Review of the Foundations of Local Public Decentralised Cooperation

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KEY WORDS

Political dimension of decentralised cooperation | Ethical and political foundations| The social, cultural, economic and institutional dimension of decentralised cooperation and its foundations |

Why are local governments involved in cooperation for development? Why do we need to structure a public policy for cooperation, in the framework of a strategic policy for international relations or for strengthening our presence abroad? This article attempts to present some possible answers to these questions and to contribute to the construction of solid arguments to justify the political dimension which we think is necessary in decentralised cooperation.

The current world economic and financial crisis is highlighting the need to go beyond motivations for development cooperation that are purely based on solidarity; important though this is, it is not sufficient. This approach has been the basis for the cooperation policies of most local governments in the northern hemisphere. At this moment consideration of how and why we need a public policy for development cooperation is indispensable to demonstrate its strategic nature and the common benefit it can provide for local governments in both 'North' and 'South'.

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1. Introduction

Local governments, from spectators to actors in cooperation policies

International development cooperation is no longer the private reserve or a monopoly of state governments or international organisations. Neither does it belong exclusively to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), although they have come to the forefront in the later years of the twentieth century. Today a variety of actors, both public and private, are involved in development cooperation on the international stage, their activities being prompted by a wide range of thinking, needs and interests.

Among them, local governments have begun to take a leading role. In a little over twenty years they have gone from being mere spectators, passive participants and occasional beneficiaries of cooperation schemes programmed by official agencies, to being legitimate, legalised operators, playing a genuinely active role in development cooperation policies.

Today it is a fact that the strengthening of local democratic governance and the consideration of local governments as actors promoting fundamental public policies in development processes are part of the agenda of most large-scale multilateral or bilateral operators in the field of international cooperation for development.

The European Commission has recognised this in its communication 'Local Authorities: Actors for Development'[1] which states that 'since the 1990s local authorities have increasingly been viewed as players in development policy'. It recognises the importance of 'local authorities' significant expertise [...] as catalysts for change, conflict prevention, decentralisation and confidence building in the development processes' and the 'significant financial resources' they allocate to development. The communication also emphasises the fact that 'Local authorities in the Partner Countries [...] can be key actors for enhancing local governance and in delivering public services, in particular in the context of decentralisation'.

However, we may ask whether the action of local governments in this area responds, as a rule, to a planned political strategy or to certain external forces which are not always related to their fundamental mission: that of working, within the scope of their competences, to ensure the well-being of their residents in a cohesive society. This is extremely important if we bear in mind that, in most cases, international cooperation for development is not seen as a 'natural' competence of local governments. This attitude is of even greater importance in times of recession, such as the period we are in now.

Another element to be borne in mind is the fact that the regulatory framework of some states, especially in Europe, recognises the capacity of sub-state, local, regional, autonomous or federal governments to act in the area of cooperation for development. To see an example of this, we need look no further than Spain[2], where

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[1] | *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 'Local Authorities: Actors for Development'. Brussels, COM (2008) 626 final, 8 October 2008, (SEC (2008) 2570).*

the law on international cooperation recognises the capacity of Autonomous Communities and local governments, giving them authority and legal powers to act in this area. Here in Spain, and in Italy, these powers have been assigned through laws dealing with the territories introduced via classic mechanisms for political programming such as multi-year master plans for cooperation.

If we analyse the record of local governments in the field of international relations and cooperation, we can draw some interesting conclusions. Obviously our findings will differ if we are analysing the situation from the viewpoint of a local government in the 'North' or in the 'South'.

This article focuses on the perspective of local governments in Europe, although it also gives some indications of how the issue can be approached from the viewpoint of local governments in Latin America.

2. The arrival of local governments in the international arena

Apart from the open, cosmopolitan profile of the Greek city-states and those of Renaissance Italy, local governments do not appear on the international stage until the last decade of the 20th century. The IULA[3] was set up in 1913, and the CEMR[4] in 1951, but it was not until the mid-1980s that international local government platforms began to appear.

This sudden growth coincided with the beginning of greater decentralisation, the strengthening of local autonomy[5] and the conviction that local governments are fundamental players in development. It coincides, therefore, with the beginning of local[5] government empowerment, their recognition as public operators, governments which form part of the public structure of a state. It was the moment when they ceased to be seen as mere managers of policies which were dictated to them or laid down by central government and began to be seen as fundamental political participants in the process of strengthening democracy.

At that time, a multitude of local government and regional networks came into existence in Europe, cooperating with each other in securing resources, experience and expertise, in order to participate in the European integration process and influence the definition of EU policies. The networks which appeared were sometimes general (EUROCITIES, the Assembly of European Regions, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, EUROTOWNS, etc.), sometimes geographical (the Latin Arc, the Union of the Baltic Cities, the Atlantic Arc, etc.) and sometimes specialised, intended to promote or defend the interests of local governments in a particular sector.

Membership of European platforms was, for many local governments, a first step in becoming international, extending their activities abroad in search of opportunities for development. For many years the European Union (EU) has represented (and clearly still represents) a mechanism for obtaining economic resources and financing.

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[2]| *Law 23/1998, of 7 July, concerning international cooperation for development, Section II, Article 20.*

[3]| *International Union of Local Authorities*

[4]| *Council of European Municipalities and Regions*

[5]| *The European Charter of Local Self-Government, promoted by the Congress of the Council of Europe and ratified by most European states, was adopted in 1985.*

But over the years the Union has generated a series of very interesting mechanisms which have made it possible to coordinate the different levels of local, regional, state and European government to define public policies which can be applied at community level. Bearing in mind that a significant part of EU legislation is applied at local level, the establishment of these mechanisms for formal and informal participation and dialogue between the EU and local governments has been fundamental in ensuring that European policies also correspond to the interests of territories and their inhabitants.

In Latin America (LA), Africa and Asia, local governments have gradually formed links, creating structures for cooperation which further empower them and enable them to have more political impact.

There are very interesting experiences such as the *Red de Mercociudades*[6](Mercocities Network), which has supported regional integration in MERCOSUR for over twenty years, acting as spokesperson for local governments in the process. Neither should we forget other locally based initiatives for integration such as *Africités*[7] and the Asian Pacific City Summit[8] (1994).

3. Local governments and decentralised cooperation. From post-colonial relations to solidarity

In the field of cooperation for development, European local governments began to define relations with other towns and cities in developing countries in the early 1980s. These relationships are expressed through twinning and other schemes and stem from different motives.

Figure Nº 1 | Geographic distribution of bilateral relations with Nicaragua

Relations with Nicaragua

Source: Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU_LA
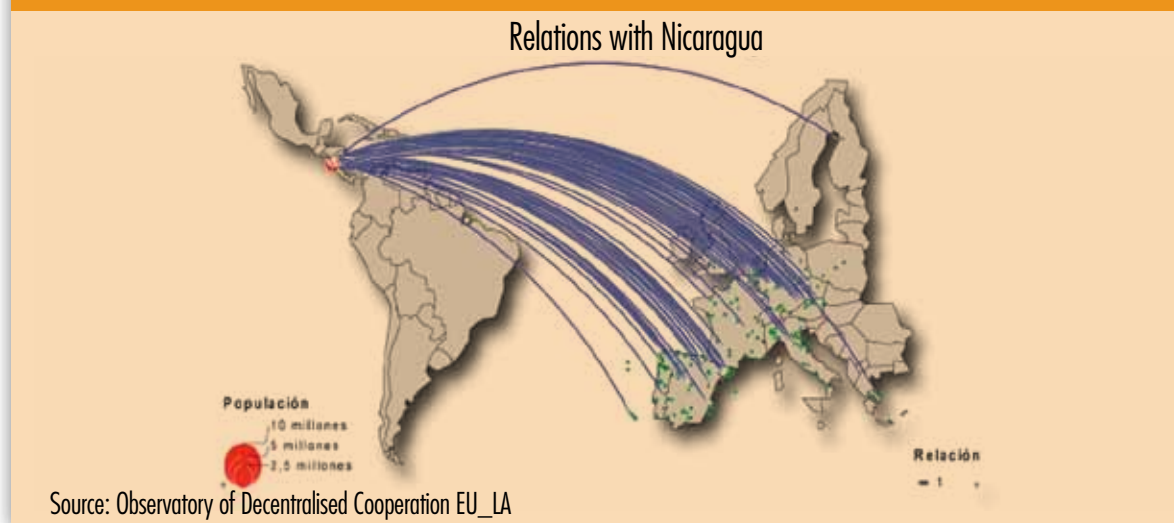
[6] *http://www.mercociudades.org/*
[7] *http://www.africites.org/*
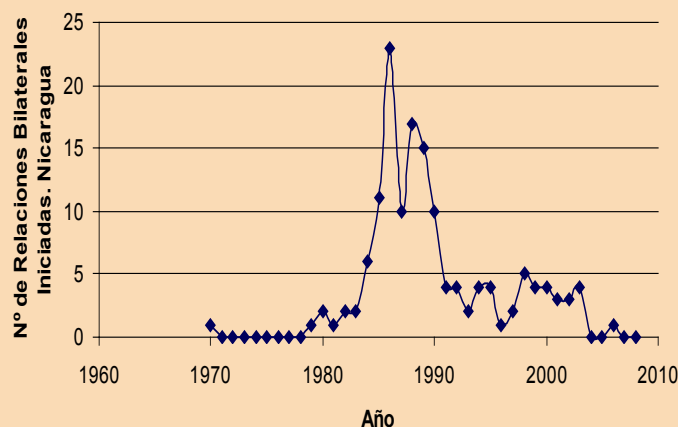[8] *http://www.urc.or.jp/summit/index_e.php*

One type of motivation that explained many relationships in cooperation in the 1980s—and still does today—is *ideological*. Nicaragua and Cuba are good examples, their revolutions receiving clear support from European local government bodies dominated by the left.

It is also interesting to analyse relationships which have a colonial basis, i.e. those which are developed between local government bodies in former colonies and the governments in the respective colonising countries. As a result, the French, British, Italians, Portuguese and Spanish establish relationships primarily with local governments in their former colonies and even set up platforms based on this colonial relationship. The *Association Internationale des Maires Francophones*[9] (*International Association of Francophone Mayors*) (1979), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum[10] and the *Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas*[11] (Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities) are clear examples of this post-colonial phenomenon. In these cases it is interesting to note that the main weight of the relationship and support for it is still based in the metropolis.

The links created by the *migration* of European citizens during the 20th century also helps to explain a large number of cooperation links. The case of Italy and its connections with Latin America is a notable example.

Figure 2 | Number of bilateral relations with Nicaragua

Source: Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA

[9] | http://www.aimf.asso.fr/

[10] | http://www.clgf.org.uk/index.cfm

[11] | http://www.madrid.es/portal/site/munimadrid/menuitem.f4bb5b953cd0b0aa7d245f019fc08a0c/?vgnextoid=72bc62995184b010VgnVCM100000d90ca8c0RCRD&vgnextchannel=ce069e242ab26010VgnVCM100000dc0ca8c0RCRD

Figure 3 | Relations with Portugal

Source: Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA

Figure 4 | Relations with Italy
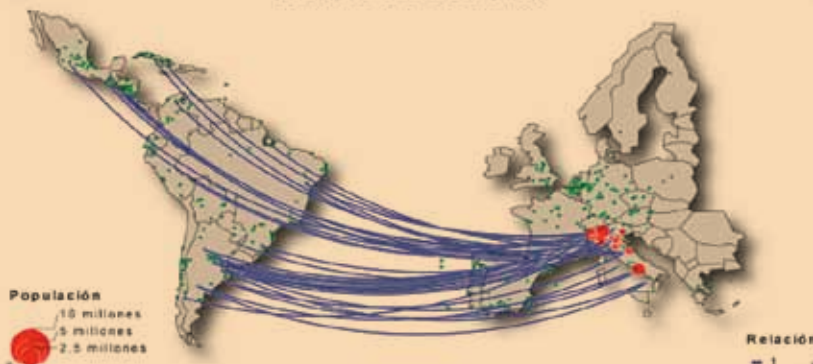
Source: Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA

However, in the early 1990s we observe a phenomenon which is fundamental in explaining the growth in decentralised public cooperation at that time: movements to promote solidarity and public demonstrations organised with the aim of committing rich countries to development. A landmark in this process was the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the concept of sustainable development was introduced and it was agreed that the richest countries should devote 0.7% of their GDP to financing development. These campaigns, conducted mainly by organisations in civil society promoting solidarity, had a great impact on local governments, bodies which were close to the organisations on the ground that were mobilising and which were especially sensitive to their demands.

From this time on, local governments in some European countries began to allo-

cate part of their budgets to helping developing countries, trying to meet the commitment of the Rio summit.

A type of cooperation thus began to emerge, in which cooperation was based, first and last on solidarity, and the commitment to it. *Solidarity* is one of the fundamental values of the European political system, both internally, linked to the definition of economic, social and territorial cohesion as a basic objective, and externally, where Europe is the world's leading actor in international cooperation for development.

This type of cooperation, which is of major importance and mobilises substantial resources in some countries, is organised in different ways and is developing quickly, moving from a purely administrative or bureaucratic approach to one with a pronounced political content.

At present we can distinguish two ways of organising cooperation: two systems which correspond to two different theories and which are developing differently, even though they are currently beginning to converge.

In many European countries, especially Germany, the Netherlands and France, solidarity is based on bilateral and sometimes multilateral relations. Such relations do not move large amounts of money but have interesting political implications and a growing strategic importance. They are geared to reinforcing the capacity of local governments in the 'South', generally through technical aid programmes.

This is a model which is evolving from post-colonial thinking (the city in the 'North' shows the city in the 'South' how to do things) to a more interesting approach based on the exchange of experience, the transfer of knowledge, and mutual support; in short, towards a model in which the benefits are mutual.

This development, which is by no means chronological, marks the transition from a *vertical* model for cooperation, in which the local government in the 'North' transfers resources to the local government in the 'South', to a *horizontal* model, in which the relationship, between equals and strategic in nature, generates a mutual benefit.

We can illustrate the two models with two examples which are fictitious but which bear a close similarity to real cases.

Example A. Vertical model

A European town is twinned with one in Africa. In the course of a meeting in Europe, at which the host town presents its advances in town planning, the European mayor offers to send two experts to the African town to assist them in drawing up a town planning project. As a result of the agreement, two prestigious European town planning experts with a certain knowledge of the situation in Africa travel to the 'beneficiary' town and start work on drawing up a plan. Two years later, after four missions lasting a week each, interviews with municipal authorities and some leading members of the town's civil society, the European mayor presents

his African counterpart with the town planning proposal drawn up by the two experts. The African mayor thanks him and, after a few days, organises an event to present the plan, which immediately arouses the opposition of the majority of the residents.

Example B. Horizontal model

A European town and one in Brazil have engaged in decentralised cooperation for over twenty years. The Brazilian town, in line with its politically mandated strategic plan, has undertaken a review of town planning in one district of the town. It is to be a pilot project, which may later be applied to the remainder of the town. They accordingly seek the cooperation of the European town with which they have links. They agree to set up a system of exchanges so that Brazilian experts can travel to Europe, to study specific cases of town planning, and contact universities and a professional college of architects and town planners. After two weeks they return to Brazil with new ideas and know-how that can be of great interest when they have been adapted to local circumstances and the local environment. As part of the same agreement a team of European town planners travel to the Brazilian town to take part in the planning process and contribute their expertise and experience. They become involved in a very interesting participative process, through which the

residents of the district and the government both take part in the decision-making process that will lead to the definitive version of the plan. After two weeks' work they return to Europe with new ideas for relaunching public participation in town planning.

In other European countries, especially Spain and Italy, policies on cooperation have developed along different lines. A transition from the vertical model to the horizontal is also taking place, but from a different starting point. In this case the resources made available are very important.

Although there are twinning programmes based on solidarity in Spain and Italy, since the movements pressing for 0.7%, the cooperation measures promoted by local governments have largely come to be organised through intermediaries: NGOs in civil society which specialise in development. Local governments do not define a strategy linked to cooperation for development as an instrument of their international action, but set up mechanisms which tend to reinforce elements of solidarity in civil society in their own areas. These mechanisms are more closely related to policies to develop public participation than those for cooperation for development.

Measures for cooperation are generally organised via the award of subsidies for which local NGOs can publicly compete. The role of the local government is limited to providing resources and handling the administrative requirements for subsidies. Their involvement in coopera-

tion initiatives is very limited and generates little added value.

This way of implementing cooperation, which clearly fits into what we have described as the vertical model, is developing over time and is becoming even more sophisticated in order to improve effectiveness.

Initially local governments have ventured into the appropriation of measures for cooperation in an extremely limited way. They feel that they are operating in an area which is not 'natural' for them, so they limit themselves to administrative processes. They have no specialist staff and finance projects of all types without following any kind of policy. They invest in the areas indicated by the NGOs, without applying any strategic criteria. We see the paradoxical situation of medium-sized towns with projects in practically all the continents.

The award of financing for projects has evolved rapidly with the introduction of increasingly complicated criteria of eligibility. The criteria may be geographical, focussing in the case of Spain, and to some extent that of Italy, on Latin America and the Mediterranean. They may also be thematic or political, with support being given to projects linked to local governance and local development, or linked to the eligibility of the activities to be financed.

Despite the move towards more rigorous and strategic approaches, we should ask ourselves if the initiatives carried out according to this formula reflect a desire on the part of local governments to establish their presence abroad and build relationships and alliances with other territories, or, as we have seen, the desire to reinforce local associations, the socially committed organisations in civil society with which they work.

Figure 5 | Compared local spanish Oficial Development Assitance (ODA) between 1998 and 2008
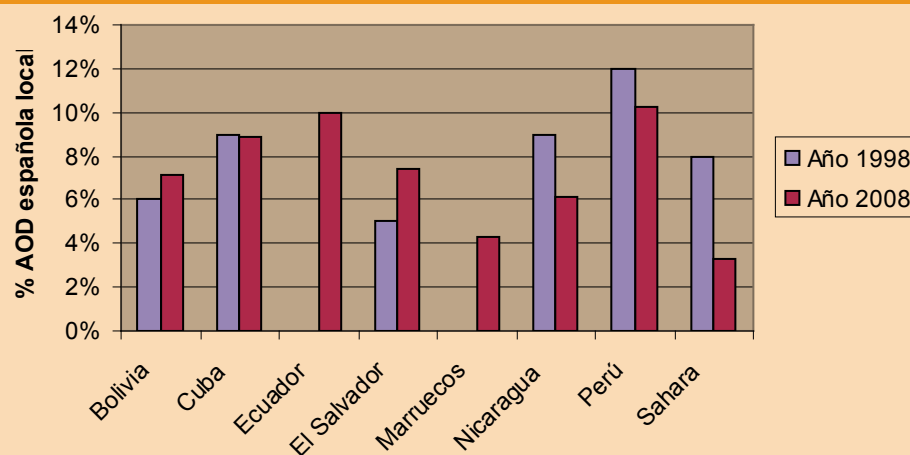
Source: Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces

We should also ask why local governments in Spain, as can be seen in the table, have concentrated their efforts on Central America (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba) for many years and paid less attention to other countries with which there are unquestionable economic and social links, such as Morocco and Ecuador.

The development we have indicated towards increasing involvement by local government, based on growing awareness and political responsibility regarding the measures being financed, has also led to changes in the form of direct cooperation, i.e. bilateral and multilateral cooperation between governments. Although they have initially been less significant, direct relations in Spain and Italy are evolving along parallel lines to those based on applications for subsidies.

Twinning, which had traditionally had a political (ideological or party) or cultural basis, is gradually moving towards more strategic relationships, which go beyond aid and in which initiatives linked to reinforcing the capacity of local governments and their public policies are pursued. The concept of twinning is slowly being superseded and progress made towards *public decentralised cooperation* based on a relationship between equals, who, despite working in dissimilar conditions, exchange experience and transfer knowledge and resources.

This model, which is clearly horizontal and on which local governments throughout Europe converge, has first been developed in large metropolitan cities, in regions with substantial resources, especially on the professional level. However, it is gradually being transferred to all types of local government.

One factor which has contributed decisively to reinforcing this type of direct cooperation is what we have called *induced cooperation*, i.e. cooperation carried out directly by local governments in the context of programmes launched by multilateral organisations. Examples of this type of cooperation can be seen in the European Commission's URB-AL, MedURBS and AsiaUrbs programmes, Cities Alliance (joint programme by the World Bank and UN-HABITAT) or the UNDP's ART programme.

This type of programme considerably reinforces the capacity of local governments, allowing them to enter a different dimension from that of vertical cooperation based on the transfer of resources. It proposes the establishment of common purpose networks between operators, who can exchange experiences, jointly develop pilot projects to verify the viability of certain public policies in areas of local competence so that they can be replicated, and reinforce each other by generating alliances which help to defend their interests nationally and internationally.

This latter feature is fundamental. Through initiatives linked to cooperation, local governments are beginning to build platforms which allow them to generate a sufficient critical mass to exercise political influence on other levels of government. In this sense public decentralised cooperation not only serves to transfer resources, experience and knowledge but also helps to generate conditions which lead to changes in the political agenda which would be much slower or more complicated without the intervention of external parties.

Example:

Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council) and the Congreso Nacional de Intendentes de la República Oriental del Uruguay (Uruguayan National Congress of Administrators) agreed, through the UNDP's ART programme, to launch a series of debates with the aim of establishing dialogue between the actors involved in a process of decentralisation (legislative body, central government, local governments and civil society) regarding the proposal for a law on decentralisation. The dialogues served to contrast the Uruguayan proposal with other cases in Europe and Latin America at a particularly important time in the country's political development, as the creation of a new level of local government, the municipalities, was being introduced for the first time.

4. From cooperation based on solidarity to having a presence abroad: the new foundations of public decentralised cooperation

I think the preceding sections clearly show that public decentralised cooperation has changed considerably in recent years. The change in orientation to new, more effective forms of cooperation is a constant but there is still a long way to go.

Although public decentralised cooperation is organised according to new models, it continues to be based, at least formally and in most cases, on relationships rooted in solidarity. While local governments are increasingly aware that in order to be more effective they must operate in a specific environment, that of local governance, where their actions can generate greater added value, it seems that nobody disputes the fact that cooperation continues to be founded on solidarity. Local governments in the north operate in the field of cooperation because they believe in solidarity and those in the south do so to secure resources from the solidarity of their fellows.

Is this a reasonable situation? Solidarity is and should be a fundamental value in the framework of relationships for cooperation. It should, indeed, be a fundamental value for government action, a value to be encouraged among the public and an inspiration for all public policies. However, if we consider cooperation for development as a public policy, and I believe we should, it must conform to strategic guidelines laid down by the government. It is a policy with a pronounced transversal character which affects, or should affect, the full range of political policies implemented locally.

A public decentralised cooperation policy can and must be clearly linked to economic, environmental, social, institutional and other policies. Can we consider that there is a link between policies on cooperation and those regarding immigration or combating climate change? Is there a connection with political action in public participation or even with job creation and economic development? Can we reinforce our institutional positioning through decentralised cooperation?

To the extent that a clear link is established between policy on cooperation and other policies, the usefulness and strategic importance of the former is greatly consolidated. If the only foundation is solidarity, it

may happen that the current economic crisis leads to it being seriously questioned, which is happening now. This questioning is a reflection of the extent to which we do not consider cooperation as a natural, strategic activity of local governments. We find attitudes such as the following: 'Why do we have to show solidarity to foreigners with all the problems we have in our own country?'

It would seem clear that we must construct sound arguments that help to consolidate cooperation as a 'natural', strategic local policy, which has solidarity as a central value but which addresses other issues.

Two far-reaching principles are relevant to this question. The first centres on the factor of *co-responsibility for development*. The second on the potential of decentralised cooperation as an *instrument for establishing a territory's presence abroad*.

At present the political agenda of local governments is clearly influenced by the appearance of phenomena which are global in origin but which have an impact on the local level. In other words, local governments must become involved in or try to influence the management of the global impact of development (or lack of development) at the local level. Attention by the local to the external or the international is a logical consequence. As the philosopher Daniel Innerarity says: "All the explanations offered to clarify the meaning of globalisation are contained in the metaphor that the world no longer contains fringe, marginal or peripheral areas. Global leaves nothing outside it, contains everything, links and integrates so that nothing remains loose, iso-lated, independent, lost or protected, safe or condemned, outside it. [...] In a world without outskirts nearness and immediacy cease to be the only dimension available and our frame of reference is markedly extended. The tyranny of proximity is relaxed and other considerations come into play". [12]

It seems clear that local governments should accept joint responsibility for the development of poorer countries as a mechanism to help ensure that their lack of development does not have a negative impact on their own territories. By contributing to greater development in the areas with which we work we help to reduce the number of immigrants arriving in our country or ensure that those who do arrive come in different circumstances, and not immersed in the social drama which migration so often involves. We can help to mitigate the effects of climate change (which has no frontiers) and prevent the relocation of businesses, which will no longer go abroad, attracted by low costs and unethical practices in less developed countries.

Local governments, in their decentralised cooperation projects, thus need to make proposals which are relevant to development processes and are closely linked to their *raison d'être* as governments. They need to establish and work with a framework for relations which strengthens them as government operators, with political power and sufficient resources, close to the public, organising systems which make it easier for people to participate in public affairs. They must define strategies which allow them to take up the challenges facing them as fundamental actors in the processes of developing

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[12] | *Daniel Innerarity: 'Los nuevos espacios sociales y las políticas de proximidad' [New social spaces and the politics of proximity], lecture given at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture - CCCB), 2 February 2006.*

social cohesion, understood from a broad, transversal perspective. Dealing with issues such as migration, both internal and international, often from the country to the city, climate change, and in particular the impact such issues and problems can have on social cohesion. Local economic development and policies designed to generate wealth by exploiting native resources and social innovation, is essential to strengthen the foundations of public decentralised cooperation.

It is important to emphasise the need for decentralised cooperation measures to be specific and focused on areas which are part of the competences of local governments. They should not try to emulate other actors in international cooperation when they do not have the powers, resources and capacity to do so. Public decentralised cooperation centred on reinforcing local governance and the promotion of strategic local public policies which are innovative, sustainable and can be replicated can provide clear added value which steers it naturally towards the principles that the international community has defined to make aid more effective and help to reinforce the legitimacy of local governments as recognised operators.

However, we must also study the need for territories and, of course, their governments and their populations, to strengthen their presence abroad in order to attract resources and opportunities for further development. Given the current advanced climate of globalisation, this foreign presence must be managed in a highly competitive environment: cities and regions compete for visibility, to raise their profiles and gain the prestige they need to attract investment, knowledge, experience, talent, and sporting, cultural and business events, etc. Paradoxically, in such a competitive environment, cooperation needs to be highly

developed. In such a context, decentralised cooperation may be a central tool for achieving these objectives.

As we have seen, the notion that territories need to be more open and strengthen their presence abroad in order to further their own development seems clear. These efforts do not have to be the preserve of major cities and regions. All local governments should concern themselves with such matters, irrespective of the size of the territory they govern, taking into account the opportunities, needs, resources, potential and strategies that exist in each one. They must join forces, build alliances and develop relationships that will help them to strengthen their interests abroad.

This profile raising abroad should not just focus on developing economic ties, attracting investment or supporting trade missions. It also involves issues related to culture, knowledge, innovation, talent and social relationships (especially those that exist because of migration patterns), tourism, the environment, building alliances to strengthen local governance, and developing political and ideological links.

However, it is also important to bear in mind that developing a presence abroad needs to be closely tied to territorial strategy. The territory must have a clear vision of what it wants to be and do, and of its current situation, its potential, its internal resources, its weaknesses and its needs. The strategic planning of international relations is vital. This must not relate just to the plans, interests or needs of the government. It is crucial that it reflects the interests of civil society, companies, organisations, universities, trade unions, and the population in general. Such actions will thus be perceived as 'natural', with solid reasons behind them, giving them local legitimacy.

Cooperative relationships can thus constitute a basic tool for raising a territory's foreign profile. It makes sense, therefore, to establish cooperative relationships based on a clear political strategy that does not, as we have seen, focus on merely transferring resources, but also on creating relationships between equals that generate reciprocal benefits.

This includes a commitment to building partnerships that are not based exclusively on historical or ideological ties, on a shared colonial past, or on twentieth century migrations. What should be the basis on which territorial governments develop cooperative relationships? What should drive such relationships? What are their basic foundations?

We can identify four groups of foundations that can lead to a commitment to develop a cooperative relationship within the framework of a foreign strategy:

a)   *Social aspects.*
b)   *Cultural aspects.*
c)   *Economic aspects.*
d)   *Institutional or political aspects.*

a) Social foundations

The social foundations for cooperative ties lie mainly in the phenomenon of migration. Europe, like other developed regions of the world, is home to many immigrants from developing countries. The presence of these immigrants has given rise to some serious contradictions in European societies, which can lead to upheaval, especially in times of crisis. On the one hand, immigration is crucial for European economies which have relied on immigrant labour for many years (and still do, in spite of the recession) to fill less skilled posts in key sectors such as industry, building, tourism, agriculture and caring for children and the elderly. It has also been important in mitigating the demographic problems of an aging native population and the potential impact of this issue for social security systems and the welfare model. On the other hand, immigration brings with it major challenges with regard to social integration and citizenship, key aspects which are especially difficult to manage at times of economic crisis. Populist attitudes may also reappear, even among traditional political factions.

Decentralised cooperation should be a valuable tool for managing this difficult scenario which may have a major impact on the local population. Using migration patterns as the basis for cooperation maps by establishing cooperative links between immigrants' homelands and reception countries is today an interesting and useful exercise, not just from the point of view of development but also for questions of social integration and promoting a foreign presence: development is boosted by relationships based on decentralised cooperation which are effectively focused, to the mutual benefit of the territories involved; social integration is promoted by such relationships, which can facilitate social cohesion, knowledge, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence; and foreign profiles are raised, as it is easy to link a strategic commitment to migrants' homeland or reception country to the general strategies that governments must develop for their territories.

There have been many interesting experiences in this area when local governments in both source and destination

countries have organised coordinated measures to improve migration flows: support for people who decide to migrate (information offices, advisory services, contracting centres in source countries, etc.); helping immigrants on their arrival and subsequent integration (co-managed reception centres, information and advice centres, etc.); measures to boost the impact of remittances; and measures to help migrants return to their country of origin and to find work there (taking advantage of money they have saved and experience they have gained).

It must also be borne in mind that the link between migration and decentralised cooperation is currently becoming ever stronger, in parallel with another growing trend, that of co-development. Without looking too closely into this practice, which relates to groups of immigrants getting involved in cooperation for development in their countries of origin, I do feel some comments are needed about the opportunities and risks that co-development represents for public decentralised cooperation insofar as it could be a significant complement to such relationships between governments and migrants' territories of origin and destination. Involving these groups and the associations to which they belong, an active part of civil society, could be a key factor in implementing measures within the framework of these relationships. These groups are increasingly keen to get involved in and contribute to the development of their territories of origin, as they do in the receiving territories. It is good to encourage and promote this commitment, which could be vital not just for the development of the territory of origin, through the contribution of resources and know-how, but also for the integration of immigrants in the societies where they now live, and for peaceful coexistence.

Co-development also involves some risks, however, which need to be studied. If we understand it just from the perspective of supporting immigrants' organisations, as part of a policy of encouraging social participation or integration, and not within the framework of a decentralised cooperation measure intended as a public policy instrument to strengthen the terri-

Example:

EMIDEL: Desarrollo local y Emigración en Latinoamérica (Local Development and Emigration in Latin America) project within the framework of the European Union URB-AL III programme

This project is headed by the town council of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat in Catalonia, and partners include the cities of La Paz (Bolivia), Canelones (Uruguay) and Santa Tecla (El Salvador). The aim is to develop mechanisms and instruments to boost economic development and business initiatives in each of the territories involved, making business initiative a part of Latin American urban development strategies and local government action, and helping to identify and exploit the contribution that migration can make to economic development activity by local bodies in the migrants' countries of origin[13].

13 | http://www.urb-al3.eu/index.php/proyectos/vistadetalle/id_proyecto/8

tory's profile abroad, we run the risk of becoming inward-looking in our attitude to cooperation and returning to the old models of patronage and vertical relationships whose only added value lies in the transfer of resources.

If we analyse the current situation, it is evident that this risk is real: there are local governments that are launching calls for the financing of co-development projects that are more about supporting immigrants' groups with cooperation resources than about developing a clearly defined strategy to strengthen decentralised cooperation with the support of immigrants. In these cases, cooperative practices by local governments are more in line with the bureaucratic approach of twenty years ago.

b) Cultural foundations

Culture is a key feature of establishing a profile abroad for territories and their governments and therefore a powerful weapon in the armoury of decentralised cooperation. We must take a broad view of culture that includes not just art, literature and folklore but also science, knowledge, education and even coexistence, identity and a sense of belonging.

The cultural links between territories, which may give rise to a relationship based on decentralised cooperation, are closely related to the movement of people, and therefore to migration, economics, history and to the establishment and consolidation of identity.

They are, undoubtedly, an extremely important instrument for establishing re-

lationships of decentralised cooperation, helping people to adopt these relationships, and are closely linked to a range of different forms of development: human, social, economic and territorial.

Local governments are increasingly committed to using bilateral or multilateral relationships established through links involving decentralised cooperation in order to raise awareness of their respective cultures. These links may be used for raising awareness of a culture from the perspective of identity (in the case of minority cultures), for implementing development initiatives based on culture, cultural exchanges (between people and groups), the transfer of knowledge on this issue, raising the profile of a territory, economic exchanges, attracting cultural events, attracting talent, or promoting understanding between cultures, civilisations or peoples as an aid to peaceful coexistence.

The 'Zaragoza Latina'[14] initiative, is a good example of the role of culture in this new relationship between profile raising abroad and cooperation between cities and territories. Organised by the city council of Saragossa (Zaragoza, in Spanish), in Spain, the project's mission is to develop an ongoing platform for the exchange of contemporary theatrical and visual arts productions with a range of Latin American cities. Another good example is the 'Lille 3000' project organised by the city of Lille in France to continue building on its successes as European Capital of Culture in 2004. "Lille 3000"[15] is a broadly based strategy to ensure the global presence of the city's own culture and to use a

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[14] | *http://www.zaragozalatina.com*

[15] | *http://www.lille3000.eu/lille3000/index.php*

variety of initiatives and activities to present contemporary world culture in the city jointly with cities in other parts of the world.

c) Economic foundations

Economics is, clearly, another cornerstone of a region's presence abroad and of decentralised cooperation. It is important to stress that, in spite of what many think (often with very good reason), economic relations and those based on cooperation must not be mixed. They must not be mixed when the conditions linking economics and cooperation are unilaterally imposed (such as the conditional funding frequently offered by the cooperation systems of most donor states) or when they are not ethically based.

Economics, or, more precisely, economic development, is behind many of the measures to promote a foreign presence undertaken by local governments and there is no reason why it should not also be the case for decentralised cooperation, provided it is based on ethical principles.

Raising a territory's profile abroad can also help to attract opportunities and resources that have a clear economic impact on the region and the wellbeing of its citizens, its economic development, competitiveness, capacity to innovate and its labour market. It may also serve to increase the territory's prestige and its ability to attract talent, knowledge, investment, sporting, cultural or business events, businesses, institutions and research centres, and to boost exports. It can have a very positive impact on tourism and on culture (which in turn can have an economic impact). The list is extensive.

However, we must bear in mind that decentralised cooperation can form a basic tool for developing economic relationships and their resulting exchanges. This is because such relationships tend to be stable, based on mutual interests and cooperation and designed to generate mutual benefits.

For example, companies could become involved within the framework of a bilateral or multilateral cooperative relationship in order to transfer knowledge, exchange experience and also to generate business. Or a cooperative relationship may give rise to an opportunity for investment, producing profits for one party and (decent) employment and growth for the other. The exchange of students or university lecturers may also take place, helping one territory or the other to attract talent. There may also be opportunities related to the organisation of events or systems to promote tourism.

Economic relations may also be behind the establishment of relationships between territorial governments. A local government may decide to establish cooperative links with a territory where its civil society, businesses, universities, research centres or promoters of tourism have important ties.

Economic relations are therefore central to maintaining a territory's presence abroad and may form an entirely legitimate basis for decentralised cooperation provided they are developed for mutual benefit and along ethical lines.

d) Institutional or political foundations

Finally, institutional and political foundations: territories and their governments may establish ties to share and defend institutional and political interests. Alliances, platforms and networks are organised with the intention of generating

sufficient critical mass to influence other levels of government, international and national.

Decentralised cooperation can also be a useful tool for generating alliances that can have a political impact. There are many examples of territorial governments developing joint political strategies on the basis of cooperative initiatives that lead to a stable relationship.

We have seen examples of how such relationships can lead to initiatives that help bring about changes designed to strengthen the political role of local governments, assisting in processes of decentralisation, reinforcing local autonomy or, simply, boosting their legitimacy and capacity for interacting and negotiating with other levels of government and the public.

However, as we saw at the start of this article, since the early twentieth century there have been political platforms that bring together local governments with the aim of promoting their interests. These highly political platforms also serve to develop relationships of decentralised cooperation within the framework of which social, cultural or economic measures are implemented.

5. Conclusions

It is broadly agreed that local governments have become recognised agents of cooperation over the last thirty years, recognised and necessary both for the role they perform in development processes and for the growing importance of their activities in the field of cooperation. So-called public decentralised cooperation has

evolved notably, acquiring a political and strategic dimension and becoming naturally more focused on criteria of greater efficacy.

These trends have been important for the practice, the *how*, of decentralised cooperation, moving from what we have referred to as a vertical model, centred basically on transferring resources from north to south, to a much richer, more complex horizontal model based on partnerships between equals in which added value is derived not only from the resources transferred but also from the relationship itself.

There has been less emphasis, however, on the *why*. Decentralised cooperation is still not regarded as a natural area of concern for local governments. It does not have equal standing with other policy areas such as social, economic or environmental strategy. It is not clearly linked to the central aims of local governments (and government in general), which are no more than to ensure the wellbeing of their citizens.

We have seen that, in over thirty years of decentralised cooperation, almost the only driving force has been that of solidarity. Pushed by social movements demanding that 0.7% of rich countries' GDP be dedicated to development aid, in the early 1990s public policies were drawn up to reflect this basic principle (in the best cases). This commitment does not, however, include strategic features to link it to territorial challenges and needs. This is where the problem lies, although sometimes it is difficult to identify it.

Although solidarity is, as we have seen, an absolutely fundamental value for European local governments, one which is at the heart of their political action, it cannot be the only cornerstone on which

a public policy is built. Although it seems obvious, it is worth emphasising that a public policy must be multidimensional, transversal and must have as its final aim the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the territory being governed. When cooperation policies are designed purely in response to a government's sentiments of solidarity towards developing regions (and their inhabitants), if there is no strategic approach that links it to the government's own political commitments, thereby making it a useful tool, the project may fail, especially at times of restricted finances, as is the case at present.

Some Spanish local governments have announced that they are cutting their commitments to cooperation for development. They are doing so in response to the budget cuts they are currently facing, arguing in some key cases, such as that of Madrid City Council, that cooperation for development is not a local responsibility at all, but falls within the competences of the central government.

We are now seeing a highly worrying situation in which, because of the recession, European local governments are starting to limit their commitments to such causes, reducing the (financial and human) resources dedicated to decentralised cooperation and focusing their political and social priorities closer to home. Although I believe this is the wrong approach to the problems caused by the recession, since it is more necessary now than ever for territories to be open and increase their presence abroad, this is what may start to happen if we do not have sound political arguments to counter it.

Clearly, we need to revisit the foundations of cooperation. We have seen that the best way to argue *why* such a public policy is necessary is to link it directly to the wellbeing of the residents of the territory governed, to make them see how it can benefit them.

I have therefore tried to analyse the central arguments that should form the basis, even in times of recession, of a local public policy on decentralised cooperation. The central argument must remain that of basic values of solidarity.

Firstly, an argument must be made that clearly demonstrates the link between the failure of developing countries (and their territories) to develop and the resulting impact on our own wellbeing. We have seen how a great many global phenomena, such as migration, climate change and new economic relationships, can have a local impact. It is therefore necessary to assume a position of responsibility and to act at local level to manage this situation.

It is essential that we continue to engage in decentralised cooperation to boost the development of those territories with which we have built partnerships. These partnerships may be bilateral or multilateral (in networks) and must be based on clear, explainable strategic links of a social, economic, cultural or political nature. And they must centre on issues that are strategic for local governments, focusing on the mutual benefits to be derived from exchanges and transfers.

However, we have also seen that decentralised cooperation can be regarded as an ideal tool for foreign or international action by territories. The main aim of this political action is to raise the profile of the territory abroad, its government and its civil society (companies, trade unions, universities, research centres, cultural bodies,

community associations, etc.) in order to attract resources and opportunities that can boost its development.

These opportunities and resources may take many different forms and must serve to strengthen the political strategies identified by the local government. This is why we regard it as important for foreign relations, in the sense of transversal political action, to be linked to the government's strategic planning for the development of a territory over a specific term of office.

Foreign action is always based on the construction of bilateral or multilateral relationships which, if they are true partnerships, in the way we have described, will be founded on a sounder, more stable strategic base. Decentralised cooperation is the ideal framework for this.

I have tried to define and draw together a series of foundations that form the basis for an argument that promotes decentralised cooperation as a pertinent tool for a territory's activities abroad. These social, economic, cultural and political foundations must be treated as the starting point for the definition of a political strategy on international relations and, within this context, of a public policy on decentralised cooperation.

These are difficult times for public decentralised cooperation. It is becoming established as a clearly recognised and valuable form of cooperation that is naturally focused on criteria set by the international community to ensure aid effectiveness. However, the principle of solidarity on which it has been based for the last thirty years is no longer sufficient in the face of a strong current of opinion that questions its validity in view of the recession. It is now, therefore, the moment to review these principles and to develop a sound argument as to why local governments should continue to engage in decentralised cooperation as part of a legitimate and 'natural' public policy.

Political Foundations for Building Public Decentralised Cooperation Policies in Latin America

María del Huerto Romero*

KEY WORDS

Decentralised cooperation|
Local development |
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Until recently, the predominant representation of decentralised cooperation in most Latin American cities/regions was one of 'a source of funds', associated with a concept of local activity in this field as additional or peripheral to the action of government.

For some years now, views of decentralised cooperation, which place importance on its qualitative impact on politics and territorial management, have been gaining weight, producing new motives (political-strategic in nature) among local authorities to operate in this area of their international relations. Although this is a very recent and uneven trend in the region, its development requires traditional approaches via local management to be overhauled, transforming decentralised cooperation into a local public policy.

This paper offers a number of discussion points with regard to the recently laid but growing political foundations for the building of local public decentralised cooperation policies in Latin America.

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1. Introduction

Representation of decentralised cooperation and its approach via local management are two necessarily linked concepts. The former relates to the subnational government's vision of decentralised cooperation, a vision based on its motivation to act in it. The latter defines how decentralised cooperation is managed by the local authority.

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For some years now, views of decentralised cooperation, which place importance on its qualitative impact on politics and territorial management, have been gaining weight, producing new motives (political-strategic in nature) among local authorities to operate in this area of their international relations. Although this is a very recent and uneven trend in the region, its development requires traditional approaches via local management to be overhauled, transforming decentralised cooperation into a local public policy.

This paper offers a number of discussion points with regard to the recently laid but growing political foundations for the building of local public decentralised cooperation policies in Latin America (LA).

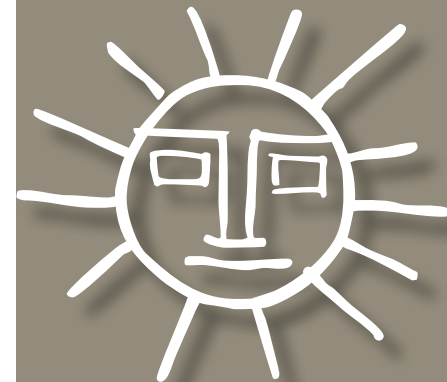The article starts by contextualising the revised meanings of 'local' in the region, and then moves on to discuss their impact on representations of decentralised cooperation. Based on both these analyses, the next section discusses the emerging political and strategic motivations of Latin American local governments to operate in decentralised cooperation. Finally, some elements of the transformation in the approach to decentralised cooperation via local management (required by the new representations and motives) are discussed.

2. A 'Change of Era' for local governments

The changes of the last decades in the social, economic, technological and cultural context inevitably have had highly significant consequences for how political and social institutions and organisations operate. It is not, therefore, strange, as Subirats states (2009) 'that in the local world there also exists the feeling that' local governments are going through a 'change of era'.

The re-evaluation of local issues, the cause and consequence of this change of era, involves two interrelated interpretations: from the perspectives of territory and development.

From the perspective of territory, according to Oscar Madoery (2001),"a new geography of institutional responsibilities for development is taking shape", in which new fields of interaction (cities and regions) are being consolidated, sharing responsibilities traditionally reserved for the area of the nation-state. In the second reading, the classic views of development as something acquired exogenously (through central government policies or external input)[1] has given rise to views of development as *something built endogenously* 'based on the capacities of local personnel and institution-

al actors to relate not just to geographical but more fundamentally to organisational and institutional proximity' (Madoery 2001). At the same time, modern societies have become increasingly complex, with more heterogeneous and specific social demands, making the local area the place where they are most vigorously exercised.

In the light of this 'change of era', subnational governments are faced with the challenge of redefining their roles and forms of government. Its classic functions, based on an administrative and operative vision of public management, are not sufficient for the new scenario of local action. Responsibilities that are multiplying and diversifying and wider, increasingly complex agendas are building a new local politics. Within this, subnational governments are assuming functions relating to the design and implementation of local development strategies to their traditional limited roles (supplier of works and public services, regulation of community life). Furthermore, the progressive territorialisation of citizens' demands requires innovative forms of governing cities and regions that allow new mechanisms for the participation of civil society in the development process, and new relations between administration and citizens.

Not only is the meaning of the local sphere reassessed, as Subirats (2006) stated, but also local authorities' capacity for government is relocated, via the management resources and management structures available, to face new responsibilities and solve increasingly complex problems.

This approach is particularly valid for LA, where the predominance of historically centralised forms[2] of state organisation have produced, over and above the differences between different countries, a weakening of local public institutions (Arocena 2001b).[3]

A weakness that is manifest not only in economic and financial capacity ('endemic lack of resources needed to fulfil the different functions assigned to local governments; strong trends towards fiscal centralisation; impoverishment and notable economic and financial dependency of local governments on central government…' (Godinez 2004), but also in other areas such as: local authority's way of operating and management; its human resources and personnel policies; its mechanisms of relating to civil society and other levels of government; as well as its international involvement.

Since the mid-eighties, the incipient revitalisation of civil society and local governments and the new approaches to development issues have generated a progressive revaluation of local issues in LA. However, it is still a very weak process that faces a number of difficulties. As Madoery (2001) notes, 'the structural conditioning factors, the institutional frameworks of local action and the design of national public policies […] affecting the territory do not contribute appropri-

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[1] *This perspective has predominated in LA throughout its history. Until fairly recently, local governments—and civil societies - in the region have played a marginal role with respect to responsibility for development, reserved mainly for the national sphere. As Arocena (1998) states, this perspective found its echo in the reductionist views of local affairs in the region, which dominated Latin American thought and practices for a long time: local affairs seen as a 'brake' on development in evolutionist thought; as an 'island' with no capacity to generate innovations, in historicist thought.*

[2] *As Godinez (2004) maintains, this centralising trend (and its consequences for local institutions) 'was in fact fundamentally guaranteed and supported mostly by diverse external aid programmes that the international community aimed at the region in the fifties, sixties and seventies', and as a mere passive 'recipient' for the structuralist approach.*

[3] *The author offers a profound analysis of the weakness of local institutions in LA, its roots and its main manifestations.*

ately to favouring the efforts of local spheres as subjects of development'. Associated with this, there are still a large number of pending issues regarding the process of decentralising functions and powers from nation states to subnational government levels encouraged in the region[4].

In brief: the change of era in the local world is occurring at a time when Latin American local authorities have serious institutional weaknesses with regard to taking on new responsibilities and challenges. This forced the cities/regions to take urgent steps (in many cases, through improvisation with no clear strategy) to obtain resources and strengthen their ability to respond. One of the areas in which these efforts have been made is in the international sphere. This partly explains the emergence, since the 1990s, of a growing trend towards involvement of subnational governments in the international arena. The changing structures and processes of political, social and economic life which come together in the concept of globalisation and the consolidation of regional integration schemes complete the series of forces that demonstrate this trend in LA (Romero 2006).

3. A 'Change of Era' for local decentralised cooperation in Latin America?

Although it is neither a homogenous nor a generalised process, there are studies (Cornago Prieto 2004) that show that international activity at a local level has multiplied and spread throughout LA in recent years. Since the start of this trend, development cooperation has been one of its central components.

Latin American local institutions, with an endemic lack of self-financing, little opportunity of generating funds internally and difficulties in obtaining them from the nation-state, saw development cooperation as a 'source of funds to alleviate the situation of vulnerable groups or to partially compensate the lack of local finance' (Malé 2009)[5]. Indeed, several areas of government created to manage these actions were termed 'fund raisers' or were associated with economics or investment departments.

This same reading is reproduced in Latin American practices in the specific field of local decentralised cooperation, and more so in those cases where it is the only opportunity for cities/regions to gain access to international resources. It may be stated, therefore, that, at least in its initial phase, local government cooperation in the region was basically built on economic perceptions and motives (fund raising) and on a vision in which subnational authorities from the North basically played the role of additional sources of aid funding.

This perspective is clearly based on the classic model of development cooperation, characterised by the 'aid' nature and content of the initiatives, the predominance

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[4]| *Víctor Godinez (2004) adds two factors that hinder the rebirth of local dynamics in the region: firstly, the general deterioration in quality of life in the cities (unemployment, environmental pollution, traffic problems, housing shortage, growing slums, lack of collective spaces, safety problems, lack of civic behaviour) produced by chaotic urban growth in the preceding decades; secondly, the need to participate directly in international economic competition, to which Latin American local governments were exposed in the framework of economic reforms, and in particular the liberalisation of markets and removal of trade barriers.*

[5]| *This vision has an equivalent among local governments in the North: the vision of cooperation as an expression of political or humanitarian solidarity, which is manifested in material or financial transfer from North to South.*

of the transfer of resources as instruments of action and the 'one-way' nature of the links (from 'donor' to 'receiver')[6].

