

Forum of Federations

700-325 Dalhousie Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7G2 Canada
Tel.: (613) 244-3360 Fax: (613) 244-3372
Email: forum@forumfed.org

Forum des fédérations

700-325, rue Dalhousie
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 7G2 Canada
Tél.: (613) 244-3360 Téléc.: (613) 244-3372
Courrier électronique : forum@forumfed.org

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**Exploring the global dimensions of paradiplomacy
Functional and normative dynamics in the global spreading of
subnational involvement in international affairs**

Noé Cornago
University of the Basque Country
dmpcoprn@ehu.es

1. Introduction

This paper offers a preliminary exploration of subnational paradiplomacy from a global perspective. Although this topic has been widely studied during the last years, the existing specialized literature has generally suffered of a certain western bias, due to its recurrent and almost exclusive attention to North American, Australian, or European expressions of this reality (cfr. Dehousse, 1991, Michelman & Soldatos, 1990, Hocking, 1993b, Amin & Thrift, 1994, Keating & Loughlin, 1997, Aldecoa & Keating, 1999). Nevertheless, during the last decade, an increasing amount of literature has established that subnational involvement in foreign affairs is far from being an exclusive domain of western OECD countries (cfr. Melvin, 1994, Goodman & Segal, 1995, Nugent & Asiwaju, 1996, Thant, Tang, Kakazu, 1994, Chen & Kwang, 1997). Consequently, the study of paradiplomacy, as that of diplomacy, should be approached increasingly from a global perspective. In fact, as we hope to show through these pages, even a brief or impressionist review of the existing experiences around the world, will lead us to recognize that subnational involvement in international affairs, is presently a truly generalized ingredient in the daily cooking of the new global political economy (cfr. Sadler, 1992).

But before we start our paradiplomatic *tour du monde* we would like to clarify some aspects regarding our conceptual approach. For instance, in the context of this paper, paradiplomacy can be defined as subnational governmental involvement in international relations, through the establishment of formal and informal permanent or *ad hoc* contacts, with foreign public or private entities, with the aim to promote socioeconomic or political issues, as well as any other foreign dimension of their own constitutional competences. Although quite contested, the concept of paradiplomacy does not preclude the existence of other forms of subnational participation in foreign policy process, more directly subordinated to central governments priorities and objectives, nor the increasing role of subnational governments in multilayered structures for global or regional governance (cfr. Hocking, 1993a). It simply tries to underline, heuristically, the self-assertive as well as the hierarchical dimensions existing behind the growing involvement of constituent units in international affairs.

Furthermore, in order to obtain a more accurate perspective on the existing interplay between subnational mobilization across the world and new international regionalism, instead of the classic model of successive country reports, we have adopted a regional approach. This procedure will lead us to underline that, in spite of global functional dynamics as well of existing constitutional differences among sovereign states, subnational involvement in foreign affairs seems to present some particular profiles, depending on the wider context posed by new regionalism (Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, 1999). This question has been widely studied in the North American and European cases. Both the European Union, and the North American Free Trade Agreement have had important implications at the subnational level, acting as new structures of opportunity, and fostering subnational governments' mobilization on domestic as well as on foreign affairs (Kresl, 1994, Scott, 1999, Clarke, 1999). Certainly, the European Union established in general terms a much more favourable political and institutional context for regional governments (Jones & Keating, 1995), but even the more negative effects of the new North American economic integration seems to have boosted subnational mobilization in the United States, Mexico and Canada (Conklin, 1997). Taking all this into account, in the next pages we will briefly explore the most prominent features of subnational paradiplomacy across the world, in the wider context of new regionalism. In doing so we will identify successively four different regional contexts: Post-soviet space, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa. After this brief review, the paper will end with some preliminary conclusions about the global dimensions of paradiplomacy.

2. Paradiplomacy in the Post-Soviet space

After the Soviet collapse in december 1991, the administrative boundaries of numerous Russian republics and regions became international frontiers of the new Russian Federation. Demarcating and controlling the new limits was a very difficult task for the central government and Moscow encouraged its new border regions to make their own arrangements with their neighbours. Consequently, the new federation assigned a special role to cross-border and inter-regional subnational cooperation (Melvin, 1995:17). In accordance with the new constitution, the major elements of foreign and security policies remain a federal responsibility, but in order to assure its new legitimacy Russian foreign policy must take into account regional interests in a way that Soviet foreign policy never did (Nicholson, 1999: 63). The central government cannot reach agreements with neighbouring states, nor subscribe or modify international treaties without consulting the relevant regions. Thus, during the last decade the russian republics and regions signed hundreds of agreements on trade, technical, or socioeconomic issues with foreign subnational governments from all around the world (Sergounin, 1999).

