

Introduction to the Special Issue on National Cultural Autonomy in Diverse Political Communities: Practices, Challenges, and Perspectives

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Numerous contemporary examples attest to the continued political salience of ethnic identification. This is the case even in multi-ethnic societies bound together by a strong overarching sense of patriotism, but it is most especially so in contexts where ethnicity has historically functioned as the building block of modern nations (Rudolph 2006). Since today's world contains many more ethno-culturally defined nations than it does states, a tension persists between the principle of self-determination of peoples and the principle of territorial integrity of existing polities (Dembinska, Márazc, and Tonk 2014). The almost invariable overlapping of different ethno-national populations within the same territorial space renders the nation-state concept inherently problematic as a modality for ethnically based self-determination, for while all nation-state projects dictate cultural uniformity, all must contend with differing degrees of pluralism. Within the nation-state frame, those who do not profess belonging to the dominant ethnocultural community are consigned to the category of “national minority” and thereby deemed an anomaly and a barrier to the creation of a “good political order.”¹ In this context, claims by minority national and ethnic communities for recognition of collective rights can be easily construed as a threat to the security of the state and its dominant ethno-national group, leading to situations of tension and—in the worst case—open conflict.

The tension between national self-determination and the sovereignty and integrity of existing states has been especially acute in the region covered by this special issue, which comprises territories formerly belonging to the polyethnic Habsburg, tsarist Russian and Ottoman empires prior to 1918. The post-World War One peace settlements brokered by the victorious Western Powers were supposed to address the national claims on behalf of subject peoples which had done much to tear these empires asunder during the conflict. Yet, insofar as they actually prioritized self-determination, the peacemakers followed the “territorial principle” of granting each ethnoculturally defined nation a sovereign state “of its own.” In most of the former tsarist empire, meanwhile, the Bolsheviks used the language of national self-determination instrumentally as a way of consolidating power, creating a state that, though multinational and federalist in name only, also strongly institutionalized the linkage between ethnicity and territory. Ultimately, neither the interwar Western nor the longer-lasting Soviet approach addressed the underlying “national question” inherited from the former empires. More than a century on, as Eric Hobsbawm (1992, 164) put it, “the eggs of Versailles and Brest-Litovsk are still hatching.” In Central and Eastern Europe, the fall of communist regimes from 1989 and the later dissolution of Yugoslavia and the USSR revived the issue of how to accommodate competing ethnonational claims within the states—both new and longer-established—of the region. These issues also remain relevant to the Middle East, as the contributions to this special issue by Cengiz Gunes and Ephraim Nimni demonstrate through the cases of Kurdish autonomy and Israel-Palestine, respectively.

One suggested modality for addressing nationality issues within the region has been non-territorial autonomy (also known as national-cultural autonomy or nonterritorial cultural autonomy),² which provides the focus for this special issue of *Nationalities Papers*. In terms of its origins, nonterritorial autonomy is most usually associated with ideas developed by the Austrian socialists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer during the final two decades of the Habsburg Empire. Renner and Bauer conceived ethnocultural nations not as territorially based entities, but rather as voluntarily constituted “communities of persons” that should have the right to create institutions of self-governance in matters relating to preservation of a particular shared cultural identity (Renner 1899/2005; Bauer 2000). The remit of these institutions, they argued, should not to be confined to a particular territorial subregion within a state, but should extend to all citizens professing belonging to the relevant group, irrespective of where they may reside within the overall state territory. This thinking was explicitly designed to counter claims to exclusive ownership of territory by particular ethno-cultural groups. In this way, Renner and Bauer hoped to defuse growing nationalist divisions within the country’s labor movement and instill a plurinational understanding of statehood that would support their goal of transforming the Empire into a democratic and socialist federal state.