For some time, a new cooperation paradigm has been growing in importance, based on the concept of human development, initiated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This represents a change of direction with respect to the classic model: a) cooperation is understood as a collaboration strategy on equal terms, although between unequal parties, between agents and active partners (multilateralism); b) the transfer of resources is an additional instrument, but not the main one (technical aid, transfer of technology, training of human resources, reinforcing skills and institutional development and exchange of experiences acquire a priority role); c) the recognition of actors other than the central state (local governments, private sector, civil society) as sponsors, protagonists and managers of initiatives.

Accompanying these new visions, also in the field of decentralised cooperation, there arises a profound reassessment of its 'aid' content and a move towards innovative models, based on horizontal relations of mutual interest between 'partners' who establish alliances to face shared challenges[7].

These new models question the representation of decentralised cooperation as 'sources of funding', particularly on the basis of two theoretical-empirical facts:

a) The amount of finance available to decentralised cooperation is limited (even more so in periods of recession such as at present) and cannot be compared to the needs of Latin American local governments, where there is a chronic shortage of resources.

b) Even with larger amounts, thought and practice have shown that centrally based fund raising exclusively for cooperation actions contributes very little to revaluating endogenous aspects of local development. It is worth repeating here the reference given above on the importance of *relational capacities* of local institutional actors in building local development and governance (Madoery); and on the relevance of *local authorities' capacity to govern* to face their new responsibilities and solve increasingly complex problems (Subirats). The building/strengthening of these capacities requires more qualitative and strategic resources than material ones. Decentralised cooperation, given that it comes into direct contact with actors experienced in managing local issues and local politics, can contribute to the development of such capacities in the region.

It is, once again, a 'change of era', from representations based on economic foundations (fund raising) to greater emphasis on the political-strategic dimension of local decentralised cooperation. Although in Latin American local practice this change of era is still very recent and not widespread, one can identify political motives in local governments in the regions to act in decentralised cooperation.

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[6]| *For an analysis of the classic cooperation model, its questions and the new paradigms of development cooperation, see: Montúfar, 2004; González-Badia Fraga and Ruiz Seisdedos, 2003; Alonso, 2003.*

[7]| *There is extensive literature on the new models of decentralised cooperation, produced within the framework of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union-Latin America which may be viewed on its website.*

4. Political foundations of local decentralised cooperation in Latin America

What are the emerging political-strategic motivations of Latin American local governments to operate in decentralised cooperation?

Firstly, it must be recognised that, in the vast majority of cases, these motivations appear in tandem, even if one of them predominates. However, for the purposes of analysis and clarity, they are organised here into three groups:

I. Motives associated with the *territory's interests and objectives for international involvement*. From this perspective, decentralised cooperation is understood as a mechanism of internationalisation, with results are expected in the external relations that impact on local development. It is possibly the most widespread political-strategic foundation (beyond the nature of the dimension in which it operates) among local governments' actions in the field of cooperation.

II. Motives associated directly with local development policies. In this case, decentralised cooperation is seen as an instrument of support for internal policy, particularly in relation to: *the improvement in the institutional quality of local authorities*[8] *and the development of local democratic governance capacities.* It is well known that 'without building local governance*[9] local development is impossible' (Enríquez and Gallicchio 2003). Equally, no one doubts 'the relevance of institutional quality (both in terms of its operational aspect and its democratic operation) with regard to the result of governance' (Serra 2009).

III. *'Derived' Motives.* Although, due to their nature, these may be included in either of the above groups (particularly the second), they have a special characteristic that merits a separate group; they are based on the capacity of decentralised cooperation to accelerate advances in local public policies, generate institutional innovations and encourage decisions, above and beyond the results expected from particular initiatives.

The following sections discuss these three groups of motives.

4.1. Decentralised cooperation to promote the territory's international involvement

For Latin American local governments, international promotion of their territory represents a central component of their strategies for seeking overseas links.

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[8] | Given that local governance has to be based on improvements in the institutional quality of local governments, some authors (Serra, 2008) include in the scenario of institutional reinforcement not only aspects linked to management capacity, but also those relating to capacities in building local governance. Although we are aware that both aspects are related, this study presents them separately.

[9] | In this article, the concept of governance defines a new style of government and governing 'which differs from traditional styles, characterised by hierarchical control, and is based on interaction and cooperation between public powers and non-state actors within mixed public-private decision-making networks' (Mayntz, 2000). The term governance has been the object of various definitions, assimilated, in some case with the term governability. However, in this article we agree with Cerrillos (2001), among other authors, in that they are different concepts.
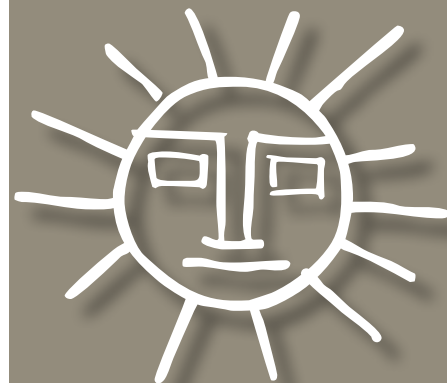
From an economic point of view, local governments seek to promote the characteristics and services of their territory in order to: a) attract investment, funds for public works, tourism, company and institution headquarters, fairs, conventions, congresses and exhibitions; b) to promote local strategic sectors and exports abroad (Zapata Garesché 2007).

Above all, external goals are pursued that impact on local development: creating wealth and employment in the region.

In some cases, Latin American local governments use decentralised cooperation to seek an instrument with which to develop this dimension in their international involvement in two ways:

*   The development of decentralised cooperation practices aimed specifically at economic promotion. For example: joint actions to promote tourism or initiatives to generate meeting points between private sectors in the cities/regions of North and South.

*   The establishment of one-off contacts or more permanent instances of dialogue between local governments from the North and South which, although not centred on economic promotion, generate links that may later, over time, lead to formalising economic relations.

An example of this type of motive may be found in the analysis by S. Olaya Barbosa and J. Vélez Ramírez (2008) of the case of local governments in Colombia where the dynamic of decentralised cooperation should be understood in relation to the processes of internationalisation of Colombian territorial bodies, processes that are associated mainly with issues of economic development and competitiveness.

From a political point of view, local government may, through external involvement, seek international recognition of its city/region as a reference point for a public issue/policy, or to publicise its achievements, its capacity for action and even its innovation. This search for international recognition may, depending on the case, be in response to one or more goals:

• Transforming the city into a valid negotiator with institutional bodies/forums on the topic. Examples of this may be found in the cities of Porto Alegre (in the area of participative budgeting), Medellín (in relation to coexistence among citizens), Rosario (strategic urban planning), Curitiba (urban planning and the environment) and Valparaíso (port-cities), among others.

• Promoting the territory and generating alliances that support the city/region's international candidacies. For example: candidacies for declaration as UNESCO World Heritage sites, for the *Capital Iberoamericana de la Cultura* (Ibero-American Cultural Capital), for the UNDP Local Democratic Governance Award.

• Promoting or strengthening internal dynamics in local society, associated with international recognition of the territory's profile and identity. Furthermore, the internationalisation of local institutions frequently legitimises them with civil society.

Decentralised cooperation becomes a mechanism that offers cities/regions opportunities to promote international recognition. Thus, it is not surprising that the vast majority of cities/regions that have de-

veloped international involvement of this type have also been actively involved in decentralised cooperation.

Associated with the political dimension of foreign involvement, in LA there is another area that attracts local government participation in decentralised practices: the problems associated with border areas. At least two political foundations for practices in this area may be mentioned: a) decentralised cooperation provides an 'external framework' (distanced from the disputes, rivalries and historical conflicts that frequently characterise border areas in the region) that facilitates the (re)construction of links between border communities; b) decentralised cooperation with local governments from the North with experience in these issues can contribute to solving the problems associated with these areas. The initiative "Reurbanización del espacio común entre dos ciudades gemelas (Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay y Ponta Porã, Brasil) de países limítrofes como instrumento de cohesión social y creación de ciudadanía con identidad propia" (Reurbanization of the common space between two twinned cities (Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay and Ponta Porã, Brazil) of border countries as an instrument for social cohesion and creation of a citizenship with its own identity), within the European Commission's URB-AL III Programme represents a clear example of this type of political foundation for decentralised cooperation. (See text box N° 1).

From the cultural perspective, the international involvement of a subnational government may be linked to an interest in promoting (with the subsequent generation of income), art, culture, science and sports in the city/region.

As in the case of international eco-

Text box N° 1:

"Reurbanización del espacio común entre dos ciudades gemelas (Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay y Ponta Porã, Brasil) de países limítrofes como instrumento de cohesión social y creación de ciudadanía con identidad propia" Phase III project of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme

As in most border areas in the Southern Cone, the cities of Ponta Porã and Pedro Juan Caballero played the role of 'frontier' throughout the period dating from independence to the 1980s (dominated by conflict between their countries), when a process of easing of tensions in bilateral relations in the subregion began. However, both twinned towns (separated/united by an international avenue) are deeply interdependent and share functional as well as social and cultural relations. The project Reurbanización del espacio común entre dos ciudades gemelas (Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay y Ponta Porã, Brasil) de países limítrofes como instrumento de cohesión social y creación de ciudadanía con identidad propia aims to work with this shared reality. It is an initiative headed by the municipality of Ponta Porã in partnership with the municipality of Pedro Juan Caballero, the Diputación Provincial de Málaga (Malaga Regional Council) and the Paraguay delegation to the NGO Paz y Desarollo (Peace and Development). Started in January 2009, it is planned to last 36 months.

The project consists in joint action between the twinned cities in managing the redevelopment of the border strip (common space) where most of the commerce of both cities is located, with the aim of promoting

social cohesion and creating border citizenry, based on a shared identity. The aims are: to strengthen relations between both municipal organisations and stimulate their joint action; to strengthen links between their civil associations involved with and present at the border; and to promote dialogue and exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices between communities.

The European partners (Diputación Provincial de Málaga and the NGO Paz y Desarollo) provide their experience in frontier interventions of this type. The project's largest impact is expected to be an improvement in the mechanism of integration in society in both cities, i.e. communication channels, promoting commerce and recognising mutual benefits.

For more information on the project, visit the website: www.urb-al3.eu

nomic involvement, some local authorities look to decentralised cooperation as an instrument for promoting these aspects of their territories, through two channels:

• The development of decentralised cooperation practices geared specifically towards promoting the arts, culture, science and sport. For example: co-production of events, festivals, programmes and services; art, sport or science exchanges; mutual support for cultural industries, among others.[10]

• The establishment of one-off

contacts or instances of more permanent dialogue between local governments from the North and South which, although not centred on cultural issues, generates links that may later lead to formalising relations of exchange and joint promotion of cultural activities.

In the field of European-Latin American decentralised cooperation, there exists a specific cultural motive: the historical-cultural links between local collectives on both continents. Direct cooperation between cities/regions facilitates links between their communities.

4.2. Decentralised cooperation to improve institutional quality of Latin American local governments

As mentioned above, the change of era in the local world is occurring at a time when Latin American local authorities have serious institutional weaknesses with regard to taking on new responsibilities and challenges. However, some studies (Arocena, 2001) show (on the basis of specific local experiences and certain institutional changes in some countries) that there is evidence in the region of growing awareness of the need to improve the quality of local government institutions.

In the field of decentralised cooperation, recognition of this need is creating an interest in working in two specific areas among local Latin American governments:

a) Local government's management capacity, with regard to the increasingly numerous and diverse responsibilities and increasing-

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[10] | *Eduard Miralles offers an interesting analysis of decentralised cooperation in the area of culture in his article (2009).*

ly large and complex agendas. 'In order to act directly in development and, at the same time, meet local social demands, Latin American local governments face the challenge of ensuring high levels of efficacy, efficiency and quality in [the design and] implementation of the public policies and management of local public services' (Serra, 2008). This implies redefining an issue largely overlooked by classic development aid models, and which has been at the heart of the problems and difficulties in many of the decentralised practices developed within these models: 'the general conditions that a local institution must meet in order to be able to plan, draw up and execute local public policies' (Malé, 2009).

Within decentralised cooperation, improving institutional quality means developing support initiatives for: training technical and political personnel; promoting a change in public administration culture; organisational design; optimisation of processes or control and evaluation of management; and improvement in operational work processes, among others. Ultimately, it involves generating institutional and managerial innovations that permit improvement in the elaboration and execution of local public policies. This motive is found, for instance, in the projects *Las mujeres transformamos las ciudades. Servicios municipales de atención a las mujeres* ('We women transform cites. Municipal services for women'; URB-AL II) and *Innovación institucional en gobiernos intermedios: la regionalización como un instrumento clave para promover democracias de proximidad* ('Institutional innovation in intermediate governments: regionalisation as a key instrument in promoting grass-roots democracies'; URB-AL III).

It is also present in other initiatives arising from new concepts of development cooperation, such as in the Belo Horizonte Telesalud (Belo Horizonte Tele-health) project.

b) The capacity of local governments to influence issues/factors that affect their institutional quality but which are part of the national agendas. From the perspective of decentralised cooperation, strengthening local authorities institutionally means supporting their actions to reinforce their role in terms of national competitiveness, economics and finance. In this context, the political motive in the actions of certain Latin American governments in decentralised cooperation is linked to the opportunity it provides to generate strategic alliances between North and South to promote an entrenchment in the state decentralisation processes 'as a means of providing more resources and responsibilities, greater capacity to build autonomous projects and transparency in management and use of resources' (Enríquez and Gallicchio, 2003).

Improving the institutional quality of local authorities means also supporting the capacity to influence the topics of interest in the international agenda, 'promoting the presence of local governments in multilateral representation systems, creating their own areas of presence and promoting access

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Text box Nº2:

"Mujeres transformamos las ciudades. Servicios municipales de atención a las mujeres" (2006-2008). Phase II project of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme

The project, coordinated by the Municipio del Distrito Metropolitano de Quito (Quito Metropolitan District Council), had two European partners, the Ayuntamiento de Gijón (Gijón Town Council, Spain) and the Municpalité de Saint-Dennis (Saint-Dennis Council, France), and three Latin American partners: the Intendencia

Municipal de Montevideo (Montevideo City Council, Uruguay), the Municipalidad de Escazú (Escazú City Countil, Costa Rica) and the Alcaldía de Santa Tecla (Santa Tecla City Council, El Salvador).

The initiative involved a triple strategy to promote gender equality in urban local politics: firstly, strengthening public services that deal specifically with women's issues, from the perspective of gender; secondly, integrating the gender perspective transversally through institutional work with technical and political personnel; and finally, strengthening the channels of citizens' participation in local management. All this with the aim of integrating the gender perspective into the municipal political agenda.

Information taken from the article by Laia Franco Ortiz and Elizabeth Maluquer Margalef: 'La capacidad de la cooperación descentralizada Unión Europea-América Latina para innovar en políticas públicas: el ámbito de género' [The capacity of European Union–Latin American decentralised cooperation to innovate in public policies: the field of gender], published in the Yearbook for Decentralised Cooperation 2007, Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union – Latin America, Montevideo, 2008

to multilateral systems of promoting and financing development and global governance' (Serra 2008). Some Latin American cities/regions have found in decentralised cooperation an instrument to improve their

Text box Nº 3:

"Belo Horizonte Telesalud"

In the sphere of local powers, the complexity of the cultural, social and economic transformations in recent decades to urban spaces in large metropolises has generated challenges to public policies that seek solutions to many of the problems

shared by large cities worldwide. Among these problems are issues of public health.

The Belo Horizonte Telesalud project (2003-2006), co-funded by the European Commission within the @lis Programme, was coordinated by the Belo Horizonte Town Council. Its Latin American partners were the town councils of Porto Alegre, Aracajú and Recife in Brazil and in Europe, the Province of Trent and the city of Bologna in Italy, Helsinki and Joensuu in Finland and the Universidad de Roskilde (University of Roskilde) in Denmark. In Belo Horizonte, in addition to the town council, the municipality's IT company and the Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais (Minas Gerais Federal University) were involved.

Focussing mainly on primary health care, offering care support through second opinions, consults and discussions of clinical cases, as well as permanent in-service training activities, the Belo Horizonte Telesalud network connects basic health units and UFMG teaching units with tele-health activities in the areas of medicine, nursing and dentistry. In drawing up the project, two forms of tele-health were chosen: tele-consults and tele-conferences.

Given its repercussions, above and beyond its conversion into a permanent programme of the Belo Horizonte Town Council, the project has become the model for a national tele-health project. Furthermore, it inspired the creation of the Laboratorio de Excelencia e Innovación en Telesalud (Laboratory of Excellence and Innovation in Tele-Health) for Latin America and Europe, facilitating exchange of experiences,

institutional quality in this field, sometimes in association with motives that relate to their international involvement.

4.3. Decentralised cooperation to strengthen local democratic governance capacities in Latin America

Local democratic governance will be determined by its capacity to include actors in the territory and generate network and links between them and local public institutions. In the task of building governance, local authorities have a role to fulfil: 'developing strategic leadership' and 'relational management' (Serra 2008) that permit the generation of dynamics and spaces of agreement between the main local forces and actors and the establishment of a commitment among citizens to the building and management of the region.

Although there are innovative experiences in Latin America in building local governance, it is a recent process and far from generalised over the region, and requires new capacities ('strategic leadership' and 'relational management') and instruments (such as participative strategic planning, participative budgeting, multi-sector alliance building, public-private partnership mechanisms, multilevel partnerships and more) from local authorities.

The interest in developing these capacities and instruments appears in the region as a growing motivation to act in decentralised cooperation. An example of this is the previously mentioned initiative, *Innovación institucional en gobiernos intermedios: la regionalización como un instrumento clave para promover democracias de proximidad*, coordinated by the province of Santa Fe (Argentina).

However, it is worth asking why the growing awareness among Latin American local governments regarding the need to improve their *institutional quality and governance capacities* has found a 'point of support' in decentralised cooperation. The answer is very simple: it makes it possible to generate areas of direct contact and exchange with 'other local political actors', with similar agendas, responsibilities, functions and challenges.

The validity of this argument in contexts with significant socioeconomic or legal-institutional differences between local governments from the North and South is questionable. A response to this question may be found in the comments made by Oscar Madoery (2001) with respect to local development: 'Establishing an axis on the importance of historical, cultural and institutional aspects in known cases of endogenising development necessarily imposes an unavoidable restriction when considering its replicability; however, different aspects of its operation open up the possibility of promising directions for action when one considers local development policies'.
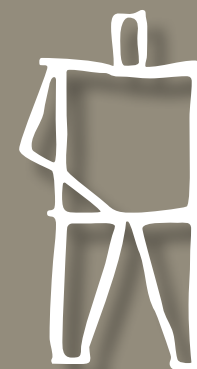
Text box Nº 4:

"Innovación institucional en gobiernos intermedios: la regionalización como un instrumento clave para promover democracias de proximidad". Phase III project of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme

As stated in the Plan Estratégico de la Provincia de Santa Fe (Santa Fe Province Strategic Plan 2008): 'The organisation of the provincial state gradually took on strongly centralised and centralising characteristics, which contributed to establishing an excessively bureaucratic dynamic, inefficient in its results and publicly perceived as distant. Instead of providing greater internal coherence and greater efficiency in state action, the consolidation of this centralism gave rise to the development of fragmentation processes and the imposition of limits and jurisdictions that reduced the state's capacity for intervention'.

In the light of this situation, in 2008 the provincial government started a process of 'regionalisation' with the aim of generating institutional innovations to make it possible to establish a new form of governing. 'Regionalisation makes it possible to institute a new level of proximity between state and citizens, integrate previously disconnected territories and balance provincial capacities. Thus, by redefining the province in spatial terms, the state acquires the tools needed to face the challenge of integration in two senses: socioeconomic and territorial' (Plan Estratégico de la Provincia de Santa Fe).

This process requires the transfer of capacities and resources to new bodies and, consequently, requires profound re-engineering of the provincial state in its administrative and functional aspects. This implies the creation of a new type of state, in the form of establishing each regional node through five civic centres (one for each region in the province) to promote participation and enable the state's presence throughout the territory.

The decentralised cooperation project *Innovación institucional en gobiernos intermedios: la regionalización como un instrumento clave para promover democracias de proximidad* aims to support this key institutional innovation for Santa Fe and promote processes of this type in other local governments.

Partners in the initiative are: the Consejo de Alcaldes del Área Metropolitana de San Salvador (San Salvador Metropolitan Area Mayors' Council, El Salvador), the Gobierno Regional de Arequipa (Regional Government of Arequipa, Peru), the Diputación de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council, Spain) and the Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo de El Salvador (El Salvador National Foundation for Development – FUNDE).

The project represents a clear example of decentralised cooperation motivated by the interest and political decision of a group of partners in strengthening local governance capacities.

For more information on the project, visit the website: www.urb-al3.eu

4.4. Derived motives: the capacity of decentralised cooperation to accelerate advances, generate innovations or encourage decisions

Based on Latin American local government's experience of decentralised cooperation in recent years, basically under the new models referred to in section 3, one can identify a number of new motives for the actions of cities/regions in this field. In this article they are termed 'derived motives', as they do not normally appear when a practice is initiated or at the start of a local government activity in decentralised cooperation. These are motives that are not reflected in the initially expected results of a decentralised action, but which emerge (or acquire relevance) 'during' their execution or on terminating them. They are:

• *Motives associated with the capacity of decentralised cooperation to act as an boost for advances in local public policies, including those considered good practices.*

'With the participation of Porto Alegre in the URB-AL Programme, for instance, representatives from the city's government and society were able to share and learn about experiences of participative democracy from the representatives of other Latin American and European cities. This exchange and "presentation" has obliged city representatives to enter into the internal debate more deeply, verifying the strengths and weaknesses of the Porto Alegre experience and implementing innovations in this direction more rapidly than if this exchange with foreign organisations had not happened, with an undeniably positive effect on social cohesion with respect to the actors involved and, consequently, on the city's social capital.'

Extract from the article by Diego Eugenio Pizzeta 'Algunas lecciones aprendidas por Porto Alegre por medio de su participación en los procesos de cooperación descentralizada entre la Unión Europea y América Latina' [Some of the lessons learned by Porto Alegre through their participation in the decentralised cooperation practices between the European Union and Latin America]. published in the journal Observa, No. 5, Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union–Latin America, Montevideo, December 2008.

'International exchanges are an important factor to enable us to expose our projects and actions to constructive criticism.'

Extract from the interview with the former mayor of Belo Horizonte, Fernando Pimentel, published in the review Observa, No. 2, Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union–Latin America, Montevideo, November 2006.

• *Motives associated with the capacity of decentralised cooperation to generate institutional innovations.*

As indicated in previous sections, there have been a number of experiences in Latin America of local governments who look to decentralised cooperation for support in strengthening institutional innovations that are underway. In these cases, the innovations precede decentralised actions, the latter serving as support. This is the case of the province of Santa Fe in the project *Innovación institucional en gobiernos intermedios: la regionalización como un instrumento clave para promover democracias de proximidad*.

However, as shown by Laia Franco Ortiz and Elizabeth Maluquer Margalef (2007) in the area of gender, which can be applied to other aspects of local management, institutional innovations usually take place at the end rather than the beginning of an action. In these cases, the innovations have an impact over and above the decentralised initiative, although promoted by it.

There is a varied range of experiences with this type of 'derived' institutional innovation: the addition of new topics to the local political agenda: the generation/modification of internal standards or procedures; the creation of new administrative instances or changes to existing ones; and the consolidation of a working team within the municipal organisation chart, among others.

It is very frequent for local governments who have been involved in actions with these types of impacts to find a special motivation to become involved actively in new initiatives in the capacity of decentralised cooperation to generate institutional innovations.

• Motives associated in the capacity of decentralised cooperation to provide an external framework that facilitates interventions or decision-making in regarding sensitive sectors/problems.

Various decentralised cooperation initiatives in border or migration issues may reflect this type of derived motivation. The project Rosario SUMA. *Una Solución Urbana desde una Mirada Alternativa* (Rosario SUMA. An Urban Solution from an Alternative Viewpoint) provides an interesting experience in this context:

the *"Rosario SUMA. Una Solución Urbana desde una Mirada Alternativa"* project.

As well as recognising the importance of the intervention and its expected/achieved results, the city's political authorities and local residents have, in particular, revaluated a 'derived' impact from the participation of Rosario in this decentralised cooperation initiative: the framework it offered for resolving the conflicts that had built up over a long time in a context the hindered urban intervention in the area.

These were basically in two areas:

a) Conflicts with two institutions included in the park estate that occupied public land affected by the project. Previously, residents had started lengthy legal proceedings to defend the public park. Despite the existence of a judicial eviction order, the sports institutions did not leave the site, arguing that the activity they performed had an important social and sporting role for local children and adolescents.

b) There was a high level of intrusion and legal complexity in the case of the public land covered by the park project. There were illegal occupants and others with expired temporary permits on the land, granted by the authorities of the old Ferrocarril General Belgrano (General Belgrano Railway), the previous owners of the land). These permits had, in turn, been transferred to others, a common practice between the rail company and its employees. There were also legal properties on private land.

The international commitments acquired by the city in executing the project (which needed both conflicts to be resolved) obliged the local authorities to develop agreement processes between the actors in the territory and to adopt decisions to resolve both situations. Furthermore, the presence of external actors (viewed socially as 'neutral parties'), such as the partners of the Rosario SUMA project and the European Commission (as co-sponsor), helped generate a 'social climate in the area' more favourable to dialogue and consensus between the actors.

In this context, solutions were found to both conflicts:

a) An agreement with the sports institutions was reached that freed the occupied lands. In order to continue with the activities they had previously carried out but which hindered work on the park, a co-management body (between the council and the two institutions) was set up for the Centro de Iniciación Deportiva y Formación Cultural (Sports Initiation and Cultural Training Centre), which was created within the framework of the project (based on the restoration and refitting of the old rail sheds existing on the site). Under this institutional coverage, each club have been given a space in the centre.

b) An agreement was reached to relocate the families with conflicts relating to intrusion on the land and the forced purchase in the case of families that owned private land affected by the work.

5. Towards the building of local public decentralised cooperation policies in Latin America

From the analysis in this article, it may be concluded that: the relocation of Latin American local governments as *political actors in the local and national scenario* who face *political challenges*; the growing awareness among these actors of the need to improve

their *capacity to govern*; and the growing recognition of decentralised practices as instruments (direct and indirect) to face these challenges represent the political foundations on which the emerging motives in the local world to act in the field of decentralised cooperation are based.

These motives do not just imply new ways of understanding direct cooperation between local authorities, but also involve the need to transform the ways of approaching their practices from local government.

In LA, with some exceptions, there still predominates a 'sector-based view that considers cooperation and international relations in general as an activity in itself, unlinked to the rest of municipal life' (Malé, 2009). This perspective may seem consistent with the understanding of decentralised cooperation as a 'source of funding', but this is not the case when understood in terms that value its qualitative impact on territorial politics and management (as referred to throughout 4th section). They require traditional administrative and one-off action management approaches to be overcome, transforming decentralised cooperation into a local public policy that offers coherence, effectiveness and durability in its practices.

How, though, is a local public policy of decentralised cooperation to be built?[11]

There are numerous studies on public policies and their analysis, construction and training[12]. This article does not intend to discuss these issues more deeply. But we consider it useful to conclude by indicating some of the elements of the scenario for building local public decentralised cooperation policy:

1 | A local public decentralised cooperation policy should have strategic orientations, which permit the practices to be determined by local priorities (defined in a strategic plan or government plan). It assumes that the decisions and activities undertaken are mutually 'coherent' (Subirats et al., 2008) and are integrated into the local authority's set of public policies. It implies recognising that decentralised cooperation represents a *transversal public policy* (which requires work coordinated between the different government departments/areas) and not an activity in itself.

2 | A local public decentralised cooperation policy should have a programme of activities, guided by the strategic orientations and with their continuity ensured. 'Public policies', states Subirats et al. (2008), 'is characterised by consisting of a set of actions that go beyond the level of a single or specific decision but which are not a wide or general declaration'.

3 | A local public decentralised cooperation policy should include activation of specific services within the local public administration, with its own goals, functions, instrument and resources. The placing of these services within the local management organisation chart can vary, but should never limit the transversal nature of this public policy. The management

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[11]| *Although in this article we refer specifically to a 'public decentralised cooperation policy', in most cases it is unlikely to be independent from a 'public international relations policy'.*

[12]| *An extensive analysis on these issues may be found, among others, in: Subirats, Joan; Knoepfel, Peter; Larrue, Corinne; Varonne, Frederic (2008)*

of decentralised cooperation structured on isolated and disperse actions in various areas of government is difficult to translate into a coherent, effective and lasting local public policy.

4 | A local public decentralised co-operation policy should have a regulatory framework, to regulate the activity. Most local governments in the region do not have a specific law that regulates their international activity in general, and even less so one linked to cooperation, largely due to the fact that it is a recent and innovative field in local public action. The establishment of legislation in this field first requires a process of maturing of the international action as a 'public policy', both in the territory and in relation to other levels of government. Although this process will require several years, it is possible and necessary to advance gradually, generating regulatory and institutional frameworks that accompany the development of decentralised co-operation as public policy.

5| A local public decentralised co-operation policy should have citizens' approval, which implies that the activity of the local authorities in this field takes place in a strategic context, i.e., that there is an initial reflection and consensus among the actors in the territory. This may take place, among other mechanisms[13] , in the framework of the city/region's participative strategic planning processes (including decentralised

cooperation and international relations in general as part of the process), or, through the creation of consultative councils with the participation of the different actors from the territory.

It would be disingenuous to ignore the fact that 'immediate demands' in the daily management of Latin American local governments (in contexts of evident weakness in their economic and financial capacity) hinder the transformation (in the short term and in LA generally) of decentralised activity from 'a resource-centred activity into an institutionally-centred policy' (Malé, 2009). It is true that overcoming a vision of cooperation as an additional or peripheral element to government action is not a simple task. It requires, among other things, a long-term effort: promoting a change in organisational culture and consolidating the public cooperation approach in various areas of government, who are, in the end, the central actors in all transversal policies.

It is highly likely, therefore, that the public policy dimension of decentralised cooperation will be built gradually, as the political foundations for local governments to act in it are consolidated. In this process, the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA can contribute a great deal, by promoting spaces for reflection, debate and training, generating consensuses, conducting studies and disseminating their results.

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[13]| *Eugene D. Zapata Garesché (2007) provides an analysis of citizens' agreement and participation mechanisms in the field of local government public policy in international affairs.*

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A year of public decentralised cooperation, new challenges and new perspectives

Sara Martuscelli *

The aim of this article is to take a look at some of the most significant events that have taken place in 2009 in the field of public decentralised coope-ration between Europe and Latin America.

We intend to summarise the advances made and measures implemen-ted by the agents of decentralised cooperation during this year in order to study the main trends and evaluate potential progress.

KEY WORDS

Public decentralised cooperation |
Aid effectiveness |
Climate change |
Social cohesion |
Future prospects |

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1. Introduction

The expanding phenomena of metropolitanisation, globalisation and regional integration have brought profound change to classic models of international relations and the role of the state in this area and, clearly, also to the field of cooperation for development. For cities, there are new challenges that require innovative responses. Traditional formulae are no longer appropriate in this new and constantly changing world.

The current international economic and financial recession has made it even more necessary to examine the basic theory and raise awareness of the reasons why regional governments should structure and lead efforts to promote a presence abroad through instruments that include decentralised cooperation. Equally, public authorities' accountability to their citizens means they must strive to improve the quality and impact of decentralised cooperation.

It is therefore important to establish from the start that public decentralised cooperation cannot simply be reduced to traditional bilateral relations between a municipality or region and its counterparts; otherwise, it is a form of action by local governments that has evolved to acquire a more global and strategic nature.

The Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation UE-LA (Observatory from now on) has, therefore, focused its efforts during the year on constructing a discourse that clearly demonstrates why local governments need to position themselves on the international stage, to develop policies on cooperation for development based on a strategic overall view of their regions.

The role of the Observatory arises precisely from the need to compile and systematise information, to carry out research with the aim of raising awareness and guiding the concepts and practice of decentralised cooperation between, in particular, the European Union (EU) and Latin America (LA).

The work done by the Observatory has, with some limitations, shed light on the progress made and the specific features of EU-LA public decentralised cooperation on the basis of some of the key events in the field in 2009.

Having examined these key events, we will go on to set out some of the issues that have characterised and guided decentralised cooperation and which have involved the direct participation of local governments. We intend, therefore, to summarise the advances made and measures implemented by agents of decentralised cooperation during this year (specially the active participation of the local governments) in order to study the main trends and potential progress.

It must be stated, however, that the events described do not represent an exhaustive selection, and we have not been neutral in our choice of events. This report discusses only a small part of the events and issues arising within the field of cooperation between local governments during 2009. It also reflects the Observatory's focus on dealing with the topics covered on the basis of its own vision of decentralised cooperation.

Clearly, the consequences of the economic and financial recession have had a profound effect on the context within which policies on decentralised cooperation are developed. The question of the effectiveness of aid, which we consider to be the greatest challenge for decentralised cooperation, is therefore the overriding issue, the guiding line that all measures implemented within the framework of decentralised cooperation must adhere to.

We then go on to look at the specific issues of climate change and social cohesion, which have become progressively more important for the work of decentralised cooperation. These two issues focus on vast, complex goals, which, if they are to be achieved, will require new instruments and truly effective cooperation.

To summarise, we will deal with issues that we regard as entirely transversal: visions and ways of focusing and guiding the development of new public policies and policies on decentralised cooperation for development. We will not present 'issues' in the strict sense of the term, but rather transversal themes which need to be tackled and which form part of regions' overall policies.

The specific questions dealt with are:

1. Advances in local governments' contributions to decentralised cooperation.

2. The importance of subnational governments and their role in development processes. The aid effectiveness agenda and the challenge of complementarity.

3. Climate change.

4. Social cohesion.

2. Advances in local governments' contributions to decentralised cooperation

The current economic and financial recession has once more highlighted the undoubted impact of global phenomena on local issues. Nevertheless, we can be sure that decentralised cooperation, networks and the growth of international municipalism now provide subnational governments with the tools to position themselves with regard to these phenomena and to play an ever greater role in decision-making processes related to certain public policies and in certain fields. They have the capacity to introduce multilevel proposals with the potential to impact on national and regional agendas and on the global stage.

The organisation of local governments into networks, whether based on geographical proximity or on common goals, has gained pace as local authorities have become increasingly aware of the need to promote and defend shared interests. Over recent years the national and international networks of local governments have accumulated knowledge, experience and good practice. Their structures have become more firmly established, as have their powers to achieve effective decentralisation and defend their political priorities and social, economic and regional interests.

International municipalism has become a vital tool for expressing and channelling multilevel dialogue whose political effectiveness is no longer in question.

One example is the World Congress of United Cities and Local Governments

(UCLG)[1] which was held in Guangzhou (China) in 2009 and was attended by around 500 representatives of local and regional authorities as well as by other partners and international institutions. The main issues discussed included an analysis of the impact of the economic recession on local and regional governments; advances in decentralisation and the financing of local governments; international negotiations on climate change during and after Copenhagen; and the issue of the effectiveness of development aid and the contribution of local governments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In the area which concerns us, the UCLG's Committee on Decentralised Co-operation, led by the city of Lyon, made an important contribution to evaluating and recognising the role and contribution of local authorities to development and the achievement of the MDGs, not only by participating in the Congress but also by taking part in preparatory work.

This committee is a vital tool for ensuring the political effectiveness of decentralised cooperation, as it helps local governments to work together to develop innovative ideas, channels for reflection and guidance, methodological instruments and best practices.

A key political document is the European Commission's October 2008 Communication 'Local Authorities: Actors for Development'[2], setting out a process of open consultation intended to demonstrate the added value that local authorities bring and the need to strengthen the synergies between actors to make aid more effective.

This Communication represents an important political milestone and a step forward for EU institutions in their recognition of local governments as agents of change and development. Its aims include 'to enhance the involvement of local authorities in aid programming and delivery and policy dialogue at partner country, regional and EU level…'[3]

Nevertheless, in line with the Commission's own principles, if the Paris Declaration agenda is to be fully adhered to and effective progress made in the recognition of subnational actors as agents of development, their powers need to be clearly defined and permanent, structured dialogue is required to ensure cooperation between actors and the various levels of government.

In Europe, in response to the need to establish stable mechanisms for dialogue with local governments, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) organised a meeting of regional associations and groups (national, European and international) in order to create a European platform of local and regional authorities for development.

This new body, named PLATFORMA[4], is committed to gaining increased

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[1] | http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/

[2] | COM (2008) 626 final

[3] | Idem.

[4] | See article by Fréderic Vallier 'La coordinación europea de las autoridades locales y regionales activas en el ámbito de la cooperación al desarrollo. Un año de acción de PLATFORMA' [The European coordination of local and regional authorities active in the field of cooperation for development. A year of activity by PLATFORMA], Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation, No. 7, May 2010.

political recognition of the contribution of local/regional authorities for development cooperation, promoting effective decentralised cooperation and ensuring a real, structured dialogue between local/regional authorities and European institutions.

Its objectives include:

a) coordinating the voice of local and regional authorities when dealing with European institutions, in particular for the definition and implementation of development policies;

b) facilitating networking of information and sharing of experiences;

c) strengthening the participation of local/regional authorities in European development programmes;

d) strengthening links between local government, its federations and civil society, in particular the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD).

PLATFORMA's contribution to the European Development Days held in Stockholm in October 2009 and to the first European Conference on Decentralised Cooperation held in the same year reflects its aim of making the voice of the local authorities it represents heard in European debates on the MDGs and the effectiveness of aid.

Associations of local governments, generally a dispersed and heterogeneous group, have traditionally found it difficult to establish consensus and common positions. Nevertheless, greater experience and some stronger networks are ena-

bling them to improve internal processes for agreeing political priorities and to enhance their political influence.

Meanwhile, the international principles that inform the architecture of development aid and progress made in the concept of good governance have highlighted the need to coordinate these policies among the various actors and countries involved and to encourage a participative approach to policy planning and implementation.

Partnerships between similar institutions represent an innovative tool for attracting resources, exchanging experiences and knowledge and identifying opportunities in order to counter (or at least minimise) the local impact of global problems, thereby defending and promoting the wellbeing of the regions' citizens.

Clearly, to make this possible, local governments must have the tools and the necessary degree of autonomy to act effectively on the international stage and to implement decentralised cooperation for development policies.

The European Charter on Development Cooperation in Support of Local Governance,[5] initiated by the French Presidency of the EU (1 July to 31 December 2008), is an important document in this respect. It presents principles and ways to improve the effectiveness of development aid, support for decentralisation and local autonomy in partner countries and attempts to consolidate the legitimate role of local governments in these countries.

In addition to establishing methods for applying the principle of effectiveness

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[5] *http://www.charte-coop-gouvernancelocale.eu.*

in cooperation policy, the Charter recognises the leadership of national and local governments and the importance of cooperation between the different levels of government to manage the processes of decentralisation and local governance.

In short, the Charter represents a political commitment at European level, one which is especially important in the current economic climate. It recognises the relevance of decentralised cooperation and demonstrates how it is politically linked to the principles of governance and local autonomy.

3. The importance of sub national governments and their role in development processes. The aid effectiveness agenda and the challenge of complementarity

Clearly, one of the greatest challenges, if not the greatest challenge, currently facing cooperation for development, decentralised or otherwise, is how to substantially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of aid.

Policies and debates related to cooperation for development are guided by the need to apply and reinforce the principles of the Paris Declaration, which defines a transversal approach to this issue.

Local governments, their associations and networks and all those involved in international municipalism and the world of decentralised cooperation are thus working to identify good practice and to prepare clear proposals to the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness which will take place in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2011.

The international community will also meet in New York in September 2010 to review the MDGs, the objectives that should form the framework for international cooperation for development. A recurring challenge which must be tackled is that of recognising the full role of local governments and decentralised cooperation.

The challenge for local governments goes beyond just ensuring that they are formally represented at both meetings. Subnational actors are working hard to present firm proposals and to raise awareness of the added value that they contribute and of the role of local actors who can make recommendations that will allow the regional approach to have a real impact on the conceptual and political definition of the agreements drafted.

Although it lacks the necessary local perspective, the aims of the Paris Declaration are transversal and should be pursued by all those involved in international cooperation. It is one of the most important commitments made by the international community regarding cooperation for development and one which, directly or indirectly, poses a challenge which all the parties involved must tackle together.

Nevertheless, despite the time that has passed since the Paris Declaration was signed (in 2005), the principles it set out are still far from being truly implemented. In brief, those principles are: 'ownership of strategies for development; alignment with the policies and systems of the partner country; harmonisation of efforts; results focused management; and mutual accountability and transparency'. All development actors, in both donor and partner countries, clearly still have a long way to go.
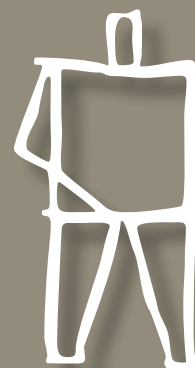
The Paris Declaration was reviewed and extended in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), adopted at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Ghana (2-4 September 2008). In this document, the role of local governments as key development actors was finally, albeit timidly, formally acknowledged.

The Agenda for Action recognises the importance of governance, social progress and environmental challenges as drivers of development. It explicitly mentions the role of local governments in national development policies and recognises the need to support initiatives to strengthen such institutions, highlighting the importance of local experience in technical cooperation.

It thereby clearly recognises subnational governments and civil society organisations (CSOs) as development actors and features of the international development system. Of particular significance is the commitment to engage in open and inclusive dialogue with these actors, acknowledging their critical role in the international system.

The first step needed towards achieving the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, and to ensure that decentralised cooperation is effectively recognised, is for the major international actors to truly accept the added value associated with this form of cooperation (not only in economic terms) and to recognise its conceptual and methodological contributions to achieving the MDGs and to making aid more effective.

It is therefore essential that local governments have structured representation, are coordinated and present specific proposals, and, above all, that they establish mechanisms for ongoing dialogue with major donors and national and international organisations and agencies.

Although subnational actors are not yet sufficiently recognised as key players in development processes, a number of events can be seen as useful steps towards this, in particular because of the development of a structured dialogue and work carried out by the local governments themselves and by their representatives.

The first of these was the organisation by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions of the first European Conference on Decentralised Cooperation in Brussels on 2 December 2009.

At this first even, to be held annually, over 300 elected representatives of European local governments and their counterparts met with the main aim of establishing a regular, representative dialogue "with and between" European actors, partner countries and the European Commission. This conference highlighted the role of local and regional authorities as development actors, driving the creation of cooperation networks between local and regional communities in the North and South and pointing out the added value contributed by decentralised cooperation and the inclusion of local governance as a basic principle of cooperation for development.

At the conference, advance information was given on the European Atlas[6] of Decentralised Cooperation for development. This electronic tool, which forms part of the European portal for decentral-

6| *http://cor.europa.eu/atlas*

ised cooperation, will bring together the projects and contributions made within the framework of aid by local and regional groups in the European Union and their counterparts in developing countries. It is an interactive map that will improve knowledge on "who does what and where", facilitating decision-making processes and contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation for development.

Secondly, in order to achieve the goals described above, the start of the so-called 'Structured Dialogue' is an important step forward. This initiative was launched by the European Commission to promote discussion and involve representatives of local governments and civil society in EU development policy. Conceived as a mechanism for creating a trust and consensus that goes beyond normal negotiation processes, it is intended to improve the effectiveness of all the actors involved in European policy on cooperation for development.

From July of this year the process began of preparing and implementing suitable mechanisms to ensure local governments and CSO are fully involved in order to establish open, inclusive, transparent and results-oriented dialogue.

This 'Structured Dialogue' is intended to be an inclusive process that brings together the Commission and the European Parliament, Member States, civil society organisations and, of course, the local governments of EU Member States and their partner countries.

Meanwhile, apart from EU initiatives, local governments themselves are working to draw on the practices and innovative ideas coming out of decentralised cooperation, especially in preparation for the challenge represented by the forthcoming summit on aid effectiveness to be held in Seoul in 2011.

The work of the UCLG's Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group is of particular significance for helping local governments to establish their positioning on the major issues and challenges that characterise the international development agenda.

The annual meeting of the CIB Working Group took place in London on 25-26 June 2009, after which it published its *Position Paper on Aid Effectiveness and Local Government*[7]. The 2010 meeting was held on 28-29 June with the collaboration of the Observatory. A round table of top-level experts discussed the issues of the aid effectiveness agenda and the monitoring and evaluation of decentralised cooperation policies.

The conclusions of this meeting included some key points on which future cooperation between partners will focus and constitute challenges to be tackled by all the actors of decentralised cooperation. They include:

a) addressing the need for evidence of the impact of decentralised cooperation through the use of assessment tools and case studies.

b) the need to work more closely with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on policy issues in order to develop indicators of the impact of decentralised cooperation.

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[7] *http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/committees/CIB/Upload/newsletters/SP_UCLG_Position_Paper_Final.pdf*

c) the need for Southern local government associations to become more involved in the dialogue between donors and beneficiaries.

d) the need to strengthen domestic accountability.

The Observatory is also carrying out research and in-depth conceptual studies in order to structure, flesh out and raise awareness of a political agenda that brings a local perspective and the added value of decentralised cooperation to international action on aid effectiveness.

A significant study carried out as part of this work, '*De Valparaíso a México: la Agenda de Paris vista desde lo local*' [From Valparaiso to Mexico: A local perspective on the Paris Agenda][8] was published in 2009. The study contains articles and documents on the perspectives and instruments used by local governments to construct a new architecture of international cooperation and to implement the Paris Declaration.

As stated in the Mexico Declaration[9], which concluded the Observatory's fourth annual conference: 'Although at its inception local governments did not form part of the Paris Declaration on the Effectiveness of Development Aid, it is now seen as a key document for defining decentralised cooperation and putting it into practice'.

The Observatory has, therefore, made a commitment to goals which include, 'Raising awareness of the principles of the Paris Declaration and ensuring that they are incorporated in the public meas-

ures and policies on decentralised cooperation of local and regional governments in the EU-LA and other regions of the world'. It is also committed to 'giving local and regional governments the support they need to ensure they are fully represented at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in South Korea in late 2011 so that they can put forward specific proposals, agreed between themselves, on redefining certain aspects of the Declaration and for better tools and policies to implement it'.

Some initial ideas on the Paris Declaration from the perspective of local governments were formulated at the Mexico 2009 Conference, culminating in this Declaration. The Observatory has linked this and its next two annual conferences to these commitments.

As the diagram shows, the Observatory's fifth annual conference, to be held in Brussels on 28 and 29 October 2010, will deal with the principles of decentralised cooperation in the current climate of recession and within the framework of the Paris Declaration, while the sixth conference, planned for 2011 in LA, will be dedicated to preparing recommendations that will help subnational governments present constructive and technically viable proposals at the forum in Seoul.

In the context of the current recession, apart from the consequences already discussed and budgetary limitations, there is a growing tendency for people to question whether local governments should continue to be involved in cooperation for development, emphasising the

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need to prioritise social requirements in their own cities rather than cooperation policies abroad.

To counter this attitude, which local governments must frequently do, it is vital to recall that, for many reasons, resolving local social issues and foreign policies may be two sides of the same coin. Above all, decentralised cooperation and international municipalism are tools that enable local governments to work together and come up with alternatives that broaden, enrich and facilitate real solutions to many of their local problems.

The Observatory is working to show how international criteria can apply locally and to explain the principles behind policies of decentralised cooperation. As a good example to follow, the Observatory is carrying out an in-depth study of the 'local associations for development' mechanism, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of decentralised cooperation and minimising traditional problems of coordination by pooling technical and financial resources to achieve its strategic measures, via local government.

It is more necessary than ever in the present recession to take political decisions strategically and on the basis of clear priorities, reflecting citizens' demands for effectiveness, accountability and transparency from politicians and governments. Local governments must respond to these challenges, especially in the field of international cooperation, for the reasons cited above.

Thus, a strong commitment to ensuring that aid is truly effective, that policies have a visible impact and that the aid lobby's actions have real influence, is now vital if local governments are to justify their decisions and be accountable to their citizens at this time of economic crisis and, in particular, to counter facile calls to abandon local policies on decentralised cooperation for development and on promoting municipalities' international presence.

Bearing in mind that many local governments are limited in the extent to which they may be involved in development processes, it is always crucial to ensure that the priority of international cooperation, whatever its scale, is essentially that of institution building, so that local governments develop their capacity to act on behalf of their citizens. This means selecting types of cooperation and

Figure 1 | Observatory of decentralised cooperation EU-LA conference's course

The Paris Agenda from Local: A first approach	Decentralised Cooperation: Solidarity and Effectiveness	Local Gavernments proposals for Seoul: Local Associations for Development
Mexico 2009	Brussels 2010	Latin America 2011

Source: Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA.

financing that help strengthen local government institutions, enabling them to assume genuinely key roles and ensuring that they are not sidelined or their competences delegated to other development actors.

One of the best ways to achieve this is through the direct management of cooperation by local authorities, especially in the form of local government to local government cooperation.

The budget support mechanism, when applied at local level, is a particularly useful tool for the processes of institution building, strengthening local financial management structures and training human resources.

Another global challenge for local and regional authorities that work as partners in decentralised cooperation is to professionalize its management. This is one of the key aspects of cooperation for local governments: institution building and the creation of social and human capital. To sum up, professionalizing the management of decentralised cooperation means, among other things, establishing a culture of planning and reviewing the measures implemented, and ensuring that local public policies on cooperation for development include assigning municipal officers with experience in the field.

4. Climate change

In addition to the current recession and the crisis affecting the dominant growth model, climate change is another serious threat to the development objectives, as its most severe effects are felt in the sectors and countries which are socially and economically most vulnerable.

In spite of the complexity of the current situation, there are many opportunities for mitigating the effects of climate change that simultaneously allow us to act to reduce poverty and generate the benefits of development.

For these opportunities to be effective, the international system must agree on a substantial reappraisal of international development models: in areas such as energy or combating climate change it is crucial to formulate a common worldwide project.