The attitude of the central government towards the growing paradiplomatic activities during the last decade has been in general terms positive. In January 1999, president Yeltsin signed the first law laying out the framework for the regions' paradiplomacy. The legislation allows the regions to maintain international relations and to sign certain international agreements on the basis of their own competencies under the Russian constitution and federal laws. The regions can also establish missions abroad as well as receiving official delegations from equivalent regions of foreign states (Nicholson, 1999: 64). Through the development of a certain tolerance towards foreign action by the subnational governments the Russian Federation has tried to reduce ethnic tensions and nationalists demands. This is an idea that the Soviet Union itself had tried out in the past (Hauslohner, 1981). But paradiplomacy in the post-soviet space is not only the result of Moscow's political design. The interplay between global political economy and devolution of power in Russia boosted the regions' foreign relations and made them real international actors (Melvin, 1995).

Apart from the extreme case of Chechnya, only rarely have regions taken foreign policy positions that differ from those of the federal state. Among the exceptions we can mention that in 1998 representatives from the republics of Bashkortostan, Dagestan, Yakutia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Khakassia and Chuvashia attended a conference in Istanbul which recognized the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, with the consequent irritation of Moscow. But subnational governments can also influence Russian foreign policy more silently. During the recent balcanic wars Moscow was

constrained by the Muslim dominated Tatarstan and Bashkortostan republics, from adopting an overly pro-serbian stance(Nicholson, 1999: 63). More worrying is the increasing influence of regional leaders over local military units. The governors of Samara, Krasnoyarsk, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan are increasingly using the armed forces to gain popularity or political advantage. Moreover, regions can establish some obstacles to the fulfilment of federal government policy priorities. Furthermore, regional opposition has complicated during the last years the optimal compliance of the Chemical Weapons Convention which Russia ratified in 1997 (Nicholson, 1999: 67), as well as nuclear non-proliferation issues (Nunn & Stulberg, 2000: 55).

Paradiplomacy is not very developed among the Caucasus regions due to the serious conflicts that devastate the area. The Chechnyan war, and the conflicts of Ingushetia, North Ossetia, and Dagestan, together with the Abkhazia conflict in Georgia, and Nagorno Karabaj in Azerbaijan, prevent the deployment of the standard forms of subnational foreign action that are fastly growing among other russian regions.

But the rise of regional power in Russia does not mean necessarily that the federation faces disintegration. Frequently, the subnational foreign action takes place in a climate of much less controversial pragmatism. For instance, in the Russian North-West, the good results of the inter-regional cooperation, between the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, and the Komi and Karelia republics with the finnish border regions, have received the formal recognition of both Russian Federation and Finland after the signing of a special bilateral agreement (Sergounin, 1999). Nevertheless, due to the very different standards of living on the two sides of the border, it is very important not to underestimate the potential social impact of this experience (Passi, 2000: 674). Following this model, in may 1996 the governors from the border regions from Estonia, Lithuania and Russia created a Cooperation Council with the aim of promoting socioeconomic and political transborder relations (Kempe & Van Meurs, 1999: 65). These initiatives have also the institutional and economic support from the European Union programmes designed to promote cross-border co-operation, such as Tacis or Interreg (Nicholson, 1999: 60).

More complex is the case of Kaliningrad at the Baltic Sea, the only Russian region isolated from the federation. Its geographic situation, surrounded by Belarus, Poland and Lithuania, place its future within the russian perspectives of both the European Union and NATO enlargements. Such a strategic position ensures that Kaliningrad will remain a sensitive issue in Russian domestic and foreign affairs (Nicholson, 1999: 62). The NATO issue is also present in the case of the foreign action of the Pskov *oblast*,

which maintains important border disputes with Estonia and Latvia complicating the Russian bilateral relations with the Baltic states (Nunn & Stulberg, 2000: 55).

Of special interest are the cases of Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Sverdlovsk and Yakutia. All four regions are among the richest of the Russian Federation and have similar nationalist aspirations. An appendix to the Russian Federation Treaty recognized the special autonomy of Bashkortostan and permitted this republic to have independent foreign economic relations. The bilateral agreement signed in 1994 between the Moscow authorities and Tatarstan, even though it was clouded with ambiguities, recognized the right of Tatarstan, which has no international borders, to develop its own international relations in certain fields, in particular in the area of foreign trade. But previously the 1992 Tatarstan constitution established that Tatarstan is a sovereign state and a subject of international law. Nevertheless, it seems nowadays that Tatarstan elites are more interested in the symbolic dimensions of its international projection than in the substantial ones (cfr. Khakimov, 1996). However, both Tatarstan and Bashkortostan republics have even acquired special rights to establish their own consulates abroad as well as official representation in international organizations (Nunn & Stulberg, 2000). In the Sverdlovsk case, the 1996 bilateral treaty signed with Russia contains also special dispositions on foreign economic relations (Easter, 1997: 630).

