absolute majority in the provincial assembly and it was only in 2008 that it lost the absolute majority in terms of votes (but nevertheless retained the absolute majority in assembly seats due to the electoral system). Moreover, the regional governor/president has always been a member of the SVP, whereas it is a South Tyrolean particularity that the territory has been ruled so far only by four persons⁷. Although the party has always been able to secure the absolute majority and can thus be called, according to Sartori a hegemonic or even predominant party, it has -due to the ethnic quota system which requires governmental representation of all autochthonous linguistic groups - never ruled the territory by itself. Until 1993 the SVP was the only relevant ethno-regionalist party but since then new ethno-regionalist parties have emerged (UfS, dF, SF⁸) and there is a polarization among them on the degree of self-government. Thus although the political landscape in South Tyrol has always been fragmented, the degree of fragmentation increased after 1993 especially among the ethno-regionalist parties competing for the German and Ladin speaking electorate: if the SVP until 1993 got approximately 60% of the overall votes, from that time onwards it lost votes and at the last elections in 2008 it got 48.1% of all votes. In parallel the newly founded parties dF and UfS increased their share of votes from 6.06% and 4.8% at their first elections in 1993 to 14.3% and 7.2% (together with SF, which split from UfS in 2007) in 2008.

⁶ Ibid, Art. 19. Para 1. Only for the Ladin group it is provided for instruction on equal terms in German and Italian Language as well as teaching of Ladin.

⁷ Besides Karl Erckert (1952 – 1955) and Alois Pupp (1955-1960) Silvius Magnago, also known as the father of the South Tyrolean autonomy and one of the founders of the SVP ruled from 1960 – 1989 and from 1989 onwards the territory has been governed by Luis Durnwalder.

⁸ Union für Südtirol/Union for South Tyrol (UfS); die Freiheitlichen/Freedom Party (dF), Südtiroler Freiheit/South Tyrolean Freedom (SF)

Scotland and South Tyrol differ substantially in a number of fields: Scotland has a much longer experience of being independent: From the Middle Ages until 1707 it was an independent state and although it entered into an incorporating union with England forming the Kingdom of England, it kept its separate legal system as well as distinct educational and religious institutions. This semi-independence under the crown of England guaranteed the survival of the distinct Scottish culture and identity. Thus constant claims from the 1960s onwards for more self-government or even full independence led to the re-founding of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 by the Scotland Act (1998). Thus Scotland re-gained a number of legislative competences from the UK, but claims for full independence continue and are much stronger than in South Tyrol, culminating in the referendum in 2014, as announced by the SNP.

Also in terms of size of the territory and population the two regions differ: 500.000 South Tyroleans are compared to 5 Million Scots. However, both regions have traditionally been a country of net out-migration reaching only after 1990 a positive net in-migration rate. Thus immigration is in both regions contributing to the demographic growth, which is, however, perceived positively only in Scotland: in the last 10 years the territory experienced a significant in-migration and the population increased by over 26,000 to 5,222,100 between 2001 and 2010. The recent census is likely to show a much higher percentage of the ethnic minority population, which was around 2% or just over 100,000 in 2001. 70% of the total ethnic minority population in 2001 were Asian and within that group the Pakistani were the most numerous, followed by Chinese, Indians, Bangladeshi or other South Asian. However, like South Tyrol, also Scotland has a significant group of immigrants from the respective state: The 2001 census⁹ reports that 88.09% of the Scottish Population defines itself as White Scottish, and 7.38% as White British. Nevertheless, there is no such clear division and cleavage based on ethnic or linguistic criteria between those who define themselves as British or Scottish, and thus there is also no division on the political-institutional level.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) as the main ethno-regionalist party of Scotland was founded in 1934 from the merger of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party with the aim to promote secession from the UK. Although it remained electorally insignificant until the mid-1960s (Newell 1998, 105) it has subsequently been represented in Westminster continuously since 1967. From that time onwards the electoral success increased again on the national level but after the devolution also in Scotland itself since “the establishment of the devolved parliament (...) created the primary arena for SNP activity, eclipsing both Westminster and the European Parliament” (Lynch 2011, 152). After forming a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats in 2007 the SNP became in 2011 the first majority government since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