4.1. Activities and/or actions lead by local governments to mitigate the consequences of the climate change

Activities and actions (mainly executed in 2009), led by local or regional governments will be introduced in this section. Those were aimed not only to generate a major conscience but also to increase the research of solutions to mitigate the climate change harmful effects in people and territory too.

In that direction, the UCLG, as the unified voice of local and regional governments when addressing the international community, is a strategic actor in negotiations on climate change[10], in particular through its work on the local government roadmap for climate change, as are the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) –an international network with 1100 cities- and other international actors.

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[10]| *http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=10544*

The most powerful tool created by towns is the World Mayors and Local Governments Climate Protection Agreement[11], launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in 2007 by a coalition of local government organisations, including ICLEI, UCLG, World Mayors Council on Climate Change (WMCCC) and the C40 Cities - Climate Leadership Group.

This Agreement is the only global agreement by and for local governments designed to implement their strategies on climate and promote their recognition by the international community.

The UCLG actively promotes the signing of the Agreement, as well as the implementation of specific measures, and in particular the promotion of national dialogues to achieve recognition of the essential role of local authorities and the way in which they complement other agreements at regional and national level.

Another example of local governments' activity in this area and the dynamism they have recently exhibited is the drafting of an agreement on water at the Fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2009[12]. As a result of this Forum, many mayors from around the world have subscribed to the agreement which aims to develop water management strategies which respond to global challenges and strengthen the role of local and regional governments in water and sanitation management. Representatives of subnational governments expressed their willingness to adopt integrated strategies to conserve water and contribute to sustainable development, asking national governments and international organisations to foster greater understanding and better exchange of information and, above all, to support local and regional action plans.

On the other hand, from 14 to 18 June 2009 the ICLEI World Congress[13] was held in Edmonton, Canada. 600 participants from 57 countries attended the Congress, whose slogan was 'ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability'.

ICLEI is a global network of 1,100 towns and cities that are committed to sustainable development, an international association of local governments and national and regional organisations for local governments. On this occasion they recognised the need to take more radical and far reaching measures in favour of local sustainability.

ICLEI-LACS (Local Governments for Sustainability's Action Against Global Warming) also continues to promote the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign. This world campaign, which currently includes over 650 municipalities, promotes and executes projects providing technical assistance with innovative approaches for towns and cities interested in action to counter global warming.

To strengthen the work done by local governments, this year local governments have been recognised as actors in the first chapter of the text of the Copenhagen COP 15 Convention (AWG-

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[11]| *http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/news/newsdocs/climate_agreement_es.pdf*

[12]| *http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/upload/template/templatedocs/Pacto_de_Estambul_para_el_Agua.pdf*

[13]| *http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=8783*
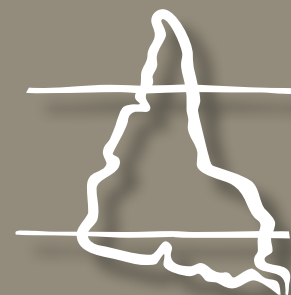
LCA)[14], which deals with long-term co-operative action. However, as we know, the Copenhagen conference, held in December 2009, failed to meet expectations, postponing the signing of an agreement until after 2012.

In spite of the disappointing results of this summit, local and regional authorities continue to organise their lobbying activities to link their measures to combat climate change to development strategies, to be involved in strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change and to have access to internationally established mechanisms.

2009 was an important year for the EU in this area. The EU is at the forefront in international action to combat climate change. Its strategy on sustainable development[15], revised in 2006, is the framework for a long-term vision of sustainability in which economic growth, social cohesion and protecting the environment are mutually reinforcing.

In November 2008, in response to the economic and financial crisis, the European Commission launched a major recovery plan for growth and employment.[16] It includes proposals for 'intelligent investment' in technical and technological capacity for the future, with the aim of making a long-term contribution to greater economic growth and sustainable prosperity.

However, the initiative which really constitutes a fundamental challenge is the EU Policy Package on Climate Change and Renewables[17], which obliges Member States to reduce their CO_2 emissions by at least 20% by 2020. In response to this, an ambitious European Commission initiative was launched in January 2008: the Covenant of Mayors. Towns voluntarily signed the agreement committing themselves to the EU's objectives for 2020 via the application of an action plan for sustainable energy.

The aim is to introduce intelligent sustainable energy policies on the local level which can create stable employment and improve the quality of life of the residents. To this end the Covenant of Mayors' Office encourages the involvement of networks of local authorities and promotes mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and tools between regions.

Significantly, *Diputació de Barcelona* (Barcelona Provincial Council) was the first institution to sign an agreement with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to encourage energy saving and the reduction of CO_2 emissions with the aim of introducing sustainable energy measures in the province's municipalities. The agreement signed was presented in Brussels last March at the 2010 Sustainable Energy Europe Week.

Diputació de Barcelona, through the *Àrea de Medi Ambient* (Department of the Environment) and with the support of the *Direcció de Relacions Internacionals* (Directorate for International Relations), will thus foster the introduction of

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[14] *www.en.cop15.dk*
[15] *COM (2009) 400 final*
[16] *Idem.*
[17] *http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/tackling_climate_change/index_es.htm*

efficient environmental programmes, designed so that they do not increase of local councils' indebtedness but have a positive effect on the environment and lead to energy saving.

In the field of cooperation for development and climate change, the European Commission has made the protection and sustainable management of natural resources a key priority in its policies to reduce poverty.

In particular, *EuropeAid* has this year published a call for proposals under its cooperation programme for non-state actors, Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy,[18] which envisages awards totalling over €62 million for the projects chosen.

In the next few years regional public administrations will be directly responsible for administering and managing projects to mitigate climate change and medium- and long-term measures in the framework envisaged by this programme and by other multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank and the *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo* (Inter-American Development Bank).

In conclusion, the documents drawn up by the Observatory at the 2nd European Union–Latin American and Caribbean Local Government Forum held in Vitoria (Spain) on 5-6 May 2010 confirm that (bearing in mind ecological imperatives, the environmental limits of the present system and the rights of future generations) the priority objectives for governments,

particularly local governments, must incorporate the effects of climate change, defence of the environment and the improvement of ecosystems, especially at regional level.

As well as action undertaken by local government bodies, climate change calls for cooperation and coordination between different levels of government, a high degree of international coordination and decisions on political programmes which involve the private sector and civil society.

It seems clear that political dialogue between different government bodies should enable us to steer economic development in a coherent, structured way towards sustainable sectors, facilitating the financing of activities and the development of new capacity at local level. These opportunities could include, for example the development of renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, providing services with low energy costs, among others.

The EU and the major international actors should push for a global approach to turn the crisis into an opportunity to tackle financial and ecological sustainability and develop a society with low levels of carbon emissions and an efficient use of resources, one which is knowledge-based, and, above all, which encourages social integration.

Local development with an endogenous base is a valuable tool to contain the consequences of the recession in a region. The design and implementation of local programmes for sustainable economic development, support for the

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[18] | *Call for Proposals 2009 - EuropeAid/128320/C/ACT/Multi – Guidelines for Applicants Deadline for submission of Concept Notes: 01/10/2009*
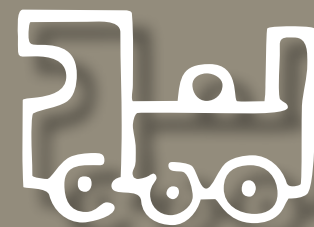
environment, through strategies to create jobs in the green economy, with better qualifications and innovation constitute fundamental challenges.

4.2. Future challenges for local governments and decentralised cooperation

In this sense cities represent a challenge and a laboratory for ideas which can have a determining effect for multiple reasons.

Firstly, environmental policies and strategies must be based on a long-term view, on sharing information and good practices, due to the fact that subnational governments, as closely involved actors, have knowledge and experience based on everyday practice which must be capitalised.

Secondly, local authorities are in a uniquely privileged position to involve the actors in their region and to design and implement policies adapted to the local situation in response to the global challenges imposed by the recession and the consequences of climate change.

In view of all these factors, it is clear that policies related to climate change are a priority area in decentralised cooperation. However, the relative newness of the issue, ignorance of it and its breadth and complexity call for the use of new tools and new forms of cooperation to implement innovative and effective policies.

It is important to determine, especially from the viewpoint of decentralised cooperation, as mentioned above,

the impact of environmental management and the way in which the effects of climate change are tackled in relation to the struggle to eliminate poverty and to achieve social cohesion.

In this sense, 'climatic disturbance', as defined by UN-HABITAT[19], can be, if well managed, an opportunity to develop new models for cities which are better integrated, more sustainable and more equitable. This affects areas as important as town planning and the models for cities, the model for urban transport, infrastructures challenges and new demands for mobility, managing pollution, energy resources, water, hydrological resources, sanitation, and waste, new concepts in urban agriculture and, very importantly, the need to rethink the relationship between urban and rural.

5. Social cohesion

The current world economic and financial crisis, on top of ongoing crises linked to the unsustainability of growth models, is having a severe impact on societies and is actually having very serious social effects with repercussions in governance, especially in countries and cities which, as in Latin America, traditionally have very unequal distribution of income and wealth.

Problems which are mainly socio-economic in nature clearly have a direct impact in the political sphere. As made clear by the Latin-American Observatory of Regional Integration and the Latin-American Faculty of Social Sciences in its publication "Transformar la crisis global

[19] | *State of the Latin American and Caribbean Cities 2010 report. UN-HABITAT. Rio de Janeiro 2010.*

en oportunidad para la cooperación. El desafío de América Latina y el Caribe y la Unión Europea" [Transforming the global crisis into an opportunity for cooperation. The challenge of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union][20], today local governments in many countries have been forced to cut normal running costs and reduce social services. The deepening economic crisis is gradually eroding public confidence in public institutions, increasing unemployment, internal and external migration, and leading to greater poverty, inequality and insecurity, among others.

In early 2009, as the financial crisis deepened, between 10 and 15 million people slid below the poverty line[21], because of rising food and energy prices, exacerbating social problems and inequality.

This makes it more necessary than ever for local and regional governments to take measures to guarantee quality of life and social cohesion on the municipal, metropolitan and regional levels. One of the greatest challenges currently facing local government bodies is that of making a qualitative improvement in the material living conditions of certain groups in the population and overcoming the difficulties of ensuring social inclusion and cohesion.

In the situation described so far, in which the crisis is having an impact on the regional level, local policies must give priority to protecting the sectors which are most disadvantaged and most vulnerable to the crisis, trying to link the processes of knowledge generation and translate them into regional economic activity.

However, currently it is even more important for those involved in cooperation for development to strengthen programmes which help to promote social inclusion and cohesion in their respective regions.

Social cohesion is a multi-faceted concept which not only refers to the inclusion and participation of all members of society in economic, social, cultural and political life but also to a sense of solidarity and belonging to society, based on the effective exercise of citizenship and democratic ethics[22].

Social cohesion, which is an integrated concept, involves combining and coordinating public policies around a 'city project' and the subsequent implementation of this idea in a series of policies dealing with public issues, or specific sectors and themes.

To construct a cohesive society, public policies need to focus on narrowing social divides and providing goods and services which bind society together and favour equitable social development.

Local governments should play a key role in achieving social cohesion, es-

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[20]| OIRLA and FLACSO, *Transformar la crisis global en oportunidad para la cooperación. El desafío de América Latina y el Caribe y la Unión Europea [Transforming the global crisis into an opportunity for cooperation. The challenge of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union],* 2009.

[21]| *Idem.*

[22]| *17th Ibero-American Summit 2007: Cohesión social y políticas sociales para alcanzar sociedades más inclusivas en Ibero América [Social cohesion and social polices to achieve more inclusive societies in Ibero-America]. Discussion document, Ministerio de Planificación (Ministry of Planning), Government of Chile.*

pecially by offering equality of opportunity, ensuring that these objectives are pursued transversally in all areas of local public policy and analysing the community's problems from a multi-dimensional viewpoint.

In this respect, 2009 was an important year, thanks to the launch of the third stage in the European Commission URB-AL Programme. One of the best ways to achieve this is through the direct management of cooperation by local authorities, especially in the form of local government to local government cooperation. We must not fail to recognise the pioneering role the EU has once again played in the framework of the URB-AL Programme, by entrusting a consortium of local government bodies with the coordination of the third stage of this programme aimed at direct cooperation with local governments in LA.

The specific aim of the programme is 'to consolidate or promote social cohesion processes and policies that may become reference models capable of generating debates, and of indicating possible solutions to the subnational governments of LA that wish to stimulate social cohesion dynamics'[23].

The first two phases in the programme (1995-2000 and 2001-2006) provided support for thematic local government networks and were a decisive element in boosting decentralised cooperation between Europe and LA by encouraging participation by many local governments which had no previous experience of cooperation for development.

In the first two phases the programme centred on institutional support for local groups by promoting learning by networking and regional and international cooperation.

The third phase, focusing on 20 major projects for social cohesion on a local scale, represents an important change in perspective with regard to the two previous phases, especially in the content of its measures.

URB-AL III will no longer give direct support to the establishment and maintenance of networks of local governments or finance projects which may emanate from this model of joint work. The programme's new phase goes beyond this, demonstrating the Commission's desire to concentrate its efforts on major local projects through which decentralised cooperation can have an impact on the central issue of social cohesion.

However, in the current situation, it is interesting to emphasise the scope of a programme like URB-AL III for building different and potentially more effective systems for intervention, which can contribute to the development of local public policies for social and regional cohesion.

The programme is still at a very early stage and its dynamics will have to be analysed, publicised and considered in depth, so that we have a clear view of the paths it is following, its possibilities and the challenges involved in drawing up local public policies to promote social cohesion.

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[23]| *http://www.urb-al3.eu*

6. Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to present a brief description of the main events and trends in decentralised cooperation during the year, together with the new challenges they raise and the outlook for the future of the field. As we are dealing with a complex phenomenon that takes many forms and is in a state of constant change, we deemed it practical to look only at general trends with the aim of identifying basic lines of action for the future.

The EU's mechanisms for dialogue and debate with local authorities (Structured Dialogue, the Conference on Decentralised Cooperation, PLATFORMA) are tools which will become more established and flexible as time goes on, enabling subnational agents to become deeply and effectively involved in EU policy-making.

It also seems clear that one of our main goals must be to continue to raise awareness of decentralised cooperation, assessing and demonstrating its actions and its achievements (which are many), the importance of the process and its added value and, above all, the overriding need to establish an in-depth conceptual basis for all these aspects. Some of the mechanisms described, such as the Atlas of Decentralised Cooperation, the CIB Working Group, the Observatory and the URB-AL III Programme, will continue to actively orient decentralised cooperation to meet new and changing challenges.

The networks and activities of international municipalism, such as the work of the UCLG and its committees and of the various forums described in the article, will continue to contribute to raising the profile of local governments with respect to the major donors and national and international organisations at the main forums for debate.

Within this framework, ensuring aid is effective and whether local governments and decentralised cooperation can truly apply the principles of the Paris Declaration are key issues which still require an in-depth academic study and conceptual review, bearing in mind that, as previously stated, these principles still remain to be fully accepted and, most importantly, incorporated into the practices of cooperation for development.

It seems clear, nevertheless, that this debate cannot and must not be treated as a purely academic one. There are many successful practices in decentralised cooperation that should be publicised and built on as real examples of how aid can be effective and the Paris Declaration principles complied with.

Furthermore, as public decentralised cooperation is naturally aligned with the declared principles of the international community, it is even more necessary that local governments genuinely apply these principles and assume responsibility for the effectiveness of aid.

Clearly, the greatest challenge facing local governments is to know how to structure and put forward viable and specific proposals at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which is to take place in Seoul in 2011, and at the review of the MDGs in New York in September 2010.

In the case of both meetings, the challenge for local governments goes beyond just ensuring that they are formally represented. Subnational actors will have to pre-

sent proposals and raise awareness of the added value and role of local actors in order to make recommendations that will allow the regional approach to have an impact on the conceptual and political formulation of these agreements.
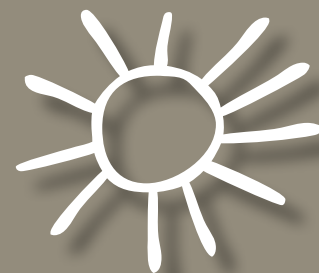
It is also crucial for local actors to participate in the debate on aid effectiveness and its relevance for regional policy so that they can, to some extent, alleviate the impact of the economic and financial recession, as we have discussed.

It is also important that decentralised cooperation features in local government policy-making processes, taking into account all factors, especially those linked to developing social cohesion, to environmental issues and to sustainable models of growth.

Nevertheless, we have seen that the world of decentralised cooperation is one which is in a constant state of change and therefore establishing a common position, formulating specific policies and strengthening multilateral international bodies'

capacity to influence is a slow, complex process and one which local governments, through their networks and association, are working on.

The Observatory is monitoring and supporting this process with interest working continuously to consolidate and strengthen international cooperation by and between local governments, who work together to bring their unique perspective and add value to the contributions of other agents of cooperation for development.

Our final, and surely most important, conclusion is that global phenomena and local issues are interlinked and cannot be analysed separately. Rather, they must be treated as entirely transversal: climate change clearly has an indirect effect on social cohesion, while models for growth (and, consequently, models for local development) have an impact on climate change and the environmental, political and economic sustainability of social and urban processes. Decentralised cooperation must pay close attention to all these processes. This is and remains one of the Observatory's main roles.

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Local governments in Latin America and global climate change: opportunities for decentralised cooperation with European governments

Eduardo Vega López*

KEY WORDS:

Climate change |
Mitigating and adapting |
Decarbonising the economy |
Political options |
Public decentralised cooperation |

This article aims to identify the risks and challenges associated with climate change at the local and regional level. It deals specifically with certain regions and cities in Latin America, paying particular attention to the present role of decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments in Latin America and Europe and opportunities for further developing it.

The text includes information about the plans and initiatives currently being carried out to combat the effects of climate change and provides important evidence to reinforce the view that public decentralised cooperation can make a valuable in situ contribution to dealing with the challenges of climate change.

Decentralised cooperation is an insuperable opportunity to share experience and knowledge, institutional skills and local management priorities. This study is based on the conviction that even more demanding standards can be met for both the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change, through the systematic and committed use of public decentralised cooperation between governments in Latin America and between these governments and their European counterparts.

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1. Introduction

Global climate change has two basic structural causes. One is associated with the excessive consumption of fossil fuels (oil, gas, petroleum, fuel oil, coal, etc.) by activities such as the transport of goods and people, power generation, industrial production, contracting services, the running of homes, governments and cities. The other is related to the use of land where vegetation (woods, jungles, mangroves, scrub) has been cleared for agriculture and livestock or for the growth of towns, property development, tourism and conventional infrastructure.

Excessive consumption of fossil fuels and changes in the use of wooded land cause significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These accumulate in the atmosphere, leading to a gradual increase in the average temperature of the planet. This global warming subsequently modifies rainfall patterns, relative humidity and wind movement, and causes the melting of the polar ice caps and snow on mountain tops, rising average sea levels, and an increase in the intensity, frequency and duration of tropical storms and hurricanes.

The consequences of the emission and accumulation of GHGs have substantial social, economic and environmental costs, which translate into net present and future losses in human welfare in a wide range of locations. Most reports and studies concerning the socioeconomic and environmental consequences of different climate change scenarios are drawn up on a global, national or sector scale (Stern 2006, Galindo 2009, ECLAC 2009a, ECLAC 2009b, SEMARNAT 2009) and, to a lesser extent,

a local and/or regional scale (WB 2008, CUD 2009, ECLAC-IDB 2010). The same trends can be seen in discussion about the design and implementation of the most suitable public policies to deal with the present and future costs of different climate change scenarios.

This article, however, is concerned more with identifying the risks and challenges associated with climate change on the local and regional level, specifically concerning certain cities and metropolitan regions in Latin America (LA). It pays special attention to the present role of decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments in LA and European Union (EU) and the opportunities for developing it further. It aims to answer the following three questions:

- ¿What are the main local and regional challenges related to global climate change in Latin America?

- How are local and regional governments in Latin America dealing with these challenges?

- What opportunities and political options does public decentralised cooperation (PDC) open up for local and regional governments in LA and the EU regarding the *in situ* challenges of climate change?

2. The local and regional challenges of global climate change in Latin America and the relevance of public decentralised cooperation

Climate change is a global process whose causes and consequences involve

specific areas. It has direct or indirect adverse effects on vulnerable municipalities and regions, where real people live. They have private or jointly owned property and work in a range of productive activities in rural and urban areas. Although the process is global, climate change has different local and regional repercussions. While these are potentially serious, they may be avoided to some extent if we have access to well-designed studies and scenarios and appropriate *in situ* strategies for adapting to and mitigating them.

Various regions and population groups in LA have already experienced the extreme weather conditions associated with climate change scenarios. They include prolonged drought, intense heat waves, flash floods and exceptionally severe hurricanes, which may have even more serious consequences in future if urgent measures are not taken on a local and regional level.

The social and economic risks of such extreme events over time depend on the combination of climate-related threats in each area and on the sociodemographic and economic-productive vulnerabilities in these areas. However, the local sociodemographic and economic-productive vulnerabilities associated with climate threats may be more or less intense in practice and may involve different types and degrees of risk according to how timely and effective is the design and implementation of measures for mitigating and adapting to climate change in each location.

It is in this sense that the role of local and regional governments in meeting the challenges of climate change is so important, and decentralised cooperation between them can be seen as an insuperable opportunity to share experience and knowledge,

institutional capacity and local management priorities, in order to prevent the most serious negative events and promote alternatives for sustainable regional development.

We can say that *in situ* risks (R) depend on the threats envisaged as a result of climate change (CCT), the demographic and economic vulnerability of each town, city or region (DEV) and the public policies in place to counteract them, especially as a result of PDC. This can be expressed in the following formula, where t can include different moments or periods of time:

$$R_t = f(CCT, DEV, PDC)_t$$

This general formula for in situ risks in climate change scenarios in LA can be applied to different regions, as can be seen in the following map of vulnerability (ECLAC-IDB 2010).

In addition to ecological damage and the subsequent alterations in the availability of environmental services in LA, the greatest risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change which can translate into significant present and future social costs are concentrated in densely populated and economically important cities and metropolitan areas.

In the above map we can see, for example, the metropolitan regions of capital cities in Central American countries, whose populations are increasingly exposed to extreme events. They range from 1.2 million to slightly over 2.6 million inhabitants: Guatemala City (Guatemala); Tegucigalpa-Comayagüela (Honduras); San Salvador (El Salvador); Managua (Nicaragua); San José (Costa Rica); and Panama City (Panama). Belize City is no longer the capital of Belize, having been destroyed by hurricane

Figure 1: Latin America and the Caribbean: Hot Spots.

□	Increased vulnerability to extreme events (e.g. hurricanes)
▮	Areas in pale red correspond to sites where biodiversity is currently severely threatened and this trend is very likely to continue
●	Sharp increase in extinction of: mammals, birds, butterflies frogs and reptiles by 2050
●	Coral reefs and mangroves seriously threatened with warmer sea surface temperatures
●	Under the worst sea-level rise scenario, mangroves are very likely to disappear from low-lying coastlines
●	Water availability and hydroelectric generation seriously reduced due to reduction in glaciers
◎	Amazonian: loss of 43% of 69 treet species by the end of twenty-first century; savannization of the eastern part
◎	Increases in aridity and scarcity of water resources
◎	Cerrado (tropical savannah region of Brazil): losses of 24% of 138 tree species for a temperature increase of 2°C
◎	Reduction of suitable lands for coffee growing
◎	Severe land degradation and desertification
◎	Río de la Plata coasts threatened by increasing storm surges and sea-level rise
◎	Ozone depletion and skin cancer

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Taken from: ECLAC-IDB 2010, Climate Change: a regional perspective, Riviera Maya, Mexico, February 2010

Hattie in 1961, and since 1970, Belmopán, with just over 13,000 inhabitants, has been the capital. The populations of the Central American countries are shown on the following map.

The table number 1 shows LA's ten most important metropolitan regions in demographic and economic terms. They are located in coastal areas and deltas, by lakes, in mountain areas or on high plateaux and each has its own combination of climate-related threats, demographic and economic vulnerabilities and public policies in place to deal with present and future risks from climate change. In view of these threats, vulnerabilities, policies and risks, there are,

in theory at least, many opportunities for public decentralised cooperation between the governments of these cities and metropolitan areas in LA, and between these governments and their counterparts in the EU.

2.1. The economics of climate change in Latin America and its social and public policy challenges

According to the ECLAC-IDB report (2010), greenhouse gas emissions caused by deforestation in LA and the Caribbean fell by 10.4 percentage points between 1990 and 2000 compared with global emissions

Figure 2 | Population in the countries of Central America

Belize ⊕ 268,800
🌑 51,4%.
⊙ 4,025

Guatemala
⊕ 12,700,000
🌑 50,0%
⊙ 1,720

Honduras ⊕ 7,347,000
🌑 52,1%
⊙ 977

El Salvador
⊕ 6,875,000
🌑 42,2%
⊙ 2,129

Nicaragua ⊕ 5,483,000
🌑 43,1%
⊙ 835

⊕ 4,322,000
🌑 37,4%
⊙ 4,505

Costa Rica

Panamá ⊕ 3,228,000
🌑 34,2%
⊙ 4,434

⊕ Total population, 2005
🌑 % rural population, 2005
⊙ Per capita GDP, 2005

Source: Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito (Savings and Credit Cooperatives) / ECLAC 2007
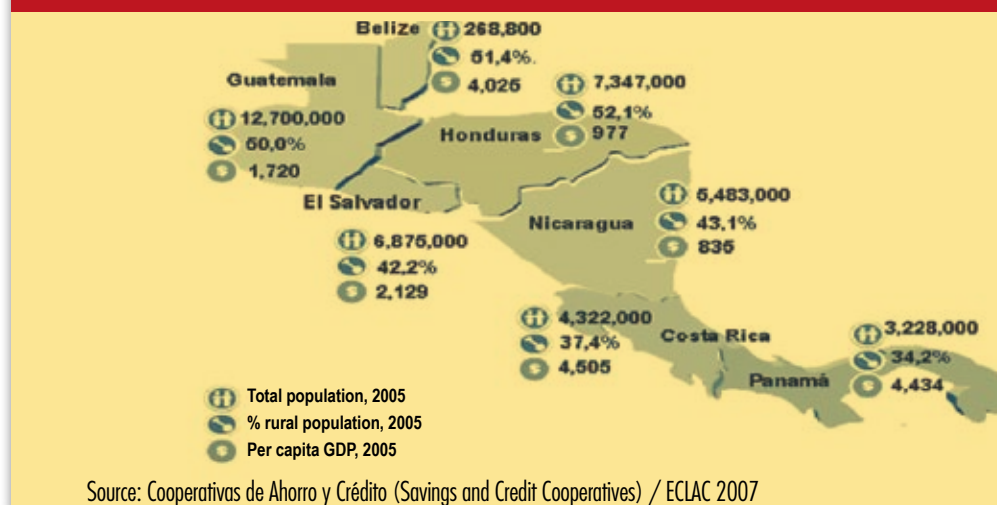
from the same cause. GHG emissions from energy consumption in LA accounted for a virtually constant proportion of global GHG emissions between 1990 (4.6%) and 2004 (4.7%).

Pressure to use wooded areas for agriculture and livestock or for property development, tourism, mining and urban growth and pressure leading to excessive consumption of fossil fuels are the result of a combination of perverse incentives in the market and in current policies: prices, subsidies, regulations, contracts, government budgets, energy profiles, technology patterns and the general orientation of economic and public policies.

Many public and private decisions which could modify this structure of institutional and market incentives are linked to decisions taken in globalised markets, by multilateral organisations and by national governments (federal and central). An example of this is the decision to con-

tinue or not with prospecting, drilling and the extraction of the oil and gas in the fields lying under the Gulf of Mexico after the accident that took place on April 20. Will this decision be taken by British Petroleum, the United States Congress, the White House, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in its forthcoming sixteenth Conference of Parts (COP16), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, or the government of Louisiana? Who will pay for the damage related to the loss of marine species, sea and coastal pollution, the losses in a number of fisheries and tourist destinations, and additional GHG emissions?

However, many other decisions that influence the maintenance or removal of perverse institutional and/or market incentives (although not necessarily in the case referred to above) are the responsibility of local and regional governments. By establishing new urban and metropolitan environmental regulations, modifying the

Table 1 | Largest metropolitan regions by population and economy in Latin America

World ranking	Ranking in LatAm	MR	Country	Population 2009	Area km^2	Population density	Projected population growth 2009-2030 %
8	1	Mexico City	Mexico	19,885,000	2,137	9,305	0.6
9	2	São Paulo	Brazil	19,505,000	2,590	7,531	0.7
17	3	Buenos Aires	Argentina	12,925,000	2,590	4,990	0.4
20	4	Rio de Janeiro	Brasil	11,400,000	1,580	7,215	0.5
34	5	Lima	Peru	7,915,000	648	12,214	1.0
35	6	Bogotá	Colombia	7,750,000	414	18,720	1.2
47	7	Santiago	Chile	5,775,000	790	7,310	0.5
59	8	Bello Horizonte	Brazil	4,810,000	1,010	4,762	1.1
72	9	Guadalajara	Mexico	4,170,000	712	5,857	0.9
80	10	Monterrey	Mexico	3,725,000	712	5,232	1.0

Source: prepared in-house with figures from Demographia 2009

size, duration and recipients of current subsidies, better use of their budgets and support for public decentralised cooperation, local and regional governments can move closer to patterns of local and regional development which favour energy decoupling (energy consumption vs. Gross Domestic Product -GDP-), decarbonisation of their respective metropolitan economies (carbon emissions vs. energy consumption) and the halting of net deforestation (deforestation vs. reforestation in woodland, jungle, mangrove and scrub areas).
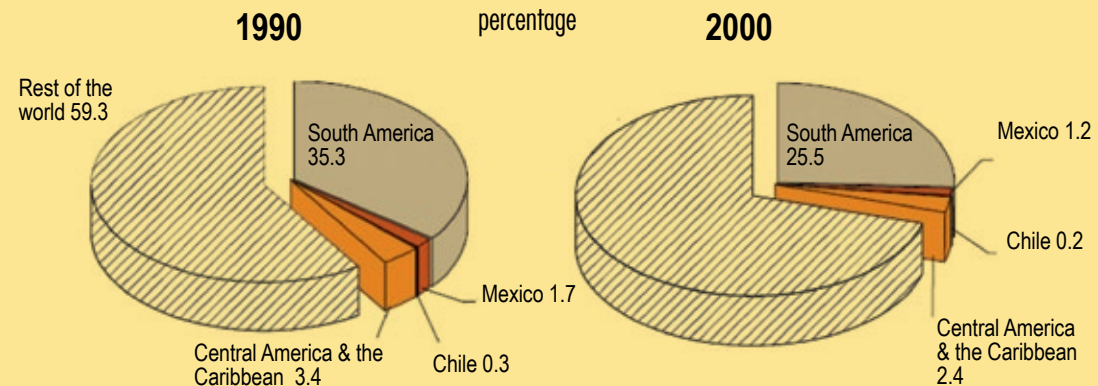
The social, economic and environmental costs of climate change must be considered in the light of an estimation of the cost of inactivity (or doing nothing costs), maintaining conventional decisions (or business as usual conducts, BAU) or taking significant, long-term measures to mitigate carbon emissions and adaptation to climate change.

Doing nothing different from what has generally been done for decades implies deciding to deal administratively with (not solve the problem of) the reduced availability of water, falling agricultural production, more frequent extreme climate events, the emergence of old and new illnesses affecting public health (malaria, dengue fever, cholera, leishmaniasis, AN1H1 flu, Chagas disease, etc.), greater road congestion in cities and metropolitan areas, bad air quality, and the social conflicts which will surely increase in these scenarios of greater shortages of natural resources, environmental services and the failure to meet everyday needs.

For example, for the Mexican economy, the estimated cost of inaction could amount to a little over 6% of annual GDP, while the costs of mitigating 50% of current carbon emissions would be around 2% of this GDP (Galindo 2009). Similar estimates have been made for Central America and several countries in South
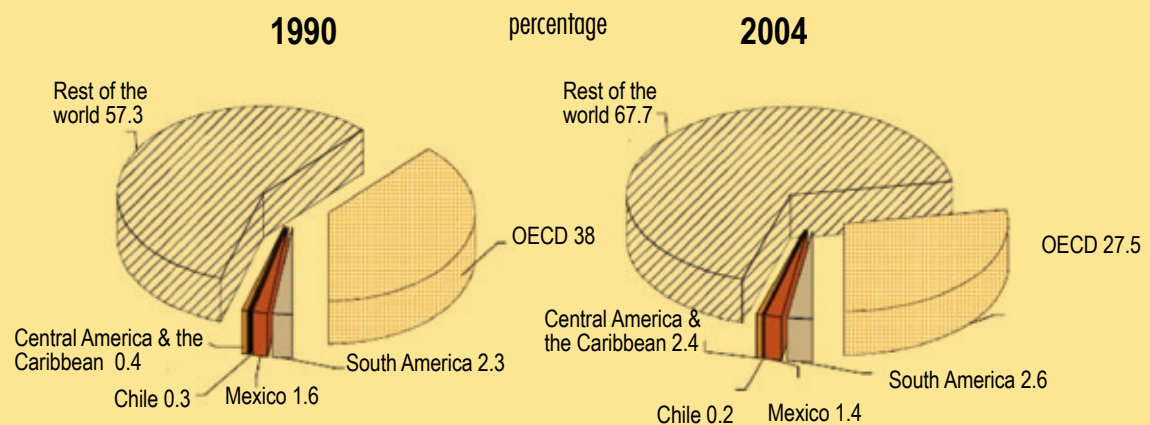
1990   percentage   **2000**

Rest of the world 59.3

South America 35.3

Mexico 1.7

Central America & the Caribbean 3.4   Chile 0.3

South America 25.5

Mexico 1.2

Chile 0.2

Central America & the Caribbean 2.4

Source: Prepared in-house from figures from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the World Resources Institute (WRI). "Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) Version 6.0" at www.cait.wri.org. 2009.

Latin America and the Caribbean:
contribution to greenhouse gas emissions from energy production and consumption

1990   percentage   **2004**

Rest of the world 57.3

OECD 38

Central America & the Caribbean 0.4

Chile 0.3   Mexico 1.6   South America 2.3

Rest of the world 67.7

OECD 27.5

Central America & the Caribbean 2.4

Chile 0.2   Mexico 1.4   South America 2.6

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) based on figures from the World Resources Institute (WRI). "Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) Version 6.0" at www.cait.wri.org. 2009.
Note: OECD emissions exclude Chile and Mexcio
Source: ECLAC-IDB 2010

America (ECLACa 2009 and ECLACb 2009). In all these cases the conclusion is that mitigating emissions and adapting properly to climate change is less costly socially, economically and environmentally than deciding to do nothing and opting for 'business as usual' solutions.

2.2. Projects and initiatives in progress for the mitigation of climate change scenarios and adaptation to them

According to the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC, 2007), mit-
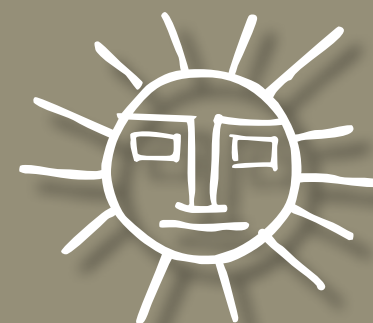
igation measures are concerned with directly reducing GHG emissions and/or maintaining and increasing capacity for the capture and storage of carbon dioxide in different types of sinks. The same source states that measures to adapt to climate change include adjustments in natural and social systems in response to climate changes and their effects, whether these are projected or real. Its importance is due to the fact that, even when mitigating measures are successful, initiatives to adapt are still needed as a result of the climate-related threats stemming from cumulative GHG emissions in previous decades. (for further information visit http://www.ipcc.ch/home_languages_main.htm).

There are variations in the effectiveness of such measures for mitigation and adapting to change. Mitigation can be measured in terms of net reductions in emissions and the amount of carbon equivalent captured and stored. The effectiveness of measures to adapt can be measured in terms of prevention and the monitoring of damage and costs avoided or kept at low levels. These levels of effectiveness can also be achieved with differing degrees of efficiency, i.e. using the best economic and institutional options available or incurring excessive expenditure. Both criteria are important when designing and implementing public policy packages to take effective action in climate change scenarios.

Table 2 | Progress in the public agenda on climate change by local governments in Latin Americas

	Climate change programme	Mobility and transport corridors	Updating road system and road links	Bicycles, parking and cycle lanes	Energy recovery from urban waste
Bogotá	In progress	Trans-millenium	Completed	Progress +++	No
Buenos Aires	In progress	Metrobus	Completed	Progress +++	No
México City	In progress	Metrobús	In progress	Progress ++	Programmed
Lima	In progress	In progress	In progress	Progress +	No
Río de Janeiro	In progress	In progress	In progress	Programmed	No
San Pablo	In progress	In progress	In progress	Programmed	No
	Intelligent buildings	Integrated neighbourhoods	Risk atlas and early warning systems	GHG emissions inventory	GHG emissions monitoring
Bogotá	In progress	No	No	No	Yes
Buenos Aires	In progress	Programmed	No	No	Yes
México City	In progress	No	In progress	Yes	Yes
Lima	No	No	No	No	In progress
Río de Janeiro	In progress	No	No	No	Yes
San Pablo	In progress	No	No	No	Yes

Source: prepared in-house with information from http://www.c40cities.org/, http://www.metropolis.org/metropolis/, http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/, http://www.plandemovilidad.gob.ar/, http://www.sma.df.gob.mx/cclimatico/principal.php, http://www.mobilicidade.com.br/,
http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/desenvolvimento_urbano/comite_do_clima/.

According to our general formula for *in situ* risks:

$$R_t = f(CCT, DEV, PDC)_t$$

Measures for mitigation try to reduce CCTs while those for adapting attempt to counteract or regulate DEVs. The effectiveness and efficiency of mitigation and adaptation can be increased via the exchange of experiences and by building management capacities through public decentralised co-operation agreements.

Hitherto many local and regional governments in LA have undertaken major projects for mitigating and adapting to climate change but, unlike other issues in their public agendas, such as education, health and gender equality, they have not taken full advantage of the many opportunities offered by public decentralised coopertion in connection with the challenges of climate change.

The table number 2 summarises the progress of various local governments in LA to date. These and other achievements could be enhanced in these same cities and metropolitan areas, while those that are taking a leading role in any of the projects concerned could share their experience and knowledge with other Latin American and European governments.

The government of Bogotá has gained a great deal of experience since 2000, when the Trans-millennium trans-

Table 3	Options for transporting 10,000 people		
Vehicles	Units	Space (m2)	Fuel (litres)
	2000	24000	200
	167	8800	80
	71	3550	40
Source: http://www.plandemovilidad.gob.ar/			

port corridor was inaugurated. Since then it has inspired and advised other local governments in LA so that they can reproduce this successful project. Now it is going further with its proposal for an integrated public transport system (IPTS) which includes links between different forms of transport, improvements to the infrastructure of reserved lanes, parking facilities, pre-payment and single card schemes, and innovative financing mechanisms to make the IPTS more flexible and more efficient. This experience could be very valuable for Mexico City, where, for example, institutional and marketing difficulties still impede the introduction

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[1] *For further information visit:(http://www.ipcc.ch/home_languages_main_spanish.htm).*

of a single travel card for any form of transport.

Mexico City, on the other hand, has developed knowledge and skills in the preparation of inventories for GHG emissions and in the whole process of verifying, inspecting and monitoring emissions and renewing the vehicles that circulate in the metropolitan area. It has also made significant advances in the environmental management of its carbon sinks in wooded areas on ecological conservation land and of green areas and public spaces in cities. These could be its strong points in possible public decentralised cooperation agreements with other local and regional governments.

The government of Buenos Aires is introducing a plan for sustainable mobility based on three pillars: public transport as a priority, healthy mobility, and traffic control and road safety. As well as extending the underground rail network and encouraging cycling, it encourages the extensive use of transport corridors with the Metrobus with the following convincing figures (see table N. 3).

For many years, local and regional governments in the EU have accumulated expertise and developed businesses and public institutions linked to greater mobility and urban transport, incorporating different forms of transport in genuinely integrated systems which are effective and efficient, including the operation of flexible pre-payment schemes for users with substantial discounts for yearly and monthly season tickets and for special categories of user (young people, the elderly, disabled, etc.).

In addition to persuasive arguments for public decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments in LA and Europe, the information on current plans and initiatives presented here provides important evidence of the value of public decentralised cooperation in meeting the local challenges of climate change today.

3. How public decentralised cooperation can tackle these challenges and build on the experiences referred to

Public decentralised cooperation aims to go beyond the conventional scope of international cooperation based on asymmetrical relationships in which one party offers cooperation, assistance or financial support for the activities of the other. Far from reinforcing the donor-recipient dynamic, PDC is intended to develop the capacity of local government bodies and strengthen horizontal and reciprocal ties between the municipal and regional governments taking part in this scheme.

As Malé (2006) says, the public decentralised cooperation is '...the expression of a profound trend in the development of international relations, reflecting the changes occurring in this field as a result of the crisis of the nation state, especially in the context of regional integration, the quickening pace of economic globalisation and the newly recognised importance of the region from the viewpoint of strengthening local development.'

This table attempts to summarise what has already been said about PDC (Malé 2006; Gutiérrez Camps 2006; Sarraute 2008; Ortega Hegg and Enríquez Villacorta 2009; Malé 2009). It shows bilateral and multilateral (networked) local and regional

Table 4| Basic scheme of public decentralised cooperation			
	Project	Programme	Strategic
Bilateral relations	Joint action to deal with a specific issue	Set of packaged projects with a common perspective and similar political orientation. Reciprocal public intervention with multi-year calendars	Twinning of cities or regions Explicit intention to influence national or global agendas from the local or regional standpoint
Network	Projects derived from PDC between two or more local or regional governments with a joint budget, fixed timescale and dealing with a specific issue	Set of packaged projects with common perspectives and similar political orientation. Multi-municipal public intervention with multi-year calendars	Lobbying to defend position of local or multi-municipal actors Long-term PDC to strengthen the presence of municipalism on a global scale

Source: prepared in-house with informaton from the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation UE-LA

decision-making processes according to the instruments used (projects, programmes, strategic alliances) for the joint management of public affairs and the development of longer-term plans with a structural perspective to strengthen local influence on national and/or global decisions.

However, despite the advances and importance of PDC in different areas of municipal and regional management, it has not been significantly developed with regard to taking an informed position on climate change scenarios. As mentioned in paragraph 2.2 of this article, the plans for action on climate issues (and relevant documentation on programmes) currently in force in LA cities and metropolitan areas are the result of individual initiatives and not associated explicitly with PDC. This does not mean that we can dispense with PDC in this area. On the contrary, we are convinced that even more demanding standards can be met for both the mitigation of GHG emissions and adapting to climate change, through the systematic and committed use of PDC between governments in LA and between these governments and their European counterparts.

3.1. Lessons learned, institutional obstacles and opportunities for local and regional development through public decentralised cooperation

PDC has gradually gained acceptance and is producing results. From the lessons learned we can identify some priority areas

where there has been a positive impact:

- Combating poverty and promoting social inclusion.

- Human rights.

- Gender equality.

- Preparation of municipal budgets.

- Management of municipal development projects.

- Urban planning.

- Restoration of historic centres and architectural heritage

We have also learned that unless we reliably evaluate the good results and valuable experiences obtained through PDC and create the institutional and budgetary conditions to maintain and develop such projects, they may no longer be regarded as a priority and the results obtained may be gradually lost or degraded.

It is therefore necessary to identify both the difficulties facing institutions and the opportunities for local and regional development through PDC. In addition to good joint planning and budgeting of public measures implemented via PDC, it is also essential for the participating governments to jointly monitor and evaluate the projects.

Some of the obvious institutional obstacles for PDC are related to:

- The short term of office of most local and regional governments.

- The fact that these terms may not coincide.

- The conventional decentralisation underlying many specific cases.

- Political and electoral rivalry between some local governments and their respective national governments.

- The emphasis on declarations and speeches regarding the measures being implemented

We would insist, therefore, that the targets set and the potential outcomes of measures both to mitigate GHG emissions and to adapt to climate change could be achieved more effectively and efficiently through PDC agreements between governments in LA and the EU.

The institutional obstacles faced by local and regional governments, to which we have briefly alluded, have not prevented certain substantial *in situ* advances in their rollout of measures to combat the potential effects of climate change. With regard to the six Latin American local governments we have discussed, these advances include:

- The governments of Lima and São Paulo are currently preparing their climate action programmes (or equivalents), while those of Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro are already being implemented.

- The government of Bogotá pioneered transport corridors and the redesign of urban mobility using different means of transport, a model which has been replicated by the current governments of Buenos Aires and Mexico City.

- The governments of Bogotá and Buenos Aires have replanned their cities with new road networks.

- Advances can be seen in Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Lima

in the growing use of bicycles in cycle lanes constructed along certain routes in cities and in university areas, and in main thoroughfares on Sundays. There is clearly a need to develop further specialised infrastructures both for the use of bicycles and for the parking of conventional vehicles so that travellers can transfer to bicycles for the remainder of their journey.

• The government of Mexico City plans to redesign its urban waste collection network, including transfer, separation and processing stations, and to recycle the methane produced to generate power.

• The government of Buenos Aires plans to develop integrated neighbourhoods, although in almost all of the six cases mentioned work has begun on the construction of smart buildings that make significantly better use of natural light and ventilation with net benefits in energy, environmental and financial terms. Such buildings also make better use of drinking water, treated water and conventional energy, while the provision of ample underground parking helps absorb the impact of vehicle use on cities and roads.

• Although the government of Mexico City has significant experience of preparing GHG emissions inventories, and all the cities studied have developed emissions monitoring systems, the construction of emissions inventories, together with risk maps and early warning systems for extreme climate-change-related events, would seem to be the Achilles heel of these programmes.

Important precedents for these local measures to mitigate GHG emissions, at least in Bogotá and Mexico City, can be found in twinning programmes between these Latin American cities and the city halls of Madrid and Paris in the late 1990s.

In the case of Mexico City, in particular, there was significant mutual cooperation between specialist government work groups and European city councils on issues such as the treatment and recycling of wastewater, refuse collection and the integrated management of urban solid waste, the reorganisation of road networks and the management of public transport (underground and buses), monitoring and improving air quality, and the protection and good use of public spaces and urban natural heritage. Although these experiences of cooperation were not originally conceived as part of an explicit plan to tackle the risks, threats and weaknesses associated with climate change *in situ,* they were important from the point of view of replacing an excessively sector-focused, unconnected and conventional approach to local public administration (refuse collection and public cleaning services, water supplies and drains, public transport, parks and gardens services and air quality management) with a newer, more integrated approach under the general concept of 'urban sustainability'.

More recently, in 2006, the *Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional* (Spanish International Cooperation Agency) signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) within the framework of the 'Hub for Innovative Partnerships', developed as part of its ART programme for regional and local development. This initiative fosters a new type of multilateralism based on local and regional social actors and governments which should sup-

port the development of local agendas on climate change[1].

Since June 2009, this ART-UNDP initiative, designed from a PDC perspective, has explicitly included local action to tackle the challenges of climate change through programmes, projects and measures that contribute to reducing GHG emissions (mitigation) and investments to protect cities against local risks and weaknesses associated with climate change (adaptation). An initial phase of this cooperation is currently being implemented in Montevideo, (including the Canelones, San José and Montevideo departments).

The document drafted for the purposes of this initiative "Cambio Climático Territorial. Desarrollo Local Resiliente al cambio climático y de bajas emisiones de carbono en los departamentos de Canelones, Montevideo y San José" ("Regional climate change. Local development to adapt to climate change and reduce carbon emissions in the Canelones, Montevideo and San José departments"), emphasises the need to develop and share expert knowledge and specialised information systems (inventories and monitoring) to identify the local level risks linked to climate change. It also points out the importance of identifying the opportunities and development priorities that could, at this local level, be driven forward by innovative cross-sector and interregional alliances based on PDC (ART-UNDP/URU/09/003).

The initiative's main aim, according to this document, is to achieve the following targets by mid-2012:

• Target 1: To develop regional climate change strategies based on a thorough study of the risks, opportunities and priorities associated with low carbon development.

• Target 2: To empower the relevant interested parties in the planning and management of risks and opportunities to improve cities' resilience.

• Target 3: To develop alliances and decentralised cooperation to support cross-sector, interregional and multidisciplinary measures.

• Target 4: To launch effective, tangible initiatives to tackle the challenges of climate change *in situ* and to promote local and regional development with low carbon emissions

With regard to these challenges, it is also crucial to support and closely monitor other initiatives such as those proposed by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), whose next meeting in Mexico City (November 2010) includes the Mayors' Climate Change Summit[2].

One of the main results expected from this meeting, which precedes the United Nations Conference of Parts on Climate Change (COP16) to be held in Cancún, Mexico, later this year, is that the current plethora of declarations and debates on the challenges and possible consequences of climate change will be turned into action and concerted measures with published calendars containing short-, medium- and long-term targets. This represents another opportunity to raise awareness of the PDC experience gained in other areas of local and regional public management and for it to have a

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[1] *For further information visit: http://www.undp.org/spain/decentralize.shtml.*
[2] *For further information visit: http://www.cities-localgovernments.org*

decisive role in the agenda for immediate action to mitigate GHG emissions and adapt to climate change.

The World Mayors and Local Governments Climate Protection Agreement states that half of the world's population now lives in urban centres and regions and accounts for 75% of the energy consumed. The urban population is projected to grow to over two thirds of the world's population by 2030. It also argues that the cities and metropolitan regions most vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change will be those that have seen rapid demographic and economic growth and where suitable measures to limit carbon emissions or to adapt to climate change have not been implemented. Its main commitments, in line with the World Mayors Council on Climate Change (World Mayors Council on Climate Change)–UCLG 2007, are:

1. To measure and report annual GHG emissions and work to continuously reduce them so that by 2050 emissions will be at 60% of 1990 levels worldwide, and 80% of 1990 levels in the relatively more developed countries.

2. To implement complementary national, subnational and international plans that will give local governments sufficient resources, authority and mandate to take on these roles and responsibilities (decentralised cooperation vs. conventional cooperation).