The Shaka Republic, or Yakutia, deserves special attention because the regional government has responded to the post-soviet opportunities with a particularly ambitious paradiplomacy. The government of the republic has developed a complex system of foreign relations with a clear delimitation of geographical areas and priorities. According to some observers, the first involves a sense of responsibility in building an arctic space of cooperation with Alaska, Greenland, Iceland and the Scandinavian countries. Another area of interest seems to be Asia-Pacific, and the promotion of trade and investment from China, Japan or Korea. Finally, and due to its cultural ascent, Yakutia's paradiplomacy has a very special place for Turkey (Mandeslatm Balzer & Vinokurova, 1996:112).

The Eastern republics of Tchita, Amur, and the coastal regions of Primorski, Khavarovski, and Sakhalin, are also particularly active in the international domain. The governors of this area created in 1990 the Association of the Far East and Za-Baikal Regional Economic Cooperation aiming towards the coordination of economic and social development and adopting a unified voice towards Moscow. It is certainly a weak institution due to the existing rivalry among the member regions but during the last decade has served to promote economic interregional cooperation between

russian, japanese, and chinese regions (Harada, 1997: 28-30). The chinese provinces of Nei Mongool, Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang, are specially active in this terrain, as is clearly shown by the fastly increasing amount of regional trade since the early nineties (Godron, 1996). However, seeing the growing crossborder migration, as well as the increase of corruption and organized crime in the area during the last years, the chinese and russian subnational governments are becoming much more interested in political dialogue and security affairs than in trade issues.

Sakhalin *oblast* is a clear example of subnational foreign action propelled by socioeconomic distress. The collapse of the Soviet Union left this island, situated at the north of Japan, isolated and submerged in a deep crisis. During the last decade, and in absence of the important soviet state subsidies, Sakhalin has experienced substantial decline. Nevertheless, during the same period intensive explorations of the island's offshore resulted in the discovery of important oil and gas fields. The local government saw the new oil production as the only way to escape from economic recession, but the widening of distrust among the island's economic and political elites towards the central government in Moscow drove the local authorities to increase their efforts in order to maximize its income from the new oil and gas projects. For that reason, Sakhalin's government is seeking nowadays to establish direct international contacts with transnational corporations and foreign governments. Furthermore, and in order to promote interregional co-operation, Sakhalin has signed agreements with Alaska and the japanese Hokkaido prefecture (Bradshaw, 1998: 167). The agreement between Sakhalin and Hokkaido is specially important due to the serious territorial dispute between Rusia and Japan because of the Kuriles islands, currently administered by Sakhalin (Zinberg, 1996). While this agreement was welcomed by the Russian government it bothered the Primorskii authorities, due to the fact that this region demands the administrative subordination of the Kurile islands to its own jurisdiction (Medvedev, 1998: 96). In fact, and in contrast with Sakhalin's, Primorski and Khavarovski paradiplomacy seems to be more aggressive, entering frequently in conflict with Moscow on different topics related with the bilateral relations between Russia and China or Japan, as they strongly oppose making any concession to Japan on the Kuriles dispute, or to China on border and migration issues (Harada, 1997: 29).

In sum, intergovernmental relations between Moscow and the regions have changed radically since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the context of generalized socioeconomic distress, resentment over economic and political influence disparities is particularly strong in some regions, encouraging among local economic and political

elites increasing demands for more resources, autonomy and influence on domestic as well as on foreign affairs. Paradiplomacy is not very developed among the Caucasus regions due to the serious conflicts that devastate the zone, but the growing subnational governments' involvement in international relations is a general trend through the post-soviet space. Moreover, the rise of regional power does not mean necessarily disintegration. In general terms, the subnational foreign action in the post-soviet context takes place in a climate of intergovernmental understanding and pragmatism. However, due to the forthcoming federal reforms announced by Putin, now it is difficult to foreseen the future of Russian subnational internationalism.

3. Paradiplomacy in Asia-Pacific

For the analysis of subnational involvement in foreign affairs, the immense Asia-Pacific region is particularly interesting. Although the Forum APEC has not provided any formal or institutional support for subnational mobilization, the economic liberalization process that characterized the zone during the last decades, has had very important implications on local and regional economies, fostering subnational governments' involvement in foreign economic affairs. Certainly, this process has adopted very different profiles, depending on the different political contexts, but it can be said in general terms, that during the last decade, subnational paradiplomacy has emerged, as one of the driving forces of the new Asia-Pacific regionalism.

