The State’s Power in the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino

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While national governments remain formidable participants in EU policy making, control has slipped away from them.

Gary Marks and Lisbet Hooghe

Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, a new form of governance appeared in European societies. The evolution of societies and the policies implemented to react to these changes aimed at creating new centres of power besides the state’s authority. The delegation of power from the state to supranational and subnational levels, known as decentralisation of authority, is a general trend in Europe. The traditional role of the state as the unique holder of authority is therefore being challenged by the rise and action of non-state actors in politics. The traditional policy-maker is no longer the only actor: state sovereignty as a political concept has changed from the times of the Treaty of Westphalia. This shift of power from a state-centric view of European policy-making to highly diversified modes of ruling is what characterises governance nowadays in Europe:1 the multi-level and multi-actor structure creates what we call a multi-level governance. Marks defines this concept as a “system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers”.2 He distinguishes three main principles at the basis of his theory. First, decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolised by state executives. Second, the collective decision-making between member states implies some loss of control by individual state executives and third, that political arenas are interconnected rather than nested.3

The development of regional policy and Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) is very much associated with multi-level governance as the functioning of this kind of region intersects a

1 Ingeborg Tömmel and Amy Verdun, Innovative Governance in the European Union, (Boulder Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 1.
3 Maura Adshead, Developing European Regions (Limerick: University of Limerick, 2002), 5
number of different actors from different countries. The state’s unique authority is again challenged by the creation of new borders.

The Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino (see figure 1) is an example of where multi-level governance is at the core of the regional functioning.

Figure 1: Map of the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino.
In this multi-level governance context, my research question asks what is the meaning and the role of the state towards the region Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino? As Marks explains,

(m)ulti-level refers to the increased interdependence of governments operating at different territorial levels, while ‘governance’ signalled the growing interdependence between governments and non-governmental actors at various territorial levels.\(^4\)

This definition enlightens us but does not say how the power is distributed between the different actors at stake. The distribution of power in a country is not necessarily the same as in the neighbouring country. It is impossible to generalise a situation. In my paper I will focus on the region Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino to investigate the role, the presence and the level of commitment of the state in the region chosen in order to understand what multi-level governance really means for the state as an actor.

I will in a first part scrutinise some theories on the state to then find out in part two and three which one applies best to the region according to the direction in which the region evolves.

**Theoretical part**

Before the development of a regional development policy at a supranational level, every state was responsible for its own territory and had a monopoly on it. Now, each member state still carries out its own regional policy and is responsible for the success of it, but the European Union (EU), the regions and localities are well-established actors that national governments must take into consideration. The aim of EU regional policy is to coordinate national regional policies by formulating guidelines and setting priorities at European level.\(^5\) The objective of economic and social cohesion in the community through the structural funds are based on four principles,\(^6\) among them the partnership principle which encourages partnerships between different territorial actors. These examples show that the state has undeniably lost some of its monopoly and is an actor among others that must bring its policies into line with those of the community. Based on this assumption, two opposing theories present themselves.

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\(^4\) Ian Bache, “Themes and Issues in Multi-level Governance,” 3.


\(^6\) Ibid, 187.
The declining role of the state

The first theory on the state, and more precisely on the nation-state, is that the role of the state is declining in favour of the region. This theory is very well-developed by socio-political analyst, Kenichi Ohmae. The nation-state is understood here as one nation equals one state. He argues that borders do not mean much in a world where economy and technology have become so important.

T. Christiansen, professor of European Institutional Politics, argues that boundaries are essential for the legitimacy of a nation-state. Indeed, the governance is spatialised or territorialised; hence the importance of borders for the nation-state that based its legitimacy on territorial sovereignty. The state is sovereign if it can “determine the extent of its own jurisdiction within its own territory and is not subject to the jurisdiction of another inside or outside its territory”.

Interesting is that with the development of cross-border cooperation or transnational cooperation, the meaning of borders has changed. Christiansen puts it perfectly: “borders are not any more what they used to be: from being dividing lines of separate spaces they have turned into the reason for co-operation. Instead of defining exclusion they now define inclusion”. Because the border is no longer what it used to be – a dividing line – and because of the apparition of new borders as a result of the multiplication of cross-border regions, the state’s legitimacy based on territorial sovereignty is now meaningless. It is in this context that Kenichi Ohmae proposes his theory. Because of the meaningless of borders in a globalised economy, the role of states is declining in favour of regional states which are the new centres of power. They hold the economic power and are defined as possibly falling within the borders of a particular nation.

