Over the Atlantic

Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in EU and Latin America

Paulina Astroza Suarez, Giuliana Laschi,
Nahuel Oddone, and Mario Torres Jarrín (eds.)

PETER LANG

The book is the result of a collective research work between the members of the team of the project "Over the Atlantic" (co-founded by the Erasmus + programme). A critical introduction presents the work, the content and the scope of the research, carried out with an interdisciplinary approach.

This book consists of three main parts. The first discusses the institutionalization and normalization of paradiplomacy in some specific and well-documented case studies regarding the Latin America region. The second one refers to the relationship between paradiplomacy and cooperation in the context of international and regional relations. The third part analyses Cities and Parliaments as international diplomatic actors.

The theme of Paradiplomacy, as a means of unofficial relationships that reacts differently to the pressure of the international system, and the role of the local authorities, despite its relevance and importance, is scarcely analysed by academia.

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OVER THE ATLANTIC

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Euroclio
Vol. 115

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

This book is published with the financial support of the European Union (Erasmus + programme).

Published by Peter Lang Editions Scientifiques Internationales - P.I.E., Bruxelles, Belgium
info@peterlang.com - www.peterlang.com

This publication has been peer reviewed.

ISSN 0944-2294
ISBN 978-2-87574-427-2
ePDF 978-2-87574-632-0
ePUB 978-2-87574-633-7
DOI 10.3726/b20853
D/2023/5678/20

Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available online at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

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Introduction

Paulina Astroza Suarez, Giuliana Laschi,
Nahuel Oddone, and Mario Torres Jarrin

For so many years the EU and Latin America have tried to build a mature relationship. Diplomacy and paradiplomacy have played a key role in fostering dialogues, negotiations, and agreements at different levels of governance, from global to local. The EU and Latin America have developed privileged connections since the first Bi-regional Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999, which established a strategic partnership. The conclusions of the summit pointed out strong historical, cultural, political, and economic bonds.[1] As a result, the two partners deepened their commitment to work together for consolidating the respect of human rights and democracy, regional integration, and rules-based multilateralism.

Diplomacy and paradiplomacy play both a crucial role in designing the relations between the two regions, on the world stage and for their bilateral agreements. The pandemic of COVID-19 had significantly increased the relevance of Paradiplomacy, on the global stage in general, and between European and Latin America regions. Recently, Alvarez and Oddone (2022) analyzed the preliminary impact of COVID-19 pandemic on paradiplomacy.[2] In addition, as Oddone has further explained

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1 The evolution of this partnership between the EU and Latin America (and the Caribbean) through bi-regional dialogues have generated during these years inter-relations among different actors of the society. Currently, from a "more diplomatic perspective" this strategic relation is under EU-CELAC Summits system that includes a multiplayers approach (Torres Jarrín, 2018). In the second half of 2023, the Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union hopes to relaunch the EU-CELAC summits suspended since 2015. The EU-CELAC summits are also a platform for institutions and organizations that develop paradiplomacy.

2 See: M. Alvarez and N. Oddone, *Paradiplomacy in Times of Pandemic: Preliminary Lessons of COVID-19 Impacts on the Internationalization of Non-central Governments*, in P. Baisotti and P. Moscuzza (eds.), *Reframing Globalization after COVID 19. Pandemic Diplomacy amid the Failure of Multilateral Cooperation*. Sussex Academic Press, Brighton and Eastbourne, 2022, pp. 40–65.

in this volume, Covid-19 pandemic shaped international cooperation schemes among the regions.

There is no way to analyze the nature of diplomatic and paradiplomatic relations between the two regions, without a reference to the specific characteristics of their integration processes.

> "The magnitude of the integrationist phenomenon has hidden a second trend during the initial years of the post-Cold War, which has not been less significant, the strengthening of the interior spaces of the national State, those that under the denomination of regions, autonomous communities, provinces or states constitute the subnational sphere" (Maira, 2006: 84).

In the study of regional integration processes, new importance has gained considering the dynamics of subnational actors. New forms of multilevel governance are thus emerging, revealing the structural link between subnational regionalism and the new supranational regionalism.

Inspired by the European experience, the early theories of integration focused on the motivations that encouraged national States to go through a process of regional integration, as well as the forms and schemes that this could adopt. Neofunctionalism has expanded the spectrum of analysis by considering societies as the result of competing interests that coexist through institutional arrangements, recognising top-down and bottom-up dynamics within the processes of regional integration. In this way, Neofunctionalism contributes to the understanding of how subnational governments put themselves in the dynamics of integration.

For this reason, while the decision to participate in a regional integration process comes exclusively from the power of the national State, subnational governments have soon concentrated their efforts on building different forms of influence, formal and informal, which – in some cases – has been channeled toward institutional structures (Martín López and Oddone, 2010). Therefore, governance would not be based on a strong and clearly defined nucleus of institutions based in a specific territory, but through political processes and activities originated by the integration between various fields of policy and at different levels of governance. The theoretical approach used to describe and analyze the European integration process was quickly transferred to other integration processes in Latin America, with particular emphasis on the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community (CAN), and the Central American Integration System (SICA), where

many research works discuss institutional isomorphism and the possibilities of adapting the European institutional framework to other regional contexts.

The governance approach has reinforced the interpretation that Central States no longer have a monopoly on global issues but instead share them with other actors, creating a more complex but less rigid and hierarchical system of relations. This system opens new opportunities and tensions among the different actors involved, and these tensions impact on diplomats and paradiplomats. As Sánchez Cano mention in his chapter in this book: "The job of (para)diplomats changes when "international affairs" become "global governance". Modifications in terms of actors, competencies, scales, agendas, and functions in the framework of cooperative processes, occupy a central place in the theoretical reflection that correlates subnational governments and paradiplomacy.

This book consists of three main parts. The first discuss the institutionalization and normalization of paradiplomacy in some specific and well-documented case studies regarding the Latin America region. The second one refers to the relationship between paradiplomacy and cooperation in the context of international and regional relations. The third part analyzes Cities and Parliaments as international diplomatic actors.

Part I: the institutionalization and normalization of paradiplomacy in some specific and well-documented case studies regarding the Latin America region. Against conventional approaches that tend to minimize the importance of paradiplomacy, with Cornago (2010) we understand that "this reality is presently undergoing a process of legal and political normalization throughout the world and deserves greater attention from both diplomatic practitioners and experts".

> Normalization allows the selective incorporation into the diplomatic field of important innovations that are produced by the pluralization of global life, simply because they are -both for functional and normative reasons- too relevant to be ignored. But it simultaneously reaffirms the hierarchical structure of the diplomatic system (Cornago, 2010: 34).

Noé Cornago has extensively analyzed the normalization of paradiplomacy through four lenses: normalization as generalization; normalization as regionalization; normalization as reflective adaptation; and, finally, normalization as settlement of disputes (Cornago, 2010). In the first chapter, *Cross-border paradiplomacy in Latin America: opportunities and challenges for the reopening of borders and the post Covid-19 recovery* by

Nahuel Oddone, the reader will recognize the normalization as regionalization. In the second chapter, *The international linkage of Chilean regions as an example of paradiplomacy in a Unitary State* by Paulina Astroza and Pablo Navarro Rosas, the reader will recognize the normalization as reflective adaptation. In the third chapter, *Galician paradiplomacy (1981–2021): A general description and ten final notes* by Celso Cancela Outeda, the reader will recognize the perspective of normalization as generalization.

The contributions presented in the Part II: Paradiplomacy and cooperation, between international and regional relations, offer different approaches to study the actorness of local and regional authorities in International Relations. In *Link between the localization of SDGs and territorial development: an environmental paradiplomacy-based approach* by Mariano Alvarez, and *Paradiplomacy, "actorness", and the global agendas* by Javier Sánchez Cano, the authors reflect on the linkages between paradiplomacy and the global agendas. The first author M. Alvarez presents a very practical perspective aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the localization of SDGS. The second author, J. Sánchez, presents a theoretical perspective based on the concept of actorness, and its evolution through a diachronic analysis.

The fact that the literature on actorness has focused on the study of the performance of the European Union and some other international organizations, especially within the United Nations System, represents a challenge for the use of the actorness to define other international actors. In the case of non-central governments, the author invites to consider their distinctive characteristics, as well as historical bonds, to understand their angles when trying to be more present on the international arena. This approach has been applied to non-central governments (Luna Pont and Oddone, 2020) highlighting that self-perception and internal cohesion affect the autonomous capacity of the unit to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system.[3] These characteristics could also help to understand the experience of Chinese paradiplomatic actors.

[3] See: M. Luna Pont and N. Oddone, *Relaciones internacionales y desempeño internacional subnacional: una oportunidad para revisitar el concepto de actorness*, "Revista OASIS", vol. 33, 2020, pp. 223–245.

In *Paradiplomacy and cooperation in the pandemic era: A review from China in Latin America* by Florencia Rubiolo and Gonzalo Fiore Viani, the authors analyze the main actions and practices implemented by China in Latin America from a paradiplomatic perspective in the context of the pandemic and the dynamics of health cooperation at the subnational level.

The Part III: Beyond some examples of traditional state diplomacy: Cities and Parliaments as international diplomatic actors, includes several experiences extremely related with the democratization of foreign policy by considering the needs and interests of the different levels within the State and the different Powers involved. Stéphane Paquin emphasizes that one can only speak of paradiplomacy when the mandate is granted to official representatives by a sub-state government to negotiate with international actors (Paquin, 2004). This interpretation is also legitim for Parliamentary diplomacy. Parliaments today are more than deliberative institutions. They have become relevant world actors by conducting parallel diplomatic relations, or what the literature refers to as "parliamentary diplomacy".[4] In *Parliamentary diplomacy in practice: the role of the European Parliament delegations in the modernization of the Global Agreement between the European Union and Mexico,* Mónica Velasco Pufleau highlights the European Parliament's diplomacy efforts to shape EU's external relations since the Treaties of Rome.

Finally, Mario Torres Jarrín analyzes paradiplomacy from the point of view of a Smart city in *City diplomacy. Theory and practice of paradiplomacy: smart city Sweden case*. This experience is extremely interesting because, as Mursitama and Lee reflected in 2018, there is a specific framework of smart city diplomacy. The main argue of these Indonesian authors is that smart cities need to build a smart diplomacy at the subnational level, and they have proposed a new and specific framework for smart city diplomacy as one way to integrate information technology, public policy and international relations which will be the main contribution to literature and practice.[5]

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[4] See: A. Malamud and S. Stavridis, *Parliaments and Parliamentarians as International Actors,* in B. Reinalda (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors*. Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, pp. 101–115.

[5] See: N. Mursitama and L. Lee, *Towards a Framework of Smart City Diplomacy*, in *IOP Conference,* Series: "Earth and Environmental Science", vol. 126, 2018, pp. 1–7.

> Smart City is an ideal concept of urbanites with a wide range of facilities and benefits it offers. To that end, among others, six aspects of the smart city should be smart governance, smart people, smart mobility, smart environment, smart economy, and smart living. However, not every city has its own desired technology to build the Smart City concept. This issue creates a dependency between one city to another city in exchange for the knowledge of each city and creates the phenomenon of international cooperation at sub-state actors, namely the city. This phenomenon is known as Paradiplomacy (Mursitama and Lee, 2018: 1).

Beyond the formal increase of local and regional authorities' participation in the conducting of International Relations during COVD-19 Pandemic, some challenges are likely to remain in place for paradiplomacy in EU and Latin America for the years to come. If the concept of actorness is taken as the ability to behave actively and deliberately internationally to produce an impact (Luna Pont and Oddone, 2020), it is appropriate to recall some challenges that probably continue to be present. The variety of issues linked to post-pandemic recovery challenges paradiplomacy in representing broader interests, which can generate difficulties of self-perception and presence in the international arena (Alvarez and Oddone, 2022). Similarly, the challenges of associated management, based on the need to bring together different independent interlocutors around specific programs, can lead to dilemmas of internal cohesion and consistency that can affect the definition of common interests and the way to pursue them at global, at bi-regional level or through their bilateral relations.

The book's aim is not solving all the open questions relating to the diplomatic and paradiplonatic relations between the EU and the Latin America region, but to base the foundations of a new research paradigm for studying how the actorness of sub-state governments becomes more and more relevant in these regions, by underlining some major case studies, as previously indicated. In this way, the editors have decided to collect the following contributions in order to remark (and so analyze) the current centrifugal motion, from the core of the state sovereignty to the local or sub-national advocacy of specific interests, that is redefying both foreign policy and outer behavior of nation states.

Part I

The institutionalization and normalization of paradiplomacy in foreign policy in Latin America and Europe

Cross-border paradiplomacy in Latin America: Opportunities and challenges for the reopening of borders and the post-Covid-19 recovery

Nahuel Oddone

Introduction

Historically, conflict has been the main structuring element of cross-border relations. Latin America has more than 41,000 km of borderlines with their particular dynamics that, in some cases, pre-existed before the creation of the modern States. The establishment of current borders fragmented certain nations, economies, and societies. The end of the conflict hypotheses of the dictatorships and the return of democracy, as well as the open regionalism and the integration processes, contributed to a new understanding – and the consequent narrative – of border relations. In this context, international cooperation took up this space. Beyond different arrangements of States in Latin America, either federal, decentralized, or unitary countries, policies, instruments and projects to strengthen border areas and their cooperation processes were designed and implemented during this period.

Since 2020, borders have been at the center of the public debate once again. The Covid-19 pandemic placed border issues at the heart of the international agenda, which constitutes a good opportunity to address legislative obstacles and regulations, and to strengthen boundary relationships and cross-border paradiplomacy, understood as a public policy of international cooperation spearheaded by local border governments. Since their independence, States in Latin America had never closed their borders during their democratic life. The States closed their borders due to the virus outbreak and reopened them long after, staying closed for a year and a half in some cases. Some countries launched a gradual reopening of their borders with their neighbours in different time periods, depending on the evolution of Covid-19 cases on the other side of

the borderline,[1] with different protocols depending on the transportation route (air, land, river, and/or maritime). In this sense, it could be agreed with Claude Raffestein statement that "the border is not a line, the border is one of the elements of biosocial communication that assumes a regulatory function", especially demonstrated for the flows of people during the first stages of the pandemic.

Covid-19 pandemic has had a strong impact on ongoing international cooperation schemes in in the region. From the perspective of local governments, there has been an enhancement of the "old-school" twinning, understood as bilateral relations between local governments, and the consolidation of international networks, especially city networks, but also those of a multi-stakeholder nature. However, it has been possible to verify a greater international dynamism of global and regional networks, such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) or Mercociudades,[2] more than in those interactions regarding cross-border relations. The closure of borders has had a strong impact on the culture of cross-border collaboration built from "crossing and meeting", and digital technologies have not been as widely used as in other cooperation experiences. Beyond the restrictions they face in terms of funding, one of the main issues to build back is the culture of cross-border collaboration towards post-Covid-19 socio-economic recovery.

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1 It is important to clarify that the closure of borders affected the mobility of people, not products. For most countries, guaranteeing distribution channels has been key in the context of the pandemic and supply problems were not observed in Latin America. That said, there were modifications in the border logistics operations due to the increase of operation cycles and a decrease of the total volume transported due to lower economic activity and the paralysis of some sectors. Loading, unloading, and transit times increased due to biosafety control measures in the main road corridors. Additional delays occurred due to paperwork issues, lacking information, or constantly changing traffic protocols, and/or restrictions of the allowed permanence periods of foreign drivers in each country. At the same time, operational costs also increased as the cargo vehicles returned empty of products from the neighbouring country.

2 M. Alvarez and N. Oddone, *Paradiplomacy in Times of Pandemic: Preliminary Lessons of Covid-19 Impacts on the Internationalization of Non-central Governments*, in P. Baisotti and P. Moscuzza (eds.), *New Paths of International Relations. Reconfiguring Power in Times of Pandemic.* Sussex Press, Sussex, 2022, p. 54.

The role of cross-border paradiplomacy

Border socio-spatial configurations are not only product of the central State. The role of the different government levels, as well as the local actors and the transnational stakeholders of the global system must be considered. All of them interact under cooperation-competition logics in a context determined by development asymmetries. According to Carrión and Pinto,

> The dynamics of border cities and societies are zonal, plural and relational (mirror-binational logic), which vary according to each situation and the historicity of each border (contextual and historical logic), but that geopolitical and geoeconomic processes also converge there, interconnecting various societies and border and non-border locations (logic of the global system).[3]

It is in this context where actors, institutions and different levels of government seek to build a cross-border governance scheme. A key element in this exercise is overcoming the obstacles of nationalism planning, since borders

> Are generally studied under the criteria of methodological nationalism that defines the object of study only on one side or partially on both sides, but that does not lead to seeing them in an integrated way as an analytical unit and much less in relations with distant borders, existing within their own country as well as other countries.[4]

Paradiplomacy in Latin America has been studied from five theoretical perspectives. The first bases its approach on the definition of an international actor. The second discusses the debate raised within foreign policy and diplomacy, based on the fragmentation of interests, their representation, and narratives. The third perspective reflects on the role of the territory and its dialectics. The fourth uses the neo-functionalist approaches to regional integration. The fifth focuses on the governance

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[3] F. Carrión and J. Pinto, *Repensar las fronteras desde sus ciudades,* in F. Carrión and F. Enríquez (eds.), *Dinámicas transfronterizas en América Latina: ¿de lo nacional a lo local?,* OLACCIF, FLACSO, UPT & UT, Quito, 2019, p. 9.

[4] F. Carrión and F. Enríquez, *Introducción: El trazado continuo de las fronteras en América Latina: en la geografía y la historia*, in F. Carrión and F. Enríquez (eds.), *Dinámicas transfronterizas en América Latina: ¿de lo nacional a lo local?,* OLACCIF, FLACSO, UPT & UT, Quito, 2019, p. XIV.

approaches, based on multilevel and multi-stakeholder articulation.[5] It is also true that, over the last few years and especially after Knutsen's research,[6] a historical approach has been introduced in the analysis of paradiplomacy that seeks to restore old actors and narratives but that, technically, could be included in the first analytical perspective.[7] Although the border factor has been present since Duchacek's first works[8] on paradiplomacy, its conception focused on the weakening of the border by international forces, which constituted an opportunity for the cross-border paradiplomatic development of non-central governments. The evolution of the study of paradiplomacy[9] has made it possible to include border issues within the drivers that promote paradiplomatic development. Alvarez[10] has clearly demonstrated that cross-border issues have been key motivations for paradiplomatic activity in Latin America. Location of the local government on the border line, or in the border area, as well as the distance from the national centers of power, the

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5 N. Oddone, *La paradiplomacia desde cinco perspectivas: Reflexiones teóricas para la construcción de una comunidad epistémica en América Latina,* Relaciones Internacionales, vol. 89, no. 2, 2016, pp. 47–81, https://doi.org/10.15359/ri.89-2.2, last access: 23 February 2022.

6 T. Knutsen, *A lost generation? IR scholarship before World War I,* International Politics, vol. 45, no. 6, 2008, pp. 650–674, last access: 23 February 2022.

7 M. Luna Pont, *De IULA A CGLU: Municipalismo internacional, narrativas y momentos*, in M. Alvarez, M., Luna Pont and N. Oddone (eds.), *AMÉRICA LATINA GLOBAL. Estudios regionales sobre paradiplomacia*. UNTREF, Buenos Aires, 2019, pp. 51–92; N. Oddone and M. Luna Pont, *Avances disciplinarios en las Relaciones Internacionales: La definición de actor internacional en el estudio de la paradiplomacia*, Relaciones Internacionales, vol. 92, no. 2, 2019, pp. 1–31. https://doi.org/10.15359/ri.92-2.4, last access: 23 February 2022.

8 I. Duchacek, *The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government*, Publius, vol. 14, no. 4, 1984, pp. 5–31; I. Duchacek, *The Territorial Dimension of Politics within, among, and across Nations.* Westview Press, Boulder, 1986.

9 M. Keating, *Regions and International Affairs: Motives, Opportunities and Strategies*, Regional & Federal Studies, vol. 9, no. 1, 1999, pp. 1–16; J. Kincaid, *Foreign Relations of Sub-national Units*, in R. Blindenbacher and A. Koller (eds.), *Federalism in a Changing World: Learning from Each Other.* McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2003, pp. 74–96; H. Michelmann, *Introduction,* in H. Michelmann (ed.), *Foreign Relations in Federal Countries.* Forum of Federations, IACFS & McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2009, pp. 3–8; M. Alvarez, *Paradiplomacia en las relaciones chileno-argentinas: La integración desde Coquimbo y San Juan*. Universiteit Leiden, Leiden, 2016.

10 M. Alvarez, *Paradiplomacia en las relaciones chileno-argentinas: La integración desde Coquimbo y San Juan,* cit.

presence of geographical conditions or the availability of shared natural resources,[11] cross-border infrastructure, and regional public goods, are factors that have stimulated paradiplomacy in the region.

Cross-border paradiplomacy, as a type of international interaction between local border governments, contributes to identifying meeting points and cooperation opportunities between counterparts, building a common ("cross-border") agenda, and making these demands visible to neighbouring States to challenge the exercises of the methodological nationalism planning on overcoming asymmetries. In this context, paradiplomacy strengthens the agency of border local governments, helpings to interpret the internationalization process for cross-border dialogue as a transversal public policy in which different sectors of the local administration converge and, in some cases, also provokes processes of institutional isomorphism where the cooperating counterparts carry out institutional modifications based on joint learning.

Cross-border paradiplomacy has been favored when there are four fundamental conditions. First of all, when the territories included participate in physical connectivity process (border infrastructure). Second, when there are high-level political agreements (regional or bilateral) between the countries involved that include different kinds of international relationships. Third, when the participation of subnational border governments is recognized as key articulators of local actors and effectors of good governance. And, fourth, when a dynamic dialogue and collaboration mechanisms are generated between local governments, civil society, the private sector and academia.[12] These four elements provide the enabling environment for effective border governance. Cross-border paradiplomacy faces challenges related to managing the border limits, which remains the prerogative of the central government, which generated diverse complex situations during the pandemic.

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[11] It is important to clarify that, in some Latin American countries, natural resources are not managed by the central government, but by sub-national governments, as may be the case in Argentina where they are under the scope of work of the provinces (art. 124, Argentine National Constitution).

[12] N. Oddone, *La paradiplomacia transfronteriza de los gobiernos locales en el MERCOSUR (2003–2013): una aproximación teórica y práctica*. Universidad de País Vasco, Bilbao, 2016.

Funding physical and digital infrastructure

The main multilateral banks with operations in Latin America, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB),[13] the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI),[14] CAF-Development Bank of Latin America,[15] and FONPLATA-Development Bank[16] have focused their efforts on promoting regional commercial integration, transportation, energy and communications infrastructure, as well as other socio-economic development and institutional strengthening projects.

Over the last few years, some initiatives that have been analyzed by other researchers have been highlighted[17] such as the Initiative for the Integration of the South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA)[18] with the participation of IADB, CAF and FONPLATA and organized under the Integration and Development Axis (EID) and the Sectoral Integration Process (PSI). Subsequently, the South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning (COSIPLAN)[19] was constituted as an instance of dialogue to plan and implement infrastructure integration of South America in connection with the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Similarly, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project, known as the Mesoamerica Project,[20] originally

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13 Founded in 1959.

14 Founded in 1960 to promote the integration and development of the Central American countries.

15 Founded in 1968 within the Andean Community as the Andean Development Corporation, currently with presence across Latin America.

16 Founded as the Financial Fund for the Development of the Countries of the River Plate Basin in 1974.

17 See: R. Terrazas Salinas, *Los programas de CAF en Apoyo al Proceso de Integración de la Infraestructura Sudamericana,* in J. Rhi-Sausi and A. Ozorio (coord.), *La nueva geografía económica de América del Sur.* CeSPI, Roma, 2009, pp. 9–18; G. Ubeda Rivera, *El Proyecto de Integración y Desarrollo de Mesoamérica*, in J. Altmann, F. Rojas and T. Beirute (eds.), *América Latina y el Caribe: ¿Integrados o Marginados?.* FLACSO & Teseo, Buenos Aires, 2011, pp. 177–194; N. Oddone, *Una paradiplomacia transfronteriza para la geografía de la(s) América(s) Latina(s),* in Z. Zeraoui (coord.), *Teoría y práctica de la paradiplomacia*. ITESM & Montiel y Soriano, Monterrey, 2013, pp. 119–147.

18 In force between 2000 and 2010.

19 Active between 2010 and 2018.

20 Established in 2008.

focused on connectivity issues and more recently has incorporated new axes, including some outputs of the Puebla Panama Plan. In May 2020, IADB, CAF and FONPLATA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the Alliance for the Integration and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (ILAT) with the objectives of: (1) creating a prioritized portfolio of infrastructure integration projects, and support pre-investment and project implementation; (2) identify, promote, and implement programs and initiatives for border integration and development; and (3) develop high technical quality sector knowledge products and digital platforms.

Beyond these multilateral efforts, and those of regional and even national scope, the Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated the problem of under-funding local and regional border governments. The socio-economic recovery agenda requires liquidity to sustain innovative policies that allow a more sustainable urban and territorial transition. Following the "Finance in Common" Summit of November 2020, the Bank for Development of Minas Gerais (BDMG), the French Development Agency (AFD), the World Fund for the Development of Cities (FMDV) and China's Institute for Development Sustainable and International Relations (IDDRI) launched the first Alliance of Subnational Development Banks (BSD) in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Alliance seeks to promote sustainable investments through a portfolio of infrastructure projects and local services while boosting urban and municipal financial markets. The objective of this alliance is to align investments with the localization of the 2030 Agenda in the territory. This new chapter in subnational financing has gained strong dynamism with the pandemic and, above all, it seems to strengthen China's presence at the subnational level. However, it is still early to anticipate potential outcomes. What is important to note is that this new mechanism of subnational financing offers an opportunity to channel cross-border paradiplomacy actions, from the moment the loans are negotiated until their execution, monitoring, and evaluation.

Vertical and horizontal dimensions of cross-border governance

Cross-border paradiplomacy plays a key role in cross-border governance, since it contributes to the national multilevel dialogue and with

its counterparts (equivalents or not) and with the actors that have a presence in the territory on either side of the border, that is, in the vertical and horizontal dimension, respectively. In the vertical dimension, the local government, based on its agency and specific capacities, and depending on the vertical decentralization routes (ascending or descending) in each border state, carries out management activities and policy implementation based on the dialogue with the intermediate and central government for coordinating actions and resources transfers. The same process is expected to take place on the other side of the border (although with its own characteristics based on possible constitutional, legislative, and administrative differences). In turn, the "bilateralization" of the relationship between the central states (and sometimes within the framework of regional integration processes) accompanies the coherence of public action for cooperation in border areas. Beyond the differences in the governance structure that may exist between States, bilateralization plays an important role in terms of dialogue, commitment, and fundraising, since financing mostly depends on the negotiation of the adjoining central States, though it may vary from source to source.

The horizontal dimension is territorially determined by actors based in the border area. The type and number of actors are specific to each territory, so it is important to characterize them for each context. These actors, in turn, have a different capacity depending on each border and may have a valid representation for concrete border territory, or go beyond the specific context. NGOs with international presence, companies that go beyond the cross-border markets, and even transnational actors linked to criminal organizations may be some examples. Focusing on the actors who contribute to a cross-border cooperation positive agenda, municipal governments in border areas play a strategic role on stimulating participation, representation, and public consensus to strengthen local innovation.[21] It is also based on this convening power of local management that territorial planning activities that seek to mitigate the impact of nationalism methodological planning and valuing local capacities to rethink territorial development of the border.

[21] See: H. Rodríguez Vázquez and N. Oddone, *Alianzas Público-Privadas como motor de la innovación local transfronteriza*, in K. Ramirez, M. Reyes and A. Figueroa (coord.), *Gobernanza y Políticas Públicas.* UABC, Mexicali, 2015, pp. 156–181.

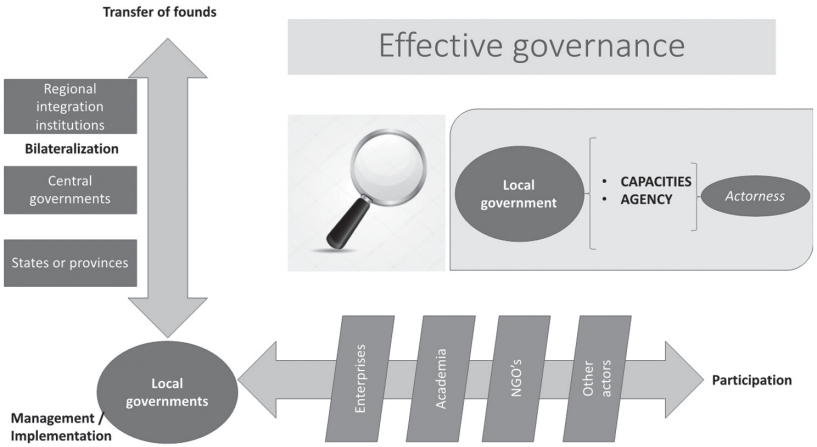

Diagram 1: Effective cross-border governance
Source: Prepared by the author.

An effective cross-border governance requires a high dynamism of both dimensions, with clear rules that allow channelling institutional efforts to overcome asymmetries and avoid the "duplication of objectives, functions and services between entities and institutions on both sides of the border, as well as preventing the disorderly growth of the territory and urban development".[22] In this sense, by

> Bringing each territorial sector of geopolitically segmented peoples closer together; it enables these peoples, in part, to alleviate the effects of the artificial division they have suffered and enables the intensification of ties at various levels between the different territorial sectors, as well as to enhance networks of various kinds.[23]

Recently, OECD[24] has valued the construction of governance schemes capable of channeling collective efforts of the actors divided

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[22] J. Rhi-Sausi and N. Oddone, *Fronteras y cooperación transfronteriza en América Latina: introducción al Proyecto Fronteras Abiertas*, in J. Rhi-Sausi & D. Conato (coord.), *Cooperación Transfronteriza e Integración en América Latina,* cit., p. 8.

[23] Fernández Majón, D., *El papel de las regiones en la dinámica fronteriza en Europa*, Revista CIDOB d' Afers Internacionals, vol. 69, 2005, p. 70.

[24] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OECD), *Achieving Cross-Border Innovation,* Paris, 2021.

by the border line, either from structures created from a bottom-up perspective, or from the reverse perspective. These structures, with a greater or lesser degree of formality, must be supported by a wide range of actors that, horizontally, allow the convergence of ideas, proposals, and policies. Likewise, it is important to consider that the most successful multi-stakeholder alliances are those where "a balanced distribution of responsibilities, costs, risks and benefits is achieved among the actors involved, which in the cross-border case should be reflected particularly in its translocal and transnational dimension"[25] or from the reverse perspective.

Cross-border paradiplomacy and the post-pandemic care agenda

The cost of not cooperating during the post-Covid recovery tends to increase over time, and the proposal to advance in a socio-economic, digital, and environmental transition of the main international organizations of a global and regional nature offers an important dimension of international cooperation. One of the first issues that comes to light from the dialogue with some local border authorities is the need to recover as quickly as possible the culture of cross-border collaboration, that was strongly affected by the closure of borders. In most cases, the unilateral decision to close the borders affected the daily dynamics and substantive processes of the border territories.

In many border areas of Latin America, there was a culture of cross-border collaboration on health that was affected during the pandemic. For example, the cases of the border cities of Posadas and Encarnación, between Argentina and Paraguay; or Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta, between Brazil and Paraguay, allowed channeling multilevel dialogue and the provision of services both formally, through an *ad hoc* agreement; or through the informal way. However, these cross-border dialogues were cut out during the pandemic. That is why it is appropriate to rescue those experiences where joint management between border cities was achieved bilaterally and contrast it with those

[25] H. Rodríguez Vázquez and N. Oddone, *Alianzas Público-Privadas como motor de la innovación local transfronteriza*, in K. Ramirez, M. Reyes and A. Figueroa (coord.), *Gobernanza y Políticas Públicas.* UABC, Mexicali, 2015, p. 172.

experiences where the lack of sensitivity to cross-border cooperation caused problems in the local dynamics.

The local dialogues built from the grassroots, either in the vertical multilevel dimension within each State, or the horizontal transnational dialogue between the authorities of the territory, were based on the role of paradiplomacy. As an example, the agreement to create the Binational Technical Commission between Rivera and Santana do Livramento whose objective is to function as an indivisible epidemiological health unit for Covid-19 cases, which was later replicated between the cities of Artigas and Quaraí and Bella Unión and Barra do Quaraí has had an important local component. These experiences could be understood from the perspective of political restructuring within the multilevel governance approach proposed by Piattoni[26] and demonstrate the importance of taking up the experiences of cross-border health services from a collaborative, multisectoral and interdisciplinary approach – which is implemented under multi-level coordination – to achieve optimal health protection results[27] of the cross-border population.

In fact, the border between Brazil and Uruguay is considered one of the most stable borders in MERCOSUR, where bilateral cooperation has always been effective. Rótulo and Damiani[28] highlight the persistent need for adequate local institutional capacity to adequately manage a paradiplomatic agenda, analyzing the institutional space for local border actors within the scope of the bilateral cooperation framework of the so-called New Agenda for Cooperation and Border Development, that emerged in 2002. Brazil and Uruguay were the only MERCOSUR member states that closed the common border by mutual agreement, on March 22 and 23, 2020 respectively, with the establishment of the necessary protocols for the transit of the local population, safeguarding the binational character of the area.[29]

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[26] S. Piattoni, *Multi-level Governance: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis,* European Integration, vol. 31, no. 2, 2009, pp. 163–180.

[27] OECD, *Achieving Cross-Border Innovation,* cit.

[28] D. Rótulo and O. Damiani, *Integración fronteriza en el MERCOSUR: el caso Uruguay Brasil*, in *V Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Polí́tica.* ALACIP, Buenos Aires, 2010, p. 26.

[29] Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, *Pandemia e fronteiras brasileiras. Nota técnica 16*, Brasilia, 2020.

At the request of Uruguay, the Binational Sanitary Action Treaty was reactivated, making it possible to install sanitary barriers that included the cities of Rivera and Santana do Livramento, to respect their cross-border life. The Binational Treaty establishes a particular consultation system through a binational border health advisory commission convened *ad hoc*. Due to Covid-19, the IX meeting of the binational border health advisory commission took place in June 2020. This commission, with the participation of the Santana do Livramento and Rivera teams, stated that the cross-border area should be understood as an indivisible epidemiological and health unit for which it proposed the installation of a Binational Emergency Operations Center (COE).[30] According to Tailanian,[31] the border tends to promote the harmonization of national systems at different levels to contribute to the process of regional integration. SGT No. 11 – MERCOSUR Health, for its part, proposed the creation of an Epidemiological Observatory of MERCOSUR Borders (OEFM) in October 2020.

Covid-19 highlighted the need to address issues, areas, and social agents specific to verify how they actually operate the processes of regional integration, such as MERCOSUR, at borders and how much influence cultural practices of social actors in border territories.[32] As Matos Lemões[33] proposed, activation of bilateral dialogues through border committees in MERCOSUR was limited to the exchange of epidemiological information even when local authorities seeking greater cross-border cooperation steps. Covid-19 offers the opportunity to evaluate the "stock of local capabilities", particularly human resources, infrastructure work and financial capabilities, and intergovernmental

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30 See: *Memorandum of Understanding between the Oriental Republic of Uruguay and the Federative Republic of Brazil for Cooperation on Health within the framework of the Binational Commission Advisory Health Uruguay – Brazil Creation of the Binational Center of Emergency Operations*, 2020.

31 P. Tailanian, *Polí ticas de salud en tiempos de pandemia en la frontera Uruguay- Brasil*, Revista MERCOSUR de Políticas Sociales, ed. 4, 2020, pp. 55–62, https://doi.org/10.28917/ism.2020-v4-55, last access : 23 February 2022.

32 H. Jaquet, *Los historiadores y la producción de fronteras: el caso de la provincia de Misiones (Argentina),* Documentos de Debate, vol. 29, 1998, pp. 1–28; A. Grimson, *El otro (lado del río): la producción de significaciones sobre Nación y MERCOSUR en los periodistas de Posadas-Encarnación.* UNaM, Posadas, 1998.

33 M. Matos Lemo˜es, *Consultoria técnica sobre mobilidade de pacientes e cooperaçã˜o transfronteiriça: Brasil.* ISM & EUROsociAL+, Asunción, 2020.

dialogue to address key issues and challenges affecting policy. What emerges from the experience of Santana do Livramento and Rivera is a vitality of relations at the subnational level, but also at a bilateral national level in terms of relative ideological convergence and a limited role of intergovernmental regional institutions in border governance. However, cross-border cooperation maintains a growing interest in the evolution of the regional process of MERCOSUR, particularly from a bottom-up perspective. Also, this issue may be extended to other Latin American regional contexts such as the Andean Community (CAN) and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

This limited initial focus on health is, at the same time, an opportunity to strengthen the link between paradiplomacy and the care agenda, which is based on a demographic and rights focus central to economic recovery and social reconstruction. The growing urban concentration in Latin America does not exclude frontier cities. In the region's border strips, there are a significant number of intermediate cities that require public attention to design systems that include cross-border social services. At this point, the experience of the European Union (EU) can be very useful. Likewise, in the border cities of Latin America a demographic *bonus* has been found that is significantly higher than the national averages, in some cases, a product of a late colonization of the territory or by internal or international migrations, which calls for the design of pro-adolescent and youth public policies. Making good use of the demographic *bonus* is key for the future of the region[34] for which it is necessary to alleviate the precarious condition of adolescents and young people compared to other population groups and the intersectionality of gaps that they face.

Four elements call for the rapid design of targeted policies that consider the border territory and the life cycle of the people who live there under a rights-based approach. In the first place, the health coverage of adolescents and young people are lower, observing a greater precarious condition compared to other population groups such as infancy and childhood or the elderly. Likewise, those young people who have had health coverage through their parents tend to lose it after the age of eighteen, starting a path of greater vulnerability. Second, school dropouts

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[34] Instituto Social del MERCOSUR and Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, *Características socioeconómicas de las juventudes en las ciudades fronterizas del MERCOSUR*. Asunción, 2020.

are usually higher in the last years of high school because young people begin to work informally or to help with new tasks. Those who manage to conclude it, face greater challenges to enter the University. Few or no programs accompany the transition from middle school to college. While in the 15–19 years band in the border cities of Posadas (Argentina), Encarnación (Paraguay), Santana do Livramento (Brazil), Rivera (Uruguay), Concordia (Argentina) and Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) more than 70 % attend an educational establishment, in the range of 20–24 in almost all cases it falls more than 50 % and substantially for women.[35]

Third, there is a greater informality of employment. In Latin America, informality reaches 54 % of total employment, but this percentage tends to increase strongly when we consider youth and approach the borders. On average, labor informality among young people in the region amounts to 67.5 %[36] and in border areas it far exceeds 70 %. The attraction of a significant part of the young labor force to jobs that are characterized by being precarious in terms of guarantees of rights, or simply informal, has two main consequences: on the one hand, the person who is inserted into the informal economy tends to remain in it, affecting the solidarity of the social protection systems and, on the other hand, young men tend to migrate from informality to illegality. Consequently, there is a high exposure of border youth to be part of smuggling and trafficking networks. Fourth, the population of women in the 20–24 age group who neither study nor work in border cities is relevant. As an example, in Posadas it reached 21.5 % of women in 2018, 28.2 % in Ciudad del Este, 38.6 % in Rivera, as well as in Salto and Concordia they exceeded 37 %. Similar percentages are observed in the following age group from 25 to 29 years.[37] Surveys on "time use" tend to hide the burden of care assumed by women within the home (unpaid work), whether it be caring for younger siblings or children, or household cleaning tasks, among others. These data also highlight the urgent need to design policies for young women from the border that underpin their life projects in terms

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[35] Instituto Social del MERCOSUR and Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, *Características socioeconómicas de las juventudes en las ciudades fronterizas del MERCOSUR*. Asunción, 2020, p. 72.