For instance, since the beginning of the Chinese transition to capitalism, through the establishment of Special Economic Zones in the early eighties, Beijing has been promoting directly or indirectly the international projection of the chinese provinces. In fact, economic reforms seem to have led to a relative increase in interdependence between the provinces and the outside world and a surprisising decrease in interprovincial interdependence (Segal, 1994:16). Sometimes, it was the central government which pushed the regions to the transnational flows of the global political economy. But in other cases it was the regional governments under their own steam who decided to promote international contacts for very diverse socioeconomic or political motives. Moreover, the important economic reforms implemented during the last decades have significantly increased inter-regional competition in domestic as well as in foreign security and economic affairs (cfr. Goodman & Segal, 1995). In addition, after the Tiananmen crisis the chinese government adopted a new diplomatic strategy -*zhoubian* diplomacy- seeking to elude its international isolation through the deployment of new objectives and policy instruments. In the framework of this new chinese international strategy subnational involvement in foreign affairs was indeed welcomed by Beijing (Quansheng, 1992, Hsiung, 1995).

Due to these overlapping dynamics, during the last decade practically all the Chinese provinces have developed very important transnational ties. This process has had important implications on Chinese political system, in terms of relocation of authority and intergovernmental competence, but in general terms the central government has showed a great interest in the internationalization of the vast majority of its provinces, not only through market integration, or the establishment of informal relations across the border, but also by authorizing its governors to sign international agreements and to receive and send international missions all over the world (Zheng, 1994, Segal, 1994).

Chinese paradiplomacy begun in the eighties at the coastal provinces of Tianjin, Shandong, Shanghai, Hainan, and specially Fujian and Guangdong, as a result of the necessary subnational political management of the growing *de facto* economic integration with Hong Kong and Taiwan and Japan, in the framework of their experimental transition to capitalism (Quansheng, 1992, Ash & Kueh, 1993). Due its extraordinary growth rate and magnitude, the case of Guangdong has a special relevance. During the last decade this powerful province have reduced considerably its dependence from Beijing, gaining alternatively greater political influence and autonomy on domestic politics and foreign affairs (Jones, King, and Klein, 1993). But, alternatively, their growing market and social integration with Hong Kong, through the so called Pearl River Delta may well have been a vital precondition to China's successful take over of Hong Kong (Hayter & Sheng Han, 1998, p. 14). More recently, North-eastern Chinese provinces are also becoming increasingly connected with transnational flows through the so called Yellow Sea Rimland, which also includes some Southern Korean regions as well as Japanese prefectures (Rimmer, 1994: 1739)

Nevertheless, the increasing economic disparities between some coastal provinces and the more depressed northern, inland, and western provinces led some regional governments to criticize Beijing's priorities considering the convenience of developing their own foreign strategy (Yang, 1991, Tzeng, 1991). This generalized trend of subnational mobilization among the poorest regions is causing serious concern to Beijing. In fact, regional development imbalance has emerged as one of the most disturbing factors affecting contemporary China (cfr. Zhao & Tong, 2000). In this competitive context, the northern regions of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang, have developed close relations with the Russian Far Eastern regions, as we saw in our brief analysis of paradiplomacy in the post-soviet space (cfr. Godron, 1996, Harada, 1997). The province of Jilin has also a particular leadership in the Tumen River Co-operation project, in which along with Jilin and Nei Mongool, regions from North Korea also

take part (Cotton, 1996). This initiative has been supported initially by the United Nations Development Programme/UNDP, but presently it seems to be paralyzed (Rimmer, 1994:1750, Jordan & Khanna, 1995: 448).

More controversial are the efforts of the western province of Xinjiang to strengthen their links with the neighbouring republics of Central Asia and Pakistan, in the context of the so called Great Islamic Circle (Christoffersen, 1993). Due to its important raw material resources, and its strategic situation, Xinjiang play a key role as supplier for the coastal provinces. Certainly, this initiative was not motivated only by economic factors, but the violent repression in 1997 of any hint of rebellion in this immense province of muslim majority, or Beijings´ decision to close the Karakorum highway between 1993 and 1995, clearly stresses the political limits of this project. However, it is interesting to recall that during the eighties, Xinjiang was able to sign protocols of cooperation with the then Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgystan, and Turkmenistan. Agreements which, despite dealing with economic and technical issues, had a great symbolic value of assertion of identity for their promoters in Xinjiang, facing the Han chinese majority (Christoffersen, 1993).