Other scholars have also been writing on the decline of the state. Rhode, professor of political science and UK economist, introduced the concept of “new governance” as being

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12 Ibid Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, 1-5.
13 Ibid, 81.
characterised by the decreasing role of government and the increasing role of alternative actors and agencies. Both Ohmae and Rhode agree on the declining role of the state and increasing role of an alternative actor to the state, whether it is in favour of the regions (Ohmae) or in favour of “alternative actors and agencies” (Rhodes).

The adaptation of the state

On the other hand, Linda Weiss, Professor of political science at the university of Sydney, developed an alternative response: “the state is not declining but adapting through new partnerships with regions”. The state is here still an active centre. She argues that despite the phenomenon of state denial, the state has a big capacity to coordinate and appears to be in the central position to give effective responses to technological competition. In this way, the state is not declining, but adapting its tasks to new challenges such as “globalisation”. By creating regional agreements, the state is adapting to both internal and external challenges and tries to stay at the core of policy-making by creating alliances and partnerships at the local level. With these partnerships, states are seeking power to remain the active centre in politics.

In the next section, I would like to apply these theories to the case of the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino to investigate the importance and role of the state in order to determine whether the state is or is not an important and effective actor at the regional and local level.

The construction of the region: a bottom-up development

The region (Tyrol-South Tyrol-Alto Adige-Trentino) is not an artificial construction but lies on strong common roots.

The construction of every Euroregion is different from one another: whether it was artificially created or whether it is based on historical, economic, or social roots. I will now analyse the construction of the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino which appears to be based on strong historical roots.

14 Maura Adshead, Developing European Regions (Limerick: University of Limerick, 2002), 4.
16 Ibid, 7.
17 Ibid, 9.
18 Ibid, 211.
A historical construction

The territory under review consists of the nowadays Land of Tyrol (Austrian territory) and the two provinces of Bozen and Trentino (both Italian territory) which together, since 1996, constitute the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Alto Adige-Trentino. They share common characteristics such as economic and environmental challenges. A common past is also one of the features. The history of Tyrol shows indeed that the region has been very much disputed over the centuries. A major reason for that is its geographical strategic position between northern and southern Europe, but also as being the meeting point of two cultures: Romania (where they spoke romance language) and Germania where the Germanic language dominated. The territory suffered many divisions and was conquered by different powers at different periods in history.

It is relevant to come back shortly on the history of the region as the special status given to the region is explained. The creation of a Euroregion will therefore be justified. Already in the 11th century in Europe, there was a gradual delegation of sovereignty from the emperors to the bishops. Bishops were nominated at the head of counties and in the German empire they became “Fürsten” (state princes). These “Fürsten” or Counts became the new centre of authority in the different counties and were very influential.

Under the Duchy of Bavaria, the cities and municipalities acquired a distinctive self-administration with particular rights and privileges well-distributed over the territory of Tyrol. Count Meinhard II was an important figure in the 13th century for the development of the state legislature of the region: he modernised the power and financial structure. The Tyrolean Landstände which can be translated as Tyrolean Estate (and corresponds to today’s regional parliament) was created in 1342. The Land Tirol’s website stresses the quickness with which this Land created an institution with democratic features – compared to neighbouring counties – and where all citizens of different social stratum were more or less enrolled in the political process. This information should however be taken cautiously as the Land Tyrol may intensify the reality on their website. The Tyrolean Landstände controlled the state prince and

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20 To avoid confusion, I will simply use the term Tyrol to refer to this territory.
21 Oskar Peterlini, Autonomie und Minderheitenschutz in Trentino-Südtirol (Committe of Regional Council of Trentino-Südtirol, 1996), 37
22 Ibid. 37
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his government by making laws and raising taxes.\textsuperscript{25} The citizens and the peasants of Tyrol could vote from the beginning in the parliament, which made them active citizens. They were conscious of the special status of their region which created a common will to fight for their territory.

There was a need to preserve the privileges of the *Land* – known as “Tiroler Freiheiten”\textsuperscript{26} in times of attempts from the emperors to centralise the authority in Vienna. When Tyrol was acquired by Habsburg in 1363, it remained a central independent county.\textsuperscript{27} Habsburg protected the special status of the county because of the important strategic position it had.\textsuperscript{28}

Under attempts to centralise the power, the emperors carried out reforms to limit the liberties of Tyrol. A consequence was the banishment of some assemblies. But Tyrolean citizens fought for the rights of their assembly and for the preservation of the region’s special status.