[36] Organización Internacional del Trabajo. *Panorama Laboral 2020 América Latina y el Caribe*. Lima, 2019.

[37] Instituto Social del MERCOSUR and Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, *Características socioeconómicas de las juventudes en las ciudades fronterizas del MERCOSUR*. Asunción, 2020, p. 78.

of training and professional development. In this framework, young women are likely to face new challenges to achieve a greater and better participation in the post-Covid-19 economic recovery. Therefore, it is appropriate to carry out specific interventions that ensure their participation in job training programs and entrepreneurship, as well as the creation of new care spaces that allow more women with children to join the formal workforce. Young women are likely to face new challenges in achieving greater and better participation in the post-Covid-19 economic revival. Therefore, it is appropriate to carry out specific interventions that ensure their participation in job training programs and entrepreneurship, as well as the creation of new care spaces that allow more women with children to join the formal workforce. Young women are likely to face new challenges in achieving greater and better participation in the post-Covid-19 economic revival. Therefore, it is appropriate to carry out specific interventions that ensure their participation in job training programs and entrepreneurship, as well as the creation of new care spaces that allow more women with children to join the formal workforce.

Another issue to consider, as a result of the demographic transition in many Latin American countries, is that in some larger border cities, the aging of the population tends to overload the health and care sectors and the care infrastructure for the elderly. This is more common in non-border urban centers but, at the same time, it constitutes an opportunity to carry out paradiplomacy programs or projects with EU countries where there is greater experience in the matter. Consolidating the exchange of good practices and the strengthening of capacities to form cross-border care networks seems to be a timely strategy to accompany the post-Covid-19 recovery process.

The post-pandemic economic recovery and the role of paradiplomacy

Although there is already an active economic paradiplomacy to attract investment and create trade in the context of recovery – above all – linked to the resolution of restrictions and scaling up of regional value chains to generate local employment, it is true that it is an opportunity unique to go through what has been called in Europe the triple transition: socio-economic, digital and environmental.

Cross-border paradiplomacy can support the process of refocusing needed to promote a shared space for dialogue policy, regulatory convergence, and productive transformation for changing the model of development and implementation of a new social pact. In them, the socioeconomic agenda, the digital agenda, and the green agenda need to be aligned in a multilevel way and, at the same time, they need to be reflected in concrete policies from and for the territories. In this context, cross-border paradiplomacy, as a public policy for dialogue and international cooperation, can contribute to locating these agendas in border territories and seeking financing. The articulating role of cross-border paradiplomacy during the pandemic has made it possible to channel demands and public interest in particular, but it has also channeled demands and proposals from the private sector to government authorities with the aim of rebuilding the productive fabric, as shown by some of the virtual activities for the generation of businesses carried out by the Integration Zone of Central West South America (ZICOSUR), among other examples.

In Latin America, the recovery context framed in transitions is an opportunity to change the productive structure and improve international insertion. The local and regional border governments carry out paradiplomacy activities to avoid their marginalization and reduce asymmetries, as well as strengthen their technical and financial capacities. Given that the productive gaps have their territorial correlate,[38] the commitment to productive convergence means closing the productivity gaps with the most competitive countries, but also reducing the internal structural heterogeneity in each of the countries and in the border areas (with regional partners). In the region, in general, the production and export structures are not oriented towards the most dynamic sectors, with higher productivity or high technological content,[39] so the digital transition is key to modifying the current matrix and enhancing the role of digital technologies in the new operating model of companies.[40]

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[38] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, *La hora de la Igualdad. Brechas por cerrar, caminos por abrir.* Santiago de Chile, 2010.

[39] M. Cimoli (ed.), *Heterogeneidad estructural, asimetrías tecnológicas y crecimiento en América Latina*. CEPAL & BID, Santiago de Chile, 2005.

[40] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, *Informe Especial COVID19 Nro. 4: Sectores y empresas frente al COVID-19: emergencia y reactivación.* Santiago de Chile, 2020.

Similarly, during the pandemic it has been detected a trend towards reprimarization on exports which tends to generate less employment and increasing environmental degradation. In this context, some of the instruments designed in the EU as the European Green Deal and the European Development Fund Sustainable Plus (FEDS+) can be good examples to equal its combination with projects that consider the demographic dividend to increase formal job creation and quality.

In Latin America, it is key to design policies to (re)insert into a more regionalized global economy to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic. Most of the countries in the region have longer recovery curves than other countries. Border production linkages can be understood as a process that provides higher density flows production and trade, derived from the expansion of the regional market that is driven by the added value, production complementarities and specialization, whose instrument of action is infrastructure and reducing transportation costs. In this exercise complex business increased participation of local governments and intermediate border in regional value chains can help create more formal employment, quality, digital and sustainable. For this, it is important from the local government to work and collaborate in the structuring of dialogue at three levels: public-public, public-private, and private-private.[41]

[41] In matters of public-public dialogue, there are coordination failures, competence gaps and overlapping of functions that take away coherence and effectiveness from public action and, therefore, competitiveness in value chains. In public-private dialogues, in many cases, there have been conflicting or linked interests from the capture of one or the other that have not allowed successful synergies. The private-private dialogue has not been necessarily successful either, since in some sectors a very low level of associativity is observed and, when associations have been formed, they have not managed to represent the interests of their affiliates in a strategic way and with a territorial vocation. In general, Public-private dialogue is successful in those contexts where public-public dialogue works in an agile way and where there is a clear identification of interests on the part of the public and private sectors (see: R. Devlin and G. Moguillansky, *Alianzas pú blico-privadas para una nueva visión estratégica del desarrollo.* CEPAL, Santiago de Chile, 2010). Similarly, private-private dialogue and partnership flourish where there is a strong dialogue and public-private partnerships.

Conclusions

Cross-border paradiplomacy plays a key role in the post-Covid-19 recovery. The reopening of borders is an opportunity to recover the culture of collaboration and advance in the design of policies, programs, projects and instruments that reduce asymmetries and generate more and better conditions of well-being based on socio-economic, digital, and environmental transitions. Paradiplomacy is a form of dialogue that allows us to think about the territory and plan international cooperation actions that nuance the weight of methodological nationalism. The territory is no longer just an element of contention and delimitation between countries; socio-economic interactions in expanded border areas are expanding creating new cultural settings, new dimensions of economic development and social cohesion, as well as offering new opportunities for cooperation in border areas. The experience of Santana do Livramento and Rivera during the pandemic highlights the importance of building multi-level dialogues with the participation of local governments. Paradiplomacy is an opportunity to strengthen the work of the government at all levels, not only at the local level and, cross-border paradiplomacy has been encouraged in Latin America when four conditions exist: (1) the territories included participate in a process of physical connection; (2) a high-level political agreement (regional or bilateral) between the countries involved that orders and so to varying conditions; (3) the participation of subnational border governments be recognized, as far as key articulators of local actors and effectors of good governance; and, (4) a dynamic dialogue and collaboration mechanisms are generated between local governments, civil society, the business community and the academy. In this context, financing policies for the region play a key role, both in its regional, national, and subnational dimensions. In particular, this new chapter in subnational financing has gained strong dynamism with the pandemic and offers a new scenario for paradiplomatic activity.

In the current situation, policies are urgently needed to (re)insert into a more regionalized global economy, which can build sustained growth curves, strengthen social cohesion, generate quality employment, and reduce informality in border areas. To achieve this, it is important to even take advantage of the region's demographic dividend, in a context of demographic transition, and to design and implement youth-centered policies that ponder the digital and environmental agenda. Sustainability

and care at the center of the development agenda, located in the border territory, allow at the same time to generate new jobs.

The crisis caused by Covid-19 in health and socioeconomic terms, as well as the unprecedented closure of borders, have limited cross-border collaboration exercises. The recent advances in the vaccination of the local population and the reopening of borders offer a new opportunity to plan the development of a cross-border paradiplomacy aligned with the post-pandemic socio-economic, digital, and environmental transitions, and the reduction of territorial asymmetries from the demolition the barriers of planning methodological nationalism. Socio-economic, digital, and environmental transitions have an important component of international cooperation, in which cross-border paradiplomacy can play a key role on strengthening institutional capacities for planning, management and coordination in border areas so these territories are able to better position themselves in the national, regional, and international development agendas.

The international linkage of Chilean regions as an example of paradiplomacy in a Unitary State

Paulina Astroza Suárez and
Pablo Navarro Rosas

Introduction

The internationalization of sub-state units, or *paradiplomacy*, as it is usually called by most of the doctrine, has begun to be the subject of studies during the last decades, attracting interest in its development, both practical and theoretical.

What started a couple of decades ago as an emerging phenomenon (mainly Anglo-Saxon and European), which put into question the state-centric conception of international relations, gradually ended up laying the foundations of a new form of international expression of governmental entities, calling into question concepts such as sovereignty, borders, territory or power.[1] In addition, the old realist principles of the rationality of the State and its protagonism in the international system were questioned.

In this sense, the external action of sub-state governments became increasingly latent. Despite the fact that in its beginnings, what Cornago called "new paradiplomacy",[2] was mainly carried out by Anglo-Saxon and European countries, industrialized and with a complex structure (mostly federal or regional States). Gradually, it ended up being a phenomenon that affected most States, considering the obvious effect caused by the intensification of globalization and the access to goods and service

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1 P. Astroza, *Paradiplomacia y Actores Subestatales: Nuevas estrategias de inserción internacional*, in C. Bywaters, D. Sepúlveda and A. Villar (eds.), *Nuevas Voces de Política exterior. Chile y el mundo la era post-consensual.* FCE Chile, 2021, p. 155.

2 N. Cornago, *Paradiplomacy and Protodiplomacy*, in G. Martel (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018, p. 3.

on the break of the reigning paradigm of the time. This event would be called, during the eighties, by Duchacek "perforated sovereignty".[3]

In this way, the expansion of paradiplomacy reached different corners of the world, being mainly used as a development and international linkage practice between sub-state units, seeking to achieve a functional goal principally (economic, environmental, social, etc.) and, in exceptional cases, under an identity purpose, nation construction and secession to achieve the independence as a State.[4]

Latin America has been no exception. In the beginning, the States with a form of federal State, such as Argentina or Mexico, were those who initiated paradiplomacy activities on their sub-state units (province or federates states). This process was achieved through the granting of regulatory powers, especially through constitutional reforms, such as the 1994 reform in Argentina or the 1992 constitutional revision in Mexico. However, over time, the paradiplomatic practice was deployed in other territories of the subcontinent, even when there were no norms that allowed it or without even having a decentralized state structure that guaranteed the autonomy of its regions with their own competencies.

In this context, and despite not fulfilling any of the main elements for the emergence of paradiplomacy (federal or complex-structured States, industrialization northern hemisphere), Chile began a process of international linkage of its regions with the outside world, becoming a State that moved away from the theoretical model studied in the northern hemisphere. In addition, Chile has historically stood out for being a unitary State, markedly centralist and where foreign policy competencies are exclusive to the executive branch, led by the President of the Republic.

Considering the above described, how is it possible that in a country that does not fulfill the classical elements, a paradiplomatic practice of its sub-state units can emerge? Where is the norm that establishes the competences for the regions to enter into agreements with the outside world? Is there in Chile a nascent embryonic activity of paradiplomacy in a strongly centralized unitary State? Have their European peers been

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[3] I. Duchacek, *Perforated Sovereignties: Toward a Typology of New Actors in International Relations*, in I. Duchacek, D. Latouche and G. Stevenson (eds.), *Federalism in International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units.* Crandon Press, 1990.

[4] Such is the case of Quebec during the second half of the 20th century or Catalonia in the context of the Catalan process.

the main sub-state partners of the Chilean regions? This paper aims to answer these questions.

Some insights on paradiplomacy or sub-state diplomacy

The international actorness of sub-state units

In this context of greater international openness, especially from the point of view of the economy, even despite the lack of a legal basis to validate their actions, sub-state entities have begun to cross borders to unite with the outside world. Thus, over the years, they have become new actors on the international scene, even though international law does not recognize their status as subjects with international legal personality.

In fact, the 1969 United Nations Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties does not recognize sub-State entities as such. When faced with the question of whether States with a complex structure (especially federal states, federative entities, regions, etc.) may conclude international treaties, international law refers to the Constitution or domestic legislation. They have the final word. In the draft articles prepared by the International Law Commission in 1966, Article 5.2. said that "the member states of a federal union may have the capacity to conclude treaties if this possibility is admitted by the federal Constitution and within the limits indicated by it".[5] But the proposal to include the possibility that infra-state entities could sign international agreements with the consent of the central State was finally rejected. The Canadian delegation requested its elimination "not because of differences with its content, but because of the fear of the federal states to strengthen this type of treaties".[6]

> As paradiplomatic actors are not actors recognized by international law, they must negotiate with central government authorities for part of their

[5] "Anuario de la Comisión de Derecho Internacional", in J. A. Ridruejo (ed.), *Curso de Derecho Internacional Público y Organizaciones Internacionales*. Editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 2002, p. 90.

[6] Ibidem.

international actions, such as formal relations with representatives of sovereign countries or international organizations.[7]

This legal definition of the 1969 Vienna Convention reflects in part what political realism supported. For realists or neorealists, the unit of analysis is the state as a rational and unitary unit.[8] "Realism defines the concept of actor on the basis of legal attributes that are not reflected in the dynamics of international relations".[9] For this reason, it has been harshly criticized. In Caterina Garcia Segura's opinion, in order to determine the international *actorness* of a subject, the first criterion to be taken into account would be to use a functional approach, as opposed to the prevailing legal criterion. For her, it matters little how legally recognized an entity is internationally, but rather its ability to mobilize certain resources to achieve certain objectives and its capacity to influence the behavior of other actors in the international system.[10]

Similarly, for Esther Barbé, the international actor "is that unit of the international system (entity, group, individual) that has the capacity to mobilize resources to achieve its objectives, that has the capacity to influence the other actors in the system and that enjoys a certain degree of autonomy".[11]

We share this opinion by specifying that a distinction must be made between subjects of international law and international actors. Following Pierre-Marie Dupuy's opinion, "an entity is said to be a subject of law when it is endowed by the rules of a given legal order with a set of rights and obligations, as well as the capacities necessary for their exercise".[12] In fact, today the doctrine recognizes that, in addition to the State – the main subject of international law –, international intergovernmental organizations and the individual (but with a more limited scope) are the only subjects with international legal personality.

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[7] S. Paquin, *Paradiplomatie et relations internationales. Théorie des stratégies internationales des régions face à la mondialisation*, Collection "Régionalisme et fédéralisme", P.I.E.-Peter Lang S.A, 2004, p. 21.

[8] E. Barbé, *Relaciones Internacionales.* Editorial Tecnos, 2004, p. 56.

[9] C. García Segura, *La evolución del concepto de actor en la teoría de las relaciones internacionales*, Papers, Revista de Sociología, no. 40, 1992, p. 17.

[10] Ibidem, p. 29.

[11] E. Barbé, *Relaciones Internacionales, cit.,* p. 135.

[12] P. M. Dupuy, *Droit International Public.* Éditions Dalloz, 2010, p. 28.

Another perspective is that of the *actorness international.* This time, the focus is on the analysis of a broader field that leans more towards the political and sociological level than towards the legal level. Thus, as the same jurist explains, "the diversification of these actors is manifest and it would be useless to deny that States have long since lost their monopoly of action in the empirical context of international economic and political relations".[13] In the same line of reasoning, and referring to the reality of the Spanish Autonomous Communities, José Antonio Pastor Ridruejo states that:

> Although according to the Spanish Constitution of 1978 the Autonomous Communities cannot enter into treaties or exercise the attributes that international law confers on the State in the external sphere -active and passive legation rights, participation in international bodies of an intergovernmental nature and others-, it seems that nothing prevents them from participating in consultation mechanisms of cross-border cooperation through non-legal agreements, on the basis of good faith, the creators of the designated animation organizations.[14]

If we look at reality, the scope of the legal standard – and the resulting legal criterion for analyzing international actorness – remains limited and international practice exceeds it. Reality is often ahead of the standard, which must be adapted to it. For our part, we consider that the mobilization of resources, capacity, ambition, and willingness to contact external partners, coupled with the development of internal skills with the aim of achieving the precise objectives, supports the qualification of sub-state units as international actors. It should be noted that this international activity of non-central governments has sought to achieve the objectives and meet the diverse needs of States and contexts. The international activities of sub-state entities are therefore multiple and heterogeneous, but share the quality of being functional to the interests of the entities.[15]

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[13] Ibidem, p. 29.

[14] J. A. Ridruejo, *Curso de Internacional Público y Organizaciones Internacionales, cit.*, p. 92.

[15] P. Astroza, *Les activités internationales des régions chiliennes: un embryon de diplomatie subétatique?*. Université Catholique de Louvain, Bruxelles, 2016, p. 33.

Legal nature of agreements entered by sub-State entities

As to the question of the legal nature of these agreements, it is still the subject of debate in legal doctrine. As Professor Pierre Marie Dupuy points out, referring to agreements concluded by local authorities:

> The legal regime of such agreements is not established once and for all. It often raises delicate problems, all related to the identification of their legal nature; this will be determined case-by-case on the basis of a set of indices, the main ones of which will be the subject of the contract and the circumstances surrounding their conclusion.[16]

Although this discussion focused on the case of States with a complex structure, the discussion can now also be expanded due to the practices of certain countries with a unitary structure. In these cases, the links established for sub-state units also raise the question of their legal nature.

For Ian Browlie:

> The position of members of federal unions is interesting. In the constitutions of Switzerland and the German Federal Republic component states are permitted to exercise certain capacities of independent states, including the power to sign treaties. In the normal case, such capacities are probably excercised as agents for the union, even if the acts concerned are done in the name of the component state. However, where the union originated as a union of independent states, the internal relations retain an international element, and the union may act as agent for the states. The United States constitution enables the states of the Union to enter into agreements with other states of the Union or with the consent of Congress. In Canada the federal government has the exclusive power to make treaties with foreign states.[17]

Antonio Remiro Bretons and other Spanish internationalists consider the "Recognition of conventional capacity to territorial entities and linguistic communities of the State" as a special situation among the competences of the State.[18] In this part they specify that

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16 P. M. Dupuy, *Droit International Public, cit*, p. 300.

17 I. Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, pp. 58–59.

18 A. Remiro, R. Riquelme, E. Orihuela, J. Díez-Hochleitner, and L. Pérez-Prat, *Derecho Internacional*. Tiram lo Blanck, Valencia, 2007, pp. 326–329.

> The complex structure of a State, federal or not, raises the question of whether - and to what extent - the entities that compose it - members of the federation, of the countries, of the regions, of the communities [...] - possess a certain international subjectivity that would lead to a limited *ius ad tractatum*.

These authors point out that international law does not address the subject directly. In fact, on the basis of State self-organization, international law refers the subject under the rule of domestic law which, only exceptionally, has recognized to territorial entities a reduced *ius ad tractatum* subject to the control of central organs "as a response to the historical origins of a federation to allow integration (as for example, the case of Germany, the United States, Switzerland)".[19]

> The result was a practice aimed at cultural and neighborhood relations in which the parties entering into agreements - for which the formal naming of treaties is often avoided – are accustomed to be homogeneous (territorial entities dependent on both parties) given the reluctance of sovereign states to meddle with those that are not.[20]

Then, they mention that today recognizing the capacity to sign international treaties has become a means to facilitate the recovery of a territory,[21] or to prevent the disintegration of a State.[22]

Finally, these authors refer to the fragmentation of the *ius ad tractatum*, which could occur due to the conclusion of mixed agreements (dealing with matters falling within the competences of both the Federal State and the federated state). In this regard, they note that as long as there are no conflicting interests, fragmentation will not occur, but, if not, it could be resolved by introducing techniques of participation in the foreign policy of each state, either at the formation of the treaty or *a posteriori* by exploiting the possibilities of a treaty already concluded.

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19 Ibidem, pp. 327.

20 Ibidem.

21 Example: the Sino-British declaration on Hong Kong.

22 Example: Denmark on Greenland, Article 16. 3, law of 17 November 1978; Canada on Quebec; Belgium, with the constitutional reform of 5 May 1993, recognizes the autonomous right of the regions and communities of the Kingdom to conclude treaties within their exclusive competence, but with the maintenance of a right of control, which would prevent the conclusion of treaties incompatible with the foreign policy and international obligations of Belgium. See Ibidem, pp. 327–328.

For his part, Alejandro Rodriguez addresses the concept of international treaty[23] as defined in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and notes that the most interesting question that arises revolves around the possibility of treaties being concluded by a member state of a federal state or, in other words, by a component of a state with a complex structure. He also recalls the draft article adopted in 1966 by the International Law Commission, which will lead to the 1969 Convention.[24] However, he points out that this rule is not currently included in the Convention because of opposition from States with a complex structure. There were two reasons for this opposition: first, they saw this rule as a threat in the sense that it could "serve as a stimulus to domestic claims to a certain autonomy in foreign policy"[25] and pointed to Canada as a concrete example.

On the point, Professor Edmundo Vargas believes that:

> The rule proposed by the International Law Commission seems to have international validity since there is no disadvantage for a member of a federal union to celebrate a treaty if it is authorized to do so by the Federal Constitution, respecting, of course, the limits that this Constitution establishes." Secondly, they "underlined the difficulties involved in determining the limitations on the treaty-making capacity of the federated states.[26]

Furthermore, when referring to the "confederation and federation of the State", he reaffirms that:

> The federal State constitutes a single legal person within the framework of its international subjectivity. The conduct of the State's foreign relations is the responsibility of the central government. Internally, there is duplication in the exercise of power; matters of general importance to the State are entrusted to the central government, while each of the states, provinces or cantons making up the federal State exercises its authority at the local level in executive, legislative and judicial matters. These states, provinces or cantons, if authorized by their constitutions, may even have certain powers of an international character, such as the conclusion of agreements or

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23 A. Rodriguez, *Lecciones de Derecho Internacional Público.* Editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 1994, pp. 170–174.

24 Ibidem, p. 172.

25 Ibidem.

26 Ibidem.

> conventions on matters of limited importance; but such powers do not confer upon them international subjectivity.[27]

On the basis of the authors' analyzes, it could be concluded that the legal nature of the international agreement signed by a sub-State entity belonging to a complex State must be analyzed in the light of the competences recognized by domestic law. If domestic law recognizes this capacity for these units, the agreement could qualify as an international treaty within the meaning of the 1969 Vienna Convention. The question remains open not in the case of agreements concluded within the framework of competences recognized by national law and granting *ius ad tractatum* to these sub-State entities, but in the case of agreements concluded without the possession of these competences or in the case of agreements of sub-State units which do not belong to federal or regional States. In the latter cases, the practice goes beyond regulatory restrictions and the agreements signed for sub-state units have a legal nature that could be considered as soft law.

The international linkage of Chilean regions: From practice to its institutional and normative consecration

With the transition to democracy, which formally began in 1989 with the first presidential elections after seventeen years of military dictatorship, Chile as a nation began to live a process of international reinsertion and economic, institutional and social development. Internationally, the opening to the outside world, initiated in the times of Augusto Pinochet, was complemented with agreements with partners in the international community, opting for what was called "open regionalism strategy".[28] In the search for this international reinsertion, the Chilean regions also began to search for a place in an increasingly globalized world with opportunities to meet certain objectives of regional and local interest. Even though it started timidly at first, driven primarily by international solidarity and the need to reinsert Chile in the international community

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[27] E. Vargas Carreño, *Derecho Internacional Público de acuerdo a las normas y prácticas que rigen en el siglo XXI.* Editorial Jurídica de Chile, Santiago, 2007, p. 232.

[28] A. Van Klaveren, *América Latina: hacia un regionalismo abierto*, Estudios Internacionales, vol. 30, no. 117, 1997, pp. 62–78.

after the isolation caused by the military dictatorship,[29] over time this sub-state linkage increased in practice.

In this way, in 1995 the first cooperation agreement was celebrated between the *Ile-de-France* region and the Metropolitan Region of Chile,[30] an agreement that aimed to achieve a more participatory and inclusive foreign state management, with priority issues such as environment, culture, land management and economic development.[31]

This increase in agreements intensified as local and regional governments broke into global markets, generating different collaboration mechanisms, depending on the level of the sub-state unit. In this way, Regional Governments began to celebrate "inter-institutional agreements", a term derived from Mexican legislation to identify those agreements entered into by a sub-state body with an external partner.[32] The same began to be done by the communes/municipalities (basic administrative unit) through the so-called "twinning agreements".[33] This process intensified as the country opened to the world, mainly during the government of President Ricardo Lagos, who opted for an even more intense foreign policy focusing on the integration and linkage of Chile with the outside world, mainly with neighbouring countries. In this way, it managed to diversify its foreign trade policy on a global scale, without compromising preferential agreements, with priority being given to the search for foreign investment in paradiplomatic exploration.[34]

However, the growing opening of the Chilean regions was not driven by an institutional or legal reform, especially considering the centralism

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29 L. Schnake, *Paradiplomacia en Chile: El caso de la región Metropolitana*, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/chile/08521.pdf, last access: 23 February 2022.

30 P. Astroza, Les activités internationales des régions chiliennes: un embryon de diplomatie subétatique?, cit., pp. 107–108.

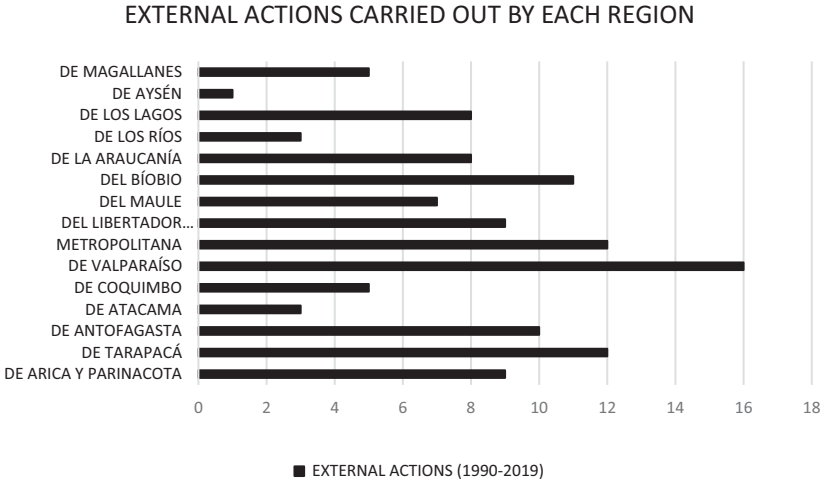
31 Agencia de Cooperación Internacional de Chile, *Seminario de Cooperación Descentralizada Chile – Francia,* https://issuu.com/agci/docs/seminario_de_cooperaci__n_descentra, last access: 23 February 2022.

32 P. Astroza, *Paradiplomacia y Actores Subestatales: Nuevas estrategias de inserción internacional,* cit., p. 158.

33 C. Parker, *La paradiplomacia de las regiones en tiempos de globalización,* https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2004/10/20/la-paradiplomacia-de-las-regiones-en-tiempos-de-globalizacion/, last access: 23 February 2022.

34 C. Ovando and D. Riquelme, *Una aproximación a la paradiplomacia en Chile: Algunos alcances de su dimensión transfronteriza en la franja norte*, Aldea Mundo, vol. 47, no. 24, 2019, p. 64.

and the current States legal status. On the contrary, the existence of weak institutions has confined the efficient and coordinated access of the regions to the international stage. This has contributed to a diversity in the international connections of the regions, with a practice which has no clear strategy and is rather a result of trial and error in its exercise.[35] This diversity manifests itself both in terms of the motives and drives of everyone to become international, as well as in the level or extent of international development, the intensity of the ties, the partners with whom agreements are signed, their follow-ups and their concrete results and achievements. This situation has affected the numbers of international agreements signed between Chilean regions and foreign partners, as seen in the following graph.



Production extracted from official documents of the Regional Coordination Direction of Chile (DICORE).

As a consequence, a very strong diversity of international agreements made by the regions, noting that the regions of Valparaíso, Metropolitan of Santiago and Biobío have a greater paradiplomatic activity. This reality is not shocking since they are the most politically and economically relevant regions, the most populated and with more points of outside

[35] P. Astroza, *Paradiplomacia y Actores Subestatales: Nuevas estrategias de inserción internacional,* cit., p. 156.

access through the main ports (like San Antonio in the region of Valparaíso or Talcahuano in the region of Biobío). On the other side, the region Metropolitan of Santiago is Chile's capital and the country's clear political, economic and financial center.

Just like Alvarez points out, this diversity responds to the different variations of learning and interest that presents the development of a region abroad.[36] In addition to the above are the regional and local citizen demands for a greater political decentralization and the regions wish to accomplish certain specific goals, both in domestic and foreign areas, allowing the start of an international extraversion process which in Chile is still premature.

Consequently, and as a product of over four decades of connections between Chilean regions and municipalities with other countries' substate units, an interesting process of sub-state institutionalization comes out in Chile.[37] Furthermore, this process was accompanied by an institutionalization of paradiplomacy, including the creation of specialized bureaus in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also in the Ministry of Interior and in the very own Regional Governments, Municipalities and other Ministries of the Central Government. In fact, those two first ministries signed a coordination protocol, mainly based on the need for the region's development through international insertion.[38]

This institutionalization process has prompted in 2000 the creation of the Regional Coordination Direction of Chile (DICORE) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This institution has been the main responsible for supporting and collaborating with the international management initiatives of Regional Governments, Provinces, and Municipalities of Chile. However it is still a Bureau of low rank within the Chancellery, understaffed, low budgeted and even a small amount of space at the building in Teatinos 180, which clearly illustrates the importance attributed to the Chilean paradiplomacy by the central government power.

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[36] M. Alvarez, *El rol de la paradiplomacia en las entidades binacionales: análisis del accionar de las provincias argentinas y regiones chilenas en los casos de EBITAN y EBIFETRA*, Si Somos Americanos, 2017, p. 88.

[37] P. Astroza, *Paradiplomacia y Actores Subestatales: Nuevas estrategias de inserción internacional,* cit.*,* pp. 160–163.

[38] C. Ovando and D. Riquelme, cit., pp. 64–65.

A noteworthy feature is the fact that the entire process of institutionalization of the sub-state Chilean units has been carried out without having clear and explicit legal norms that could approve its development. As we know, in Public Law the only things that can be done are what the Constitution and the law authorize public entities to do. However, practice prevailed over the legal vacuum. Therefore, this institutionalization process, far from being coordinated, has been carried out haphazardly, without a strategic management and no specialized staff, which brings the functioning of both the DICORE and the public servants in charge at the Regional Governments of the Regional Units for International Affairs (URAI) into question. Despite the legal and institutional insufficiency, both centrally and regionally, the non-Central Governments have continued to sign inter-agency agreements and to join forces between regions and municipalities with their peers abroad. A new legal development happened in 2018, when the Law 21.080 which aimed to modernize the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came into force, allowing in its article 35 that: "The bodies of State Administration, within the scope of its powers, will be able to sign inter-agency conventions of an international nature with foreign or international entities".[39]

This rule was enacted twenty-three years after the signature of the first inter-agency agreement in Chile, so we deem that it authenticated *ex post* an international activity that was already practiced by the regions and municipalities. This provision filled an existing gap in Chilean legislation and despite it still containing rules of an unclear scope, it nevertheless means progress in a unitary State like the Chilean one.

The article mentioned also established that:

> These agreements may not include legal matters or refer to affairs that may not be compatible with the foreign policy of the Republic of Chile. In order to ensure the consistency of the latter, the respective team must inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in due time of it's intention to sign them.

This provision comes to put limits on sub-state foreign action. It obviously reflects a fear observed in the compared experiences about the fragmentation of foreign policy by the central power. However, in the Chilean situation – until now –, the sub-state diplomacy has been

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[39] Congreso Nacional de Chile, *Ley 21.080 que modifica diversos cuerpos legales con el objeto de modernizar el Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*, http://bcn.cl/2xzt9, last access: 26 February 2022.

characterized by being consensual between the central power and the regions/ communes. The internationalization of these has not been against the central power but in coordination or non-confrontation with the foreign policy determined by the central Executive Power. There are no indications so far of attempts to use Chilean paradiplomacy for separatist purposes – "protodiplomacy" – or with contradictory objectives with the country´s foreign policy. It is a complement, a new dimension of the central policy developed at the sub-state level, reinforcing, in our opinion, the foreign policy determined at the central level.

When we wrote this article, Chile was carrying out a constitutional process intended to provide the country with a new Constitution. After the social outbreak that began on 18th October 2019, it's political-institutional exit is through the signing of Peace Agreement and a New Constitution on 15th November of the same year, Chile lives a historical moment. After the plebiscite of 20th October in 2020, where almost 80 % of the voters chose to approve the constitutional process and that it be carried out by a Constitutional Convention that´s elected 100 % by the citizens, with gender parity and with reserved seats, we are already beginning to know some of the norms that will be in the proposed text to be submitted to a ratifying plebiscite. In this regard, on 19th February 2022, two provisions referring to the paradiplomacy of the Chilean regions were approved in the plenary session of the Constitutional Convention.

In first place, we find in the second paragraph of article 23, that refers to:

> A Governor or Regional Governor will direct the Regional Government, exercising the administrative and regulatory function and will represent the autonomous Region before the other national and international authorities, within the frame of the national policy of international relations with coordination functions in intermediation between the central government and the region.[40]

[40] Convención Constitucional, *Informe de la Comisión de Forma de Estado, Ordenamiento, Autonomía, Descentralización, Equidad, Justicia Territorial, Gobiernos Locales y Organización Fiscal,* https://www.cconstituyente.cl/comisiones/verDoc.aspx?prmID=2157&prmTipo=DOCUMENTO_COMISION, last access: 26 February 2022.

This provision was approved in the plenary session of the Constitutional Convention with 110 votes in favor, 38 against and 4 abstentions.[41]

The above is complemented by the general attributions of the Regional Governor[42] and it is deepened in article 35, paragraph 1, numeral 13, which indicates, among the attributions of the Regional Governor:

> To celebrate and execute international cooperation actions, within the frames established by the treaties and agreements that are celebrated by the country for this purpose and according with the procedures regulated by law.[43]

According to what was said in the provision, it was approved in the plenary session of the Constitutional Convention with twenty-five votes in favor, twelve against and eleven abstentions,[44] existing, unlike the previous provision, a greater number of supporters of this proposed rule.[45]

So we can conclude that not only is the existence of Chilean paradiplomacy being recognized, but also the foreign action of the regions is being constitutionalized. It would be a process of standardization of the paradiplomatic practice where the norm should be the main guarantee for the international activity of a sub-state entity, which serves as an impulse in its internationalization allowing certain flexibility to its territories, something basic, and that is well explained by professor Noé Cornago when defining paradiplomacy as:

> The involvement of non-central governments in international relations, through formal and informal contacts, permanent or ad-hoc, with foreign entities, public or private, in order to promote socio-economic and political

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41 Convención Constitucional, *Pleno Sesión Nº58 – Viernes 18 de febrero de 2022,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDKT_t1PDR4&t=3s, last access: 22 June 2023.

42 Authority that is elected for the first time in history by popular suffrage on 15–16 May 2021.

43 Convención Constitucional, *Informe de la Comisión de Forma de Estado, Ordenamiento, Autonomía, Descentralización, Equidad, Justicia Territorial, Gobiernos Locales y Organización Fiscal,* cit.

44 Convención Constitucional, *Pleno Sesión Nº58 – Viernes 18 de febrero de 2022,* cit.

45 Without detriment to the constitutional consecration of paradiplomacy. We consider that it should be a legal matter and not a constitutional one, as has been done by the Convention members. Even more so, when the rule in question is identical to the one established in Article 16, letter k) of Law 19.175.

results, as well as any other external dimension of their own constitutional competences.[46]

Finally, we must emphasize the double restriction for the international actions of the regions: On one hand, it must be carried out only by governmental bodies, excluding private sector entities; and, on the other hand, the need for a legal basis for such actions, which cannot be carried out by those who do not have such attributions.[47]

The international linkage of Chilean regions with Europe and China

From the analysis of the inter-institutional agreements celebrated by the Chilean Regional Governments, of which we were able to identify more than a hundred from 1995 to date, in the first years of the democratic transition, those celebrated with European infra-state units, mainly Spanish, Italian, and French stand out. We explain this because Europe cooperated strongly with Chilean society to return to democracy and to support it in its process of democratic consolidation. Thus, Europe-Chile state relations were also reflected at the sub-state level.

It is not strange that the first country whose sub-state units were linked to Chilean peers were Spanish autonomous communities. Language, common ties, and Spain's effort to support the return to democracy in Chile resulted in the first agreements between Spanish and Chilean sub-state entities. What most attracted our attention is the finding that currently the sub-state units that have entered into the most agreements with Chilean non-central governments are the Chinese provinces. China has been making a strong entry into the Latin American subcontinent, not only at the state level but also at the sub-state and local level. Inter-institutional agreements and twinning agreements between cities have increased after the conclusion of the free trade agreement between Chile and China (2002) and the strategic change of the central administrations, which has turned strongly to the Asia-Pacific region, has also been

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[46] N. Cornago, *Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in the Redefinition of International Security: Dimensions of Conflict and Co-operation,* Regional and Federal Studies, no. 1, 1999, p. 40.

[47] P. Navarro, *El Procés Català y su proyección internacional ¿Ejemplo de protodiplomacia?.* Universidad de Concepción, Concepción, 2020, pp. 12–13.

projected at the sub-state level. European presence has lost influence also at this level. The Chinese provinces have played an active role in seeking out their Chilean counterparts. In the case of the Biobío Region (Chile), for example, the Biobío-China Corporation was created and participated in Biobío Week (2017), a week of exchanges in the Chinese provinces with which the Chilean Region has signed inter-institutional agreements (Hubei and Sichuan).