The SNP claimed already from its founding moment to be the party representing the Scots and there is, according to Newell, a clear link between voting for the SNP and strongly identifying more with Scottish than British national identity (Newell 1998, 108). Consequently the primary aim and ideological concern of the SNP was always the question of self-government, but from the mid-1980s onwards, the party established itself as a left-of centre nationalist party, both in terms of policies and electoral support (Lynch 2011, 149). Devolution substantially changed the SNP and its demands, as Lynch argues, since the party profile became “more mixed and the centre-left profile was de-emphasized – evident in its manifesto commitments for the 2003 and 2007 Scottish elections and in relation to its programme in

⁹ New census data not yet released

government” (2011, 150). Currently the SNP as strongest Scottish Party has to face the challenge of adapting to government office, an experience the SVP in South Tyrol had already made much earlier in the history of its existence.

Scotland and South Tyrol: the issue with identity

Although the protection of the culture and identity of the German- and Ladinspeaking group is often discussed and forms one of the most important aspects of the Autonomous Province, there is a gap of research in this field in particular in relation to the markers of these particular identities. However, the perceived injustice resulting from the change of borders between Italy and Austria is at the core of the group identity. Thus the relationship with the Italian state is the basis, from where all further developments regarding the identity of the German - as well as Italian – speaking language group starts: although for both of the groups being a minority and thus a victim which needs to be protected is at the core of their self-definition, their interpretation is opposed: the German speakers, counting for 70% of the population within South Tyrol, refer to their status as minority within the Italian state and use it as a quest for more protection implemented by a larger autonomy and less interference from the Italian state. This argument is put forward in particular in times of crisis, e.g. the current “spending review” initiated by Prime Minister Monti is referred to by the South Tyrolean government and all ethno-regionalist parties as a violation of the autonomy statute, as an infringement of the principle of minority protection and in general as a measure against the German language group¹⁰. The Italian speakers, in contrast, interpret being a minority strictly in relation to South Tyrol and ask for more interference from the Italian state: counting for 26% of the population, they refer to themselves as “being in an unease (‘disagio’)”¹¹: this unease results first of all from their lack of internal coherence since they immigrated to South Tyrol during Fascism and after WWII from various Italian regions and secondly from their lack of influence within the autonomous system based on power-sharing.

This first characteristic of “being a minority” of the South Tyrolean identity is complemented with a second, but equally strong one: division and separation. Since the agreement of self-government has been presented by the South Tyrolean government as the possibility to overcome, from the perspective of the German speakers, the initial shortcoming of injustice and being a minority, its impact on identity building has been very strong. The SVP even argues, that the “autonomy has created the South Tyrolean identity” (“SVP: “Autonomie hat Südtiroler Identität geschaffen” 2010). Identity, therefore, developed always in relation to the basic principle of the agreement, namely the separation of the society according to the linguistic affiliation resulting in the creation of parallel societies. The perception of a cultural “threat” coming from the Italian state and the Italians themselves has been very strong until 1992, when all provisions of the agreement were finally implemented and the conflict official closed in front of the UN. This initial boundary based on rejection changed into an acceptance of the Italian group, but has not yet been overcome: the SVP never talks about building a joint society, but about a consolidation of the culture of each linguistic group before interacting (Volkspartei 1993, 15). “The clearer we separate, the better we understand each other” – a principle, expressed 1984 by the former minister for culture Anton Zelger, and sharply summarized by Carlá as a “living apart in the same room”(2007) seems still to be

¹⁰ <http://www.stol.it/Artikel/Politik-im-Ueberblick/Lokal/SVP-Rom-begeht-Vertragsbruch-Gehen-notfalls-vor-Internationalen-Gerichtshof>, accessed on 13.08.2012.