Tyrol has constantly been divided and occupied. The last division occurred in 1918 after World War I with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the re-establishment of the frontiers. President Wilson claimed that “the readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality”.\textsuperscript{29} The actual configuration of the region dates from 1918: South Tyrol and Trentino have been incorporated by the Italian government while the northern part of Tyrol remained under Austrian control.

Since then, the provinces of Bozen and Trentino, and the county of Tyrol, each on their respective side of the border have grown in a different jurisdictional framework (the Austrian one and the Italian one). Despite this, the strong roots that have once bound the region together reappeared and the common interests on both sides appear to be stronger than borders. Many measures have been undertaken, often with difficulties, to reunify this region and to come to the creation of the actual Euroregion.

History shows that despite constant divisions of the county by outside powers or state attempts to centralise power, the special status of the region created a strong common identity among citizens that were ready to fight for the preservation of their liberties. This, I believe has put some pressure on the respective states of Italy and Austria and has given little space to the states in the functioning of the region. That explains partly why the Italian Government, for example, came to the decision of the creation of a status of autonomy for the provinces of

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Tyrolean Liberties.
\textsuperscript{27} Werner Köfler, ”Geschichte Tirol,”
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Interpretation of President Wilson’s Fourteen Points, www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/doc31.htm (accessed 22 March 2010).
Bozen and Trentino. Gaining autonomy status was therefore a long and difficult process for these regions but it was justified by history.

Cross-border cooperation: a bottom-up approach to politics

The development of cross-border regions started in the 1950s and appears to be a bottom-up initiative meaning that the policy makers are not national representatives but local and regional ones. The state has little to do (at least at the beginning) with the development of cross-border cooperation.

Indeed cooperation started at the local level with first individual activities because of the absence of legal and administrative competences. Each side of the border has different laws, administration, taxation, etc. Gabbe defines this co-operation as follows: “the goal of co-operation in border and cross-border regions is to develop cooperative structures, procedures and instruments that facilitate the removal of obstacles and foster the elimination of divisive factors” and finally to “transcend borders and reduce their significance to that of mere administration boundaries.

Regional associations were created on each side of the border aiming to improve CBC. Some of these associations then merged to form a bigger association to better address cross-border issues. Co-operation was then extended to governments, which were included in the integration process of the regions. Finally, a European association known as “union for border regions” was created. It is now named the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). This association developed cross-border programmes, founded the “Assembly of European Regions” (AER) and participated actively in the mid 1990s to create the “Committee of the Regions”(CoR), with whom they now work closely. It also helps other border regions in Europe to implement cross-border EU programmes. It is also from this association that the programmes such as INTERREG were created to tackle the problems in border areas.

The development of CBC shows that it is the result of regional and local initiatives. The first and main policy makers here were not state representatives. It followed a bottom-up approach to politics. Key elements of successful cross-border cooperation are for example the proximity to citizens and the partnership and subsidiarity principles: regional and local levels are the best suited to sort out problems related to CBC.

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31 Ibid, 15.
32 Ibid, 19.
33 Ibid, 61.
Let’s first underline the problems the state can cause for CBC, and then scrutinise in part three if the states of Austria and Italy are obstacles to cross-border cooperation. As Gabbe underlines, there are a number of negative factors for a state to be an obstacle. First, public law limitations on local/regional authorities imposed by the national authorities may exist. Secondly, the differences in structures and powers of different levels of agreement and administration on either side of the border may prove problematic. The third point is the lack of political will, especially at national level to remove existing constraints, through new national legislation or bilateral treaties.

The last important point to understand before looking more closely at the region selected is to see what the meaning of Euroregion is for the state. The AEBR and the Council of Europe settled criteria to identify a Euroregion:

- it must be an association of local and regional authorities on both sides of the national border and sometimes with the presence of a parliamentary assembly; (it must be) a cross-border association with a permanent office, an administrative team and own resources; (it must be) a non-profit making organization based on private law; (it must be) based on an interstate agreement (in other words, on public law).