In contrast, during the last decade Beijing has been promoting, for more political than economic purposes, the cross-border contacts between Yunnan and the North of Burma, or Guangxi and Vietnam. For some, it is a strategic attempt by China to extend its sphere of influence through discrete means, but for others it means a true attempt to normalize relations with its neighbouring countries (cfr. Maung, 1994, Womack, 1994). But in spite of this example of central government surveillance of subnational foreign action, the chinese provinces´ involvement in international affairs has been developed generally with significant autonomy.

Nonetheless, dealing with chinese provinces´ paradiplomacy it is important to note that this wide web of international agreements presently existing between the provinces and other subnational governments from all over the world, would have been impossible without the close collaboration from the Australian states, Canadian provinces, North American states, and more recently, European regions. In the Australian and Canadian cases, geographical conditions have indeed determined a certain kind of triangular paradiplomacy. As a result of this dynamic during the last two decades many bilateral agreements have been signed between chinese provinces and canadian or australian counterparts (cfr. Mac Leang & Nossal, 1994). In addition it is interesting to note that the growing paradiplomatic activity in Eastern Asia has stimulated the international activities of japanese prefectures such as Hokkaido, Nigata, Akita and Toyama (Zinberg, 1996).

The Australian case deserves also particular attention. Due to its geographic situation and the competitive nature of its political system, the Australian states were among the first subnational governments that tried to add a foreign economic dimension to their policy priorities. This caused in the past important intergovernmental tensions, as well as serious constitutional conflicts about the federal powers and the limits of the states' involvement in international affairs (Ravenhill, 1990, Harris, 1993). However, during the last years subnational foreign action seems to have been normalized, and the usual controversies on this issue have significantly decreased. According to Ravenhill, the move towards more co-operative relations since the late eighties can be explained as the result of two factors. First, the central government wished to increase its legitimacy avoiding the political costs of intergovernmental conflicts. But, in addition, the federal government has showed increasing awareness about the necessity of collaborating with the states in order to assure a more fluent political process on domestic as well as on foreign affairs (Ravenhill, 1999: 142-144). Consequently, during the last years different measures have been adopted with the aim to facilitate optimal intergovernmental relations on foreign affairs. Nonetheless, as the Australian central government is still constitutionally able to use international treaties to override states' competences, external relations will remain a sensitive issue for Australian federal system (Ravenhill, 1999: 151).

In spite of political and constitutional controversies the fact is that, with the exception of Tasmania, all the Australian states have established some overseas representation, and all of them send and receive regularly international missions on the more diverse issues. Particularly active is Western Australia, which in 1997 maintained, along with its London representation, no less than thirteen Asian offices. The focus on Asia is also clear in the cases of New South Wales, Northern Territory, and South Australia. More diversified are the overseas representation of Queensland and Victoria, which in addition to their Asian offices, have opened delegations in Los Angeles and Frankfurt respectively (Ravenhill, 1999: 137).

Subnational foreign action has adopted a quite different form in Southeast Asia. Instead of overseas representation and missions around the world, the internationalization of Indonesian, Malaysian, Thailand, or Philippine's regional governments has been largely the result of a variety of informal economic cooperation schemes. Through the configuration of the so called Triangles of Growth, subnational governments have seen fostered its political power and economic success, even if they have now to confront the new problems associated with increasing social turmoil (Parsonage, 1992, Thant, Tang, Kakazu, 1994, Chen & Kwang, 1997). The oldest, and

more widely discussed is the Growth Triangle that links Singapore, Malaysia's Johor province and Indonesia's Riau Islands. The most dynamic participant in this experience is Singapore, due to its prominent economic power as well as its pressing necessity of abundant labour and land availability. The existing disparities between the regions involved have resulted in a new division of labour inside the same Triangle with noticeable economic success. Moreover, following Jordan and Khanna, it is interesting to note that the Malaysian central government has been less enthusiastic than the Indonesian about this experience because it was a initiative from the own Johor state government (Milne, 1993, Jordan and Khanna, 1995:453).

Another example that deserves mention is the cooperation efforts between North Sumatra and Aceh in Indonesia, Malaysia's northern states of Kedah, Perak, Penang, and Perlis, and Thailand's southern provinces of Satun, Songkhla, Yala, Narathiwath and Pattani. The promoters of the idea were the three central governments involved, which decided in 1994 to set up this cross-border initiative following the recommendations of an Asian Development Bank report about the economic potential of the area (Jordan and Khanna, 1995:455). More tedious seems to be the progress of the East Asia Growth Area, which encompasses Mindanao in the southern Philippines, Manado in Indonesia, and the eastern Malaysian region of Sandakan (Khanna, 1995: 268).