3. To construct a sustainable energy economy through saving energy and the use of new and existing renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in order to reduce de-

pendence on fossil and nuclear fuels and to reduce carbon emissions.

4. To implement measures to adapt to and prepare for climate change through local government planning, development and operational mechanisms, prioritising the most vulnerable cities.

5. To ensure that each national delegation at COP16 includes designated local government representatives to ensure that local priorities and measures are included in future negotiations.

6. To call on national governments to work jointly with the international community to establish compulsory carbon limits in order to quickly and significantly reduce GHG emissions in the short term and, by 2050, to reduce them by 60% worldwide in comparison to 1990's levels.

4. Opportunities for public decentralised cooperation between Latin American and European governments to combat climate change and its consequences

As previously argued in this article, climate change is a global process whose causes and consequences involve specific areas. Although climate change is a threat for all the nations, cities and regions of the globe, it is clear that it will affect each one at different times and with varying intensity. Levels of exposure to the risks posed by climate change vary even further given the de-

mographic and economic differences that exist in each town or region. It is therefore important to point out that the *in situ* risks of climate change are more serious in some cases than in others. While most of the diagnoses and policy measures carried out by public authorities in this area are based on averages and likely trends, which allow for greater analysis and better projections of the climate change scenarios thus produced, in the real world most people experience constant change and see the effects of climate on their own cities and regions.

LA is one of the regions most threatened by climate change and one of the most vulnerable from a socioeconomic perspective. Furthermore, the northwest, central-southern and south-eastern regions of Mexico, various regions on South America's Atlantic coast and certain areas of the Andes and the Pacific coast are highly exposed to the risks of desertification, drastic reductions in the availability of water, loss of biodiversity, unpredictable tropical storms and more intense hurricanes.

The likelihood of the most severe outcomes of climate change occurring also depends on what is done, or left undone, in terms of energy policy, forestry conservation and rural development, policies on urban mobility and goods transport, urban and regional planning, the integrated management of urban solid waste, etc. Specific measures to mitigate GHG emissions and adapt to climate change should be applied to these, and other areas of global, national and federal decision-making, by the governments of Latin American cities and metropolitan regions.

4.1. The current reciprocal decentralised cooperation agenda to combat climate change

Reciprocal decentralised cooperation between local governments in LA and the EU is a very attractive public policy tool that has already demonstrated its usefulness and effectiveness in diverse areas of public policy and municipal management. The potential local effects of climate change also make it advisable to implement PDC policies aimed at avoiding, reducing and controlling its social, economic and environmental costs. Issues related to climate change are not yet central planks of the current PDC agenda, but they should be made so, and the following decisions and measures implemented via the PDC route:

- Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of local and regional governments to construct GHG emissions inventories (legacy).

- Establishing systems to monitor and analyse GHG emissions (flows).

- The construction of a risks map and early warning systems for extreme events (diagnosis and publicising).

- Improvements to ad hoc civil protection programmes (disaster prevention and response).

- Replanting urban spaces and encouraging the creation of integrated districts to change mobility and transport needs.

- Fostering the construction of smart buildings and infrastructures.

- Designing integrated systems for managing urban solid waste that en-

courage the recovery of methane emissions to generate power.

• The construction of cycle routes, special parking areas and the use of bicycles for short journeys.

• Improving the connectivity of the road networks and reorganising traffic flows at certain times on major and minor thoroughfares.

• Developing integrated urban, suburban and metropolitan transport systems with the construction of dedicated public transport corridors.

Of these possible joint actions on climate change by LA and EU local governments, the first four of these measures and the last one are of particular significance. The other measures in the list (numbered 5 to 9) are also important, but the first four and the last are indispensable and could perfectly well be the start of advantageous exchanges between local governments.

The first two (strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of local and regional governments to construct GHG emissions inventories (legacy), and establishing systems to monitor and analyse GHG emissions (flows)) are crucial because of the importance of measurement and establishing 'base lines' for public action to set viable targets for reducing GHG emissions over the next two decades. Inventorising GHG emissions allows us to determine the sources of such emissions and the processes involved in them, as well as their volume and relative proportions. Systems for monitoring GHG emissions allow us to determine the pattern of such emissions and changing trends, which in turn makes it possi-

ble to define 'business as usual' scenarios and scenarios in which measures to mitigate or adapt to climate change are introduced. The government of Mexico City has accumulated over 20 years' technical and management experience in monitoring polluting emissions and drawing up emissions inventories in general. More recently it has gained specific experience of monitoring GHG emissions and this could be shared with other local governments. Similar considerations apply to the experience accumulated in these fields by the Paris City Council.

Two other measures in the list, the construction of a risks map and early warning systems for extreme events (diagnosis and publicising), and improvements to ad hoc civil protection programmes (disaster prevention and response) are also viable priority options for decentralised cooperation between local governments in view of the importance of being fully aware of all the risks and vulnerabilities to which the area is exposed and the urgent need to have effective programmes to provide immediate assistance to the public to prevent danger to people, property and the environment.

Finally the tenth and last measure in the list, which refers to the desirability of developing integrated urban, suburban and metropolitan transport systems with the construction of dedicated public transport corridors, is undoubtedly an area of opportunity, where the local councils of Bogotá, Buenos Aires and Mexico City could exchange experience to improve their respective systems, while the experiences of European local governments in interconnecting urban and suburban public transport systems (underground, trains, trams) could be very valuable.

This prioritisation of local action in response to climate change conforms to the main commitments of the so-called Covenant of Mayors (Leipzig Charter, Aalborg Commitments, Local Agenda 21, EU municipal governments agreement), namely:

- Producing local GHG emissions inventories.

- Drawing up action plans to reduce carbon emissions and enhance urban sustainability.

- Developing mechanisms to encourage greater use of renewable energies and more sustainable patterns in total energy consumption.

- Improving urban mobility and public transport.

- Emphasising public participation and civil protection in view of the likelihood of extreme events.

- Sharing technical know-how and management experience among local and regional governments.

These and other measures should be part of compulsory agendas to deal with climate change under the leadership and responsibility of local and regional governments, on the basis of which there should also be an obligation to explicitly incorporate a shared commitment to assess progress and results through PDC agreements (bilateral or via networks).

In some cases this could make it necessary to redesign legal and regulatory frameworks (LRF) and administrative and organisational processes (AOP) as well as identifying the parties who are proactive, supportive, indifferent and opposed (PSIO) to the economic and budgetary requirements (EBR) for introducing and carrying out measures such as those listed above.

These public policy options to deal *in situ* with the possible consequences of climate change should be included in PDC agreements between Latin American and European governments.

Figure 5 |

AOP

PSIO   EBR

LRF
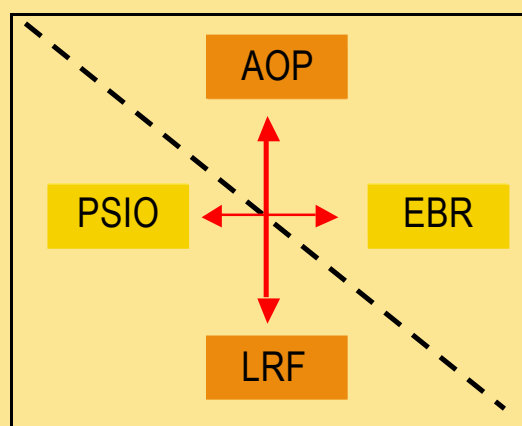
⇒ Institutional and socioeconomical redesign to motivate bilateral agreements and nets through the PDC
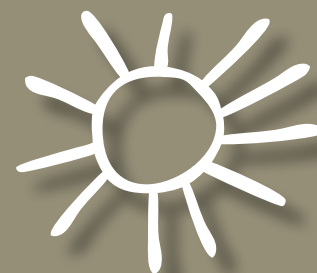
4.2. Potential agenda to develop public decentralised cooperation for COP16 and in the post-2012 context

In the run up to COP16 in Cancún (Mexico) in late November and early December 2010, and the UCLG and Mayors' Summit on Climate Change meeting in Mexico City at the end of November 2010, the political and public policy positions relating to these issues have acquired a higher profile and become of wider interest.
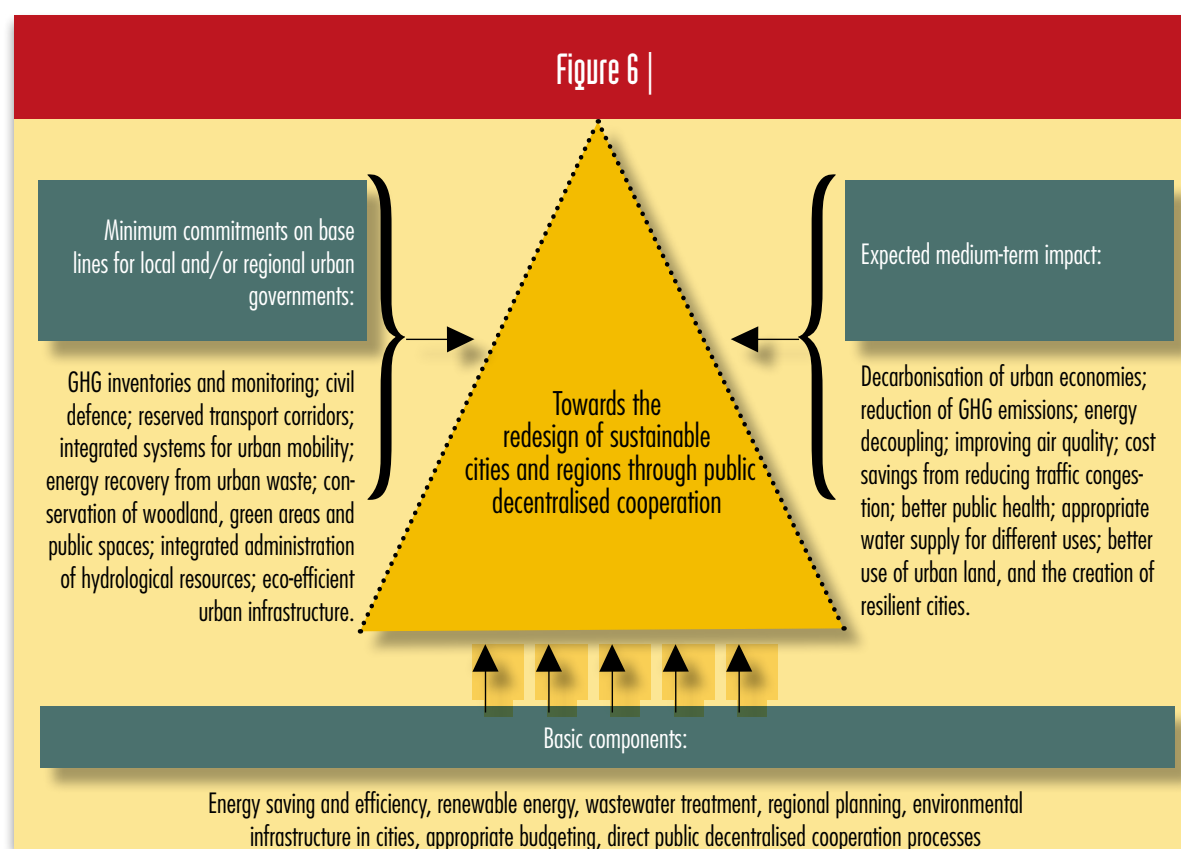
We need to take advantage of these forums for multilateral discussion and negotiation to include PDC as an effective, efficient and potentially sustainable strategy and tool for regional management on global, national and local agendas. A significant step forward in these forums would be to achieve the recognition of PDC as an officially recommended institutional mechanism for strengthening commitments from now until post-2012 and assessing potential results up to 2020 and beyond.

The following figure summarises the basic components, the minimum commitments and the expected impact of the potential agenda for developing PDC in preparation for COP16 and post-2012 negotiations.

Among the basic components of policy to deal with local climate change

Figure 6 |

Minimum commitments on base lines for local and/or regional urban governments:

GHG inventories and monitoring; civil defence; reserved transport corridors; integrated systems for urban mobility; energy recovery from urban waste; conservation of woodland, green areas and public spaces; integrated administration of hydrological resources; eco-efficient urban infrastructure.

Towards the redesign of sustainable cities and regions through public decentralised cooperation

Expected medium-term impact:

Decarbonisation of urban economies; reduction of GHG emissions; energy decoupling; improving air quality; cost savings from reducing traffic congestion; better public health; appropriate water supply for different uses; better use of urban land, and the creation of resilient cities.

Basic components:

Energy saving and efficiency, renewable energy, wastewater treatment, regional planning, environmental infrastructure in cities, appropriate budgeting, direct public decentralised cooperation processes

scenarios is the establishment of base lines associated with GHG emission inventories and the introduction of systems to monitor such emissions and identify local risks and vulnerabilities resulting from climate change. Using these base lines, local and regional governments can produce a calendar for meeting a series of minimum commitments which will, in turn, allow them to design integrated policies for sustainable development in their respective cities and metropolitan areas. PDC should be one of the key ways to achieve significant results in pursuing these objectives, while there should be a partial reduction in the costs of moving towards 'resilient cities', via a range of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In the short term and, more particularly, in the medium and long term the positive impact of initiatives such as the one illustrated in the second figure could translate into the gradual decarbonisation of urban economies and energy decoupling, which, by reducing GHG emissions and limiting the effect of the risks and vulnerabilities we have referred to, would help to make the urban-metropolitan structure more resilient.

For these results to come about in the medium term, the underlying 'basic components' are those which apply public decentralised cooperation to policies on energy, regional issues, the environment, budgets and urban/metropolitan re-planning, the same policies that could be central to the COP16 agenda. This would, furthermore, give greater weight and prominence to the proposals made by local governments in LA and their EU counterparts in the context of this summit.

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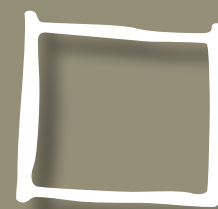
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*Coordination between public decentralised cooperation and civil society in Europe. Methodological proposals from the **Conseil Général de l'Hérault** case study and other European examples*

Georges Bonan*

KEY WORDS

Civil Society |
Interaction |
Participation |
Gobernability |
Territory |

When local government initiates or updates its decentralised cooperation policy, seeking success for its public action, it faces the challenge of obtaining the adhesion of civil society. This is a complex task because local government has different models of cooperation which lead to different behaviours or strategies in relation to civil society.

The organisations, associations and parastate institutions that of which organised civil society consists each have a specific strategy, which have in common the desire to participate in cooperation policy and obtain funding for their activities.

If it wishes to open a dialogue with civil society, local government needs to analyse its composition and the foreseeable strategies for each of the main components identified, which is synthesised by a mapping of the actors. There is also a further element to consider, the territory, which is where local government and civil society are located.

This analysis, based on various European experiences, demonstrates that coordination between local government and civil society is a dynamic and permanent process, which is born out of political will and which progressively improves the degree of acceptance of decentralised cooperation policy in civil society. Through the proposal for a methodology consisting of three key stages, and using a range of instruments that permit the generation of participation by civil society and the development of good governance, it is possible to build consensus, credibility and legitimacy for decentralised cooperation policy, these being the fundamental pillars for the sustainability of the process and the social cohesion of the territory

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1. Introduction

Today, most local governments have integrated the need to 'open up to international issues' and to develop 'actions' relating to decentralised cooperation. To take action, some have built real policies based on an established strategy, rather than acting as opportunities arise. Setting up a policy of decentralised cooperation means building local public policy in the sense of Aristotle's *Politics* and the Greek *polis*, which is defined as 'the body of citizens' as well as a 'human group' and a 'city', 'originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life '.

A policy of decentralised cooperation consists of three basic elements that make up a system:

- A local government.
- A body of citizens: civil society .
- The territory where these two protagonists act.

The operation of this system has as its goal, along with the other public policies led by local government, the improvement of the living conditions of its inhabitants, which in the context of the 21st century and the 'de-cohesions' caused by the neoliberal model and the economic, financial and environmental crisis, may be termed 'improving social and territorial cohesion'.

When analysing relations between local governments and civil society, one finds there are numerous types of relations arising from the variability of these three components and their interaction: local government, civil society and the territory. These impede a synthetic vision and, in the end, weaken relations between local governments and civil society, beyond governance in the processes of decentralised cooperation, all within a process of permanent and interdependent change.

This article aims to identify the interaction in order to construct a methodology that allows this area of relations to be rationalised and the chances of success for decentralised cooperation policies to be optimised. The discussion focuses, firstly, on the sociological mechanisms of evolution, based on a brief presentation of the three 'protagonists' that interact in the

Figure 1 |

Local government

The Polis
civil society
and the territory

Social and territorial cohesion

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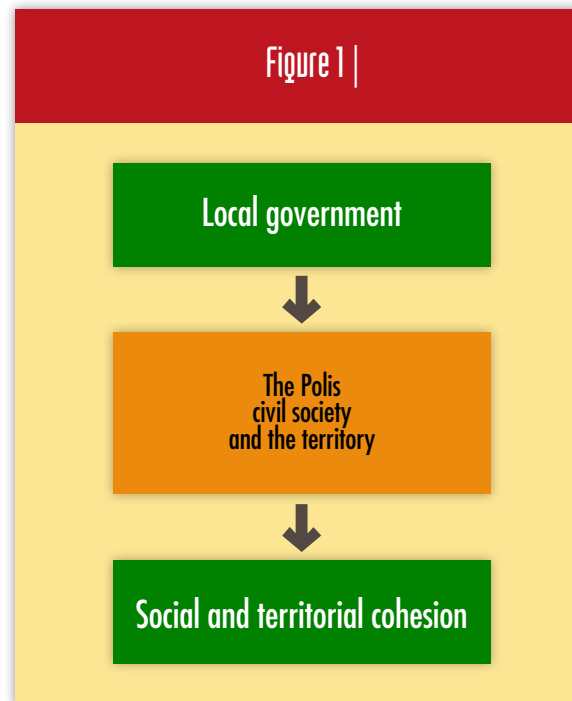
[1]| *Aristotle:* **Politics.** *330 BC.*
[2]| *From the Latin* **civis:** *Citizen.*

decentralised cooperation process, secondly, on identifying the different behaviours and strategies that mark the actions of these actors and, thirdly, based on the situations generated by their interaction, on demonstrating the dynamic and permanent mechanisms of the coordination process between these actors and on designing methodological proposals to build a coordination strategy.

This article is based on the experience over the last 15 years in the *Département de l'Hérault* (Department of Hérault) in France and in the world of decentralised cooperation, as well as other European examples that aid in placing the content of the article in the context of local realities.

2. Three protagonists: Local government, civil society and the territory

When discussing the relationship between local government and civil society, there are two key words that are immediately prominent: 'governance' and 'citizen participation'. In local government, once these two commitments have been stated (which is today generalised to most public decentralised cooperation policies), switching from words to deeds means local governments have to face a complex problem and exercise in which improvisation and experimentation predominate.

'Discussing *governance* means discussing heterogeneity, flexibility, plurality, instability, fluidity, responsibility, flexibility, transversality and hybridisation'[3]. Why? We might find many answers to that question:

1. Because local government has different behaviours and types of decentralised cooperation policies that are reflected in different behaviours of civil society.

2. Because civil society is not homogenous in its components or its actions, and before initiating a dialogue, the existence of convergences or divergences must *a priori* be identified in relation to the strategic orientations of local government. Hence it is necessary to analyse its composition and the possible strategies of each of the main components identified.

3. Because the territory has different imbalances that influence local government politics and the demands of civil society.

Understanding these 'actors' in detail is the first step towards recognising the only stable elements, the 'constants' in this 'permanently changing world'.

2.1. Local government and models of decentralised cooperation

The involvement of local governments in decentralised cooperation focussed initially, due to delegation to NGODs, on the target territory for intervention and its inhabitants, leaving to one side local governments' own territories and citizens. The reactions of civil society (in terms of both participation and criticism) have favoured the development of local governments, who have progressively built two perspectives on the processes of decentralised cooperation, which focus, on the one hand, on the target territory for cooperation

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[3] *Hélène Rey-Valette, Sylvie Lardon and Eduardo Chia: 'Governance: Institutional and learning plans facilitating the appropriation of sustainable development', 2009.*

and, on the other, on the territory 'forgotten' until now, that of day-to-day concerns. The forms of managing decentralised cooperation have in turn followed this evolution and, today, three models of decentralised cooperation may be identified among the practices of European local governments[4]:

- Decentralised cooperation based on cooperation delegated to an NGOD, who are actors associated by local government to the process of decentralised cooperation.

- Decentralised cooperation based on direct functional cooperation between autonomous municipalities, seeking synergies between the different actors to improve implementation of the decentralised cooperation programme.

- Decentralised cooperation based on 'joint action' approaches, where the need to strengthen civil society's participation is a priority thanks to an integrated vision of coordination between the actors and territories and co-ownership of the decentralised cooperation process.

Beyond this schematic division, there are numerous variants and, furthermore, within this analysis, local government itself must be considered in greater detail.

On the surface, the local government is a well-identified institutional structure that, *a priori*, unlike civil society, operates as a single actor, with an homogeneous strategy and behaviour. But experience shows that it is in fact a mosaic of sub-groups of actors

that are not 'reading from the same script', which sometimes means the development of decentralised cooperation is impeded by internal resistance to local government. The most frequent example is to find support lacking among political opposition groups, but other opposing forces may appear and/or coordinate due to divergent interests (e.g. budgetary competition from other projects). Thus, the first step required is that of identifying this opposition and building coordination between the actors in local government itself. It is essential for the different components of local government to be convinced of the utility of decentralised cooperation, to share the policy and action programme so that local government 'speaks with one voice'. This required work on internal governability what may prove the key to success of the decentralised cooperation process.

Having made this point, the main part of this article considers local governments as a single entity.

2.2. Civil society and its different components

The main form of segmentation that appears when one considers public policy is that of sector, where the public sector is differentiated from the private sector. If actors in the 'public' sector are generally well identified because of their institutional role and well-defined legal support, private sector actors are situated in a more confused environment. Some authors use the term 'civil society' to encompass all actors that do not belong to the public sector, others distinguish between the 'economic' private sector and citizens. In any event,

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[4] *See the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA Yearbook for Decentralised Cooperation 2008: Jean Bossuyt. 'Coordination of European local governments and civil society in their territory in decentralised cooperation'.*

when attempting to identify the strategies of these actors, as in this case, it is common to divide them into three groups, based on their logic:

- **The public sector**, which answers to a logic of public interest.

- **The private sector**, which is guided by market forces and economic priority.

- **Civil society**, as an actor that provides the spaces and means to coordinate and include public interests[5].

Civil society is a group of actors in which organisations and individuals play an intermediate role between the home, the state and the market. There is enormous diversity among its actors, depending on national and local characteristics. These may include communities, cooperatives, social, cultural, economic or environmental associations and groups, neighbour associations, unions, employers' associations, private associations, churches and confessional groups, NGODs, universities, the media and more[6].'

A supplementary level of analysis may be added to this classification, observing processes of decentralised cooperation:

- **The private sector** includes enterprises that obey two different types of logic in the context of decentralised cooperation:

- Large enterprises are connected to the international market and often answer to headquarters and decision-making centres located outside the territory of the local governments, which cannot be considered part of civil society.

- Small and medium-sized enterprises, whose directors, rooted in the local territory, should be considered as local private enterprises and also individuals within civil society.

- **Civil society** , brings together:

- The citizenry, as a body of individuals that act individually, although influenced by 'societal' changes[7], which may be termed 'non-organised civil society'.

- The organisations and organised associations and bodies with collectively established goals, which may be considered the true territorial agents, as 'organised civil society'.

2.3. The territory and its importance in decentralised cooperation policies

The territory is a key element in the analysis of relations between local governments and civil society in decentralised cooperation policies for different reasons:
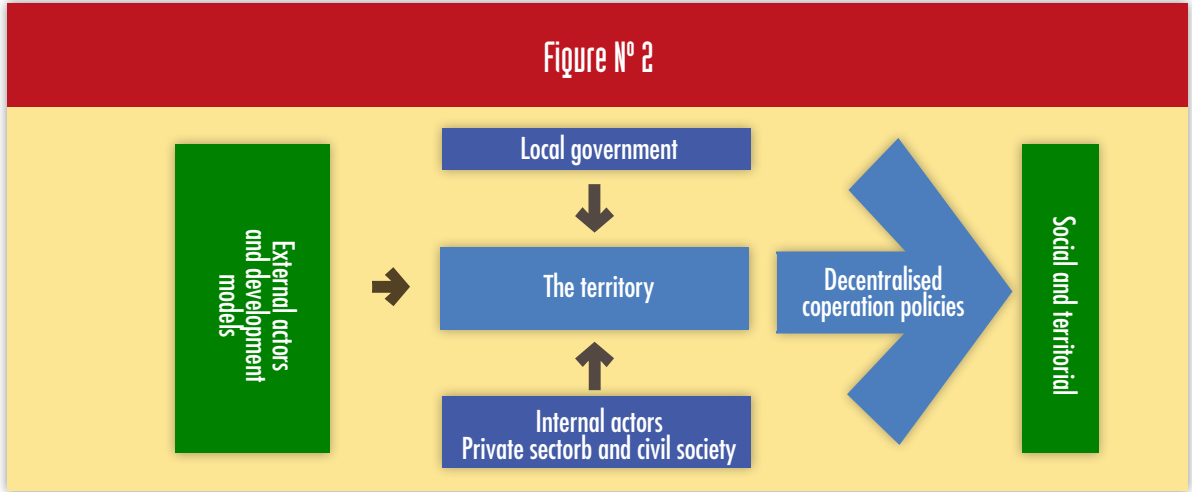
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[5]| *Jean Bossuyt.*

[6]| *Jean Bossuyt.*

[7]| *'With regard to society, its organisation, its values and its institutions'.*

		Civil Society			Private Sector	
		Organised civil Society				
Local government	Citizenry	Associations and organisation	Partially state controlled services	NGODs	SMEs	Large companies

Box Nº 1

- The territory is the institutional base for local government, which is responsible for improving living conditions and improving social and territorial cohesion.

- The territory is the geographical base where actors are identified so they can be involved in the decentralised cooperation process and is the site, 'the coliseum', where relations develop.

- The territory is an element that establishes a distinction between:

- Internal actors that live and act in the territory, where civil society is located.

- Actors external to the territory, such as institutional actors (a municipality's state, region or province), supranational actors (European Union), international organisations and local government networks, which must also be included in the actor coordination process in decentralised cooperation in a relationship geared towards complementarity[8].

The territory is also the base for identifying the needs of civil society and, from

Figure Nº 2

External actors and development models → The territory ← Local government / Internal actors Private sectorb and civil society → Decentralised coperation policies → Social and territorial

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[8]| *Multilevel coordination.*

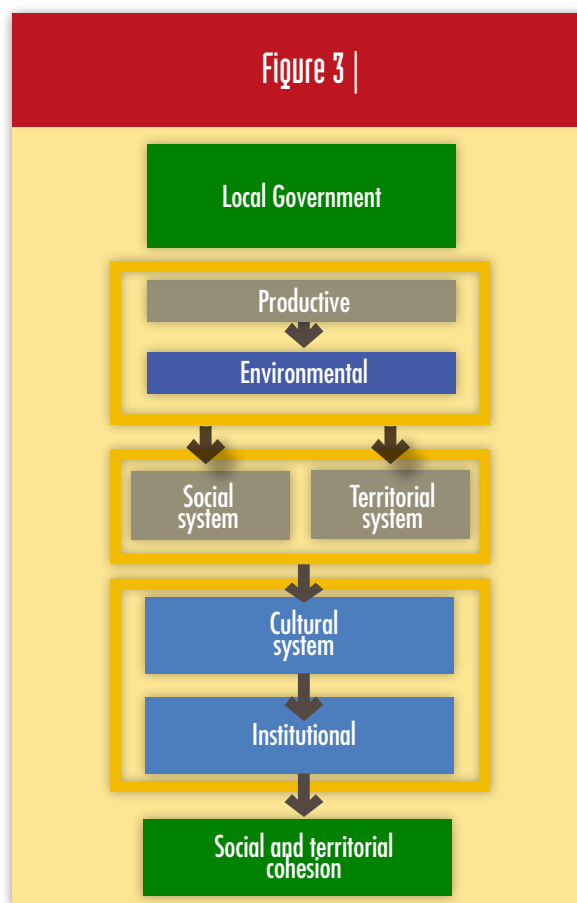imbalances identified, planning local government policies.

Imbalances within the territory are expressed through its different sub-systems. These territorial sub-systems are crucial because, within each one are to be found the corresponding organised civil society sub-group and the local government sector-based policies.

2.3.1. Local government territory and its sub-systems

- Within decentralised cooperation policy, the territory may be an anchor point for the credibility and legitimacy of the policy[9], on the condition that this cooperation meets the needs of civil society and reduces territorial imbalances[10].

- The territory is a strategic horizontal element within local governments and in the handling and management of public policies because it brings together actors from various sectors; hence examining a territory puts a brake on fragmentation into sectors.

However, it also represents an element of complexity in that decentralised cooperation brings two sectors into contact, each characterised by 'its context'[11] To sum up, the challenge of decentralised cooperation is to meet a double territorial need: and that turn to be the aspirations of internal actors, acting in the two territories. In the case of simple cooperation between a European and local government and another in Latin America, a system based on two sub-systems is created, characterised by having the same structure.
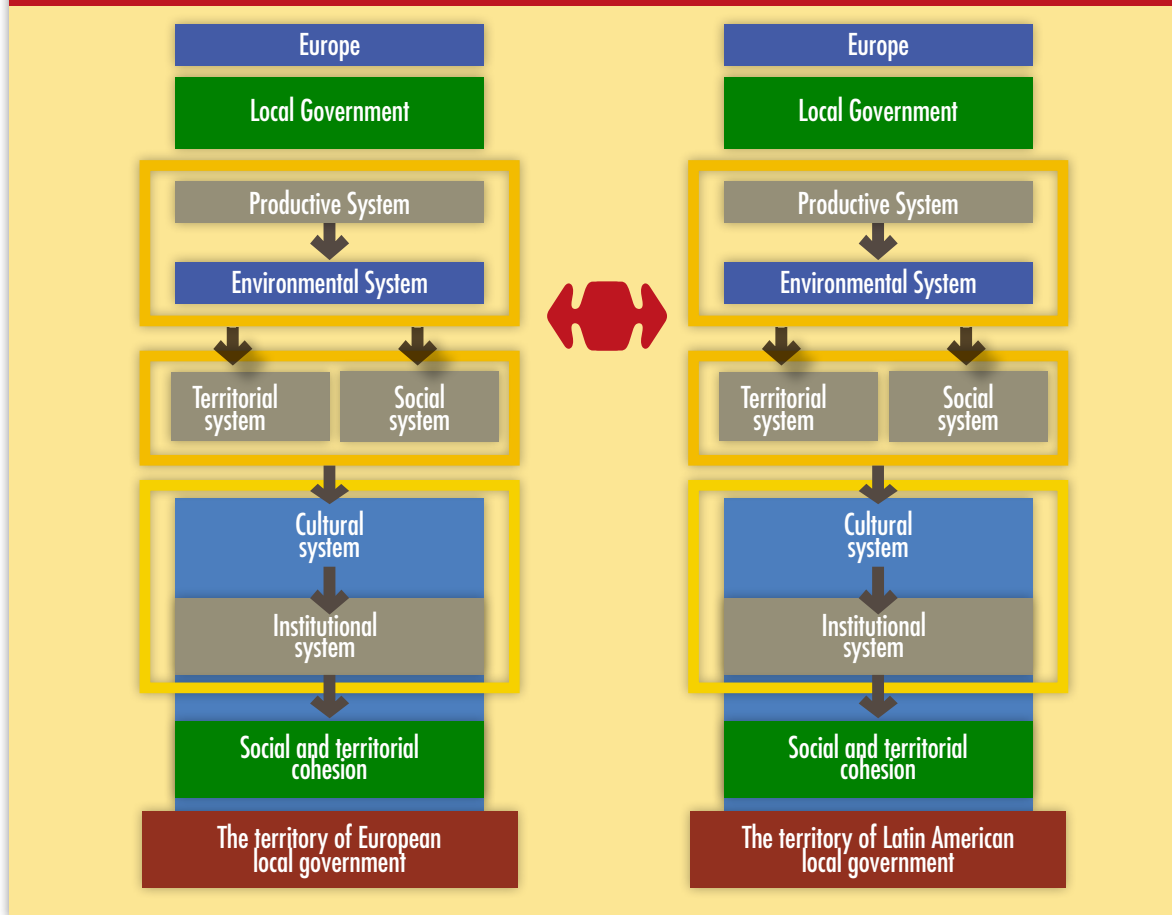
Figure 3 |

Local Government

Productive

Environmental

Social system

Territorial system

Cultural system

Institutional

Social and territorial cohesion

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[9] | *See the example of the Conseil Général de l'Hérault.*

[10] | *Claudio Orrego, Mayor of Peñalolén. Chile. 4th Annual Conference of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation European Union – Latin American in Mexico DF, 30 September – 2 October 2009.*

[11] | *One talks of nearby 'contexts' when analysing the 'couples' or networks that come together in cooperation processes. These contexts are always linked to the territories and their imbalances.*

Figure 4

Europe
Local Government
Productive System
Environmental System
Territorial system | Social system
Cultural system
Institutional system
Social and territorial cohesion
The territory of European local government

Europe
Local Government
Productive System
Environmental System
Territorial system | Social system
Cultural system
Institutional system
Social and territorial cohesion
The territory of Latin American local government

2.3.2. Coordination between the territories and its actors in decentralised cooperation

The relationship between local governments and civil society thus falls within this complex double tripolar system which requires, on the part of local government, good understanding of the actors and their strategies in both territories and a true perception of the territorial problems and imbalances of each of the participant territories

3. Interaction between local government, civil society and the territory

The relations established between local government and civil society can contribute to the progressive construction of the first steps of decentralised cooperation, as local governments did in the 1990s. The risk of this, more empirical, route is, firstly, a delay in reaching a point of fluid relations with civil society (or not reaching this point) and, secondly, leaving to one side key actors who could take up positions

opposing decentralised cooperation policy, thereby weakening the process.

Is it realistic, in practice, for a local government to choose another route?

Is it possible to build, rationally and using an appropriate methodology, an actor coordination strategy that ensures, as far as possible, the success of decentralised cooperation policy?

The situations created reflect the consequences of variations in the strategies and behaviours of the actors and their interactions; in other words, they are the result of a combination of forces: the strategy of the actor induces a first type of behaviour. This initial behaviour evolves in reaction to the behaviour of another actor, and thus interactions and interrelations between actors in a territory start and stop.

It is essential to understand these elements in order to build a successful strategy based on the various types of possible situations. To be able to propose an efficient and replicable methodology it is necessary to identify the types of relations that can be forged between local government and civil society, based on the behaviours of each component of a public decentralisation policy.

3.1. Strategies and behaviours of local governments

Many local governments in Europe launched decentralised cooperation processes within the aid paradigm, in a North-South 'donor-receiver' relationship and a general strategy sustained by a necessary solidarity with 'under-developed' countries. With the increase in cooperation and civil society's growing interest in these policies[12], local governments have evolved, integrating civil society's reaction into their strategies, as civil society is an 'internal' actor that lives in the territory and evaluates their policy globally. Thus, the strategy of local governments has been geared towards finding a sympathetic resonance for the decentralised cooperation policy in the local territory, and reciprocity for its cooperation action for civil society.

The behaviour of local government in its attempt to coordinate with civil society, and based on this strategic axis, has varied depending on the contexts arising between the three figures, which have also represented three generations of evolution in local government[13]:

• An initial behaviour of 'decentralised cooperation management with an administrative and reductionist approach, where the relationship with civil society is based on informing and reporting, under pressure from citizens'.

• A second type of behaviour involving 'management of decentralised cooperation where a systematic relationship for risk management is established and greater understanding among the actors of civil society is induced'.

• A third type of behaviour involving 'management of decentralised cooperation based on a model of inclusion and agreement and a comprehensive and strategic relationship with civil society'.

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12 | *Developed in the following paragraph.*

13 | *Guía para la acción exterior de los gobiernos locales y la cooperación descentralizada UE-AL [Practical Guide for Local Governments' External Action and for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA] of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation: Volume 2, Chapter 5: Participación y concertación ciudadanas en la política pública local de cooperación descentralizada [Citizens' participation and agreement in local public decentralisation policy] (pp. 155 to 178). Beatriz Sanz.*

Box Nº 2 : Example of the Conseil Général de l'Hérault of France

Here one may present the example of the Conseil Général de l'Hérault (Hérault General Council – CG 34) in France, the supramunicipal local government—département (province)—in the region of Languedoc Roussillon, which, from 1993 to 2007, developed its decentralised cooperation policy. This developed from a first phase (1993-2000), characterised by an almost confidential administrative management and international action, to a second phase (2001-2007) involving a progressively more open management with regard to civil society in both territories committed to the process of transparent and open cooperation, without yet establishing a comprehensive relationship with civil society.

The Conseil Général de l'Hérault's cooperation started with a decentralised cooperation relationship with three territories, and with the regional government of Medenine in Tunisia, complemented by the creation of a fund to provide financing from civil associations and organisations that were acting in the international arena.

the cooperation with the region of Medenine, the cooperation process between both supramunicipal institutions was transposed to the municipal level, through cooperation agreements between towns in both territories simultaneously, thanks to an agreement that united the two supramunicipal governments of Hérault and Medenine. Thus a process was born that could in part assimilate the delegation of cooperation from the provincial level to the towns: four municipal 'partnered' towns that initiated a cooperation process. However, the 2001 municipal elections in the French territory produced a change of mayor in three of the four towns, bringing the cooperation process to a halt. The Medenine regional government expressed its concern to its counterpart of the Conseil Général de l' Hérault, which placed cooperation between the two original partners on a fragile footing. This event showed that the chosen model was unsustainable and other anchor points were required.

The arrival of a new president to the Conseil Général de l' Hérault in 1998 generated a process of strategic reflection with regard to decentralised cooperation policy, which permitted, in 2001, strategic orientations and geographical priorities to be defined.

Seeking sustainability for the decentralised cooperation process, after the difficulties encountered in the case of Tunisia, it was decided to mobilise Hérault's organised civil society and build 'partners' with the associations and organisations sharing the same activities in the territories of cooperation.

The overall balance for the territory of Hérault was quite positive:

1. A real political impact through the involvement of numerous associations and organisations in the cooperation programmes.

2. Greater credibility for decentralised cooperation in the local government territory through the actors in Hérault associated with the process and within the public institution, having a positive impact on Hérault's civil society overall.

3. Greater 'mobilisation' thanks to an exchange process between members of organised civil society and their partners. The setting up of networks within the framework of cooperation policy has made it possible to maintain a dynamic within the decentralised cooperation, creating new contacts between actors that had not found and did not know the activities or strategies. The network, with its own dynamic and virtues has become a tool for permanent and automatic coordination among the actors from civil society.

4. The response to problems in the territory and the civil servant assessment and evaluation process.

5. The sustainability of the cooperation process through personal links established between organised civil society in both territories, above and beyond the missions planned in the cooperation programme and the exchanges between civil society in both territories, which have continued even without the intervention of local government.

The overall balance in cooperation for the territory also shows:

• A real technical impact in the territories of cooperation with respect to meeting needs and improving skills.

• Mobilising and strengthening civil society through recognition, training and mobilisation, taking a further step on the road to democracy.

The limits of the experience:

• Empirical construction has taken its time.

• Weak integration of organised civil society in the processes of choosing global strategic orientations and in decision making for the decentralised cooperation policy.

3.2. Strategies and behaviours of civil society and its components

Non-organised civil society experiences a schizophrenic evolution between globalisation[14] and glocalisation Civil society is characterised by a multitude of actors. Each actor follows its own logic, which also obeys conscious and unconscious strategies: one part of civil society acts individually, without a well-defined strategy but in relation to sociological groups that have the same 'societal' behaviour, while other 'organised actors', associations, organisations and territorial agents have a planned goal through a jointly defined policy and activities.

The 'modern' word and new lifestyles arising with globalisation have caused, in Europe, a loss of collective identity in urban ter-

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[14]| *Georges Bonan: Course: 'Articulación entre actores de la Cooperación descentralizada' (Coordination between actors in decentralised cooperation). Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia - UOC)– Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA. 2009*

ritories and a devaluation of collective identity in rural areas due to rural exodus and urban growth. As a reaction to this 'globalisation', socio-cultural groups become insular, protecting themselves in their own territories, a behaviour defined as 'glocalisation'[15], and finding a new collective identity in the 'local world', through identification with their neighbourhood or people. These evolutionary factors have induced new behaviours that make civil society a protagonist through a new identity of local citizenry, which requires responsible local leaders, and greater civil activism, favouring the development of voluntary work[16]. Thus a new form of local association has developed, through networks and on an international scale: movements defending the environment, human rights or minorities, favouring the construction of a better-informed and proactive global civil society, concerned with local and global issues, with its neighbourhood and the planet at the same time.

This search for 'international connectivity', facilitated by new communication technologies, has made decentralised cooperation, since its first steps at the end of the last century, even more compatible with current sociological changes and civil society's new aspirations.

This evolution is an element that facilitates the integration of civil society into local government cooperation policies, but also generates new aspirations and new pressures on local governments, requiring and/or inducing a change in the forms of coordination with civil society.

● *Organised civil society is fragmented*

The strategy of the territorial associations, organisations and agents, globally and at the sociological level, falls within the framework of the evolution of civil society analysed in the previous paragraph. Beyond the desire to increase its participation in the orientation decision-making process, an association or organisation acts according to two main principles:

• Fulfilling the 'mission' of the organisation that brings them together: this mission is generally thematic (protecting nature, fighting poverty), or geographic (development in a specific country or local territory), or social (focussing on a group of people).

• Seeking financial resources to operate: a characteristic common to all these organisations is that they do not have financial autonomy.

It is worth stressing and closely analysing this group of actors, within the framework of decentralised cooperation:

Partially state-controlled services, and universities and their research centres in particular, which in Europe are actors

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[15] | *Glocalisation is a term derived from the combination of globalisation and localisation which first developed in the 1980s in the framework of commercial practices in Japan. The concept comes from the Japanese term **dochakuka** (derived from dochaku, 'he who lives on his own land'). In a global world, in which we see a progressive suppression of economic, political and social frontiers, the existence of cultural barriers, created by people defending their traditions from cultural globalisation, increases (see Wikipedia).*

[16] | *One may talk about four conditions that characterises an action as voluntary: no self-interest, no desire for profit; an intention to pursue an end and a positive goal (seeking a change to improve the situation of the other); it is legitimate, providing sufficient capacity to provide the assistance with the consent of the other party; and it is justified, meeting a real need of the beneficiary. For more information see the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) (http://www.cev.be).*

with an identifiable and constant strategy. Whether public, semi-public or private, universities play a very important role in decentralised cooperation as they represent a category of actors already committed to the international dimension and the practice of cooperation. Furthermore, the territorial coverage of the universities is highly decentralised, and large measure of autonomy they enjoy facilitates their relations with local governments.

Generally, they have two major strategic goals that coincide with the goals of local governments:

- To meet the needs of its teachers and researchers, who, acting in a globalised world, cooperate with other universities and research centres in other countries.

- To meet the needs of their students who look for complementary teaching and experiences in other regions in the world

● *The associations or organisations that carry out their activities in the local government's territory* are equally potential partners for local government as they bring together citizens and are a link with non-organised civil society. In this group, one must give particular consideration to immigrants' associations, both to facilitate their settling and integration into the adopted country and their return to their country of origin. These organisations are at the heart of the concerns of both territories of cooperation, whether socially (interculturality and integration), economically (remittances and unemployment) or politically (votes for immigrants).

● *The NGODs* that act in the area of North-South relations, which are also highly involved in the processes of decentralised cooperation. The intervention of NGODs in decentralised cooperation, which occurred in Spain and Italy in particular after the UN's recommendation of spending 0.7% of GDP on cooperation, produced a change in the internal goals of these territorial agents, prioritising, at times, the search for funding. This development has produced resistance or rejection on the part of local governments in territories in the 'south'[17], due to the excessive autonomy required by the NGODs as a result of delegation from European local governments.

To sum up, the behaviours of the different components of organised civil society are guided by:

- The specific strategy of its different subgroups.

- The desire to receive information and participate in the decentralised cooperation policy, seek opportunities for dialogue with local governments, seek connections between the pillars of decentralised cooperation policy and its priorities for actions.

- The search for funding, which generates 'expert' positioning.

These behaviours are related to local government's policy of governance and can produce indifference, support or conflict. For example, the mechanism that local government chooses to involve actors looking for funding through expert missions can turn them into active partners in the decentralised cooperation policy, while also maintaining the role of

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[17]| *Bossuyt, Jean (2008) and Freres, Christian (2008).*

expert, if the dialogue centres on the goals to be met and is based on a consensual platform between both actors.

To sum up, one can identify three types of progressive behaviour in civil society with respect to local government:

• Level 1: seeking information, funding, opportunities and dialogue.

• Level 2: level 1, with the addition of seeking connections betweens the pillars of decentralised cooperation policy and its priorities for action.

• Level 3: levels 1 and 2, with the addition of seeking participation and integration in the decentralised cooperation process.

3.3. The territory and its impact on the behaviours of local governments and civil society

In the same logic of 'system' analysis, which constitutes a decentralised cooperation policy based on the three poles of local governance, civil society and the territory, it is important to ask whether the territory and its imbalances should be considered a variable in the model of local government/civil society relations.

The 'typification' of a territory (urban, rural or peri-urban) or the institutional level directly related to the size of the territory (town, province or region) has an impact on the model of local government/civil society relations.

It is true that each territory has its own characteristics and its own imbalances; however these are multiplied by local government and civil society's perceptions of the priorities for intervention in the territory, beyond the difficulties and divergences that may arise and generate conflicts, if the decentralised cooperation policy is not built through a participative process.

The analysis of the variability of the 'territorial' component in a decentralised cooperation process makes it possible to shed light on its impact on the behaviour of the local government/civil society 'duo', summarised in a simple alternative:

• Civil society's 'opposition' generated by a local government's lack of involvement in the axes of territorial development considered as priorities by the associations or organisations or directly by the citizens.

• Civil society's support generated by the consensus on local government's priorities for intervention to reduce imbalances in the territory, or opposition in the opposite case.

Furthermore, the territory and its imbalances generally constitute the basis for the links between non-organised civil society and a part of the organised civil society which, at times, positions itself as the spokesperson for these imbalances.

The type of territory, which local government has to manage, also has a strong influence on the participation mechanism proposed to the citizenry: the permeability of civil society, in terms of communication and mobilisation of citizen participation, differs greatly between urban and rural

municipalities. In a province or region it is harder to make communication reach all parts of the territory and generate citizen participation.

Furthermore, the 'territory', in order to avoid opposition and conflicts and to integrate civil society into the decentralised cooperation process, imposes on local government the need to seek consensus with civil society regarding the priorities for intervention of decentralised cooperation policy and its foreseeable impact on reducing imbalances in the territory.

To sum up, it may be noted that the territory and its different variations in terms of imbalances does not directly constitute a variable in itself, although they directly influence the behaviours of civil society as a whole, the mechanisms of citizens' participation and the positioning of local government.

Other examples could be mentioned, but the key element in this strategic orientation has been the search of reciprocity, partly conditioning the credibility of cooperation and anchoring decentralised cooperation activity in the territory and its needs. This axis for developing cooperation has demonstrated that the territory, understanding of its needs and its evolution, are key elements in decentralised cooperation.

4. Forms of coordination between local government and civil society and methodological approaches

4.1. Coordination of the actors: a dynamic and permanent process

On the basis of the above analysis it is possible to determine a typology of interaction situations among the different behaviours of local government and civil society, including the 'territory' component:

- Interaction 1: the relationship with civil society is based on informing and reporting, under pressure from citizens (decentralised cooperation management with an administrative and reductionist approach). The behaviour of civil society is centred on the search for information and funding, and exerts pressure to obtain opportunities for dialogue, due to the need to find other sources of funding or propose themes for the cooperation policy that match their priorities for action.

- Interaction 2: the relationship with civil society is systematic for risk management and induces greater comprehension among actors from civil society. Civil society is informed and receives funding, but, as in the previous situation, requires greater dialogue. They thus exert pressure on local government to be associated with the process of drawing up cooperation policy and to ensure it fits in with their own areas of action.

- Interaction 3: the relationship with civil society is comprehensive and strategic (management of decentralised cooperation based on a model of inclusion and agreement). Government has perceived the need to seek consensus over territorial priorities. Civil society is integrated and included in this process.

At the start of this chapter, the following question was asked: It is possible for local government, from the start of the decentralised cooperation process, to develop an active, strategic and comprehensive relationship with civil society?

Box Nº 3: Example of the Conseil Général de l'Hérault of France

The Conseil Général de l'Hérault, in developing its decentralised cooperation programme[18], decided to put all decentralised cooperation actions to the vote in the departmental assembly open to the public, from the validation of the cooperation agreement to the authorisation of missions in the cooperation territories and the reception of foreign delegations. This process has made it possible to establish total transparency regarding cooperation activity in the face of so much political opposition from local government (which was systematically associated with international activities), and civil society in general.

This exercise has caused criticism from associations' representatives, blown up by the media, based on the following argument: Why spend the local government budget abroad, when there are so many needs in the territory?

This pressure from civil society and, in particular, the contributing associations, led local government to add a fourth strategic orientation to guarantee reciprocity of cooperation actions and gain credibility: 'To search, through decentralised cooperation, answers to problems of development in the territory'.

Thus, for example, cooperation with Souss Massa Draa, the southern Moroccan region, was based on the need to deal with the problems of social and educational integration of young immigrants from this region who, arriving in Hérault through family reunion programmes, aged 14 at the oldest, often spoke no French or Arabic (only Berber). Local governments started to create special classes to deal with this problem, but the increased flow of immigration and the impossibility of reintegrating some of these young people once they had finished school led local government to seek preventative solutions[19] in the territory of origin.