According to these criteria, we can see that local and regional authorities are the main actors for the creation of a Euroregion. The development of the Euroregion has to develop in accordance with the respective national jurisdictional framework in which they are. The state is therefore an actor; not the first one, but as Euroregions are not totally free because they have to respect the national rule of law, the state controls and still has legitimacy. Moreover, as I just underlined, a Euroregion must be based on an interstate agreement which means that the local and regional authorities depend on national authorities: in this sense, there is a dependency of the region on the state.

If the actual Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Alto Adige-Trentino is the result of a long historical process where local, regional authorities and citizens of the regions have mainly been the actors of the regional construction, state actors are legitimate actors too with whom local and regional authorities have to work with and respect the national framework. Despite the special status the region was given in the past, there is a dependency on the state. The next...

34 Ibid, 61.
step in this paper will now be to see the direction in which this dependency on the state goes. Is the region being more and more dependent to the state or not?

**The territorial distribution of power**

In this part, the functioning of the region will be explained, as well as the different organs that constitute it on both sides of the border and the common bodies, in order to see what is now done in this region, what activities are favoured and what are the states of Austria and Italy’s reaction to it. This will help us to determine the direction the region takes. Are we going towards a regional autonomy from the state where the activities implemented give more power to the region or towards more interdependency between the state and the region? I am mainly going to focus on the state and the region. The European level will not be analysed here. First, I will analyse the structure and functioning of the region. After focusing on the respective approaches of the Austrian and Italian government to the region, I will analyse what states think of recent activities implemented.

**Cross-border structure: the functioning of the region**

The Euroregion is represented at many different political levels. First, the Euroregion discussed in this paper is composed of three different parts: every province or Land has its own parliament: the provincial parliament of Tyrol in Innsbruck, the provincial parliament of the autonomous region of South Tyrol in Bozen and the provincial parliament of the autonomous province of Trento (Consiglio della Provincia Autonoma di Trento). Moving closer to each other, the three provinces signed the “Convention on cross-border cooperation within a Euroregion” in 1998. This is known as the first step towards the establishment of organisational structures for the Euroregion Tyrol-south Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino.\(^{37}\)

Second, in 1995, the three councils created the transboundary office for common representation of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino in Brussels.\(^{38}\) The aim is to represent the interests of the region at the European level and in this way better integrate the region in the European Union. One of the objectives of the Euroregion is to gather information and transfer it to the region.\(^{39}\) At the EU level, the two provinces of Bozen and Trento and the Land of Tyrol are represented in different European institutions or bodies.

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38 European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino http://en.alpeuregio.info/.

such as the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament (via party representatives), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (which is a consultative body within the Council of Europe), etc.

Finally, the last body of the region is the joint-office of the European region of Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino in Bozen. This was created in 2009 as a symbol of the high level of networking and is again a local initiative from the three governments of the Euroregion. The office is composed of representatives of the three provinces and they are in direct contact with the transboundary office in Brussels. The three levels of representation (local, regional, and European) work in interaction. This Euroregion is, however, very much tied to the national framework.

The implementation and perception of the European Grouping Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

For more clarity, a new European legal instrument, designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, has been implemented in 2006: the European Grouping Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The European Commission defined it as a “legal entity (that) will enable regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different member states, to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality”.

Upon my written enquiry to the representatives of the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino, I was informed that the Euroregion was now implementing an EGTC. I will briefly explain what this EGTC entails, in order to analyse what it will mean for the state.

The EGTC is a stable legal structure with autonomous legal personality, constituted by territorial authorities from at least two member states. The EGTC shall be governed by a convention or by the laws of the member states where it is registered and it is considered as an entity of the member state. In other words, an EGTC has autonomy (with its own rules of

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43 Ibid, Article 3(2).
44 Ibid, Article 2(1).
applicable law) but remains in the jurisdictional framework of the member state. What is not covered by the EGTC is covered by the legislation of the member state.45

The members of the EGTC define a convention that enumerates its tasks, which, however, may not run counter to the interest of the state.46 The EGTC shall be governed by the laws of the member states where it has its registered office.47 Here again, if an activity carried out by the EGTC is not in accordance with the national law, then the state has control, can ask for the removal of the activity and can dissolve the EGTC. The state is regarded as a regulator, controller and partner. The EGTC is a real advancement in the domain of regional cooperation as it gives more power to the region and a real capacity of intervention. Partnership is wide, open to the state.