Final conclusions

Chile is an example of a State that does not meet the classic characteristics that theory and comparative experience pointed out to us as a state model in which sub-state units are linked to the outside. In spite of still being a strongly centralized unitary state, since the 1990s of the last century the regions began to link themselves with the exterior. This occurred despite a constitutional and legal vacuum that allowed them to do so. The actorness of the Chilean Regions is still in an embryonic stage, but it is interesting to observe the process of institutionalization first, and *ex post* legitimization, later to even be one of the first norms approved by two-thirds of the Constituent Convention to become a constitutional norm in case of the final approval of the New Constitution in the exit plebiscite.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight that Chilean paradiplomacy is consensual with the central power, it is even promoted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself and, at the time, by the Ministry of the Interior. This has even implied a cultural change for decision-makers, especially in the capital Santiago, advancing in a decentralization process broader than just the international dimension.

Finally, Chile is an example of a Latin American country where China has been gaining space and influence on the detriment of Europe. Starting from paradiplomacy with agreements with French departments, Spanish autonomous communities, or Italian regions, today most sub-state links are with Chinese provinces. This reflects, on the one hand, that the central foreign policy strategy influences the international activities of Chilean regions and, on the other hand, that Europe is losing influence in Chile – and Latin America in general – also in this sub-state dimension. This should lead both parties to think that in a world with so much uncertainty, risks, and vulnerabilities, it would be good to realize

the desired bi-regional partnership strategy. Perhaps a new political scenario in the Americas, with the new elections and the recently assumed new government in Chile, will help to strengthen these ties, which are not only historical and based on common values and traditions, but are also strategically important in the current global context.

Galician paradiplomacy (1981–2021): A general description and ten final notes

Celso Cancela Outeda

Introduction

In November 2021, the Regional Ministry (*conselleira*, in Galician) of the Environment, Territory and Housing participated in the 26th United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Glasgow, on behalf the *Xunta de Galicia*. This is a simple example that illustrates Galician paradiplomatic activity.[1] Nowadays, such actions carried out by different members of the Galician government are relatively common. At the same time, this case allows us to observe that the UN acts as a driving force for paradiplomacy.

Paradiplomacy,[2] that is, the presence of sub-state governments (regional or local) in the field of international relations, is a relatively widespread

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[1] In this chapter we will use the expressions "paradiplomacy" and "external action" in an interchangeable way (in the Spanish academic and legal context, the former is more common than the latter). There is no unambiguous definition of paradiplomacy. See, Z. Zeraoui, *Para entender la paradiplomacia*, Desafíos, vol. 28, 2016, pp. 15–34 and S. Paquin, *Paradiplomacy*, in T. Balzacq, F. Charillon, and F. Ramel (eds.), *Global Diplomacy. An Introduction to Theory and Practice.* Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2020.

[2] As Setzer and Anderton write "there has been an ongoing opposition to the term 'paradiplomacy' because of its origin in the notion of "parallel diplomacy." Consequently, several scholars have suggested alternative terminologies to describe subnational engagement in IR. Kincaid, for example, argued that "constituent diplomacy" was a less pejorative term to describe subnational international activity: "Terms such as micro-diplomacy and paradiplomacy imply that constituent diplomacy is inferior to nation-state diplomacy and exhibits a nation-state bias." The same term ("constituent diplomacy") is preferred by McMillan as " 'paradiplomacy' and 'subnational diplomacy' minimize the degree to which actors below the level of the nation-state are involved with foreign relations". Hocking also vigorously rejected the term "paradiplomacy." For him, the term only emphasizes a potential conflict between subnational and national governments. Instead, he suggested the concepts of "multilayered diplomacy" and, later, of "catalytic diplomacy". Similarly,

phenomenon on all continents of the world.[3] It occupies a place in governmental agendas, although with variable importance, and appears under different formulas and profiles.[4] In practice, it shows different features derived from several elements: diversity of strategies and goals, levels of action (global, interregional, transregional), political-constitutional frameworks (competence delimitation), available resources, relationship schemes center-periphery (cooperative-conflictual).[5] In short, sub-state governments have become aware of opportunities offered on the global scene[6] and they realize the role that they must assume abroad to exercise their powers and the effective promotion of their interests (economic, commercial, cultural, political, etc.).[7]

Pluijm, and Melissen argued that the term paradiplomacy "is unfortunate and rather inappropriate, given that state and city actors do not necessarily 'ride' along different diplomatic routes, but rather along the same route although in a different car". See J. Setzer and K. Anderton, *Subnational Leaders and Diplomacy.* Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies, 2019, https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.504, last access: 21 November 2021.

3 M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking*, 2000, http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/ForRelCU01/924-FRCU0105-eu-keating.pdf last access: 28 June 2022.

4 A. Kuznetsov, *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy. Subnational Governments in International Affairs.* Routledge, London, 2015 and N. Cornago, *On the Normalization of Sub-State Diplomacy*, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, vol. 5, 2010, pp. 11–36.

5 A. Lecours, *Political Issues of Paradiplomacy: Lessons from the Developed World*, Discussion Papers in Diplomacy, Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael", 2008.

6 As Paquin wrote "since the end of the Second World War, there has been an increase in multilateralism and international negotiations. Multilateralism and international negotiations have therefore become an indissociable component of globalization […]. The consequence of these two phenomena has been that all fields of government activity, even in federated states and municipalities, may enter into the jurisdiction of at least one intergovernmental organization and often of several. Thus, in the framework of international organizations and thematic conferences, topics are addressed regarding the environment, free trade, procurement contracts, education, public health, cultural diversity, corporate subsidies, treatment of investors, the removal of non-tariff barriers, agriculture, services, etc. In this context, federated states are increasingly aware that their political power or sovereignty – in other words, their ability to develop and implement policies – is the subject of negotiations within multilateral international forums". See S. Paquin, *Paradiplomacy*, cit.

7 M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking*, cit.; S. Paquin, *Paradiplomatie et relations internationales. Théorie des stratégies internationales des régions face à la mondialisation*. PIE. Bursens y Deforche, Bruxelles, 2004; P. Bursens and

At the beginning of the 21st century, in the context of globalization, sub-state governmental actors (non-governmental actors as well) are claiming their own role in the governance of societies, which requires the connection of global, state, regional and local agendas to cope with people's demands. As a result, according to Heine, at the diplomatic level this involves a renewal or transformation of "club diplomacy" into "network diplomacy".[8] The latter is developed at different levels with the intervention of various actors (international organizations, governments, companies, NGOs, unions, etc.) on a wide range of issues.

Spain is no exception. In the framework of the State of Autonomies (in Galician, *Estado das Autonomías*), there has also been a remarkable transformation regarding the performance of the autonomous communities (and local authorities) abroad. This entails abandoning the traditional conception of "international relations" and accepting a mild distinction between domestic and external/international affairs. These external activities began in the 1980s, at the same time as the creation of the autonomous institutions, as a controversial and conflictive practice both politically and legally. However, the Autonomous Communities were able to develop an external dimension in some of their competences with different profiles and intensities. At the present time, this practice is institutionalized at the political-administrative level, legally formalized in some statutes of autonomy,[9] and also by the 2014 External Action and Service Act (in Spanish, *Ley de la Acción Exterior y del Servicio Exterior*, LAESE). In addition, it was admitted by the jurisprudence of the Spanish Constitutional Court which has been evolving from its initial orientation.

In this context we must frame the case study of Galician paradiplomacy. It is based on an extensive experience that responds mainly (except for specific episodes such as president Fraga's visits to Cuba or Libya in the 1990s) to a functional orientation (social assistance, economic and

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J. Deforche, *Going beyond Paradiplomacy? Adding Historical Institutionalism to Account for Regional Foreign Policy Competences*, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, vol. 5, 2010, pp. 151–171.

8 J. Heine, *On the Manner of Practising the New Diplomacy*, CIGI Working Paper, Working Paper vol. 1, 2006, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=941440, last access: 21 November 2021.

9 R. García, *La acción exterior de las Comunidades Autónomas en las reformas estatutarias*. Tecnos, Madrid, 2009.

commercial promotion), combined with a secondary cultural dimension.[10] The Galician government is one of the first regional executives to initiate actions of this sort. Some specific factors fostered the actions such as the fact of having a border, which stimulated the relationship with the Portuguese authorities,[11] the care offered to the Galician diaspora located mainly in Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba, etc.) and in Western Europe (England, Germany, Switzerland, etc.). Other general factors can be added such as European regionalism, European integration or, more recently, globalization.

The initial set of sporadic and poorly coordinated activities was gradually consolidating and acquiring a certain political coherence and institutional stability (preparation of documents and creation of administrative structures) to make way, recently, for the approval of Act 10/2021 on foreign action and cooperation for the development of Galicia (in Galician, *Lei reguladora da acción exterior e da cooperación para o desenvolvemento de Galicia*, LAECDG). Therefore, the Galician executive has accrued a paradiplomatic heritage.[12] Since the establishment of the autonomous institutions in 1981, a trajectory with different phases, characteristics and actors can be traced. From a descriptive and comprehensive overview, we will consider in this chapter roots, characteristics, and results of the Galician experience. We intend to offer a case study. In other words, these pages attempt to present a panoramic and descriptive vision of Galician paradiplomacy of the period 1981–2021 that serves to complement the theoretical studies on the subject. First of all, we will examine the evolution of the Spanish state (political and legal) context. Next, we will expose historical phases of paradiplomatic action, its characteristics, and its driving factors. Finally, we will mention Galician paradiplomacy's ten notes.

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[10] C. Cancela, *La paradiplomacia del Gobierno gallego (1981–2010)*, in *Gobernanza global multi-nivel y multi-actor. Ejemplos de Europa, el Mediterráneo y América Latina.* Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, Zaragoza, 2011, pp. 181–199.

[11] Undoubtedly, neighborhood with Portugal acted as an incentive factor for Galician paradiplomacy. From the initial informal contacts, progress has been made to the constitution of common entities for cross-border cooperation issues such as the Galicia-North of Portugal EGTC). As we pointed out, the degree of institutional development and the intensity of the contacts between Galicia and Portugal would advise not to include them in paradiplomatic activity, at least in this field. C. Cancela. See ibidem.

[12] Ibidem.

The Spanish context: From hostility to legal-formal recognition with certain distrust

A paradiplomatic phenomenon has also developed in Spain following political and legal evolution. Since the initial hostility and rejection of paradiplomatic practices, both by the Spanish government (and its diplomatic service that avoided providing any kind of collaboration or assistance to the Autonomous Communities) and by the Spanish Constitutional Court, a situation of legal recognition has been reached, albeit one with some mistrust on the part of the Spanish Government. Mainly, this point has been reached due to the jurisprudential change of the Constitutional Court, the provision of mechanisms for participation in European affairs (EU), the introduction of political and legal bases in several statutes of autonomy amended in the first decade of this century, and the configuration of a legal framework (LAESE) that formally welcomes the external action of the Autonomous Communities and local entities.

As we know, each Autonomous Community has self-government recognized through its Statute of Autonomy materialized in the provision of a set of competences that had to be exercised within its administrative territory (territoriality principle). However, practice soon exceeded this legal provision. In an informal way, so-called external action or paradiplomacy emerged. Several forces played a role in this phenomenon: the border nature of some Autonomous Communities, the presence of emigrant communities (diaspora) and, mainly, Spanish accession to the European Communities (1986).

In the early 1980s some Autonomous Communities such as the Basque Country, Catalonia, Andalusia, and Galicia had already begun to carry out activities to exercise their powers beyond state territorial borders. At that point, they encountered political and legal opposition from the Spanish government, which understood that any activity outside the state territory corresponded to its exclusive competence according to the constitutional category of "international relations" (art. 149.1.3 Spanish Constitution). At that time, neither the statute of autonomy texts (except some references related to information on international treaties for the Autonomous Communities, requests to the Spanish Executive to conclude agreements on matters of regional interest, or relations with the emigrant communities) nor the Spanish Constitution itself contained express mentions of the external action of the autonomous institutions.

As Lecours points out, it was common for paradiplomacy to be in a grey area from the point of view of competence.[13]

Contacts with European institutions were also part of the "international relations" category. However, Spanish accession to the European Communities supposed, *de facto*, a transfer of competences to the European institutions and, indirectly, to the Spanish Government, which held exclusive representation in Brussels. In practice, this implied a material alteration of the distribution of powers established through the Constitution and statutes of autonomy and a recentralization of powers. Then, some autonomous governments demanded political-institutional measures to correct this situation and protect their exclusive powers. Partially, the solution arose from the gradual institutionalization (1989, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2004, 2006) of the indirect participation of the Autonomous Communities in European affairs through the Conference on Issues Related to the European Union, (in Spanish, *Conferencia para Asuntos Relacionados con la Unión Europea*, CARUE), the sectoral conferences and the regional representatives in the Spanish delegation to the EU Council.

How, though, should the "international relations" category be understood[14]? The Spanish Constitutional Court carried out the main task because it opened the legal path for external action of the Autonomous Communities after a previous denial period (1981–1991). During this time, this Court considered that any action that implied an external projection or intervention (extraterritorial jurisdiction) performed by an autonomous government, was an exclusive competence of the Spanish Government because of a traditional and broad conception of the "international relations" category. For instance, its decision 154/1985 denied the competence of the *Instituto Galego de Bachillerato a Distancia* (Galician public entity for distance education) to act beyond the Galician territory. The same point of view was used in the Court's decision 137/1989 related to the "Comunicado de colaboración" (agreement to collaborate) (1984) signed between the Galician Government and the Danish Government's Directorate General for the Environment.

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[13] A. Lecours, *Political Issues of Paradiplomacy: Lessons from the Developed World,* cit.

[14] According to the art. 149.1.3 Spanish Constitution.

The Constitutional Court's decision 17/1991[15] started a change regarding the previous conception of "international relations" that made it less restrictive. Thus, the Constitutional Court admitted external action of Autonomous Communities, by considering that exclusive state competence was restricted to certain fields such as foreign policy direction, international agreements signing (*ius ad tractatum*), foreign representation (embassies), nationality, immigration, international State responsibility, etc. In this jurisprudential evolution, the key ruling was decision 165/1994 regarding the establishment of a Basque Government office (institutional representation) in Brussels. Therefore, since this decision, Autonomous Communities have been permitted to act abroad with some limitations.[16] Certainly, in the political field both regional presence in the European institutions and interregional contacts contributed to the development of an external dimension of their competences.

Currently, it is not unusual for a regional president or councillor (*conselleiro*, in Galician) to travel to another state, sign a cooperation arrangement, or establish an official delegation or economic promotion office abroad. In general, Spanish Autonomous Communities accomplish such activities with greater or lesser intensity and extent. Therefore, it is a generalized and consolidated practice that assumes an external dimension of both their interests and their powers. In fact, some statutes of autonomy, reformed during the early years of the 21st century (Andalusia, Catalonia, or Balearic Islands), have incorporated explicit provisions related to external action. Later, some Autonomous Communities (Catalonia, 2014 and Galicia, 2021) have passed specific acts on this matter.

Indeed, besides previous legal elements, the above mentioned LAESE was added to the legal framework in 2014.[17] It was approved with

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[15] Which resolved unconstitutionality appeals against some articles of Act 16/1985 regulating Historical Heritage.

[16] Subsequent constitutional judgments such as 31/2010, 80/2012, 198/2013, 46/2015, 228/2016 or 135/2020 have defined the responsibility for Autonomous Communities' external action.

[17] Another important regulation is Law 25/2014 on Treaties and other International Agreements. However, Ridao detects the return to the expansive conception of the State's competence regarding international relations, functions on international treaties and direction of foreign policy conferred by the Constitution to the Spanish Government. See J. Ridao, *El rol de las Regiones Europeas en el marco de las relaciones internacionales de los Estados compuestos, en particular, el caso español*, Ius et Veritas: Revista de la Asociación Ius et Veritas, vol. 54, 2017, pp. 124–149.

parliamentary support of the conservative Popular Party (PP) alone and was read in different ways. While some political leaders and autonomous governments accepted it without criticism (due to partisan loyalty or because of the different importance given to external action, in general), others considered it as an attempt to recentralize external action by the central government under the pretext of the economic-financial crisis and the political conflict between Catalonia and the Spanish Government.[18] Apart from political and legal controversies, from a historical perspective this Act implies to the Autonomous Communities (local entities, as well) the legal recognition of the external dimension of their powers. To sum up, a double legal framework (regional and national level) has gradually been set up to perform external action. A future constitutional reform should include these modifications.

Galician paradiplomacy: factors, phases, and characteristics

The existence of a large Galician emigrant community abroad (Galician diaspora), the fact of having a border with Portugal (added to cultural and linguistic proximity) and the opportunities derived of EU membership acted as mobilizing and legitimizing specific factors of this paradiplomacy.[19] Territorial areas in which it has focused its attention were Portugal, Europe, especially the European Union, and Latin America. At the beginning, therefore, its priority issues were: cross-border cooperation with the Northern Region of Portugal, assistance to the Galician diaspora, and representation and participation in European

[18] R. García, *La proyección internacional de las Comunidades Autónomas en la Ley de la Acción y del Servicio Exterior del Estado (LAESE): Autonomía territorial y unidad de acción de la política exterior*, Revista Electrónica de Estudios Internacionales, vol. 27, 2014 and S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024*, Ponencia XV Congreso de la Asociación Española de Ciencia Política (AECPA), 7 July 2021, https://aecpa.es/files/view/pdf/congress-papers/15-0/2616/, last access: 21 November 2021.

[19] According to the historian Ramón Villares, the reflection on the international projection of Galicia has its roots in the political tradition of republican and autonomist Galicianism derived from the Galicianist Party that was founded in 1931. See R. Villares, Diplomacia para unha nación cultural, In *Unha vida de compromiso para unha Galicia universal. Libro homenaxe a Xulio Ríos Paredes*, IGADI, 2021, pp. 65–71.

institutions; later, those were complemented with the internationalization of Galician companies, development cooperation or the external promotion of Galicia's image.

Considering Ríos and Viqueira's contributions,[20] we will examine the development of Galician external action based on five main periods.

1st period: 1981–1989

This period began with the establishment of the first Galician autonomous institutions. From this point onwards, first formal contacts were developed with the Portuguese authorities to coordinate initiatives and promote common interests (communications, border crossing infrastructures, cultural and scientific exchanges). This area has been a steady priority for successive Galician executives whatever their political colour.[21] In November 1982, Xerardo Fernández Albor, the first president of the *Xunta de Galicia* (regional government; usually we mention only *Xunta*), traveled to Porto to sign a collaboration agreement with the Administrative Commission of the Northern Region of Portugal. Later, in July 1984, he undertook a second official trip to northern Portugal.

Initial trips of the *Xunta*'s president were also developed to contact the Galician diaspora in Latin America. Thus, in 1982, Fernández Albor traveled to Buenos Aires (as well as Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro) to participate in the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the emblematic Galician Centre located there. Later, President González Laxe continued institutional trips like these to Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela) in which contacts were scheduled with political authorities, business actors or universities.[22] From the beginning, Argentina occupied a privileged position on the Galician government's agenda.[23] Nevertheless,

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[20] C. Freres, X. Ríos, A. Sanz, and M. X. Viqueira, *Os principais actores da acción exterior*, Texturas Internacionais, nº. 3, 1999, https://www.igadi.gal/ti/003/os_principais_actores_da_accion_exterior.htm, last access: 21 November 2021.

[21] Cross-border cooperation has reached a high level of institutionalization and intensity (currently, there are several active EGTCs, the Galicia-North of Portugal EGTC is especially noteworthy). Due to this, we wonder whether cross-border cooperation must be included in the paradiplomacy field. See, C. Cancela, *La paradiplomacia del Gobierno gallego (1981–2010)*, cit.

[22] Xunta de Galicia, *A xestión dun goberno.* Presidencia da Xunta de Galicia, Gabinete de Prensa, 1989.

[23] As Peruzzotti and Villarrazo point out, the paradiplomatic contacts of this period also responded to Argentine political interests: "For the Argentine authorities, the encounters with the Galician community and officials were perceived as a gateway

Galician external projection was extended to other Latin American countries for various purposes (economic, tourist and cultural promotion, social assistance, etc.).

As we have noted, in 1986, the Spanish State became a member of the European Communities. This fact prompted the constitution of the Galicia-Europe Foundation (*Fundación Galicia-Europa*) in 1988, which basically sought to create a two-way channel of contact with European institutions and bodies (apart from the Santiago de Compostela office, it had an office in Brussels). Recourse was made to the legal figure of foundation (private institution) derived from the legal-political obstacles of the Spanish Government. In this way, a third focus of external attention emerged.

2nd period: 1989–1997

In the autumn 1989, Manuel Fraga, a Spanish conservative leader (who was born in Galicia), became the third president of the *Xunta*. His political leadership and charisma gave a personalist orientation to the paradiplomatic action. Overall, he provided a strong political boost to the Galician presence abroad. On the other hand, the aforementioned territorial areas were consolidated (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Uruguay or Venezuela) since Galician emigration had attracted attention from the beginning.[24] Numerous activities were accomplished related to economic, cultural, health-care fields, social assistance, etc.

Secondly, we must highlight the progressive configuration of an administrative organization fully integrated into the *Xunta*'s structure and oriented toward paradiplomatic action. Precisely, in 1990, the Secretariat General for Relations with Galician Communities was created to provide assistance-humanitarian actions to the Galician emigrant communities; obviously, its functions and responsibilities were focused

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to Spain and eventually to Europe. They expected from this greater rapprochement a political and economic support that would serve to solidify the process of democratic consolidation under way". E. Peruzzotti and M. Villarrazo, *As relacións da Comunidades Autónoma de Galicia coa Arxentina*, Tempo Exterior, vol. 4, 2002. https://www.igadi.gal/arquivo/te_se04/as_relacions_comunidade_autonoma_galicia_arxentina.htm, last access: 21 November 2021.

[24] Latin American attraction must also be related to the policies recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund based on privatization, trade liberalization and stabilization.

on the outside.[25] In 1993, the Galician Institute for Economic Promotion (in Galician, *Instituto Galego de Promoción Económica*, IGAPE) was established to support the internationalization of Galician companies and attract foreign investment to Galicia. For this purpose, the so-called "business promotion centres" were created in the United States, Germany, Poland, Japan, and China (which no longer exist).

3rd period: 1997–2009

The establishment of the European Committee of the Regions (1994) and the increase of contacts with different associations linked with European regionalism (Association of European Border Regions, Assembly of European Regions, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, etc.) encouraged foreign connections at the European level.[26] In connection with this, the General Secretariat for Relations with the European Union and External Action was created in 1997, reporting directly to the *Xunta*'s presidency. Its role consisted of representing Galician interests in different European forums and increasing administrative coordination. Also in 1997, the *Xunta*'s External Action Commission was established, chaired by the *Xunta*'s president, and made up of various councillors, general secretaries, and general directors. Its tasks included the formulation of proposals for political action and the coordination of initiatives and actions of the Galician regional administration (promoting interdepartmental coordination).

At this stage, initial strategic documents were prepared to provide the necessary articulation to Galician external action. Geographic and sectoral priorities of the Galician government were established. Thus, the First Four-Year External Action Programme (1998–2002) was released in 1998, followed by the Second Four-Year External Action Programme (2003–2006) in 2002. In 2004, a third document was drawn up, the White Paper on Galicia's External Action, to stimulate debate in Galician society on foreign interests.

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[25] Between 2002 and 2010, the Galicia Emigration Foundation (*Fundación Galicia Emigración*) was in operation. Its main orientation consisted in providing assistance to Galicians from the diaspora in a situation of hardship or risk of social exclusion.

[26] It is worth mentioning that already in mid-1992, Fraga, who aspired to the presidency of the Assembly of European Regions in competition with the Catalonian president Jordi Pujol. Then, the Galician president began a campaign to project his image and attract support through trips to different European countries (Czechoslovakia, Italy, Germany, Belgium, France, and Portugal).

In 2001, the Ministry of Emigration and Foreign Cooperation (in Galician (*Consellería de Emigración e Cooperación Exterior*) was created to deal with the emigrant community and development cooperation. Therefore, its activities were oriented toward the outside world, Latin America in particular.

During this phase, Galician paradiplomacy acquired a more political and personalist profile, due to Fraga's strong leadership. Trips abroad of the *Xunta*'s president multiplied and diversified his destinations (America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania).[27] From a general perspective, throughout Fraga's mandates, we detected the articulation of a political discourse regarding paradiplomacy, the definition of a minimum strategy (objectives and means), institutionalization into the Galician public administration's framework (administrative coordination), and the diffusion and awareness of the growing relevance of the foreign dimension in regional policies (internationalization).

In 2005, the socialist Pérez Touriño, in coalition with the Galician Nationalist Bloc (in Galician, *Bloque Nacionalista Galego*), replaced Fraga as head of the *Xunta*. In terms of paradiplomacy, actions and forms used by his new government showed a certain continuity with the previous presidency, although political leadership was less strong. Inside the governing coalition, two conceptions coexisted as far as Galician external action was concerned: one, inspired by a functional nature supported by the socialist side and another, grounded on a political-cultural nature, assisted by the nationalist side, which sought a certain political-cultural recognition. In contrast to Fraga's mandates, some administrative departments (in Galician *consellerías*) stood out for their presence abroad (for instance, the case of the Ministry of Culture).[28]

During the coalition government, three aspects can be highlighted. On the one hand, the strengthening of the executing apparatus of Galician paradiplomacy through the creation (2006) and integration into the organic structure of the higher bodies dependent on the *Xunta*'s

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[27] Some of his travels were controversial. Thus, in September 1991 Fraga travelled to Cuba to meet with Fidel Castro (in 1992 the Cuban leader visited Galicia), in 1996 he travelled to Iran and in 1998 he visited Libya.

[28] C. Cancela, *Unha ollada á paradiplomacia galega: 2005–2008*, Tempo Exterior, vol. 17, 2008, pp. 65–78.

presidency of the Secretariat General for Foreign Relations.[29] From a functional perspective, the Secretariat General depended on the *Xunta*'s president, which provided it a clearly political profile, unlike other Autonomous Communities that attributed an economic profile to similar bodies, integrating them into the ministry of the economy. On the other hand, the constitution of the *Xunta*'s official delegations abroad took place, for the first time, in Buenos Aires (2007) and Montevideo (2008). Finally, another important element was the development of the so-called External Action Strategy, conceived to offer a comprehensive approach to Galician paradiplomacy (2007).

Concerning Latin America, president Touriño (also the vice president, Anxo Quintana, and some councillors) made trips to Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, and Cuba for promoting economic relations and Galician culture, mainly.

4th period 2009–2014

In 2009, the conservative party's leader (Popular Party) Alberto Núñez Feijóo became the fourth president of the *Xunta*. He has remained in office until 2022 continuously (since the beginning of April 2022, he is the national leader of the People's Party. Then, he resigned as president). On the one hand, economic crisis (2008) and austerity measures (reduction of public spending and personnel cutbacks) and, on the other hand, political conflict between the Spanish Government and the Catalonian Government (2010) generated a less positive scenario for the development of the paradiplomatic activity of the Autonomous Communities. Then, in general, political discourse was oriented to the degradation of the self-government of the Autonomous Communities and, in particular, discrediting their external actions.[30] Several aspects of Galician paradiplomacy were modified. In general, it adopted an economic-functional

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[29] It was also assigned the Directorate General for Foreign Cooperation, which was in charge of drawing up the I Master Plan of Galician cooperation 2006–2009.

[30] In the political debate, expressions associated with paradiplomacy were "regional waste", the creation of "mini-embassies" or "beach bars". Furthermore, on the one hand, the Autonomous Communities were accused of irresponsibility and irrationality; on the other hand, calls were made to rethink or dismantle external action and promote its centralization in the hands of the Spanish Government to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency. In short, paradiplomacy was expendable, superfluous, or even contrary to state foreign policy. In the midst of this climate, for example, the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha closed its separate office in Brussels to integrate it in the Permanent Representation of Spain.

profile aimed at business and commercial promotion (attracting foreign investment, transferring technology, creating new markets). Deliberately, economic elements have provided the strongest motivation for Galician paradiplomacy in these years.

Regarding the organizational aspect, the Secretariat General for Foreign Relations was replaced by a Directorate-General for International and EU Affairs integrated into the organic structure of the Ministry for the Presidency, Public Administrations and Justice.[31] In short, Galician paradiplomacy was based on this Directorate-General, which served as the main tool for the management of European and external affairs. Although, at the present time (2021), this administrative unit is framed inside the First Vice-presidency and Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Tourism, the paradiplomatic action did not recover the former political-administrative status of the Fraga or Touriño stage when it could count on a secretariat general. In an increasingly globalized context, it seems a directorate general is not a sufficient organizational means to provide political centrality, offer visibility to external action or to coordinate administrative departments (ministries) that have been increasing their external involvement.[32]

Along the same lines, in 2009 the Galician External Action Council (in Galician *Consello de Acción Exterior de Galicia*, CAEX) was established to advise the Galician Executive on external issues. It is a collegiate body of a consultative nature (not binding), chaired by the Ministry for the Presidency, Public Administrations and Justice (vice-presidency corresponds to the Directorate-General for International and EU Affairs), in which representatives take part as members of several ministries (economy and industry, education, culture and tourism, sea, etc.), chambers of commerce, Business Leaders' Confederation of Galicia, trade unions, universities, NGOs, etc.

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[31] Four sub-directorates general depend on this Directorate-General (Sub-directorate general for Relations with the European Union, Sub-directorate general for Foreign Cooperation, Sub-directorate general for Analysis and Programming, Sub-directorate general for External Action and Cross-Border Cooperation) and the two official delegations (Delegation of the *Xunta de Galicia* in Buenos Aires and Montevideo).

[32] The importance attributed to the General Secretariat of Emigration, very active abroad although limited to this field, is paradoxical because the number of departments, units or administrative bodies that intervene in external actions is growing and they demand a relevant political reference.

In the same way as his predecessors in office, since 2009, president Feijóo has continued to make institutional visits mainly to Europe (e.g., Brussels, London, Hamburg), and to Latin America. Concerning the latter destination, we can mention visits and meetings with political and business leaders from Argentina (2009), Uruguay (2010),[33] Mexico and Panama (2011), Colombia (he held a meeting with President Juan Manuel Santos, 2012) Brazil (he visited Sao Paulo and also met the governor of Rio de Janeiro 2012); Mexico (he met President Peña Nieto and participated in a business meeting 'Galicia-Mexico. Business Opportunities', 2013)[34] and Peru. At the end of 2013, he officially travelled to Cuba to support (social) Galician residents and deepen economic ties. In this case, it should be noted that he held a meeting with president Raúl Castro and another with the first vice president, Miguel Díaz-Canel. Usually, the president's agenda contains institutional and economic contacts to promote investments and business initiatives.

Considering the predominant functional orientation of Galician paradiplomacy, the activity of the Ministry of Economy and Industry stands out, directly, through its councillor, and indirectly through IGAPE.[35] However, the aforementioned business promotion centers, that is, IGAPE delegations that operated directly, were reorganized (Polish and Japanese delegations were eliminated). Following that, based on an agreement with the Business Leaders' Confederation of Galicia, it was decided to establish the Network of Business Platforms Abroad of Galicia (in Galician, *Rede PEXGA*) that has been operating since 2010. So, we see the beginning certain outsourcing of the external action.

An altruistic dimension of Galician external action is manifested through the II Master Plan of Galician Cooperation for Development 2010–2013 and the III Master Plan of Galician cooperation for Development 2014–2017. The two were promoted by the Directorate General for International and EU Affairs and approved unanimously by the Galician Parliament. Both plans show a relative continuity as far as potential beneficiary countries of Galician aid are concerned; namely, Cape

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[33] In 2013, he received Uruguay's president, José Mújica, in Santiago de Compostela.

[34] According to media data, President Feijóo had visited Mexico six times up to the beginning of 2015.

[35] It is quite usual for the Galician President travelling accompanied by the Councillor for Economy and Industry, the Director-General of the Galician Institute for Economic Promotion (IGAPE) and the Secretary-General for Emigration.

Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique (Portuguese-speaking Africa), Peru, Ecuador, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Guatemala (Central and South America).

In terms of culture, in 2014 the Galician Parliament unanimously approved Act 1/2014 "for the use of the Portuguese language and links with Lusophone countries (Lusofonía)" (informally, called "Paz-Andrade Act"). It seeks to harness advantages derived from the linguistic proximity between Galician and Portuguese languages to provide Galician government stimulation for the economic, commercial, cultural relations with countries where Portuguese is an official language (Lusophone world).[36] Its effective promotion should lead to the cultural and linguistic recognition of Galicia and the promotion of intercultural exchanges. In this regard, Pazos Vidal writes that

> Clearly and as expected, an act [1/2014] on a Galician scale of such geopolitical significance but clearly programmatic in nature has had little impact either internally or too much on external action, but we quote it here precisely because of an initiative that was approached with real determination: integration of the *Xunta* as an observer in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP).[37]

In 2018, the Galician Parliament agreed unanimously to request entry as a "member" in this Community, but later, the Spanish government decided to ask for its integration as an "Associate Observer", which happened in July 2021. Apart from the sincerity of the Spanish commitment to promoting the Portuguese language, the direct effect is

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[36] These countries are grouped in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (*Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa*, 1996). In July 2021, Spain acquired the status of associate observer. Earlier, *Xunta de Galicia* had contacted the Spanish authorities and the Secretariat-general of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries in Lisbon to participate and cooperate in the Lusophone world. Currently, the Council for Galician Culture (in Galician, *Consello da Cultura Galega*) and the Galician Academy of the Portuguese Language (in Portuguese, *Academia Galega da Língua Portuguesa*, AGLP) are consultative observers, which allows them to take part in the work of the Community. On the relations between Galicia and Lusophone world, see *Galicia e a Lusofonía diante dos desafíos*, 2019.

[37] S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024,* cit.

that it closes the door to a formal and immediate Galician presence in this international organization.[38]

From a formal point of view, this period can be considered to have ended with the approval of the LAESE (and also the Treaties and other International Agreements Act). Although both regulations were promoted by Mariano Rajoy's conservative government in the context of the growing advance of the Catalonian independence movement (the political objective was to stop the international projection of Catalonia that was secessionist in nature), they imply the legal recognition of the external action of Autonomous Communities (and local entities, as well). In other words, they imply the political acceptance of paradiplomacy as a new framework in which various actors (national, regional, and local level) must interact.

5th period: 2015–2021

After the approval of the above Spanish acts, the Galician executive approved the Decree 178/2015 "that regulates the external action of the Autonomous Community of Galicia". This rule deserves to be highlighted because it tries to establish

> The comprehensive regulation of [the] external activity [of the Autonomous Community], with the aim of facilitating its internal coordination and with the State, as well as punctually meeting the consequent obligations derived from this new regulatory framework.

Specifically, the decree mentions issues such as participation of the Galician executive in EU institutions, as well as Galician external action outside this institutional framework, the Galicia-North of Portugal Euroregion and relations in the Lusophone world or rules that establish obligations of communication related to the trips abroad by the *Xunta*'s president and councillors.

This decree provided for the drawing up of the Galician External Action Strategy (EGAEX) conceived as a

> Plan in which the priorities that interest or concern Galician society will be specified, with special emphasis on the promotion of the language, culture

[38] Pazos points out that the Spanish Government's motivation responds to "the corporatist interests of the diplomatic corps". S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024,* cit.

> and image of Galicia, on the safeguard of the rights and expectations of the Galician diaspora in the States in which it is settled, on the promotion of the Galician companies and economy abroad and on the strengthening of ties with Portugal and with the Portuguese-speaking community of countries [CPLP].

Three years later, in 2018, the EGAEX was officially presented.[39] Basically, it is a document that identifies the main actors, sectors and geographic spaces concerning Galician paradiplomacy. From a chronological perspective, it continues the task started through the four-year programs at the end of the nineties, although it was criticized for its limited operational dimension. In mid-2018, the Galician Parliament approved the IV Master Plan of Galician Cooperation for Development 2018–2021, which establishes similar geographic priorities to the previous plans.

Finally, at the normative and organizational level, we must refer to the approval of Act 10/2021, "regulating external action and cooperation for the development of Galicia". At the same time, it aims to improve Galician projection and the coordination related to external action, Galician participation in the negotiation of international treaties, and the care of Galician communities abroad. It also seeks Euroregion Galicia-North of Portugal consolidation, Galician projection in the Lusophone countries and a greater Galician role in the field of development cooperation. Act 10/2021 assumes the increasing internationalization of several fields connected with Galician self-government. Consequently, it lists a series of sectors where external action can be carried out: emigration, emergencies, training public employees, environment and climate change, R+D+I, education and university, culture and language, tourism, volunteering, health, maritime sector, and so on.

In accordance with the broad and diverse composition of CAEX, this Galician act admits the presence of multiple actors or subjects in the field of external action: the Galician regional administration (president, ministries, and other high officials), the Council for Galician Culture, Galician local entities (city councils and provincial councils),[40] Galician public universities, chambers of commerce and professional associations,

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[39] The Galician External Action Strategy can be consulted at https://ficheiros-web.xunta.gal/exteriores/documentos/libro-egaex.pdf (last access 21 November 2021). At the end 2021, announcement was made of the development of a new Galician External Action Strategy for the period 2022–2026.

[40] In relation to the external action of some Galician cities, Alejo presents the cases of Santiago de Compostela and A Coruña. A. Alejo, *Diplomacias urbanas en España*.

among others. It also mentions the so-called "concurrent private subjects" (business organizations, trade unions and professional associations, non-governmental organizations for development cooperation, associations and groups of exporters or entities that include Galician communities or associations of studies).[41]

Besides the above normative initiatives, it is necessary to add other concrete representation activities mainly undertaken by the *Xunta*'s president. Thus, for instance, he held a business meeting at the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce of Uruguay to promote Galicia as an investment destination in 2016. In this same year, he visited Cuba and met Raúl Castro again.[42] In June 2017, Feijóo carried out the first institutional trip of a Galician president to China to assess business opportunities and attract investment. In July 2017, he offered a reception in Santiago de Compostela to representatives of Asia-Pacific countries (Afghanistan, Australia, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Thailand, and Vietnam). In May 2018, he held a meeting with the European Commissioner for Regional Policy to discuss the cohesion funds (2021–2027) that Galicia will receive from the EU budget. In February 2019, he also travelled to Miami and New York where he performed a cultural agenda (opening an exhibition), tourism (promotion Xacobeo 2021–2022) and business (meeting businesspeople). Some months later (September 2019) he travelled to Buenos Aires to meet President Mauricio Macri and consider investment opportunities in Argentina. Before the COVID-19 pandemic (February 2020), his last official expedition was to Uruguay where he met Tabaré Vázquez (they had already met in 2016) and the future president, Luis Lacalle.

Later, in May 2021, president Feijóo reactivated his foreign agenda to meet in Lisbon, both the president of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and the prime minister, António Costa. In June 2021 he was received by the Pope at the Vatican where they assessed a possible

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Una aproximación a la política exterior de las ciudades en Galicia, in María Rosario Alonso Ibáñez (dir.), *Las agendas urbanas y el gobierno de las ciudades: transformaciones, desafíos e instrumentos.* Reus, Madrid, 2020, pp. 67–90.

41 Although it is an unnecessary and incoherent reference, it is worth highlighting the mention to the Galician Parliament's external action because it recognizes the category of parliamentary diplomacy.