Renner and Bauer’s model was never fully adopted within a Habsburg context, and was long regarded as little more than an interesting historical footnote. The 1990s, however, saw a renaissance of scholarly interest in nonterritorial autonomy that has shown no signs of abating up to the present day.³ Central to this revival have been numerous works by Ephraim Nimni, who has brought Renner and Bauer’s ideas more fully to the attention of an English-language readership.⁴ In the same period, David J. Smith, John Hiden, and Martyn Housden—among others—have examined how the original concept of nonterritorial autonomy was carried over into the newly established Baltic States of the 1920s, shaping unique arrangements for national minorities that elicited wider transnational activism and policy debates at the European level.⁵ Over time, the contemporary resonance of this historical research became increasingly clear, as the revival of scholarship coincided with a (largely unforeseen) return of nonterritorial autonomy to the political agenda in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Since 1991, institutional arrangement bearing the label of nonterritorial autonomy or national cultural autonomy have been adopted in Hungary, Estonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Montenegro. Less obviously, reference to the concept can also be found in minority laws in Latvia and Ukraine, while nonterritorial autonomy continues to feature prominently in debates in Romania.⁶ These developments coincided with a renewed focus on minority issues at the international level, as Euro-Atlantic and European organizations—Conference on (later Organisation for) Security and Cooperation in Europe; Council of Europe; and, latterly, the European Union—began to devise the elements of what has come to be known as the European minority rights regime (Galbreath and McEvoy 2012). In this context, reference to nonterritorial autonomy can be found within key documents such as the 1999 Lund Recommendations on Participation in Public Life produced by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities. 1999).

The return of this “potentially promising model” (Buquicchio 2008, 8) to the international political agenda has inspired a range of works discussing theoretical aspects of nonterritorial autonomy (Bauböck, 2001; the essays in Nimni, 2005; Roach 2005) and its contemporary manifestations within the Central and East European and Middle Eastern regions. The latter include case studies of individual countries (Osipov 2004; Dobos 2011) and edited volumes and articles covering a range of different cases (Smith and Cordell, 2008; Osipov, 2010; Smith 2013; Nimni, Osipov, and Smith 2013; Salat et al., 2014; Kántor 2014; Malloy, Osipov, and Vizi 2015; Malloy and Palermo 2015; Nimni and Aktoprak 2018). Several of these works have usefully set our region of study in a wider perspective, analyzing arrangements elsewhere in the world that are today usually described as forms of nonterritorial autonomy. Among other things, this body of scholarship highlights the

sheer difficulty of defining nonterritorial autonomy in today's world, given the broad spectrum of often very different arrangements encompassed by the label. At the same time, it has highlighted issues common to all cases, many of which are further touched upon in the contributions to this special issue.

Central to the discussion of nonterritorial autonomy, for instance, is the communitarian versus liberal debate as to whether self-determination can be understood as the property of a group, or only of individuals freely associating and acting in concert with other individuals. In Renner and Bauer's original theoretical formulation, nonterritorial autonomy institutions (the collective legal subject of autonomy) rest on individual free choice of identity and voluntary adhesion (the "personal principle," to use Renner's (1899/2005) terminology). In practical terms, however, setting the boundaries for inclusion within the institutional framework is a far from straightforward task. Renner and Bauer's original scheme is also open to the charge of essentialism, since it implies that an individual can hold only one ethnic identity. While this might appear meaningful in political contexts shaped by strong preexisting group boundaries, it is at odds with the complexity and fluidity of individual identity often found in ethnoculturally diverse environments. The issue of boundaries is also linked to what Erin Jenne (2007, 29) calls the "integrationist versus segregationist dichotomy"—how to strike a balance between collective minority claims to self-rule on the one hand and, on the other, the rights and aspirations of individuals belonging to minorities to play a full and equal role in the wider society of which they form part. In this regard, several recent contributions to the literature frame nonterritorial autonomy primarily in terms of minority participation—as a question not just of self-rule, but of *shared* rule (Malloy, Osipov, and Vizi 2015). A similar understanding has guided the thinking of international organizations on nonterritorial autonomy, as Stéphanie Marsal's contribution to this special issue makes clear.