Cooperation actions were set up that initially centred on actions for education or school reintegration for 200,000 unscholarised or 'descholarised'[20], young people from the Moroccan region, who contributed largely to the flow of legal immigration (not to mention the flows of illegal immigrants across the Strait of Gibraltar). Through these actions, a global programme to combat the rural exodus and promote sustainable development in the Souss Massa Draa region was built, which mobilised French and Moroccan associations in the field of education, as well as numerous territorial agents in both countries and research organisations who were greatly interested in organising exchanges with local research centres in the semi-arid region.

Similarly, cooperation with Chile, more difficult to justify due to the lack of a common history with this country (unlike North Africa), initially focussed on the issue of water and in numerous actions on the fields of culture, tourism and telemedicine, among others. However, other areas of cooperation more closely related to the needs of the territory of Hérault were quickly sought:

• The problems of wine (Hérault is the largest wine producing area in France) and competition from 'New World' wines and, in particular, Chilean wines. Exchange missions with Chilean wine producers were organised.

• The needs of Hérault research centres, which found in Chile the ideal research conditions due to the variety of its ecosystems and geographical isolation.

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[18]| *See Chapter 2.1.*

[19]| *Which could be assimilated into a process of co-development.*

[20]| *School drop-outs.*

The history of decentralised cooperation could show that the situations presented by typology are a sequence of three inevitable steps that all local governments must follow in a maturing process.

But in the light of the analysis of the actors' behaviour, we have noticed that that this form of integration and inclusion of civil society cannot by created ex nihilo. It is a dynamic process, a route that is born out of political will and the strategic orientation of decentralised cooperation policy which thrives on results, i.e. greater the acceptance of the decentralised cooperation policy and satisfaction among civil society.

This route or process has:

• A starting point, represented by a model of decentralised cooperation that must be compatible with the goal of civil society's participation, requiring a will to evolve on the part of local government. Are all the models compatible?

• The stages of evolution, of the maturing of civil society in terms of inclusion and/or integration. This is a progressive phenomenon that depends on the mechanisms and instruments used to generate citizen participation.

● *The analysis of compatibility with the involvement of civil society of the three large models of decentralised cooperation[21]:*

• 'Decentralised cooperation based on delegated cooperation (in general, an NGOD)' is not compatible with an active policy of involving civil

society, to the extent that NGODs are almost always the only representatives of local government.

• 'Functional decentralised cooperation which is based on direct cooperation between autonomous municipalities' may be compatible with the integration of civil society, as long as a policy of coordination among the actors is constructed in order to involve organised civil society and move from a relationship of 'providing a service' to one of 'partnership'.

• 'Decentralised cooperation based on joint actions that reflects a political vision of the need to strengthen the participation of both local government and civil society and includes an integrated vision of coordination between actors and the territories' is, by definition, compatible.

The third model undoubtedly corresponds to the third behaviour of 'management of decentralised cooperation based on a model of inclusion and agreement with a comprehensive and strategic relationship with civil society' and represents the ideal model, the target model.

● *The mechanisms and instruments used to generate the participation of civil society:*

The range of mechanisms and instruments available to local government is wide. The main ones are:

• Instruments for financing and tendering contracts.

• Formal dialogue mechanisms.

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[21]| *See the article by Jean Bossuyt, Chapter 1 of Part of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA's Yearbook for Decentralised Cooperation 2008.*

• Involvement of civil society in the construction or update of decentralised cooperation policy.

• Involvement of civil society in the drawing up of the actions in the programme.

• Flexibility in the forms of partnership and funding.

• Agreement on goals with the actors involved.

• Search for consensus with organised civil society.

• Co-management of the policy and programme.

• Shared funding with the participation (financial or human resources) of civil society in the programme actions.

• Coordination between the actors in civil society in both cooperation territories[22].

These mechanisms and instruments have a gradual impact on civil society, enabling it to progress through different stages of integration towards the desired model.

The choice of mechanism or instrument and its use depend on the model of cooperation and the political will in local government.

Coordination between local government and civil society is a road, a dynamic process, that moves through successive stages. This movement is generated by local government as it matures in the face of the pressures from a civil society that aspires to future participation in its local territory and in the planet.

Box Nº 4: The case of Reggio Emilia in Italy

There are few complete experiences of comprehensive development in this third model, but there are many local governments that are working towards this goal. One example is that of Reggio Emilia[23], in Italy, where the vitality of civil society, especially regarding social issues, has favoured the creation of 'twinning agreements' with cities in Europe, the East and Africa. These agreements are based on combining the reinforcement of local government with empowering the population. The town has created the Consulta cittadina della coperazione decentrata (Citizens' Committee on Decentralised Cooperation), a permanent structure for meeting and discussion between associations involved in cooperation and in particular in the strategic fields defined by the town: solidarity, development aid, education for peace and human rights.

Chaired by the mayor of Reggio Emilia, the committee proposes three goals:

• Mutual recognition of the associations' intervention programmes and strategies adopted.

• The creation of synergies and rationalisation of interventions.

• The opportunity to propose initiative and projects to involve a growing number of people and topics in decentralised cooperation.

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[22] *See the example of Hérault in Chapter 2.1.*
[23] *http://www.comune.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf*

Decentralised cooperation, based on the relationship built between a local government and civil society, contributes to the construction of a virtuous process to the extent that citizens' awareness increases , thereby increasing civil activism, encouraged also by 'glocalisation', which in turn generates greater pressure from citizens for greater integration.

Based on this analysis it is possible to answer the question presented. A local government can establish relations with civil society with the aim of obtaining an 'integrated and inclusive joint action' model, on the condition that:

- There exists the political will to achieve it with a change from a passive to an active and anticipatory position.

- There is a strategy for coordination among the actors involved in the steps that have to be taken.

- Civil society is given the time it needs to mature.

- At the same time as civil society matures, the cooperation model is driven towards other more integrating ones.

Box Nº 5: Example of Issy les Moulineaux in France

Here, the e-AGORA experience of Issy le Moulineaux in France may be presented, involving the development of a decentralised cooperation programme focussing on the implementation of an 'Academy for e-Democracy' in a network with the towns of Ipatinga (Brazil), Juiz de Fora (Brazil), Viña del Mar (Chile) and the Observatório Territorial CEA/Unesp (Territorial Observatory of the University of the State of Sao Paulo Centre for Environmental Studies – Brazil) in the framework of the European URB-AL Programme.

The aim of this project is to create a space for meeting, experimentation, training and information, with the aim of promoting the use of ICTs, and thus support the processes of modernisation in the practices of local democracy.

The e-AGORA project lies within a context where local democratic practices converge with the use of information and communication technologies. Its origin is in 'Red: democracia en el pueblo' (Network: democracy among the people) an initiative in the European URB-AL Programme. The goal of this network, coordinated by the town of Issy-les-Moulineaux in France, was to develop lasting cooperation between Latin American and European towns on the topic of local democracy, permitting people from both continents to exchange their practices, experiences and work and start up common projects in response to specific problems, particularly on the issue of citizens' participation in local affairs. Based on data from an official report on citizens' apathy with respect to local participation and distrust of governments, e-AGORA aimed to respond to the opportunities of ICTs to strengthen citizens' consultation and participation processes and revitalise local democracy together with traditional practices. This involved a trend towards convergence of local democracy practices and the use of ICTs at the service of citizens.

Box Nº 6: The case of Cordoba City Council in Spain

On the issue of citizens' participation, it is interesting also to analyse the experience of the town of Córdoba, in Spain, which has established a number of 'elements of analysis' to identify good participative practices in the field of local government. Expressed as four questions

Who participates?
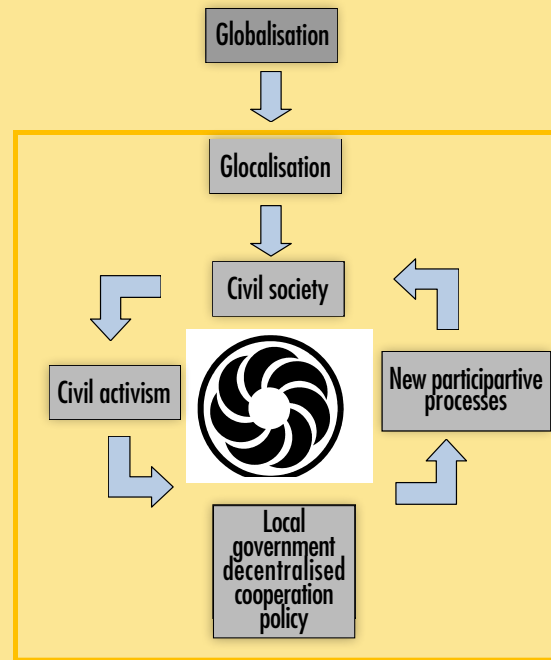
Regarding what do they participate?

How do they participate?

What are the consequences?), the following criteria stood out:

1.   Political leadership in the government team.

2.   An explicit definition of the limits of the participative processes.

3.   The expression of the participative practices in local government.

4.   Coordination and transversality in the local council.

5.   Strengthening the information and communication channels between the council and citizenry.

6.   Return of information.

7.   The execution of the commitments acquired with the citizenry.

8.   The transformation of the environment.

9.   An educational process.

10.   Co-responsibility among the different actors involved in the process.

11.   A planned process.

12.   Diversification of social agents.

13.   The importance of nearby facilities in the participative processes.

Figure Nº 5 | The virtuous process of permanent evolution in the coordination between local government and civil society

Globalisation

Glocalisation

Civil society

Civil activism

New participartive processes

Local government decentralised cooperation policy

4.2. Methodological proposals for building a coordination strategy for the actors

The participation of civil society is not established by decree. It is built within the framework of a study to define the strategy for coordinating actors that identifies the goals and the action programme and which must constitute one the main strategic axes for the decentralised cooperation policy.

The ideal methodology is to incorporate civil society from the start of the decentralised cooperation policy definition process. But in most cases this coordination takes place 'on the fly', which requires greater efforts to convince the actors who have not participated in the selection of the policy's goals. In both cases, local government has, firstly, to map the actors and, secondly, build a partnership with the key actors.

4.2.1. Stage one: mapping the actors

Mapping the actors involves a precise study of the key actors in organised civil society in order to analyse their positions with regard to the existing policy and action programme.

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[24]| *For more details see Jean Bossuyt in the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA Yearbook for Decentralised Cooperation 2008 pp. 180 to 183.*

● Identification of the key actors is a preliminary and essential stage which must answer the question: Which actors should be associated with the decentralised cooperation process?, thus making it possible to distinguish the actors to be associated with each of the policy's goals and each of the programme actions.

• At the political level and in terms of the action programme as a whole: the aim is to identify the key actors with regard to goals and/or the most active actors and those who have a decisive influence on the programme as a whole.

• At the action level: the aim is to associate actors with one or a limited number of actions.

● The positioning of the key actors with respect to the decentralised cooperation policy, permitting convergences (or divergences) between the actor's strategy and the local government's strategy to be measured, is the second stage. There are different methodologies to help reduce the subjectivity of the exercise   and obtain an overall, synthesised vision of the positioning the key actors. This second step enables the distance that separates the key actor from local government's strategy and which will determine the action plan for building the partnership to be evaluated.

These two analyses have to be performed through group work to guarantee the widest possible detection of actors and the most precise analysis possible of the positioning of each of them.

4.2.2. Stage two: building the consensus within local government

● *How should consensus be defined within the range of communication tools?*

It is possible to grade forms of participation, linked to the form of communication (in its widest sense), classified by an increasing value based on the intensity of participation[26]:

1. communication, with the aim of conveying a message and obtaining public adhesion to a proposal,

2. information, whose aim is to inform the public on intentions and decisions that have been taken,

3. consultations, which seeks to compile actors' opinions without guaranteeing their integration in the subsequent proposals or decisions,

4. dialogue, which builds horizontal interaction between actors based on equality,

5. agreement, which aims to discuss or identify common elements to identify solutions ,and

6. negotiation, which enables a decision to be reached jointly.

The consensus may be considered as a form of negotiation whose result is 'near unanimity'. However, consensus assumes that the project is not over and there is still the chance of introducing changes.

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[26]| *Beuret, Jean Etienne (2006).*

In Chapter 2.1 we stated that behind an apparent homogeneity, government is made up of a mosaic of actors, political groups, experts and economic partners who do not necessarily share the same vision of decentralised cooperation or its politics or programme, even if it has been adopted by the elected assembly.

Therefore it is essential to start building the consensus within local government itself, through concentric circle analysis, where:

- The first circle consists of people at the head of local government.

- The second circle is made up of councillors from the political majority and heads of services.

- The third circle contains opposition councillors and heads of services contracted out by local government.

- The fourth circle consists of everyone who works in local government.

The degree of participation may be described as follows:

The four levels are informed.

- The first three levels are associates and participate at given instances.

- The first two actively participate.

- The first level shares the directions taken by the decentralised cooperation process.

This exercise also helps extend the established consensus to the 'core of public anchorage' and ensure that this process, in terms of its goals and content, is shared by an increasing number of actors from the public institution.

4.2.3. Stage three: building the partnership with key actors in civil society

Local government needs to make two complementary roles compatible: leading the process and building the consensus. This implies having to manage a degree of contradiction between leading, on the one hand, and being a partner on the same level as everyone else within the group of actors, on the other.

- *Local government leadership: Essential 'transversal' coordination*

Local government must provide leadership for the coordination process through a transversal structure, which requires the institution to switch from a pyramidal vision to a horizontal one, similar to a network and based on differing degrees of participation.

Transversal coordination is mostly based on the capacity to build reciprocity with the territory's internal actors, where civil society plays a fundamental role.

- *How should the consensus be built? Anchor the decentralised cooperation process as a response to the territory's needs[29]*

Building reciprocity with actors from civil society requires presenting the results expected from decentralised cooperation policy as a contribution to territorial development policy and its goal of improving living conditions in the local territory.

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[27]| *Beuret, Jean Etienne (2006).*

In the Département of Hérault, one of the operational pillars in achieving this goal was to consider international action as an activity shared by all the institution's technical areas and not just by the management of international relations. In practice, each action in the decentralised cooperation programmes has had a technical reference point from the Conseil Général alongside the partner associations or organisations with their equivalents from local government and the civil associations and organisations in the partner territory. The missions organised outside the local territory as well as the reception of foreign delegations were always organised with the active participation of civil servants and councillors from the opposition. From 2001 to 2007, 70% of members of the Conseil Général, representing 49 elected councillors, participated directly in cooperation activities, and not only with a representative function but also chairing technical meetings and following the programme development over several years. Furthermore, the 5,000 civil servants who work in the institution were able to actively associate with more than 250 people (5%), including the logistics services or, for example, the institution's cooks to prepare special menus. This core of more or less 300 people has made it possible to anchor decentralised cooperation within the institution and to build a consensus on its policies and action programmes.

Figure Nº 6
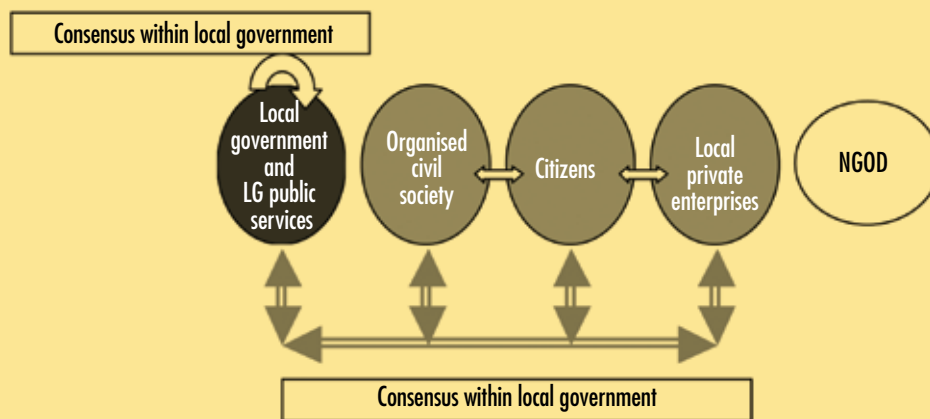
It is necessary to respond not only to the actors from organised civil society associated with producing the policy but also with actors that have not been able to express themselves, i.e., the whole body of citizenry. This means giving decentralised cooperation a public use, permanently legitimising and anchoring its existence in the policies of local government.

To achieve this, the action programme for the decentralised cooperation policy needs to answer the following question:

How can the decentralised cooperation policy contribute to reducing the gaps and weight of limiting factors and reducing the risks identified in the territory?

What international links should be established to provide economic growth and sustainable development to the terri-

Level 1: Identification of the potential actors in civil society

Two complementary means were used, partly using the 'breeding ground' of associations or organisation financed by Conseil General 34:

- Geographical meetings with organised civil society that acts in the countries of cooperation (and not only in the territories of cooperation), to incentivise its participation as a partner in the cooperation programmes.

- Theme-based meetings with the organised part of civil society that intervenes in the problems of the territories of cooperation or in the key issues of the cooperation agreements.

Level 2: Proposals for intervention in the framework of the institutional cooperation agreement based on:

- A CG34 subsidy to finance expenses linked to the planned cooperation, mainly travel expenses, always anticipating financial participation in terms of human resources on the part of the association or organisation.

- Participation of CG34's technical management related to the field of intervention.

- The presence in the territory of cooperation of a similar association or organisation and expert local government civil servants.

Level 3: A mission in common on the field, to present the 'new' cooperation partners, identifying the associations or organisations in the territory of cooperation that act in the same field, checking the feasibility and pertinence of the organisation's intervention and defining the forms of intervention (quantifying the degree of participation).

These key missions made it possible to build the programme, share the spirit of decentralised cooperation and establish the necessary coexistence within the new decentralised cooperation 'team'.

It should be noted that these first missions always included representatives from civil society and civil servants from the three poles of sustainable development: economics, solidarity and culture and the environment, with the aim of creating transversality and virtuous circles for sustainable development.

Level 4: Exchanges between civil associations or organisations in both territories, in the framework of a jointly produced programme.

These exchanges, supported initially by local government, were developed and provided sustainability for the project.

tory, and to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants?

Answering these questions requires identifying the challenges and gaps in the territory and placing the cooperation policy in local government's global territorial development policy.

The work of consensus building is defined within the framework of the actor coordination strategy, prioritising the key actors that are more distant from the policy proposed by local government. Consensus building can take place through individual meetings to identify divergences or group meetings, where these actors attend in association with actors at the centre of anchoring the governability and consensus building process[28] , a centre that can be institutionalised through a 'cooperation council"[29].

The first phase of establishing consensus is based on an agreed platform, which is often only part of the policy defined or desired by the local government. Despite its limitations, the platform makes it possible to boost and widen the consensus and draw up a shared project based on 'what we have in common'.

This first process ends with the signature of all the key actors involved in the agreed cooperation policy and the overall policy which each actor can put into practice by signing operation agreements that define the responsibilities of the actor and regional government .

These actions to institutionalise the partnership also help inform non-organised civil society that the decentralised cooperation process is a participatory one.

The group of key actors committed to the decentralised cooperation policy can also act through thematic or geographical networks, with the opportunity for 'self-mobilisation' of decentralised cooperation.

Box Nº 8: The case of the Flemish towns

One may mention here the example of the **Flemish towns in Belgium**, which have created an 'advisory council' with the aim of favouring coordination with civil society. This advisory council is made up of citizens' representatives and a group from the town consisting of the civil servants and politicians who manage the DC programme. Participation is voluntary, but local and regional NGOs, the universities, the private sector, schools and socioeconomic actors all participate.

The three-yearly plan is presented in draft form to the advisory council, and in some towns, the council is invited to draw up proposals.

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[27]| *See the example of Hérault.*

[28]| *Georges Bonan: Course: 'Articulación entre actores de la Cooperación descentralizada' (Coordination between actors in decentralised cooperation). Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia - UOC)– Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA. 2009.*

[29]| *See Guía para la acción exterior de los gobiernos locales y la cooperación descentralizada UE-AL [Practical Guide for Local Governments' External Action and for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA] of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation. (Beatriz Sanz).*

● *The consensus with civil society represents the basis for the sustainability of decentralised cooperation.*

Relations with civil society in the field of decentralised cooperation have been dominated by communication and information, sometimes complemented by consultations, reserving 'agreement' and 'negotiation' as means of conflict management, which has caused a significant gulf to open between political power and civil society.

This model of governability, based on an a posteriori form of risk management, has an advantage for local government in that it reduces the deadlines for executing operations and the disadvantage of maintaining the gulf between local government and civil society, who perceive it as not being associated with the decision-making process. This model can function in operations in which public use is not in doubt (building a road, hospital or school); in this case possible opposition is usually expressed in relation to the means but not the end of the operation. To obtain civil society's validation of a decentralised cooperation initiative and to ensure the sustainability of its process, it is necessary to 'build the consensus' regarding the policy, i.e., let some of the power go as a counterbalance to the sustainability of the process and the credibility and legitimacy of the decentralised cooperation policy.

These are the essential factors for success, considering that decentralised cooperation is a new, politically sensitive, and thus fragile and complex field.

Credibility and legitimacy are built step by step with civil society from:

• The participation of the key actors in the process of drawing up or updating the decentralised cooperation policy.

• The positioning of local government and its capacity to build the consensus with civil society based on its project or action.

• The participation of the actors in the decentralised cooperation management and evaluation process.

All these goals contribute to the good governability of the decentralised cooperation process, which is not an end in itself but a means to building the actor coordination processes.

However, the quality of operational management should be guaranteed as well, in order to strengthen and sustain these elements that make the optimisation, sustainability and success of the decentralised cooperation process possible.
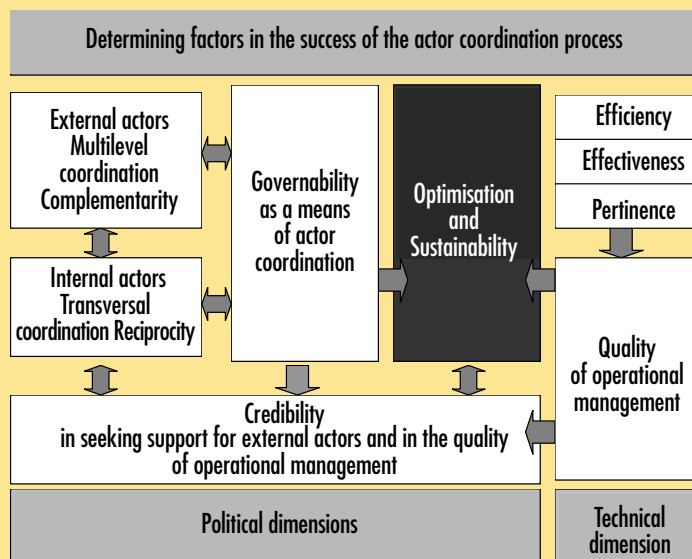
Figure N° 7:

In conclusion, a local government can build an actor coordination strategy as a prospective, organised and coordinated plan for the optimisation and, in the end, success, of its decentralised cooperation policy, on the condition of:

• Understanding from the start that it is a road, a process, marked by the changes in behaviour and mutual interactions.

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[32] *Este elemento es clave para las asociaciones y organizaciones porque permiten estabilizar estas estructuras que resultan bastante frágiles.*

Determining factors in the success of the actor coordination process

External actors
Multilevel coordination
Complementarity

Governability as a means of actor coordination

Optimisation and Sustainability

Efficiency

Effectiveness

Pertinence

Internal actors
Transversal coordination Reciprocity

Quality of operational management

Credibility
in seeking support for external actors and in the quality of operational management

Political dimensions

Technical dimension

- Having the political will and switching from a passive to an active and anticipatory position.

- Seeking consensus with civil society.

- Giving civil society the time it needs to mature.

- Maturing as civil society matures so that the cooperation model and its participatory mechanisms evolve towards other more integrating ones.

After reaching a consensus on the decentralised cooperation processes with the internal actors in local government (elected, services, civil servants), it is necessary to map the actors, based on a precise analysis of their strategies and behaviours, as well as seeking the consensus of organised civil society as a priority.

Placing the territory and the reduction of its imbalances at the centre of this process makes it possible to develop good coordination with civil society, positioning cooperation policy and its programme as a response to the citizens' needs, giving decentralised cooperation policy credibility and legitimacy and providing the process with sustainability.

Such good coordination between local government and civil society can create a virtuous circle that feeds social and territorial cohesion:

- Civil society is at the centre of the decentralised cooperation processes as it is the main actor in the large territorial challenges that must be faced by local government: immigration, integration, urbanisation, social cohesion, innovation, internationalisation and so on, and because civil society grants cred-

ibility and, hence, sustainability to the processes of decentralised cooperation.

• At the same time, cooperation policies are increasingly at the centre of the concerns and aspirations of civil society, because the evolution in the behaviours in the light of the global challenges of the 21st century and in particular the aspirations that are born of the relationship between globalisation and localisation mean that decentralised cooperation is one of the natural responses.

Decentralised Cooperation: a view of civil society in Latin America based on case studies

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KEY WORDS

*Decentralised cooperation in Latin America|
Public participation |
Actors in civil society |
Urban governance |
Regional measures |*

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1. Introduction

The towns used for the case study share a long history of action in the field of international decentralised cooperation. Over time, via shared projects, their local governments have developed a series of institutional mechanisms and appropriate local resources for international participation. The cumulative results of these experiences in the context of decentralised cooperation allowed many local government bodies in Latin America to develop and implement an implicit local state policy for international cooperation with an internal structure for action that is compatible with the democratic changes in management and political parties occurring in these municipalities. The macro-objectives of each of the projects studied focus on socio-urban and regional transformations in pursuit of greater social cohesion via measures undertaken with actors in civil society providing a more effective mechanism to deal with problems of poverty, inequality and exclusion in marginalised urban areas .

To provide a reference framework for the current process of democratic consolidation in LA countries, we will first consider the structure of civil society and the various agents that constitute it, as well as their relations with local governments in the social and urban projects carried out in the areas concerned. Latin American towns with different political and cultural complexions were chosen so that their projects could be analysed, with a view to identifying the new forms of participation available to actors of civil society in the relationship between local government and society. The method of analysis adopted provided an area for reflection and a certain degree of comparison between the approaches to public participation adopted by the municipal authorities and between the new roles now being introduced for coordination with the actors in civil society.

We conclude by reflecting on the conceptual approach to the challenge for the local and regional political system implied by these new forms of public participation by the actors in civil society.

2. Political and social context in Latin American

Currently in LA we find dual visions and perceptions of the challenges affecting democratic governance and consolidation. Public life is marked by disenchantment with political parties and the system of representation, which has come about as a result of successive national crises, and the appearance of new sectors in the population. This is leading to the development of more open societies in a framework of democratic national governments which are more representative of neglected social groups. This new scenario is the result of the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, which has taken place in all Latin American countries in which 'economic reforms were undertaken and more open economies developed and where, from the point of view of democratic governance, in recent

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[1] *EU/LAC Summit declarations repeatedly state in their objectives that it is the primary responsibility of governments (at all levels), together with civil society, to undertake processes of transformation to increase social cohesion by combating poverty, inequality and social exclusion (Guadalajara 2004, Vienna 2006 and Lima 2008).*

decades civil societies have been strengthened in their dealings with the state (...). The tension between old and new is characteristic of times of uncertainty and change' (Cardoso 2007).

The broad political and social process of reinstating democracy in the region, expressed initially in civil and political rights, with the appearance of greater demands for socioeconomic and cultural rights, as well as rights to development and 'the city', created demand for greater capacity for socially committed action and participation by local, regional and national governments in the 1980s and 1990s. This is still the case today, against the background of the current international recession, which has hit different countries in Latin America with varying degrees of severity. The demands for inclusion emerging from society and different social actors demonstrate the need to constantly and increasingly redefine public policies for the management and development of cities and public participation in these processes (Braun 2006). Greater individual freedom and the large-scale introduction of technological innovation have brought about new forms of political and social action on the local level, which do not function via traditional formal institutional mechanisms such as political parties and trade unions.

In the context of these processes of change we also find both old and new social demands for inclusion and visibility by recognising people as actors belonging to a more plural and apparently less organised society, but one which is better informed and more connected in a local scenario of territorial fragmentation, with public policies that do little to eliminate exclusion in the face of levels of poverty and insecure employment which are still high. Against this backdrop of a more firmly established civic culture which is well informed and which actively participates and assumes responsibility in urban contexts which respect the identity of local neighbourhoods, are inclusive, and favour human development, there are still justifiable demands for the right to participate in new areas where municipalities deal with civil society. Local political governability calls for broad social consensus to drive sustainable public policies for the more democratic management of towns and cities. The viability of participative management also depends on the ability of local governments to bring about strategic agreements and commitments with and between the relevant parties in the locality. (Braun 2006).

Today the public more openly express their indignation regarding the political and social corruption and impunity and the violence that permeate the social fabric, aggravating successive crises of legitimacy in political institutions, while they make growing demands for truth and transparency. According to Cardoso (2007: 10), 'democracy...is a constant process of inventing history and societies... Democracy in Latin America is alive, even though it faces risks and challenges, because it is subject to an ongoing process of reinvention'. Schmitter (2004) defends 'deliberative democracy' with arguments which are being increasingly accepted in the political and economic context, stating that 'there is not only one way to establish democracy: there are several and they vary from one country to another. Many people have a static view of democracy. There is no finish line. There is a horizon and it is always moving'.

'All these new trends and dynamics

raise new questions' (Cardoso 2007). Three major questions posed by the writer have been selected as a way of synthesising a view of Latin America, formulated through case studies carried out in certain towns and cities which were chosen for the purpose.

What is the direction of the processes of political and social transformation taking place in our societies? What is the likelihood of traditional forms of representation being revised in response to the emergence of an active citizenship and a new public forum for participation and debate? What conditions could bring about a virtuous circle of representative, deliberative and participative democracy?

From the public's viewpoint, urban governability involves key factors with multiple transversal readings on the conceptual level. For the new circumstances affecting local government, the role of the public as it relates to municipal or regional management and democratic and participative governability can be taken as a political, social and institutional dimension. The lack of integrated responses to the social needs of large excluded groups leads to the development of 'conflict areas', with the growth of government alliances and cronyism involving a large number of social actors centred on local leaders, presenting the media with an appearance of urban governability which is repeatedly disrupted by social conflict. As the role of public participation is not explicitly included in the local political agenda (neither as a visible agent in local governability nor as a social agent representing civil society in its relations with local government), for many municipal bodies, civil servants and politicians it is limited to a functional requirement in the implementation of social assistance programmes (Braun 2006).

The increasingly complex demands and mobilisation at street level, used currently as an implicit lobby to inform the public of the circumstances surrounding unresolved socioeconomic and town planning problems when there is no other way to be heard, are often the subject of court cases with appeals for legal protection. This calls for greater involvement by new actors and the integration of public participation in a transparent policy for urban governability able to tackle the dislocation of needs and demands in local institutional management by means of agreed, consensus-based solutions.

It is interesting to note that this focus on local urban governability in Latin America bears a relation to the description given by Morata (2002: 1) on state governance in the European Union (EU), making allowances for differences in scale and location, when he says '... the authorities' decision-making responsibilities, the deteriorating management capacity of democratic institutions, the lack of resources and technical skills, the endlessly growing list of problems on the government agenda, each problem mobilises sectors and groups in society with conflicting interests and demands (for services) and the official responses tend to generate new conflicts, which in turn lead to further demonstrations...' We refer to these analytical sources to reflect on legal contexts which are on the face of it very different, examining their similarities and dissimilarities, and to suggest the need for integrated discussion of these topics, including the fresh looks researchers are taking at compartmentalised areas.

The concept of membership in a community is fully represented by the term civil society which corresponds to a large number of agents with various interests (social, political, economic and other interests). These parties are able to express, to a greater or lesser extent, people's demands, even though they do not represent the whole of society. Citizenship is seen as a broader concept than civil society and even includes a country's civil servants and the military in their role as citizens. According to O'Donnell, 'The notion of citizenship leads inexorably to that of rights' (O'Donnell 2005a). The concept of civil society has been the subject of a wide range of definitions and critical analyses that have been hotly debated. In this study, our approach considers the concept of civil society in relation to local political and urban governability, which allows us to delimit the agents playing a significant role in democratic municipal management and in the formulation of local public policies for development and their application.

We agree with the views of Sorj (2005a) that the idea of civil society has a Utopian potential for expressing '... the hope for a better world and a strong influence on the structure of people's perception and on the role the different social agents assign themselves ...'. For some writers "civil society" (CS) is an expression with no precise meaning, while for others it is a new concept which can light the way to a better world. Sorj provides his own definition of the concept, pointing out that 'civil society constitutes a symbol of solidarity and social change in the framework of post-cold war public debate ...' He also adds that, beyond the different definitions which have been given, civil society is now at the centre of discussions in sociology and political science dealing with democracy and processes to establish it. He also proposes that 'to advance the debate on the concept of CS and the parties that consider themselves part of it, social scientists should carry out an investigation which is both conceptual and empirical, taking care not to fall into the theoretical mould of wishful thinking with moral statements that tend to disregard the complexities of the real world ...' (Sorj 2005b).

At an international seminar, held in 2009 in Buenos Aires, *Sociedad civil y democratización en América Latina: un balance crítico* (Civil society and the establishment of democracy in Latin America: a critical balance), in addition to many other topics and questions, Sorj presented in his talk, and in the paper subsequently published, two views in the form of key questions regarding parameters related to citizenship and decentralised cooperation. They are questions which should be dealt with in the context of integrated debate: What needs to be done for CS to become a factor which strengthens a body of independent power which can engage in dialogue with public and state institutions and public opinion? How can we restore the links between moral discourse, which social agents and other parties in civil society attribute to themselves, and party political discourse, which many Latin Americans see as opposed at present? (Sorj 2010).

In the context of the discussion of CS and its agents, a transversal consideration of decentralised cooperation in LA

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² | *Introduction by O'Donnell. In Sorj, Bernardo (2005a) La democracia inesperada [Unexpected Democracy].*

allows us to say that it is an international external agent which has great impact at municipal level on a series of public policies for local development, but less impact on CS. The prolonged duration of the URB-AL decentralised cooperation programme (shared projects for local governments in Europe and LA) has created in many LA municipalities a strong awareness of their new roles of regional and international leadership. Stages I and II of the programme developed capacities in municipal structures which facilitated the qualitative leap seen in the recent third stage, in which a number of municipalities/regions have been working on large-scale projects (management of participants and regional action) to improve the urban habitat and the quality of life in CS in Latin America. Decentralised cooperation could take on a new role as an external agent in strengthening coordination between municipalities and CS, in the greater number of formulation and implementation stages of projects for regional intervention. This role could be complemented by ex-post assessment of significant projects carried out via financing from this type of cooperation.

3. Case studies[3]

The cases analysed are socio-urban programmes/projects involving municipal action of differing degrees of complexity, in terms of both how they are implemented in the area and the operational mechanisms

used to manage them. They involve a range of scenarios for institutional interaction and multiple schemes for coordinating horizontal and vertical integration (between jurisdictions) to carry out activities and implement policies based on consensus between various institutions. They are at different stages of development, operate at different levels, and correspond to various types of project in the social/urban/cultural/economic and educational areas. They share the aim of public participation and have approaches adapted to the political and cultural circumstances in each country, focusing on local objectives for inclusion and social, economic and regional cohesion. The cases were chosen according to the profiles of towns and cities[4], forms of municipal management which incorporate public participation through coordination with the agents of CS, and their activity in the field of decentralised international cooperation for local development.

The method of analysis chosen provides the flexibility needed to describe each case separately and to produce a transversal interpretation via parameters that cut across common issues in the three cases. The first is a series of programmes/projects dedicated to education and urban-rural culture to complement an educational policy which was already in place and functioning in Medellín, Colombia. For this case, three educational projects guaranteeing access to the whole education system from infancy to higher education were grouped together under the title 'Urban educational-cultural system'. We also considered a highly complex scheme for the urban and

socioeconomic rehabilitation of a large neighbourhood (Montevideo, Uruguay) and, finally, a project for public security which had been finalised and implemented by the municipality of Peñalolén in Chile.

3.1. Medellín, Colombia "Urban educational-cultural system"

As part of the municipal development plan and its strategies for the metropolitan area, policies for social intervention were designed and educational projects and programmes with high quality aims were developed. From the new municipal schemes three projects were identified, covering the basic levels of education, with a particular public-private and social organisation in each case. The projects chosen extend and improve the education service available to people with limited resources while acting as a driver of social inclusion for the community, focusing on minors and adolescents. The overall objectives refer to improving access to knowledge, learning and the city's culture to assist in a process of social-urban transformation and fostering the individual and collective growth of the residents. The municipality considers it a very productive social investment with the potential to ensure the foundations for coexistence in a just, modern society.[5]

3.1.1. Urban-institutional context

The processes of establishing democracy in the country facilitated the appearance of circles willing to incorporate the methods of decentralised cooperation, which currently supports development in local and regional independent decentralised government bodies. In this political and institutional context the *Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín y el Área Metropolitana* (Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellín and the Metropolitan Area) (ACI 2002) was organised on a municipal level. Decentralised cooperation financing is intended to support local government proposals and policies, organisations of indigenous peoples, professional associations, cooperatives, trade unions, churches, women's and young people's groups and educational, cultural and research institutions. The cooperation work for local development managed by the agency is aimed at priority areas and strategic projects in the current *Plan de Desarrollo de Medellín* (Medellín Development Plan), which covers socioeconomic issues, culture, the environment, town planning and mobility, security and coexistence. This focus on leading issues is combined with the municipalities' own priorities, the transversal policies which mesh with them: gender, strengthening institutions, urban projects for marginal areas with community participation in the planning, execution and assessment of projects (social town planning).

The overall aims of decentralised cooperation in Medellín are based on two strategic pillars: support for equitable, effective, sustainable local human development and the application of creative forms of direct, participative local democracy. There are various channels of access for the international cooperation related to the aims. Some involve the joint organisation of pro-

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[5] *10 new schools were built and the infrastructures of 135 existing schools were refurbished and improved in the Ministry of Education's programme Escuelas de Calidad para la Equidad y la Convivencia (Quality Schools for Equality and Coexistence), benefiting over 400,000 students in the urban and rural area (418,094 students – figures from Medellín municipality / Internet).*
http: www.medellin.gov.co.

jects by NGOs and municipalities; regional, national, multilateral and international calls for projects; twinning projects with mutual cooperation; networks as associations of experts and/or cities, to generate mutually beneficial alliances; and participation in common projects. The ACI also has a regional network for international cooperation formed by private agents such as COMFA-NA[6], CONFENALCO[7], and the *Federación Antioqueña* de ONGs (Antioquia NGO Federation), and public agents including the *Gobernación de Antioquia* (Antioquia Government), the *Instituto para el Desarrollo de Antioquia* (Antioquia Development Institute - IDEA), and the *Universidad de Antioquia* (University of Antioquia). The aim of this network is to optimise the impact and sustainability of cooperation in the region.

Social investment in a quality education system

For the analysis of this case three programme/projects were taken, including kindergartens (under 5 years) and *Colegios de Calidad* (Quality Schools) covering pre-school/primary/secondary/middle school, complemented with play centres (0 to 11 years). *The Parques Biblioteca* (Library Parks) projects were included in the system, their aim being to improve the district, the area and the city, by helping to 'change mentalities and be a driver of change for communities with limited resources'. Through their educational and cultural role they make a multiple social contribution

to the communities to which they belong and to the whole city. Each of these programme/projects has specific objectives which are handled jointly with the alliances they develop with other programmes in the municipality and with a range of public, private and international agents and which strengthen their overall integration and can be seen as local public participatory policies.

The municipality sees this integrated educational and cultural system as a public twenty-first century enterprise which offers and contributes professional and technical training. Its close links with civil society, especially with local communities and the private sector, and the addition of the architectural wind farm and its facilities to the existing urban structure, considered landmarks in the city, would guarantee better quality in the services to be provided.

3.1.2. Consolidated elements

To determine the consolidated elements, the central components of each project and/or public policy analysed were taken (overall and specific aims, beneficiaries, activities and results/products). In the case of Medellín each project in the educational-cultural system has a clear impact in the city.

A look at kindergardens

The *Buen Comienzo* (Good Start) programme for family-based action is ai-

[6] *COMFAMA is a private, independent social enterprise, controlled by the Colombian government, which assists over one and a half million people in the department of Antioquia with its activities. It was set up in 1954 as the result of a voluntary agreement between companies and unions to improve workers' quality of life. It is one of the most novel and successful experiences in social policy. It manages bibliómetros (metro libraries) jointly with the underground railway system, 7 libraries and 25 centres for on-line information searches, as well as four Parques Biblioteca (Library Parks). .*

[7] *The Caja de Compensación Familiar Antioquia (Antioquia Family Compensation Fund - COMFENALCO) created in 1957, states that in its different development stages it was always linked to the 'country's main social processes and challenges during the second half of the 20th century'. Currently it manages one of the Parques Biblioteca.*

med at children under the age of 5 and deals with the way in which they interact with their parents and other responsible adults, which is vital for their emotional, cognitive and social development. Adults receive educational support and are provided with teaching material to reinforce their roles at home with the children. The programme gives priority to rural areas in the municipality and peripheral neighbourhoods or districts where there has been an influx of new residents, providing integrated services in health, nutrition, education and protection. At the institutional level this new programme will use the capacity and experience of the children's centres which already exist in local communities. The programme will take advantage of the experience of the valuable training process undertaken with children by mothers in these communities at the centres, and training is proposed to improve and ensure the continuity of the current care and nutrition services provided in the community homes.

Under the slogan *Medellín educa* (Medellín Educates), the city proposes to create spaces for integrated healthy, safe, quality development during early childhood. It prioritises selective criteria for their location, not only according to social sector but also seeking proximity to cultural, educational and leisure facilities to increase their relevance, progressive improvement in the quality of services and joint social responsibility, as described in the *Plan de Desarrollo 2008-2011.* Coordination between institutions for the B*uen Comienzo* programme is organised jointly with the *Secretaría de Educación* (Department of Education), the S*ecretaría de Salud* (Department of Health) and the fire brigade, who provide safe, healthy premises for these social projects.

A city supporting children and young people in search of good schooling

The *Colegios de Calidad para la Equidad y la Convivencia* (Quality Schools for Equality and Coexistence) are part of a *Secretaría de Educación* programme which aims to achieve high educational standards in the city through public-private alliances. They focus on the refurbishment and improvement of existing buildings and the construction of new schools. A total of 160 institutions enjoy the support of the Department of Education's *Unidad de Calidad* (Quality Unit) of the *Secretaría de Educación* and other agents in CS (Press release from the Medellín City Council, 2010). All the schools in the programme focus on improving teaching, learning and the school infrastructure, so that they may achieve their strategic goals. These schools are considered to be spaces that are open to the whole community. The Buen Comienzo programme is implemented in those schools that are newly built, to provide services for the youngest children. Over 140,000 students in Medellín will benefit from the ten new *Colegios de Calidad* (prepared for new use under the existing overall programme with refurbished premises and improved facilities). 190,000 m2 of multi-purpose areas will also be made available for a wide range of uses by the public.

Green spaces for reading and leisure activities

The *Parques Biblioteca* are an urban-cultural project for people with limited resources and are part of a forward-looking view of education. It was considered desirable to treat the project as part of an educational-cultural system. They are 'cultural centres for social deve-

lopment which give residents the chance to meet, fostering educational and leisure activities, the development of associations and the opportunity to tackle the new challenges of the digital culture..." They are established as spaces designed to provide services for local cultural creativity and to strengthen social and cultural organisations. The good design and building quality of these cultural buildings (five have already been built and incorporated in Medellín's public library service) contributes to the development of their surroundings, making them architectural landmarks in the city[8].

The *Parques Biblioteca* are part of the city of Medellín's assets, but they are administered by the *Caja de Compensación Familiar* (Family Compensation Fund). At present, five parks have been built in the city, while another four are being constructed. They have received substantial international support for their design and construction: the government of Japan donated the architectural designs for the construction of another future *Parque Biblioteca* and the Spanish government donated the equipment in the auditorium and the computer room of one of them.

3.1.3. Territorial measures and results

The city council's strategies for integrated development in education and culture are reinforced by local and departmental inter-institutional coordination and by the participation of various actors in CS and pu-

blic, private and international agents. These agents aim to develop the 'open school' concept to turn these educational facilities into centres for culture, education and leisure, with multi-purpose public spaces. They will provide an opportunity for urban and rural residents to meet, and have the potential to become city landmarks (theatres, parks, games).

With the aim of providing greater equality of opportunity for access to the knowledge society, the programme is supported by the Medellín Digital scheme, which is intended to improve education using ICTs as key tools for closing the digital divide. The ten new schools soon to be built will have sponsorship from British institutions. In this context, British teaching staff will assist with the teaching of English. This is possible thanks to coordination between the municipal authorities and the British Council. Clearly, in order to attain the highest standards of quality, the *Escuelas de Calidad para la Equidad y la Convivencia* are sponsored and supported by higher education institutions, businesses, banks and good private schools, who will advise them on administrative, management, academic and community issues.

3.1.4. Other actors

Since the 1980s, the processes by which democracy has been established in Latin America have created the appropriate conditions for the concept of decentralised cooperation for development by regional governments and local communities to flourish. Against this backdrop of interna-

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[8] *'The people of Medellín have greater opportunities thanks to the Parques Biblioteca, which provide a range of services to nearly 10,000 users every day. Their architectural design has won them international acclaim on various occasions, including the Lápiz de Acero (Steel Pencil) and Lápiz Azul (Blue Pencil) awards at the Sixth Iberoamerican Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism (BIAU) and the 16th Quito Pan-American Biennial of Architecture (BAQ)'. Extract from the speech by the Mayor of Medellín, Alonso Salazar Jaramillo.*
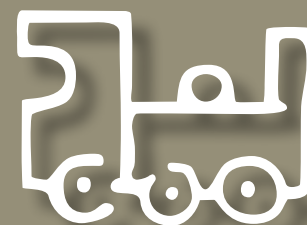
tional cooperation the Medellín City Council has undertaken ongoing projects with the private sector and other actors in civil society (ACI Medellín).

The *Jardines Infantiles* kindergarten project has a strong connection with pre-existing projects (former children's centres) that provide valuable experience for the new programmes and projects. An example is the role of 'community mothers' in the education of children. The project proposes to enhance this role with training and support programmes, inter-institutional coordination with various ministries and other public and private institutions which identify with the project's aims. They have also benefited from international cooperation from the city of Lleida in Spain for the equipment in one of the kindergartens. However, the most sustained support for projects is from representatives of civil society. This can be seen in the close relationship that these undertakings have with the community in the conflictive urban areas in which they are located. Vertical coordination with agents who guarantee the general objectives of health, nutrition and protection required for the project is also important (*Ministerio de Salud* (Ministry of Health), fire brigade).

The *Colegios de Calidad para la Equidad y la Convivencia* programme has strong support from the private sector, which has members on their governing boards. They include various actors in civil society such as businesses, outstanding private schools, universities and banks, which coordinate their participation with the *Secretaría de Educación*. As part of an agreement on international decentralised cooperation with the city of Barcelona, Spain, the Medellín City Council hopes to include an international member on the governing boards of the *Colegios*

de Calidad, so that there can be an active exchange of principals and teaching staff with public schools in Barcelona.

For the implementation of the programme, the schools have the direct support of the *Secretaría de Educación*'s *Unidad de Calidad*, the *Líderes Siglo XXI* (Leaders of the 21st Century) programme, the *Fundación Proantioquia* (Proantioquia Foundation), and they liaise with 180 volunteers from the business world who see in this initiative '… the opportunity to demonstrate their sense of social responsibility…'. Another representative of CS is Bancolombia, which has joined the volunteer group to offer programmes of financial training in the project's institutions[9].

Below we record some of the statements by public and private actors participating in this educational and cultural scheme, as they show directly the reasons for public-private coordination and the way in which it is organised, and explain participation in local development and the introduction of public policies for social transformation and inclusion:

'Entrepreneurs associated with *Fundació Proantioquia* are interested in supporting processes to improve the quality of education, because they are convinced that it is the best strategy to achieve social transformation' according to Celina Calderón, Director of the *Medellín la Más Educada* (Medellín, the Best Educated City) award and representative of *Fundació Proantioquia* (February 2010).

'With the support of the *Secretaría de Educación* we hope to develop students' financial skills and guide them in the formulation of a life project dealing with financial issues and decision making' (Diana Quintero, Director of Corporate Social

Responsibility, Bancolombia, 2010).

Juan Carlos Zapata, principal of the Medellín *Escuela Normal Superior* (Teachers' College), one of the institutions represented on the governing boards, declares that the programme is an excellent opportunity made available by the *Secretaría de Educación*, as it 'will provide better training and enable our students to reach a better standard in higher education' (February 2010).[10]

'Our *Parques Biblioteca* can be seen as the future of our city', says Alonso Salazar Jaramillo, Mayor of Medellín (Library Parks – ACI Medellín), and he goes on '...under the previous local government, as one of the foundations for change, a number of projects were undertaken to improve the residents' quality of life ... improvements to schools, local business development centres, public avenues and parks, and health services, among others. One project which demonstrates the impact of these transformations in low-income communities is that of the five (operational) *Parques Biblioteca*. They are strategically located in areas of Medellín with limited resources and designed for a range of social, cultural and educational programmes, intended to improve residents' quality of life'.

A wide range of public (civic), social and private actors were involved in the planning and execution of the *Parques Biblioteca*. The municipality was responsible for organising a complex horizontal and vertical system of coordination to give form to a collective ideal in the fields of education and culture[11]. To administer and manage the *Parques Biblioteca* private entities were chosen. They include the *Cajas de Compensación Familiar*, which operate in Medellín and in the Department of Antioquia and have over 50 years' experience in the management of social projects. One of them, COMFAMA, administers four of the five cultural centres built to date. The remaining *Parque-Biblioteca* is managed by COMFENALCO, another private *Caja de Compensación Familiar*.