42 During this institutional trip, the Galician president signed a memorandum with the Cuban Ministry of Culture to consolidate existing historical and cultural ties between the Galician people and the Cuban people.

future visit to Santiago de Compostela in 2022, during the Holy Year. Recently, in September 2021, he held a meeting with Colombia's president, Iván Duque, at the Galician Government headquarters.

In addition to establishing the chronological periods of Galician paradiplomacy's development and highlighting factors that drove it, this section offers to the reader a panoramic vision based on a set of basic questions: partners or counterparts (who?), destinations (where?), issues (what?), instruments (acts, meetings, signing agreements) (how?).

Ten final notes

Note 1: Pioneer, active and non-conflictive

The interests of citizens (and groups) transcend the state's territorial borders. It assumes a mediating role among several actors who can reach effective agreements to satisfy these interests. Sub-state entities are among these actors that try to take advantage of opportunities and face threats, giving rise to paradiplomacy that allows them to intervene in this scenario integrated by international actors, classic and new. As Setzer and Anderton point out, it is an inevitable phenomenon.[43]

According to Santos,

> Paradiplomacy is by and large seen as beneficial and a positive contribution to strengthen the overall international position of states. These are increasingly active in the international arena, mainly in areas of low politics (trade, investment, science and technology, culture, and education), trying to project their specific interests. [...] Paradiplomacy is a strategic channel for the creation and consolidation of the 'soft power' of States not only because of the informal channels and instruments it uses but also because of the fundamental relevance of the issue-areas addressed by paradiplomacy, namely trade, investment and economic cooperation; education and human capital; migrations; science and technology; culture and identity. All of these are crucial dimensions of 'soft power'. [Paradiplomacy] constitutes a major factor for the consolidation of the soft power of states.[44]

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[43] J. Setzer and K. Anderton, *Subnational Leaders and Diplomacy,* cit.

[44] M. Santos, *Paradiplomacy, Knowledge Regions and the Consolidation of "soft power"*, JANUS.NET, e-journal of International Relations, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 10–28.

Nevertheless, this beneficial and positive vision has not yet been fully accepted in Spain. Due to political factors (center-periphery conflict, Jacobinism tradition…) mistrust of paradiplomacy still persists. Thus, in the Spanish system, it is not easy for the Spanish government to realize that paradiplomacy does not represent a menace to itself or, on the positive side, that it can be considered an opportunity. Definitively, it is necessary to remove the conflictive logic (political obstructionism and lack of collaboration from Spanish diplomacy) and establish a cooperative and loyal logic between the Spanish government and the Autonomous Communities.

In the 1980s, Galician authorities realized the need for external action to promote and defend Galician interests in different areas and to give substantive content to self-government. Besides the emigration and the neighborhood with Portugal, territorial competence promoted both at global and European level[45] and the opportunities and EU institutional demands were immediately added as driving factors of paradiplomacy.[46] In this way, as an autonomous community endowed with self-government, Galicia is entitled to seek and defend its interests through paradiplomatic means. In the Spanish context of the State of Autonomies, Galician paradiplomacy was among the pioneers, although more motivated by specific needs (functional approach) than by broad

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[45] Keating writes "A different way of thinking about regions has come into political science from social geography, that of rescaling […]. There are several versions of the rescaling argument but the common thread is that social, economic and political systems are changing their territorial scales and reconfiguring, above, below and across states. […], some observers have portrayed these systems as being in competition to attract investments, skills and technology in a global race for advantage. States, unable to manage their territorial economies in a world of capital mobility, have resorted to the language of inter-regional competition instead". M. Keating, *Regions, history and political science*, in *Política, Derecho y Constitución. Estudios en homenaje al profesor Antonio Carlos Pereira Menaut.* Tirant lo Blanch, Santiago de Chile, 2021, pp. 953–974.

[46] In the emergence of paradiplomacy, international and state level factors are brought together. Thus, Latouche mentions the failure of traditional actors to adjust to changes in the international system. Thus, the development of paradiplomacy is not the result of a simple institutional mimicry between Autonomous Communities. In addition, it should be noted that paradiplomatic strategies can be different in terms of objectives, means, etc. See D. Latouche, *Foreign Policy at the Subnacional Level*, in Ivo D. Duchacek, D. Latouche, and G. Stevenson (eds.), *Perforated Sovereignties and International Relations: Trans-Sovereign Contacts and Subnational Governments.* Greenwood Press, Westport, 1988.

political and economic trends (regionalism, internationalization, etc.). We could even indicate that, at least in the early years, its external action was barely conscious (context, future implications, etc.). Indeed, some of its actions generated the first litigation before the Constitutional Court but did not lead to an open political confrontation. In fact, it has shown a relatively active and constant profile, but not conflictive. So far, it can be said that it has been in relative harmony with the Spanish government; it has not been focused on confrontation deliberately. In other words, its paradiplomatic strategy is designed not to provoke the Spanish State.

Note 2. Low political profile

Galician paradiplomacy is not motivated by a nation-building process, that is, by seeking recognition as a nation in the international context and with separatist aspirations.[47] It points to a certain recognition of its cultural and linguistic identity, albeit in a somewhat hesitant (non-convinced) manner. Precisely, cultural identity (not necessarily antagonistic with the Spanish national identity) connects with the development of an external image for the projection and promotion (e.g., economic, commercial, tourist, educational) of the Galician people. This element becomes paradiplomacy's key factor, particularly when it comes to defining a country-brand strategy that enables a recognizable presence on the international stage.

In the domestic sphere, as an autonomous community, Galicia is considered a "historic nationality" (as well as Catalonia and the Basque Country), which adds to its cultural-linguistic identity. However, its paradiplomacy is not directly proportional to this political and constitutional status. Related to this, Pazos notes "[...] the contradiction inherent in Galicia's external action since its beginnings between identity voluntarism and political and emotional dependence on the swings of the policies of successive governments and the Spanish context in general [...]".[48] Indeed, although the political parties that make up the Galician party system also recognize its identity, they show an evident dependence on

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[47] Paquin reserves the term "protodiplomacy" for this assumption. S. Paquin, *Paradiplomatie et relations Internacionales. Théorie des stratégies internationales des régions face à la mondialisation*, cit.

[48] S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024,* cit.

state trends, which implies certain variations in the paradiplomatic field. Since the beginning of Galician self-government (1981), successive Galician executives held by state-level political parties (Partido Popular and PSdeG-PSOE, mainly; indeed, nationalist forces, in particular BNG, have never ruled alone) have orientated paradiplomacy in a smooth and peaceful way, avoiding open confrontation. However, as we have mentioned, a compromise has been forged on paradiplomacy as a whole,[49] but it seems that there is no consensus on its concrete strategy or approach; we can observe a choice or dilemma between a political-cultural (political recognition as a nation) and a pragmatic-functional approach. Then, the key question is how does it combine the two approaches?

Note 3. Geographical focus

Galician paradiplomacy is focused on four geographical areas (in this order): Portugal, the rest of Europe, Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, etc.) and, more recently, the Portuguese-speaking countries (Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, etc.). The profile of each specific country (territorial organization, level of economic development, openness to trade, membership to trade bloc, etc.) affects objectives to be pursued (political stability, development cooperation, foreign investment, technology transfer, educational or cultural exchanges, etc.). Certainly, the relevance of these countries can change due to internal and international political, economic, and social factors. Regarding this topic, two specific mentions should be made. On the one hand is China, which still seems to be a pending issue as institutional contacts have been scarce. On the other hand, the post-Brexit United Kingdom is emerging as a new and relevant area for paradiplomatic deployment. Finally, several countries (including Russia, Morocco, Japan, South Korea, Emirates, and Namibia) are mentioned in official documents since they are attractive in terms of certain goals

[49] In fact, electoral programs of the main political parties (PP, PSdeG-PSOE, and BNG) to the Galician Parliament's elections in 2020 contained sections referring to the external projection/action or international relations. Although they assume this political reality, it does not escape the normal political debate between Galician political forces. Sometimes, especially when electoral calls are approaching, some actions carried out by the *Xunta*'s president or by the General Secretariat of Emigration, have caused confrontations because they prone to pork-barrel politics.

(tourism promotion, investment and foreign trade, fisheries and agricultural, cooperation, development cooperation, demographic inputs, etc.).

Note 4: Steady interest and changing intensity

The Galician case reflects a progressive adaptation to the global, both European and state context. State boundaries have been overwhelmed by expansive economic and commercial relations, innovative technologies (internationalization), new transnational popular demands (e.g., climate change, poverty reduction, gender equality) or the extent of exchanges and human relations has led to the transformation of traditional instruments of state control and management. It also reflects adaptation to the context of improvement in international cooperation after the fall of the Berlin Wall or the acceleration in European integration over the last thirty years, in addition to the multiple, fast, and profound changes in the Spanish State (democratization, decentralization, European integration) since the mid-1970s. All these factors can offer an idea of the political and organizational efforts required for paradiplomatic configuration. Despite these latter aspects, the Galician government has shown a constant interest and concern for its external action; however, its intensity has changed due to domestic factors (political leadership, economic crisis) and international ones (political and economic transformations). It must be noticed that there have not been abrupt breaks or absolute cuts in this field.

Note 5: Permanent and structured activity

After nearly four decades of Galician government paradiplomacy, its evolution can be followed in different fields (political, organizational, normative, strategic, policies) continuously. It does not consist of sporadic or unstructured actions that end in the achievement of a short-term objective or the satisfaction of a specific need. With its highs and lows, Galician paradiplomacy presents a case characterized by the development of a permanent and structured paradiplomatic activity.[50] Linked to this, as we have already indicated, there have been two critical junctures. Firstly, in 2005, coinciding with President Fraga's removal from

[50] Regarding paradiplomatic success, as Keating notes, the development of an articulated and specialized paradiplomacy is essential. See M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking*, cit.

the office, because there was a risk of the activity disappearing, given that it was associated with his strong and personalist leadership. Indeed, other experiences show that the removal from power or the loss of interest of a certain political leader sink or weakens paradiplomatic action. Secondly, the economic crisis of 2008 and the consequent political and financial pressures generated. In both situations, Galician paradiplomacy was advanced through institutional channels, although with different political thrusts and different intensities of adjustments.

Note 6. Social normalization and political capital

The extensive path of Galician paradiplomatic activity, combined with the presence of strong political leaderships heading the *Xunta*, have allowed its social normalization (the political and social discourse built around the Galician diaspora also matters). Given his accentuated charisma and strong leadership, paradiplomacy during President Fraga's time in office was already accepted as a "natural" or "normal" practice. Later, especially, during President Feijóo's mandates (he has now been at the head of Galician executive for 12 years), this social normalization is not questioned.

On the contrary, paradiplomatic activity is clearly present in Galician public opinion thanks to media coverage. Usually, the main Galician media provide uncritical, almost institutional coverage of paradiplomatic actions, assuming that they are carried out in favor of Galician interests (accountability). In this way, the media have contributed both to dissemination and transparency and to the creation of public opinion (visibility) and social normalization. In addition, since its attention is focused on concrete or tangible gains (e.g., investment agreements, the businesspeople that make up the Galician delegation), that is, its approach is inspired by outputs legitimacy (how effective, costly, and advantageous political initiatives are), the activities promote political capital, susceptible to electoral use, and the construction and projection of political leadership not only in the Galician sphere, but also in the state sphere. This legitimacy is also linked to the inputs legitimacy (how decisions and policies are established and implemented), which is grounded in the formal elements of the decision-making process (parliamentary intervention, administrative and technical inputs). In this way, public support, generated based on a double legitimacy, i.e., input and output legitimacy, is crucial to Galician paradiplomacy's viability and effectiveness.

Note 7: Internationalization of the Galician agenda

As Setzer and Anderton point out "[…] with an intensified global interdependency, policy areas such as environmental protection, human rights, immigration, and trade, just to name a few, require action both at the international and territorialized levels, as many of them transcend political administrative boundaries".[51] Progressive internationalization of Spanish society, politics and economy created a framework that encourages paradiplomatic practices on a cooperation basis. Consequently, an international dimension permeates the political and institutional agenda.

As we have indicated, Galician paradiplomacy started, centered on the *Xunta*'s presidency, from scratch and within a very unfavorable political and legal context. Today, it is a permanent item on the Galician agenda. A great number of departments and administrative bodies take part in it: the *Xunta* presidency, vice-presidencies, ministries, general secretaries, general directorates, directors of instrumental entities; the list goes on. Although to some degree or other, in practice, all Galician departments and policies display an external dimension: economic and commercial promotion, agriculture, fishing, industry, tourism, education, culture, cooperation and development assistance. Areas that stand out are those most directly related to the economy (such as foreign investment, business internationalization, tourism promotion)[52] and emigration (demographic inputs). A certain parallelism can be observed between paradiplomatic development and internationalization of business sectors (paradiplomacy is important for small and medium-sized companies that are in the majority in the Galician economy).

Note 8: Organization of a regular formal instruments' repertoire

In Galician paradiplomacy there is a double institutional strategy: direct representation (official delegation) and indirect representation (Fundación Galicia-Europa, IGAPE, business antennas abroad, PEXGA). Basically, the formal repertoire of actions consists of official trips, meetings, receptions, memoranda of understanding, collaboration

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[51] J. Setzer and K. Anderton, *Subnational Leaders and Diplomacy*, cit.

[52] From our point of view, there is even an excessive Xacobeo and Way of Saint James promotion and a poor projection of the Galician cultural system as a whole.

or exchange, agreements, participation in institutional conferences or seminars and such like. They can be considered the most important political tools because they allow common objectives to be sought in areas such as stimulating internationalization in Galician companies, attracting foreign investment, maintaining and fostering links with emigration and projecting the Galician image abroad. Participation in expert meetings or technical working groups (civil protection, fisheries research, etc.) should also be mentioned, although perhaps this second group should not be included among paradiplomatic activities.[53] At this point, it seems necessary to distinguish between paradiplomatic activities (political representatives, negotiations and agreements, discretional margin, representation on behalf of the government as a unit) and technical-administrative relations (sectoral coordination, exchange of information, technocratic consensus) creating expert networks.

To conclude this note, mention should be made of the laws (mainly LAESE and LAECDG) that have clarified this issue.

Note 9: Political and institutional impacts

Galician paradiplomacy's development has caused an impact on the political-institutional, organizational, and regulatory fields. Firstly, paradiplomacy is useful from a political leadership perspective because it reinforces that of the *Xunta*'s president. From the political point of view, paradiplomatic actions serve to cultivate the president's public image (political acts, formal meetings with relevant political leaders and media attention). In a way, the latter are linked to the fact that Autonomous Communities lack a dual executive, which means the president is inserted within a parliamentary system and thus more akin to the figure of a republican president (certain presidentialization effect). At the same time, functional-pragmatic orientation (promoting interests, obtaining

[53] Something similar must be raised in relation to actions within the EU. On the one hand, the EU offers bodies such as European Committee of the Regions or European Commission committees or the EGTCs; on the other hand, states themselves have created channels for participation in European affairs (see C. Cancela, *La paradiplomacia del Gobierno gallego (1981–2010)*, cit). Regarding to this sort of relations, Bartolini proposed the expression "paradiplomacy or internal diplomacy" (see S. Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe. Centre Formation, System Building, and Political Structuring between the Nation State and the European Union*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005).

tangible results, effectiveness) inspiring paradiplomatic action contributes to forging a "good manager" political profile. So, as we have said, functional orientation helps to legitimize Galician paradiplomacy as a whole.

Secondly, as we pointed out, different administrative bodies have been created (secretariats, directorates-general, sub-directorates general, official delegations) or para-administrative entities (e.g., Galicia-Europe Foundation). At the same time, it is worth noting that departments involved in paradiplomatic activities, on the one hand, acquire experience, knowledge (policy learning) and the ability to assess opportunities and, on the other hand, adopt realistic approaches (awareness of limitations), while generating a "culture of external action".[54]

Thirdly, at the normative level, different rules have been passed with both parliamentary (Act 10/2021) and administrative (decrees) origins. To those rules must be added the Institutional Code of Ethics of the *Xunta* de Galicia (2014), which contains the "Criteria for application in official trips abroad of the positions of the autonomous administration" (a similar detail document had already been approved in 2011). Finally, institutional impact extends to the functioning of the Galician Parliament. Since 2011, a Galician executive member has attended the Galician Assembly (usually the Director-General for International and EU Affairs), at least once per period of sessions, to inform and explain objectives, agenda and the results of institutional trips made outside the Spanish State's territory. This practice aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in this field. However, the Galician Parliament does not have a specialized commission on external action like other Autonomous Communities (Basque Country, Catalonia, Balearic Islands or Canary Islands). Given that paradiplomacy is a consolidated reality, it should be included in a future reform of the Statute of Autonomy of Galicia (and also in a future constitutional reform).

Note 10: Plurality of paradiplomatic actors

Some years ago, Keating wrote

> Paradiplomacy is inherently a pluralistic activity involving economic and social actors as well as governments and its success often hinges on the

[54] S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024,* cit.

> ability to involve these. Again, private actors must see that there is something in it for them in order to retain their interest and commitment. [55]

A pluralistic and open conception of paradiplomacy gives a large role to business associations and firms, research and educational institutions, and cultural bodies but, to retain support, these have to see some tangible result for their efforts.[56] Specifically, the Galician case corresponds to this scheme.

In this sense, as Pazos points out: "We must highlight the holistic approach, by which Galicia's external action is understood as a collective phenomenon that is not limited to the government itself, but involves the entire society".[57] The Act 10/2021 regulating foreign action and cooperation for the development of Galicia responds to this holistic and generating conception of a paradiplomacy ecosystem. It contemplates a plurality of actors enabled to intervene in the external action field (municipalities, universities, cultural or business entities). Therefore, the Galician Executive seems to assume a role of selector of actors and facilitator of commitments with actors (public and private), which represent different interests (some of them even have legally recognized autonomy, which introduces a certain complexity).[58] Thus, for example, some Galician cities (A Coruña or Santiago de Compostela) have already launched programmatic documents related to their external action.[59] For its part, the Council for Galician Culture has a Technical Commission for Institutional Relations and External Action which has been responsible for drafting its own sectoral External Action Plan for the next two years. To sum up, in a broad sense, it seems that Galician paradiplomacy is heading towards outsourcing or externalization.

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55 M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking*, cit.

56 Ibidem.

57 S. Pazos, *¿Nuevos comienzos o más de lo mismo? La nueva Ley de Acción Exterior de Galicia y la Estrategia de Acción Exterior de España 2021–2024,* cit.

58 Given its neo-corporatist inspiration, this scheme of plurality actors entails the risk of policy capture by actors involved, in addition to management challenges come from its complexity nature.

59 A. Alejo, *Diplomacias urbanas en España. Una aproximación a la política exterior de las ciudades en Galicia*, cit. Galician and northern Portuguese cities make up the *Eixo Atlántico do Noroeste Peninsular*. It is a non-profit organisation that promotes cross-border cooperation and, at the same time, the external projection and visibility of its members (e.g. promoting cities network, external action in the world).

Part II

Paradiplomacy and cooperation, between international and regional relations

Link between the localization of SDGs and territorial development: An environmental paradiplomacy-based approach

Mariano Alvarez

Introduction

Non-central governments (NCGs) are becoming key players in dealing with major world problems using their paradiplomatic actions.[1] The strongest reflection can be found in the New Urban Agenda,[2] which exemplifies how global problems require local solutions. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that the NCGs cannot reach their full development without considering the international arena.[3] The global and local interdependence becomes palpable, not only in traditional spheres of politics and economics but also in social and environmental agendas.

In this context, paradiplomacy is normally presented as a unidirectional action, where the focus is either on the external actions of sub-state entities and their impacts on the behavior of other international actors; or on the effect of global trends –including climate change – on NCG. When the 2030 Agenda is analyzed, one of its most important qualities is often left out, which is the link between it and the development of NCG. It is no longer a unidirectional action (international impact or localization) but rather a synergy between both dimensions.

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1 DESA, *World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World.* United Nations, New York, 2020; J. Sánchez Cano, *Redes de gobiernos locales y nueva agenda mundial: una perspectiva multinivel*, Cahiers de la coopération décentralisée, no. 5, 2015, pp. 112–30.

2 Habitat III, *Nueva Agenda Urbana*, Conferencia de las United Nations sobre la Vivienda y el Desarrollo Urbano Sostenible, United Nations, Quito, 2017.

3 UNDP et al., *The Trainer's Guide. Learning Module 2: Territorial Planning to Achieve the SDGs*, 2019, https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/module_2_territorial_planning.pdf, last access: 10 April 2022.

The potential of this link has not been revealed, nor is it taken into account by the national voluntary reports that most countries send to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). This chapter sheds light on the link between the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the development of NCGs. It emphasizes the importance of NCGs in achieving SDGs and the great benefits that the localization of the Agenda can provide for territorial development plans both locally and intermediately.

The chapter is structured as follow, the first section addresses the environmental paradiplomacy framework of the analysis; the second section evaluates the importance of the NCG concurrence to achieve the 2030 Agenda; a third section addresses the role of the SDGs for local development; and a fourth section analyzes the problems in the localization of SDGs. The chapter ends with a brief corollary.

Environmental paradiplomacy framework for action

The international action of NCGs has various names and definitions. The term "paradiplomacy"[4] is the most widespread,[5] but it is not the only word used today, nor is it necessarily the most representative. Still, the specialized literature has preferred its use over other alternatives such as "constitutive diplomacy",[6] "multi-level diplomacy",[7] "international management",[8] or "sub-state diplomacy".[9] Similarly, while local and

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4 I. D. Duchacek, *Perforated Sovereignties: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations*, in H. J. Michelmann and P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations: The Role of Subnational Units.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 1–33.

5 M. Alvarez, *Debates teóricos sobre la acción exterior de los gobiernos no centrales. Una propuesta sintetizadora respecto de la paradiplomacia*, Papel Político, vol. 26, no. 2, 2021.

6 J. Kincaid, *Constituent Diplomacy in Federal Polities and the Nation-State: Conflict and Co-operation*, in H. J. Michelmann and P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations: The Role of Subnational Units,* cit., pp. 54–75.

7 B. Hocking, *Localizing Foreign Policy: Non-Central Governments and Multilayered Diplomacy.* St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993.

8 M. Colacrai and G. Zubelzú, *Las provincias y sus relaciones externas ¿Federalización de la Política Exterior o protagonismo provincial en las relaciones internacionales?*, 1994, http://www.cerir.com.ar.

9 D. Criekemans (ed.), *Regional Sub-State Diplomacy Today.* Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden, 2010.

intermediate governments are not fully considered subjects of public international law, they are still generally regarded as actors in international relations.[10]

There is an intense debate regarding the scope of paradiplomacy, which actors it involves – municipalities, intermediate governments, civil society, universities or companies[11] – and in which areas it operates – the so-called hard and soft cores of foreign policy.[12] It is possible to define paradiplomacy as "the direct or indirect involvement of non-central governments in foreign affairs, in permanent or ad hoc activities, in the pursuit of functional objectives".[13] This makes it possible to identify different types of paradiplomatic action, according to the way, channel, and objective pursued. Environmental paradiplomacy, therefore, refers to the pursuit of functional objectives for the sustainable development of NCGs.

There are several examples of cities and intermediate governments taking international actions in many historical periods, including the creation of networks of cities at the beginning of the XX century. However, it is commonly accepted that NCGs began performing international actions – in its modern sense – in the second half of the 1980s.[14] Likewise, it was in the following years that NCGs became involved in foreign affairs such as twinning, decentralised cooperation, trade promotion, investment attraction, and partnership in the search for joint

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[10] C. Pesuto, *La internacionalización de ciudades y regiones en las construcciones teóricas de las relaciones internacionales*, Revista NEIBA cadernos Argentina-Brasil, no. 10, 2021, pp. 1–33, https://doi.org/10.12957/neiba.2021.49932, last access: 20 April 2022; M. Luna Pont and N. Oddone, *Relaciones internacionales y desempeño internacional subnacional: una oportunidad para revisar el concepto de actorness*, OASIS, no. 33, 2020, pp. 223–45, https://doi.org/10.18601/16577558.n33.12, last access: 20 April 2022.

[11] M. Salomón, *La Acción Exterior de Los Gobiernos Subnacionales y el Análisis de Políticas Exteriores*, 2007, http://www.cedet.edu.ar/Archivos/Bibliotecas_Archivos/id34/Salom%C3%B3n%20Acci%C3%B3n%20exterior%20de%20los%20gobiernos%20subnacionales.pdf, last access: 25 December 2016; Z. Zeraoui, *La diplomacia paralela y las relaciones*, Desafíos, vol. XXIII, no. 1, 2011, pp. 59–96.

[12] Z. Drnas de Clément, *Aspectos internacionales de la participación de los entes subnacionales en los procesos de integración*, 2011, http://secretarias.unc.edu.ar/academ/doctrina/articulos/artaspectosinternacionales, last access: 24 June 2022.

[13] M. Alvarez, *Debates teóricos sobre la acción exterior de los gobiernos no centrales. Una propuesta sintetizadora respecto de la paradiplomacia*, cit.

[14] Ibidem.

developments, among others. Currently, NCGs are a growing form of paradiplomatic activity worldwide,[15] which was reflected in their actions during the Covid-19 pandemic.[16]

This boom in paradiplomatic activity generated a proportional increase in academic literature, which is vast and constantly expanding. Examples include the creation of the Network of Experts in Paradiplomacy and Territorial Internationalization[17] in 2019 – present in most Ibero-American countries –, the Jean Monnet project "Over the Atlantic. EU and Latin American Relations: between Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy", and a large number of recently published works.

Within the field of paradiplomacy, there are various approaches to NCGs internationalization,[18] one of which is environmental paradiplomacy.[19] This approach was particularly favored by the 2030 Agenda

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15 M. Alvarez, *The Rise of Paradiplomacy in International Relations*, 2020, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/17/the-rise-of-paradiplomacy-in-international-relations/, last access: 20 April 2022.

16 M. Alvarez and N. Oddone, *Revisiting Paradiplomacy in the Context of Covid-19*, E-International Relations, 2020, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/08/05/opinion-revisiting-paradiplomacy-in-the-context-of-covid-19/, last access: 20 April 2022.

17 Cfr. www.repit.site

18 M. Alvarez and N. Oddone, *El lugar del territorio en los estudios paradiplomáticos*, in D. Villarruel Reynoso et al. (eds.), *Actores locales, impactos globales: aportes académicos en paradiplomacia.* Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, 2019, pp. 52–80; S. González Miranda, N. Cornago, and C. Ovando Santana (eds.), *Relaciones transfronterizas y paradiplomacia en América Latina: Aspectos teóricos y estudio de casos.* RIL, Santiago de Chile, 2016; A. S. Kuznetsov, *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy. Subnational Governments in International Affairs.* Routledge, New York, 2014; R. F. Lara Pacheco, *La inserción de las ciudades en el medio internacional. Una revisión histórica, teórica y empírica desde las relaciones internacionales.* Universidad de Guadalajara, Zapopan, 2019; R. Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Players.* Oxford University Press, New York, 2016.

19 S. Bouteligier, *Cities, Networks, and Global Environmental Governance: Spaces of Innovation, Places of Leadership.* Routledge, New York, 2014; S. Curtis, *The Power of Cities in International Relations*, 2016; F. Enríquez Bermeo (ed.), *Paradiplomacia y desarrollo territorial*, I ed, Serie Territorios en debate 9. Ediciones Abya Yala, Quito, 2019; T. Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change: The Translocal Relations of Environmental Governance.* Routledge, New York, 2016; N. Oddone, H. Rodríguez Vázquez, and M. J. Quiroga Barrera Oro, *Paradiplomacia local y transfronteriza como un instrumento de gobernanza ambiental en el Mercosur y la Unión Europea: una descripción comparada*, Civitas – Revista de Ciências Sociais vol. 18, no. 2, 2018, p. 332, https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2018.2.29690, last access: 20 April 2022; F. Rei, K. Borges Cunha, and N. Vera Pérez, *La paradiplomacia*

localization process and the SDGs,[20] but it was not an isolated event, since all the great international environmental pacts of the recent years – The 2030 Agenda, UN-Habitat III, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Agenda – recognize the importance of local and regional governments.[21] For this reason, the World Social Report of 2020 is increasingly acknowledging the importance of local authorities to achieve the 2030 Agenda.[22] Environmental paradiplomacy should be understood then not only as the external actions of the NCGs but also as the localization of international issues in the planning of territorial development.

The role of local authorities in the 2030 Agenda

In 2015, the 193 member States of the United Nations committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an ambitious consensus of the international community that established seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 specific targets to be achieved by 2030.[23] This plan and its commitments were negotiated, agreed, and adopted by States, not NCGs. Among reasons for the Agenda to be discussed only between States, it's worth mentioning, first, the legal personality and international responsibility of the States – absent, or at least debated, at the sub-state level – and, second, the number of actors involved in the debates – the 193 States that signed the Agenda are the entirety of the United Nations members, whereas the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has over 240 thousand members, making

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medioambiental global y el papel de las comunidades autónomas españolas, Foro Internacional LIII, no. 2, 2013, pp. 337–362; F. Rei and V. C. Farias, *Paradiplomacia Ambiental: La Cooperación Descentralizada Hispano-Brasileña*, Conpedi Law Review vol. 1, no. 16, 2016, p. 115, https://doi.org/10.26668/2448-3931_conpedilawreview/2015.v1i16.3551, last access: 20 April 2022.

20 F. Rei, M. L. Machado Granziera, and A. Gonçalves (eds.), *Paradiplomacia Ambiental – Agenda 2030.* Universitária Leopoldianum, Santos, 2020.

21 OCDE, *Reshaping Decentralised Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda*. OECD, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264302914-en, last access: 20 April 2022.

22 DESA, *World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*.

23 General Assembly, *Transformar nuestro mundo: la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible*, A/RES/70/1. United Nations, 2015, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=S, last access: 20 April 2022.

it impossible to achieve a unanimous consensus. However, while States conducted the negotiation and signing of the declaration, the reality is that the SDGs cannot be achieved without the participation of local and regional governments.[24]

The inclusive nature of the post-2015 process (which started in 2011), where the United Nations held the most important consultation in its history, was seen as a major victory for local and regional interest groups.[25] This was largely because the international relationship between NCGs and the SDGs was significantly different – than that outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was, strictly speaking, absent.

Unlike the MDGs, the local dimension of the SDGs was present from the outset in the 2030 Agenda. In 2004, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the World Federation of United Cities (WFCU) merged to create United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to represent local authorities.[26] Consequently, NCGs had a greater presence at the conferences on international cooperation in Accra and Busan – with dissimilar results – contributing to UCLG becoming a valid interlocutor, with a permanent seat in the Working Group of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on aid effectiveness, and participation in the advisory group of the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum. Therefore, the President of UCLG was also invited to participate in the High-Level Panel for the Post-2015 Agenda.[27]

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[24] Cities Alliance, *Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a Successful New Urban Agenda*, Discussion Paper, Cities Alliance, 2015, https://www.adelphi.de/en/publication/sustainable-development-goals-and-habitat-iii-opportunities-successful-new-urban-agenda, last access: 20 April 2022.

[25] CGLU, *Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible: lo que los gobiernos locales deben saber*. United Cities and Local Governments, 2016, https://issuu.com/andaluciasolidaria/docs/los_ods._lo_que_los_gobiernos_local, last access: 24 June 2022.

[26] M. Luna Pont, *De IULA a CGLU: Municipalismo internacional, narrativas y momentos*, in M. Alvarez, M. Luna Pont, and N. Oddone (eds.) *América Latina global: estudios regionales sobre paradiplomacia*. Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Sáenz Peña, 2019, pp. 51–92.

[27] R. Grasa and J. Sánchez Cano, *Acción internacional y en red de los gobiernos locales: el caso de la ayuda para el desarrollo*, Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals, 2013.

In 2013, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) was established, whose role was to represent local and intermediate governments in the process. Thanks to this new scenario, the NCGs were able to be heard during the definition of SDGs, achieving the incorporation of Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, and its reference throughout the entire 2030 Agenda, which is called to be located during its implementation.[28] This was seen as an achievement, both for local governments and for the United Nations. In her opening speech, María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the LXXIII session of the General Assembly, acknowledged this was the first time that NCGs participated in a statement of the organization, proving that it was open to hearing and including the voice and guidance of decision makers who are close to people.[29]

Therefore, when in 2019 the Secretary-General of the United Nations declared the Decade of Action, he appealed to all sectors of society to mobilize in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda, emphasising three levels: global, local (national and sub-state) and people.[30] Consequently, the literature began to pay greater attention to the international and environmental dimensions of NCGs, because they became key bridges between central governments and citizens.[31] Likewise, the literature recognized that the best strategy to achieve the SDGs and their targets varied from place to place, validating the need to localize the goals and targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

There is some consensus that the achievement of the SDGs and their targets is directly or indirectly related to the responsibilities of regional

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[28] T. Ojeda Medina, *Localización de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en espacios fronterizos y cooperación sur-sur transfronteriza en América Latina*, Aldea Mundo, no. 47, 2019, pp. 27–38.

[29] D. Gomes Galvão, *Desafios para uma educação de qualidade: análise dos dados do fórum político de alto nível das Naçônes Unidas sobre desenvolvimento sustentável (HLPF) – 2019*, in F. Rei, M. L. Machado Granziera, and A. Gonçalves (eds.) *Paradiplomacia Ambiental – Agenda 2030.* Universitária Leopoldianum, Santos, 2020, pp. 67–80.

[30] A. Guterres, *Remarks to High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.* United Nations Secretary-General, 24 September 2019, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2019-09-24/remarks-high-level-political-sustainable-development-forum, last access: 20 April 2022.

[31] R. Messias, *Aspatial Dimension to Tackle Inequalities within Countries*, in F. Rei, M. L. Machado Granziera, and A. Gonçalves (eds.) *Paradiplomacia Ambiental – Agenda 2030.* Universitária Leopoldianum, cit., pp. 183–99.

and local governments.[32] While the 2030 Agenda is an intergovernmental agreement with an institutional framework to review progress at the national level, the participation of NCGs is increasingly relevant to its localization and implementation.[33]

On the one hand, it is commonly mentioned that 65 % of the goals cannot be achieved without the participation of local governments[34] and, on the other, the study commissioned by the Cities Alliance argues that ten of the goals are directly or indirectly linked to SDG 11 and its ten targets. This is reflected by the wide range of topics covered by the targets of SDG 11, such as ensuring everyone has access to housing and adequate, safe, and affordable basic services and improving slums (target 11.1), until reducing the number of deaths caused by disasters, including those related to water, and the number of people affected by them (11.5). Additionally, international indicators are defined for meeting the goals, which are directly linked to local actions and where 39 % of the 231 indicators are linked to SDG 11.

In short, the only way to achieve the 2030 Agenda's objectives, goals, and indicators is to include local actors, not only in their implementation but also in their definition, and monitoring.[35] Consequently, communities must be empowered, and policy implementation must be a partnership between all levels of governments within and between countries.

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[32] T. Ojeda Medina, *El Rol Estratégico De Los Gobiernos Locales y Regionales En La Implementación De La Agenda 2030: Experiencias Desde La Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular*, OASIS, no. 31, 2019, pp. 9–29, https://doi.org/10.18601/16577558.n31.03, last access: 20 April 2022; F. Varela, B. Álvarez, and J. Cortés, *Guía para la localización de la Agenda 2030.* Gobierno de España / Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias, 2020, https://www.agenda2030.gob.es/recursos/docs/Guia_para_Localizacion_de_la_Agenda_2030.pdf, last access: 20 April 2022.

[33] J. Dávalos González, *La agenda climática global en las ciudades latinoamericanas. Actores no estatales y gobiernos subnacionales en acción.* Análisis Carolina, 2020, https://doi.org/10.33960/AC_28.2020, last access: 20 April 2022.

[34] CGLU, *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews. Volume 1: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs.* United Cities and Local Governments / UN-Habitat, Barcelona, 2020; Cities Alliance, *Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a Successful New Urban Agenda.* OCDE, *Reshaping Decentralised Development Co-Operation*.

[35] F. Varela, B. Álvarez, and J. Cortés, *Guía para la localización de la Agenda 2030*, cit.

The role of the 2030 Agenda for local development

The adaptation, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at the local level, not only refers to the geographical space, but also includes its actors, institutions, culture, and history.[36] In this sense, when speaking of localization, reference is made to the "process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and sub-national sustainable development goals and targets. Specifically, it includes the "process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress".[37] Meaning, "mainstreaming the SDGs into local development plans requires coordinated efforts among the different segments of the local public administration and ongoing dialogue between actors involved in local development".[38] Therein lies the SGDs' potential to integrate different sectors of territorial development plans.

Through the localization of the SDGs, NCGs are revalued as protagonists in constructing a decent and sustainable development, where each territory is a unique and specific place, which needs to be read in all its complexity.[39] These complexities are complemented and reinforced by the New Urban Agenda[40] and the regional action plan for its implementation[41] that empowers cities to fight against major global problems. This does not necessarily imply reformulating planning, but it does imply

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36 UNDP et al., *The Trainer's Guide. Learning Module 2: Territorial Planning to Achieve the SDGs*.

37 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2018 HLPF. 2nd Report.* United Cities and Local Governments, Barcelona, 2018.

38 ECLAC, *Quadrennial Report on Regional Progress and Challenges in Relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.* United Nations, Santiago de Chile, 2019, 53, http://hdl.handle.net/11362/44552, last access: 20 April 2022.

39 ISM, *Planificar en un mundo de incertezas crecientes.* Instituto Social del Mercosur, 2020.

40 Habitat III, *Nueva Agenda Urbana*. United Nations, 2017, https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-Spanish.pdf, last access: 20 April 2022.

41 ECLAC, Habitat III, & MINURVI, *Plan de Acción Regional para la implementación de la Nueva Agenda Urbana en América Latina y el Caribe. 2016–2036.* United Nations, Santiago de Chile, 2018.

rethinking and implementing it in a decentralised manner, studying the location of the 2030 Agenda as an international element to be incorporated into local development plans.

The central contribution of the 2030 Agenda lies in one of its fundamental characteristics, its integrative approach. It is not possible to address the SDGs or their targets separately.[42] While the 2030 Agenda can be prioritized for implementation – and it is right that countries and NCGs do so – its objectives and goals cannot be treated in isolation. Therefore, the planning generated due to the location of the SDGs must be integrative.

In Latin America, for example, the MERCOSUR Social Institute[43] recognizes that current planning is not the same as the 1970s, and it now involves facing four large challenges: (I) it must be multi-scalar, considering the national and international context; (II) it must be intersectional, and cannot be approached from a sectorised scheme and instead require comprehensive solutions; (III) it must be multitemporal, analyzing and acting on conjunctural facts, but without neglecting structural situations; and (IV) it must be multi-stakeholder, incorporating different territorial actors, such as academia, companies and civil society organizations. These four dimensions are directly linked to incorporating the SDGs and their targets into local development plans.

NCGs are particularly well-positioned to adopt and implement policies that address the 2030 Agenda. The literature on paradiplomacy and international agreements recognize the role that NCGs plays in territorial planning. Additionally, the SDG localization exercise offers a frame of reference for the joint work between different government areas by incorporating the principle of comprehensiveness of the 2030 Agenda. This does not necessarily imply redesigning development plans and local policies but rather implementing them under the logic of the 2030 Agenda and its principle of integration.