However, as Pomfret has suggested, although the concept of Growth Triangle caught the public imagination in Asia during the last decade, without another Singapore it will be very difficult to repeat the impressive success of the original one (Pomfret, 1998:211). These transnational economic experiments have also important social implications, in form of increasing income inequalities, territorial imbalances, and ecological distress, but over time they also may become a catalyst for greater democratization and political change (Lele & Tettey, 1996).

In sharp contrast with the aforementioned, Indian strong centralized political system does not seem to promote subnational paradiplomacy. Indian constitution established a federal form of government but the experience shows that when different parties are ruling the central and state government, federalism remains in suspense (Tummala, 1996). In addition, India's failure to deal with its ethnic and territorial problems has indeed important repercussions on its foreign policy. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the very existence of ethnic ties across borders, as in the case of Kashmir, Punjab or Assam, could be turned into different forms of cross-border cooperation which would favour economic development and regional stability. But the hostility between India and Pakistan prevents any genuine attempt in this direction (Muni, 1993, Chaudurhi, 1993). However, some observers have considered that the

analyses of regionalism in India have been too much concentrated in secessionist struggles, neglecting other important dimensions of Indian regionalism. For instance, during the last years, and due to the considerable economic development of southern states, a certain economic north-south cleavage seems to emerge. The triangle formed by Karnataka, Andhra-Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra is becoming increasingly dynamic and influential (Vaugier-Chatterjee, 1999: 40).

4. Paradiplomacy in Latin-America

Disputes over borders as well as popular nationalism and political authoritarianism, have prevented during the past decades the emergence of powerful regional governments in Latin America. However, the extension of democracy, as well as the renewed efforts to impulse regional economic integration under original schemes such as Mercosur, or the new Andean Community, have favoured decentralization processes across the subcontinent. In this changing context, and learning from the failures of the past, Latin American governments are considering, since the early nineties, subnational regionalism as a valuable instrument for the promotion of regional integration (González Posse, 1990, Tokatlian and Barrera, 1991). Simultaneously, various regional governments started to experiment with different modes of paradiplomatic activity, as a tool for economic development and regional cooperation. During the last decade, initiatives of crossborder cooperation have been multiplied, spreading out across the subcontinent (Bolognesi-Drosdoff, 1990, Herzog, 1992). This process is also congruent with the territorial restructuring of Latin American economies imposed by the changing conditions of the global political economy (Laurelli & Lindemboim, 1990, Bosier, 1991, Bosier, 1992).

Moreover, the participation of the regions in the formulation of foreign policy in Latin American countries is a process which is constantly developing, in tune with the claims for democratization in the framework of new regional integration schemes (Bernal Meza, 1990). In regimes with authoritarian characteristics, or in those countries where the regulatory capacity or sovereign control over territory has been eroded due to drug dealers or guerilla warfare, the autonomous regions have seen that their capacity to act abroad is restricted. Alternatively, in states which enjoyed certain political and institutional stability, this regional autonomy has been strengthened, giving a new profile to interamerican relations (Bernal Meza, 1990, Valenciano, 1995).

This process is particularly clear in Argentina and Brazil due both to their strong federal systems and the growing subnational implications of Mercosur.

In Argentina, the central government has adopted in 1992 new legal and administrative measures, in order to maintain the growing internationalization of its provincial governments under certain control (Colacrai de Trevisan & Zubelzú de Bacigalupo, 1998: 323). This is congruent with the general trend towards decentralization and sharp economic reforms which characterized this country during the last decade (Remmer & Wibbels, 2000). But, in addition, subnational involvement in foreign affairs is widely recognized in the constitutional charter of provinces such as La Rioja, Catamarca, Formosa, Jujuy, Córdoba, Tierra del Fuego, La Pampa, Salta, San Luis, or Rio Negro among others. Moreover, during the last years subnational foreign action only rarely has produced intergovernmental conflicts. The most active province is Cordoba, which has already established overseas representation in New York, Madrid, Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo, and Saint Petersburg. This province has also extended numerous international agreements with european and russian regions, but presently his prioritary area is Mercosur. Also particularly active in foreign economic affairs is the Mendoza province. In contrast with the more conventional cases of Cordoba and Mendoza, we should also mention the case of Rio Negro. This depressed province situated in Patagonia, has deployed diverse missions abroad, in order to promote foreign investment as well as inmigration towards its own underpopulated territory (Colacrai de Trevisan & Zubelzú de Bacigalupo, 1998: 326).

Similar patterns has followed the case of Brazil. Since the early nineties different brazilian regions have been involved in numerous cross-border integration projects. For instance, the one that links the Bolivian departments of Pando y Beni with the states of Mato Grosso, Acre y Rondonia, or the various exisiting between the northeastern states of Acre, Amazonas, Roraima with their corresponding Peruvian, Colombian or Venezolan subnational counterparts (cfr. Bolognessi-Drosdoff, 1990, Tokatlian & Barrera, 1991). Brazilian governors, particularly those from the coastal states of Bahia, Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, are also accustomed to receiving international missions from european regions.