¹¹ See FF, South Tyrolean weekly magazin, 07 - 18. February 2010.

upheld on the level of politics. However, in particular on the level of the civil society, there are many initiatives and cooperation bridging the language groups. A third characteristic deriving from the previous two is the focus on language as identity marker enshrined in the declaration of linguistic affiliation, but also exemplified by parallel schooling system. Carlá argues that the SVP “seems to oppose any official recognition of the transformation experienced by South Tyrol society in the past decades” (2012, 39). Thus the SVP, and consequently also the provincial government, promote a static concept of identity with the aim to keep the sensitive balance of power as the most important objective one has to defend against change.

In contrast to the South Tyrolean identity, research suggests that the Scottish identity is built primarily, although not exclusively, on territorial and civic markers and in particular on the place of birth and place of living, as well as on the self-definition of people. Since Alex Salmond took over the leadership of the SNP and in contrary to the 1970s focus on ethnic elements, the SNP presents itself now at the forefront of promoting a civic and inclusive Scotland.

Mitchell, Bennie and Johns report “feeling Scottish”, “respecting Scottish political institutions and laws” as well as “living in Scotland now” as the three most important criteria of being truly Scottish (2012, 110). Although the political elite tries to keep ethnic criteria for being Scottish on a low level, the SNP highlights Scots and Gaelic as languages that need to be re-vitalized due to their historical and ancestral relevance by teaching them at school (in all SNP election manifestos since 1997) and by promoting their use. Mycock (2012, 56) classifies this language politics as opportunistic and as contributing to a ethnicization of the identity-discourse. Including Scots and Gaelic into the school curriculum, as proposed by the SNP, is however, also inconsistent with the party’s vision of an enrichment of ethnic minority cultures because no reference can be found in the election manifestos of valorizing and thus including also other minority languages in the school curriculum.

Ethnic elements are present also among members of the SNP who identify “having Scottish ancestry” and “being born in Scotland” as fairly important criteria for their identity (Mitchell, Bennie, and Johns 2012, 111). These criteria get particularly important when talking about how to become Scottish: Bond and Rosie show that 68% of Scots do not think that an English-born person living in Scotland can become Scottish. This result gets even more interesting when seen in light with the 55% of Scots, who believe that a non-white person with a Scottish accent and living in Scotland cannot become Scottish. From this general overview on identity it is suggested that Scottish identity is on the borderline between ethnic and civic criteria. It is not clearly assessable where it will move in the future, since the political elite is leaning towards a civic definition, but masses have not yet fully bought that.

Furthermore it is proposed to take a closer look at the “significant other” (Triandafyllidou 2001). In Scotland, and to a lesser degree also in South Tyrol the state majority is the “significant other”, against the own identity is created. It needs to be seen if this remains the case once confronted with immigration and additional diversity stemming from that.

Scotland and South Tyrol: immigration as challenge or enrichment?

Neither Scotland nor South Tyrol have legal powers to influence immigration policies¹². Nonetheless, both territories demand a greater control over immigrants' selection and admission to the nation state, although guided by different approaches based on opposing objectives: immigration is perceived in Scotland as a positive phenomenon, in South Tyrol as a challenge. Scotland wants to attract further immigrants to counterbalance the demographic crisis and to strengthen the economy, South Tyrol would like to reduce influx or to focus on selecting immigrants from European countries due to their cultural proximity to the receiving society (Volkspartei 2008) needed for the protection of the German speaking minority. The Scottish government initiated therefore a series of campaigns and initiatives (One Scotland – Many Cultures; Fresh Talent Initiative) to present itself attractive to immigrants: inclusive and multicultural (Hepburn and Rosie 2012, 14).