This is reflected when applying analysis tools on the alignment of development policies with the 169 goals of the SDGs; it is evident that

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42 UNDP, *Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) To facilitate mainstreaming of SDGs into national and local plans.* United Nations Development Programme, December 2017, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/sustainable-development-goals/rapid-integrated-assessment---mainstreaming-sdgs-into-national-a.html, last access: 20 April 2022.

43 ISM, *Planificar en un mundo de incertezas crecientes*, cit.

the link is not unequivocal or exclusive. For example, the application of the RIA (Rapid Integrated Assessment) analysis of the United Nations Development Program[44] yields a double-entry table as one of its results where the thematic policy areas are combined with the targets of the SDGs. This analysis shows that the same policy area (for example, health) does not limit its link to SDG 5, specific to its sector. Likewise, policy areas often do not cover all the targets of their specific SDGs, which are addressed by other policy areas. Finally, the main contribution of this methodology to NCGs is that it shows how various policy areas contribute simultaneously to achieving the same target of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, it is possible to design coordination and synergy mechanisms between the areas involved.

Identifying the explicit and implicit link of SDG targets to local development plans allows NCGs to incorporate integrated territorial management characteristics, internationalization, and access international cooperation.[45] Many local development plans pursue objectives and targets similar to the SDGs, but due to the lack of analysis, they are unaware they could insert such efforts into broader national and international contexts and access international cooperation.[46]

Challenges for localization

There are at least three major problems of linking the 2030 Agenda and NCGs development. These barriers limit incentives for the localization of SDGs and their targets. They are the lack of awareness at the sub-state level, the centralism with which the 2030 Agenda is interpreted at the state level, and the lack of NCGs incorporation in central coordination mechanisms.

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[44] UNDP, *Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) To facilitate mainstreaming of SDGs into national and local plans,* 21 December 2017, https://www.undp.org/library/rapid-integrated-assessment, last access: 20 April 2022.

[45] T. Ojeda Medina*, El Rol Estratégico De Los Gobiernos Locales y Regionales En La Implementación De La Agenda 2030*, cit.*;* T. Ojeda Medina*, Localización de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en espacios fronterizos y cooperación sur-sur transfronteriza en América Latina*, cit.

[46] UNDP, *Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) To facilitate mainstreaming of SDGs into national and local plans*, cit.

Firstly, there is still a huge lack of knowledge at the sub-state level in various countries about the 2030 Agenda, making it difficult to achieve SDGs and delaying community development. There are several cases of NCGs that still assume SDGs as externally imposed burdens, which discourages them from being proactive.[47] Many local governments still see the 2030 Agenda as an external international framework that does not necessarily concern them or impact their realities.[48] Therefore, further studies on political and social advocacy campaigns are needed to promote its local implementation. For example, without a correct baseline on the current alignment state of the NCG development plans with the SDGs, it is impossible to promote their location. At the same time, without a civil society that is empowered on the topic, it is difficult to generate political will.

Added to the lack of awareness in the NCGs is the centralism with which the 2030 Agenda is assumed in most countries. National Voluntary Reports (NVR) are submissions the countries committed to send to the HLPF, where they account for the progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in their territories. There are very few NVRs that incorporate the experience of non-central governments, and when they do, it is mostly from a centralist perspective.

Only a small group of countries, such as Spain, incorporate the voice of cities and regions in their NVRs and give them space to portray their experience. A second group, which includes Uruguay, analyzes the situation at the sub-state level, but a central government body performs a review without the active participation of NCGs. Finally, most countries do not include the sub-state dimension in their NVRs, nor have they demonstrated real progress in involving NCGs in improving disaggregated information,[49] which is detrimental to analyzing the

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47 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2018 HLPF. 2nd Report*, cit.

48 PLATAFORMA and CEMR, *How Local and Regional Government Associations Bring the SDGs to Life.* PLATFORMA / Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), 2019, http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CEMR-PLATFORMA-study-SDGs-2019-EN.pdf, last access: 20 April 2022.

49 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2018 HLPF. 2nd Report*, cit.

implementation of the 2030 Agenda.[50] Additionally, while the number of countries involving their NCGs in NVRs preparation has increased, very few have sub-state level information.[51]

In third place, the level of NCG participation in national coordination mechanisms for implementing SDGs is still low – whether through advisory councils, pre-existing multi-stakeholder mechanisms, or specific ad hoc meetings. In the five years between 2016 and 2021, 176 countries submitted reports to HLPF; reaching a total of 247 NVRs (forty-seven countries have already submitted two reports and twelve have submitted three). Even though the guide to assess the alignment of the SDGs indicates that local and sub-state development plans, laws, policies, and strategies should be reviewed in a way that involves all sectors and government levels[52]; this does not always happen. The GTF analyzed 234 NVRs from countries with elected sub-state authorities and found that only 30 % had a medium or high level of local government participation, 24 % had weak participation – CNGs are simply informed or invited to occasional meetings – and 47 % did not directly consult NCGs.

The only region with high NCGs participation was Europe, where 53 % of countries had medium or high NCGs participation between 2016 and 2021.[53] This situation undermines NCGs empowerment in the localization of the 2030 Agenda and reduces the information available at the national level. NCGs involvement requires in-depth dialogues and medium- and long-term strategies for their active participation in national strategies.

However, even when NCGs and their associations are not fully involved in NRS preparation or coordination mechanisms, if they are informed of the 2030 Agenda they demonstrate a high commitment to

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50 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2019 HLPF. 3rd Report.* United Cities and Local Governments, Barcelona, 2019.

51 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2020 HLPF. 4th Report.* United Cities and Local Governments, Barcelona, 2020.

52 DESA, *World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World.* United Nations, cit.

53 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2021 HLPF. 5th Report,* United Cities and Local Governments, Barcelona, 2021.

localizing the SDGs.[54] For instance, in May 2018, this sub-state motivation led to New York City declaring its intention to become the first local government in the world to report to the HLPF directly and began submitting Local Voluntary Reports (LVRs).[55] Subsequently, fifty-one NCGs have submitted more than sixty LVRs, highlighting Basque Country (which has submitted four reports), the Walloon Region, the state of Pará, and the cities of Buenos Aires, Ghent, Helsinki, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and New York (which have submitted two reports).[56] Furthermore, pilot plans for the widespread presentation of LVR in Costa Rica and Ecuador began in 2020.[57]

Corollary

The literature that addresses territorial internationalization predominantly analyzes the external actions of non-central governments or local incorporation of international agendas but does not assess the relationship between these two dimensions. Localization is key to achieving major sustainability projects, such as the 2030 Agenda, because the solution to many global problems can and should be addressed locally.[58] Also, globalization of sectoral policies via the 2030 Agenda can generate great benefits for territorial development through their integral design. It is, therefore, a two-way process: on the one hand, intermediate and local governments support the pursuit of the SDGs and, on the other hand, the 2030 Agenda offers an international framework for more efficient and sustainable local development, in synergy with the other levels of government.[59]

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54 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2019 HLPF. 3rd Report*, cit.

55 CGLU, *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews. Volume 1: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs,* cit.; GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2018 HLPF. 2nd Report*, cit.

56 CGLU, *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews. Volume 1: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs*, cit.

57 GTF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Local and Regional Governments' Report to the 2020 HLPF. 4th Report*, cit.

58 Habitat III, *Nueva Agenda Urbana*, cit.

59 UNDP et al., *The Trainer's Guide. Learning Module 2: Territorial Planning to Achieve the SDGs*; F. Varela, B. Álvarez, and J. Cortés, *Guía para la localización de la Agenda 2030,* cit.

There are still barriers that make it difficult for NCGs to actively participate in the localization of the 2030 Agenda and use its benefits for their development plans. However, the active participation of more than forty NCGs in the presentation of Voluntary Local Reports is an example of their growing commitment to the localization of the SDGs and environmental paradiplomacy. This participation of NCGs responds to the fact that it is in them where inequity has an inescapable spatial aspect; the division between rich and poor, for example, when observed under criteria of race or nationality, leads to their concentration in certain neighborhoods and parts of the city, with different degrees of deprivation.[60]

The action of environmental paradiplomacy must be observed with a double vision. Said actions are, simultaneously, of global incidence and local internationalization. For localization, the first thing is to design or adapt existing plans and policies; with this, it is possible to address the challenges of sustainable development and the advancement of the SDGs, which are global objectives.[61] Therein lies the fundamental link shared by the 2030 Agenda and NCGs, which links international advocacy with local development.

[60] R. Messias, *Aspatial Dimension to Tackle Inequalities within Countries,* cit.

[61] F. Varela, B. Álvarez, and J. Cortés, *Guía para la localización de la Agenda 2030*, cit.

Paradiplomacy, "actorness", and the global agendas

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Over the last decades, the growing international salience of cities, regions, and their governments has been widely acknowledged by different disciplines. Current approaches to International Relations, political science, regional (notably European) integration, geography, sociology, economy, or urban and environmental studies have all noted the expansion of the local-international interface, and duly integrated its relevant dimensions and impacts into their analysis and theoretical perspectives.

From an IR angle, the rising participation of sub-national political units in international affairs is unquestionable. Transnational activism, network formation, or cooperation with multilateral organizations by local and regional governments (LRGs) count among its manifestations. Fifty years ago, foreign policy by non-central governments was only significant in some developed countries. Slowly but surely, this not-so-new trend has acquired a global reach, and its present consolidation, scope, and diversification are proof that sub-state diplomacy is not a circumstantial but a permanent phenomenon, as well as a distinctive, structural feature of contemporary international relations.

In the 1980s and 1990s, IR studies on sub-state diplomacy focused on the impact of this activity on well well-established research topics, such as foreign policy, EU integration, federalism, or sovereignty. In the post-Cold War context, with the declining use of military force and the growing importance of soft power and economic relations, a reinvigorated debate on international actors welcomed cities and regions as yet another evidence of the crisis of states as main protagonists in international relations, albeit as "perforators" of national sovereignty.[1] Newer literature on sub-state diplomacy would go beyond applied case studies,

[1] I. D. Duchacek, D. Latouche, and G. Stevenson, *Perforated Sovereignties and International Relations: Trans-sovereign Contacts of Subnational Governments.* Greenwood Press, Westport, 1988.

trying to grasp the phenomenon of sub-state foreign activity in itself and as a whole and building a unified and coherent field of study around this practice. The term "paradiplomacy"[2] is connected to this epistemological effort and choosing it over more conventional expressions – like sub-state diplomacy, constituent diplomacy, or foreign activities of non-central governments – is not without consequence: for some observers, paradiplomacy has persistently carried ideological baggage, as its intellectual construction seems rooted in a contentious relationship, at both domestic and international levels, with classical state diplomacy.[3]

Edited in 1999 by Francisco Aldecoa and Michael Keating, *Paradiplomacy in action*[4] is a well-known reference in the analysis of local governments as international actors. This collective volume is the result of a seminar held in Bilbao in 1997 and contains both case studies and sections with a theoretical and conceptual intent. Among the latter, the contribution by Brian Hocking "Patrolling the 'frontier': globalization, localization and the 'actorness' of non-central governments"[5] constitutes a valuable contribution to the understanding of local authorities as international actors. As regards their *analysis*, Hocking considered that traditional approaches were not useful to understand the phenomenon of sub-state foreign action. Such approaches drew sharp distinctions between different types of international actors, considered each of these types in isolation from the rest, and evaluated the results of their activities in terms of winners and losers. In the case of LRGs, this created an unnecessary and counterproductive sense of competition with central governments. Sub-state diplomacy should be understood for what it is: an instrument connected to the great transformations of world politics, whose relevance is not gained at the expense of conventional foreign policy. Hocking also elaborated on the *qualities* inherent in non-central governments as actors in world politics – their "actorness". Following

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2 Coined by Panayotis Soldatos in his "An explanatory framework for the study of federated states as foreign-policy actors", in H. Michelmann and P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 34–53.

3 N. Cornago, *On the Normalization of Sub-state Diplomacy*, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, no. 5, 2010, pp. 11–36.

4 F. Aldecoa and M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy in Action. The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments.* Frank Cass, London, 1999.

5 Ibidem, pp. 17–39. A previous version had been published in Regional and Federal Studies (vol. 9, no. 1, 1999).

Rosenau's[6] well-known distinction between "sovereignty-bound" and "sovereignty-free" actors, Hocking considered non-central governments as "hybrid actors", partially bound by and partially free from the constrictions and obligations of sovereignty and its various implications. While states *must* assure functions like consular protection or diplomatic representation, regions and cities *can choose* their areas of interest, and combine strategies, instruments, and alliances from the governmental and the non-governmental worlds, continuously or discontinuously. This possibility provides the foreign action of non-central governments with a unique quality: "exploring the boundaries between the conventional but often misleading distinctions between state and non-state actors, they have been able to play a variety of roles in several political arenas.[7]" As we shall see, local governments have used this unique quality to their advantage. Articulated in global networks, and strategically deploying hybrid strategies, their participation and engagement with the UN system and conferences have allowed them becoming actors in global governance.

New actors in the UN global governance framework

In the 1980s and 1990s, the UN pioneered the creation of new political agreements and forms of world governance beyond its permanent institutions and organizations. New formats – Special sessions of the General Assembly, world conferences, and special commissions – were used to frame world problems in new ways: focusing the attention of the entire international community on a single problem; capturing the interest of both specialized groups (academia, private sector, transnational movements…) and the general public; and overcoming the sectoral fragmentation (or "silos") inherent to the UN system and its specialized agencies.[8] Fundamental meetings such as the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), the fourth UN Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), or the Millennium Summit

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6 J. N. Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990.

7 J. N. Rosenau, *Patterned Chaos in Global Life: Structure and Process in the Two Worlds of World Politics.* International Political Science Review, vol. 9, no. 4, 1988, pp. 327–364.

8 J. Taylor and A. J. R Groom, *Global Issues in the United Nations Framework.* St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989.

(New York, 2000) facilitated the creation of a technical and depoliticized public debate, addressed complex problems of global governance innovatively, and opened up spaces for the participation of new actors, mostly non-governmental and articulated in transnational networks.

Both UN world conferences are global commissions were fundamental for the emerging system of *global governance*, another concept grown in the optimistic post-Cold War soil. Chaired the Swedish prime Minister Ingvar Karlsson, the Commission on Global Governance brought together the members of the four previous global commissions.[9] In August 1994, Karlsson's report to the UN General Assembly contained an ambitious proposal for "global security" through the enhancement of international economic and political cooperation and the revitalization of the UN. Since 1995, the new journal *Global governance: a review of multilateralism and international organizations* served as a base of operations for an influent group of academics with a liberal-institutional penchant, interested in devising practical alternatives to both the anarchic and the supranationalist views of world politics.[10] International civil society, interdependence, a focus on people rather than on state, and common values and institutions – but not a "world government" – form the intellectual background of global governance. According to Peter Willets[11] specific definition, global governance consists of *policy-making* and *policy implementation* in global political systems, through the collaboration of governments with actors from civil society and the private sector. Willett's notion is deliberately wide and integrates different elements from different sources. He borrows from the constructivist literature attention to agenda-setting, the framing of issues, the emergence of norms, and the process by which regimes are created. Following Finkelstein,[12]

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[9] The Brandt Commission on development, the Palme Commission on disarmament, the Brundtland Commission on sustainable development, and the South Commission on cooperation among developing countries.

[10] Many of whom had communicated closely with the diplomatic world through the Academic Council on the UN System, the UN University, their research, and their career appointments: Mohammed Ayoob, Michael Barnett, Lawrence Finkelstein, Harold Jakobson, James Rosenau, Thomas G. Weiss, and Peter Willetts among others.

[11] P. Willetts, *Non-governmental Organizations in World Politics: The Construction of Global Governance.* Routledge, London and New York, 2011, pp. 148–149.

[12] Willetts follows here L. Finkelstein, *What Is Global Governance?,* Global Governance, no. 1, 1995, pp. 367–372.

also the consequences of policy-making – allocative effects, programs and projects, efficacy, compliance, and domestic implementation – are comprised. Global governance covers the allocation of status to global political actors, when decisions are made to admit governments, NGOs, or transnational corporations to membership, observer status, or consultative status with international organizations. Thus, global governance refers to

> Systemic processes of interactions between governments and global civil society, primarily focused on the policy outcomes of international organizations, each operating within their own distinct set of structured political relationships, to establish norms, formulate rules, promote the implementation of rules, allocate resources, or endorse the status of political actors, through the mobilization of support for political values.[13]

The conceptual framework of global governance is useful to understand the interaction of LRGs and their networks with the UN system and conferences and their role in policymaking and implementation.

1992–2012: Global articulation and recognition

The first UN conference where local authorities had a significant presence was the UN Conference on Environment and Development or "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Rio was a defining moment in the strategy of local governments towards the UN system of conferences and set the tone for subsequent participation.

First, *local government associations* proved more effective than individual representation. Networks like the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) or the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives[14] (ICLEI) had been very active in the preparatory phase of the Summit. They facilitated permanent contact with international secretariats and created room for political leadership among their members.

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[13] P. Willetts, *Non-governmental Organizations in World Politics: The Construction of Global Governance,* cit., p. 150.

[14] ICLEI had been established in 1990, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), by IULA, and by the Center for Innovative Diplomacy, to act as an international environmental agency for local governments and to represent them in the Rio process.

Second, in Rio networked local governments started to build a *common, universal narrative* that remains valid today: in North and South, cities are the place where problems occur, but also the key to their solution. Metropolises are big consumers of energy and the largest source of greenhouse gases (GHG), but also engines of the global economy. Especially in countries undergoing rapid urbanization processes, investing in sustainable development, and supporting transitions towards greener economic models can have an enormous and efficient impact. The efforts around this narrative, geared toward recognition of the role of cities in world affairs, bore fruit: both the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government (a political statement) and in Agenda 21 (the voluntary UN program of action for implementing sustainable development) expressly mentioned the role of local authorities.

Third, local governments and their networks were active *norm entrepreneurs*. Advocacy by local networks targeted and effectively succeeded in the inclusion of a specific chapter entitled "Local Authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21" (Chapter 28) which urged local authorities to carry out participatory processes to elaborate their "Local Agenda 21", and devised mechanisms to enhance city-to-city cooperation, at all levels. This fundamental mandate given by the UN to cities generated the global Local Agenda 21 movement, with hundreds of cities actively involved. In the words of Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of the 1992 Earth Summit, "of the many programs that have resulted from the Earth Summit, none is more promising or important than this one, which has hundreds of local authorities around the world now setting out and implementing their Local Agenda 21[15]".

Fourth, local governments and their networks showed great commitment to the implementation of global norms, and used the instruments adopted in Rio (Convention on Biodiversity, Convention on Climate Change, and Agenda 21) to guide their public policies. In addition to direct local initiatives (improving energy efficiency in streets, buildings, and municipal transport systems), municipal governments promoted specific legislation, created tax incentives (also negative: penalization of excessive water consumption), and launched public information

[15] ICLEI, *Local Sustainability 2012. Taking Stock and Moving Forward. Global Review*, Bonn, 2012, p. 11, https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/2123654/taking-stock-and-moving-forward-global-review-iclei-rio-20, last access: March 2022.

campaigns on urban sustainability. Internationally, the campaign "Cities for Climate Protection (CCP)" connected over 1,000 municipalities around the world in a common effort to reduce GHG, and inspired other initiatives, such as those of Mayors for Climate Protection, in the United States and Europe.

Cities' "green" networking has lured new scholars from new disciplines – including natural sciences and environmental studies – to the global governance debate, with Michele Betsill (political scientist) and Harriet Bulkeley (geographer) as the first in a long list. Betsill and Bulkeley cast a fresh look at the role and functions of local government networks through multi-level governance lenses. To them, the CCP campaign did more than mediate between the local government and the global climate change regime: through the development of norms and rules for compliance with the goals and targets of the network, the CCP "created its own arena of governance. The CCP network also takes on functions that are typically presumed to rest with national governments, such as setting GHG emission targets for participants, as well as requirements for reporting and monitoring emissions."[16]

The key conference in the access of local authorities and their associations to the UN system is "Habitat II", the 2nd United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul in June 1996. Habitat II was convened to provide global responses to the pressing problems of a world population that was about to become largely urban. Local authorities and their associations felt particularly entitled to make their voices heard in a forum that was to discuss a problem that fell within their own field of competence. City delegates turned up in high numbers, which allowed them to be granted a specific accreditation system: not as official representatives of states, nor as non-governmental agents, but as governmental members of the extensive community of UN-associated actors. They were able to participate in the conference's plenary deliberations, main committees, and working groups. Habitat II is a fundamental landmark in the formation of local authorities as international actors. Proof of their agency is the impact on both institutional and normative aspects of the global governance of urbanization.

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[16] M. Betsill and H. Bulkeley, *Cities and the Multilevel Governance of Global Climate Change*, Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations, vol. 12, no. 2, 2006, pp. 141–159.

Point 12 of the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements pointed to local authorities as "the closest and most essential partners in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda", to which they should contribute together with other strands of civil society, including the private sector. This recognition was a great achievement for the world municipal movement and led to a significant advance: the creation in 2000 of the UN Consultative Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA). This is the first space for a direct *institutional* representation of non-central governments in the UN environment, and therefore a milestone in the opening of the world organization to transnational actors. UNACLA was established as a consultative body to Habitat's Executive Director, and not as a subsidiary committee of the Commission on Human Settlements as the local movement advocated for. However, this does not diminish the importance of the creation of a formal entity within the UN made up of local authorities and advising on local affairs. After its effective constitution in January 2000, the influence of UNACLA on Habitat activities was soon noticeable. Right from the start, the Centre for Human Settlements gave UNACLA a privileged and differentiated role from other partners. Habitat's Executive Director (initially Klaus Toepfer, and Anna Tibaijuka after 2002), who was responsible for the designation of UNACLA's twenty members, chose some prominent figures from the international municipal movement.

In the *normative* sphere, local authorities globally organized acted again as transnational norm entrepreneurs and promoted – with UNACLA's help – a new and ambitious instrument: the World Charter of Local Self-Government. Their inspiration was the European Charter of Local Self-Government, a convention adopted in 1985 by the Council of Europe on the prompting of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), IULA's European section. As with the European Charter, the principle local authorities were most interested in was subsidiarity, e.g. that decisions are to be made and services are to be provided at the lowest possible level, and as close to citizens as possible. Local authorities expected the Charter to incorporate some of their long-standing demands vis-à-vis central governments, such as better resources and autonomy for local finance, including taxation and transfers, as well as support for direct cooperation between local governments. As with UNACLA before, support by Habitat's secretariat to the local authorities' agenda was essential, and the promotion of the World Charter was among the common goals of the agreement signed

by Habitat and local government networks in 1997. The Charter's draft was discussed over the following two years in eight regional international conferences and led to a document, approved in April 2000, which met local expectations. Together with references to their demands of decentralization and access to financial resources, the text mentioned the constitutional and legal bases of local self-government "where practicable" should be "guaranteed in the Constitution" of every country. The Charter's draft was submitted to Habitat's intergovernmental body (the Commission on Human Settlements) at its 18th session (February 2001). Its approval and forwarding to the UN General Assembly were mandatory, but an agreement was not reached.[17] Six years later, the efforts to pass a set of international norms on decentralization would bear fruit, and both UN-Habitat's Commission on Human Settlements and its Governing Council adopted the International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services for all. Within its limited normative power – the Guidelines did not become a binding international convention –, they have established themselves as a key instrument to promote good governance at all levels and to strengthen local authorities.

Habitat's II Secretary-General Wally N'Dow called the multiple networks present at Istanbul to overcome their differences – many of them inherited from the Cold War –, improve their articulation, and make progress toward the creation of a single world association of local governments, assuring both the highest representation of local authorities and the greatest capacity for dialogue with states and international organizations. In 1996 the international municipal movement initiated a process of unification that culminated in 2004 with the creation of a new organization representing local governments at the highest international levels: United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG. As we have discussed elsewhere,[18] in a way that exhibits certain parallelisms with the constitutional logic of the Group of 77 a few decades ago, the UN has been the venue privileged by the international networks of local

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[17] In favor of the text were the representatives of the Group of 77, who considered that the Charter was a useful instrument for development and a facilitator for international cooperation, and the representatives of Council of Europe member countries. However, the open opposition of other governments to a binding instrument, mainly the USA, China, and Canada prevented the Charter's adoption.

[18] M. Salomón and J. Sánchez Cano, *The United Nations System and the Process of Political Articulation of Local Authorities as a Global Actor*, Brazilian Political Science Review, vol. 2, no. 1, 2008, pp. 127–147.

authorities, who have used the world organization both as a meeting point and as a platform for political action. Insofar as some agencies of the UN (notably the Secretariat of the UN-Habitat Programme) actively supported the merger of the previous world associations of local authorities and considering that participation in the UN system acted as one of its main incentives, it seems clear that the UN has had *formative effects* on the global actor (UCLG), of the kind identified and described in the literature on transnational actors.[19]

Since its creation, UCLG has established a special relationship with UN-Habitat (still presenting itself as the "focal point" of local authorities to the UN system). Yet, the new world organization of cities soon understood the need to participate in international debates beyond urbanization: development, gender, sustainability… Working arrangements and varied forms of collaboration were then established between UCLG and different international agencies, bodies, and programs, not only in the UN system: UN Development Program, UN Women, the World Bank… For international secretariats, partnering with cities and their networks was an opportunity for differentiation, political backing, and access to information, technical and economic resources. In 2010, UCLG organized its 3rd Congress *and* 1st World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, practically leading a global articulation of territorial networks beyond the contours of national federations of local authorities. In June 2012, the Rio+20 Summit formally recognized the organizations and networks of local and sub-national governments as a "Major Group" in providing feedback to the state-led formal negotiations. The recognition of local governments, articulated in networks, as legitimate and relevant interlocutors in world affairs was a fact.

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[19] M. Merle, *Sociologie des rélations internationales.* Dalloz, Paris, 1988; J. Boli and G. H. Thomas, *Constructing World Culture. International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875,* 16 Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1999; P. Willetts (ed.), *The Conscience of the World. The Influence of Non-governmental Organisations in the U.N. System.* The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1996; T. Risse, *Transnational Actors and World Politics*, in W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B. A. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations.* Sage, London, 2002, pp. 426–452.

2012–2022: Proliferation and adaption to global policy demands

In the 2000s and 2010s, the consolidation of a single, unified world association of local authorities coexisted with the creation of new specialized networks, with different levels of formalization, related to regional integration, policy dialogue, technical cooperation, etc. The research by Michele Acuto,[20] who has led the creation of a historical, comprehensive database on city networks, provides us with specific figures. Acuto's analysis showed how the number of city networks grew initially very smoothly and linearly: 10 networks in 1915, 20 in 1940, 40 in 1975, and 60 in 1990. From then on, the growth is faster: 80 in 1995, 120 in 2005, 158 in 2015, and 202 in 2020. Over time, city networks become increasingly international instead of domestic, and specialized instead of generalist. Seventy-four percent of the networks focused on governance issues in the period 1991–2000, but only 40 % thereafter. In the same period, environmental networks grew from 9 % to 36 %. Networks dedicated to economic issues went from 4 % to 6 %, and to cultural issues from 13 % to 18 %.

Our comparison[21] of how city networks operate in different global governance systems showed that network formation is higher when city networking is more necessary, that is, in systems of governance (or "regimes") where the international level holds a relevant degree of normative power, allowing networks to perform not only external functions (representation, advocacy…), but also internal (norm diffusion, self-regulation, and support for the local implementation of the global policies: capacity-building, peer learning, technical advice). Advocacy loses its purpose in systems where there are no global norms and policy implementation is unfeasible or irrelevant: local governments need

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[20] First published in 2016 and regularly updated: M. Acuto and S. Rayner, *City Networks: Breaking Gridlocks or Forging (new) Lock-ins?*, International Affairs, vol. 92, no. 5, 2016, pp. 1147–1166. Also M. Acuto and B. Leffel, *Understanding the Global Ecosystem of City Networks*, Urban Studies, July 2020, pp. 1–17; M. Acuto, A. Kosovac, D. Pejic and T. L. Jones, *The City as Actor in UN Frameworks: Formalizing 'urban agency' in the International System?*, Territory, Politics, Governance, January 2021, pp. 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1860810.

[21] J. Sánchez Cano, *Réseaux de gouvernements locaux et nouvel agenda mondial: une perspective multi-niveau*, Cahiers de la coopération décentralisée, no. 5, 2015, pp. 10–28.

a "global mission" to bring home. This finding explains the growth in the number of local environmental networks, a well-regulated issue-area where local governments can set an action plan, including compliance, self-regulation, and the targets (GHG levels) that can substantiate their contribution to the common goals.

At the UN level, the most significant "global mission" that local governments can act upon is the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The importance of the SDGs is clear: they reunite the two fundamental global agendas of development and sustainability and can even be seen as a kind of culmination of the long period of reflection on world issues and UN reform that started in 1989. Since their adoption in 2015, the SDGs have established themselves as the main reference framework for measuring the efforts and progress in sustainable development – and beyond. They are not binding, and their advancement is the responsibility of States and individuals alike. In exchange, they enable the inclusion and the engagement of many actors for the common goals.

The importance of the new framework was quickly understood by local governments in 2012 when states at the Rio+20 summit decided to launch an inter-governmental process to review the Millennium Development Goals and elaborate a new set of Sustainable Development Goals. This integrated process allowed LRG networks and leaders to engage in multi-sectoral, multi-agency policy dialogues, and thus amplified their possibilities to influence policymaking.

First, thanks to the effective advocacy of local government networks, the mayor of Istanbul an UCLG President Kadir Topbaş was appointed member of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons charged with overseeing the preparations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda (July 2012). This was a select panel of only twenty-five members, with British Prime minister David Cameron or EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs among them. UCLG used this appointment to build a "Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments" (GTF) to inform its position at the Panel, attracting the most relevant environmental and territorial development networks: ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability; Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (NRG4SD); the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); or the Development Partners Working Groupon Decentralization and Local Governance (DeLoG). Facilitated by UCLG, the GTF has since then become a standing coordination mechanism, bringing together the

major international networks of local governments to undertake joint advocacy relating to international policy processes.

Second, local networks joined forces with other actors interested in urban affairs. An example is the achievement of SDG 11 or "urban SDG". In 2013, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, formally launched a campaign ("#urbanSDG") aimed at obtaining an SDG specifically dedicated to the problems of the cities. The initiative quickly gained support from UN-Habitat, UCLG, Cities Alliance, ICLEI, Metropolis, and the Communitas Coalition for sustainable cities and regions. A heterogeneous movement of local and national authorities, social activists, urban planners, firms, tech centers, universities... formed and pushed for an *urban SDG* until it became a reality.

Third, local governments put forward a robust, data-based agenda, convincingly advocating for the *localization* of the new SDGs on the basis that these depend directly or indirectly on the provision of infrastructure and services – health, education, water, sanitation, emergency services, and waste management… – which in turn depend to a greater or lesser degree on local governments doing their job. The localization of the SDGs has brought together policymakers and academicians in a fruitful dialogue that has produced interesting policy-making and collective actions, actively animating international debate and exchange.[22]

On the *policy implementation* side, the 2030 Agenda – like the Local Agenda 21 before – is seen by LRGs and their networks as an opportunity to align their local priorities and results to global frameworks, innovate in their public policies, and promote the engagement of local private stakeholders. Vis-à-vis the UN, local governments present themselves as fundamental allies to realize the SDGs. For example, they carefully prepared the 2019 "SDG Summit", the first High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (SDG HLPF) to carry out a comprehensive review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They managed

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[22] M. Biggeri, *Editorial: A "Decade for Action" on SDG localisation"*, Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, vol. 22, no. 4, 2021, pp. 706–712. Note that UCLG's position paper, "The role of Local and Regional Authorities in the UN Development Agenda Post-2015", adopted at the December 2011 World Council meeting in Dakar, was authored by David Satterthwaite (Institutional Institute for Environment, UK), Sheridan Bartlett (CUNY Graduate Center, US), and Yves Cabannes and Donald Brown (University College London).

to include a High-level Local and Regional Governments' Forum in the official program, and one of the six Leaders Dialogue was entitled "Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals". As a result, one of the ten points in the summit's political declaration read that "gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development", local governments committed to "bolstering local action to accelerate implementation."

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (par. 79). Since 2016, UCLG has launched regular surveys among national federations of local authorities and individual LRGs to assess if and how these Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) incorporate the perspectives of the sub-national administrations. In 2018, eight pioneering regions and cities decided to complete the information provided by their national governments by producing their own SDG reports; the city of New York named this exercise "Voluntary Local Review" (VLR). The name took hold, and new self-assessments of the contribution to the SDGs have been produced by a growing number of sub-national authorities. Only last year the number of VLRs available doubled: from 40 in May 2020 to more than 100 in June 2021, representing different types of subnational government (federal states and regional governments; and major, small, and middle-sized cities).[23] In 2020, UCLG supported the creation of a new monitoring instrument: the Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs). These SDG reports, elaborated by national LRG associations, assess the institutional environment for SDG localization, showcase the experiences of different LRGs, and issue policy recommendations.[24]

Annually, UCLG consults with GTF members to produce the "Towards the Localization of the SDGs" report, which is shared with the national delegations and UN authorities participating at the SDG HLPF in New York. In its own words, the report provides a comprehensive

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[23] E. Bilsky, A. Calvete and A. Fernández, *Local Governments and SDG Localisation: Reshaping Multilevel Governance from the Bottom Up*, Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, vol. 22, no. 4, 2021, pp. 713–724.

[24] In 2020, VSRs were piloted in six countries presenting their Voluntary National Reports that year, and in 2021 local government associations produced nine new VSRs.

analysis of local efforts to localize the global goals, reviewing the diversity and the breadth of local initiatives implemented by cities and territories to improve human wellbeing through the defense of human rights, public services and adequate housing, and showcasing their initiatives to reduce gender inequalities and protect cultural diversity, fight against climate change and protect the environment, and lead local economic development. In 2020–2021, cities and regions started an intense, open dialogue with the aim of sharing experiences and solutions to Covid-19. Significantly, the fifth report (2021) presented ample data on the efforts to respond to the pandemic in cities and territories worldwide, as well as their connections with the SDGs, with a particular focus on the countries presenting VNRs.

Support to SDG localization is becoming a core function in local government networks, notably UCLG. Since 2016, the world organization of cities has become a virtual hub for the promotion of the SDG implementation among its members, setting up partnerships with different agencies for this purpose. With UN-Habitat UCLG has prepared a set of common reporting guidelines and a handbook for the preparation of VLRs. With the European Commission, UN-Habitat, and UNDP UCLG has developed four "training of trainers" modules to provide LRGs and their national associations with a practical guide to implementing different aspects of SDG localization: general issues; territorial planning and the SDGs; monitoring and reporting; and decentralized cooperation. In this and the rest of SDG-related tasks, UCLG has worked with its constituent members, showcasing their practices, promoting peer learning, and fostering a bottom-up approach to localization. This has favored multiple experiences of participatory local SDG reporting, where VLRs are becoming a powerful instrument for public transparency and accountability, long-term strategy, multi-level policy coherence, strengthened data innovation and monitoring at the local level.[25]

[25] S. Narang Suri, M. Miraglia and A. Ferrannini, *Voluntary Local Reviews as Drivers for SDG Localisation and Sustainable Human Development*, Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, vol. 22, no. 4, 2021, pp. 725–736.

Final remarks

In only two decades, networked local governments have managed to secure a relevant position in different global governance systems. This success can be partly explained by the ability of sub-state diplomacy to use their unique "actorness" to its advantage, combining strategies, alliances, and instruments from each of the two spheres of world politics: state-centric (nation-states), and polycentric (non-state actors.)

Yet, for better or worse, these twenty-five years of multilateral reflection and reforms have failed to create an international regime of sustainable development – formalized in treaties and supervised by a secretariat. Multi-level governance – advocated for by municipal networks for effective localization of the SDGs – is already happening: the operation of global governance systems *is* already fluid, participatory, multi-actor, and multi-level. It is issue-based, highly specialized, and does not distinguish much between public representation and private interests. Informal rather hierarchical, it is geared not towards democracy but towards the effectiveness of its goals. In this liquid context of "shared responsibilities" LRG networks are diversifying and hybridizing their alliances, specializing their narratives, and rethinking representation. City networks request "a seat at the global table", but different global converzations are going on at the same time.

The job of (para)diplomats changes when "international affairs" become "global governance." Traditional paradiplomatic roles (representation, negotiation, interaction with international agencies…) are already giving way to new ones: creating awareness and dissemination of international standards; capacity building; benchmarking and identification of good international practice; planning, monitoring, and reporting; policy coherence for development and policy innovation. New local diplomats, rather than *gatekeepers*, must act as *boundary spanners*, and support the internationalization of local government and its adaptation to global frameworks, since "boundaries between organizations and policy arenas, far from being irrelevant, are fluid and continually reconstituting themselves, thereby becoming sites of intense activity which demand a special role for those capable of acting as linkage points.[26]"

[26] B. Hocking, J. Melissen, S. Riordan and P. Paul, *Integrative Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, In Clingendael. Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Report no. 1, 2012, pp. 69–70.

Paradiplomacy and cooperation in the pandemic era: A review from China in Latin America

Florencia Rubiolo and Gonzalo Fiore Viani

Introduction

The global pandemic has faced humanity with one of the most devastating, disruptive, and unequal crises of recent times. The collapse of world trade that had been dragging years of economic deceleration after the 2008 crisis; the general closure of borders; the interruption of commercial and productive activities; the fall in employment rates and the increase in the level of world poverty are some of the immediate consequences of this ongoing catastrophe. Unequivocally, the pandemic also brought to our attention the utter fragility of our health and distribution systems and the profound inequities that pierce and divide the globe.

The overwhelming differences between hemispheres, countries, and regional or provincial units within the States were catalysts for an uneven response capacity to the health emergency, which had a greater impact on the less developed territories. Latin America, one of the most affected regions, suffered deep setbacks. According to figures from the International Labor Organization, during the year 2020 the decrease in employment was equivalent to thirty-three million jobs.[1] That year, the fall in terms of economic growth represented 6.8 % according to Economic Council of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) – the worst hit region in the world –, and the poverty rate reached 33 %, the highest figure since 2002 in the region.[2] All of them with greater impact on minorities such as indigenous communities, children, and women.

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1 International Labour Organization (ILO), *ILO Labour Overview 2020 Lima,* ILO / Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_777630.pdf, last access: 18 March 2022.

2 Economic Council of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), L*a paradoja de la recuperación en América Latina y el Caribe. Crecimiento con persistentes problemas*

In this given scenario, subnational governments suddenly found themselves on the front line of immediate responses to the pandemic, providing indispensable services and aiding in the continuity of businesses, along with providing essential information and maintaining constant communication. Altogether, this gave subnational governments key and prominent roles in addressing the pandemic. Yet it was not only at a local level that subnational governments gained new importance, but international cooperation also became of the essence.