This EGTC project has been implemented in the Adriatic Euroregion, but the Italian government perceived this new instrument as being imposed by the European Commission.48 The ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian government have been a bit reluctant to accept this new instrument because of the political and legal problems it poses: it gives too much freedom on a regional level, such as the possibility to create interregional organs governing transnational organisations.49

As the EGTC is currently being implemented in the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino, it is too early to analyse the reactions from both Austrian and Italian government, but it has already encountered some reluctance in other Euroregions in Italy.

The role of the Austrian and Italian states

Before dealing separately with the two states’ approach, I would like to raise some problems that cross-border co-operation can cause for the states. First, there may be on each side of the border different levels of decentralisation of power to the region. Second, despite a will on each side of the border to co-operate, there may be conflicts preventing a union. Finally, the motivation and will to co-operate might not be the same on each side of the border. These problems raised are real ones and the creation of the Euroregion in the last fifty years has not been an easy task with many conflicts arising between both states. However, despite this,

46 Ibid, Article 7 (4).
47 Ibid, Article 12 (1).
49 Ibid.
agreements have been made between Austria and Italy to go beyond these divisive issues. In 1993, the two republics signed an agreement on “Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities” to foster transfrontier co-operation by promoting appropriate initiatives. Co-operation has to take place “within the limits of competence which the internal legislation of each contracting state assigns to the bodies”.

Therefore, the two countries allowed transfrontier co-operation and helped the regions concerned. More freedom and autonomy has here been given to the region but within the public law of the respective countries. This interstate agreement shows that the national governments are the important players that allow the creation of a jurisdictional framework for the region to work well. Hence, they act as partner.

**The Austrian government and the region: what relationship?**

Austria is a federal state constituted of nine Länder. By definition a federation is composed of members who have a large degree of autonomy and give some of its power to a central organism (federal or central). In the Austrian constitution, the competences of the federal government and those of the Länder are clearly defined. Article 11 (9) states for instance that “the federal government has power to inspect via federal agencies documents of the Land authorities”. It also checks the execution of federal legislation. The Länder have a constitutional autonomy meaning its own legislation, they are responsible for the execution of many federal matters, they can conclude treaties with other Länder, etc. Despite a high degree of Land autonomy, the federal government has the final word through controlling the execution of federal legislation. It is first a role of supervision.

This great autonomy given by the constitution to the Länder makes it easier for the state to extend it to the Euroregion; that is to say to a cross-border region. A good example of this high level of decentralisation is the working community of the central Alps, ARGE-ALP, established in 1972. Its members co-operate in various fields such as the economy, environment, agriculture, spatial planning, education, etc.

The decentralisation of power is well explained on the Austrian government’s website where we can find an article dedicated to regional policy and how it is implemented in

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Austria: the Austrian government has clearly a role of co-ordinator of the different levels of policy. But most important is the coordination of the European Structural Funds from the government. Money dedicated to regional policy is partly given to the state that then shares the money between its regions. The financial argument is therefore very important in order to talk about autonomy of the region. To achieve the aim of European Territorial Cooperation, the INTERREG programme IV, supported by Italy and Austria, has been implemented. It finances for example the Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino. The Austrian state is also encouraging regional development.

The Austrian state’s role as co-ordinator is supported by the Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz (ÖROK), which can be translated as Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning. It was created in 1971 by the Bund, the Länder and the municipalities to co-ordinate spatial planning at the national level. A variety of actors work together on projects such as “Europaregion”. With their reports and studies, their role is advisory. It is the body that co-ordinates the European and internal national level.

Important for the state is the number of partnerships created to remain in control of what happens at regional level. In 2002 the Austrian government created the “Netzwerk der Netzwerke”. One of its objectives is to profit from the experience of others. INTERREG is an example of an existing network created and supported by the governments of Austria and Italy. Regional Management is another Austrian network constituting of national, regional and local actors for the enhancement of regional co-operation.

On the one hand, the Austrian state’s role of supervisor and coordinator shows the level of commitment the state still has and is willing to keep. On the other hand, all these initiatives prove the active support the state gives to the further development of CBC and further decentralisation of power (made easier by the already above-mentioned high level of decentralisation). The Austrian signature (in 1980) and ratification (1982) of the “Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities” encourages and facilitates the conclusion of cross-border agreements between

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54 Interreg IV Italy-Austria, http://www.interreg.net/de/programm/prioritaeten.asp.
55 Municipalities.
local and regional authorities within the scope of their respective powers.\textsuperscript{58} The additional protocol, which recognises the right of territorial communities to conclude transfrontier co-operation agreements has also been signed and ratified; it proves the relatively high degree of political autonomy the state is willing to give to the Euroregion.