The South Tyrol government, in contrast, hesitated and was the last of all Italian provinces to finally adopt in December 2011 a provincial integration law, as foreseen by the Italian immigration law¹³. The law sets a framework for the integration criteria, whereas the learning of the two official languages – German and Italian - is the most important aspect. The integration law had been drafted by the responsible minister, who comes from the coalition partner *Partito Democratico* and belongs to the Italian language group. It is a prime example of how integration is dealt with in South Tyrol: the government tried to ignore the fact of immigration for a long time, leaving it to the Italian language group whose voluntary associations have been very active on the ground, and only when it was absolutely necessary, a very general law was enacted leaving it to a number of working groups to find implementation measures, which are not yet elaborated. Only in 2003 the government and thus the SVP realised the impact immigration has on changing the South Tyrolean society in demographic terms which could then also result in a change of the balance between the autochthonous linguistic groups and started engaging with the topic. But at that time the Freedom-party (*dF*) had been already very active on promoting immigration as a threat for the minority culture thus pushing the SVP also towards a more radical position.

Polarization on immigration is therefore much higher in South Tyrol than in Scotland, where party competition takes place on the left and anti-immigrant parties perform poorly (Hepburn and Rosie 2012, 11). In South Tyrol all ethno-regionalist parties (*dF*, *UfS*, *SF*) are situated on the right and work with a harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric evoking feelings of alienation and of a cultural and linguistic ruin of the German speaking minority. In the 2008 elections the SVP lost 10% of its votes, whereas the main competitor, *dF*, using immigration as the main topic of their election campaign, gained 9.3%. It seems that in South Tyrol voters are attracted by anti-immigrant campaigns, whereas in Scotland the SNP successfully and actively courts votes by creating affiliated organizations such as 'Asians for Independence' or 'New Scots for Independence' and by involving the ethnic minorities in the organization and representation of the party.

The topic of immigration and integration entered in 2003 under the heading of "foreigners" and "foreign workers" the election manifesto of the SVP and is since then referred to in relation to the German and Ladin minority and the need to protect those groups from "foreign infiltration". Immigration is presented

¹² With immigration policies I refer to policies of selection and admission of immigrants, whereas integration policies deal with the participation in social, political, economic and cultural life.

¹³ Dec. Legislativo 25 luglio 1998 n. 286; reg. di attuazione con dec. Del Presidente 31 agosto 1999 n. 394; and the various changes; <http://www.meltingpot.org/articolo232.html#4>

as one of the biggest challenges of the coming years and therefore the SVP demands further powers from the Italian state to better control the influx of immigrants into the region. It is furthermore suggested to select those immigrants that come from European countries, because they would be easier to integrate - in the meaning of assimilation - into the existing culture. In 2003 but also in 2008 immigrants are valued as seasonal workers and additional labor force, but nevertheless they are needed on the labour market, the party suggests to first of all focus on unemployed South Tyroleans and only secondly, to employ foreign workers. This proposal is quite problematic, since the average unemployment rate in South Tyrol over the last 10 years was around 3%.¹⁴ Once immigrants are in South Tyrol, the SVP focuses on integration through the educational system and language learning. The bilingual setting and the importance of the German language are always accentuated and the party lobbies for a greater recognition of this regional particularity also on a state level, e.g. German language competence as a criterion for additional points in the integration contract.

The integration of migrants can be classified as an attempt to either assimilate them into the German group or separate them from all already existing autochthonous groups by creating an additional group. Thus the system of parallel societies seems to be reproduced in relation to migration. The current approach of the SVP could therefore be classified as instrumentalist in the sense that certain types of immigrants are tried to assimilate into the German language group in order not to lose them to the Italian group, because they could increase their population size. This re-production of the traditional boundaries between groups can be found in particular at the level of rhetoric, though, whereas on the institutional level the integration of immigrants triggered a particular collaboration between the Italian and German school system: besides the teaching, also the administrative bodies of the German and Italian school systems are separated, but there was created a “competence centre for the integration of immigrant pupils”; this centre was not allocated to one or the other system, but bridging the educational systems. Thus this was the first initiative to overcome the divide between the German and Italian language group. In that sense, immigrants could become, as already noted by Winter for Northern Ireland (2011), a catalyst to create a joint South Tyrolean society at least at the institutional level.