The international action of local and provincial governments acquired, as a consequence, a deeper role. Among other measures, dialogue was promoted in subnational exchange spaces – such as UN Habitat and *Mercociudades* – that allowed the exchange of experiences between local actors.[3] The closeness to the varied demands of the territories, and the capacity to adapt national measures to local contexts highlighted the role of the local level in the implementation of decisions in times of crisis.

Decentralized international cooperation was the area that received the greatest boost from municipal and regional governments in Latin America. In the broad range of international actors, the main partners in terms of decentralized cooperation were their Chinese counterparts. In this sense, pre-established mechanisms were activated based on local and regional level agreements along with sister cities agreements, which mainly promoted the obtention of international health aid directed straight to the territories.

Based on these insights and added to the fact that the pandemic was an accelerator of China's subnational-level ties with different regions of the Global South, in this chapter we propose to analyze the main actions and practices implemented by China in Latin America from a paradiplomacy perspective, in the context of the pandemic. In the first section we make a brief overview of paradiplomacy, including the case of China in these conceptualizations. Then we delve into the most emblematic trajectory, actors, and actions of contemporary Chinese paradiplomacy and its distinctive features at a global level. Finally, we focus on the dynamics

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estructurales: desigualdad, pobreza, poca inversión y baja productividad, Informe Especial Covid-19, no. 11, July 2021, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47043/5/S2100379_es.pdf, last access: 18 March 2022.

[3] M. Álvarez and N. Oddone, *Paradiplomacia en contexto de Covid19: nuevas dimensiones y desafíos,* https://mercadoyempresas.com/web/aporte-tecnico.php?id=162, last access: 17 March 2022.

of health cooperation at the subnational level between China and Latin America during the span of the Covid-19 pandemic, from the year 2020 to the beginning of 2022.

This chapter argues that China, as a global power, was the main country that promoted paradiplomacy and cooperation with Latin America in the context of the pandemic and the current state of world affairs. In this scenario, it is essential to shed light on this key issue for the opportunities offered by cooperation for the recovery of the Latin American region and the future of its cities in the post-pandemic era.

Paradiplomacy: Theoretical perspectives

International relations analysis, traditionally concentrated in the study of interstate relations, started to introduce new insights along with the expansion of globalization dynamics during the seventies. The end of the Cold War, allowed for more diverse and multilevel agendas, that besides including topics apart from international security, also welcomed the more active participation of a wide range of actors, such as NGOs, regional organizations, transnational companies, among others. Along with these changes, the studies on international relations and diplomacy started to gradually incorporate new perspectives on the activity of subnational entities in the international arena.

Building on the theoretical breakthroughs Keohane and Nye introduced to IR lectures, by questioning the unitary nature of the State,[4] a new international agenda with more diffuse hierarchies and boundaries began to emerge, giving entity to multiple channels of relations.[5] More recent studies that called for more pluralism and theoretical diversity have acquired a greater centrality, strongly impacting the reinterpretation of international relations, both in the periphery and in the center, and called for investigating on the margins of the discipline itself.[6]

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4 R. Keohane and J. Nye, *Power and Interdependence Revisited,* International Organization, vol. 41, no. 4, Autumn 1987, pp. 725–753.

5 N. Oddone, F. Rubiolo and M. Calvento, *Paradiplomacia y relaciones internacionales: de la práctica hacia su curricularización en Argentina*, Oasis, no. 32, 2020, pp. 63–84.

6 A. Acharya and B. Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory. Perspectives on and beyond Asia.* London, Routledge, 2010; A. Acharya and B. Buzan; *The*

The international action of subnational units has been referred to as "paradiplomacy" since Soldatos's introduction of the term,[7] although its scope is still being discussed. Following Cornago's definition the concept can be described as

> Sub-state governments' involvement in international relations, through the establishment of formal and informal contacts, either permanent or *ad hoc* with foreign public or private entities, with the aim to promote socio-economic, cultural or political issues, as well as any other foreign dimension of their own constitutional competences.[8]

In this sense, it is not an action that opposes the state's foreign policy, as there is constructive coordination and complementary action between national diplomacy and subnational international action. But the debate around the interpretation and motivations behind the international action of subnational units is still ongoing. According to Colacrai, it is a dynamic that in some cases can accompany the foreign policy of the State and in others compete with it and may even acquire a disruptive or separatist connotation. As Ippolito has suggested, depending on the intention pursued by paradiplomacy and the type of relationship developed between a national government and its constituent units the concept has at least two interpretations. The one that understands it in an instrumental sense, oriented to promote the local interests in terms of development, working in a complementary or collaborative fashion with the national State. And a second group that suggests the existence of a sense of symbolic political self-affirmation and in certain cases of construction of a nation minority, becoming "proto diplomacy".[9] Zulbelzú also summarizes different groups of motivations, and differences

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Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at Its Centenary. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019.

7 P. Soldatos, *An Explanatory Framework for the Study of Federated States as Foreign-policy Actors*, in H. J. Michelmann and P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990.

8 N. Cornago, *On the Normalization of Sub-state Diplomacy,* The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, no. 5, 2010, pp. 11–36.

9 D. Ippolito, *Relaciones internacionales de gobiernos no-centrales: un análisis teórico-conceptual de la Paradiplomacia y de sus variables explicativas*, Cuadernos de Política Exterior Argentina, 125, January–June 2017, pp. 29–47.

between subnational units within the same national State, and introduces variables such as migration, diasporas, and cultural and ethnical identities.[10]

Among the diverse motivations behind paradiplomatic activity, international cooperation is certainly a central driver. Cross-border subnational cooperation has been regarded as the main arena for the successful implementation of such activities. Keating underlines that "one of the most common forms of paradiplomacy takes the form of interregional cooperation and networking".[11] Notwithstanding the centrality of cross border decentralized cooperation, non-bordering units have also developed strong links in the last decades. As we analyze in this chapter, the Chinese case is a clear example of this trend. Among the motivations behind this type of cooperation, the idea of common functional interest and the advantages of pooling resources are central drivers.[12]

Even though the main focus of these works was on subnational units that are parts of federal states, and particularly in the Western hemisphere, there is growing interest in international relations literature in the development of paradiplomacy in non-Western region, and a particularly in China, given the global power status it has already attained. Although the political system is regarded as highly centralized, subnational units – provinces and cities – have developed an outstanding dynamism in terms of external actions since 1978. The "opening up" process introduced during Deng Xiaoping's era encouraged a less monolithic approach to foreign policy,[13] particularly in coastal regions, but increasingly expanding to central and western provinces. Economic openness

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[10] G. Zubelzú, *Los gobiernos subnacionales en el escenario internacional: conceptos, variantes y alcance. Un marco de análisis para las acciones de las provincias argentinas,* in E. Iglesias, V. Iglesias and G. Zubelzú (eds.), *Las provincias argentinas en el escenario internacional. Desafíos y obstáculos de un sistema federal, Buenos Aires.* UNDP, 2008.

[11] M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking,* Forum of Federations: an International Federalism, Hanover, October 2000, http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/ForRelCU01/924-FRCU0105-eu-keating.pdf, last access: 23 April 2022.

[12] Ibidem.

[13] Y. Zheng, *Perforated Sovereignty: Provincial Dynamism and China's Foreign Trade,* The Pacific Review, vol. 7, no. 3, 1994, pp. 309–321.

and the integration to international trade and investment, were major drivers for a more outward orientation of transnational regionalization.[14]

Given Chinese central government's support to regions to develop a more dynamic external approach, the result was a multiplication of paradiplomatic activity, with a focus on cross border relations – as the case of Yunnan's province shows – oriented towards enhancing development of backward regions and improving Chinese relations with neighbouring countries, such as Southeast Asian states, through transregional cooperation. As Liu and Song underline, even though the Chinese constitution does not recognize the right of provinces and cities to establish and implement international policies, the Central government has allowed a certain degree of autonomy in conducting external affairs, particularly in low-sensitive dimensions, such as economic relations and technical, scientific and development cooperation. Notwithstanding this relative degree of autonomy, the Central government in China still has a deep influence in subnational affairs, and, as an example and unlike federal democratic countries, the regional and local authorities are appointed by the national government. In this sense "although regional decentralization has gone quite far in many aspects, the central government's control is always substantial since the Chinese governance structure is still hierarchical".[15]

As we analyze in the following sections, Beijing's foreign policy towards Latin America has been increasingly conducted through a multilevel and multiactor approach, particularly in the economic and health cooperation realms. Regions and cities came to the front of sanitary diplomacy, through donations and collaboration. These subnational actions were in clear accordance with the Central government's interests and motivations in promoting international cooperation to pursue international political goals during the pandemic.

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[14] X. Su, *From Frontier to Bridgehead: Cross-border Regions and the Experience of Yunnan,* International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, vol. 37, no. 4, 2012, pp. 1213–1232.

[15] C. Xu, *The Fundamental Institutions of China's Reforms and Development*, Journal of Economic Literature, no. 49, 2011, p. 1078.

China's paradiplomacy in Latin America on a global powers' competitive scenario

The world has profoundly changed since 1978, when Deng Xiaoping took the first steps that led to China's integration into the world economy some decades later. The process of opening-up and the market-driven reforms arrived at a major milestone in 2001 when the country entered the World Trade Organization. This symbol of the PRC's economic transformation was followed a few years later, in 2010, by its consolidation as a global economic player becoming the second largest world economy.[16]

Today, China's role as a global power is unquestionable and its influence irradiates to every corner of the world. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is not an exception, as Beijing's interest in approaching the region has been growing steadily in the last two decades. Almost every LAC economy has seen an unprecedented growth in its export numbers, related to China's enormous demand. Among other commodities, exports of copper, crude oil, iron ore and soybeans skyrocketed, starting a decade-long commodity boom from 2003. Given LAC countries economic structure, trade became the outstanding pillar of bilateral relations as Chinese needs of natural resources soared.

Almost twenty years have gone by, China already has a foot in the region in many more dimensions and multilateral and bilateral aspects than at the beginning of the century. Contemporary China's emerging impacts on the world are evolving in all manner of messy and complex ways which make analysis difficult; in that sense economic engagement has political impacts, whether it is planned or not.[17] China's engagement in Latin America, encouraged by domestic needs, have led to inevitable competition with the United States, an aspect that is observed in several regions of the world, though in Latin America acquires greater

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[16] F. Rubiolo and D. Telias, *China-United States Competition in Latin America: Evolution, Perspectives, and Implications in the Covid-19 Context,* Estudos Internacionais Revista de Relações Internacionais da PUC Minas, vol. 9, no. 4, January 2022, pp. 43–62.

[17] J. Garlick, *The Regional Impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative.* Routledge, London, 2021.

importance given that for decades it has been considered the backyard of the US.[18]

China acquired a new global role after the world economic crisis of 2008. In 2009, the year in which the financial crisis had the greatest impact[19] exports from Latin America to the United States decreased by 26 %, to Europe by 29 %, and to Asia by just 4 %. However, towards China, they not only did not decrease but even grew by 11 %.[20]

In the last two decades, Latin America has significantly increased its weight as an agricultural supplier to the People's Republic of China (PRC), going from representing 16 % of Chinese imports in 2000 to 29 % in 2020.[21] In 2008, the Chinese Foreign Ministry published the "White Paper on Relations with Latin America". In that official document, the government urged the country's companies to seek greater insertion in Latin America.[22] Unlike North America and Central America and the Caribbean, in South America there is greater economic complementarity with China, compared to a lesser presence of the United States.[23]

The context of competition between the United States and the People's Republic of China is a broad dispute and in no way can one speak of a linear phenomenon. It is traversed by a deep interdependence between both powers, in a context that is also markedly multipolar. In

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18 F. Rubiolo and D. Telias, *China-United States Competition in Latin America: Evolution, Perspectives, and Implications in the Covid-19 Context,* Estudos Internacionais Revista de Relações Internacionais da PUC Minas vol. 9, no. 4, January 2022, pp. 43–62.

19 E. Barzola and P. Baroni, *El acercamiento de China a América del Sur. Profundización del neoextractivismo e incremento de conflictos y resistencias socioambientales*, Colombia Internacional, no. 93, 2018, pp. 119–145.

20 CEPAL, *La República Popular China y América Latina y el Caribe. Hacia una nueva fase en el vínculo económico y comercial*, 2018, https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/2995-la-republica-popular-china-america-latina-caribe-nueva-fase-vinculo-economico, Last access: 19 March 2022.

21 *China-Latin America Finance Database*, 2020, https://www.thedialogue.org/map_list/, Last access: 20 March 2022.

22 J. Malena, *La peculiaridad de la relación de China con América Latina*, 2013, anu-ar.org. http://www.anu-ar.org/miradas/relacion-china-americalatina.html, Last access: 20 March 2022.

23 E. Barzola and P. Baroni, *El acercamiento de China a América del Sur. Profundización del neoextractivismo e incremento de conflictos y resistencias socioambientales*, Colombia Internacional, vol. 93, 2018, pp. 119–145.

the post-pandemic global scenario, Latin American countries are likely to face a funding crisis. In this sense, neither the Trump Administration first, nor the Biden Administration later, seem willing to lose what they historically consider their "backyard" at the hands of who today is, in many ways, their most important adversary.[24]

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was first launched in the year 2013 and it is the main global integration strategy of the PRC with the rest of the world.[25] Its growth and acceptance has been important in most regions of the planet. Although it is the official world economic integration project of the government of the PCR its impact on globalization processes far exceeds this dimension, since, in turn, the initiative incorporates new political and cultural meanings that require a proper interpretation.

In this competitive scenario, the Belt and Road is an important part of the future of global economic relations. In this way, it is a great opportunity, on the one hand, for businesses in Latin America, but also for different forms of cooperation in diplomatic, commercial, political, economic, and cultural matters.[26] The inclusion of Latin America in the Initiative has been greatly discussed, specifically the motives that led to the expansion of the PRC towards this region. It has been suggested that China did not originally have a "grand strategy" for this region, but its inclusion was really the outcome of the interests of multiple actors and mainly due to the lobbying by Latin American regional actors, wanting to be included in this initiative.[27]

China's engagement with the region has recently had a "multi-tiered" focus, with a broad range of objectives going from the previously

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[24] F. Rubiolo and G. Fiore Viani, *América Latina: Entre Washington y Beijing*, 2020, https://agendapublica.elpais.com/noticia/16929/am-rica-latina-entre-washington-beijing. Last access: 19 March 2022.

[25] E. Dussel and A. Armony, *Beyond Raw Materials Who Are the Actors in the Latin America and Caribbean-China Relationship?*. Red Académica de América Latina y el Caribe sobre China y Universidad de Pittsburgh, Buenos Aires, 2015.

[26] G. Fiore Viani and M. Mosquera, *Ruta de la seda: Una oportunidad de desarrollo integrado al mundo*, 2022, https://www.lavoz.com.ar/mundo/ruta-de-la-seda-una-oportunidad-de-desarrollo-integrado-al-mundo/, Last access: 21 March 2022.

[27] R. Jenkins, *China's Belt and Road Initiative in Latin America: What Has Changed?*, Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1177/18681026211047871. Last access: 21 March 2022.

mentioned investment opportunities to "advancing Chinese policy interests at various levels of government and society".[28]

Within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the reality of its link with the Global South rests on a complex network of multilevel and multi actor actions. It is that not only the states take on a leading role, but also the subnational government units (regions, provinces, departments, municipalities, among others), companies, universities, cultural actors, and civil society, display a growing participation in this intricate network in search of the positioning of their interests. The nature of this action is also replicated by China, whose multilevel diplomacy demonstrates the country's capacity to establish links and simultaneous agendas in a multilevel sense. Within this sphere, financing for local development continues to be an unsatisfied demand by first-level local governments and, secondarily, by the state.

In this way, the multilevel link with the Belt and Road Initiative provides financing possibilities for the local development of subnational units of the Global South, which allow them to diversify their productive matrix, for example promoting renewable energy projects and connectivity infrastructure while seeking to reduce energy dependence and improve territorial connectivity. However, this reduction in medium-term dependence can generate long-term dependence to the extent that Chinese financing is usually granted to activate the import of Chinese technological products, generating a structural dependence on these projects in terms of capital and technology.[29] At the same time, this complementarity of interests is part of China's long-term strategies, focused on maintaining channels of access to raw materials and non-renewable resources, which help sustain its economic growth.

As Liu and Song suggest, even though China has a centralized political system, "provincial governments have become partners or agents of the central government in the conduct of foreign policy agendas".[30] In

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[28] M. Myers, *GOING LOCAL An Assessment of China's Administrative-Level Activity in Latin America and the Caribbean*, December 2020, https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Going-Local-Chinas-Administrative-Level-Activity-in-LAC.pdf, Last access: 19 March 2022.

[29] E. Oviedo, *El ascenso de China y sus efectos en la relación con Argentina*, Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de Chile, vol. 47, no. 180, 2015, pp. 67–90.

[30] T. Liu and Y. Song, *Chinese Paradiplomacy: A Theoretical Review*, SAGE Open, vol. 10, no. 1, January–March 2020, p. 6.

this regard, paradiplomacy and subnational ties play a fundamental role in Chinese foreign policy. This began in 1973, when the first sister agreement between a Chinese and a foreign city took place: between Tianjin and the Japanese city of Kobe.[31]

This growing process of twin city agreements has mainly been due to two reasons, one internal and the other external. The first one is the result of China's international relations, which have been expanding into new geographic territories such as Africa and Latin America. The second factor is the external one, in which paradiplomacy has been an increasing trend worldwide, and more cities everywhere have been delving into this type of relations.[32]

For China, this twinning policy is aimed at peaceful coexistence, in addition to strengthening the country's relations with the rest of the world. A feature worth noting, related to these Chinese city twinning agreements, is the foreign policy guidelines that the government has developed in the process, in which the recognition of the one and only Chinese Government and the maintenance of territorial integrity stand out.[33]

In this sense, the twinning policy with cities in Latin America has experienced significant growth in recent years. In 2015, there were at least 147 sister agreements, while by 2020, these were already more than 200. All South American countries with diplomatic relations with China have at least one twinning agreement, while in Central America and the Caribbean, Mexico and Cuba stand out, and to a lesser extent Costa Rica, Jamaica, Panama, Grenada and the Dominican Republic. In some particular cases, there were very significant increases in the five years between 2015 and 2020: Argentina, for example, went from seventeen to more than forty, Chile, increased the number of twinings from thirteen to more than thirty, and Uruguay, went from having four to more than

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31 A. Raggio, *Hermanamientos China-América Latina: ¿Qué son y adónde van?*, 2022, https://latinoamerica21.com/es/hermanamientos-china-america-latina-que-son-y-hacia-donde-van/, Last access: 19 March 2022.

32 J. C. Mesa Bedoya and C. H. González-Parias, *Paradiplomacia: una herramienta de poder blando de China,* Papel Político, vol. 21, no. 2, 2016, pp. 537–563. https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.papo21-2.phpb, Last access: 20 March 2022.

33 J. C. Mesa Bedoya and C. H. González-Parias, *Paradiplomacia: una herramienta de poder blando de China*, Papel Político, vol. 21, no. 2, 2016, pp. 537–563. https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.papo21-2.phpb, Last access: 20 March 2022.

fifteen.[34] An important fact is that these three countries are part of the Belt and Road Initiative, Argentina being the last to join, signing the memorandum of understanding in 2022.[35]

The case of Latin America facing the Covid-19 pandemic

In the context of a more active Chinese policy in LAC through the Belt and Road Initiative, and the US policy reinforcement in the framework of this competition, the Covid-19 pandemic struck. This phenomenon has triggered different responses from Beijing, particularly has enhanced health cooperation through different channels and actors. In Latin America, nine out of the thirty-three countries hold some degree of partnership with China. As of 2020, there are seven countries that have reached the maximum status of comprehensive strategic partnership (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela), two that attained intermediate status of strategic partnership (Uruguay and Costa Rica), and Jamaica holds partner status.[36]

As Liu and Song suggests,[37] it should be noted that China's response to the pandemic is not only dependent on the Chinese government, but also on a wide range of actors involved. China's cooperation with the LAC region in the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, can be divided into two phases. A first pre-vaccine stage in which donations and national, provincial, and municipal cooperation agreements prevailed, which we call multilevel action, with the participation of Chinese business and

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[34] A. Raggio, *Hermanamientos China-América Latina: ¿Qué son y adónde van?*, 2022, https://latinoamerica21.com/es/hermanamientos-china-america-latina-que-son-y-hacia-donde-van/, Last access: 19 March 2022.

[35] Cancillería Argentina, *Acuerdo con China: la Argentina obtiene financiamiento para obras de infraestructura estratégicas y se incorpora a la Franja y la Ruta de la Seda*, 2022, https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/es/destacados/acuerdo-con-china-la-argentina-obtiene-financiamiento-para-obras-de-infraestructura, Last access: 19 March 2022.

[36] D. Telias and F. Urdinez, *China's Foreign Aid Political Drivers: Lessons from a Novel Dataset of Mask Diplomacy in Latin America during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Journal of Current Chinese Affairs 2021,* https://doi.org/10.1177/18681026211020763, Last access: 24 March 2022.

[37] T. Liu and Y. Song, *Chinese Paradiplomacy: A Theoretical Review*, SAGE Open, vol. 10, no. 1, 2020.

non-state actors, which we call multi-stakeholder, focusing on the purchase of health-related material and equipment.

In Latin America, Beijing has implemented both dimensions of the so called "chinstrap diplomacy"[38] based on health cooperation mechanisms at two levels: multilateral and bilateral. Bilateral experiences go beyond the traditional State-State mechanisms: they are multidimensional and multi-level, involving a range of diverse actors. We note that cooperation assumes a character: (a) intergovernmental; (b) between sub-national units among themselves or between them and national governments, and (c) between large Chinese companies and national/sub-national governments.

China has become, especially since its emergence as a major player on the global stage at the beginning of this century, a more proactive State in terms of world governance. However, their motivations and objectives, as is the case with other great powers, go beyond the mere desire to improve human health and safety in developing countries.[39] The commitment to health, in the form of help, assistance and cooperation, is also used as a form of soft power that simultaneously fulfills the objectives of internal and external policy.[40] This includes, in turn, health security, economic growth, and commercial interests.

In line with official policy, China did not provide support to countries enjoying diplomatic ties with Taiwan, including Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.[41]

Between February and June 2020 alone, China provided over $128 million in medical-related donations to thirty-three countries in LAC. Later, in July, it announced a $1 billion loan for vaccine access,

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[38] F. Rubiolo and J. Vadell, *América Latina y la 'diplomacia de las mascarillas',* Agenda Pública, 2020, https://agendapublica.elpais.com/noticia/16938/china-america-latina-diplomacia-mascarillas, Last access: 22 March 2022.

[39] M. Myers, *What Motivated China's Covid-19 Assistance in LAC?,* The Dialogue, 2021, https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2021/10/what-motivated-chinas-Covid-19-assistance-in-lac/, last access: 22 March 2022.

[40] F. Rubiolo and J. Vadell, *China, América Latina y la 'diplomacia de las mascarillas',* cit.

[41] M. Chang, *Covid-19 Aid from China to Latin America Twice as the US.* Fundación Andrés Bello, 2022, https://fundacionandresbello.org/en/reporting/covid-19-aid-from-china-to-latin-america-twice-that-of-us-as-it-increases-investments-in-the-region/, Last access: 23 March 2022.

strengthening economic cooperation and alliances with the region.[42] Three main destinations of Chinese donations (Venezuela, Brazil, and Chile) accounted for 61.4 % of total donations.[43] We can also note that, if measured in USD per capita, the greatest impact of such donations was in the Caribbean countries and Venezuela. The fact that Venezuela was the largest recipient of aid from China is not surprising given the humanitarian emergency that the country was experiencing after the economic crisis that began in 2015, which led millions of people to emigrate.[44]

In addition to government assistance, the following private and state-owned Chinese companies have made donations in Latin America: Huawei, BGI, China Three Gorges Corporation, NBFE, CHCEC, Alifante, Tencent, CNPC, GAC Group, DiDi, ZTE, CATIC, Alibaba, COSCO, CCCC Dredging Group, Dahua Technology, Microport, Fosun, COFCO International, Trip.com Group, WanHuida, Nu Group, Yutong, Tencent, China Communications Construction, ICBC, Bank of China, TikTok, and Envision Energy.[45]

Though likely coordinated to some degree by Chinese authorities, China's assistance to LAC and other regions is coming from a wide range of actors. For instance, many of the donations have come not from the central government in Beijing, but from local governments across China. In an early-stage (February 2020–September 2020) Chinese pandemic outreach was notably decentralized. It entailed loosely coordinated engagement by wide-ranging Chinese actors, including embassies, companies, provincial government authorities, networks of overseas Chinese communities, and quasi-governmental organizations, such as the Chinese Red Cross. The latter donated US$ 100,000 worth of supplies to Colombia, gave US$ 100,000 in cash to Cuba, and provided some

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42 C. Guevara, *Russia and China Have become Critical Allies to Latin America and the Caribbean during the Pandemic. The United States Should Step Up,* 2022, https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/online-articles/russia-and-china-have-become-critical-allies-latin-america-and-caribbean-during, Last access: 23 March 2022.

43 Wilson Center, *Aid from China and the U.S. to Latin America Amid the Covid-19 Crisis*, 2022, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/aid-china-and-us-latin-america-amid-Covid-19-crisis, Last access: 24 March 2022.

44 D. Pantoulas and J. McCoy, *Venezuela: un equilibrio inestable*, Revista de Ciencia Política, vol. 39, no. 2, 2022, p. 391.

45 Wilson Center, *Aid from China and the U.S. to Latin America Amid the Covid-19 Crisis*, 2022, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/aid-china-and-us-latin-america-amid-Covid-19-crisis, Last access: 23 March 2022.

hurricane and pandemic-related assistance to El Salvador. These actors operated in broad support of China's diplomatic objectives and engaged the region through distinct and sometimes ad hoc channels[46]

International decentralized cooperation from Chinese non-central government actors was more active with certain countries in Latin America. Sister city linkages are one of many examples of China's expansive subnational diplomacy. In other cases, large cities in China have shipped equipment to Chinese embassies in LAC or to LAC governments for broader distribution. For example, the city of Chongqing in central China delivered 1,000 protective suits, 1,000 surgical suits, and 5,400 N95 masks to Ecuador in early April, according to China's embassy there. Suzhou, which is located in China's Jiangsu province, donated 20,000 facemasks and 200 hazmat suits to Panama's government later that same month. And the city of Nanjing donated 30,000 facemasks to Colombia.[47]

According to official figures, as can be seen below, the main recipients of donations from Chinese regional and municipal governments in Latin America were Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. In the Argentinian case, donations came from: Hangzhou, Shanghai, Chongqing, Nanchang, Guangzhou. For example, the city of Hangzhou donated to Argentina 196,000 masks, 20,000 disposable gloves, 5,000 disposable protection suits for medical use, 2,500 Covid reactive test kits, 2,000 protection glasses, 550 digital thermometers and three infrared digital thermometers in March 2020.[48] Shanghai donated to the city of Rosario, 3,000 masks N95 model, 300 medical protection Jihua suits, and 20,000 surgical masks.[49] The city of Chongqing provided the city of Córdoba with

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[46] M. Myers, *China's Covid-19 Diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Motivations and Methods.* Global Security Review, vol. 2, no. 1, 2022, pp. 11–12. https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=jgi_research, Last access: 24 March 2022.

[47] M Myers and R. Barrios, *China's Medical Outreach in LAC: Facts and Features – The Dialogue*. 2022, https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2020/05/chinas-medical-outreach-in-lac-facts-and-features/, Last Access: 23 March 2022.

[48] Telam, *Donaciones de China a Argentina están llegando al país y se espera videoconferencia médica*, 2020, https://www.telam.com.ar/notas/202003/442176-donaciones-de-china-a-argentina-estan-llegando-al-pais-y-se-espera-videoconferencia-medica.html, Last access: 24 March 2022.

[49] La Capital, *Rosario recibió una valiosa donación de insumos sanitarios del gobierno de Shangai*, 2020, https://www.lacapital.com.ar/pandemia/rosario-recibio-una-valiosa-donacion-insumos-sanitarios-del-gobierno-shanghai-n2589676.html, Last access: 24 March 2022.

1,600 disposable masks, 1,520 surgical masks and 1,200 disposable protectors.[50] Both Shanghai and Chongqing are sister cities with Rosario and Córdoba, respectively.

Brazil has received donations from the following Chinese cities and regions: Shanghai, Shangxi, Shenzhen, Jiangmen, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, Qingdao, Guiyang, Sichuan, Guangzhou, Dongguan/Fujian, Jiangsu, Gansu, Henan y Hebei. One particular case was the city of São Paulo in Brazil that received donations of masks directly from the municipal government of Shanghai, a sister city since 1988.[51]

Uruguay was also a top destination for decentralized cooperation from China. The South American country has multiple sister agreements, some examples are: Paysandu with the city of Guanxi, Lavalleja with Sichuan, La Paloma with Zhoushan, the province of Rocha with its counterpart of Hainan, Florida with the city of Kaifeng: Montevideo with Guangxi, Qingdao y Guangzhou: Salto with Foshan, Rivera with Guizhou, and Trinidad with Weifang.[52] The regions and cities that donated medical features to its counterparts in Uruguay during the pandemic were: Chengdu, Chongqing, Qingdao, Guangzhou, Guangxi, Jiangxi, Hainan, Sichuan, Shanxi, Qingdao.[53]

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50 CBA24N, *Llegó una donación de material sanitario para la provincia desde China*, 2020, https://www.cba24n.com.ar/internacionales/llego-una-donacion-de-material-sanitario-para-la-provincia-desde-china_a5ed03e9cf5bd154ab0ef5535, Last access: 24 March 2022.

51 Leikang, *The Chinese Consulate General in Sao Paulo Donated Surgical Masks to the Local Area*, 2020, http://www.wzleikang.com/en/news/qyxw/newsShow249.html, Last access: 24 March 2022.

52 Embajada de la Repútblica Popular China en Uruguay, *Lavalleja se hermana con Sichuan,* 3 September 2020, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/ceuy/esp/xwdts/t1812359.htm, last access: 24 March 2022.

Intendencia de Florida Official Website, *Firma de hermanamiento entre Florida y Kainfeng (China),* 20 October 2020, http://www.florida.gub.uy/noticias/firma_de_hermanamiento_entre_florida_y_kaifeng_china, last access; 24 March 2022.

El Telégrafo, *Acta de hermanamiento con la región china de Guangxi se firma mañana Paysandú,* 24 October 2019, https://www.eltelegrafo.com/2019/10/acta-de-hermanamiento-con-la-region-china-de-guangxi-se-firma-manana-paysandu/, last access: 24 March 2022.

53 Embajada de la República Popular China en Uruguay, Official Website, News, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/ceuy//esp/xwdts/t1766616.htm, last access: 24 March 2022.

Regarding China's health diplomacy, some concerns have been raised about the country's true intentions in Latin America. As it has been widely addressed, China's need for raw materials in relation to its own economic and industrial development, has given Latin America a central role in its foreign policy agenda. Besides this domestic interest, there are also external or international concerns influencing China's policies towards the region and enhancing its own image as a responsible global power in the context of an intensified global competition with the United States is a core one. The pandemic context can be seen, in the aftermath, as a golden opportunity to improve the nature of the bilateral relations, from a trade and financial centered orientation to a wider and more diversified spectrum. Chinese health diplomacy enters in this already developed and consolidated relation with LAC, underpinning China's positive role in the region, contributing to a gradual change in the perception of the country's image. Given the centrality of vaccines as a tool to mitigate the impact of the disease, China's diplomatic efforts towards the region are nurturing its role as a "public goods provider" and strengthening a more diversified perception of the benefits of its presence, going beyond the economic centered approach.

The international initiatives from Chinese subnational units nurture these same goals and should be understood not as autonomic impulses but as contributing to Beijing's global expansion through a wide range of channels, actors, and dimensions.

Conclusions

The events produced from the Covid-19 pandemic have shown that the building of the global idea does not endure with individual responses. What the pandemic brings to the table is the schizophrenia of a world with global productive connections and dynamics, but without forecasts, guarantees, or true transnational commitments to act in a joint way to face the challenges that a complex, changing and unpredictable world brings.

Transnational governance proposes a balance between the State, civil society, and the market. There, both civil organizations and multinational companies play an important role. Globalization, multilateral organizations, and international cooperation are going through an extremely difficult moment. Since the establishment of the current liberal world order

after World War II, the prevailing system has not faced major challenges such as those facing it now in the 21st century.

Global governance was already in crisis prior to December 2019, when the existence of a new coronavirus was announced in the Chinese city of Wuhan, but the subsequent pandemic has served to further amplify the voices against it. "A crisis within another crisis", affirms José Antonio Sanahuja[54] with his gaze set on the questioning of globalization and the systemic failures that allowed anticipating the disaster. Failures, such as poor communication and management of global risks, the reluctance to make a legitimate commitment to well-being beyond national borders, which did not allow a rapid, efficient, and consensual response to a disease that became a global catastrophe.

Today transnational governance faces an unprecedented dilemma. Are there actors up to the challenge of committing to global well-being? The problem is no longer whether we recognize its usefulness: it seems that today there is no other option. Because in an interconnected and interdependent world like the current one, the "every man for himself" is inconsistent and incoherent with the very nature of that system.

The pandemic directly challenged local governments, demanding urgent, and unprecedented responses. Despite the challenges and tensions, strengths were demonstrated when it was essential to invigorate international ties in order to have greater access to alternatives for health cooperation and training. A clear example of the potential of the internationalization strategies of subnational governments to strengthen response capacities in the face of global crises with approaches adapted to the territory.

For China, it is clear the relevance that Latin America represents for the country is growing. In this sense, the pandemic represented a great opportunity for the Asian giant to increase its presence in Latin American countries. It did so by taking advantage of the already proven mechanisms of its subnational diplomacy. Everything indicates that Beijing will continue to deepen this in the future and that its sister cities policy will continue to grow. China found in them an opportunity to

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[54] J. A. Sanahuja, *Covid-19: riesgo, pandemia y crisis de gobernanza global*, 2022, https://ceipaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/4.2020-AnuarioJose-Antonio.pdf, Last access: 22 March 2022.

strengthen its diplomacy strategy towards the world in general and Latin America in particular. The ties that bind China to the region will continue to intensify within the framework of a complex, changing, and extremely competitive global context.

Part III

Beyond traditional state diplomacy: Cities and parliaments as international diplomatic actors

Parliamentary diplomacy in practice: The role of the European Parliament delegations in the modernization of the Global Agreement between the European Union and Mexico

Mónica Velasco-Pufleau

Parliaments today are more than deliberative institutions. They have become relevant world actors by conducting parallel diplomatic relations, or what the literature refers to as "parliamentary diplomacy".[1] In Stavridis' words: "As such, parliamentary diplomacy challenges the classic definition of diplomacy, which focuses so tightly on the international role of governments, ministries and other executive agencies".[2]

The European Parliament (EP) alone has more than forty standing delegations aiming to maintain and develop its contacts with third countries, regions, and organizations globally.[3] Notably, these delegations also enhance the European Union's (EU) role and visibility around the world, including the values on which it is founded, such as democracy and respect for human rights.[4]

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1 A. Malamud and S. Stavridis, *Parliaments and Parliamentarians as International Actors,* in Reinalda, B. (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors.* Ashgate, Farnham, 2011, pp. 101–115.

2 S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: Parliamentary Diplomacy as a Global Phenomenon*, in S. Stavridis and D. Jančić (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy in European and Global Governance*. Brill-Nijhoff, Leiden, 2017, p. 387.

3 European Parliament (EP), *Decision of 17 April 2019 on the number of interparliamentary delegations, delegations to joint parliamentary committees and delegations to parliamentary cooperation committees and to multilateral parliamentary assemblies*, doc. No. P8_TA(2019)0408, Strasbourg, 2019.

4 EP, Conference of Presidents, *Decision on the Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union*, doc. No. PE 422.560/CPG, Brussels, 2015, Article 3(1).

Specifically, nine EP standing delegations exist for maintaining relations with Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries.[5] The mission, composition, organizational structure and activities of these delegations varies according to their type. The Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT), for example, contributes to provide a parliamentary dimension to the EU-LAC Bi-regional Strategic Partnership since 2006.[6]

Contrastingly, other EP delegations for relations with LAC countries have been established in connection with specific EU international agreements. Among these, the Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MX) which, together with its Mexican counterpart (a delegation composed of fourteen members of the Mexican Congress), has the role of considering all aspects of EU-Mexico relations.[7] This primarily includes the implementation of the 1997 "Global Agreement" (GA),[8] which entered into force in 2000, and the 2008 EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership. To this end, both delegations usually meet twice per year, alternating between Mexico and one of EP's working places, under the umbrella of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).[9] Since its constituent meeting in 2005, the JPC has held 27 meetings; the last one in Brussels on 3rd February 2020, before the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19 illness) led to lockdowns, travel restrictions, and border closures worldwide. The D-MX also holds independent ordinary meetings in Brussels or Strasbourg on a regular basis, with over eighteen in the last parliamentary term (2014–2019).[10]

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5 EP Delegations, *List of delegations by region. Latin American and Caribbean.* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/list/byregion?filter=SOAMER, last access: 25 June 2022.

6 J. J. Fernández Fernández, *La Asamblea parlamentaria Euro-Latinoamericana (EUROLAT) y la dimensión parlamentaria de la Asociación Estratégica Birregional UE-ALC: Evolución y Perspectivas* VI Congreso CEISAL Independencias – Dependencias – Interdependencias, Toulouse, 2010, p. 2.

7 EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (EU-Mexico JPC), *Rules of Procedure*, doc. No. PE 364.442/BUR/ANN, Strasbourg, 2005, Rule 1.

8 *Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and Its Member States, of the One Part, and the United Mexican States, of the other Part*, [2000] OJ L 276/45.

9 EU-Mexico JPC, *Rules of Procedure*, cit., Rule 5.

10 On these meetings, see https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/archives/8/d-mx/home, last access: 25 June 2022.

This contribution aims to shed light on how the D-MX has fulfilled its abovementioned role in practice. Particularly, regarding the process to modernize the GA announced in 2013 within the framework of the first EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit (Santiago de Chile, January 2013).[11] Several studies have examined this modernization from inter-governmental or trade perspectives,[12] yet studies using an inter-parliamentarian one are conspicuously lacking.[13] The present work contributes to fill in this gap in the literature on EU external relations and the EP diplomacy, by providing an in-depth inter-parliamentarian analysis. From a political point of view, this is relevant and timely, especially since the renewed agreement shall be ratified by the EP (and by the parliaments of all EU Member States and some regions, when appropriate)[14] prior to conclusion by the Council of the EU. From the Mexican side, the Senate's ratification would be also needed.

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[11] Council of the EU, *Santiago Declaration*, doc. No. 5747/13, Santiago de Chile, 2013, point 22.

[12] Among others, see L. Ruano, *The "Modernisation" of the Global Agreement between Mexico and the EU,* in A. Mori (ed.), *EU and Latin America: A Stronger Relationship?*. Ledizioni, Milano, 2018, pp. 56–59; R. Torrent and R. Polanco, *Analysis of the Upcoming Modernisation of the Trade Pillar of the European Union-Mexico Global Agreement*, doc. No. PE 534.012, EU, Brussels, 2016.