But during the last years, and due to the growing economic integration of Argentina and Brasil, the most important case of inter-regional cooperation in Latin America is by far the so called Crecenea-Codesul. Crecenea is the Northeastern Argentine Regional Comission of Foreign Trade, and includes the provinces of Chaco, Corrientes, Entre Ríos, Formosa, Misiones and Santa Fé. It was created in 1984 in order to promote economic development and foreign trade, but in 1990 a Federal Pact, signed between the central government and the corresponding provinces, recognized openly its

international relevance in the promotion of foreign trade as well as its role in the fulfillment of Mercosur objectives. Codesul is the Council for the Economic Development of the Southern Brazil, which is formed by Mato Grosso do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catarina. The Crecenea-Codesul cooperation scheme has achieved an appreciable economic success, and has certainly empowered the political influence of its participants (cfr. Crecenea-Codesul, 1998). Similar initiatives are being also essayed, in more discreet forms, by other regional governments in the framework of the new Andean Community (Oliveros, 1995). However, as Teubal has pointed analyzing Mercosur, greater economic integration does not necessarily mean increasing social welfare (Teubal, 1997: 69).

Due to its geographical conditions as well as to its participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement, the case of Mexico shall be distinguished from the rest of Latin American cases. The combining effects of structural adjustment and regional trade liberalization have aggravated regional inequalities, posing serious challenges on Mexican political stability (Hiernaux, 1994, Polese & Perez Mendoza, 1995, Conklin, 1997, Morales, 1999). The northern states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nueva León and Tamaulipas, have been intensively integrated into the southern United States economy, with the simultaneous effects of economic productivity and social turmoil. In addition, the northern frontier has been increasingly militarized, including extensive use of air and electronic interdiction devices, due to the growing smuggling, illegal migration, and various forms of cross-border organized crime (Heyman, 1999).

In spite of this difficult context, subnational governments from the two sides of the border have been involved in a dense network of cross-border cooperation contacts. Moreover, governors maintain periodical meetings in order to strengthen inter-regional cooperation on socioeconomic, technical or ecological issues. However, it has been pointed out that the administration of these problems has resulted frequently in relations of *clientelism* between governments on both sides of the border. More recently, the concerns about the repercussions which the recent free trade agreements might have on the environment and security affairs, have led to a renewed interest by the federal authorities in the growing subnational relations across the border (Thorup, 1993).

But in addition, as is known, the North American Free Trade Agreement has aggravated the feeling of social and territorial alienation among the southern states, in general, and particularly in the state of Chiapas (Gutierrez, 1994, Zermeño, 1995, Saxe Fernandez, 1996). In sum, as Morales has pointed, all seems to suggest that the complex management of growing regional imbalances will need in the next future

more than subnational paradiplomatic efforts. United States and Mexico must recognize the need to address the negative effects of the NAFTA, establishing institutional as well as financial mechanisms able to facing these serious territorial and social disparities (cfr. Morales, 1999: 992). Otherwise, Mexican central government will finally have to confront the same problems in terms of what Rochlin has called critically post-national security (Rochlin, 1995).

5. Paradiplomacy in Africa

Although the existing socioeconomic and political conditions of the vast majority of African states makes the involvement of subnational governments in international affairs a difficult task, during the last years some developments have been registered in this field. This trend is particularly clear in the case of South Africa, but in the near future it could be considerably important in other federal countries such as Nigeria or Ethiopia. The South African transition to democracy has opened new possibilities for both international and subnational regionalism. Departing from the existing *de facto* integration of some neighbouring economies, the new political context has impelled new regional cooperation schemes, such as the renewed Southern African Development Community, which posed increasing opportunities for subnational mobilization. For instance, the South African provinces of Gauteng and Mpumalanga are presently involved in the so called Maputo Corridor, an important project which includes massive investment in transport infrastructures in order to strengthen the Johannesburg-Maputo axis (Blanc, 1997). Even more ambitious is the so called Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which will provide Gauteng in the future with important water resources (Cling, 1997: 128).