For all of this burgeoning literature, however, the study of nonterritorial autonomy is "far from exhausted" (Osipov 2010, 29). Alexander Osipov wrote these words in an article published in 2010, but they remain relevant nearly a decade later. In the article, Osipov remarks upon the preponderance of legal and political philosophical approaches within existing scholarship on nonterritorial autonomy, leading to a normative approach and a "focus on *what could and should be done* rather than on analyzing and describing *what, in fact, exists*" (Osipov, 2010, 30, emphasis original). He especially criticized what he saw as the "groupist" assumptions behind many existing studies, reflecting scholars' tendency to view ethnic communities as self-evident, internally cohesive social actors. Within this "methodologically narrow corridor," he argued, discussions of autonomy become limited to political and technical issues of how to secure agreement between governments and ethnic communities and the most appropriate organizational forms that should flow from this (Osipov 2010, 29–30).

Osipov's point about a focus on "what should be" certainly seems apposite if one considers the top-down, state-centric, and security-based perspective adopted by many recent studies of nonterritorial autonomy in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. Here, there has been a clearly discernible tendency among those producing the literature to juxtapose territorial and nonterritorial autonomy as conceptual opposites, with the former being portrayed as inherently contentious and destabilizing, and the latter as a kind of "magic bullet" in the armoury of those seeking to cope with problems of ethnic diversity and conflict" (Coakley, 2016a, 166).⁷ Several authors have rightly criticized this normative one-size fits-all approach with regard to the diverse array of complex minority situations across the region, while underlining the unlikelihood that ethnopolitical claims will ever be deterritorialized entirely (Kymlicka 2007; Purger 2012).⁸ Nevertheless, to return to Osipov's (2010) original argument, there are still very few studies that explore the actual *practice* of nonterritorial autonomy across different Central and East European contexts and hardly any that focus on the experiences and perspectives of minority political actors speaking for communities that display a variety of different situations, needs and claims (Smith 2013). This is a point echoed more recently by Tove Malloy (2015, 3), who attributes the current

absence of conceptual clarity around nonterritorial autonomy at least in part to a lack of adequate institutional description and contextual knowledge.

With regard to Central and Eastern Europe, preexisting methodological approaches mean that there has until now been no single comprehensive, empirically based cross-regional comparison of nonterritorial autonomy exploring the questions of what, why, and for whom: how *autonomy* is defined in different contexts; how nonterritorial autonomy arrangements came into being; how—and in what broader institutional setting—they operate; how they are perceived by minority and majority elites; and the implications this carries for the construction of political community across the region. Addressing this gap was the key goal of David J. Smith's project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, *Minority Rights and Democratic Political Community: Practices of Non-Territorial Cultural Autonomy in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, from 2014 to 2018, housed at the University of Glasgow, from which this special issue is derived. The researchers on this project⁹ conducted nearly two hundred in-depth interviews with relevant political actors (primarily minority nonterritorial autonomy and nongovernmental organization representatives, state officials, and academic experts) across five countries (Estonia, Hungary, Romania, the Russian Federation, and Serbia), gathering a unique repository of empirical data.¹⁰ In each case, attention to the actual political practice brought to light the “hidden agendas” (Malloy 2015, 3) that often lie behind nonterritorial autonomy, by exploring how elites from both minority and majority ethnic communities deploy autonomy instrumentally for their own ends, and how domestic and international political factors interacted to shape outcomes across the different contexts.

The project also linked up with other nonterritorial autonomy-focused research on Central and Eastern Europe—notably Balázs Dobos's electoral study at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences¹¹—while seeking to engage policy makers and practitioners and set our case-study countries within a broader comparative framework. All of these objectives came together in a project seminar kindly hosted by the Department of Political Science at Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania, which the project team scheduled to coincide with a roundtable discussion on nonterritorial autonomy at the 2017 Cluj Congress of the Federal Union of European Nationalities. The articles selected for this special issue are all based on papers originally presented at the project seminar, and all of them bring something new to contemporary discussions of nonterritorial autonomy.