3.2. Montevideo/Uruguay– *Habitar Goes* – URB-AL III project[12]

3.2.1.Urban and institutional context

The Goes district is mainly a residential area, founded by immigrants from Italy, Spain and members of the Jewish community. The latter group have given the area a distinct commercial identity. In recent decades people were constantly driven away from the centre

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[9]| *Information regarding public-private coordination was taken from various municipal publications on projects and programmes and from the Medellín City Council's press release of February 2010.*

[10]| *These three quotations are taken from the Medellín City Council's official press bulletin, February 2010.*

[11]| *The Departamento Administrativo de Planeación (Administrative Planning Department) and the Departments of Public Works, Citizen Culture, Social Development and Finance took part in this 'urban dream'. Decentralised bodies such as the Biblioteca Pública Piloto (Pilot Public Library), Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano (Urban Development Company - EDU) and Empresas Públicas de Medellín (Medellín Public Companies) also took part, and the Universidad de Antioquia provided support to the Cajas de Compensación Familiar, COMFAMA and COMFENALCO, along with companies such as Telefónica Colombia, UNE Telecommunications, and ISAGEN, the Agencia de Cooperación Internacional Española (Spanish International Cooperation Agency) and the Japanese government via the University of Tokyo, NGOs, publishers, the Universidad de Antioquia's Escuela Interamericana de Bibliotecnología (Inter-American Library Technology School) and its graduate association, entities promoting literature, culture and artistic groups, popular libraries, local administrative meetings, business foundations and the media (Library Parks - ACI Medellín).*

[12]| *Se utiliza para el análisis de este caso la denominación "Habitar Goes" -Proyecto URB-AL III (enero 2009). ("Revitalización socio-urbana y articulación de políticas hacia la integración social en áreas centrales degradadas).*

of the city to peripheral areas, in a process which we may see as residential segregation. In view of this complex situation, the Montevideo Authorities are carrying out a coordinated series of projects as part of the *Viví Goes* (I lived in Goes) programme, since the district is one of the areas most affected by the outward movement of population. The central government is also intervening in the area with a series of plans, programmes and projects with the aim of counteracting the problems of social deterioration and vacuum. The municipality of Montevideo's *Plan Especial de Ordenamiento y Recuperación Urbana de Goes* (Special Plan for the Regulation and Urban Restoration of Goes) is the basis for the coordination of a programme of urban rehabilitation and a series of projects focusing on different urban and social issues (*Habitar Goes*, coexistence and public safety, urban renewal, socioeconomic stimulation, cultural issues and gender promotion, urban transport planning, etc.). Given the number of measures and government bodies involved[13] in the same area, this wide range of projects is coordinated on an inter-institutional basis, via the constitution of the *Consejo Goes* (Goes Council).

The *Habitar Goes* - URB-AL III project described in this case study forms part of an extensive and complex programme coordinated by the municipality, which will develop its own guidelines within the framework of its goals of 'revitalising and coordinating regional policies' for an area with over 16,000 residents, which is expected to have greater impact on the city in the long term. Substantial measures are envisaged to transform an area that is suffering from a process of decay and population drift, which is common to other central areas of Montevideo. It is hoped that it will be possible to reverse this process of urban deterioration, recovering spaces for housing and work and enhancing the district's identifying features with new alternatives for the residents and their families to fulfil themselves individually and collectively. The measures envisaged are geared to recovering and refurbishing abandoned buildings and run down public spaces and tackling the problems of urban violence and exclusion, which are a pronounced feature of the area.

3.2.2. Consolidated elements

The central aim of the *Habitar Goes* project is to 'increase levels of social and territorial cohesion in rundown areas of the city and improve the quality of life of the residents' (this objective extends to partner towns in Latin America and Europe). More specifically, it focuses on social and urban rehabilitation, renovating existing buildings, encouraging the introduction of programmes for social housing and increasing opportunities for production and employment with improved microeconomic development. Another important aim of the project is related to the need to capitalise and coordinate all the measures which are being carried out by local and national entities in the area concerned 'to avoid pointless duplication, waste of resources and multiple failures'. This view is in line with the city of Montevideo's aims, as the project's objectives correspond to the

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[13] | *The Habitar Goes (Live in Goes) project and the central government work jointly via the Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente (Ministry of Housing, Town Planning, and the Environment); the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development) concerning poverty in the area; the Ministerio del Interior (Ministry of Home Affairs) with the installation of the Mesa de Seguridad y Convivencia Ciudadana (Table for security and coexistence in the city); the Ministerio de Salud Pública (Ministry of Public Health), which coordinates services to deal with the consumption of toxic substances; and various other internal and external programmes and sources of finance.*

definitions set out in different plans for the area 'taking the present development of the *Habitar Goes* project as a new opportunity and a challenge with regard to its completion and sustainability'. The operational guidelines for the aims are included in the *Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo de la Zona 3* (Zone 3 Strategic Development Plan), including the Goes district, which aims to reverse the process of urban decline in the area.

It also mentions stimulating initiatives which 'allow groups and individuals to recover a sense of belonging and solidarity; rules for coexistence and willingness to participate in discussion and/or collective projects in order to increase social and territorial cohesion and confidence in institutions'. At the same time it presents as a policy for implementation the intention to 'capitalise and coordinate' efforts at local level via the *Viví Goes* programme and at national level through the work of the ministries and national programmes such as the one to assist people in a situation of poverty, which includes the externally financed programme (by the Inter-American Development Bank) *Integración de Asentamientos Irregulares* (Integration of Irregular Settlements).

With the aim of coordinating this local/national and international diversity in a single area and generating a range of synergies, the *Consejo Goes* has been set up through a resolution passed by the Montevideo regional government, so that joint agreement can be reached on measures in the area. It will provide an integrated development plan with social participation and inter-institutional coordination". The local residents' council and other local and decentralised bodies cater for public participation and consensus with the district's residents.

3.2.3. Territorial measures and results

The *Habitar Goes* project distinguishes two levels of social and regional action. One refers to the drawing up of plans for area and community development and improvement and activities to provide better facilities in public spaces, changes in urban signposting, improvements to pavements, the design of an effective waste collection system, façades, social housing, work with local clubs and training for women. The other is related to the economy, coordinated via traders and entrepreneurs, work cooperatives, job training and programmes for trainees, programmes to reinforce small production units and service providers. Awareness-raising campaigns dealing with the revival and consolidation of the area covered by the project cut across the two levels.

The project also envisages a number of larger-scale measures, either via tenders (restoration of existing public spaces which have deteriorated seriously) or via the creation of small cooperative groups and small building companies, related to training for young people and women over 45 (residents involved in the recovery of public spaces, repairs to pavements, façades) and to raising public awareness concerning the replacement and maintenance of trees in public areas. In order to encourage participation by the residents, annual awards for the care of public spaces will be introduced for the projects carried out by organised social groups and those executed under tenders (contracts with construction companies). The development of this type of strategy for raising awareness is sure to lead to greater sustainability for the results anticipated and allow the public to be more closely involved in local transformations and improvements.

The expected results include the integrated plans and programmes for intervention formulated on an inter-institutional basis by the *Consejo Goes* at regular intervals; the plan for urban improvement (façades and housing); public spaces recovered in each of the areas specified in the project; the participation of residents, social organisations (NGOs) in the area and groups involved in activities; development of a centre to promote employment; a combination of micro-economic, social, cultural and sports services and programmes which have been recovered; the conduct of studies on the impact of accommodation and cooperative housing programmes and the economic situation and production patterns in the area, including the informal sector and another series of results concerning the coordination of the project with its external partners such as the URB-AL Programme.

The other area identified concerns using the project as a search engine for a management strategy with the conditions and capacity for the sustainability of the proposal involving different institutions and actors in civil society (integrated social-urban public policy) and its medium- and long-term results. To this end, it is proposed that a project management team should be created, closely linked to the decisions of the *Consejo Goes* in all the areas of its activity, and that the team should include local government employees from the municipality's key departments (horizontally integrated and linked to the development of the project) with a technical secretary acting as the link with the working team. The methodology proposed includes ongoing training for the participants to develop new practices and encourage the active involvement of municipal officers in the target area and the

services that will be involved in the project (reclassification of municipal officers and training for integrated management). In the area chosen for urban revival and rehabilitation, a series of programmes and projects are in progress and/or action plans have already been implemented, from which we can infer extensive experience in the municipality in financial and institutional questions and the ability to secure sources of finance for projects. The *Habitar Goes* project is based on a series of programmes/projects that will be carried out depending on a combination of different sources of local, national and international public-private financing, which suggest there will be new patterns of regional management.

'The methodology for intervention is based on a multi-sector, multi-actor perspective, which combines and organises strategies for social integration, urban planning, local economic development and territorial coordination, giving priority to work which points to integrated, participative management" (*Habitar Goes* - URB-AL III project).

3.2.4. Other actors

Behind the *Habitar Goes* project there is a long history in the city of participative urban practices built up over a twenty-year process of democratic and institutional decentralisation. The project is intended to recreate and develop more detailed alternative forms and levels of participation by a range of civil actors. The methodology is treated as a system for updating and strengthening urban measures which are viewed as integrated public participative management policies, e.g. the *Ciudad Vieja Renueva* (Old City Made New) project in Montevideo to help revitalise depressed or abandoned urban districts.

In the early stages of implementing the *Habitar Goes* project, a number of strategies were developed to inform the public about the project, about how local residents and businesses can get involved in the many measures being proposed within the framework of the plans and programmes already being implemented, and about how inter-institutional resources are organised locally and nationally. The private sector is actively involved in certain projects that present business and employment opportunities, and in street and urban renewal projects. A series of programmed activities was also carried out with the participation of various groups of local residents.

Specific activities were organised by the *Consejo Vecinal* (Residents' Association) with support from the district association, the local council and the project itself, focusing on cultural themes and the recovery of local historical memories. Workshops tackling a range of subjects were also organised for the women employed in the restoration of public spaces. At the same time they were all given training in the use of ICTs. These activities will continue throughout the period during which the work for which these groups were recruited is being carried out. A participative project involving artists, residents and local business people led to cooperation on the design and production of a mural that made a cultural and aesthetic contribution to the neighbourhood and the city.

The *Habitar Goes* project also addresses the significant risks arising due to political changes in municipal government which the project hopes to make, pursuing greater operational involvement at neighbourhood level and relying on municipal officers acting within the area. A strategy of mitigation would seem to guarantee that there will be continuity of action and management and that budgetary resources will be committed to ensure the proposed aims are achieved.

3.3. Peñalolén, Gran Santiago/ Chile – Unidad Seguridad Ciudadana (Public Security Unit)[14]

3.3.1. Urban-institutional context

The local *Seguridad Ciudadana* project was set up as part of the *Planificación Urbana y Cohesión Social* (Urban Planning and Social Cohesion) project within the URB-AL II programme (2006), under the auspices of the *Seguridad Ciudadana en la Ciudad* (Public Security in the City) network, which is coordinated by the city of Peñalolén within the framework of decentralised cooperation for local governments in LA and the EU.

'Generating strategies that encourage the public to get involved and promote networking has become an inescapable responsibility for local authorities today', declared Claudio Orrego Larraín, Peñalolén's mayor at the time the URB-AL project was launched, with his municipality as coordinator of the overall project. In his speech he also referred to two central issues, which have to a great extent been addressed in the *Seguridad Ciudadana* project implemented by the municipality. The first of these issues relates to the principle of co-responsibility between local government and civil society.

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[14]| *The Unidad Seguridad Ciudadana (Public Security Unit) is part of the programme Planificación Urbana y Cohesión Social (Urban Planning and Social Cohesion).*

'In the Community of Peñalolén, in Santiago de Chile, we have actively developed the principle of co-responsibility in our efforts to build safer and friendlier neighbourhoods. We are therefore convinced that participation is crucial to bringing about a definitive move away from conflict and towards social cohesion in public spaces where there are tensions and problems involving crime, race and inter-generational and environmental issues'. The second major issue relates to the social instruments used to implement planning strategies: 'The planning of public spaces, the development of participative projects, encouraging social development, community mediation, investment in infrastructures and the prevention of social problems are some of the things to be taken into account and which we need to review here through specific examples' (Ruiz y Carli 2009).

3.3.2. Consolidated elements

Public security in the municipality 'is a responsibility shared by local government, residents, and the national and local police forces, in which all do their best to make our towns safer and more welcoming'. The municipality's security unit develops strategies to improve public security and to help allay perceptions of insecurity through the creation of a community action programme, close to residents, that seeks original solutions to deal with crime and improve neighbourhood security via a broad range of jointly agreed projects that 'incorporate participation and community responsibility'. The existence in the city of marginalised districts and social groups means that they must be included in the municipality's public security projects in order to promote social inclusion and solidarity within the city.

3.3.3. Regional measures and results

The municipality has developed a range of mechanisms and operational instruments based on strategies that have been defined and agreed by the public, social and other institutional actors involved and which form a set of local public policies for public safety. The organisation of the *Comités de Seguridad Ciudadana* (Public Security Commissions) is particularly significant. These groups include residents, city council officials, and local and national police officers, who work together to improve perceptions of security in the city's neighbourhoods. The team that works 'on the field' with residents, jointly with the police and municipal authorities, has managed to find various original ways to reduce the level of fear in neighbourhoods and help residents to get to know each other better. This has naturally led to more direct and closer involvement with the institutions involved in security. Neighbourhoods, i.e. individual residents, can ask to join these commissions, while the professional members are responsible for the work of the commissions and for organising the residents' groups to generate new solutions for the problems of insecurity.

The *Comités de Seguridad Ciudadana* carry out a range of projects in the town, the success of which is due to the joint efforts of residents, police forces and the municipality. Some projects merit particular mention for the creative approaches they use to get the public involved: the *Plan Silbato* (Whistle Plan) is a free alarm system to alert residents to an urban or social problem (theft, the presence of strangers in the area, fire, illnesses and other emergencies). *Diagnóstico Barrial* (Neighbourhood Diagnosis) is a channel for ideas, resources and opinions on preventing crime and the development of plans to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhoods. This

community-based, participative programme is coordinated by the municipality working together with other institutions such as the police, and is complemented by another important activity of the *Comités*, the *Marchas Exploratorias* (Exploratory Walks). Micro-zoning, or risk mapping (identifying sectors in the neighbourhood where residents feel insecure), is used to find solutions to each problem. It has proved an excellent tool for producing graphical studies that identify the real situation in each micro-area, enabling measures to be based on better operational knowledge. Access to pertinent information on the *Plan Cuadrante* (Zone Plan)[15] and police investigations, together with training in security matters for the organisers and participants of the *Comités*, is provided by the municipality, and extends to residents who are not actively involved in the *Comités*. A number of security leaflets have been produced to give residents access to clear information on the security programmes implemented in the city[16].

Mediación Vecinal (Neighbour Mediation) is a social tool that has been developed to help resolve conflicts between local residents without going to court. A group of professional experts provide a free advisory service, listening to the arguments of the parties involved and helping them to find a satisfactory solution to the conflict. Neighbours are encouraged to reach an agreement by mutual consent and without violence, seeking new solutions that minimise resentment and promote dialogue in the community, making this an excellent tool for resolving neighbourhood conflicts.

Some of the successful programmes developed by the municipality involve actors from CS, boosting the municipality's own measures while enabling the public and private sectors to participate at an operational level. This makes certain measures more visibly sustainable and provides practical experience of public participation. There has been a positive effect on relations between people living in the neighbourhoods and also on the municipality's security programmes with inter-jurisdictional links.

Construyendo a Tiempo (Building in Time) is a programme to reintegrate young, first-time offenders from the city back into society by supporting and protecting their families while the team works with the children and young people themselves to prevent them re-offending.

The operational and symbolic aims of the *Barrio Seguro* (Safe Neighbourhood) programme are to reduce the fear of violence in vulnerable neighbourhoods and areas of the city that are perceived as very unsafe. The programme is jointly organised by the *Ministerio del Interior*, the municipality and the Kairós Corporation[17], and provides free training for residents to enable them to assume leadership roles in their communities. A social and educational organisation is also

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[15] *A nation-wide police surveillance programme organised by regions and cities.*

[16] *The issues covered include: The Unidad de Seguridad Ciudadana; Mediación Vecinal (Neighbour Mediation); insurance; investigations by the police in Peñalolén; Construyendo a Tiempo (Building in Time); and the Ley de Responsabilidad Juvenil (Law on Juvenile Responsibility).*

[17] *The Corporación de Educación y Promoción Social Kairós (Kairós Corporation for Education and Social Development) is a not-for-profit organisation which for 18 years has developed and managed programmes intended to contribute to sustainable, integrated local development that fully involves the public. It provides a range of services including technical assistance and training for poor urban communities, facilitating the development and delivery of integrated short-, medium- and long-term solutions to promote the social, cultural and environmental development of local communities.*

involved in this programme, working directly with primary and secondary schools to help children, young people and their families to be more socially integrated, improving their quality of life and enabling them to develop joint strategies to make vulnerable neighbourhoods safer.

The aim of the *Colegio Seguro* (Safe School) programme is to make the city's educational establishments safer, training educators and carrying out participative activities to improve students' behaviour, such as the creation of a *Red de Amigos del Colegio* (School Friends Network) to build supporting links between the various groups connected to the school and to strengthen the school's relations with the community. Implementing these municipal policies in cooperation with CS has been found to improve security both within and outside the city's educational establishments and has reduced levels of violence among students.

3.3.4. Other actors

The municipality of Peñalolén has developed programme and project units to manage its relations with CS and the international cooperation system. These units apply an innovative approach to a range of strategic issues affecting the city's key policies. The *Unidad de Responsabilidad Social y de Recursos Internacionales* (Social Responsibility and International Resources Unit) manages relations between the public and private sectors. It identifies best practice in other cities (in North America, Latin America and Europe) and adapts it for application to the municipality's pilot programmes. The municipality develops links with a wide range of civil actors for each of these programmes, focusing on links with socially responsible private companies. Over 160 public-private agreements are in place. New ideas for local government and innovative policies for the public sector and local management are generated by the central participative mechanism developed by the municipality, involving 17 advisory councils with 25 members each (a total of 425 civil actors), which propose and comment on new policy ideas in relation to strategic development issues. Each member is personally invited and appointed by the city's mayor.

The results and impact of local pilot programmes are evaluated and, if they prove successful, they are used to formulate local public management policies. When these policies affect a large proportion of the population, they generate local policies at state level that go beyond electoral disputes and changes of government. In some cases, these local policies are then considered by the national government with a view to converting them into national policies[18].

4. Transversal and prospective readings

This study considers the cases of three cities in Latin America whose municipal governments have developed and implemented socio-urban projects and programmes of medium to high complexity that serve as local public macro-policies and involve forging strong links with public and private actors in CS. At the same time, these regional enterprises establish close horizontal and vertical inter-

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[18]| *A municipal educational programme in Peñalolén, the first of its kind in Chile, an 'open school with extracurricular activities outside school hours for young people at risk', may be considered as an example of the application of local policies at national level.*

institutional links within a framework of decentralised international cooperation. The common features identified fall under three main headings, linked to these municipalities' policy decisions to make local management more participative, with greater levels of democracy, transparency and social involvement.

Common features identified

• The cases studied have been closely linked to the field of decentralised international cooperation, most of them benefiting from extensive experience in the development of common, joint projects by municipalities in LA and the EU, via direct cooperative relations with a range of countries or other forms of international action. Historical experience of cooperation has enabled these local governments to develop more adventurous regional projects and quality urban services with complex multiple interconnections. The decentralised cooperation element was, and is, a crucial factor in putting Latin American municipalities on the international map and in developing political relationships and management skills, while the skills and abilities of municipal employees have been developed in response to the requirements of international projects and cooperation agencies. This training has been provided over recent decades, with successes and failures, through a constant process of sharing, agreeing and implementing common working methods with other municipalities and incorporat-

ing new, more democratic and transparent approaches to working with local CS. A similar, but lengthier and more wide-ranging process has been recorded since the 1960s in social organisations, especially those NGOs which are involved in the field of international cooperation[19].

• Another common feature of the cases studied points to the broad and complex issue of public participation and highlights the diversity of the links maintained by the municipalities with a range of actors in CS. Although each city has developed its own approach to social participation that is adapted to its political and social context, in the process of developing regional cooperation platforms involving different actors, local politicians have clearly decided that public participation is key to the present and future sustainability of the measures developed and services implemented in their regions. No other fields have been identified that could provide a methodology for linking decentralised cooperation and CS. Given the diversity of municipalities and approaches that exist in LA, a range of 'organisational criteria' could be considered.

• A third feature identified links the institutional political context and the organisational culture of municipal structures to prior experiences of participation within the organisation and to the 'new roles' assumed by local governments as they acquire powers to develop

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[19] | *In their social role, 'NGOs reflect an ongoing story and not a fixed reality' (Sorj, 2010: 14).*

relationships on the national and international stage. These powers also strengthen municipal structures, as they acquire the skills needed to participate in inter-institutional and cross-functional networks, with programmes and projects at other levels in the government hierarchy (provincial/departmental/national). This situation also means that local governments must take the political decision to involve the public and form ties with CS as a recognised, visible and explicit actor in the implementation and management of local measures. One side effect of this feature is generally ignored, but merits pointing out as a major step forward in terms of international practice: the horizontal integration of projects with other areas and programmes within the municipalities themselves. Such improvements to regional operational integration make it easier to tackle complex socio-urban measures that affect a large number of people, applying new management approaches. The study shows that this inter-coordination can lead to a more integrated, better quality range of services provided by technical teams with multi-disciplinary skills working together to achieve shared goals.

A number of issues have become apparent which cut transversally across the three common features identified. One of these is the major role played by decentralised cooperation in facilitating projects and policies to bring about socioeconomic change and regional development. Another is the challenges posed by involving the public in the local/regional political system, with new forms of relation-

ship requiring the delegation of political and budgetary powers. In order to agree on these new forms of integrated and participative management, debate and consensus must be established with the actors of CS.

Specific features of each case

The features that are particular to each case include how each location relates to the actors of CS, specifically with social organisations (NGOs), base organisations and the private sector.

- LThe city of Medellín and its local government have developed an open, flexible form of participation with the actors of CS for each project, including defined roles with direct responsibility for the management of said projects. Where there are links with the private sector and sectors such as businesses, banking and private education, these organisations participate at the level of governing bodies, (e.g. the boards of governors in *Colegios de Calidad*) and at a delegated management level, in institutions with established experience in the organisation and provision of social and cultural services (e.g. the *Parque Biblioteca*). Relations with communities (the *Buen Comienzo* programme) also involve clear, direct links with social actors and public institutions through roles defined for each function. This system, whose goals are 'social transformation and inclusion', generates global participation mechanisms (supervision, management, control) in the municipality's strategic undertakings, which allow better allocation of budgetary resources across the whole of civil society.

• In Montevideo, a city with wide experience of social participation in its projects[20], the regional and socioeconomic measures implemented through the *Habitar Goes* project pose a challenge for the city, being part of an extensive series of municipal and national programmes and projects affecting numerous aspects of an extensive and complex rundown area in the centre of the city. The impact on the area is greater, as local, national and international resources are mobilised and organised in all the urban districts involved. At the same time, work will be done to find new ways of combining measures to reduce poverty, as well as meeting the needs of the intermediate sectors that live in the areas covered by these measures. CS is involved on two related levels during the project implementation process. Decentralised spaces and mechanisms (e.g. the *Consejo Goes*) are established in the areas involved for the purposes of participation, debate, horizontal and vertical interaction, and agreement with public bodies and institutions regarding the measures planned. Meanwhile, socially participative activities are organised at the operational level (women's and residents' organisations, work and home-building cooperatives, enterprises), including the private sector (businesses and the Agricultural Market), with specific measures and strategies to raise awareness about socio-urban integration in neighbourhoods. In this context of institutionalised participation organised by the municipality, we see the first signs of exchanges and self-evaluation among the social organisations involved in the local measures taking place through *Habitar Goes* and in other cities affiliated to this URB-AL III project.

• Individual residents are highly involved in the programmes and projects implemented by the city of Peñalolén's *Unidad de Seguridad Ciudadana*, while the municipality makes great efforts to establish working links with other authorities and private CS bodies that share the common goal of improving neighbourhood security. Recruiting and training residents to become involved in most of the *Unidad*'s activities means the municipality must establish a public policy of training, inclusion and participation that allows local people to discuss and act on their perceptions of danger, thereby fomenting solidarity among residents. In some projects, the training organised by the *Unidad de Seguridad Ciutadana* is carried out by social or private organisations. A relationship of this nature with the actors of civil society involves a highly centralised form of participation. To provide support for its strategic programmes, the municipality therefore needs to set up centralised, multi-skilled bodies involving public, social, private and other actors. Peñalolén is developing an innovative and distinctive model of local public management, involving a wide range of actors from CS (including 160 agreements with the private sector), which other municipalities are studying with a view to adapting it to their regions

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[20] *Uruguayan NGOs historically share a state-managed political and socioeconomic framework with a political and public culture that is more in favour of statism than that of other countries in the region, while public institutions are generally better perceived (Midaglia, 2002, in Garcés M. et. al., 2006).*

4.1. Conclusions

In the three cases studied, socio-urban projects are developed jointly by municipalities and decentralised cooperation organisations both to promote inclusion and social cohesion and to boost the development and micro-economic, cultural and regional integration of excluded communities whose populations lack basic resources. The social organisations (ONGs) and base organisations that take part in this type of project may have many years of experience implementing such measures and methodologies in these neighbourhoods and communities, experience that municipal agents and other actors of civil society can benefit from.

Given the goals and target recipients of the programmes and projects, it seems entirely natural to involve social actors, who are participants and beneficiaries at the same time, in the general planning and specific implementation of the measures. Nevertheless, the notion of a 'right to participate' (in the organisation and planning of needs and demands, the monitoring of projects, and the drafting of policies) is not built into the foundations of the programmes and projects by managers and local authorities. Adopting a participative political methodology would help to establish more sustainable key strategies for social cohesion.

To encourage debate and reflection on the many issues raised by the possibility of involving actors of civil society in local development, democracy and human rights, certain key steps need to be taken: 'public participation in the field of local development' includes theoretical aspects of urban governability and new thinking on multi-level (multiple or plural) governance and the need to open more specific debate on the new roles assigned to actors of CS to tackle the serious social problems (unemployment, poverty, exclusion) affecting LA as a result of major national crises and, to a greater or lesser extent, the recent global recession. These debates must also consider in depth the strategic question of how much political and administrative power the local executive and legislative systems are prepared to transfer to actors of CS in order to fully involve them in the plans and programmes concerned. It would be useful to follow the debates currently taking place on 'CS and its actors' by social and political scientists.

In one of the projects (*Habitar Goes*) there is clearly a constant search for new mechanisms, tools and innovative forms of inter-hierarchical institutional interaction that can be applied to public policy in general. Among the 'estimated results' of this project, the two impact studies that will be carried out are of particular interest, as is the system in place for assessing and monitoring it. The material obtained from these studies and systems should provide highly useful information on the strengths and weaknesses of these forms of institutional interaction and on participation with other public actors and with civil society. Using data such as feedback from the public on the projects already carried out will help with the development of wider ranging local projects and the implementation of new participative management practices.

There is a great deal of experience in LA regarding land disputes and reparatory processes that may be regarded as a form of social or public participation. Many municipalities use these processes to resolve social problems and town-planning issues, provided there is no conflict with public infrastructure works or major property

developments. The private sector, as a civil actor, uses business lobbying as a tool to pressurise political powers on public policy issues. In general, however, local, provincial and national governments fail to recognise social organisations as actors in their own right, or to listen to their solutions, views, and proposals with regard to major projects (water supply systems, mines, etc.) and other town and country planning issues such as land or water pollution, environmental problems and construction programmes to meet social housing needs, although their views may have strong technical support and are based on their everyday experiences.

As such organisations grow and strengthen their technical skills, there is increasing social pressure demanding the right to be taken into account as a recognised actor by political authorities and to be allowed to participate in the development of a better living environment. These social groups have taken to the streets of their cities to make their demands and ideas heard, and have developed the legal skills needed to defend their social causes against public policies that threaten the property or identities of their neighbourhoods (such as expulsion and exclusion from the city).

In this context of change, decentralised cooperation, which encourages new participative approaches to local development and social inclusion, must meet the challenge of strengthening (through project financing) visible and transparent legal networks and links between the multi-actor platforms of CS and the municipalities. This is necessary as it is the municipalities who are responsible for formulating and implementing public policy on global and local sector development. This vision includes the need to incorporate the range of quasi-governmental activities carried out by social organisations in a broader debate about decentralised cooperation. As a result of these discussions, which could give CS a greater role in local development, the political authorities will have to demonstrate the political will to establish institutionalised channels for effective, binding participation.

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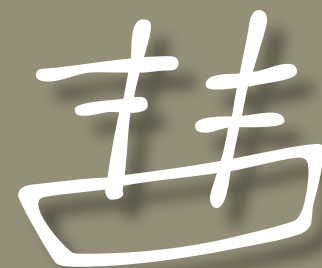
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Development, decentralised cooperation and multilevel governance: considerations for the current climate

Andrea Noferini *

Decentralised cooperation and multilevel governance have been two of the most fashionable concepts over the last 20 years. Arising from different contexts and disciplines, they still have a common origin framed within the broad debate on the role of the nation-state in times of globalisation. This article offers a short, and by no means exhaustive, reflection on these two topics. The starting point is the recognition, both in form and substance, of local governments as international actors in the current framework of the agenda for development. The central argument discusses how and to what extent the idea of multilevel governance can help local governments strengthen their presence in the field of decentralised cooperation.

KEY WORDS

Decentralised cooperation|
Multilevel governance |
European Union |
Local governments |
Development |

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1. Introduction

The participation of local governments in the world of international relations and the fields of cooperation for development are two phenomena that are currently receiving a great deal of attention. Both are the result of a number of changes that have marked the industrial world since around the early 1980s and which are closely interlinked. This debate has placed the role of the nation-state and its capacity to provide public assets in increasingly internationalised contexts.

The presence of a myriad of local governments in areas and sectors that are traditionally the domain of States is one of the most visible signs of change. In this case, it is the result of a progressive process of affirmation which, in two decades, has enabled local governments to gain legitimacy as both holders of the democratic values and protagonists in local development. Formal recognition of the right to autonomy has thus contributed to the proliferation of a large number of experiences in international cooperation, whose raison d'être includes seeking visibility for political demands, the desire for internationalisation and greater competitiveness and experimentation in forms of horizontal cooperation between 'equivalents' as a valuable tool for learning and institutional reinforcement.

One, if maybe not the only, channel that has attracted the attention of local governments since the start has been decentralised cooperation, generally understood as cooperation whose goal is the sustainable development of territories and whose protagonists are subnational bodies, either directly, through their institutions, or indirectly, through civic society and its associations. Today, decentralised cooperation is in very good health, as shown by the support it receives from the main international organisations. Furthermore, it is a practice that is now judicially and legally regulated in most countries. However, the amount of official aid directed to decentralised cooperation is still minimal, in many cases more symbolic than substantive. In Spain, one of the most advanced countries in terms of participation by subnational governments, decentralised cooperation represents 15% of national aid. In other European Union countries, the percentage is much lower.

However, there is a second piece of data even more worrying than the one above. In two of the most recent topics of discussion, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and aid effectiveness, one observes that development policies continue to be dominated by nation-states. Some critical voices, for example, noting the last-minute commitment to the local world in the Paris Declaration, have stated that most of the discussion regarding effectiveness hides a desire to re-centralise the management of aid. For instance, when mention is made of excessive fragmentation, the finger is pointed mainly at decentralised cooperation, with its numerous actors with multiple agendas and goals.

What, then, are the current challenges in which decentralised cooperation improve itself as an added value? And how can the idea of multilevel governance help local governments strengthen their presence and relevance in the field of cooperation? This article offers a short, and by no

means exhaustive, reflection on these two topics. More generally, the article speculates on the relations between two of the most fashionable concepts of the last 20 years: decentralised cooperation and multilevel governance. The central hypothesis is that the two concepts, arising from different contexts and disciplines, have similar origins and traits.

Firstly, they have the same parent, in the sense that they are set in the grand debate on the role of the nation-state in times of globalisation: its incapacity to challenge impersonal market forces, its ineffectiveness in providing public assets (both local and global) and/or its obsolescence in the light of the need for constantly greater economic and political integration, as the rise of the European Union appears to demonstrate. Secondly, decentralised cooperation and multilevel governance affect the same protagonists, in that they focus on the analysis of the functions, responsibilities and powers that subnational bodies have gradually acquired in recent decades as a result of a new international scenario, the appearance of alternative models of governance and a new form of understanding politics and public policies.

Today, recognition, in form and substance, of local governments as actors in development lies in their capacity to offer solid and effective responses (and, indeed, alternatives to state actions) to the most urgent issues on the development agenda. The principles of multilevel governance, in particular, stressing that current policy making has become more complicated due to the presence of a large number of actors and the overlap of certain responsibilities, could thus represent an extremely useful set of tools for new

cooperation scenarios. As long as multilevel governance is not considered a cure-all or an easily transferable model to other scenarios.

This article is divided into four sections. The first section (Chapter 1) offers an interpretation of the rise of decentralised cooperation due to a series of changes in the debate on development and a description of its key features. The second section (Chapter 2) sets out the current challenges facing development aid and the tasks required of decentralised cooperation in order to reaffirm the role of local governments as actors for development. The third section (Chapter 3) describes the key elements of the concept of multilevel governance. It outlines its main features, while also pointing out some of the common mistakes in the interpretation of the term. Finally, the fourth section (Chapter 4) concludes the study and presents a number of reflections on how the idea of multilevel governance could be useful to decentralised cooperation.

2. Development and local governments (i): the premises of decentralised cooperation

2.1. The international context: an introduction

Decentralised cooperation[1] is a relatively recent phenomenon which, in a relatively short time, has gained the attention of politicians, academics, experts and development officers. There are various interpretations regarding the why and when it appeared. Some authors suggest that decentralised cooperation became part of the development agenda in the mid-1980s due to a certain *fatigue* in international

aid and as a consequence of a deep process of reflection on national and international development policies. Other authors suggest it is originated as the result of the convergence of two specific factors: a change of paradigm in the idea of development and the affirmation of the international action of local governments (Hafteck, 2003). From a more general perspective, the phenomenon is undoubtedly more complex and can only be understood in the framework of the turbulent international context of the last 30 years.

By the start of the 1980s, the world, or at least the Western industrialised world, had undergone rapid change. The greater integration of economic systems, which some authors refer to as globalisation[2], seriously tested the strength of the traditional nation-state model (of governance). Demands for change came from various sides and included elements of all areas and sectors of our social systems. Internationally, the end of the Cold War and bipolar Manichaeism opened new, uncertain scenarios of integration which, at the same time, required alternative and novel models of governance. On the one hand, the first voices in favour of global (or supranational) government were heard, to alleviate the costs of greater economic and financial integration. On the other hand, domestically, many countries mooted a change in the form of conducting public policies, calling for new regulations in relations between the state and society.

In economic affairs, since the later 1970s, unemployment and inflation, together with the ineptitude of many inefficient public administrations, had buried Keynesianism and reduced trust in nation states to an all-time low. Thus the eighties began as a period of promise for proponents of market forces and the principles of competition. In short, the nation-state abdicated its *interventional* role in favour of a more discrete *minimal state*[3] or *regulatory state*[4], whose basic functions consisted of defining and guaranteeing the rules of the game, leaving economic agents free to play and defending them from assorted *free-riders* and *scroungers*.

In politics, the third wave of democratisation was crossing Europe and Latin America (LA). This was accompanied by a degree of support for the decentralising

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[1]| The is no single official definition of decentralised cooperation. Various institutions and organisations that work in development use different definitions. The United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank differ in certain aspects of their definitions. For an interesting review of the origin and spread of the term decentralised cooperation, see Pierre Hafteck (2003) and María Del Huerto Romero (2007). However, in this article, many of the references are to direct, public decentralised cooperation, as defined by the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA: cooperation in which decentralised public agents play a leading role in the programming, promotion and management of the actions, without relying on central states or multilateral organisations. Throughout the article, the decentralised public agents most frequently referred to are local councils. Finally, this article does not consider the first twinnings to involve European (and North American) towns since the 1950s as examples of decentralised cooperation. In this latter instance, the term international intermunicipal cooperation is preferred. See Hafteck (2003) on the subject.

[2]| Globalisation is another polysemic concept for which there are numerous definitions. Below is the definition provided by David Held, professor at the London School of Economics and the leading expert on the subject, which offers one of the best-known and consistent approaches: Globalisation can best be understood as a process or set of processes rather than a singular condition. It does not reflect a simple linear developmental logic, nor does it prefigure a world society or a world community. Rather, it refers to the emergence of interregional networks and systems of interaction and exchange. In this respect, the enmeshment of national and societal systems in wider global processes has to be distinguished from any notion of global integration. For more information on the topic, see the website www.polity.co.uk for a large selection of bibliographical material.

[3]| Nozick, 1974

[4]| Majone, 1994; For a more extensive review of the idea of regulatory capitalism see Jordana and Levy Faur, 2005

processes that were taking place in the new democracies. In Europe in the 1980s, for example, the decentralisation process led to the formation and institutionalisation of regions in many Nation-States. With respect to local politics, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, dated on 1985, represents one of the most important institutional expressions of the European concern for democratic principles in the exercise of public power (Lasagabaster Herrarte, 2007). Indeed, the Charter represents an important point of legitimisation which was to provide a boost, after a process lasting two decades, for the definitive affirmation of local government international relations and para-diplomacy (or post-diplomacy) (Aguirre Zabala, 2000; Keating, 1998; Aldecoa and Keating, 2000).

2.2. . The change of paradigm: human development, territory and good governance

Clearly, so much change left its mark on the debate over growth and development. Furthermore, although the Washington Consensus-the term used for the neoliberal policies of the period-had, on one hand, overseen greater macroeconomic stability, on the other, it had failed to tackle issues such as poverty and inequality. Also, the structural reforms and stabilisation policies promoted by the main international financial institutions

throughout the nineties had contributed, in numerous cases, to worsening citizens' living standards. In Latin America, these circumstances combined with the continuing negative sequel of the 'lost decade' of the eighties[5].

As the negative consequences of the neoliberal programme on people's wellbeing in both industrialised and developing countries became evident, there was growing demand for a radical change in the concept of development. Without being exhaustive, it is worth noting three dimensions to change that were to have an impact on local government cooperation: the emergence of the idea of human development; the renewed emphasis on territory; and, finally, new attention given towards institutions (*good governance*).

The first change is a philosophical-conceptual one and is framed within the debate on growth and development as the ultimate goals of our socioeconomic systems. The period saw the rise of the idea of human development[6], understood as *wellbeing*, specifically in the form of skills, opportunities and liberties provided to individuals so they may seek the lifestyle they consider most appropriate (Sen, 1997; 2000). The belief that increasing available wealth is enough to achieve wellbeing was definitively dismissed. On the contrary, individuals were recognised as having different preferences, uses and conversion skills[7]. Thus, human

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[5] *Londoño and Székely (2000) show that in Latin America the ratio between the average incomes of the highest and lowest quintiles fell from 22.9 in 1970 to 18.0 in 1982, to then rise again to 22.9 in 1991.*

[6] *From a more pragmatic perspective, the new vision is contained in the 1990 publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index, which is largely indebted to the work of the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, Amartya Sen.*

[7] *For instance, Amartya Sen recognises that the same amount of money can provide very different levels of wellbeing to two different people (e.g. a pregnant woman compared to a worker).*

development comes to mean a process of extending specific liberties which requires a minimum set of attributes (good health, a home, nourishment, education, civil and political liberties[8]). In a period of philosophical pluralism, and with a clear desire not to repeat the mistakes of the theory of modernisation, this new interpretation is more respectful of the diversity among individuals and societies. The message conveyed is that each intervention for development must therefore focus on the attributes and less so on individuals' goals, many of which are culturally defined.

The second dimension of change considers territories as differential elements of development, whether this is because this is where the forces of globalisation finally reverse their negative effects on individuals or whether it is because, following the theories of endogenous growth, the territory is established as an element of comparative advantage. This is the point at which the slow interpretative change from the development aid model towards new formulas, among them decentralised cooperation, begins. Thus, interventions focussing on physical capital and investment in infrastructures are pushed into the background. Indeed, social policies for development, the provision of basic services at a local level, investment in human capital and a certain tendency towards micromanagement of policies with greater attention to the consequences (and opportunities) that affect the territories take on a new importance. Clearly, the new paradigm has major implications for local agents, focussing on the idea of local development

and requiring policies (programmes and projects) to be refocused on territories and individuals who live in them.

Finally, from the institutional perspective, this being the third dimension of change, there arises new attention on good governance and, in general, the role of institutions as decisive variables for development. In 1998, the World Bank warned that 'institutions matter' (Burki and Perry, 1998), with the aim of underlining the fact that effectiveness requires not just good public policies, but also good administrators, as well as solid and credible organisations and institutions. Doubts arose due to the fact that similar policies often produce opposite effects in countries with different institutional arrangements and capabilities. As a result of this, World Bank researchers concentrated on selecting the key elements of what came to be known as *good governance* and which is defined in general terms as a legitimate, effective and efficient system for decision making and public policy formulation[9]. It is not difficult to perceive how decentralised cooperation accepts and promotes part of these new principles, given the emphasis it places on strengthening local institutions, on the participation of agents in designing policies and on horizontal coordination with other actors.

2.3. The suitability of decentralised cooperation

Today, no one questions the added value produced by decentralised coordination and the idea that in matters of sus-

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[8] *Functioning, to use Amartya Sen's term.*

[9] *See section 3.2*

tainable development at a local level, local governments hold a clear comparative advantage (OECD, 2001). In any case, this degree of consensus is the result of a long road marked by a number of different phenomena. Three fundamental questions will be discussed here: firstly, why decentralised cooperation has fit in so suitably the new paradigm for development; secondly, how local governments knew how to grasp the moment and, at last, what the role of decentralised cooperation might be in the current debate on development.

The theoretical reflection on growth and development is accompanied by profound review of cooperation practices. Firstly, the belief that if a solution is good for one country it is good for the majority has been discredited, and, with it, the idea that policies for the Northern hemisphere can easily be transferred to contexts in the South (policy transfer). Finally, the limits of state-centric cooperation models, in which the large distances (both physical and procedural and practical) between donors and receivers complicates both the appropriation and the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions, were definitively accepted. It is precisely in this context of change that decentralised cooperation appears as a novel and alternative model in terms of the forms and protagonists of development policies.

From a conceptual perspective, decentralised cooperation, as an instrument for development, fits in very well with the abovementioned paradigm shift. Firstly, the one-way nature of the paternalist 'donor-to-receiver' model gives way to a more egalitarian interpretation of the relationship where the nature of the agreement (contract or alliance) between partners is given pride of place. In many cases, the asymmetry of the relationship is recognised but the vision of the relationship as *between equals* is reinforced, even though the parties have very different capacities and demands. Furthermore, in this direction, horizontal relations between 'homologous' governments of the South are encouraged, and networking is promoted as an alternative (more open and plural) form to the traditional North-South axis. Secondly, decentralised cooperation includes a more pragmatic, less idealised and ingenuous, vision of developmental aid. It recognises, for instance, that the triggers for cooperation for development might not be exclusively altruistic and charitable. On the contrary, it defends the legitimacy of cooperating for a mutual interest (or benefit), which may also be economic in nature. What matters here are results and impacts on individuals' living standards. Thus, the purely 'aid' component disappears through the introduction of mechanisms of appropriation and accountability for all parties.

Given this context, local governments knew better than anyone how to grasp the opportunities of change. Faced with the withdrawal of traditional donors and making the most of a climate of seeking internationalisation, the field of cooperation underwent a veritable invasion by a mixed group of agents, including not just local governments but also second-level subnational governments (the regions), the more professional NGOs, specialist consultancy companies and professional associations (unions, professional colleges, chambers of commerce, etc.).

Firstly, the main international organisations had reached the conclusion that they preferred working with governments (subnational and local) than with civic associations (at least with respect to certain forms of intervention). The voluntarism and solidarity of the first NGOs had revealed

their full limitations when they started using slightly more refined planning instruments (such as medium- and long-term strategic plans and programming documents, among others). Secondly, the emphasis on the training and institutional reinforcement of actors from the South (one of the aspects of good governance) gave a clear comparative advantage to local governments, which had the skills and experience in their territories. Furthermore, both local governments and subnational bodies also guaranteed greater leadership in mobilising civic society and its associations, whether in the donor or the receiver country.

Finally, decentralised cooperation offered an alternative to the traditional *modus operandi* of development aid focussing on elements that were very often not on the agenda of national governments. A recent European Commission Communication[10] from 2008, for example, clearly recognises that 'due to its proximity and territorial presence, as well as its understanding of local needs and specialist knowledge in sectors that traditionally favour poverty reduction (urbanisation, water and health or aid to vulnerable groups or populations with no resources in remote areas)', decentralised cooperation has a number of virtues lacking in other forms of cooperation. To this must be added the fact that local authorities can play a key role in the democratisation of local affairs. As holders of legitimate political responsibility in their communities, local governments play a valuable role in bringing together institutional and civic actors to design and implement public policies. In this sense, decentralised cooperation is the torchbearer for the principles of participation and democracy to the extent that they favour less hierarchical and more open forms of policy making.

3. Development and local governments (ii): decentralised cooperation and the current debate

3.1. Millennium developmental goals and local governments

Without being exhaustive, today there are three interrelated issues that occupy a large part of the development and cooperation agenda. These are: sustainability, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the debate on aid effectiveness[11]. Local governments are part of this grand debate, given that, as is widely known, it is estimated that in 2030, around 5 billion people (representing 60% of the world's population) will live in urban areas. From a more strategic perspective, it is clear that strengthening local governments' role as actors in development will inevitably involve their ability to fit in comfortably with present and future cooperation scenarios.

In the next pages it will be offered a description of what the most relevant contributions of decentralised cooperation on the new development aid scenario are (or should be), indicating two of the three abovementioned topics. Due to the large extension of *sustainability*, this topic will not be discusses in this document. However, it is worth remembering that sustainability is the grandparent of all ideas regarding development in the last

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[10]| *SEC/2008/2570/FINAL*

[11]| *Another major topic is not discussed here: the issue of development funding as established at the Monterrey Conference.*

30 years. At this point, the only thing to note regarding the idea of sustainable development[12] is that it is clearly polysemic and contains a bit of everything. Over time, the environmental component has been combined with economic and social aspects and all types of references within the concept of human development. So much variety and heterogeneity in interpretations and readings can sometimes empty the term of practical use, without affecting the validity of its contents.

The MDGs range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and achieving universal primary education by 2015. Presented in September 2000 by the United Nations as the result of a dozen large international summits and a plan agreed on by all the world's nations, they are, after five years, the cause more of concern than satisfaction due to the accumulated delays. The judgement on their relevance is also controversial. According to some, they represent the most ambitious worldwide initiative to renew the international development agenda. However, according to others, the MDGs demonstrate the failure of world cooperation policies and development aid to date. The commitments agreed on by the international community in previous years had been noticeably watered down, focussing more on tackling the consequences of poverty than on identifying and changing its structural causes (Gómez Gil 2007).

On reading the list of MDGs, the role of local governments can easily be assigned to many of them. Indeed, to achieve them requires local actions that stress the important of local institutions and the fact that the goals require commitments from society. The mobilisation of local governments is thus crucial to achieving them. Indeed, conscious of this, local governments have for some time been calling for 'Millennium Development Goals to be promoted through the cities'[13].

Undoubtedly, one Goal which is a rallying cry to local governments is number 7, which, under the title 'Ensure environmental sustainability' and as part of the defence of the natural environments, slips in the provision of true basic assets (water and sanitation) without which it is not possible to guarantee a decent life or survival. The set target (Target 7.C) indicates the desire to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation services by 2015. Bearing in mind that in many parts of the world local governments are ultimately responsible for providing drinking water and sanitation to their citizens, the accumulated knowledge and management skills developed by Northern partners are evidently valuable capital to invest in less well-off contexts.

However, recent history teaches us to exercise extreme caution. The experiences of privatisation in Latin America[14] in the 1990s noticeably affected

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[12]| *Arising in response to an avalanche of criticism of capitalism, the idea of sustainable development was the product of negativity, i.e., the result of the awareness of the unsustainability of patterns of industrialisation and the serious threats that hung (and are still hanging) over the future of humanity. In general, based on the publication of the Bruntland Report, the overvalued formula meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is used.*

[13]| *United Cities and Local Governments' World Council Declaration presented for the Millennium +5 Summit.*

[14]| *For the emblematic case of Argentina under Carlos Menem's two mandates, see the book by Mariana Llanos (2002).*

water supplies, among other things,[15] and with them local governments. The lessons that may be extracted from some of the resounding failures should serve as a warning for future interventions. Firstly, it is worth remembering that local governments operate in an institutional and legal context defined nationally and by the central state. In many cases, with a clear political will for reform at the national level, with no real powers and without the presence of a clear regulatory framework, any action taken locally is destined to fail. Secondly, it is worth remembering that, in the regulatory struggle between companies that provide the service and the public bodies that control it, the limited experience of the public regulator (especially at subnational level) has almost always favoured the private sector, with negative effects on the quality of the service.

In other cases, however, the responsibilities for failure have been widely shared with the local governments. Despite in these latter cases almost never being the owners of the infrastructure, they have had other relevant functions in the sector's regulatory systems (in many cases, they established some aspect of the rates system, defined the service standards or tendered concessions or service contracts). The lack of local political commitment, the limited administrative ability of local personnel, the excessive cost of coordination and the persistence of obscure practices and cronyism have often frustrated attempts at improvement.

In brief, the whole area of local public services is fertile ground for decentralised cooperation. Strengthening the institutional skills of local actors is undoubtedly a primary requisite. In any case, it is better not to generate too much expectation on the real impact of isolated action by local governments. The scenario of these services, as well as being complex, also included the presence of different levels of governments, each operating within certain areas of power. If central (and/or provincial or regional) government fails in its area of regulatory responsibility, local government will see its range of options reduced.

3.2. The effectiveness of aid and local governments

The other major issue on the development agenda is aid effectiveness, as summarised in the 2005 Paris Declaration. It places at the heart of the matter, firstly, the excessive cost of aid ineffectiveness, valued at between three and six billion Euros, according to a study by the European Commission.[16] The other negative element to consider is the excessive fragmentation of aid. The average number of official donors in each receiver country rose from 12 in 1960 to 33 in 2004, with more than 30 countries having more than 40 active donors (Sanahuja, 2007).