In contrast to South Tyrol, the SNP dealt with immigration already in the manifesto of 1992 under the heading of “multicultural society” and cultural diversity, which is presented as an enrichment of the territory. Immigration is dealt with in a positive manner claiming rights for those ethnic minorities or better protection of asylum seekers, attracting highly skilled people and fighting discrimination and racism. In 2001 citizenship is added to the topics dealt with in relation to population development: The SNP would grant citizenship to everybody living and/or born in Scotland, or to everybody with one parent born in Scotland. The topic of citizenship is then also dealt with in the context of education where it should become part of the regular curriculum. Similar to South Tyrol, also the SNP argues that education is an important aspect to deal with in relation to the integration of diversity, and it is suggested to move towards a multicultural education, including also modern languages and the needs of other communities.

From 2003 onwards the SNP suggests also a “better immigration policy” which should be free of racial bias, thus claiming additional legislative competences in this field from the state and at the same time also differentiating Scotland from Britain. Mycock (2012) argues, that the SNP tries to make political capital

¹⁴ Data from „Amt für Arbeitsmarktbeobachtung – Autonome Provinz Bozen“/Schaubilder 2012.

out of multiculturalism in confronting a “good ”Scotland to a “bad” United Kingdom. Alex Salmond argues that “different traditions do not undermine our culture; they enhance it”¹⁵ whereas UK political parties see diversity as a challenge, if not as threat.

This suggests, that also the SNP follows an instrumentalist approach towards immigration. This argument is supported also by Hussain and Miller (2006), who show that not all ethnic minority groups are equally welcome and that in particular those people from Britain are excluded from the vision of a multicultural Scottish society . Moreover, the *Race Equality Scheme*, initiated already in 2004 by the coalition between Labour-Liberal Democrats, reports increasing racism among the Scottish people, suggesting, that the government operates with an inclusive and tolerant rhetoric, but at the level of implementation and within the mass population this is not yet totally achieved. This links to the discussion of identity, where it seems that the political elite is equally employing a very civic discourse, but at the mass level, ethnic identity markers still have a great importance.

C) Preliminary Conclusions

The aim of this paper was a first empirical exploration of the relation between immigration and identity building from the perspective of ethno-regional parties. In relation to the main hypothesis, namely, the impact a divided society has on this relation, two contrasting cases have been selected: in South Tyrol in Italy, inhabited by three autochthonous linguistic groups, the institutions, but also parts of the daily life, are organized along ethnic lines. This system risks to be reproduced also in relation to immigrants. In Scotland, on the contrary, there is one Scottish society that is presented by the SNP as multicultural, inclusive and based on a civic identity.

At first glance the main hypothesis seems therefore to be true: on the one hand a prior division of the society along ethnic criteria impacts on the group identity and highlights ethnic identity markers which are reproduced also in relation to immigration. Thus the integration of diversity stemming from immigration is looked at from an ethnic lens and with the fear to threaten the balance between the groups. Boundaries between groups have been already very strong and are reproduced and contracted in relation to immigrants. On the other hand, a cohesive society based on a civic identity is able to include further diversity easier since boundaries within the group don't exist or are very weak and thus it is easier to include new elements into it.

This first analyses here demonstrates that the relation between immigration and identity building as well as the relation between ethno-regional parties and immigration is a complex one that cannot be explained by a single exploratory factor: lacking party polarization (due to the needs to counterbalance demographic evolution and labour shortage and due to the lack of any competences in this field) and a lacking linguistic identity marker might, as Hepburn and Rosie (2012) argue, might be important explanations for the promotion of an inclusive approach in Scotland, but as the case of South Tyrol shows, the relation between the autochthonous groups heavily impacts on how immigration is perceived.

Furthermore this first analysis has not only shown that there is a gap between elite and mass perception, but also a gap between the level of rhetoric and practice. This has become clear in particular with the

¹⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/06/04090501>

establishment of a joint competence centre for the integration of immigrant children in the educational system in South Tyrol, which gains additional importance if one considers the importance of the school system in the process of socialization and eventually also nation building.

Therefore the findings of this article can only be interpreted as very preliminary and explorative calling for further research in this direction, comparing first of all more regions inhabited by national minorities and secondly by having a closer look on the relation between discourse and practice.

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