In the opening article, David J. Smith discusses the politics of nonterritorial autonomy in present-day Estonia, setting this within the wider context of late-Soviet era and post-1991 approaches to state- and nation-building and, in particular, bringing out the perspectives (often disregarded or misrepresented) of local Russian minority elites toward the model of nonterritorial autonomy. Drawing on interviews and previously unused archival sources, the article offers the first fully comprehensive account of the debates and processes leading to the adoption of Estonia's 1993 Law on Minority Cultural Autonomy. Existing studies already show that, far from restoring the comprehensive nonterritorial autonomy framework found in interwar Estonia, the 1993 law was in many ways a pale imitation of its famous 1925 predecessor. Smith, however, shows that a far more substantial draft was under consideration during 1990–1991, until a sudden and dramatic shift in international context paved the way for the *de facto* restoration of Estonian statehood and a cardinal shift in domestic politics. Hereafter, Smith argues, debates on nonterritorial autonomy became primarily about defining and fixing who could legally claim to belong to a “national minority” (and, more importantly, who could not). In highlighting the interplay of the domestic and international levels Smith also outlines the broader conceptual thinking behind his Economic and Social Research Council project, anchoring the discussion in the “quadratic nexus” framework that he first sketched in 2002 and has since been further developed in relation both to the Baltic States and to the region more generally (Smith, 2002; Cheskin, 2015; Cheskin and Kachuyevski 2019; Schulze 2018).

In the contribution that follows, Judit Molnar Sansum and Balázs Dobos reflect similarly upon how domestic and international factors intersected to shape Hungary's 1993 Law on National

Minorities, which enshrined collective rights to national-cultural autonomy for the country's mostly numerically small and dispersed ethnic minority populations. Their article is based on the first systematic analysis of the parliamentary debates preceding the law, as well as on follow-up interviews with key actors involved in the process. The standard interpretation of the 1993 law has been to see it as motivated purely by a strategic desire to establish Hungary's international credentials in the sphere of minority protection, so as to enhance the post-communist ruling elite's claims to speak on behalf of the far more sizeable ethnic Hungarian minorities living in neighboring states. The article argues that, while "kin-state" aspirations were undoubtedly an important factor, an exclusive focus on this dimension serves to obscure what is in fact a more complex picture. Molnar Sansum and Dobos suggest that for many domestic political actors at the start of the 1990s, defense of a transborder Hungarian nation was nested within a genuine commitment to developing international norms and promoting democratization and minority rights, including greater justice for Hungary's already marginalized Roma community. As has been the case in other countries of the region, however, this initial impetus struggled to overcome the inherited legacies of the communist (and pre-communist) past. Minority actors were ultimately unable to make their voices heard within the legislative process, resulting in a centralized system that—while broadly satisfying the aspiration of at least some minority communities—has carried egregious consequences for Hungary's Roma in particular.

The question of how existing legislative frameworks actually operate in practice leads neatly on to the contribution by Stéphanie Marsal, who outlines the experience of nonterritorial autonomy as seen from the standpoint of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's High Commissioner on National Minorities, where she worked as a senior advisor until 2017. Contrary to claims by some recent studies (Csergő and Regelmann 2017, 292), Marsal suggests that the High Commissioner on National Minorities still ascribes value to nonterritorial autonomy, insofar as existing arrangements have helped to dispel perceptions of greater minority participation as something threatening to the territorial integrity of states (in this respect, see Smith 2018). Her analysis nevertheless highlights a number of common problems across different settings, such as the failure to create a consistent and predictable legal framework that clearly delineates the competences of nonterritorial autonomy institutions, inadequate financing and a lack of capacity and/or responsiveness on the part of central authorities with regard to meeting the needs of minority bodies. Marsal also highlights the further challenge of ensuring that nonterritorial autonomy institutions themselves uphold political pluralism rather than becoming monopolized by one political segment of the minority community to the exclusion of others. In the absence of an inclusive and internally pluralistic approach, she argues, nonterritorial autonomy bodies structurally replicate the very nation-state concept that they are supposed to challenge, thereby diminishing their claim to represent the minority community as a whole.