After Paris, the international community thus decided to reassess develop-

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[15]| *Similar considerations could be made for the urban sanitation service, another local public service with extensive repercussions for people's quality of life. One may also consider Target 7.D of Goal 7, which proposes, 'By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers'. In many cases it is the local councils who are responsible for building.*

[16]| *Data quoted in the document Assises of Decentralised Cooperation for Development: Local and regional authorities: full partners in EU development policy, Committee of the Regions, 2009.*

ment aid management under the principles of appropriation, alignment, harmonisation, management aimed at results, mutual responsibility and transparency. This is not the place to reiterate that the Paris Declaration is a political commitment signed by states and made for states. Until very recently, both civil society and the local world had been, not without harsh criticism, excluded from the debate. It was only in 2008 that for the first time local governments were recognised as actors in the debate on aid effectivenessThe effectiveness of aid and local governments. The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), as well as recognising the relevance of democracy, good governance, social progress and the environment, officially declared the need to support institutional reinforcement of local governments and the importance of local resources in providing technical cooperation. Each of the principles accepted in Paris can easily be interpreted on a local level (UCLG, 2009).

Although they are not completely new principles, public decentralised cooperation and organised civil society have for some time talked about the need to make the weakest partners accountable, using the word appropriation. At the same time, both sectors constantly stress the need for demand-driven interventions, based on the receiving partners' real demands and not so much on the donors' interests (whether these by central states or local governments).

Undoubtedly, in the analysis of the relationship between decentralised cooperation and aid effectiveness, one of the most delicate and controversial points is that which arises from the principle of harmonisation[18], which pushes agents towards 'coordination and a division of labour based on comparative advantage and complementary'. This means reducing the fragmentation (number of actors) of aid and increasing the level of coordination between different donors. In the eyes of subnational bodies, the principle could contain and evident tension. It is hoped to avoid excessive dispersion of aid, which clearly leads to bigger challenges of coordination and increases transaction costs. However, the instruments used to achieve this rationalisation are of dubious worth. Firstly, the specialisation into areas or sectors (division of labour) among donors appears difficult to achieve due to traditional issues of sovereignty and respect for each agent's autonomy in decision making. Indeed, this latter aspect is often mentioned by decentralised cooperation agents themselves who lament the excessive zeal on the part of local governments when taking joint decisions.

Secondly, it is not at all clear how a comparative advantage may be established (For instance, should local governments specialise exclusively in technical aid for their equivalents and in institutional reinforcement? Or should local governments focus only on local public services?). Finally, discussing international division of cooperation by functional or technical criteria would mean, somewhat ingenuously, a lack of aware-

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[17]| *Previously in Rome and New York (in the United Nations Development Cooperation Forums) and subsequently in the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra*

[18]| *As stated in the Paris Declaration, excessive fragmentation of aid on a global, national or sector level reduces its effectiveness. A pragmatic approach to the division of labour and the distribution of the load increases complementarity while reducing transaction costs.*

ness of the post-colonial and self-serving origin of cooperation. States have been and continue to be motivated by clear interests (economic, political and geostrategic interests, among others). Many local governments are motivated by similar factors. Just at the moment when their international activity has gained a degree of legitimacy, to deprive them of part of their decision-making autonomy would be somewhat hard to digest.

Although the Paris Declaration is a response to a restrictive and technocratic conception due to its focus on development, it cannot be denied that it is an unprecedented attempt to seek greater aid effectiveness. To do this, it proposes an extensive review of practices and establishes a number of principles demanded by civil society and central and local governments as essential criteria for rationalising the system (Martínez and Santander 2008).

4. The paradigm of multilevel governance: interpretations and consequences for the local world

4.1. Governance 'by the moderns'

Multilevel governance is today a very popular expression in areas of international relations and studies on European integration. Indeed, the term continues to gain institutional support such as the recent publication of the Committee of the Regions *White Paper on Multilevel Governance*[19]. Finally, its inclusion in the debate on development cooperation indicates, once again, the horizontal nature of the idea. Its definition is still unclear and its interpretations so varied that, without first attempting to define it, it is difficult to understand what exactly is being discussed.

Governance[20] in its most general sense describes the forms in which a community decides on the mechanisms of collective action and decision making to provide public assets. Indeed, there are as many forms of governance as there are agreements on how to organise collectively. In any case, observing the history of the term *governance* over the last 10-15 years, certain interesting phenomena may be noted. Firstly, the word has acquired a degree of relative weight with respect to the more common term *government*. It is highly likely that behind this process lies a degree of dissatisfaction with what can be explained by the term *government* when considering the complex contemporary world. Indeed, as stressed in previous paragraphs, the IT revolution, technological advances, internationalisation of markets, the end of the Cold War, sustainable development and international terrorism have cast serious doubt on the more familiar political categories[21]. Many of them may either be retired or require major reworking to catch up with the times. Thus it is easy to understand why the idea

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[19]| *Committee of the Regions (2009/C 211/01).*

[20]| *The World Bank offers the following definition: governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1992).*

[21]| *It is worth remembering that economics and political sciences, as self-contained fields of knowledge, are disciplines that arose with the first steps of the nation-states. It is normal for many analytical and conceptual instruments to become obsolete in a world in which pressing a couple of buttons can move amounts of money equivalent to the GDP of many small and medium-sized nations.*

of governance is today more attractive than the common term 'government'.

The difference between the two concepts remains simple. Governance refers to the act (action) of governing[22] while government, however, is the instrument of governance. In fact, systems of governance almost always contemplate the presence of multiple governments. Therefore, the concept of multilevel governance has to mean something more than 'the presence of multiple governments' or it would add nothing new to the original meaning of the word. Finally, it should be pointed out that governance is almost always accompanied by numerous modifiers, to extend or define more precisely the content of the term. Thus there exists: *good* governance, *global, multilevel, polycentric, multi-actor* governance and many more. Sometimes one gets the feeling that this is semantic camouflage rather than real differentiation. The aim of the following pages is to introduce the concept of multilevel governance, define its essential traits and show what its relationship with decentralised cooperation might be.

As a general reflection, however, it is important to stress the legitimisation of the multilevel governance model receives from a broad spectrum of the political and academic world is the result of a process of deep change. In its most general sense,

multilevel governance evokes a scenario of decision making and open public political process, vertically and horizontally integrated, in which various public and private actors are involved[23]. The central and innovative idea is, however, another one. This hypothetical state of things, if it exists, would mean a break with the more traditional forms of the nation-state's command-and-control. This is where the novelty lies. In effect, the relevance and originality of the concept truly lies in this latter aspect in that it postulates multilevel governance as *the form of governance of the moderns[24]*, in other words, the new form of conducting politics and making public policies, as an alternative and replacing the vertically hierarchical nation-state model. It will be seen that experts are far more cautious when interpreting multilevel governance as something that exists *hic et nunc* and when defending its normative value and prescriptive capabilities. In any case, the innovative value that the idea of multilevel governance has brought with it cannot be denied.

4.2. How many types of governance are there?

Despite the diverse types and definitions of governance, one can still find a common thread that is evidence of the presence of certain shared basic principles. Here, the idea of *good governance* and the definition of *European governance* will be

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[22] *Or, possibly, the set of formal and informal institutions that undertake the act of governing.*

[23] *The most influential academic definitions are given here. The first is by Schmitter (2004) and sustains that multilevel governance is 'an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors—private and public—at different levels of territorial aggregation in more-or-less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority to any of these levels'. The second definition is by Piattoni (2009) and considers multilevel governance (MLG) 'as a diverse set of arrangements, a panoply of systems of coordination and negotiation among formally independent but functionally interdependent entities that stand in complex relations to one another and that, through coordination and negotiation, keep redefining these relations'.*

[24] *Here, political scientists will be reminded of the classic debate at the beginning of the 19th century on Benjamin Constant's definition of liberty of the ancients and liberty of the moderns.*

considered, with particular attention to their repercussions on decentralised cooperation.

The result of renewed attention on the institutional adjustments that serve a country's prosperity, *good governance* arose at the end of the eighties from the offices of the World Bank as a precondition for growth and development[25]. The concept is a broad one and focuses on strengthening countries' formal institutions, with a degree of attention on internal decentralising processes. All this implies managing public affairs transparently, promoting real, and not just formal, participation of the actors involved, trusting in the rule of law and establishing solid brakes and counterweights between the various state institutions[26]. Good governance thus means both a stable environment and one that is favourable to investment in terms of the presence of a political system and a public administration capable of channelling and responding to the public's demands democratically, inclusively and transparently.

By contrast, the idea of *European governance*, as defined in the European Commission's 2001 *White Paper*,[27], stems from the debate on the functioning of the Eurpean Union (EU). Although in this case the concept is not directly linked to development, it does redefine some principles common to the ideas discussed in the debate over cooperation. The White Paper also represented a major turning point in that it proposes governance as a strategic goal for the EU, marking the start of an extensive period of reflection that culminated with the publication in 2009 of the Committee of the Regions' *White Paper on Multilevel Governance*.

There are five principles that constitute the basis of European governance[27]: *openness, participation, responsibility, efficacy* and *coherence*. In EU rhetoric, these principles are not only the basis for democracies, but should also be applied to all levels of government: world, European, national, regional and local. In any case, as the European Commission itself stresses, governance is not a miracle cure for all problems (*White Paper on Governance*, 2001; p. 9). Change is much more complex and gradual. Experience suggests it requires concerted action on the part of all EU institutions, Member States, regional and local authorities and civic society and presupposes a notable improvement in coordination among them. Hence, the clear relationship with the idea of multilevel governance. Indeed, a joint reading of the five principles leads unsurprisingly to the conclusion that good governance is precisely that model which incorporates the participation of a wide number of agents at all levels, each given both administrative and executive responsibility, autonomy and capabilities, and which permits transparent and participative decision making, coherent with the interests present in society. In a word: multilevel governance.

Throughout all this, it is worth noting that both local governments and decentralised cooperation have been profoundly affected by this change in

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[25]| *One of the first appearances is in the 1989 report on Sub-Saharan Africa.*

[26]| *More specifically, there are five dimensions to good governance, referred to as: 1) Voice and accountability; 2) Government effectiveness; 3) Lack of regulatory burden; 4) Rule of law; and 5) Independence of the judiciary and control of corruption. (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton, 1999).*

[27]| *White Paper on Governance, COM (2001) 428 final. To these five principles must be added the already existing principle of subsidiarity and principle of proportionality.*

perspective. During the 1990s, many countries recognised the value of self-government as an instance of democracy. Democratic legitimacy has enabled local governments to appear as privileged representatives of the citizens' interests and thus, a little later, to strengthen their position as actors in development. Along this route, the support of European institutions has played a relevant role. Although somewhat slowly, subnational and local governments have seen their role in European affairs strengthened. Secondly, Brussels has proven to be a more open meeting point than traditional diplomatic environments, contributing to the increase in contact between a vast number of local governments and their international associations. Finally, it should be acknowledged that the EU has been a pioneer in incorporating the focus on decentralised cooperation into the agreements of the 4th ACP-EC Convention of Lomé signed in 1989 with the Asia, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and in setting up and funding cooperation programmes whose key agents are not nation-states (most notably, because of its success, the URB-AL Programme).

Also, the emphasis on good governance has had contrasting effects on the local world. Experience has shown that when decentralised cooperation operates in institutionally unstable environments, the odds of success are notably reduced. In many local councils in Latin America, for example, too many projects or programmes aimed at improving basic municipal services (such as solid urban waste) have had to overcome obstacles outside the scope of decentralised

cooperation. Among the main obstacles are: a muddled division of responsibilities among the various institutions and levels of governments, legal vacuums, the absence of a strong national legal framework[28], regulations approved without application and, finally, inefficient tribunals. In all these cases, the horizontal action of local governments is clearly of little use if it is not supported by a real political desire for reform on the part of the corresponding national governments.

Therefore, the lesson worth remembering is that, to guarantee a degree of effectiveness, decentralised cooperation must necessarily match the political and institutional culture of partners' local contexts. Programming interventions thus requires an accurate analysis of the institutional framework and formal and informal regulations that regulate it. It is a necessary condition for defining the real capabilities of local government from the start. Ignoring this element runs the risk of many experiences ending up as little more than an exchange of reciprocal visits and seminars for a few privileged municipal officers. In this context there are two positive developments. The experiences of the South-South network (or partnerships between mostly Southern agents) appear to be a good step in the right direction, given that the agents share similar institutional contexts (compared to North-South relations). Secondly, the attention of multilevel government to relations between multiple actors, in this sense, serves to calibrate more closely the interventions of decentralised cooperation to the contexts in which they are applied.

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[28]| *One of the most frequent cases is the presence of framework laws stripped of the respective decrees for action and therefore inapplicable.*

4.3. Multilevel governance: the genesis of the concept

From the academic perspective, it has now been 15 years since the idea of multilevel governance first appeared in the specialist literature on European integration[29]. Its genesis, therefore, circumscribes certain well-defined areas of study (international relations and political sciences) whose object of analysis is the EU.

At the start of the nineties, the authors of multilevel governance offered an alternative point of view to the classic dichotomy between intergovernmentalists and neofunctionalists. They defend the idea that European politics is not only played out on two levels (European institutions versus member states), but on multiple levels. Regional governments, local bodies, interest groups, civic organisations and transnational environmentalist movements are just a few examples of the new actors and agents invited to the European policy-making table. The European integration process had had a double impact on the ways in which nation-states act. Firstly, the effects of supranationalisation of powers and the transfer of sovereignty on the part of Nation States, especially on economic issues, was recognised. Secondly, these authors were the first to suggest the presence of feedback from Brussels. The European institutions, in particular the Commission, offering incentives and money as an opportunity for action to a set of new actors, contributed to disseminating a novel form of 'making public policy'. Taken to its extreme, the idea emerged that, by virtue of the European integration process, a given model of governance (state-centric) was being replaced by another, not yet fully defined, model which nevertheless considered a degree of blurring of powers among the large number of public and private actors and in which the central state did not hold a monopoly.

The empirical field of analysis from which these first hypotheses arose was political cohesion; a political history of the EU that, even today, occupies a third of the community budget and whose aim is to reduce socioeconomic differences between the territories. Through the instrument of structural funds, and after a substantial reform in 1988, community policy has literally financed the development of many European territories and has been innovative in various fields. This has undoubtedly reinforced the participation of subnational bodies (in particular, the regions) in the design of territorial development strategies. Secondly, it has encouraged the participation of civic organisations as an element of effectiveness and democracy; and finally, it has financed the first experiences in territorial cooperation between regional and local governments, opening the way, at the end of the 1990s, to new forms of organisation such as the Euroregions (according to some, true examples of possible models of multilevel governance).

Territorial cooperation, in particular, has been a true experimental laboratory in which subnational bodies have specifically put into practice some of the

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[29]| *For the original contributions see: Marks, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 1996, 2001; Hooghe 1995, 1996. For the historical and conceptual reconstruction of the idea, see the recent book by Simona Piattoni (2010). Finally, for a good reconstruction of the debate in Spanish, see Morata (2004).*

principles of multilevel governance. Although cross-border cooperation might be questioned by some in Europe, the first interesting experiences applied to the Latin American context have already taken place[30], the objective of which is the definition of common development strategies that do not depend on political frontiers in the region. Apart from the known difficulties with regional integration that have marked the continent, the current capacity to construct agreement mechanisms between Latin American local and intermediate governments is still weak (CeSPI – *Fronteras Abiertas*, 2009). This represents a challenge that could prove an opportunity for decentralised cooperation in the near future. In brief, the management model of structural funds has contributed to the emergence of previously unknown forms of political mobilisation and policy making.

In that direction, the Commission had promoted a virtuous cycle—however long it has taken to work properly—which encouraged collective action between different levels of government within a state, with the obligation of acting in a coordinated and transparent manner, observing the principle of citizens' participation. The design process for the first regional operational programmes represent a long learning exercise throughout Europe during which subnational bodies central administration have had to talk in depth and during which the coordination of actions among different actors (management authority, payment authority, monitoring committees, beneficiaries) has been a crucial element for the success of the policy.

4.4. Multilevel governance and local governments

An alternative way of discussing the implications of multilevel governance for the local world consists in comparing the efforts of nation-states in three key areas (Piattoni, 2010). The three following dichotomies are considered: a) external (international) affairs versus domestic affairs; b) centre versus periphery; c) State versus society.

Promoters of the multilevel model defend the idea that European integration has produced substantial changes in all three dimensions. These changes, firstly, opened participation up to subnational (and local) bodies in international affairs. Secondly, they extended the radius of actions of subnational and local governments without them having to request permission (or authorisation) from central administration. The qualitative jump is relevant given that it is an alternative vision to traditional liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsick, 1994, 1998), one of the dominant paradigms in studies on European integration, which has always stressed the nation-state's capacity for resistance.

Multilevel governance challenges the three preceding points in the following way: firstly, it casts doubt on whether central governments now have the capacity to rigorously control both the centre-peripheral dimension and the dividing line between domestic and international

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[30]| *See the Fronteras Abiertas (Open Borders) programme, co-financed since 2007 by the Ministero degli Affari Ester (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and a number of Italian Regions and executed by the Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (Centre for International Policy Studies – CeSPI) and the Instituto Italo-Latino Americano (Italian-Latin American Institute – IILA).*

affairs. In other words, it offers a critique of the capacity of states to decide which subnational bodies can legitimately present themselves on the international arena and which issues should fall within the domains of internal or foreign affairs. In this sense, the presence of more open policy making and opportunities offered to European institutions did in fact strengthen the position of regions, provinces and governments with respect to central administrations.

For their part, subnational governments, acting as political entrepreneurs and exceeding, in many cases, the available legal framework, made the most of the new opportunities, presenting themselves directly in the international and European arena in search of visibility, resources and legitimacy. If we view the process of European integration in terms of the widest paradigm shift that the internationalisation of the markets appears to have produced, it is easier to understand how subnational agents found themselves facing a particularly favourable scenario. The renewed emphasis of national movements on plurinational states, the revitalisation of regional identities, proliferating international actions of subnational agents through the affirmation of para-diplomacy and a growing number of experiences of territorial cooperation (cross-border, transnational and interregional) without the presence of states, are all examples of non-conventional forms of political mobilisation that give regions and local governments a new protagonism.

From the perspective of the division of labour between State and society for the formulation of public policies, (point C above, 'State versus society'), multilevel governance proposes a scenario

of change. As can easily be seen, the nature of change here is in line with some of the principles already found in the good governance paradigm and in the definition of European governance. Firstly, it recognises participation as a key element for democratic legitimacy, transparency and the effectiveness of public policies. More generally, government agencies (national, regional and local), although maintaining a degree of leadership in proposing public policies, now have the obligation to open the "black box" of decision making to the main actors in civil society.

Initially, it was the traditional organisations representing the communities' economic interests (unions, employers' associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, etc.) who took on board these new practices. Another element of openness was the promotion of PPP (public-private partnership), a practice already known in the world of cooperation, with contrasting opinions regarding their efficacy and purpose. These were soon followed by new models of associations, the result of a process of transnationalisation of the defence of certain shared ethical and political values (defence of the environment, consumer rights, transparency and publicity for public decisions). The essence of a multilevel scenario lies, in this case, in the presence of private movements acting in international areas promoting and defending interests that appear, at first sight, public in nature. It was this overlap, and subsequent blurring, of powers that provided legitimacy to the defenders of multilevel government in affirming the new model of doing politics had assumed some of the traditional functions of the State.

5. Decentralised cooperation and multilevel governance: some final observations

5.1. General warnings on the use of the idea of multilevel governance

As can be observed, one of the main difficulties in the concept of multilevel governance having a degree of operational utility is reaching agreement on the nature of the phenomenon. What is it said about multilevel governance? A theory or a new analytical framework? Is it a real observable phenomenon in some sectors of European politics or in all sectors and all countries? A set of higher regulatory principles useful for prescribing specific reforms? Coming down on one side or the other has relevant consequences when defining why and how multilevel governance can serve decentralised cooperation and the international action of local governments.

What is harder to believe is that multilevel governance is a packet of tools and principles easily applicable in one context or another. To think this would be to commit the classic error of policy transfers, where the same recipe was applied uniformly to different institutional scenarios. Secondly, it is hard to see multilevel governance as an integrated and firm set of scientifically falsifiable principles. Twenty years after its first appearance, multilevel governance has grown significantly in terms of recognition, depth and legitimacy of the phenomena studied. In any case, its explanatory capacity and applicatory value are still relatively weak. Although many studies on the subject describe that the political scenario has indeed changed, giving as evidence the presence of new actors, very few studies have been able to scientifically test the sign and intensity of change, leaving, in many cases, the question of when and how subnational governments have increased their autonomy with regard to the Central State undecided.

A good starting point is to consider some of the results that the scarce empirical literature on the subject can defend. First of all, it should be noted that the institutional dynamism and creativity that local governments have been able to show has, in many cases, been frustrated by lack of political will at the national and local levels. Secondly, putting the principles of multilevel governance into operation significantly increases coordination costs. In the absence of institutionally and administratively empowered local agents, the new multilevel scenario is very likely to come across significant hurdles to implementation. Finally, the empirical studies on the subject show that the most successful cases of action by local governments have occurred when the central administrations have been considered as complementary rather than antagonistic elements to the will of the former. Decentralised cooperation should therefore take on board this warning and seek maximum coordination with national and international politics.

These warnings make it fairly clear that writing a programme of action for multilevel governance or promoting multilevel territorial agreements[31], for example, in no way guarantees the application of a plural and open decision-

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[31] A Some of these ideas remain contained in the Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance, such as the 'European Union Charter on Multilevel Governance'.

making process. The most cautious positions both in the scientific world and in international relations in fact confirm that the profound changes that have occurred in the form of organisations and models of public policy making in countries and their territories require a set of factors, among them: time, political will and a favourable institutional and social context. By contrast, so much emphasis on the idea of multilevel governance contributes to disseminating expectations that the new model can be implemented through a charter or decrees.

5.2. Multilevel governance in the context of decentralised cooperation

In the 2nd European Union–Latin American and Caribbean Local Government Forum, local governments once again stated their commitment to promoting sustainable development, in the context of respect for the values of democracy and liberty, thus assisting in the fight against climate change, promoting social cohesion and introducing the territorial perspective in the definition of different strategies for local development[32]. In the framework of development, its contributions may be specified in the traditional comparative advantages of decentralised cooperation (institutional capabilities, political leadership, capacity to mobilise territorial agents and experience in the management of local public services). In any case, the current debate on development forces local agents to fit in better with the general lines of cooperation. Among them, greater attention to partners' decision-making processes and institutional contexts merits special mention. In a word: governance.

For decentralised cooperation, the multilevel governance approach could represent an important point of view for an original focus on the role of local governments as international actors for development. Indeed, in the end, all reflectors point openly to a new model of governance that horizontally covers all public policies, interventions for development among them. Firstly, it is clear that the emphasis on institutional reinforcement continues to be, today more than ever, one of the relevant fields of application. Evidently, the presence of multilevel, multi-actor and polycentric scenarios will increase coordination and transaction costs. Management of participation and the need to connect more frequently with contexts involving a multitude of agents (international, national, regional, local, public and private) also require local administrations that are prepared for, and familiar with, such complexity. The range of perspectives on multilevel governance, in this case, pays special attention to the mechanisms that regulate relations between agents. Thus, in preparing interventions, local governments (both partners and donors) must reflect carefully on the relevant institutional environment and on the real margins for decentralised action.

A second relevant field of action concerns promoting civic participation in the design, discussion and implementation of policies. Local governments can here use their leadership capacity and experience in mobilising territorial actors. Furthermore, greater participation of territorial agents is likely to improve the level of appropriation, increasing the probabilities of success for cooperation. Renewed attention to good governance and multilevel governance

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[32]| *Declaration of Vitoria-Gasteiz.*

stresses the need for a plural and open environment capable of representing different interests transparently. However, the presence or absence of organised civil society is a variable that is frequently outside the control of local governments. Indeed, it depends on historical, socioeconomic and cultural factors whose roots go a long way back into the past. Decentralised cooperation urgently needs conscientious, knowledgeable and mobilised citizens who represent an important stimulus for the transparency and accountability of actions. The latter is an aspect requiring improvement for both northern and southern local governments.

Finally, regarding the need to reduce the fragmentation of interventions and harmonise cooperation of local governments with the action of nation-states and international organisations, it has already been stated that the topic contains a number of potential elements of friction. There are sufficient political, historical and conceptual reasons to suggest more than a few points of debate. Realistically, an excessive number of local governments autonomously deciding where and how to direct their cooperation efforts may well be ineffective. Too much fragmentation and a systemic lack of coordination and joint action are likely to produce negative effects on decentralised cooperation as a whole. For instance, there are certain areas in which the concerted action of local governments may be more effective than the sum of individual interventions. One may consider here, for example, actions aimed at making central governments aware of the need for decentralising administrative reforms or the need to institute more stable institutional environments. In these cases, it is better to strengthen the work of organisations that bring together local governments at the national, regional and international level than to continue following alternative individual roads.

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Cross-border regional integration and cooperation in Latin America: experiences and perspectives *

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*This article provides a detailed discussion of the role of cross-border cooperation between local governments in the processes of development and integration in Latin America, presenting the experience of the **Fronteras Abiertas** (Open Borders) experience. The project, started in 2007 by the **Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale** (Centre for International Policy Studies – CeSPI) in Rome and the **Istituto Italo-Latino American** (Italian-Latin American Institute – IILA) and co-financed by the **Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo del Ministero degli Affari Ester** (Directorate General for Developmental Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and a number of Italian regions and provinces, aims to construct an interregional network of Latin American and European actors in order to strengthen cooperation between frontier territories as a complementary and functional process to Latin American regional integration through decentralised EU–Latin American cooperation. The article introduces a discussion on cross-border cooperation and its contributions to regional integration processes and presents the contents of the **Fronteras Abiertas** project and the lessons learned from the experience.*

KEY WORD

Cross-border cooperation |
Regional integration |
Decentralised cooperation |
Local development |
Paradiplomacy |

1. Introduction: the relevance of cross-border cooperation

In this article, the term "cross-border cooperation" refers to experiences of cooperation between local and intermediate authorities across frontiers. Thus, cross-border cooperation may be defined as "collaboration between sub-national authorities beyond national border limits" (Perkmann 2003), which permits joint, networking participation of public and private actors in the territory on both sides of the border.

"The goals of cross-border cooperation usually relate to territorial organisation, regional economic policy, improvement in infrastructures, environmental protection and the promotion of culture. Its overall objective is to develop relations between neighbouring territorial authorities as naturally as if there were no frontier" (Conde Martínez 2001).

Cross-border cooperation in the last 20 years has spread significantly around the world (Perkmann and Sum, 2002), as a result of a number of events and processes that have favoured its development. Some of the most important among them are the fall of the Berlin Wall, and subsequent new world order; the processes of economic and social internationalisation; the growing weight of local and regional authorities on the international arena; and the constantly increasing urgency and relevance of environmental and territorial topics, which require joint, multi-level efforts to be faced and managed.

Cross-border cooperation is also closely linked to the processes of regional integration. It is clear that true integration among different national territories (in economic, social and institutional terms) requires the participation of various actors (public and private) and levels (local and national) in the process of exchange and convergence. The relation between cross-border cooperation and integration processes is a biunivocal one. Firstly, cross-border cooperation between local authorities contributes to the integration process, through 'bottom-up', day-to-day integration among citizens in different national territories. Secondly, the integration process stimulates local cross-border cooperation, thanks to the processes that activate it and its political and institutional reference framework.

In the specific case of Latin America (LA), cross-border cooperation between local authorities has developed in recent years as a consequence of certain current processes. The most significant phenomena to have contributed to the development of cross-border cooperation in LA are, for example, the renewed importance of physical regional integration proposals based on the design of ocean-to-ocean axes and corridors; the decentralisation processes that have generated greater autonomy for sub-state governments in international affairs, both individually and as groups; the process of economic territorialisation, which is defining the emergence of a new economic geography; and the political processes of regional integration.

With respect to the new proposals for physical regional integration, the *Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Sudamericana* (Initiative for South American Regional

Infrastructure Integration - IIRSA)[1] contains a clear interest in frontier zones. Its main objective is to promote the development of transport, energy and telecommunications with a regional perspective, aiming for the physical integration of the 12 South American countries and an equitable and sustainable pattern for territorial development.

The greater freedom of circulation and exchange of goods and services in border areas, which promotes the process of territorial infrastructure development, also strengthens local identities and economic traits as elements that co-exist and stimulate interactions at the border.

Also, the increasing autonomy produced by decentralisation enables sub-national units to use cooperation to seek solutions to their local development needs. Strengthening local and regional institutions, as part of decentralisation, facilitates the establishment of cross-border collaboration and cooperation networks, which can stimulate the development of new shared multi-level governance mechanisms on both sides of the border. The new Latin American economic geography induced by the processes of globalisation makes it essential for the territories to reposition themselves in an increasingly competitive context, adding value to their own resources through new cross-border and transnational alliances.

The political processes of regional integration have also revealed the importance of cross-border cooperation. Regional integration is considered a key political instrument for economic and social development, democratic governance and international economic insertion. The need to coordinate Latin American regional integration through local development clearly demonstrates the urgency required in creating areas that can promote convergent developmental processes, both institutionally and economically. The cross-border process has the potential to be the central axis for areas of economic-institutional convergence, where different projects on paper become functional, and dependent variables for each specific regional reality.

The added value in practices of cross-border cooperation lies in various aspects. For instance, cross-border cooperation enables typical shared problems in border areas to be overcome, which are linked to the fact that territorial continuity produces problems that cannot always be resolved through the rigid separation imposed by national States. Cross-border cooperation practices can provide an important instrument for economic development, offering territories the opportunity to create new transnational central systems, thereby complementing many traditionally localised functions in the centre of the respective countries. Cross-border cooperation can also contribute to adding value to common environmental and cultural heritage sites and assets, thus favouring improved relations between

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[1]| *This initiative is a programme that includes the 12 South American countries and has its origins in the I Reunión de Presidentes de América del Sur (1st Meeting of South American Presidents) held in Brasilia in the year 2000. The IIRSA represents the consolidation of the 12 South American governments' commitment to the modernisation and integration of regional infrastructure with the technical and financial assistance of three multilateral banks: the Corporación Andina de Fomento (Andean Development Corporation - CAF), the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (Inter-American Development Bank - BID) and the Fondo Financiero para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca del Plata (Financial Fund for the Development of the Plata Basin - FONPLATA).*

nations and strengthening the integration process.

Cross-border cooperation can play a central role in conflict prevention. The crisis produced by tensions between Latin American governments continues to affect border areas. Among the causes of these tensions are historical factors and recognition of problems that transcend frontiers such as the environment, the war on drugs, terrorism and organised crime, which are all part of the current international agenda. Indeed, one constant in the tensions between bordering Latin American countries are their highly fluid nature. In other words, they can quickly switch from 'conflict' to 'agreement'. In this context, cross-border cooperation could be a suitable foundation for developing preventative diplomacy where national systems, regional institutions and local agreements can contribute to preventing conflict and stimulating peace-building mechanisms. Cross-border cooperation could also help build trust through actions in the 'common' territory involving close collaboration between government authorities and local civic society on both sides of the border, as well as help promote respect and interrelations between ethnic minorities, ultimately stimulating political consensus between all parties.

There are numerous cross-border issues in which sub-national bodies can play a relevant role, in particular: environmental management; protection of historical-cultural assets; promoting local small-scale economic and civic infrastructure; social cohesion; the labour market and mobility; urban/rural relations and new territorial balance; and social development based on fighting poverty and social exclusion and designing new plurilinguistic and multicultural educational programmes, as well as common health policies and standards. Consequently, most regional integration processes are fundamentally mechanisms that stimulate cross-border cooperation and integration. Yet despite these mobilising factors, cross-border cooperation still faces a number of limitations and hurdles. Above all, there is still a largely unfavourable institutional framework, the result of the continuing 'fear of frontiers', and the possible association of border activities with illicit actions. To this must be added the fact that Latin American experience in border areas has been based on binational agreements between central governments that have provided little space to sub-national bodies and, furthermore, cross-border cooperation has been barely recognised and poorly prepared.

Indeed, international cooperation has little experience in cross-border issues, with the notable exception of the European Union Interreg Programme, the *Programa de Apoyo al Desarrollo e Intergración Fronteriza* (Border Development and Integration Support Programme - PADIF) run by the *Corporación Andina De Fomento* and the *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo*'s *Programa Bienes Públicos Regionales* (Regional Public Assets Programme).

The last 20 years' experience of regional integration has shown the lack of coordination among composite territories, the emergence and growth of new asymmetries within the processes themselves and the generation of a form of centre-periphery with respect to integration (in the form of principle axes and corridors and ones that are appended to or distant from the economic-productive circuits and decision-making centres). Furthermore, regional integration is sometimes hindered

by anachronistic systems designed for frontiers that, through international mechanisms with restricted powers, aim to make operational systems compatible with each country's regulations with specific goals in mind.

Positive results must come through coherence between sub-national cross-border cooperation and integration policies, national policies and policies that arise out of regional integration processes. The latter, aimed at favouring exchange and coordination, serve to support sub-national activities already underway. By way of example, creating integrated tourist circuits and services in border areas is a waste of time without appropriate, consensual security, customs and public transit policies to facilitate movement from one side of the border to the other.

The task of combining operational systems and each country's own regulations to fulfil the functions of border services is a challenge that requires coordination, exchange of information and special attention to the specific characteristics of each frontier situation in the regional context.

2. Decentralised Cooperation for cross-border cooperation: the experience of the Fronteras Abiertas project

The *Fronteras Abiertas* project, co-financed since 2007 by the *Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* and a number of Italian regions, is the work of the CeSPI and IILA and focuses its efforts on building an "interregional network for cross-border cooperation and Latin American integration". This network involves Italian and Latin America regions and intermediate authorities, as well as municipalities, with the collaboration of intermediate government associations such as the *Osservatorio Interregionale sulla Cooperazione allo Sviluppo* (Interregional Observatory of Cooperation for Development – OICS) and the *Red de Mercociudades* (MERCOcities Network).

The project aims to stimulate decentralised cooperation among a group of Italian regions and Latin American cities, while also promoting south-south cooperation between sub-national cross-border bodies in Latin American countries by transferring best practices. This methodological design permits 'triangular cooperation', based on decentralised cooperation.

The project is based, firstly, on the vast and mature Italian experience in decentralised cooperation on issues of cross-border cooperation and integration processes within the European Union (EU). The European integration process may be considered the most complex and advanced in the modern world, where local and intermediate authorities play a central role in the integration process. Since 1957, the year in which the European Economic Community was founded (the precursor to the current EU), European local and regional authorities have acquired growing political relevance. Specifically, they have played a key role in European architecture in accordance with the European principle of *subsidiarity*, by which public intervention must take place at the closest possible level to its citizens; they have contributed to the integration process and peaceful development of the EU through major cross-border and interregional exchange; over the years, they have built an increasingly important network of international rela-

tions with homologous institutions outside the Union through decentralised cooperation, creating spaces for exchanging the experiences and skills acquired locally and regionally for development and social cohesion (Coletti 2009).

The *Fronteras Abiertas* project adds values to these experiences in two ways. Firstly, the project has inspired an operational methodology specifically in the exchange initiatives and experiences that have taken place between local and regional authorities in Europe, which have made a significant contribution to the integration process. Secondly, due to experience acquired in the field of international twinning and decentralised cooperation projects (Stocchiero 2000, 2007; Stocchiero, 2001), local and regional authorities are considered partners sufficiently qualified to create international cooperation networks at a local level.

There are numerous paradiplomacy and international relations between local authorities and representatives of society, as well as European, Italian and Latin American regional actors, sustained to a greater or lesser extent by EU funds (Rhi-Sausi and Conato, 2008; Stocchiero and Izzo, 2007). There are also many experiences of cross-border dialogue, sometimes accompanied by specific projects or initiatives, in different areas of South America. However, what still seems to be lacking is the capacity to build agreement mechanisms with intermediate and local authorities, which provide stability and continuity to institutional relations and the administration of specific aspects of cross-border issues such as environmental management and the mobility of goods and people.

In this context, the *Fronteras Abiertas* project is based on the conviction

that European regions and municipalities involved in decentralised cross-border cooperation could be useful partners for sub-national Latin American governments interested in improving the organisation of cross-border dialogue.

Cross-border cooperation could become an important topic with respect to exchanging experiences and best practices where Italian and European actors have acquired extensive field experience in structured frontier and city exchange and could help gain the attention of institutions and civic society through proposals based on the existing forms of institutional actions and solutions. Furthermore, local European and Italian actors could provide their Latin American partners with specific skills for drawing up projects, as well as sharing their experience in institutional lobbying.

Fronteras Abiertas is also based on the conviction that the creation of trans-local networks with respect to cross-border cooperation could contribute to the spread in Latin America of the idea of frontiers as areas of peace and prosperity, transforming the concept of frontiers as 'barriers', preventing movement and growth, to one of 'bridges' connecting with neighbours and to the motors for growth and development. In this sense, international cooperation could develop a strategic role in disseminating new concepts regarding frontiers. Local and sub-state dimensions might be the best place to implement this transformation: firstly, because of the existence of specific common problems in border areas and cities that stimulate cooperation and, secondly, due to the interest and will of local authorities in establishing international cooperation networks to project themselves globally and improve the competitiveness of their territory.

The proposal of the *Fronteras Abiertas* project is to accompany cross-border cooperation between local Latin American authorities (municipalities and intermediate government), favouring the creation of strategic alliances with Italian and European partners through decentralised cooperation. Assistance has consisted of organising an activity to mobilise cross-border and transnational relations, as well as by supporting vertical and horizontal coordination of the debate on cross-border cooperation topics between local authorities and national governments and public and private actors. The support provided has thus been focussed, firstly, on diagnosing territorial development, bearing in mind existing differences, but integrating the perspectives and priorities of countries that share each border area and, secondly, in territorial governance, on the role of public and private actors involved in cross-border relations. A relevant part of the *Fronteras Abiertas* project has also been its work to improve the local actors' skills in designing projects and proposing them as a common project platform, by accompanying the project design process in accordance with the regulations and conditions of multilateral cooperation bodies. In addition to this, *Fronteras Abiertas* has provided funds to execute a number of 'direct actions': small-scale projects for cross-border cooperation and local development in the areas of intervention.

The complexity of regional integration in Latin America means that projects such as *Fronteras Abiertas* require 'bottom-up' support for integration processes, generated in the territories, where the main actors are sub-national public bodies, the private sector and civic society. Each border area has its own unique characteristics, which imbricate a multitude of interests, conflicts, agendas, actors, priorities, relationship experiences, work rhythms and more. Articulating and coordinating different elements to jointly seek the opportunities and/or solutions to common issues are the key goals of cross-border cooperation. Consequently, the *Fronteras Abiertas* logic of intervention is also different for each frontier area. The linking element between the different interventions in border areas lies in the common theoretical-methodological frame of reference.

Currently, *Fronteras Abiertas* operates formally in four border areas, although it has also supported cross-border cooperation processes in other Latin American border areas. The priority areas are: MERCOSUR, with special emphasis on the Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay borders; Central America, with special emphasis on the Gulf of Fonseca and the Trifinio region; the border between Ecuador and Peru; and the triple Bolivia, Chile and Peru border.

The main elements that have been considered in selecting the project's border areas are: active participation and consensus on the part of national governments; active participation of sub-state administrations in border areas; the existent socioeconomic conditions that justify the participation of international cooperation; countries and/or priority areas for Italian cooperation; adhesion of one or more Italian regions to the *Fronteras Abiertas* project in the identified border areas; the existence of a will towards and/or processes for integration underway and the opportunity for dialogue with other cross-border development projects.

As well as the specific activities in each area, *Fronteras Abiertas* has undertaken a series of functional activities to achieve the project's goals, such as providing information on the website, producing working documents and newsletters, offering training based on fact-finding trips, on-line courses and live seminars, technical assistance for drawing up diagnoses and projects, specialist consultancy, the creation of a network of border study institutes and researchers, which are now developing their research protocols, and the establishment of a network of border parliamentarians in a context of greater interaction between parliamentarians and local authorities.

2.1. Borders and cross-border integration in MERCOSUR

In MERCOSUR there is no border, only borders. As maintained by Machado do Oliveira (2006), it is their plural atmosphere that transforms borders into unique environments, with their own unique features in relation to the territory-nation and to each other, as each border is unique.

Regional integration does not put an end to borders or border interactions; it simply reshapes them, making them more visible (by stimulating or limiting them), leading to a struggle between the recognition of idiosyncratic factors on the one hand and the need to incline towards generalities on the other (Rhi-Sausi and Oddone 2009).

Border relations in the Southern Cone existed before the establishment of MERCOSUR in 1991, in the form of friendship and work, sports, family, political or commercial relationships. MERCOSUR provided greater visibility for them, and not necessarily institutional 'visibility'. Furthermore, it may be recognised that "processes […] such as MERCOSUR have had a complex impact on border areas. States see their strength at the borders revitalised through 'integration'. They exercise unprecedented control over some border populations, unaware of, or attempting to wipe out, local history and traditions. Settlers in frontier spaces, where free exchange of products has existed for decades, now see customs and police controls being reinforced. They feel the effects of new migration controls. Thus, in many borders in the Southern Cone the end to the hypothesis of armed conflict was followed by demilitarisation, and then by new controls on the movement of goods, people and symbols" (Grimson 2001).

In the light of this, *Fronteras Abiertas* has proposed to approach and study the reality at MERCOSUR frontiers, to contribute to research on the topic and assist in consensus-building among sub-national bodies to sustain development projects and exchange processes (north-south and south-south) leading towards cross-border territorial development. From the operational perspective, *Fronteras Abiertas* has concentrated, in the border territories of MERCOSUR its projects on three areas of work.

Firstly, it has established a systematic dialogue with the national SEBRAE[2] and the SEBRAE Paraná to collaborate with the *Fronteiras do Brasil* (Brazilian Borders) programme. In particular, *Fronteras Abiertas*

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[2] *The SEBRAE, the Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às micro e pequenas empresas (Brazilian Support Service for Micro- and Small Companies), founded in 1972, is the main Brazilian agency for the promotion of local development. It is organised into both national and regional structures.*

has been involved in formulating the first project in this programme: the founding of the *Centro de Desarrollo de Tecnologías para la Integración Transfronteriza de Micro y Pequeñas Empresas del MERCOSUR y América Latina* (Centre for Technology Development for the Cross-border Integration of Micro- and Small Companies in MERCOSUR and Latin America – CDT-AL), promoted by SEBRAE Paraná and aimed particularly at the border areas of Brazil with Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay. Closely linked to this collaboration, *Fronteras Abiertas* has established relations with the secretariat of the *Consellho de Desenvolvimento e Integração Sul* (Council for Southern Development and Integration, CODESUL), the coordinating body for the country's southern border states, and the *Associação dos Municípios do Oeste do Paraná* (Association of Municipalities of Western Paraná, AMOP), to promote and formulate cross-border cooperation projects with the involvement of Italian decentralised cooperation.

A second area of activities has arisen through the agreement signed between the Misiones Province and *Fronteras Abiertas,* where the planned activities are: formulation of social cross-border projects, particularly health projects; functional technical support for the Misiones Province project to create a logistics platform in Paraná River area and provide advice on the institutional reorganisation of their international relations and cross-border cooperation.

The third line of work undertaken by *Fronteras Abiertas* in the MERCOSUR border areas consists of support for the twinned border towns. In this field, *Fronteras Abiertas* designed the *Cooperación cultural entre pequeñas ciudades gemelas del MERCOSUR* (Cultural Cooperation between twinned towns in MERCOSUR) programme, whose goal was to identify and formulate cross-border cultural cooperation projects between neighbouring towns in MERCOSUR to strengthen regional integration. The creation of cross-border cultural citizenry is understood as the right and access to both material and cultural goods and services. It is a relationship that is both individual[3] and communitarian, which seeks to strengthen the citizens' skills of creation, participation and expression and their inclusion in the cultural supply and consumption circuits, while establishing a number of stable relations with the cross-border cultural spaces from which they arise. Cultural cooperation stimulates social inclusion and reinforces regional integration (Rhi-Sausi 2009).

As well as supporting the creation of cross-border city networks, *Fronteras Abiertas* carries out a research of partners and allies among Italian and European towns to develop their cultural agenda. Spreading the twinning process to Italian and European towns helps develop innovative forms through triangulated and decentralised cultural cooperation. The accumulated cultural wealth and generosity of Italian and European cities in international cooperation could produce significant added value to cultural cooperation among twinned towns.

The promoters of the *Fronteras Abiertas* project, CeSPI and IILA, undertook -together with the *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República del Paraguay* (Ministry of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Paraguay), the Government of the Alto Paraná Department and the

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[3]| *Cultural education enhances work integration.*

municipality of Ciudad del Este- the *I Foro de Cooperación Transfronteriza Argentina-Brasil-Paraguay Cooperación: Sur-Sur para la Integración* (1st Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay Forum for Cross-border Cooperation: South-South Cooperation for Integration), held in Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) on 29 and 30 April 2009. This activity was organised with the following objectives: to promote systematic dialogue between the main actors in border areas, such as public institutions, business associations, border parliamentarians, universities and research centres and civic organisations, among others; to discuss the main problems and propose solutions for the border areas involved; to publicise existing cross-border projects and their priority topics, actors and instruments, used as well as gathering ideas for international cooperation.

The Forum was attended by more than 250 people, including representatives from the national governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Italy, Paraguay and Uruguay and governors and civil servants from local and intermediate authorities from border areas, with a large delegation of border parliamentarians, a number of representatives from the most important multilateral organisations with respect to funding projects in LA, a delegation of business associations and a delegation from the leading border universities in MERCOSUR[4]. The results of the *I Foro de Cooperación Transfronteriza* may be summarised as greater awareness among the parties, favouring decentralised north-south and south-south, the presentation of cross-border projects with possibilities of receiving international funding, the signing of institutional agreements, the founding of a group of border parliamentarians, the founding of an association of border studies, which is now developing its study protocols, and the need to promote twinning between border towns in MERCOSUR.

2.2. Fronteras Abiertas in Central America

Frontiers have always been an essential factor in defining national identity in Central America.

Central America today has a stable integrationist framework recognised by all the governments in the isthmus, represented by the *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana* (Central American Integration System – SICA)[5]. However the successes so far in the regional integration process are accompanied by persistent limitations, such as excessive dependence on international cooperation or lack of supranational bodies, which mean the most relevant decisions are still taken at presidential or intergovernmental level (Conato 2009). Indeed, Central American regional integration is a very contradictory process where local cross-border cooperation is still an underestimated concept.

Despite this, there have still been a number of important experiences in cross-border cooperation, which, in their successes

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[4]| *The forum was organised into seven working groups and plenary sessions. The working groups discussed the following issues: cross-border tourism; cross-border production chains, SMEs and technological innovation; cross-border trade; treatment of people; border issues in parliamentary debate; health and social cohesion policies in border areas; and university cooperation.*

[5]| *SICA today has seven member countries (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize), an associate country (Dominican Republic) and seven observer countries (Taiwan, Mexico, Chile, Germany, Spain, Italy and Brazil). The operative arm of SICA—whose fundamental objective is to obtain full Central American integra-*

and their problems, represent a wealth of lessons learnt that may be used to define new directions in cross-border development[6]. Furthermore, in the framework of Central American integration in recent years there has been a growing interest in cross-border cooperation and the role that municipalities (the only sub-national administrative level in Central America) have to assume in this.

The work by *Fronteras Abiertas* has focussed on two particular areas: the Trifinio region and the Gulf of Fonseca. The Central American Trifinio region, consisting of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, is a space that over the last 20 years has experienced a cross-border integration process unprecedented in Latin America. The driving forces behind this plan are the *Plan de Desarrollo Integral en la región Fronteriza de El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras* (Comprehensive Development Plan for the Border Region between El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), better known as the Trifinio Plan. This involves a regional institution, created by the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which promotes comprehensive and balanced development in the region through joint action coordinated by the governments and local actors in the framework of Central American integration.

Through the plan's institutionalisation, in the framework of the tri-nation treaty as a strategy based on a shared tri-nation vision, a large number of actions aimed at conserving and protecting national resources have been carried out, managed by the competent authorities in each country.

The Central American Trifinio experience is of great interest to LA, as it is the only example of a multinational agreement in which governments from different countries have accepted converging interests in a territory recognised as a common asset. For this reason, the Trifinio tri-nation area has been included among the cross-border action regions in the *Fronteras Abiertas* project, through two forms of cooperation: firstly, the project supports territorial processes, promoting decentralised international cooperation; it also makes the *Fronteras Abiertas* Latin American network available to actors in the Trifinio, in order to publicise this Central American experience and to investigate the possibility of adopting some of the methodological landmarks by other LA cross-border cooperation projects.

The Gulf of Fonseca area includes Salvadoran, Nicaraguan and Honduran municipalities, which share a large number of problems: for example, contamination of seas, rivers and lagoons; the impact of manufacturing on the ecosystem; the distance from the centres of power of their respective countries; and the large inward and outward migratory flows. The new manifestation of Mesoamerican viability along the Puebla-Panama axis and, specifically, the running of the new Salvadoran port of La Unión, including a dry canal to the Atlantic and, in particular,

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[6] *Among them: the Trifinio Plan, the European Commission Binational Border Development Programme, the Convenio de Cooperación Transfronteriza entre Costa Rica y Panamá (Cross-Border Cooperation Agreement between Costa Rica and Chile), and the Plan para la Gestión Integrada de los Recursos Hídricos y el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Cuenca del Río San Juan (Plan for the Integrated Management of Water Resources and Sustainable Development of the San Juan River Basin - PROCUENCA) between Costa Rica and Nicaragua.*

the Honduran Puerto Cortés, open up unprecedented possibilities for the people of the Gulf of Fonseca region. Therefore, any perspectives for development in the area will have to take into account future changes created by the port and, more generally, by the creation of the new logistic coordination this will produce.

The declaration by presidents Ortega of Nicaragura, Zelaya of Honduras and Saca of El Salvador, signed on 4 October 2007 under the title *Golfo de Fonseca, una Zona de Paz, Desarollo Sostenible y Seguridad* (Gulf of Fonseca, an Area of Peace, Sustainable Development and Security) represented a milestone in its proposal of "a new era of collaboration to fully tackle and resolve issues relating to the Gulf of Fonseca, through open and constructive dialogue", while also inviting the international community to support a process of balanced development in the region.