[13] On an exception, see M. Velasco-Pufleau, *Parliamentary Dialogue and the Role of the Joint Parliamentary Committee*, in EU (ed.), *The Modernisation of the European Union-Mexico 'Global* Agreement', doc. No. PE534.985, Brussels, 2015, pp. 37–54, 57–59, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/534985/EXPO_STU(2014)534985_EN.pdf, last access: 25 June 2022.

[14] Although the GA is a "mixed" agreement, the European Commission (EC) has already suggested that the renewed agreement could be split into three parts (a "mixed" Political and Cooperation Agreement, a "EU-only" Free Trade Agreement and a "mixed" Investment Protection Agreement) in a view of its ratification. See M. Banchón, *Entre la UE y México hay un Acuerdo Global que dormita*. Deutsche Welle, 2022, https://p.dw.com/p/47d75, last access: 25 June 2022. However, the Mexican Government supports the signature of a single (mixed) agreement at the time of writing. See Cámara de Diputados, *Conferencia internacional: Hacia la Modernización del Acuerdo Global.* Mexico City, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1eSSYYR-qw, last access: 25 June 2022. On the division of competences between the EU and its Member States concerning next generation trade and investment agreements, see Court of Justice of the EU, *Opinion 2/15 of the Court (Full Court)*, Luxembourg, 2017, https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=190727&doclang=EN, last access: 25 June 2022.

In particular, the contribution joins the scholarly debate about the effectiveness of the EP in shaping EU inter-governmental relations with third countries through parliamentary diplomacy.[15] The latter understood here *stricto sensu*, that is as the EP's international relations *per se*.[16] It asks: Has the D-MX been able to shape the GA's modernization process? If so, in which way(s)?

The case under analysis is intriguing for several reasons, including that the GA, along with the 2002 EU-Chile Association Agreement (AA),[17] is the first to be modernized in the Latin America region. Yet, unlike Chile, Mexico is a EU strategic partner. Moreover, Mexico is a country where human rights are severely curtailed,[18] which makes the case conducive to valuable insights on the EP delegations' efforts to uphold respect for human rights worldwide.

To fulfill its purposes, this work is mainly based on documents produced by the EP due to the lack of research on the issue in question. It is divided into five sections. Following this introduction, section two provides a concise historical overview of the EP's parliamentary diplomacy efforts to shape EU's external relations since the 1957 Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community (EEC), when, as stated by Giuliana Laschi, a formalized foreign policy did not even exist.[19] Section three addresses the GA's modernization process in

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[15] Among others, see D. Jančić, *The Transatlantic Connection: Democratizing Euro-American Relations through Parliamentary Liaison*, in S. Stavridis and D. Irrera (eds.), *The European Parliament and Its International Relations.* Routledge, Abingdon, 2015, pp. 178–191; S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: The International Role and Impact of the European Parliament*, in ibidem, pp. 294–295; V. Rita Scotti, *The EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee and Turkey's Accession Process*, in S. Stavridis and D. Jančić (eds.), *Parliamentary Diplomacy in European and Global Governance*, cit., pp. 115–133; M. Velasco-Pufleau, *The Impact of Parliamentary Diplomacy, Civil Society and Human Rights Advocacy on EU Strategic Partners: The Case of Mexico*, in ibidem, pp. 134–155.

[16] D. Jančić, *World Diplomacy of the European Parliament*, in ibidem, p. 21.

[17] *Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Chile, of the other part* [2002] OJ L 352/3.

[18] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, *Mexico's relentless wave of human rights violations*, Geneva, 2015, https://www.ohchr.org/en/newsevents/pages/hcmexicovisit.aspx, last access: 25 June 2022.

[19] G. Laschi, *Il potere dei senza potere. Il Parlamento europeo e le relazioni esterne della Cee*, in P. Caraffini et al. (eds.), *Il Parlamento europeo e le sue sfide. Dibattiti, proposte e ricerca di consenso.* FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2020, p. 164.

a nutshell, including the EP's involvement as a whole institution, that is plenary level. Section four examines the D-MX's role in this process, principally within the context of the EU-Mexico JPC. Finally, conclusions are presented in section five, including avenues for further research.

The European Parliament's parliamentary diplomacy efforts to shape European Union's external relations: A historical overview[20]

Throughout the past six decades, the EP developed a sophisticated system of delegations covering relations with almost all third countries in the world. This hold true despite the then "European Parliamentary Assembly" did not have formal powers in external relations, according to the 1957 Treaty of Rome that established the EEC, aside from a consultation role in the conclusion of AAs.[21] Within that context, for example, the EP created a first JPC[22] with the Hellenic parliament already in 1962 under the first ever AA signed by the EEC with a third country, that was Greece, in 1961.[23] Soon, a second JCP was established with the Turkish parliament in 1965 under the so-called "Ankara Agreement".[24] These bodies enabled the EP to participate in the implementation of both international agreements even in the absence of specific prerogatives in this regard,[25] in particular by examining the annual reports submitted by the relevant association councils on which the EP issued recommendations.[26]

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[20] This section is partly based on M. Velasco Pufleau, *La Diplomacia Parlamentaria Euro-Mexicana: Trabajos de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta 2005–2011,* PhD dissertation [unpublished], University of Barcelona, 2012.

[21] See Article 238 du Traité instituant la Communauté Économique Européenne, 1957.

[22] In this case, called "*Commission Parlementaire d'Association*" (or Association Parliamentary Committee).

[23] EP, *Résolution sur la création d'une commission parlementaire d'association avec la Grèce*, [1962] OJ P 116/2676.

[24] EP, *Résolution tendant à la création d'une Commission parlementaire mixte C.E.E.-Turquie,* [1965] OJ P 96/1703.

[25] M. Chauchat, *Le contrôle politique du Parlement Européen sur les exécutifs communautaires*. Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1989, p. 118.

[26] Among others, see Conseil d'Association C.E.E.-Turquie, *Premier rapport d'activité du Conseil d'Association à la Commission Parlementaire d'Association (1er*

Prior to direct elections, the EP established at least seven delegations to maintain regular inter-parliamentary contacts with third countries or groups of countries either within or beyond the umbrella of AAs.[27] Considering the geographical scope of this work, the Delegation for relations with Latin America merits mentioning, which participated in the inter-parliamentary conferences initiated with the Latin American Parliament in 1974 before any political dialogue was institutionalized at the bi-regional level.[28] Concluded in 2005, these inter-parliamentary conferences gave way to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly or EUROLAT in 2006, in which the DLAT is currently a party. This shows that the EP has also been a "prime mover" in the EU's external relations,[29] whilst showing interest in following developments in these relations.

It is precisely in those remote years that the EP carried out its first contacts with the Mexican Congress.[30] However, these contacts were not institutionalized until 1997, leading to the organization of five inter-parliamentary meetings by 2003. Building on this experience, the EU-Mexico JPC was established in 2005.[31]

The first direct EP elections in 1979 were a turning point in the EP's system of delegations. Importantly, because thereafter, the number of delegations increased in an unprecedented way, reaching over twenty.[32] Additionally, since they were granted with a specific legal basis in the EP's rules of procedure that incorporated them to the EP's institutional

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décembre 1964 – 31 décembre 1965), http://aei.pitt.edu/42352/1/A5875.pdf, last access: 25 June 2022.

27 R. Corbett, *The European Parliament's Role in EU Closer Integration*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1998, p. 85.

28 J.A. Sanahuja Perales, *25 años de cooperación parlamentaria entre la Unión Europea y América Latina,* doc. No. PE167.204, Parlamento Europeo, Luxembourg, 1999, p. 135.

29 C. Dri, *The European Parliament and Regional Cooperation: The Case of Latin America*, in S. Stavridis and D. Irrera (eds.), *The European Parliament and Its International Relations*, cit., pp. 161–177; S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: The international Role and Impact of the European Parliament*, in ibidem, p. 286.

30 M. Chauchat, *Le contrôle politique du Parlement Européen sur les exécutifs communautaires*, cit., p. 123.

31 See M. Velasco-Pufleau, *Parliamentary Dialogue and the Role of the Joint Parliamentary Committee*, cit., p. 38.

32 On these delegations, see EP, Bureau élargi, *Extrait du procés-verbal no. 210/79 de la réunion du 23 octobre 1979*, doc. No. PE60.637/BUR/extr., Strasbourg, 1979.

structure as from 1981.[33] Subsequently, decision powers pertaining the creation, numerical composition and general competences of the delegations became responsibility of the Plenary, which adopted a first decision in this regard on 22nd April 1982.[34] These internal changes made the EP delegations an essential element of the EP's external relations,[35] coming to be perceived by EP members as "[…] one of the most valuable instruments of foreign action that the EP has".[36]

The changes mentioned above were heavily motivated by the EP's ambition to increase its influence on the EEC's institutional framework, with a view of redressing the widely perceived democratic deficit, as contended by the literature analyzing the EP's role in European integration.[37] This included the field of external relations that almost entirely escaped parliamentary oversight due to the EP's extremely limited powers in the matter. In words of a key staff member of the EP dealing with international contacts in the 1970s:

> For the EP, it is understood that either at community level or national level, it is the Executive that is competent in directing external relations. That said, it must be equally understood that either at community level or national level, it is the Parliament that controls, sustains and censures the Executive and that it monitors, supports or criticizes the external relations conducted by the Executive.
>
> In the Community, the Commission has powers of initiative, negotiation and management in the field of external relations, in which the Council has the power of decision. The Commission is accountable before the European Parliament to which it reports on all its activities, including external relations. The European Parliament, in turn, must ensure that the external policy decided by the Council and implemented by the Commission clearly

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[33] See EP, Commission du règlement et des pétitions, *Rapport sur la révision générale du règlement du Parlement européen*, doc. No. 1-926/80, 1981, p. 125.

[34] EP, *Decision setting up interparliamentary delegations*, [1982] OJ C 125/113.

[35] O. Costa, *Le Parlement européen, assemblée délibérante.* Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, Brussels, 2001, p. 221.

[36] A. Herranz, *The Inter-parliamentary Delegations of the European Parliament: National and European Priorities at Work*, in M. E. Barbé Izuel et al. (eds.), *The Role of Parliament in European Foreign Policy: Debating on Accountability and Legitimacy.* Oficina D'Informacio del Parlament Europeu, Barcelona, 2005, chapter 5.

[37] J. P. Jacqué, *L'évolution du triangle institutionnel communautaire depuis l'élection du Parlement européen au suffrage universel directe*, in P. Manin et al. (coords.), *Mélanges offerts à Pierre-Henri Teitgen.* Pedone, Paris, 1984, pp. 183–184; O. Costa, *Le Parlement européen, assemblée délibérante*, cit., p. 64.

> expresses the interest of the Community as a whole and of its peoples, before any particular national interest.[38]

Not surprisingly, the first EP decision on its standing delegations adopted on 22nd April 1982 explicitly established "the provision of parliamentary backing for the EEC's external policies" as part of their tasks.[39] Similarly, the next decision of this kind adopted by the EP in 1984 would partly ground the number and numerical composition of these delegations in "[…] the need to preserve the democratic element in the Community's external relations by ensuring the direct involvement of the representatives elected by the peoples of Europe".[40]

Soon after, Mathias Chauchat was one of the first scholars to acknowledge that like EP standing committees, delegations are "[..] important means of political control" at the disposal of the EP in practice in the late 1980s. Fundamentally, he contended that delegations function as "collective research methods" gathering crucial information for the EP to have its own political position on EEC's external relations, so that it does not solely rely on the information provided by the executive bodies that it tries to control. Thanks to this unique information, he argued, the EP examines and, if appropriate, criticizes the acts carried out by the Executives in foreign policy, thereby exerting political control over them.[41] Three decades later, the notion that "[…] the link between parliamentary diplomacy and the traditional role of parliaments in the *political accountability for foreign and security policies* […]" continues to be recognized as a main function of the EP's parliamentary diplomacy by leading scholars in the field.[42]

However, the function of "parliamentary control of foreign policy" is not the only one that delegations may perform in the EP's efforts to

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38 T. Junker, *Cinq années de relations interparlementaires Parlement européen – Congrès des États-Unis (1972–1977)*, Revue du Marché Commun, no. 205, mars 1977, pp. 121–122 (author's translation). Also cited in M. Chauchat, *Le contrôle politique du Parlement Européen sur les exécutifs communautaires*, cit., p. 122.

39 EP, *Decision setting up interparliamentary delegations*, cit., point 1(a).

40 EP, *Decision concerning the interparliamentary delegations for relations with third countries*, [1984] OJ C 300/50.

41 M. Chauchat, *Le contrôle politique du Parlement Européen sur les exécutifs communautaires*, cit., pp. 10, 75–76, 139–142.

42 S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: Parliamentary Diplomacy as a Global Phenomenon*, cit., p. 375; see also D. Jančić, *World Diplomacy of the European Parliament*, cit.

shape EU's external relations. Notably, the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993, which established a common foreign and security policy partly with the aim of consolidating and developing the Union's founding principles (called "values" after the Lisbon Treaty), gave the EP the opportunity to formally link the work of its delegations to the implementation of this policy. Accordingly, the current provisions governing the activities of EP delegations expressly provide that these delegations shall "[…] contribute to promoting in third countries the values on which the European Union is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law (Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union) (sic)".[43] From a scholarly perspective, this value-oriented diplomacy[44] relates to the function of parliaments acting as "moral tribunes" in international relations, by introducing "[…] important normative elements far from the traditional premises and prescriptions of realism while considering human rights and democratization as components of a more human and moral international system, if only at a discursive level in many cases".[45] More specifically, such diplomatic efforts can be related to a democracy promotion function of parliamentary diplomacy. This function may be conducted in various ways, including technical cooperation, socialization processes or acting as "transmission belts" between the executives and civil society actors.[46]

The Global Agreement's modernization process in a nutshell

As previously noted, the EU and Mexico agreed to explore viable options for updating the GA within the framework of the first EU-CELAC Summit held in Santiago de Chile in January 2013. Many

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[43] EP, Conference of Presidents, *Decision on the Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union*, cit., Article 3(1).

[44] D. Jančić, *World Diplomacy of the European Parliament*, cit., pp. 29, 39.

[45] S. Stavridis and I. Fernández Molina, *El Parlamento Europeo y el conflicto de Libia (2011): ¿una tribuna moral eficiente?*, Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internationals, no. 101, p. 154 (author's translation).

[46] S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: Parliamentary Diplomacy as a Global Phenomenon*, cit., p. 380.

reasons drove this decision, principally market access related ones. Following Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Trade in those days:

> As a bilateral free trade agreement, the EU-Mexico deal was something pioneer. Today almost all countries are negotiating these agreements. Moreover, the nature of these agreements has changed. The kinds of trade deals that the European Union and Mexico are negotiating today are very different to what we agreed on all those years ago. They remove many more types of barriers, making them much more effective at opening markets. […] We both know that the relationship between our two economies is too important to leave to a free trade agreement from another era. […] We should be aiming for an EU-Mexico deal that is comparable to our deal with Canada and to what the TTIP [*Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership]* will become.[47]

As a result, the EU and Mexico established in 2013 a joint working group, composed of three sub-groups, to examine the possibilities for modernizing the GA in its three pillars (political dialogue, cooperation and trade). This work led to a joint vision report laying down the aims that modernization should attain, endorsed by the seventh EU-Mexico Summit (Brussels, June 2015) in 2015.[48]

The Council ultimately[49] authorized the opening of negotiations to modernize the GA in May 2016. A set of factors contributed to the acceleration of the negotiation process regarding the trade pillar. Most notably, the United States protectionist trade policy under the Trump administration (2017–2021) that led to freezing negotiations with the EU on the *TTIP; a*nd the re-negotiation of the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to which Mexico was a party.[50] In this light, the EU and Mexico reached an "agreement in principle" on the

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47 C. Malmström, *EU-Mexico Trade: Modernising our Relations* [speech], Brussels, 2015, https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/may/tradoc_153433.pdf, last access: 25 June 2022.

48 F. del Río and R. Saavedra Cinta, *Modernización de los capítulos de diálogo político y cooperación del Acuerdo Global México-Unión Europea,* Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior, no. 112, enero-abril 2018, p. 41.

49 On the many institutional steps taken by the EC ahead of the opening of negotiations, see G. Grieger, *Modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement,* doc. No. PE 608.680, EP Research Service, Brussels, 2020, pp. 8–9.

50 L. Ruano, *The "Modernisation" of the Global Agreement between Mexico and the EU,* cit. In 2020, the NAFTA was replaced by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement or USMCA.

new trade pillar in April 2018, formally concluding negotiations in April 2020.[51]

Negotiations on the GA's political dialogue and cooperation pillars also started in 2016, being concluded in November 2017. Among others, strengthening the institutional structure of the new agreement through the fully integration of the EU-Mexico Summit (biennial), the EU-Mexico JPC (biannual)[52] and civil society participation was agreed.[53]

The signature of the modernized GA is expected to take place once the translation (into the 24 EU official languages) and legal revision of the outcome of negotiations is concluded, including deciding on its final legal architecture. At the time of writing, the European Commission (EC) supports to split such outcome into three different agreements (*a priori*, a Political and Cooperation Agreement,[54] a Free Trade Agreement and an Investment Protection Agreement). However, the Mexican Government refuses this approach, instead standing up for signing a single agreement of comprehensive character such as the GA. Both the EU and Mexico have shown political willingness to sign the new deal in 2022 or 2023, but this remains to be seen.[55]

The EP's involvement as a whole institution (that is, plenary level), in the GA's modernization process has been rather modest to date. This holds especially true if this modernization is compared with that relating

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[51] See G. Grieger, *Modernisation of the Trade Pillar of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement,* cit., pp. 1, 8–9.

[52] Unlike other JPCs, such as that created under the EU-Chile AA, the EU-Mexico JPC lacks a binding legal basis in the text of the GA, being established on the basis of a joint declaration annexed to the GA's Final Act ([2000] OJ L 276/66) that only refers to the advisability of institutionalizing a political dialogue at inter-parliamentary level.

[53] See F. del Río and R. Saavedra Cinta, *Modernización de los capítulos de diálogo político y cooperación del Acuerdo Global México-Unión Europea,* cit., pp. 44–45.

[54] Another name for this agreement could be "Strategic Partnership Agreement", covering political and cooperation aspects, considering that Mexico is one EU's strategic partner.

[55] M. Banchón, *Entre la UE y México hay un Acuerdo Global que dormita*, cit.; Cámara de Diputados, *Conferencia internacional: Hacia la Modernización del Acuerdo Global*, cit.; V. Dombrovskis, *Answer given by the Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis on behalf of the European Commission*, no. E-000567/2022, Brussels, 2022; B. Glynn, *WebStreaming of the AFET meeting of 12 May 2022* [speech], Brussels, 2022, https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/committee-on-foreign-affairs_20220512-0900-COMMITTEE-AFET, last access: 25 June 2022.

to the EU-Chile AA, within which framework the EP has already adopted a specific document containing recommendations to the Council, the EC and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the negotiations of the agreement's trade pillar.[56] Conversely, the modernization of the GA's trade pillar has been primarily addressed at plenary level on the basis of a parliamentary question for oral answer to the EC. This question was tabled on behalf of the EP Committee on International Trade (INTA) in October 2013[57] and debated in the January 2014 sitting in Strasbourg.[58] The GA's modernization has also been raised as part of some EP resolutions (e.g., the 2017 Resolution on EU political relations with Latin America and the 2018 Resolution on the Annual report on the implementation of the Common Commercial Policy)[59] and plenary debates (such as that on the outcome of the December 2020 EU-LAC Ministerial Conference).[60] Nevertheless, these resolutions and debates are not specific to EU-Mexico relations, neither do they contain a set of specific recommendations on negotiations such as those issued in relation to the EU-Chile AA.

Importantly, the EP will have a key opportunity to discuss the GA's proposed modernization within the framework of its ratification process. The EP cannot amend the proposal, yet still holds the power to reject it, in which case the Council cannot adopt the decision(s) concluding the new agreement(s).[61] Despite the still rather marginal room for the EP's input in foreign policy decision-making, this "right of veto" should not be underestimated, as the EP has already used it in a number of cases, including highly salient international agreements, such as the

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56 See EP, *Recommendation of 14 September 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association Agreement*, doc. No. P8_TA(2017)0354, Strasbourg, 2017.

57 See V. Moreira and G. Sabin Cutaş, *Question for oral answer to the Commission: Modernisation of the trade title of the EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement*, no. O-000115/2013, Brussels, 2013.

58 On the full content of this debate, see https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-7-2014-01-15-ITM-021_EN.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

59 G. Grieger, *Modernisation of the Trade Pillar of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement,* cit., p. 8.

60 On the full content of this debate, see https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-01-19-ITM-010_EN.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

61 Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, consolidated version, 2012.

Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement.[62] In October 2020, for example, the EP also anticipated that it would not ratify the new agreement between the EU and the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) as it currently stands.[63]

The D-MX and the Global Agreement's modernization process

Historically, the D-MX and its Mexican counterpart, gathered under the umbrella of the JPC, have been very active in monitoring EU-Mexico relations and trying to influence their development in line with the *raison d'être* of these inter-parliamentary bodies.[64] Accordingly, the two delegations demonstrated a strong interest in the GA's modernization very early in the process, pioneering EP discussions on the issue. The JPC raised this modernization already at its fifteenth meeting (Mexico City and Cuernavaca, May 2013) as part of its evaluation of the GA's implementation during its first fifteen years. This meeting was held months before INTA tabled the aforesaid parliamentary question for oral answer to the EC in October 2013. From the beginning, both delegations stood in favor of the GA's modernization, highlighting the need to develop simultaneously and in coherence with the TTIP negotiations to be launched that same year.[65]

The JPC discussed the GA's modernization in depth as a specific agenda item of its sixteenth meeting (Strasbourg, November 2013) merely six months later, which took place prior to the January 2014 plenary debate of the INTA parliamentary question. The JPC addressed the three pillars of the agreement, showing itself in favor of that the GA's modernization reached all of them, unlike the predominant place of the trade pillar in the process given by the EU and Mexico executives and the EP standing

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62 D. Jančić, *World Diplomacy of the European Parliament*, cit., pp. 24–26, 39–40.

63 EP, *Resolution of 7 October 2020 on the implementation of the common commercial policy – annual report 2018*, doc. No. P9_TA(2020)0252, Brussels, 2020, point 36.

64 See M. Velasco-Pufleau, *Parliamentary Dialogue and the Role of the Joint Parliamentary Committee*, cit.

65 EU-Mexico JPC, *15th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee. Joint Declaration*, doc. No. PE446.825, Cuernavaca, 2013, points 6 and 7.

committees.[66] Within that context, the JPC unequivocally expressed its desire to be regularly informed on the progress made by the aforementioned EU-Mexico joint working group responsible for examining the possibilities for updating the GA.[67] As part of its firm commitment to participate in the process, the JPC also agreed to request an independent expert study. This study aimed to assess the GA's implementation and proposed recommendations on possible options for its modernization from a parliamentary perspective. Additionally, it examined the JPC's role in fulfilling its mission, including recommendations to strengthen its participation in the GA's modernization process.[68] The study, eventually commissioned by the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) on the initiative of the then Chair of the D-MX Ricardo Cortés Lastra (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats – S&D, Spain),[69] was published in January 2015. This constitutes the first policy input of this nature regarding the GA's modernization in the EP,[70] reiterating the JPC's (including the D-MX) innovative role in the process within this EU institution. From the sixteenth meeting (Strasbourg, November 2013), the JPC addressed the GA's modernization in all its meetings held until 2020; most of the time, as a specific agenda item for discussion.[71]

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66 EP, Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (D-MX), *XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-Unión Europea. Declaración Conjunta*, Strasbourg, 2013, point 4.

67 Ibidem, point 6.

68 Ibidem, point 7; see also EU-Mexico JPC, *17th meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee. Joint Declaration*, doc. No. PE503.026v01-00, Strasbourg, 2014, point 15. The study's first part was written by R. Dominguez and the second one by M. Velasco-Pufleau. See EU (ed.), *The Modernisation of the European Union-Mexico 'Global* Agreement', cit.

69 EP, Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) Enlarged Bureau, *Record of Decisions of 21 January 2014*, Brussels, 2014, pp. 1–2, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/commissions/afet/coordinateurs/01-21/AFET_CORD(2014)01-21_XL.pdf, last access: 25 June 2022.

70 Later, the Committee on International Trade (INTA) commissioned another independent expert study on the modernization of the GA's trade pillar. See R. Torrent and R. Polanco, *Analysis of the Upcoming Modernisation of the Trade Pillar of the European Union-Mexico Global Agreement*, cit.

71 Except from the twentieth (Mexico City and San Miguel de Allende, February 2016), twenty-fourth (Mexico City, February 2018) and twenty-seventh (Brussels, February 2020) JPC meetings. Nevertheless, all the joint declarations of these JPCs referred to the GA's modernization.

Furthermore, the JPC showed a special interest in involving and considering points of views outside of parliaments while discussing the renewal of the GA from the outset. To this end and on the initiative of the D-MX, a joint seminar on the GA's modernization and the JPC's role in the negotiation process took place at the aforesaid sixteenth meeting (Strasbourg, November 2013). Different stakeholders from the EU and Mexico participated as speakers, namely representatives of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Mexican Government and the academic sector as well as an independent expert. Notably, the idea of requesting the independent expert study on the GA's modernization resulted from this seminar.[72] Later, for example, the EESC was again invited to join other JPC meetings, such as that in which José Rodríguez García-Caro, rapporteur of the EESC opinion on the review of the GA,[73] participated.[74] In line with his presentation, the joint declaration adopted at the end of the JPC underlined the importance of creating " […] a body representing civil society organizations from both parties in order to monitor the Agreement", which should include representatives from the EESC on the European side.[75] In particular, the JPC acted as a "transmission belt" between EU and Mexico executives and the EU organized civil society represented by the EESC, to the extent that the JPC joint declarations are meant to be transmitted to such executives. More broadly, this JPC request voiced concerns from Mexican civil society actors, which have called for the establishment of a joint body for civil society participation within EU-Mexico relations for at least two decades.[76] In fact, the sixteenth meeting (Strasbourg, November 2013) was not the first time that the JPC referred to this body in its joint declarations. References in this

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[72] EP, D-MX, *Proyecto de Acta. XVI Reunión de la CPM UE-México*, doc. No. PE503.023v00-00, Strasbourg, 2013, pp. 6–8.

[73] [2016] OJ C 13/121.

[74] EP, D-MX, *19th meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee. Minutes of the meetings of 7–9 July 2019*, doc. No. PE543.303v01-00, Strasbourg, 2019, pp. 8–9.

[75] EU-Mexico JPC, *Joint Declaration. 19th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee,* doc. No. PE543.300v01-00, Strasbourg, 2015, point 46.

[76] Among others, see M. Atilano et al. (eds.), *1er Foro de Diálogo con la Sociedad Civil México-Unión Europea en el Marco el Acuerdo de Asociación Económica, Concertación Política y Cooperación entre la Unión Europea y México (Acuerdo Global). Memoria*, Brussels, 2002.

regard can be traced back at least to 2010.[77] In addition, EESC representatives have occasionally appeared at the D-MX ordinary meetings.[78]

The JPC started to adopt recommendations on each pillar of an updated GA as from 2014 within the framework of its seventeenth meeting (Strasbourg, April 2014),[79] two years before the Council of the EU approved the mandate for negotiations with Mexico. As previously noted, issuing recommendations is one of the oldest competences of JPCs in the EP, which remains valid to date.[80] In practice, the EU-Mexico JPC includes its recommendations in its joint declarations adopted at the end of each meeting. These recommendations are not binding and shall be supported by the majority of each of the two delegations to be approved.[81]

Since that year of 2014, the JPC recommendations have become regular instruments to express viewpoints on the modernization by the D-MX and its Mexican counterpart with a view of shaping its content. In a way, these JPC recommendations have partly filled the discussed gap left by the EP plenary, which has not adopted any text containing specific recommendations on the renewal of the GA to the Council of the EU, the EC or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to date, despite it having the right to do so.[82] The absence of these plenary recommendations is regrettable, since they are one of the few means available for the EP to state its political position and try to exert influence on EU international agreements before their conclusion by the Council. As previously highlighted, even if the aforesaid power of consent (which enables the EP to approve or reject certain EU international agreements) gives the EP a right of veto on such

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77 See EP, D-MX, *Acta de la reunión de los días 12, 13 y 14 de mayo de 2010,* doc. No. PE432.103v01-00, Sevilla, 2010, Anexo II, point 15bis.

78 See M. Appel, *Europa: Impugnan representatividad de ONG mexicanas*, Proceso, 2013, https://www.proceso.com.mx/internacional/2013/9/20/europa-impugnan-representatividad-de-ong-mexicanas-123671.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

79 See EU-Mexico JPC, *17th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee. Joint Declaration*, cit.

80 On the JPC's power to put forward recommendations, see EU-Mexico JPC, *Rules of Procedure*, cit., Rule 4.

81 Ibidem, Rule 4(2).

82 See EP, *Rules of Procedure 9th parliamentary term*, September 2021, Article 114(4).

agreements, the institution cannot amend the text.[83] Moreover, the EP does not directly partake in the drafting and approval of negotiating directives or negotiations as such; it is only informed during the procedure.[84] This makes the recommendations issued by the JPC highly valuable in the GA's modernization process to date.

During the inter-governmental negotiations, a number of JPC recommendations on the content of an updated GA appeared to be taken into account,[85] for example providing the JPC with a clear legal basis directly in the text of the agreement, creating institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation, and incorporating strong and extensive provisions relating to sustainable development into the new trade pillar.[86] Nevertheless, it is difficult to assert whether these recommendations were actually accepted because of the JPC's influence, and the degree to which other factors accounted for their acceptance.[87] Taking as a sample the three recommendations mentioned, for instance, it cannot be ignored that all of them were aligned with EU existing policies and practices shaping contractual relations with third countries, making their implementation rather simple and even desirable for EU negotiators to update the GA in accordance with these policies and practices.

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[83] At the most, the EP committee responsible for the recommendation to approve or reject the proposed legally binding act may "[…] if necessary, table a report, including a motion for a non-legislative resolution setting out the reasons why Parliament should give or refuse its consent and, where appropriate, making recommendations for the *implementation* of the proposed act". Ibidem, Article 105(2), emphasis added. It remains to be seen whether this will be applied to the outcome of the negotiations to renew the GA.

[84] D. Jančić, *World Diplomacy of the European Parliament*, cit., p. 26.

[85] See F. del Río and R. Saavedra Cinta, *Modernización de los capítulos de diálogo político y cooperación del Acuerdo Global México-Unión Europea*, cit., pp. 44–45; G. Grieger, *Modernisation of the Trade Pillar of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement*, cit., p. 10.

[86] Among others, see EU-Mexico JPC, *Joint Declaration. 19th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee,* cit., points 12, 45–46; EU-Mexico JPC, *Joint Declaration. 20th Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee,* doc. No. PE543.310v01-00, Mexico City and San Miguel de Allende, 2016, points 5, 23; EU-Mexico JPC, *Joint Declaration. 21st Meeting of the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee,* doc. No. PE543.318v01-00, Brussels, 2016, points 25–26, 36.

[87] On this issue on the literature, see S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: The International Role and Impact of the European Parliament,* cit., p. 294.

In particular, engaging in face-to-face dialogue with representatives from the executive bodies of the EU and Mexico has been at the core of the D-MX's individual role in the GA's modernization. Notably, these encounters have facilitated the D-MX to gather first-hand information on the inter-governmental process, which *a priori* should be reported to EP relevant committees (and the EP plenary, upon request) when the encounters take place within the framework of JPC meetings.[88] These encounters have additionally enabled D-MX members belonging to different EP political groups to question and express point of views on the actions undertaken by the EU and Mexico, contributing to exert parliamentary oversight over them. During the eighth parliamentary term (2014–2019), for example, the D-MX met in Mexico with representatives from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food.[89] In Europe, it held over eight parliamentary exchanges of views with the EEAS, the EC Directorate-General for Trade (DG Trade) and/or Mexico's Mission to the EU as part of its ordinary meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg.[90] Furthermore, it participated in the organization of a public audience where the then Commissioner on Trade, Cecilia Malmström, was a speaker; alongside representatives of the EEAS, the EP and the business sector.[91] More broadly, the D-MX members were also debriefed on the GA's modernization within the framework of their work in other EP delegations,

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88 EP, Conference of Presidents, *Decision on the Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union*, cit., Articles 18(1)(2) and 19(2)(3).

89 On examples of these meetings, see EP, D-MX, *Draft Minutes. 18th Meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC 18–20 February 2015*, doc. No. EP/503.036, Mexico City, 2015; T. Jiménez Becerril, *Informe de Misión a raíz de la XXII Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-UE y las reuniones conjuntas con la Delegación de la Comisión de Comercio Internacional*, doc. No. PE543.334v01-00, Brussels, 2017.

90 On examples of these meetings, see EP, D-MX, *Minutes of the meeting of 21 April 2016,* doc. No. PE543.313v01-00, Brussels, 2016; EP, D-MX, *Minutes of the meeting of 7 July 2016,* doc. No. PE543.315v01-00, Strasbourg, 2016.

91 Redacción, *La UE insiste en "oportunidad" de cerrar cuanto antes el acuerdo con México*, La Vanguardia, 2017, https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20171018/432168203105/la-ue-insiste-en-oportunidad-de-cerrar-cuanto-antes-el-acuerdo-con-mexico.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

such as the DLAT. The ordinary meeting held in March 2018, in which Cecilia Malmström also took part, illustrates this excellently.[92]

Encounters between the D-MX and officials from the EU and Mexico have continued in the on-going nineth parliamentary term (2019–2024). So far, for example, the D-MX has met with representatives from the EEAS, the DG Trade, the 2021 Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU and Mexico's Mission to the EU in Europe.[93] Besides, some D-MX members met with Mexican officials as part of a small delegation that visited the country in October 2021 with a view to fostering inter-parliamentary relations and exploring positions on the ratification of the renewed GA. Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D, Italy), the Chair of the D-MX at the time of writing, led such delegation.[94] The GA's modernization has also been addressed within the AFET and INTA's parliamentary activity in which some D-MX members participated.[95]

In the same vein, EU and Mexican representatives have appeared before the JPC, which has the right to invite them to attend and speak at its meetings.[96] The case of the joint seminar held at the sixteenth meeting (Strasbourg, November 2013) has been already mentioned in this work. Other examples include the twenty-fifth (Brussels, July 2018) and the twenty-sixth (Mexico City, February 2019) meetings, both held during the eighth parliamentary term (2014–2019).[97] It should not go unnoticed, however, that members of the D-MX or its Mexican counterpart

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92 EP, Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT), *Acta de la reunión del 14 de marzo de 2018,* doc. No. PE581.885v01-00, Strasbourg, 2018, pp. 2–3.

93 On an example, see EP, D-MX, *Draft Agenda. Semi-remote meeting 18 March 2021*, doc. No. PE611.583v01-00, Brussels, 2021.

94 EP, AFET, *Eurodiputados viajan a México para fortalecer la diplomacia parlamentaria*, Brussels, 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/es/press-room/20211026IPR15801/eurodiputados-viajan-a-mexico-para-fortalecer-la-diplomacia-parlamentaria, last access: 25 June 2022.

95 On examples of these meetings, see EP, AFET, *Minutes of the Meeting of 22 and 23 February 2021,* doc. No. PE689.580v02-00, Brussels, 2021, p. 3; EP, AFET, *Draft Agenda. Meeting 11 May and 12 May 2022*, doc. No. PE731.736v02-00, Brussels, 2022; EP, INTA, *Draft Agenda. Meeting 24 January and 25 January 2022*, doc. No. 703.246v01-00, Brussels, 2022.

96 EU-Mexico JPC, *Rules of Procedure*, cit., Rule 6.

97 See EP, D-MX, *Acta de la reunión de los días 11 y 12 de julio de 2018*, doc. No. PE611.563v01-00, Brussels, 2018, pp. 4–5; EP, D-MX, *Acta de la reunión de los días 7 y 8 de febrero de 2019,* doc. No. PE611.565v01-00, Mexico City, 2019, pp. 3–4.

were not invited to any negotiating round or meeting of the joint working group assigned to analyze options for the GA's modernization so that they could state parliamentary positions. This also holds true for meetings of the joint bodies responsible for the GA's implementation (this is the EU-Mexico Joint Council and the EU-Mexico Joint Committee), regardless of the many calls made by the JPC in this regard over time.[98] Unlike other JPCs, the JPC does not receive an annual report on the functioning and progress of the GA by the EU and Mexico executives either.[99]

Moreover, the D-MX has actively monitored human rights in Mexico during the GA's modernization process, especially in light of the precarious situation and the EP's engagement to uphold these rights worldwide, including through its delegations.[100] Within that context, the D-MX has extensively discussed the issue with its parliamentary counterpart and Mexican and European officials in both sides of the Atlantic.[101] It has also met with a wide range of human rights organizations and victims of human rights violations in Mexico, acting (again) as a "transmission belt" of non-state actors' concerns vis-à-vis the EU and Mexico executives. The JPC joint declaration of the eighteenth meeting (Mexico City, February 2015) offers an outstanding example of such communicative function performed by the D-MX; in this case, with the support of its

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[98] Among others, see EP, D-MX, *XVI Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-Unión Europea. Declaración Conjunta,* cit., point 29; EP, D-MX, *Draft Minutes. 18th Meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC 18–20 February 2015*, cit., annex Joint Declaration, point 61.

[99] On an example, see European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee, *Resolution adopted pursuant to Rules 11 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure on 13 March 2019, Strasbourg, France, on the Annual Report of the EEA Joint Committee on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2018*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/162246/ResolutionontheEEAJointCommitteeAnnualReport2018(final).pdf, last access: 25 June 2022.

[100] Among others, see L. Feliu and F. Serra, *The European Union as a 'normative power' and the Normative Voice of the European Parliament,* in S. Stavridis and D. Irrera (eds.), *The European Parliament and Its International Relations*, cit., pp. 18–34.

[101] Among others, see EP, D-MX, *Draft Minutes. 18th Meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC 18–20 February 2015*, cit.; T. Jiménez Becerril, *Informe de Misión a raíz de la XX Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-UE y las reuniones conjuntas con la Delegación de la subcomisión de Derechos Humanos*, doc. No. PE<NoPE>543.312</NoPE><Version>v01-00, Brussels, 2016. On an example in the EU, see EP, D-MX, *Minutes of the meeting of 23 October 2014*, doc. No. PE503.039v01-00, Strasbourg, 2014.