In this way, Marsal's analysis sets the scene for the three articles that follow. In the first of these, Katinka Beretka uses the example of Serbia's National Minority Councils to illustrate the importance of a clearly defined legal framework for the effective operation of autonomy. The system of elected minority councils introduced in Serbia after 2002 drew many plaudits internationally, and has been portrayed as an approach that took Yugoslav legacies and adapted them to the contemporary requirements of European integration (Petsinis 2012). The autonomy provisions have, however, been challenged domestically, and the legal status of the minority councils within Serbia's multilevel governance structure remains unspecified. As such, it is unclear whether the councils truly exercise effective voice in decision-making or whether they should rather be seen merely as consultative bodies. At the time of writing, Beretka argues, they remain *sui generis* bodies with a status somewhere between nongovernmental organizations and public authorities. The next article, by Balázs Dobos, addresses issues related to inclusiveness, representativeness and legitimacy, by offering the first systematic analysis of election procedures for nonterritorial autonomy institutions in Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia. Picking up from the earlier co-authored piece with Molnar Sansum, Dobos observes that, in a Central and East European context, nonterritorial

autonomy has generally been implemented top-down, in such a way as to offer minority groups only symbolic and apolitical power, thereby preventing and neutralizing any more far-reaching claims. While this view is widely accepted in existing literature, it has deflected attention away from questions of how minority members and minority representatives actually perceive and use their own nonterritorial autonomy organizations. Elections have an important role in shaping intra-community relations, but until now this has been largely neglected. Dobos fills this gap through a theoretically grounded comparative analysis covering definition of the electorate, candidate nomination, electoral competition, ballot structure, turnout, and electoral formula. In so doing, he raises a host of issues for future research.

Federica Prina's article also discusses how top-down and bottom-up dynamics interact within the operation of nonterritorial autonomy, but this time in relation to the ostensibly very different case of the contemporary Russian Federation. The stated aim of the 1996 Federal Law on National Cultural Autonomy is to enable Russia's "nontitular" national communities to independently regulate issues relating to the preservation of their identity and their linguistic, educational and cultural development. In this regard, it functions alongside preexisting ethno-territorial formations inherited from the USSR and "peoples' congresses" uniting co-ethnics living within (and in some instances beyond) the borders of the state. National cultural autonomy bodies have, however, mainly been created on the basis of preexisting ethnocultural organizations rather than through direct election, and it is generally agreed that they have very limited influence on decision making (Osipov 2004; Bowring 2007; Prina, 2015). While the increasingly authoritarian character of Russia's political system is obviously one major factor that explains the peripheral status of these bodies, Prina shows that attention must also be given to how nontitular national elites themselves navigate within a framework for nonterritorial cultural autonomy that has been widely embraced at different levels of the state.¹² National cultural autonomy institutions, she argues, can be broadly situated within the concept of Russia's "political community," in as much as they mostly recognize the government's rules of engagement and role as decision-maker and operate within an overarching framework of consensus and shared objectives. This in turn can be attributed to a shared political culture inherited from the Soviet past. At the same time, Prina illustrates a diversity of experiences and attitudes on the part of national cultural autonomy-based respondents, whose engagement with the system is often rooted in "dissentful" rather than "consentful" compliance (Cheskin and March 2015). This again demonstrates the merits of a "ground-up," practice-based approach to the study of nonterritorial autonomy. More generally, Prina usefully highlights the importance of inherited institutional legacies and the condition of "quasi-civil society" shaped by Russia's authoritarian political context. Previous accounts have tended to clearly differentiate Russia's practice of nonterritorial autonomy from those found in Hungary and Serbia.¹³ However, in light of the findings of other articles in this special issue, and the recent political trends observable especially in Hungary, one should question whether such a sharp distinction can in fact be drawn.