\textit{The Italian government and the region: what relationship?}

Despite strong political pressures for federalism in Italy in the 1990s, the Italian territorial structure remains unitary. However, the decentralisation of power has been started and five regions were given a special statute of autonomy, among them the region Trentino/Alto Adige/Südtirol.\textsuperscript{59} This dates back to 1946, when Alcide de Gasperi (then Italian prime minister) and Karl Gruber (then Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs) signed a treaty in Paris.\textsuperscript{60} The region then acquired a second status of autonomy in 1972. In the Constitution for a “Special Statute for Trentino-Alto Adige”, Article 1, by defining the autonomous territory, puts emphasis on the fact that its legal structure is dependent on the state’s structure:

Trentino-Alto Adige, comprising the territory of the provinces of Trento and Bolzen, constitutes an autonomous region, with legal status, within the political structure of the Italian Republic, one and indivisible, on the basis of the principles of the Constitution and according to the present Statute.\textsuperscript{61}

Like the Austrian Länder, the region of Trentino-Alto Adige has the power to issue law on a number of issues (such as education, employment, culture, etc.) even if the central government has exclusive jurisdiction and can control the constitutional validity through state commissionaires to make sure the national interests are being preserved.\textsuperscript{62} They work for the Home Secretary and have the role of co-ordinator. The region has now autonomous resources and receives a part of the tax revenue collected in their own territory. They can establish and apply their own taxation.\textsuperscript{63} This financial autonomy can be seen as being in competition with the state.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{60} Oskar Peterlini, \textit{Autonomie und Minderheitenschutz in Trentino-Südtirol} (Committee of Regional Council of Trentino-Südtirol, 1996), 115.
\bibitem{62} Oskar Peterlini, Automonie und Minderheitenschutz, 144.
\end{thebibliography}
Despite this, the state remains a strong regulatory actor through control of regional implementations and distribution of resources to municipalities for the development of infrastructural projects. But the reforms implemented go towards more and more fiscal decentralisation, underlines Stefano Piperno, who works at the Institute of Social Economic Research in Piedmont. He observes an increase of the local government’s participation and decrease of the state’s involvement with the relevant example of building a regional tax autonomy.  

The Italian government also creates partnerships to support the regional development and somehow remains in control of what happens in its territory. INTERREG, as has been already mentioned, is a partnership supported by both Italian and Austrian governments. The government signed and ratified the Madrid Convention like Austria did, but did not ratify the additional protocol which recognises the right of territorial communities to conclude transfrontier co-operation agreements. It seems that there is more resistance on the Italian side to support transfrontier co-operation. This is probably partly due to the traditional distribution of power in each country. Austria is a federal state with a higher and more harmonious degree of decentralisation of power to its nine Länder, whereas the process of decentralisation of power in a unitary Italian system is more recent, less harmonious between the regions and more fragmented.

**Conclusion**

This paper posed the following question: is the role of the state declining in favour of the region or is it rather adapting to new challenges? I argue that the two tendencies corresponding to the two theories mentioned in my theoretical part, are valid and even connected. In the case of the region Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino, both states lost some of its power, although Italy perhaps lost more power, because of being a unitary state where the decentralisation of power is more recent than in Austria. This is evident in the example of the delegation of administrative power to the region and the particular status the Euroregion now acquired. What the evolution of cross-border co-operation shows, is that even if the state was not an active player at the creation of the Euroregion, it is nonetheless an effective actor because of the place it occupies in the different treaties implemented (especially recently in the rules of the EGTC) and thanks to the partnerships it creates. What

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has been lost by the state has been acquired in a new way with new instruments. The state is not declining but rather transforming. The Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol/Alto Adige-Trentino can better develop autonomously because of the space that is currently being created by both European and national initiatives. The Austrian state seems to be less reluctant in this than the Italian state. However, both states remain relevant supervisors, controllers and regulators of the process. In this context, the quotation from Marks and Hooghe on multi-level governance, mentioned at the beginning of my paper, makes sense. States are probably not the central players in regionalism and cross-border co-operation, because of the need to act closer to local and regional problems, but recent activities include the state and make it an actor among others. With the interdependency between states and regions, the state is important to integrate better the Euroregions into Europe.
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