Moreover, in contrast with the analyses which merely highlight the institutional weakness of the African states (cfr. Jackson, 1990), some authors emphasize the importance which different popular strategies of survival and political organization have achieved, in a context of deep economic and social crisis, through different forms of transborder activity and informal economy (Bayart, Mbembe and Toulabor, 1992, Constantin, 1994). As Bach has pointed out, the intensity of these transnational contacts is directly related to the range of opportunities generated by the diverse socioeconomic and institutional conditions of boundary lines (Bach, 1997: 101). In some areas, as Rwanda and Burundi, or Sierra Leone and Liberia, the frontier dynamic seems to be

stronger than the central governments. In others, as Southern Sudan, Angola, or the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others, where the concept of a national territory is in serious dispute, the transborder flows are simply ignored by central governments. But, in other more stable countries as Uganda, Benin, Togo, Senegal, Gambia, Niger, Ghana, and Nigeria, transnational flows are a vital component of central governments' policy orientations (Bach, 1997: 106).

Certainly, as the prosperity of these informal flows depends on their capacity to evade state control or negotiate support from its civil servants, transnational regionalism acts frequently as a powerful incentive to the deligitimization of state agencies and subnational governments, challenging the territorialized model of the state introduced by the colonial period (cfr. Bach, 1997:108-110). However, the recognition of this situation, and its possible institutional reconversion is beginning to be included in the design of national policies and international cooperation programmes. Although the fulfilment of new decentralization efforts in Africa shall be subordinate to the general objectives of state building and democratization, it has been suggested that starting off from the potential of some bordering regions it will be possible to give a new impetus to preventive diplomacy and economic development in Africa. Nigeria, for instance, has promoted during the last years diverse experiences of integration through cross-border cooperation (Asiwaju, 1994a) Moreover, a new approach to cross-border relations can also improve ethnic conflict management, and contribute to the better administration of common ecological resources (Asiwaju, 1994b, Nugent & Asiwaju, 1996).

From a very different perspective, other interesting case of paradiplomacy among African states, is the case of the Republic of Sahara. Its paradiplomatic character is not the result of its disputed sovereignty. As is known, the of the Arab Democratic Republic of Sahara maintains fully recognized diplomatic relations with an important number of sovereign states. The paradiplomatic approach emerged instead as a result of the growing difficulties that the Republic of Sahara found when deploying its conventional diplomatic efforts, in order to obtain the international support of Spain. Due to its important political and economic ties with Morocco, the spanish government preferred to maintain formally a neutral stance about the conflict in the Sahara. In fact, Madrid seems to be afraid that the Sahara case may have implications on its own dispute with Morocco, about the spanish ruled territories of Ceuta and Melilla. As a result, the Republic of Sahara has not been formally recognized by its ancient colonial ruler, Spain, which has even refused to this date to receive officially any Sahara's representant with the corresponding diplomatic formalities. However, this lack of support from the Spanish government to the Arab Democratic Republic of

Sahara, contrasts with the wide popular support and solidarity that the Polisario Front receives from some regions in Spain. Taking all this into account, the Republic of Sahara has finally adopted a sort of paradiplomatic approach facing Spain, having extended delegations, not only in Madrid, but also in the Basque Country, Catalunya, Andalucia, or the Canary Islands, among others, and intensified its international contacts at the subnational level.

6. Conclusions

Our exploration of subnational paradiplomacy across the world, seems to suggest that the growing subnational involvement in foreign affairs is certainly a truly global phenomenon. Although much more empirical evidence is needed, our brief review has shown that besides the widely studied North American and European cases, subnational paradiplomacy is gaining importance all over the world. Certainly, African experiences in this field remain to date exceptional or merely anecdotic, but in general terms, it is interesting to note that, even in the most disparate contexts, subnational governments' mobilization has acquired increasingly a foreign dimension, which deserves more detailed attention. Consequently, it could reasonably be established that the growing subnational involvement in foreign affairs is a structural feature of the global political system. In some cases, as those of the Russian regions and Chinese provinces, the phenomenon shows a very clear profile, in which functional and normative motives at the subnational level, are more or less accurately combined with some kind of superior federal foreign policy design. In others, as in the case of Southeastern Triangles of Growth, or the Mexico-United States frontier, the dynamic towards internationalization seems to be exclusively economic in spite of the increasing political implications and social turmoil. Moreover, it is interesting to note that in the wider context of new Latin American regionalism, where the growing subnational involvement in international affairs seems to follow a more similar path to that of the European Union and, more recently, East European regions.

The results of our preliminary exploration do not preclude the existence of other forms of subnational participation in foreign policy process, more directly subordinated to central governments' priorities and objectives, nor the increasing role of subnational governments in multilayered structures for global governance, such as

the World Trade Organization or the World Bank. But before to finish we would like to express our conviction that between subnational and international regionalism existed a certain kind of structural link. This structural link imposes the need to create new institutions, and new public modes of attribution of responsibility and codecision. In fact, in the present contemporary conditions established by the global political economy, governments, no matter their level, have to respond to global problems, which go far beyond the conventional imaginary in which domestic as well as foreign policies, until very recently, were formulated.

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