The final two articles in this special issue shift the focus to the Middle East, highlighting contexts where innovative approaches to autonomy have been developed—and, in some cases, implemented—from the ground up. In all instances, however, this has occurred against a background of ongoing violent conflict, which poses considerable obstacles to a fuller more durable accommodation of diversity. Cengiz Gunes's article on approaches to Kurdish autonomy in the Middle East deals with Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In the former two cases, state weakness has allowed (one might say impelled) Kurdish movements to establish their own autonomous formations—the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria. Strictly speaking, these are both examples of territorial, as opposed to nonterritorial autonomy. However, as Gunes demonstrates, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria combines territorial and non-territorial elements in a way that corresponds to Palermo's vision of more inclusive territorial arrangements that take the ethnic heterogeneity of a region into account. The blueprint for the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, moreover, originates from the remarkable vision articulated at the turn of the 21st century by Kurdish-Turkish leader Abdullah Öcalan. Described

as democratic confederalism, this seeks to organize (from the grass roots) a transnational confederation of Kurds across the Middle East operating within and across existing internationally recognized borders (in other words, it seeks to address Kurds' long-standing claims for self-determination without creating a sovereign nation-state).¹⁴ Öcalan's scheme also included proposals to reconfigure the Turkish state along lines of "democratic autonomy," through a wider decentralization of power that would offer Kurds the possibility of both territorial and non-territorial autonomy. The dominant political parties in Turkey, however, have remained strongly resistant to any suggestion of diluting the unitary nation-state model, and since 2015 have again resorted to active suppression of Kurdish claims. More generally, Gunes's contribution underlines that workable systems of autonomy rest on shared rather than simply self-rule, while noting that this condition remains absent across most of the region in question. For instance, the consociational and federal framework devised for post-2004 Iraq has not been implemented in practice, leading to a continued majoritarian approach on the part of both the central state and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The rights of minorities at different levels thus remain inadequately protected. Similarly, the longer-term sustainability of Democratic Federation of Northern Syria will depend upon a post-conflict power-sharing mechanism at the state level as well as support from international actors involved in the conflict, some of which (such as Turkey and Iran) actively oppose the consolidation of an autonomous, Kurdish-led entity.

As its title, "The Twilight of the Two-State Solution," suggests, the final article of this special issue questions the viability of the approach long advocated by the international community as a means of resolving the conflict in Israel-Palestine. Instead, Ephraim Nimni argues, present realities dictate a shift towards a single, binational state solution based on principles of shared sovereignty, national cultural autonomy, and collective rights. Nimni highlights how Israeli Palestinians have come together through the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network to develop extensive mechanisms of nonterritorial autonomy from below, with the aim of attaining equal rights and collective representation within a common polity. Whether this development in itself can herald the "new dawn" of which Nimni speaks is obviously open to question, given the formidable obstacles—both domestic and international—to sustainable peace and accommodation arising from 70 years of conflict. Importantly, however, Nimni also demonstrates that national cultural autonomy is far from alien to the Zionist tradition: while the creation of a Jewish national state is often portrayed as the single defining goal of Zionism, this political conception attained its hegemonic position only in the aftermath of World War Two. Prior to that, an influential current of cultural Zionism advocated the creation of a binational state according to principles of national cultural autonomy. Nimni illustrates this tradition with reference to the writings of Brit Shalom and, in particular, the work of Hans Kohn, who moved to Palestine from Prague in 1925 before abandoning Zionism and pursuing an academic career in the United States. As a native of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and former member of the Austrian Socialist Party, Kohn was well acquainted with the thinking of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. He thus all too readily foresaw how the trends evident in the interwar successor states of Central and Eastern Europe might be replicated in Mandatory Palestine.

Nimni's exploration of Kohn's thinking on interwar Palestine further underscores the links between the Central and East European and Middle Eastern contexts discussed in this special issue, and the common issues and dilemmas they evoke. In his article, pointing to the contemporary neglect of Brit Shalom and Kohn's ideas, Nimni observes that historians often present them as a "small curiosity" in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, while political analysts might readily dismiss them as an historical irrelevance. At the same time, as he rightly points out, few could dispute the continued salience of the issues these thinkers first raised a century ago. This comment could be seen as apposite to all of the cases covered by this special issue; for, while the international environment has shifted and *autonomy* has acquired a range of meanings across different contexts, nonterritorial autonomy has today become an established element of political practice reflecting persistent and ongoing ethnic minority claims for greater recognition and self-governance.