Mexican counterpart.[102] Likewise, these concerns have been voiced into the EP parliamentary activity, especially that of standing (sub-)committees, with rather remarkable results.[103] The D-MX was also joined by an *ad hoc* delegation from the EP Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) that visited Mexico in February 2016, demonstrating further collaboration ties between EP delegations and standing (sub-)committees when human rights are at stake.[104]

But far from acting as a unified body, the D-MX members have adopted different positions in relation to the GA's modernization and the precarious human rights situation in Mexico, aligned with those of their political groups. One case in particular brought to light these divisions, known as the "Ayotzinapa case", involving the disappearance and murder of unarmed civilians with the participation of state forces in the State of Guerrero (Mexico) in September 2014.[105] On the one hand were those, such as the S&D and the Group of the European People's Party (EPP), which supported the modernization to help the country overcome its human rights challenges. Contrarily were those, such as the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) and the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) that suggested to freeze the process.[106]

Although all the EP political groups mentioned above seem to have ended up by supporting the renewal of the GA over time, it remains to be seen whether and to what extent the specific positions of these (and other) groups regarding human rights in Mexico will have an impact

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[102] See EP, D-MX, *Draft Minutes. 18th Meeting of the EU-Mexico JPC 18–20 February 2015*, cit., annex Joint Declaration, points 23–24.

[103] Among others, see *Letter sent by Elena Valenciano, Chairwoman of DROI, to Andrew Stanley, Head of the EU Delegation to Mexico*, dated 9 March 2015, doc. No. EXPO-A-DROI-D(2015)9673.

[104] See E. Tournier, *Human Rights Delegation to Mexico and Guatemala*. EP Press service, 2016, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20160212IPR14154/human-rights-delegation-to-mexico-and-guatemala, last access: 25 June 2022.

[105] On this case, see the three reports issued by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI by its Spanish acronym) available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/activities/giei.asp, https://serapaz.org.mx/informe-3-giei-caso-ayotzinapa/, last access: 25 June 2022.

[106] See M. Velasco-Pufleau, *The Impact of Parliamentary Diplomacy, Civil Society and Human Rights Advocacy on EU Strategic Partners: The Case of Mexico*, cit., pp. 148–149.

on the ratification of the new agreement. For example, some D-MX members belonging to the Greens/EFA expressed that they would only ratify the agreement under certain conditions, including strengthening mechanisms to enforce the human rights clause contained in the GA.[107] Conversely, Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D, Italy), as with other chairs of the D-MX in the past (especially, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril, EPP, Spain) strongly supports the modernization in line with the majoritarian position of the EP. Accordingly, he already publicly encouraged both the Mexican Senate and the EP to "[…] ratify the agreement with the broadest support and with the greatest celerity so that the new agreement can enter into force as soon as possible" together with his Mexican peer at the JPC.[108]

Finally, besides human rights issues, the D-MX's involvement in the GA's modernization was heavily shaped by Donald Trump's rise to the United States presidency, especially in the last years of the eighth parliamentary term (2014–2019). On the one hand, the D-MX members showed solidarity with Mexico considering Trump's constant attacks, including the introduction of increasingly restrictive policies towards migrants and asylum seekers, alongside the expansion of the border wall between both countries.[109] On the other hand, the protectionist trade policy of Trump's presidency gave momentum to the EU-Mexico new trade deal within the D-MX members, fostering closer collaboration with INTA. Accordingly, the D-MX was joined by a first INTA ad hoc delegation to Mexico[110] during its mission to participate in the twenty-second JPC (Mérida, February 2017). Resulting from this JPC, both the D-MX and its Mexican counterpart expressly welcomed the

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[107] Among others, see EP, D-MX, *XXIV Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta UE-México. Acta*, doc. No. PE611559v01-00, Mexico City, 2018, p. 6.

[108] C. Hernández Mora and M. Smeriglio, *Declaration by the Co-Chairs of the EU-Mexico JPC on the conclusion of the Global Agreement*, doc. No. PE611.552, Brussels, 2020.

[109] Among others, see European People's Party (EPP), *Los eurodiputados del PP expresan su respaldo a México ante los ataques de Trump*, Brussels, 2017, https://www.eppgroup.eu/es/como-trabajamos/con-los-paises-de-la-ue/espana/noticias/eurodiputados-pp-respaldan-a-mexico-ante-ataques-de-trump, last access: 25 June 2022; EP, D-MX. *Acta de la Reunión del 16 de febrero de 2017*, doc. No. PE543.332v01-00, Strasbourg, 2017.

[110] EP, INTA, *Mission report following the ad-hoc delegation to Mexico (Mexico City) from 20 to 22 February 2017*, doc. No. PE599.859v01-00, Brussels, 2017, p. 2.

EU and Mexico's agreement to speed up their trade negotiations.[111] On that occasion, Sorin Moisă (S&D, Romania), then INTA standing rapporteur for Mexico, served as EP guest rapporteur for the topic related to the GA's modernization.[112] This was the first time that an INTA standing rapporteur for Mexico participated as a EP main speaker on this issue at the JPC.[113] Later, for example, Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero (S&D, Spain), current INTA standing rapporteur for Mexico, also served as EP rapporteur on the ratification process of the modernized GA at the twenty-fifth JPC (Brussels, July 2018),[114] following the aforementioned "Agreement in principle" on the renewed trade pillar reached by the EU and Mexico in April 2018.

Nevertheless, the D-MX faces serious challenges to continue its work under the JPC following the last twenty-seventh meeting held in Brussels in February 2020. The reasons behind this include the COVID-19 pandemic and organizational issues,[115] to name but a few. The fact is that no JPC meeting has taken place in over two years, and even the last one was highly criticized by different observers.[116] At the time of writing, the long overdue twenty-eighth JPC is expected to take place in the first half of 2022,[117] although by remote participation only, considering that the aforementioned small delegation led by Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D,

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[111] T. Jiménez Becerril, *Informe de Misión a raíz de la XXII Reunión de la Comisión Parlamentaria Mixta México-UE y las reuniones conjuntas con la Delegación de la Comisión de Comercio Internacional*, cit., annex Joint Declaration, point 56.

[112] See T. Jiménez Becerril, ibidem, pp. 15–16.

[113] Previously, this INTA rapporteur had debriefed the D-MX on the modernization in the EP's working places at least on two occasions. See EP, D-MX, *Minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2015*, doc. No. PE543.296v02-00, Strasbourg, 2015, p. 2; EP, D-MX, *Minutes of the meeting of 7 July 2016*, cit., p. 2.

[114] See EP, D-MX, *Acta de la reunión de los días 11 y 12 de julio de 2018*, cit., p. 4.

[115] Among others, see EP, Conference of Presidents, *Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wednesday 12 January 2022*, doc. No. PE 700.194/CPG, Brussels, 2022, p. 53.

[116] See M. Appel, *La 'súper aburrida"* (sic) *reunión entre legisladores mexicanos y europeos*, Proceso, 2020, https://www.proceso.com.mx/opinion/2020/2/7/la-super-aburrida-reunion-entre-legisladores-mexicanos-europeos-238236.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

[117] By the end of June 2022, a formal EU-Mexico JPC has not taken place. Instead, a number of D-MX members has only welcomed three members of the Mexican Senate at a "joint meeting" (to paraphrase the Secretariat of the D-MX) in the EP on 13 June 2022. EP, D-MX, *Incoming delegation visit from the Congress of the United Mexican States*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-mx/activities/inter-parliamentary, last access: 25 June 2022.

Italy) visited Mexico in 2021.[118] Following the twenty-eighth JPC, the next (face-to-face) JPC meeting should take place in one of the EP's places of work, according to the EP Conference of Presidents.[119] However, as with the official signature of the modernized GA in 2022 or 2023, all the former remains to be seen. Meanwhile, INTA continues to invest resources to follow the ratification process of the renewed GA's trade pillar in Mexico in view of its role on the consent. Recently, for example, a new *ad hoc* delegation from this EP committee visited the country in February of this year.[120]

Conclusions

This work shed light on the EP delegations' role in the modernization of EU international agreements, thereby advancing the literature on EU external relations and EP diplomacy. It joins the scholarly debate about the effectiveness of the EP in shaping EU inter-governmental relations through parliamentary diplomacy, with a focus on the renewal of the GA between the EU and Mexico. The findings allow for some conclusions to be drawn both regarding the EU-Mexico case and (the EP) parliamentary diplomacy in general.

Overall, the D-MX has been very active in trying to influence the GA's modernization from a parliamentary perspective within and beyond the EP institutional framework, showing that standing delegations continue to be important means for the EP to participate in the development of EU's external relations to date. Remarkably, the D-MX enabled (inter-) parliamentary (May 2013) and multi-stakeholder (November 2013) discussions and provided expert independent analysis (January 2015) prior to any other EP body, voicing a wide range of viewpoints outside the executive branch into the modernization process in collaboration with its Mexican counterpart.

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[118] In fact, the EP Conference of Presidents originally authorized this delegation to participate in the twenty-eighth JPC in Mexico, but this JPC did not occur. See Conference of Presidents, *Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wednesday 12 January 2022*, cit., p. 53.

[119] Ibidem.

[120] Ibidem, p. 28. See also EP, INTA, *Mission report following the INTA mission to Mexico City, Mexico, from 21 to 25 February 2022*, doc. No. PE729.860v02-00, Brussels, 2022.

Within that context, the D-MX proved to be particularly effective in exerting one of the classic JPC's competences in the EP together with its parliamentary peer, which is issuing recommendations to executive bodies of the EU and the third country concerned. While some of these recommendations seem to have been adopted during the inter-governmental negotiations to update the GA, more research is needed to assess whether and to what extent the (inter-)parliamentary input decisively accounted for this outcome. This confirms that the evaluation of the impact of parliamentary diplomacy on international relations remains problematic,[121] meriting further attention in the literature. In this case, such recommendations were especially relevant since they partly filled in the gap left by the EP plenary in this regard. The latter poses an interesting research question: Are standing delegations carrying out tasks in practice that should rather be performed by the plenary sitting in the field of EU's external relations?

Additionally, the D-MX exerted parliamentary oversight through frequent engagement in face-to-face dialogue with representatives of the EU and Mexico executives, thus allowing EP members to convey positions in a direct way, besides gathering first-hand information on the process conducted by these executives. The same holds true for members of the Mexican Congress when encounters with the EU and Mexico executives took place under the umbrella of the JPC. In this way, the D-MX facilitated the enhancement of democratic practices in both sides of the Atlantic to some extent. This is in line with the key functions of parliamentary diplomacy identified by the literature, to which this work already referred. More broadly, this shows that standing delegations do contribute to promote EU's founding values as the own EP has envisaged, not only in third countries but in the EU as well. Nevertheless, there are still aspects that may be strengthened in the executive-parliamentary relationship, such as the participation of JPC members in EU-Mexico inter-governmental meetings, even if only as observers. Namely, the invitation to the EP chairs of EUROLAT and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, among others, to attend the Berlin ministerial conference between the EU and LAC countries held in December 2020 serves as an important example in this regard.[122]

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[121] See S. Stavridis, *Conclusions: The International Role and Impact of the European Parliament*, cit., p. 294.

[122] See J. Borrell Fontelles, *Debate – Enhancing EU's External Action in Latin America and the Caribbean Following the Latest EU-LAC Ministerial Conference*

Closely related to the previous point, the D-MX was also crucial in providing regular human rights inputs into the modernization process, both at (inter-)governmental and (inter-)parliamentary levels, due to its numerous meetings with human rights organizations and victims of human rights violations in Mexico. In this way, it acted as a "transmission belt", while engaging in human rights promotion in Mexico. Within that context, the D-MX showed a plurality of positions, which may shape the ratification of the GA.

Finally, the present analysis highlighted that the D-MX closely collaborated with EP standing committees to perform its mission of examining EU-Mexico relations, including the GA's modernization. Yet, while some of these committees (e.g., INTA) continue to play a relevant role in the process, the D-MX struggles to carry out its work under the umbrella of the JPC. This has been partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to recent organizational issues. In this respect, future research should further examine the influence of structural and agency-driven factors on the development of parliamentary diplomacy, including why some parliamentary diplomacy actors have been more resilient to the pandemic-induced constraints than others and how to improve resilience of these actors in times of crises in general.

[speech], Brussels, 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-01-19-ITM-010_EN.html, last access: 25 June 2022.

City diplomacy. Theory and practice of paradiplomacy: Smart city Sweden case

Mario Torres Jarrín

City diplomacy

Usually, the term diplomacy is used to refer to the foreign action carried out by the governments of national states and its implementation is as a rule in charge of the ministries of foreign affairs. However, in recent decades this term has been used by local governments, either at the level of cities or regions of a given country and its implementation has been in charge by their respective international relations offices.

It can be argued that the external action carried out by these cities is an exclusive capacity of the nation states, and that therefore they are not empowered to exercise them, unless they do so in coordination and under the leadership of their respective central government. This premise comes from the conception of the international system established by the first diplomatic congress that resulted in the "Peace of Westphalia" in 1648.[1] Indeed, this congress determined that nation states were the only actors on the international stage. In addition, this historical fact is usually considered as the starting point of international relations as a science that is expressly concerned with studying international problems,[2] as well as part of modern history that deals with relations between national states.

But the international relations history is not born with the nation states relations history, the international relations is created thanks to cities diplomacy, as was the case of the first city-states that were developed in ancient Greece between the centuries VIII to VI BC. There is plenty of historical evidence regarding the city-state's diplomacy, for example,

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1 The so-called "Westphalian Congress".

2 C. Del Arenal, *La génesis de las relaciones internacionales como disciplina científica*, Revista de Estudios Internacionales, vol. 2, no. 4, 1981, p. 852.

according to the history of Greece in the 3rd century BC: when the Greeks won the war against the Romans, Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, sends his minister Cineas as ambassador to the Roman Senate to present the conditions of a peace treaty.[3]

We can also mention Venice or Milan cases, which were the first cities to establish representation missions abroad, likewise, together with Florence, they had a diplomatic corps accredited to the city government.[4] Outside of Europe, we also find cases in Asia, as the Chinese city of Chengdu, and although in the 17th century the central system of the nation state marginalized the external action of cities, it seems that cities had returned.[5]

Taking these historical references into consideration it would allow us to affirm that the "city diplomacy" or also called "paradiplomacy" is prior to the diplomacy attributed to the nation states themselves. Ultimately, city diplomacy gave rise to traditional nation-state diplomacy. Since the foreign action undertaken by the cities is prior to the foreign action developed by the national states.

At present we find municipal governments and/or regional governments developing foreign action parallel to that of their central governments. We even find cases of national and regional parliaments that also carry out activities related to foreign action. All these cases are usually called paradiplomacy. It is true that not in all cases, it seeks to develop foreign action to the detriment of that undertaken by the national government, but rather what is sought is to position the image of a city internationally.

What is usually intended is to create a city brand, as occurs with the country brand, based on its own characteristics, such as the specialty in a certain economic sector, or also because of its richness in terms of cultural heritage. Lately, there has been a new factor that has begun to differentiate one city from another, and it has to do with the technology variable.

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3 M. Torres Jarrín, *El acervo integracionista en Europa y América: Una historia común,* Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, 2017, p. 76.

4 H. Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method.* University of Leicester Press, Leicester, 2001, pp. 6–33.

5 R. Marchetti, *City Diplomacy. From City-States to Global Cities.* University of Michigan Press, United States of America, 2021.

The geographical space that brings together a group of technology companies is usually called "axis", "logistics center" or "node", all these terms derive from the English word "hub". The fact that a city has a hub has become a kind of brand, offering it a certain national and international prestige, based on the premise that if it has a group of companies in the technology sector that participate in the urban planification and city management with sustainable solutions then it is a city of the future: a smart city.

This new city of the future must also be intelligent, which gives rise to the concept of "Smart city", which defines as "intelligent city" the city where traditional networks and services become more efficient thanks to the use of digital solutions. This chapter studies the "Smart City Sweden case" as an example of paradiplomacy, based on the city diplomacy that Sweden has developed.

Theory and practice of paradiplomacy

In the academy there is no consensus on the definition of the concept "paradiplomacy", therefore, its agents, functions and instrumentalization are not clear either. The emergence of international organizations, regional integration organizations and the appearance of big tech companies, located in the before mentioned hubs, have configured a new international system over the traditional one, which was made up only of national states, exercising the powers of actors in development policies and in the external representation of the countries.

Interconnectivity, globalization, and the digitization of the economy have represented several challenges for both states and their cities, including their governance, and external dimension. The need to project internationally has led cities to design, develop and implement internationalization strategies whose purpose is to ensure that their cities find a space on the international stage.

In the 1980s, the neologism paradiplomacy appeared in the academic world within a context of revival due to studies on federalism and comparative politics, focused mainly on the international activities of cities in certain provinces of Canada and in some states of the United States within the context of globalization.[6] Panayotis Soldatos was the first to

[6] S. Paquín, *Paradiplomatie et relations internationales. Théorie des stratégies internationales des régions fase la mondialisation*. Peter Lang, Brussels, 2004.

define paradiplomacy as a direct continuation and to varying degrees of a sub-state government in international activities.[7]

For Ivo Duchacek, adding the term "para" before the concept of "diplomacy" adequately expresses what is intended to be done, that is, to develop parallel policies by a sub-state government, coordinated or complementary to those of the central government, but which conflict with the country's international policies.[8] Some prefer to use the term "regional sub-state diplomacy"[9] and others use the concept of "multilevel diplomacy".[10]

Since the academia, there are those who consider that taking into account the complexity of the current international system is necessary for sub-state units to require their own foreign policy[11] so that they can participate in the international arena in defense of specific interests.[12] There are those who believe that paradiplomacy can also be seen as the participation of non-central governments in international relations in order to promote socioeconomic or cultural aspects.[13] As well as those who believe that paradiplomacy differs from traditional diplomacy in that it develops a strictly sectoral foreign action, rather than seeking to represent a territorial unit as a whole.[14] According to Arenas Arias, although the idea of a foreign policy formulated by an actor other than

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7 I. Duchacek, *Perforated Sovereignties: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations*, in J. Hans Michelmann and Parayotis Soldatos (eds), *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units.* Oxford Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 1–33.

8 Ibidem.

9 D. Criekemans (ed.), *Regional Sub-State Diplomacy Today.* Brill, Leiden and Boston, 2011.

10 B. Hocking, *Localizing Foreign Policy: Non-Central Governments and Multi-layered Diplomacy*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1993.

11 M. De Almeida Medeiros, *¿Necesita Sao Paulo una política exterior? Hegemonía, diplomacia y paradiplomacia en Brasil,* América Latina Hoy, vol. 56, 2019, pp. 163–186.

12 S. Wolff, *Paradiplomacy: Scope, Opportunities, and Challenges*, The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs, vol. 10, no. 1, 2007, pp. 141–150.

13 N. Cornago, *La descentralización como elemento de innovación diplomática,* in L. Maira (ed.), *La política internacional subnacional de América Latina*. Libros del Zorzal, Buenos Aires, 2010, pp. 107–134.

14 G. Zubelzú, *Los gobiernos subnacionales en el escenario internacional: conceptos, variantes y alcance. Un marco de análisis para las acciones de las provincias argentinas*, in E. Iglesias, V. Iglesias, and G. Zubelzú (eds.), *Las provincias argentinas en el escenario internacional. Desafíos y obstáculos de un sistema federal.* Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, Buenos Aires, 2008, pp. 19–46.

the state may seem disproportionate, the truth is that in practice there are interventions by sub-state units in the international arena, such as the cases of cities in provinces of Canada, some states of the United States of America or certain autonomous communities in Spain or Länder in Germany, or oblasts in Russia.[15]

In recent decades, the development of countries has fallen to a limited number of cities, which have focused their development on specializing in certain sectors. This specialization has allowed them to channel resources from their respective central governments and manage to attract foreign investment, achieving with them an increase in their economies and levels of development.

In many countries, a large part of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is concentrated in one or two cities, which have developed their own economic and negotiating capacity abroad. Ten years ago, in 2012, Richard Dobbs and Jaana Remes published in Foreign Policy part of their study presented by the McKinsey Institute which indicated that cities matter more than ever because there are around 600 cities that generate about 60 % of the World's GDP. These data show several changes in geopolitical terms while generating a wave of new consumers, whose purchasing power will change the way of buying and investing[16] in the world economy as a whole and therefore the set of international relations.

It is estimated that among the 600 cities mentioned above there will be an average of 745 million households with a GDP per capita of 23,000 euros. By 2025 the population of these urban centers will represent some 12.7 billion euros in terms of consumption spending, which means that it will generate a multiplier effect in the consumption of goods and services in each of the respective cities and the importance of developing external action by these cities is an evident reality.

For Tavares, there are around 125 multilateral networks and forums that bring together subnational governments to discuss a wide variety of issues ranging from sustainable development to culture, education

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[15] G. J. Arenas Arias, *Paradiplomacia: definiciones y trayectorias*, Papel Político, vol. 23, no. 2, 2018.

[16] R. Dobbs and J. Remes, *Introducing… The Most Dynamic Cities of 2025*, 2012, https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/13/introducing-the-most-dynamic-cities-of-2025/, last accessed: 7 December 2021.

or urban development.[17] The economic capacity of certain cities makes them global players because they are economic centers themselves whose wealth gives them the ability to promote their own international agendas that include their interests, strategies and action plans, which translates into a greater negotiating power by themselves without the need for intervention or consent of a central state.

More than half of the world's population lives in urban areas and in the case of the European Union three out of four European citizens live in cities. It is estimated that every year fifty million people, that is an average of 140,000 people per day, move to urban areas.[18] Within this new context, the governments of certain Swedish cities are beginning to develop, together with companies and academia, a new development model based on the "triple helix", whose objective was to establish a platform for the export of goods and services based on sustainable solutions focused on environmental technology. It is within this framework that Smart City Sweden was born, a project that seeks to internationalize the good practices of Swedish cities in areas related to sustainable urban management.

City diplomacy: Smart city Sweden case

The urban population has grown vertiginously during the last decades, it is expected that by 2030 there will be 5.2 billion people living in cities and that by 2050 this figure will rise to 6.7 billion, likewise, it is projected that the number of "megacities", that is cities with more than 10 million people will, increase from 33 in 2018 to a total of 43 cities by 2030.[19] It is also estimated that

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[17] R. Tavares, *Paradiplomacy. Cities and States as Global Players.* Oxford University Press, New York, 2016.

[18] M. Ahlgren, N. Robson, and R. Houthaeve, *Urban Move Report. Urban Space for People on the Move – The Living City*, 2018, p. 4. https://www.swecourbaninsight.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ui_report_urban-space-for-people-on-the-move_a4_-1.pdf, last access: December 2021.

[19] Banco Africano de Desarrollo, Banco Asiático de Desarrollo, Banco Europeo para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo y el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, *Promover Ciudades Sostenibles. Perspectivas regionales,* 2019, p. VII, https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Promover-ciudades-sostenibles-Perspectivas-regionales.pdf, last access: 12 December 2021.

80 % of the demographic accumulation will take place in Africa and Asia.[20]

Apart from the growth in the number of megacities there are the so-called "tech industry cities" which are cities that have a hub such as the cases in the city of Silicon Valley (United States), Shenzhen (China), Skolkovo Technopark (Russia) or Dubai Silicon Oasis (United Arab Emirates), all of them called to be the new political capitals of the world since it will be where future decisions on trade in goods and services will be designed in the new digital era. The economic and geopolitical capacity of the big tech industries located in each of these cities make them the new Florence or Chengdu of the 21st century.

When in 2017 the Danish government opens its first triple tech embassy in Silicon Valley, Copenhagen and Beijing, it appoints a Tech Ambassador to the big tech industries located in the aforementioned cities and presents the concept of "Techplomacy" within its foreign policy strategy in, at that time, the big tech industries which are *de facto* the new international actors in the international system.[21] This demonstrates the importance of cities in the development of the economy, not only of a country but also worldwide.

Cities are the center of the economic world, over 50 % of the population lives in urban areas today and are responsible for 80 % of the GDP,[22] which is why city governments have undertaken processes within their governance that include the design, development, and implementation of an agenda abroad often through internationalization strategies and plans and each of these actions has been contextualized within the concept of "diplomacy of cities".

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[20] United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects 2018*, 2019, https://maintenance.un.org/, last access: 15 December 2021.

[21] M. Torres Jarrín, *Techplomacy. El interregionalismo de la Unión Europea-América Latina y el caribe en la era digital: Un interregionalismo 4.0 para una Gobernanza 4.0,* in P. Astroza Suarez, and B. Larraín Martínez (eds.), *Relaciones entre la Unión Europea y América Latina: escenarios futuros en un mundo de cambios.* Tirant lo Blanch, Valencia, 2022, p. 81.

[22] World Bank, *Urban Development*, 2020. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview#1, last access: 15 December 2021.

In 2021, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) published its Global Innovation Index[23] which measures the levels of innovation that countries have and develop at a global level, evaluating factors such as the existence or not of policies that promote. They promote innovation, education, infrastructure, the creation of knowledge etc. At European level, the results of its Regional Innovation Scoreboard[24] were published, which consists of evaluating the performance of regions in terms of innovation. In both indexes Sweden occupied the first place. Worldwide, Sweden ranks second after Switzerland and at the European Union level Sweden has the highest level of innovation compared to all the Member States of the European Union.

Sweden has an international image as a developed country whose innovation model allows them to have companies with high levels of technology and that, at the same time, are committed to protecting the environment and sustainable development. Sweden implements an innovation model called "Triple Helix". This model has been used to develop relationships between three sectors: university, industry and government. In recent years Sweden has used the Triple Helix conceptual framework to develop initiatives at local, regional, and national levels.[25] Trilateral networks and hybrid organizations have acted as agents of change.[26]

The origin of the Smart City Sweden project comes from the idea of conceiving a "sustainable city", which gave rise to the "Symbiocity" concept, which seeks to develop cities under a holistic and inclusive approach to sustainable urban planning and development based on the experiences of Swedish municipalities and global best practices.[27] Sweden has used its cities to build hubs that contribute to the creation of

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[23] World Intellectual Property Organization, *Global Innovation Index 2021. Tracking Innovation through the COVID-19 Crisis.* WIPO, Geneva, 2021.

[24] European Commission, *Regional Innovation Scoreboard*, 2021, p. 20, https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/statistics/performance-indicators/regional-innovation-scoreboard_en, last access: 15 December 2021.

[25] H. Etzkowitz and C. Zhou, *The Triple Helix. University-Industry-Government Innovation and Entrepreneurship.* Routledge, New York, 2018, p. 117.

[26] OECD, Reviews of Innovation Policy: Sweden, 2013, p. 235, https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-reviews-of-innovation-policy-sweden-2016-9789264250000-en.htm, last access: 15 December 2021.

[27] S. Dahlgren and C. Wamsler, *Evaluation of the Development of the Sustainable City Approach*. SIDA, Stockholm, 2014.

its own ecosystems and where the interrelationships of the three sectors have resulted in companies with high levels of innovation.

In 2009, under the "Triple Helix" approach, the project "Strengthening Stockholm's ICT Cluster – Kista Science City" was launched. One of the greatest success stories of this project is found in the development of the Ericsson company and although initially it was the sector of technology companies that began to develop, it was quickly followed by the sectors of the audiovisual and creative industries. This project had a total budget of 1,400,000 euros, of which the European Union contributed about 520,000 euros.[28] Since then, the city of Stockholm has positioned itself as one of the most modern cities in the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), it is estimated that the city has a group of 600 companies and 30,000 employees in the sector ICT.[29]

In 2010, Stockholm was named European Green Capital by the European Commission for having more than 20,000 companies in the ICT sector and for having generated an average of 100,000 jobs linked to the sector. Add to that its high level of connectivity: 90 % of residential buildings and 100 % of office buildings have fiber optic networks. Its communications networks allow vehicle traffic to be managed more efficiently, reducing it by 20 % and reducing carbon emission levels by 12 %.[30]

In 2016 Smart City Sweden was created with a clear objective of exporting sustainable urban solutions.[31] It has a central office in Stockholm, or more specifically in Hammarby Sjöstad, one of the most famous sustainable urban developments in the world since it is a district completely designed in an intelligent and sustainable way. This office manages the internationalization strategy and oversees international relations

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[28] European Commission, *URBELAC: Urban European and Latin American and Caribbean Cities for Integrated and Sustainable Urban Development*, 2014, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/international/pdf/idb_urbelac_en.pdf, last accessed: 7 February 2022.

[29] E. R. Sanseverino and V. Vaccaro, *Smart Cities Atlas. Western and Eastern Intelligent Communities.* Springer, Switzerland, 2017, p. 72.

[30] S. Colado, A. Gutiérrez, C. Vives, and E. Valencia, *Smart City. Hacia la gestión inteligente*, Marcombo, Barcelona, 2014.

[31] Nordic Council of Ministers, *Enabling the Digital Green Transition. A Study of Potentials, Challenges, and Strengths in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 2021, p. 75, https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1596448&dswid=3590, last access: 15 December 2021.

with other cities and central governments of other countries. Smart City Sweden welcomes international delegations interested in implementing Swedish solutions in areas such as climate, energy and environment, mobility, digitization, urban planning and social sustainability.

As part of Stockholm city diplomacy, its local government has a vision to make the city the first carbon-neutral city and smart city by 2040. Within this context, the companies Telia and Ericsson launched together with the Royal Institute of Technology a commercial project of the 5G network in Sweden.[32]

On the other hand, we find as an experience of multilateral collaboration the work developed between the Swedish government and the Sweco company for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, who are taking as reference the experiences developed in the field of urban development in cities such as Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg[33] and has decided to explore new projects related to sustainable urban planning.

It is expected that by 2030, 70 % of the transportation in Sweden will be free of fossil fuels, in a clear commitment to electric cars with their respective logistics infrastructures within the city to be able to supply the cars through biogas stations, bio ethanol, biodiesel and electricity. Public transport with buses and boats that use 100 % renewable energy. Digitization plays an important role within the innovative solutions for a smart city since thanks to it transport, city security systems or waste management can be improved. Each of these issues involves a group of companies that together with local governments develop foreign action activities seeking to export the city model, work method and all thanks to city diplomacy.

One might think that each city participating in the Smart City Sweden project could develop its own city diplomacy. In fact, they have the resources and financial autonomy to be able to seek to project themselves

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[32] Flanders Investment & Trade, *Smart cities in Sweden*, 2020, https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/export/sites/trade/files/market_studies/2020-Smart%20Cities%20Sweden_0.pdf, last access: 10 December 2021.

[33] C. Pineda, *El concepto de Symbiocity como fundamento para el análisis e intervención de los Sistemas Urbanos en el Distrito de Barranquilla. Ejemplos del sistema energético, de manejo de residuos y de manejo de agua y saneamiento básico,* 2014, p. 3, https://manglar.uninorte.edu.co/handle/10584/8223, last access: 15 December 2021.

internationally and therefore seek to develop their own foreign relations with other cities. However, they have done so within the framework of the central government's foreign actions. Smart City Sweden information is on a website, which in turn is hosted on the websites of Swedish embassies abroad. So, if someone wants to visit Sweden to learn more about Smart City Sweden, it is coordinated with the Swedish embassy in the country.

EU-LAC regional policy dialogues on sustainable development in cities

In the last EU-CELAC Summit, held in Brussels in 2015, the regions both engaged in a dialogue on territorial cohesion and equity and on regional development policy with focus on to strengthening the capacity of the regional and urban authorities to promote economic development and innovation and social inclusion and cohesion. The Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) established regional policy dialogues with Brazil (2007), Argentina (2012), Chile (2010), Peru (2013), Mexico (2014), SICA (2015) and Colombia (2015).

The dialogues address exchanges of information and good practices on policies aiming at economic, social and territorial cohesion on multi-level governance and partnership issues. Between the areas of activities of EU regional policy that are of interest to Latin American countries are regional innovation and competitiveness and sustainable urban development in addition to cross-border cooperation and inter-regional cooperation.

The European Commission have been carrying out actions for further cooperation as before mentioned, among which the following projects can be identified:

- "International Urban and Regional Cooperation programme (IURC)" for city-to-city cooperation on sustainable urban development and region-to-region cooperation on regional innovation. This programme was implemented since 2017 and has become the world's largest city-to-city cooperation programme involving 165 cities from the EU and non-EU countries in North America, Latin American and the Caribbean countries, Asia and South Asia.[34]

[34] IURC, *City-to-City Region-to-Region. Frequently Asked Questions. EU Cities & Regions*, 2021, https://cdn.iurc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FAQs_IURC_Call_EU-cities_and_regions.pdf, last access: 15 December 2021.

- "EU-CELAC Innov-AL" project of DG REGIO. The aim of the project is to exchange knowledge and experience in the fields of innovation and smart specialization policies in CELAC countries. The project was the result of preparatory action of the European Parliament to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices between EU and non-EU countries on the subject of territorial development with special emphasis on urban development, the urban-rural partnership and cross-border urban cooperation. The project created a community of agents related to these issues in EU-LAC countries. The first phase ran from January 2018 to July 2019 and Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru participated on the one hand and Brazil on the other. The second phase ran from January 2019 to June 2020.[35]
- "INNOVACT" is a platform that promotes knowledge on cross-border innovation support. The platform is supported by EU with the ambition of diffusing its regional policy experiences and good practices in Latin America, for further cooperation between regional authorities and specialized agencies on innovation policy decision-making and governance from EU-LAC regions. INNOVACT supports cross-border cooperation and innovation in seven CELAC border regions:[36]

1. Mexico-Guatemala
2. Colombia-Ecuador
3. Colombia-Peru
4. Peru-Chile
5. Ecuador-Peru
6. Argentina-Paraguay-Brazil
7. Bolivia-Peru

On 9 December 2020, in the framework of INNOVACT, two services of the European Commission: DG DEVCO and Joint Research Center launched the project "S4Latin America" as an important milestone in

[35] Innov-AL, *Promotion of decentralized innovation policies in CELAC countries. EU-AL Cooperation*, 2022, https://www.innoval2.eu/innovation-policies/the-project/eu-al-cooperation_204_1_ap.html, last accessed: 7 February 2022.

[36] European Commission, INNOVACT, 2022, http://www.innovactplatform.eu/en/about-innovact, last accessed: 7 February 2022.

the new innovation pillar of the EU-CELAC Common Research Area (CRA). The S4Latin America will be implemented under the governance of the Regional Facility for Development in transition and its main goal is to confirm the potential of the EU Smart Specialization policy concept to steer innovation-driven territorial development. EU-LAC cooperation by focusing on cases and practices in Mexico, Chile and Peru.[37]

- "URBELAC Network" promotes sustainable development in cities in the two regions. URBELAC was created in November 2010 based on the common efforts of the European Commission and the Inter-American Development Bank in helping national, regional and local governments face the challenges as integral management of urban sustainability cities.[38]

Conclusions

Globalization, the Internet and the digitization process of the economy have generated a greater rapprochement between different populations, which has translated into an increase in international relations. In this context, cities have become new actors or, as we have been able to verify in history, they are once again actors on the international stage.

In a certain way it makes sense since international actors such as companies, non-governmental organizations, foundations or international organizations carry out their activities within a city and therefore their activity has a direct impact on the political, economic, social and cultural life of a concrete city. In this sense, it is logical that it is the governments of the cities that seek to interrelate with other international actors at the same time seek to undertake their own international relations to attract new investments, facilitate the export of goods and services of companies settled in its territory and in generating the legal conditions so that all these actions described above are developed.

In most cases, the interests of a city are usually within the foreign policy of the countries since it is part of a nation state and therefore

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[37] Ibidem.

[38] European Commission, *URBELAC: Urban European and Latin American and Caribbean cities for integrated and sustainable urban development*, cit., last accessed: 7 February 2022.

the ministries of foreign affairs have within their powers and functions to represent the cities, promote their cities internationally and attract investment for them. However, in recent decades this function has been developed by the city governments themselves, with paradiplomacy being the theoretical and practical framework used to justify their foreign action.

Many of the cities have created an international relations office with the aim of projecting themselves abroad. In certain cases, a diplomacy different from that of the local government is duplicated or carried out in parallel, even in some cases behind the back of the central government itself. This shows that in certain cases the interests and needs of cities are not met by central governments, which makes cities seek to develop a paradiplomacy, that is, a parallel diplomacy seeking to satisfy their needs as a city and those of citizens. In recent decades within international relations the relationship between domestic and international policies has begun to be theorized.[39]

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has increased the digitization processes of the economy and has brought the populations even closer thanks to interconnectivity and new communication channels have been generated where the central government itself has been left out due to its technological incapacity speaking. Nation-states are weakening in decision-making on the global agenda with cities taking on an increasingly important role and so their administration is becoming increasingly empowered as interlocutors in the international arena.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Smart City Sweden had received 1,700 visitors from fifty-five countries. Since its launch to this date, twenty pre-feasibility studies have been carried out in countries around the world to replicate the Swedish sustainability model. Within the Global Objectives of the United Nations, it is foreseen that all cities must implement sustainable solutions in their cities. This objective opens a whole field of work for Smart City Sweden, which makes the paradiplomacy developed by its cities more than necessary. For the cities of the world that want to work with Smart City Sweden it is required to also

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[39] R. Putman, *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games*, International Organization, vol. 42, no. 3, 1988, pp 427–460; C. Brow, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice.* Polity Press, Cambridge and Oxford, 2002.

develop a city diplomacy that allows them to create a network of sustainable cities and everything under the leadership of the cities.

Now, although it seems that the city of Stockholm through Smart City Sweden has developed a city diplomacy or its own paradiplomacy we verify that this is not the case as both the conception of the project itself as well as its promotion and management of external image are made through Swedish embassies abroad. If a representative of a city wishes to visit or learn how Smart City Sweden is managed the first point where you can find information is at the Swedish embassy accredited in your country. The Swedish embassy organizes and coordinates the visit to Stockholm or any of the other cities that are part of the Smart City Sweden project.

It is true that the city of Stockholm has all the capabilities to be able to implement a paradiplomacy without the need for its state diplomacy, but it does not do so because it is part of Sweden's national digital agenda[40] because local and central governments have fostered a development model based on joint work, applying the triple helix innovation model. On the other hand, it is evident that there is coherence and alignment in terms of foreign action, which on the other hand allows us to verify that cities can develop foreign action within foreign action at the state level. Their interrelation with other cities is a case of city diplomacy, however, unlike other experiences, Swedish cities have not gone alone to seek relationships with other cities. Although they have the economic capacity and political strength to develop their own direct relations with other cities in the world with which relations have been developed within the framework of Swedish foreign policy. That is, in full coordination with the foreign policy guidelines of the central government.

The projects developed within the framework of cooperation between EU-LAC represent a platform on which cooperation can be deepened within the areas linked to the Smart City sectors and even Smart City Sweden itself can use the networks created to build new cooperation mechanisms at the bi-regional level and be an instrument that allows them to achieve the SDGs and deepen the EU-CELAC strategic association.

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[40] J. R. Gil-García, T. A. Pardo, and T. Nam, *Smarter as the New Urban Agenda. A Comprehensive View of the 21st Century City.* Springer, Switzerland, 2016, p. 11.

Whether it is called paradiplomacy or "city diplomacy" the truth is that city governments will play a very important role in the development of countries. The development of the level of cities innovation will make the difference between one population and another. City diplomacy plays an important role in the design and implementation of cities' foreign action. Just as they did in Antiquity and in the Medieval era, in the digital age cities have returned as actors on the international system.

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