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Notes

- 1 “A nation-state, then, consists of two disparate parts: a nation, defined by nonpolitical similarities between men [*sic*], and the state, or political order, that is to rule it. ... Nationalism is the opinion that when the nation and the state are congruent, a good political order will result” (Cohler 1970, 4). On minorities as an anomaly in a world of nation-states, see Jackson Preece 1998 and, more recently, Nancheva 2016.
- 2 All three terms are used in the contributions to this special issue.
- 3 Witness, for instance, the establishment in 2019 of the European Non-Territorial Autonomy Network, a European Cooperation in Science and Technology Action, which aims to examine nonterritorial autonomy from a comparative and comprehensive perspective. Many of the contributors to this special issue are participants in the network. See <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18114/#tabs|Name:overview> (accessed August 1, 2019).
- 4 See, among many others, Nimni 1999, 2000, 2005, 2007. Here, a special mention should also be given to John Coakley, whose 1994 article on nonterritorial autonomy remains an essential point of departure for research in the field (Coakley 1994).
- 5 See, for example, Smith 1999; Hiden 2004; Smith and Hiden, 2012; Housden 2014; also Germane 2013; Smith, Germane, and Housden, 2019. A comprehensive and excellent overview of different historical applications of nonterritorial autonomy can also be found in John Coakley’s 2016 special issue of *Ethnopolitics* (Coakley, 2016b). A European Research Council Starting Grant project launched in 2018 and based at the University of Vienna (Non-Territorial Autonomy as Minority Protection in Europe: An Intellectual and Political History of a Travelling Idea, 1850–2000) is also currently exploring the history of nonterritorial autonomy as a political concept and applied policy. See <https://ntautonomy.oew.ac.at/en/> (accessed August 1, 2019).
- 6 A law based on principles of nonterritorial autonomy was drafted in Romania in early 2005 but has never been put to a full sitting of parliament (see Decker 2007).
- 7 In a similar vein, Aviel Roshwald (2007, 373) observes that nonterritorial autonomy can be “presented as situated at the golden midpoint between Balkanization and banalization. It offers minorities the option of substantive cultural self-determination without linking it to territorial autonomy, with all the centrifugal tendencies the latter may awaken.”
- 8 Of particular note here is recent work by Francesco Palermo (2015), who distinguishes between autonomy granted to a territory and all of its inhabitants (“autonomy to”) and autonomy granted to an ethnic group that constitutes the majority within a territory (“autonomy for”). Whereas the latter approach strengthens ethnic-based claims to ownership and excludes local “minorities within minorities,” the former offers the possibility to develop pluralistic regional identities and institutional arrangements that accommodate all communities through a combination of territorial and nonterritorial approaches. As Palermo (2015, 29) observes, autonomy debates have until now been “still—often involuntarily—trapped in the Westphalian nation state discourse ... [Autonomy is] seen in terms of something ‘belonging’ to groups competing for ownership of a territory.”
- 9 David J. Smith (principal investigator), Federica Prina, and Judit Molnar Sansum.
- 10 The data has been deposited and will be made available through UK Data Service Collection Number 852375. For further initial findings from the project, see Smith and Semenyshyn 2016; Prina, Smith, and Sansum, 2018; Prina, Smith, and Sansum, 2019; Prina, 2018.

- 11 “The Internal Dynamics of Non-Territorial Autonomy Regimes in Central and South-Eastern Europe: A Five-Country Comparison.” Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH) under Grant number PD/116168.
- 12 According to the most recent report submitted by Russia under the Council of Europe Framework Convention on National Minorities, in December 2016, no less than 1,183 federal, regional, and local national-cultural autonomy bodies had been registered in the country as of September 2015 (Council of Europe 2016, 38).
- 13 For instance, Malloy (2015, 14–15) argues that while contemporary arrangements in Hungary confer genuine “voice through institutions of self-governing,” those in Russia (and, indeed, Estonia) are an example of “nonvoice”. The latter category is used to denote “autonomy” provisions which, in practical terms, offer nothing more than symbolic recognition to particular minority ethnocultural communities, which have neither an effective say in their own affairs nor any co-decision powers.
- 14 For a fuller exposition, see Gunes 2013.

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