In the Gulf of Fonseca region there is an extensive network of relations between the people and the municipalities in each country. However, there is little dialogue between local and territorial bodies across frontiers. Except for a few experiences sustained by international cooperation, which have been wound up or stagnated once external cooperation has ended. It should also be noted that among all governments in the isthmus, foreign relations are conceived as the exclusive responsibility of central government, which does not help develop bottom-up experiences.

In the work fulfilled in the Gulf of Fonseca area, the *Fronteras Abiertas* project has been concerned with involving institutions at all levels: municipal, national and regional. As mentioned before, there is no intermediate government; municipalities have acquired a highly relevant role in cross-border territorial development. In operational terms, the *Fronteras Abiertas* project works for the interconnection between communities, through funding for computer equipment and Internet connections for municipal networks in each country. Gulf communities have also been provided support through internship packages offered to managers and experts from inter-municipal associations, involving a number of visits, meetings and studies in Italy on issues of sustainable territorial management. After attending introductory lectures coordinated by the CeSPI in Rome, the site of the IILA, the interns spent two weeks in Lombardy, where they visited municipal companies and waste management plants in different provinces in the territory, and had the opportunity to exchange experiences and opinions with experts, technicians and managers from local government. The adhesion and mobilisation of the Italian region of Lombardy is of great value to the development of the activities of *Fronteras Abiertas* in Central America, given that the region's interest in providing technical support and training to Gulf municipalities on issues of sustainable economic development, integrated waste cycle management and environmental conservation has made it possible to activate decentralised cooperation, a key factor in the project strategy.

The workshops, meetings and field visits in Central America, and the exchanges during the internships, have made possible to focus on the environment as a strategic part of developing the area, in which Lombardy and its towns and provinces could provide experience and technical and organisational skills.

2.3. Cross-border integration in Andian Community (Comunidad Andina, CAN): the Ecuador-Peru border

When discussing the topic of relations between Ecuador and Peru, it is still astonishing how rapidly relations between the countries have improved after a serious border disagreement, which even led to armed skirmishes in the last years of the 20th century. After placing the last border milestone in 1999, trust between these two countries has been built through a series of programmes dealing with common and strategic issues for the frontier population in the area and both countries in general.

Thus, with the aim of putting an end to recurring border disputes, the governments of both countries prepared a collaboration strategy, defined in the *Plan Binacional Perú-Ecuador* (Peru-Ecuador Binational Plan) in 1998. In 1999, the *Comunidad Andina de Naciones* (Andean Community of Nations – CAN), which includes both countries, approved the *Política Comunitaria para la Integración y el Desarrollo Fronterizo* (Community Policy for Integration and Border Development), placing increased emphasis on the subject of borders as the backbone to the integration process.

The *Fronteras Abiertas* project has become involved in the Ecuador-Peru border and, though these national and supranational frameworks, has proposed support for bottom-up integration processes, placing local and regional authorities at the forefront. In particular, the *Fronteras Abiertas* project maintains the

reinforcing of a south-south cooperation network between intermediate and local governments in the western frontier departments of Ecuador and Peru. The project involves the Italian region of Piedmont, which has become a key partner to intermediate governments on this border.

With respect to the issues tackled, after the first mission, the topic of sustainable tourism was identified as a priority area for development, a demand expressed by the local authorities and which also emerged as a result of the analysis of the territory's potential. The area covering the south of Ecuador and the north of Peru is undoubtedly very significant with regard to sustainable tourism, conserving as it does an extensive and varied natural and cultural heritage. The coast has adequate infrastructure for spa and sea tourism. There are also numerous sites and museums to meet demands for cultural tourism.

The project's first formal activity was to organise a training session and fact-finding visits to Italy for a number of civil servants from the intermediate frontier governments of Peru and Ecuador in April 2008. The regions of Piedmont and Tuscany offered the Latin American partners the chance to learn about successful experiences in the field of sustainable tourism through three weeks' practical experience. From the perspective of *Fronteras Abiertas*, the fact-finding trip had two aims: firstly, to reinforce the skills and abilities of the provincial and regional civil servants in the field of sustainable tourism and cross-border cooperation, sharing a number of basic concepts to establish a dialogue with European public authorities; secondly, to

help build solid, stable inter-relations between civil servants from the Italian regions, thus creating a solid basis for relations which in turn would ensure a successful start for the project's activities.

Since then, *Fronteras Abiertas* has accompanied a number of technical missions to Piedmont to investigate the possibilities of cooperation with the territory and has supported and encouraged dialogue among Latin American intermediate civil servants with respect to tourism. On a private level, links have been formed between the networks of Peruvian and Ecuadorian immigrants in Italy and those of immigrant's relatives in Ecuador and Peru. *Fronteras Abiertas* considers consolidation of these networks to be strategically important as international migration in both countries plays a fundamental economic role through remittances. This means a key element of economic sustainability can be added to future projects. In the second half of 2008, the first direct action to be financed by *Fronteras Abiertas* in the area was identified: the decision was taken to support a medical centre in the strip between the Peruvian region of Cajamarca and the Ecuadorian province of Zamora-Chinchipe, which attends to a large Peruvian and Ecuadorian population.

Currently, *Fronteras Abiertas* supports sustainable tourism at intermediate government level, which is synergic and complementary to the *Plan Binacional*, supporting the *Pequeña Spondylus* (Small Spondylus) project, which aims to contribute to binational development of sustainable tourism in the provinces of El Oro (Ecuador) and Tumbes (Peru), by reinforcing and promoting tourist enterprises and service suppliers to family and small businesses owned by migrants in Europe, along the Spondylus

Route (promoted by the *Plan Binacional*). Particularly significant in the framework of the *Pequeña Spondylus* project is the involvement of a new institutional level: the municipal authority.

In October 2009, the Piedmont region agreed to fund the project for the "implementation and development of the production chain of Saraguro homemade organic cheese and the improvement of animal husbandry in the Saraguro community of the Loja Province, Ecuador". Although this is not a cross-border project, the initiative is particularly interesting because thanks to the cross-border and transnational cooperation network, local Piedmontese and Ecuadorian actors have become involved, thereby activating a positive collaborative relationship for local development.

Future development of the *Fronteras Abiertas* project in the Ecuador-Peru cross-border region involves strengthening the collaboration and coherence of actions in the general inter-institutional framework offered by the *Plan Binacional*, as well as the guidelines on regional integration produced by the respective governments, maintaining a relationship of dialogue and information with the *Dirección de Relaciones Fronterizas del Ecuador* (Ecuadorian Directorate for Border Relations) and the *Dirección de Desarrollo Fronterizo del Perú* (Peruvian Directorate for Border Development).

2.4. Cross-border cooperation in the Bolivia-Chile-Peru Tri-border

The Boliva-Chile-Peru tri-border, understood as a continuous three-nation territory, has a history of disputes, sepa-

rations and annexations among the three countries, but also, at the territorial level, a history of formal and informal cooperation and exchange and a common cultural ancestry linked to the indigenous presence of the Aymara people, with a strong, recognisable cultural profile, distributed over the border areas of the three countries.

To understand the complexity of many of the current processes in the Bolivia-Chile-Peru tri-border, it is worth briefly reviewing its history, marked by a series of disputes between the three countries, going back to the War of the Pacific (1879-1884). According to Orias (2007), today, political solutions are still being sought to two fundamental and closely related conflicts: the first is Bolivia's maritime demands, involving on-going negotiations between Bolivia and Chile, and the second is closely linked to the controversy over maritime limits between Chile and Peru Therefore, the international conflict in this area is specifically a border one, with explicit additional consequences in the territory, despite the existence of a political dialogue and bilateral trade agreements between the countries, the foreign ministries of the three countries have explicit and divergent positions that prevent progress towards a true integration process(Marteles Moreno, 2009).

The main agreements within the framework of Chilean bilateral agreements with Bolivia and Peru in the field of cross-border cooperation are recorded in the *Comités de Frontera* (Border Committees). This is a permanent body for exchange, mainly in the areas of physical integration, transit and border traffic, development and cooperation in border areas and education and tourism in the bor-

der regions of Chile and its neighbouring countries: Bolivia and Peru, separately, with a leading role being played by their foreign affairs ministries. Even though these bodies have no decision-making powers, it is recognized that they work as a stable mechanism for cooperation.

Territorially, where cross-border cooperation has resulted in processes of exchange at local and regional levels, at the tri-border there is a fascinating cross-border associational experience: the *Alianza Estratégica Aymaras Sin Fronteras* (Aymara Strategic Borderless Alliance). This network, created in 2001, is made up of border municipalities from the west of Bolivia, southern districts of Peru and counties in the north of Chile. The *Alianza Estratégica Aymaras Sin Fronteras* has become an innovative tri-border political platform capable of generating a discourse of integration linked to a territory with an Aymaran identity. It resides and interacts regularly with the High-Andean area of Bolivia, Chile and Peru, beyond the border limits of the three countries.

In March 2008 in Tacna (Peru), *Fronteras Abiertas* held a seminar on 'Cross-border Integration in the Bolivia, Chile and Peru Tri-border', which identified, with the participation of local, regional and national actors from the three countries, the 'demand' and strategic alignments for joint cooperation and development in the cross-border area. Based on a major participatory effort, the main issue and theme for the inter-institutional coordination work in this frontier area has been sustainable tourism, closely linked to respect and adding value to the com-

mon Aymara ancestry in the three countries. The topic of tourism is sufficiently transversal and synergic to bring together the institutional visions and missions of the local, regional and national actors in the three countries. Community-wide dialogue and work on the topic of sustainable tourism aims to strengthen the border integration process, through multilevel cooperation and government.

Therefore, one of the main contributions made by the *Fronteras Abiertas* project in the Bolivia-Chile-Peru tri-border was to create and strengthen links between actors at different institutional levels (local, intermediate and national), thus generating a process of dialogue and exchange, and, in some cases, institutional work, contributing to strengthening the processes of integration and cooperation in the border area.

The *Fronteras Abiertas* project has also invested major efforts in articulating a complex process of multilevel cross-border cooperation with the collaboration of Italian sub-national authorities. The main Italian actors with an active role in the Bolivia-Chile-Peru tri-border, based on logic of north-south cooperation, are the region of Tuscany, the autonomous community of Bolzano, the Province of Frosinone and the OICS.

From the operational perspective, *Fronteras Abiertas* has provided technical advice to the *Alianza Estratégica Aymaras Sin Fronteras*, in the phase of drawing up the *Recuperación, Fomento y Puesta en valor del patrimonio Cultural y Natural Aymará (Bolivia, Perú y Chile)* (Recovery, Promotion and Valuing of the Aymara Cultural and Natural Heritage (Bolivia, Peru and Chile)) project, subsequently approved and financed by the *Bienes Públicos Regionales* (Regional Public Assets) fund of the *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo. Fronteras Abiertas* has also supported the project *Cohesión, inclusión y desarrollo social a través del turismo sostenible. Fronteras Turísticas* (Cohesion, Inclusion and Social Development through Sustainable Tourism. Tourist Borders), financed by the EU URBAL III programme which is now being executed in the Peruvian and Bolivian border territories, as well as in the north of Argentina, with the participation of OICS, the Argentinean NGO *Asociación Para el Desarrollo Social (*Association for Social Development, ADESO) and the Italian province of Frosinone. Furthermore, between 2008 and the start of 2009, a tourism expert sent from Tuscany, after a fact-finding and working trip lasting several weeks, produced a feasibility study that identified additional elements for structuring projects[7]. These projects aimed to help to strengthen territorial integration through cross-border cooperation in the context of developing tourism based on the accumulated experience of this Italian region, one of the regions with the highest number of tourists worldwide.

Direct action in this area during 2008 was represented by co-financing from *Fronteras Abiertas* for the *Fortalecimiento de la Red Ganadera de la región*

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[7]| *The term structuring projects, used in the framework of European programmes, refers to projects relating to topics of special relevance and which seek to prevent excessive fragmentation of initiatives in the territory where they are carried out. Through the scale of funding, geographical concentration and issues considered, structuring projects aim to provide an efficient, long-term impact on the development of the territories involved.*

trifronteriza Bolivia-Chile-Perú (Reinforcing of the Livestock Network of the Tri-border Region of Bolivia-Chile-Peru) project. One of the instruments offered by the *Fronteras Abiertas* project, which has had the greatest impact on the work of institutional reinforcement in the area, was the fact-finding visits undertaken by an number of key territorial actors from the tri-border region to the seat of regional government in Tuscany and the autonomous province of Bolzano in 2008. During the fact-finding visits, a strong working party was formed with experts from different institutional levels (municipal and regional) from the three countries, which has provided continuity to tri-border cooperation activities. This in turn encouraged an enriching technical exchange of experiences between agents in the tri-border territory and the Italian partners on issues of territorial development, cross-border cooperation, the development of sustainable tourism and adding value to cultural heritage. Over the last two years, the participants in the fact-finding visits have consolidated their position as a multilevel 'promotion group' for a cross-border micro-process in the territory.

3. Cross-border cooperation and integration: lessons learned

The development and dissemination of cross-border cooperation, understood as a strategic alliance between neighbouring actors and territories to strengthen regional integration processes, have become a highly relevant challenge for LA. The European Commission, in its recent communication on the European Union and Latin America (European Commission, August 2009), attributes a central importance to this "bottom-up approach favouring regional integration and reinforcing interconnectivity". The Commission's recommendation extends to operative programmes, when it states that they should "improve cooperation, in particular, for social cohesion and regional integration, geared towards programmes that focus on emerging needs and ensuring more tangible results".

In the Commission's new approach, the traditional commitment of the EU and its member countries to support regional integration processes in LA favours greater contact with non-state actors: like private enterprise, sub-national institutions or civic organisations, which play a tacit but relevant role in integration and interconnection processes and, thus, in EU–Latin American relations.

Indeed, the 'bottom-up' approach to integration proposed by the Commission includes many elements that have emerged from the endogenous Latin American integration process over the last decade. This is clear just in terms of the operating mechanism for physical integration: top-level intergovernmental agreements and technical operability through public agencies and non-state actors, in particular through the promotion of public-private partnerships. Also worth mentioning is the greater participation in these processes among sub-national, regional and local governments, often in alliance with multilateral international cooperation organisations.

In this context, cooperation and integration at border areas are proposed as unique laboratories for building an agenda that strengthens Latin American

integration. Its relevance stems not only from the growing interest in the subject shown among sub-national governments, but also because a number of characteristics of cross-border cooperation offer significant added value to the harmonious and balanced development of LA.

In particular, cross-border cooperation permits operational reconciliation between two fundamental criteria that have driven Latin American integration over the last decade: firstly, the **geo-economic criterion**, which has served as a physical road-map for the subcontinent; and secondly, the **geo-political criterion**, which has guided integration processes and regional political agreement. Indeed, these are not incompatible criteria; on the contrary, the degree of interaction is notable and productive. However, their compatibility does not automatically translate into operative instruments to promote cross-border integration and cooperation. For example, the construction or expansion of a bridge helps strengthen mobility of goods and people at a border crossing, even when real mobility depends on a number of other factors, while the existence of structured regional institutions offers greater strength and legitimacy to find the necessary solutions. In this sense, MERCOSUR's commitment to implementing integrated customs at border crossings provides a fundamental condition for reaching agreements to effectively promote the mobility strengthened by physical integration (the building or expansion of the bridge). On the other hand, if there are no regional agreements mechanisms, agreements depend totally on binational will, which lacks structural links and is often highly volatile.

Obviously, in LA, both scenarios, as well as various conditions of bilateral relations, are present. Indeed, in some cases, they are more favourable than the mechanisms planned by regional agreement structures; in other cases, bilateral agreements represent formidable hurdles to regional integration.

From the *Fronteras Abiertas* observatory, we consider cross-border cooperation to be especially relevant in the area of operative reconciliation between the Latin American geo-economic criteria and geo-political criteria.

Issues of cross-border cooperation also belong to low and middle politics. This fact, firstly, makes it possible to reduce the political weight of the foreign policy on the countries involved and, secondly, permits greater involvement of local and intermediate governments, assigning them a significant complementary role in regional integration processes. Assigning importance to local and regional authorities in the area of border relations means, effectively, reducing the 'strength' of the issue, in turn reducing the weight of historical and intergovernmental tension by achieving and increase of the chances of finding specific solutions to real problems. Actively involving local governments and actors from the territory in this agenda may also help improve the efficacy of initiatives already underway. This involves switching from a logic in which all border exchange flows are classified as acts of foreign policy, to a vision of shared regional spaces that require specific administration in a framework of multilevel governance, i.e., based on harmonious participation at various institutional levels. Building a positive and operational agenda in cross-border territories will bring a qualitative jump in Latin American integration and a specific space for European-Latin American cooperation based on a "bottom-up" approach.

Cross-border cooperation and integration are considered particularly apt to meet two functional principles: firstly, stimulating relations between institutions and border-territory actors to help prevent conflicts and reduce tensions, by means of a number of preventive paradiplomacy actions, and, secondly, contributing to the generation of new regionalisation models, tending to include political-administrative limits in functional, non-institutional territorial groupings, based on the co-division of common and interdependent problems. The priority issues, identified by *Fronteras Abiertas* through their consultation work, refer to the sustainable reference of shared environmental assets, the development of local and regional economies, with particular attention to micro- and small companies, and to aspects of culture and identity. The general strategic goal of border areas is to radically modify their traditional peripheral and marginal position, turning them into territories positioned on new routes for Latin American development.

**In specific terms,
Fronteras Abiertas has proposed:**

• Strengthening the institutions of border territories, accompanying and contributing to the construction of a network of local and regional border governments.

• Supporting incipient processes of cross-border cooperation.

• Offering technical assistance in drawing up local cross-border development projects, helping them access sources of international funding and strengthening endogenous project skills.

An early lesson learned is linked with the capacity of cross-border projection. Cross-border cooperation is specifically developed through operational programmes and projects. The *Fronteras Abiertas* experience indicates the existence of various problems in this context. Firstly, LA still pays very little attention to cross-border cooperation and integration projects where the most dynamic actors, along with sub-national governments in border areas, are international organisations[8]. Despite this, a problem which greatly hinders cross-border cooperation projects and programmes lies in the limited project-development skills of territorial actors.

The experience of *Fronteras Abiertas* suggests, therefore, that two tasks currently need to be encouraged: firstly, significantly increasing the attention given to cross-border regional development projects, in particular with respect to human and financial resources; and, secondly, sustaining and improving the project skills of actors from and in the border territories. Hence, *Fronteras Abiertas* offers itself as a project platform, i.e., a body for collaboration with local actors to formulate, coordinate and execute international cooperation projects.

The starting point for this task is the construction of a system of relations that links local and regional authorities from both sides

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8| The following programmes are worth highlighting: the Programa de Apoyo al Desarrollo e Integración Fronteriza of the CAF; the Fondo Multilateral de Inversiones (Multilateral Investment Fund - FOMIN) projects of the BID, the BID's Programa Bienes Públicos Regionales and the European Commission's URB-AL Programme.

of the border with Italian and European actors in decentralised cooperation. In this field, the *Fronteras Abiertas* project helped to channel contributions from international actors, such as the BID and the European Commission, and decentralised Italian cooperation, from the regions of Lombardy, Piedmont, Tuscany and the autonomous province of Bolzano. In this light, the dialogue with the *Corporación Andina de Fomento* (Andean Development Corporation, CAF), as well and the SEBRAE and various regional agreement structures (MERCOSUR, CAN and SICA) is extremely interesting and fruitful.

A second and significant lesson learned is the importance of anchoring cross-border cooperation, and thus the intervention of *Fronteras Abiertas*, in real integration process, whether political, physical or economic. We have seen how a context of supranational integration, such as MERCOSUR, CAN or SICA, significantly increase the chances of promoting cross-border cooperation, even if there are significant differences between the three mechanisms. As it is mentioned by Maira Aguirre (2008) the lack of a regional integration context may be compensated through strong binational agreements, as is the case of the border between Argentina and Chile, where the role of the *Comités de Integración y Fronteras* (Integration and Border Committees) and the *Agregaduría de Cooperación e Integración Subnacional* (Office of the Attaché for Sub-national Cooperation and Integration) of the Chilean Embassy in Argentina, the first and only of its kind, have been fundamental in strengthening cross-border links). Another case of particular importance is that of the Ecuador-Peru border, promoted by presidential and ministerial meetings.

In general terms, it may be stated that when the institutional framework is lacking, it is difficult to develop cross-border cooperation processes, even when cross-border projects exist. With no supranational framework or strong bi- or tri-national agreements, sub-national actors in border areas, given their institutional weaknesses, are in no position to promote bottom-up integration processes. The experience of the Bolivia-Chile-Peru tri-border, although it has generated a number of interesting results, confirms this. However, the existence of regional agreement processes, even when the actors from border territories are weak, makes cross-border cooperation possible and this in turn becomes, in various ways, an instrument of institutional reinforcement for local governments in border areas. Furthermore, the existence of physical integration processes through infrastructure networks represents an important condition for cross-border cooperation processes. Physical integration reinforces intergovernmental agreement mechanisms, although they are hard to replace when non-existent.

In summary, this lesson suggests that the independent variable is the cross-border cooperation process, whose main determining factors are: the existence of a supranational or binational institutional framework and a current physical integration process. The cross-border cooperation projects are the dependent variable and acquire meaning to the extent that they promote, reinforce and consolidate border integration processes.

A third lesson to have been learned though field interventions by *Fronteras Abiertas* is indicated by the importance of municipalities and intermediate governments as key actors cross-border integration. Governance is the central topic that cuts across Latin American border areas. Cross-border cooperation, as a form of local and territorial development that aims to prevent duplication of goals, functions and services between bodies

and institutions on both sides of the border, requires a harmonious, balanced and rational combination of both horizontal and vertical policies. Despite this, regional integration structures and national governments have few mechanisms to build a strategic vision of their border areas and, above all, lack operational instruments to exercise territorial border governance.

In this area, the role of local and regional authorities is crucial and irreplaceable for at least two reasons: firstly, because Latin American local authorities have strong democratic legitimacy: municipalities are the basis of Latin American democratic life, where the direct election of local mayors contributes to the legitimisation of local representation through created channels of participation, thus permitting the creative role that the municipality has in the design of new public policy responses to flourish, based on the intimate knowledge of local realities and needs

that have to be faced daily. The calling of Latin American municipalities is to strengthen their roles as both *civitas* and *polis*.

Secondly, sub-national authorities show particular sensitivity to the issue of border integration arising from the daily need to confront the limiting effect that characterises their territories. Furthermore, the field experience of *Fronteras Abiertas* has confirmed what is highlighted by Rose and Miller (1992 p. 192) i.e., that "each actor, each local step, is an intersection point between forces, and thus a potential point of resistance to any form of action or thought, or a point of organisation and promotion of different and opposing programmes" Even when local and regional authorities are characterised by limited capacity to offer proposals, they represent a major force for channelling, or possibly blocking, processes underway. Consequently, their participation in initiatives of their territory is essential to guaranteeing efficacy.

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Reflection document for the 2nd Forum of local governments from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean *

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The meeting, which took place in Vitoria (Spain) on 5 and 6 May 2010, brought together more than 60 local politicians and representatives from national and regional local government associations in both regions, and discussed the topic of innovation and technology as a driving force for development and social cohesion.

Among others, the Observatory provided this document to assist the process of debate and strategic reflection in order to encourage the building of a political agenda for local governments on issues of innovation in all its facets and to promote the search for exchange and cooperation mechanisms in this field.

Local governments in the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to introduce the concept of 'social innovation' into their public policies and the Vitoria-Gasteiz Declaration underlines the importance of strengthening this concept and its links to local public policies, in areas such as 'social cohesion, public services, environmental sustainability, governance and strengthening democratic institutionalism, competitiveness and local economic development'.

* *| Document produced by the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU–LA*

1. Innovation, development and local governments

1. This document presents an overview of the various dimensions of the relationship between technology and innovation as an engine of sustainable development from the standpoint of the local governments.

2. In the context of this document, the notion of *social innovation* (SI) will be adopted. This is a concept which is defined, in a general way, as the collective capacity to provide a response to situations considered unsatisfactory in diverse spheres of social life. In practical terms, SI is materialised in action and lasting change. SI has no particular form and manifests itself both intangibly and tangibly. In the first case it translates into practices, services, ways of doing things, methods of organising social action, legislation, and rules and standards of conduct. In the second case it is materialised in production technologies, mechanisms and products. In both cases, however, SI stands out as a novel solution or one outside the established norm in a specific context.

3. SI must be seen within the context of a process of change and improvement of the development of individuals, of their territorial area and of their occupational sphere. On all three levels, SI, to be considered as such, should produce better results than the existing or traditional practices, and the changes should be lasting and sustainable.

4. Under no circumstances may SI be considered an accidental occurrence. Its nature necessarily implies actions that are undertaken for predetermined purposes. Consequently, SI entails the existence of agents who act according to defined goals. It cannot be an isolated or contingent element; it is a sustained process that may be considered a goal, a possibility and a need for growth, evolution and progress.

5. For the development of SI, the existence of leadership and of an organisation open to change is essential. It requires the existence of individual or group initiatives and of cooperative leaderships, capable of recognising the aggregate value of collective work, and open to innovation and to participation. At local or territorial scale, a leadership of this nature goes hand in hand with a democratic representative institutionality, committed to the active promotion of the diverse factors that favour and sustain innovative impulses.

6. SI can and should be incentivised by the public institutions. In this field, the local or territorial governments have a key role to play, which consists of operating as "connectors" between the agents capable of generating and producing innovation. In democracy, the local governments are almost natural promoters of SI since, on the one hand, "innovation" and "change" express programmatic goals and convictions of those who govern, and on the other, because of the advantages that this may afford them in political competition (the greater the public support, the greater the possibilities of electoral victories and of exercising authority).

7. Within the frame of open societies, the local governments' "connection" task in favour of SI should be understood as a strategic intervention in which the quality of the interactions and their fluidity, the ef-

ficient access to information and to knowledge, and the development and availability of appropriate tools are essential to promote the deployment and the potential enhancement of the value of the various innovation practices implemented by the economic, political and social agents.

8. Nevertheless, there are reasons for the local public administrations to be cautious with respect to innovation *per se*. Innovation is not always a guarantee of success; on the contrary, failures often occur and they should be avoided whenever possible in institutions subject to accountability and in those on which depend such crucial matters in the life of the people as are health, education, the transport system, public safety and the provision of other basic social services. First of all, the local governments concentrate and should concentrate, rather than on the invention of new schemas, on the improvement of the management and performance of the existing schemas and models of administration. One of their irrelinquishable duties, however, is to promote a climate favourable to SI in all its aspects.

9. It is well known that economic growth is mainly generated by innovation and knowledge.[1] Although there are no precise measurements in this respect, innovation plays an equally decisive role in social progress. What is more, SI is decisive to economic growth. Historically, the spread of new technologies (electricity, automobiles, the Internet, just to mention three emblematic examples in this respect) has depended as much on SI as on technical

innovation proper, or business innovation. In the world of the 21st century, the interrelationship between SI and economic growth appears to have become even closer: some of the barriers that most seriously restrict growth today, such as climate change and (in a significant number of countries) population ageing, can only be overcome by promoting and generating SI (which, it should be emphasized, is a broader notion that includes technological innovation and its economic-social dissemination).

10. By means of public policy, the local governments, each in its own particular circumstances, can contribute in diverse ways to shape environments favourable to innovation: by promoting and strengthening the emergence of new social and economic leaderships in the community; by channelling focalised supports (tangible supports, but above all organisational and coordinational supports and institutional supports) for Research and Development (R&D) projects in specific areas identified as priorities; by implementing new intervention methodologies, including the formation of partnerships for innovation among local administrations, *ad hoc* agencies of the central government, and universities and academic and research centres, contributing to the empowerment of the social and economic agents with tools, incentives, recognition, access to financing (which does not necessarily have to be public) for the unfolding of innovative projects; by fostering systemic transformations in strategic spheres, such as climate change and its implications for development and welfare, which require

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[1]| *It is estimated that these factors account for between 50% and 80% of the growth of the modern economies. Likewise, it is considered that differences in knowledge and technological capacity account for over 60% of the differences in income and in the growth rates between countries.*

multidisciplinary approaches; by linking SMEs to big Research and Development institutions, such as universities, and by promoting pertinent legislation and regulation for innovation.

11. In the field of economic development, the European experience –and, in a less extensive but equally significant way, the experience of some Latin American cities– has demonstrated the benefits to be obtained in this respect by the territories through the implementation of sectoral cooperation mechanisms between public institutions and companies in matters of Research and Development when such mechanisms are addressed to companies' specific needs. To diverse extents, these alliances around specific projects (or territorial R&D partnerships addressed to specific purposes) have allowed the formation of "local clusters" of knowledge and, in the most successful cases, of excellence poles on a national and even international scale.

12. At the local or territorial base of countries there are various fields in which "demands for innovation" are generated. Among others, one may mention, for example, aside from the business sphere, the technological field, understood in the broad sense of the term; the public policy field; the urban public services field; the community development field in its diverse expressions, and the field of the reduction of both tangible and symbolic social inequalities. It is around this "demand for innovation" that the territorial administrations can focalise a set of pertinent actions in specific fields of public policy, all of them closely tied to each other since, as a whole, they give shape to dimensions in which the local governments' actions converge in the quest for goals of social cohesion and development sustainability.

2. Innovation, competitiveness and local economic development

13. From the standpoint of local development, SI has or should have the effect of modifying for the better the market situation of the territorial economic agents, helping to strengthen their capacities and competitiveness. The achievement of this result –the transition from innovation to the systemic improvement of economic performance– entails the generation of a whole series of positive externalities that will favour the emergence and consolidation of virtuous circles of innovation which, in turn, should translate into an increase in the level of local activity, productivity, employment and income.

14. The local governments can and should play a strategic role in the shaping of such externalities. The definition of public policies addressed to this end requires the existence of a "collective rational actor" watching out for the general interest of the community who, in the territorial context, can be no other than the government (local or regional, often in coordination with the central authorities) due to the need for institutional coordination which such public policies demand. Indeed, the diversity of organisations and institutions which are usually involved in a local public SI policy is relatively large, entailing the need to build likewise relatively complex institutional arrangements between actors and symbols, among which the public administrations have possibilities of exerting an important

influence and of exercising certain strategic coordination functions.

15. Even so, it is necessary to recognise that both in Europe and in Latin America these possibilities have been –and continue to be– more accessible to big metropolises than to cities and regions of lesser territorial, demographic and economic scale. This phenomenon lies at the base of the territorial and productive heterogeneity which, in Latin America, tends to increase in several countries, and which the European compensation policies have combated for years. It is clear that a priority goal on the local development agenda in the 21st century continues to be the overcoming of this heterogeneity, which is linked in many ways to economic and social inequality.

16. Both the European and the Latin American experience show that behind every successful case of innovation, competitiveness and local economic development there are public policy schemas that *in each specific context* distinguish between what should be the object by the steering or control of the public administrations and what should be left to the forces of the market and of competition. These same experiences show that the institutional frame of local economic development is complex and far from being predetermined. They also show that the multi-level and intersectoral coordination of public policies is an essential factor in the effectiveness of a public strategy of local economic development.

17. From the territorial standpoint, the need for multilevel and intersectoral coordination requires the adoption of active public policies of promotion of innovation and technology. It is all the more necessary to consider this factor because the innovation policies reject, by their nature, the application of undifferentiated regional strategies and demand, on the contrary, different strategies which are defined according to each type of region or locality. Three types may be established both in Europe and in Latin America: the regions or localities whose productive and social factors enjoy "classic" comparative advantages, the development and utilisation of which demand physical investments and the deployment of the knowledge base; the regions or localities with relatively important externalities or economies of agglomeration, in which development is based on the innovative potential of the socioeconomic sectors and on the interactions between agents and institutions (companies, universities, local development centres, development agencies), and regions and localities which are centres of knowledge and which also possess multiple sources of production and dissemination of innovations, in which the externalities produced by the intersectoral articulations (economic and social) are supplemented by those produced by the intrasectoral articulations. For each one of these archetypical regional or local cases (in the interior of which there may be marked differences of degree), the design of public innovation polices should be different. This reality adds complexity to the need of multilevel and intra- and intersectoral coordination of the public policies, in addition to making them even more demanding.

18. The range of instruments within the reach of the innovation policies, however, is relatively broad in the field of local economic development. On the one hand there are the instruments which directly concern the national sphere of public policy in the legal, tax-related, financial, educational and technological fields and in that of the creation of major physical infrastructures. All of these are decisive aspects in the

determination of a territory's innovation capacities. On the other hand, there are the own instruments possessed by each region and locality according to the specific attribution of competences and the degree of decentralisation of each country. The methods of using this set of instruments and their mix are the subject of a discussion, the basic terms of which are very closely linked to the main orientations and methods of local economic development.

19. The most "traditional" orientations lend priority to both the development of technological and scientific infrastructures for the explicit purpose of increasing the territorial capacities in a sense similar to that posed in the theory of the "regional development poles", and the creation of financial stimuli for R&D at business level. A variant of this approach assigns greater importance to the capacity of social and business dissemination and absorption of the innovations produced in the R&D establishments, according to which it envisages active stimulation policies focused on the creation of "high density" human capital, the increase of which is considered a central strategic factor. In both cases, the systems for helping the innovation of companies are present, although their effectiveness has often tended to be questioned in recent years.

20. Policies aimed at creating human capital have come to occupy a high priority in the innovation strategies for competitiveness and local development. In this respect, the universities and scientific and technological research centres are considered to be a real and potential driving factor of local and regional economic dynamism. In contrast, almost all the other instruments of the public innovation policies are disputed: this is the case with respect to both the direct or indirect aids to companies, and the policies

for the promotion of clusters or the creation of public agencies for assistance to companies or the creation of such infrastructures as business incubators, science parks or the so called technology poles. In the political discussion in this respect diverse questions are usually posed on the effectiveness of these instruments according to the myriad possible circumstances under which their instrumentation can be carried out, and according to the budgetary resources that each territorial administration should assign to the promotion of innovation.

21. In a situation of economic and financial crisis like the present one, the public intervention should be carefully dosed in order to assure its structural effectiveness. One of its priorities should be the strengthening of the local economic fabric and of the set of factors that exert a long-term influence on development, factors which are to a large extent of sociological and institutional nature. In this respect, the local governments have a primordial role to play in modelling some strategic factors of innovation and economic development which, depending on the potentialities and aspirations of each territory, will be capable of recovering the original essence of the concept of "endogenous development" as a process of both economic and social development focused on the maximum and most efficient utilisation of the available resources at local level while respecting the principle of sustainability.

22. Under the conditions particular to each continental and national reality, the local governments of Europe and Latin America have often unfolded innovative policies that are characterised by a proactive perception of the changes that are produced in the respective territorial productive systems. In this process, these administrations have
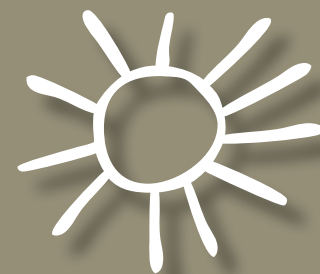
shown themselves to be particularly suitable for designing and building mechanisms of productive and social integration that are within the reach of the whole population, in order to assure a better primary distribution of the income and opportunities. Although it may appear paradoxical, the present crisis has carried with it, together with the many problems which it entails, a scene of new opportunities in which it is possible to unleash the development potential associated with the knowledge economy and the green economy. The utilisation of these opportunities should lead to a strengthening of the local governments' role in the shaping of a new paradigm of development which will be based on public-private partnerships and which will be explicitly addressed to the expansion of reasonable remunerative employment. In the case of the Latin American localities, this means a systematic reduction of the dimension of the informal sector.

23. In this context of crisis it is also pertinent to highlight the strategic importance of international cooperation and of the exterior projection of the territories to attract opportunities and increase competitiveness. The local governments can facilitate exchange spaces for innovative policies, especially those based on the use of the new technologies, and policies for attracting and managing knowledge and talent as instruments for institutional strengthening. A significant number of European territories and some Latin American territories have reliably shown that the creation of public development policies focused on R&D represents an element of great potential for local economic and social progress. In these territories, the promotion of innovation and technologies has taken its place as a key instrument of public policy in the quest for new sustainable solutions to major economic-social problems associated with

exclusion, unemployment and poverty. One of the great lessons of the development cycle that has been jeopardised by the crisis today is that the local capacity to structure endogenous development dynamics is capable of producing some "natural" economic complementarities among territories. One conclusion based on recent experience is that the territorial competition for access to markets or to attract resources may also be accompanied by the joint deployment of cooperation mechanisms, such as the creation of sectoral clusters based on development partnerships that include all the actors of the territory.

3. Innovation and environmental sustainability

24. SI and local public international cooperation are two factors of high strategic value with respect to one of the major priorities of the 21st century's development agenda: the fight against the effects of climate change and the implementation –which is inseparable from it– of new development methods based on sustainability. Indeed, given the ecological limits of the present socio-productive system and the obligation to safeguard the rights of future generations, the public policies are facing the challenge of conciliating the needs of economic growth and of the generation of paid jobs –needs which the current crisis has aggravated– with the conservation of the environment and the recovery and improvement of the ecosystem. In this redefinition of the development model and of the public policies, the local governments are called in their own right to carry out fundamental actions. Without their assistance, the ecological restrictions of development will not be efficiently or lastingly overcome.

25. In democracy, the local sphere is one of the key dimensions from which the public policies –regional, national and international– will have to emerge, policies which are necessary to implement a sustainable management of the world's public assets such as raw materials in the process of depletion, air, water, the climate and biodiversity. In order to face up to this responsibility, the local governments have in turn the obligation to double their capacities to utilise the potential offered by technology and innovation in this field. In principle, there is a broad spectrum of opportunities within their reach to mitigate the consequences of climate change and to promote a lasting reduction of exclusion and the renewal of the growth model. Examples of these opportunities are represented, from the standpoint of technical feasibility, by renewable energies, energy efficiency, sustainable transport systems and the provision of low energy content services, and from the standpoint of their political-social feasibility, by a varied range of good practices addressed to achieving goals such as the "zero-emissions city", the clean renewal of urban equipment, and the modernisation of the collective transport and mobility system.

26. The local and regional governments cannot and should not be exclusive or sole agents of innovation and environmental sustainability and they have the obligation to call for and stimulate the participation of other key territorial agents in this process. In this respect, their coordinated interaction with the local business sector is decisive so that it may take its place as a pillar of the necessary innovation to achieve the sustainability of environmental initiatives. The *ad-hoc* building of public-private partnerships can be an engine of environmental social innovation with a great capacity to mobilise, in the territorial base of society, resources (and not only financial ones) and organisational capacities that will materialise in tangible changes, setting goals and standards of performance and using SI to achieve them.

27. Although their design and application unfold in the day-to-day operation of the public administrations, the local environmental strategies and policies are based on long-term approaches. The coordinated planning of cities, which are the central focus of CO_2 emissions in the world, is a feasible mechanism for achieving, within mandatory deadlines, significant reductions of pollutants. Numerous innovative initiates are circulating in favour of "green cities", the instrumentation of which is accessible on the condition of stimulating the design and implementation of urban planning systems that take advantage of new practices, such as the so called "proximity access", the "reintroduction" and enlargement of the urban green spaces, the expansion of pedestrian areas, the fostering of the use of new sources of energy (such as solar energy) in public and commercial buildings and in dwellings, or the energetic reconversion of urban public transport.[2] The design of a new generation of regulations, stricter with respect to the mitigation of the environmental impact of the major urban conglomerates, is also necessary

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[2] *One example among others concerns the taxi park: it is estimated that in the big cities a tax covers in one year ten times more kilometres than the rest of the vehicles. For this reason, for every one thousand taxis that were to be changed for hybrid vehicles, the effect would be equivalent to changing 10,000 automobiles.*
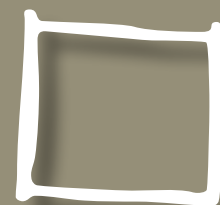
(for example in the management and recycling of wastes).

28. The local governments' encouragement of SI and environmental sustainability makes enormous sense in economic terms and in terms of the renewal of the growth model. In each one of the initiatives evoked for indicative purposes, there are new opportunities of investment and, consequently, of businesses and paid jobs compatible with the "green future of the cities". On the other hand, the strict "territorial linking" of each innovative initiative increases the feasibility and social pertinence of the solution which it carries with it. Its implementation, if successful, also creates opportunities for its geographical scaling and its replicability, turning them, eventually, into territorial contributions to the social stock of innovations for sustainable development.

29. It is in a certain way paradoxical, in a problem of truly global significance such as climate change in its diverse dimensions, that a significant number of possible solutions should stem from the local spheres of society. This is so because the mitigation of its effects is a primary responsibility of the territorial governments. Nevertheless, due to its scope, reach and implications, this problem goes far beyond the limits of the local and demands the cooperation of other administrative levels. In this way, the imperative of the multilevel intersectoral coordination of the public policies reappears. Moreover, to the extent that the challenges implicit in climate change involve essential aspects of the model of society, the implementation of the local mitigation policies also raises the matter of citizen participation: its legitimation entails the conviction and adhesion of the citizens and their guilds and

collectives, which likewise refers to key dimensions of social cohesion, another programmatic imperative of the renewal of the economic and social model.

4. Innovation and public services

30. The relative importance of the public character of an asset or a service justifies in each specific case the need for intervention of the public authority on the various territorial levels of each country. With respect to intervention, it almost always defines needs of coordination among the diverse institutions, in the absence of which the supply of the respective service is deficient. The analysis of the recent local and regional development experiences of the European Union and Latin America –so contrasting in their dynamic, their configuration and their results–, shows that the greater the "public" character of a specific service, the greater the coordination requirements of the public institutions. From the standpoint of the local SI policies, such a demand has important implications in terms of the decision-making process of the public and private agents in matters of risk, costs and investment of always scant resources.

31. One archetypical case is that of the local policies for promoting the creation of human capital and R&D. Given the highly positive externalities for development that are implicit in these activities, there is hardly any doubt about their public character. From a hypothetical standpoint (very distant from the European and Latin American local reality) in which the educational and R&D systems would pos-

sess sufficient financing from local public sources, the government goals are defined in the pursuance of goals of "excellence" and of strengthening of their nexuses with the regional economy and society. In the frame of this hypothesis, the considerably lower demand for coordination and the highly differentiated demand for quality contrast with a likewise hypothetical case (but one closer to reality, above all in Latin America), which is defined by the precariousness of resources for financing this basic social service for collective development and the development of individuals.

32. Another strategic sphere for regional development, competitiveness and innovation is that of the big material and organisational structures, indispensable to take advantage of the local resources. In several European localities and some, less numerous, of Latin America, the territorial governments have been active promoters of the so called "science parks". The experiences which have been successful in this respect have become genuine sources of innovation whose results have exerted a decisive influence on the shaping of virtuous circles of development with a large impact on the progress of the respective territories. This is a true public service that compensates an imperfection of the market.[3] According to what is known of this type of experiences, the design, configuration, start-up and management of these technology parks is a process that demands a close coordination between the public institutions and authorities on diverse territorial levels. The mere use of tax resources to contribute to the financing of infrastructures of this nature requires in

itself such coordination. The same thing happens with the development of the rest of the physical infrastructures necessary for the deployment of development. One of the biggest implications of this need for coordination of the public policies in matters of basic public assets and services is the selectivity and priority of these same policies – a matter that is of particular importance in the field of innovation. With scant exceptions which should be sufficiently justified, it is not feasible or efficient for a locality or region to possess an "à la carte menu" of innovation-for-development polices, above all if they are addressed to the same sector or segment of the value chains. The coordination in the supply of this type of public services should determine, among other operative aspects, which innovation policies are the responsibility of the national authority, which are the direct responsibility of the territorial government, and which are the object of coordinated management.

33. Clearly important are the rules of play between the various authorities who intervene to assure the supply of the assets and services which the market on its own does not have the possibility of making available to the agents in the field of innovation. The coordination of the public policy is required for reasons of effectiveness and efficiency in the use of tax resources; but under the present circumstances, it is all the more necessary since the transition towards new paradigms of use and dissemination of technical progress, such as that which is implicit in the challenges posed by climate change, it is indispensable. It suffices to consider

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[3] *There is evidence of private investments in this type of technology projects which are firmly rooted in the territory, but they are substantially fewer in number than those unfolded on the initiative –and with the provision of resources– of the governmental sector.*

that, in the years to come, the public territorial administrations will be directly in charge of administering and of carrying out the direct management of projects for the mitigation of climate change, such as those envisaged in this respect in the medium- and long-term planning of the multilateral institutions (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, European Commission).

34. This matter is so important and it is so closely linked to the public promotion of local SI (here one may recall the notion of "unified rational actor"), that the multi-level and intersectoral coordination of the public policies may be considered, in itself, an "intangible public asset". Consequently, it is of strategic importance that the territorial administrations should incorporate among the goals of their work in matters of innovation, precise definitions, appropriate to each national and regional context, of the responsibilities which are the object of the common action of the institutions and of those which are the object of the diverse methods of coordination which are implemented and formalised in each case. Such definition should also include clarifications as to those areas of work which will be left to the discretion of the autonomous actors of the economy and society in order to stimulate the creation of social capital.

35. It is not very difficult to glimpse how the territorial public administrations are situated in general terms when it comes to making decisions in matters of innovation and provisioning of basic public assets and services: by means of these and their other government actions, they have the possibility to create the tangible and intangible externalities that foster change and the search for new sustainable solutions to the major problems of local development. To fulfil this role, the administrations need to possess sufficient institutional, legal and financial capacities.

36. Failure to meet this requirement restricts the scope and effectiveness of governmental action. This is an almost general problem of most territorial administrations, but the enormous difference existing between the average Latin American cases and the average European cases should be recognised. The large asymmetry in favour of the European cases with respect to the average availability of resources, technical managers, organisation and financing marks substantial differences which, moreover, are very well known. Multilateral agencies such as ECLAC, IDB or the World Bank have thoroughly documented an overall situation which may be described quite simply: the level of the total tax load of the Latin American countries is insufficient for the public financing. The same sources have recently pointed out on several occasions that the tax structure of the Latin American countries is definitely more regressive than that of the developed economies, which negatively affects the distribution of the income and is one of the factors that makes Latin America one of the most unequal regions on the planet. It is striking that the level of general taxation on consumptions (the level with the most regressive characteristics) is quite similar between the countries of the region and those of the developed world. Hence, the difference lies in the poor performance of the income tax and the social security tax (which are taxes of more progressive or proportional characteristics).

37. Such is the structural context in which Latin America's territorial governments unfold their operation from the tax standpoint. Of course, the insufficiency of resources at central level has a cascade effect on the local and regional finances. The various waves of decentralisation and deconcentration of functions from the central level to the territories which have occurred in the last 25 years according to the particular methods of each national case, although they did generate positive effects in some cases, produced indefinitions and bottlenecks in other cases which are far from being resolved in favour of the development of the government capacities and of a greater local or regional autonomy. Theoretically, in order for the decentralisation process to be complete and efficient, the territorial governments should be autonomous, which implies possession of the necessary financial resources to be able to decide on the best assignment of the expenditure according to the local preferences. According to this schema, the citizens, in turn, may demand the government that collects taxes from them to render accounts. Nevertheless, the countries of the region are not characterised by a large taxation at local level.

38. By recalling these structural problems, we highlight the *enormous task of institutional political innovation* which the public authorities are facing on all territorial levels to find new feasible solutions to these restrictions. It is a matter that is closely tied to the decentralisation of political authority and, as such, it requires, as has been stated on countless occasions and by numerous actors, the concertation of new wide-ranging social agreements or contracts, focused on the public interest. Historical experience shows categorically that the major agreements of this nature are milestones of innovation for general progress. In these agreements, the territorial perspective, more than ever, should hold a pre-eminent place.

5. Innovation, governance and social cohesion

39. The overall set of institutional transformations observed in the last 25 years both in Europe and in Latin America reflects a vast ensemble of operative and structural changes which, possibly, forced the public administrations and their respective systems of governance to gradually develop innovative forms of government whose scope, anatomy, mechanisms of operation and methods of implementation are different on one side of the Atlantic and the other. In this current of change, the local and regional governments have participated unequally, particularly when the process is compared to some areas of the central public administrations (for example, the Ministries of Finance and their agencies). Once again, in this field one observes large differences of quantity and quality between the European and Latin American experiences.

40. Despite such differences, it is possible to hold that in the course of this process the public institutions and, in particular, the local public administrations, have opened themselves gradually and to different degrees to the performance of innovative initiatives that broaden the spaces of citizen participation and discussion, favouring in many cases the articulation of various public and private actors (compa-

nies, social organisations, universities, interest groups, minorities). On diverse occasions and in various places, the new local public governance has also been an effective concertation mechanism of the agents involved in specific matters that affect the community or particular groups. As governments in proximity, the local governments are almost natural facilitators of social initiatives that seek to unleash dynamics which will strengthen the territory's resources. Behind these initiatives there is always an enormous potential of SI of idiosyncratic character that the local governments should know how to detect and stimulate. For its part, the broad social dissemination of the communication technologies has allowed local citizens to become acquainted –on occasions in real time–, with other novel practices and experiences in the exercise of the social, economic and cultural rights that create a greater awareness of rights and increase the level of demand among citizens.

41. In practice, however, the local governments concentrate and should concentrate, rather than on innovation properly speaking, on the ongoing improvement of the management and performance of the existing schemas and models of administration, which is something that lies at the base of their own legitimation. They should attend to numerous issues in this respect and the weighting and particular significance of these issues for each local administration vary. Extensive mention has already been made of the need for coordination of the public policies and of the high priority that this aspect has in the local and regional government agendas. An important dimension of this is represented by the technical and professional managers of the public administrations. The average quality of the human capital possessed by the local

public administrations should be increased and this is a goal of strategic character in Latin America. In order for innovation to be able to really penetrate into the local administration and to be projected into the social fabric, it is indispensable to qualify, consolidate and improve the training profiles of human resources.

42. In accordance with the arguments that have been set out in this document, the active promotion of SI processes by the territorial public administrations not only offers the possibility of unfolding original approaches of strongly idiosyncratic character but also incentivises a greater and better participation of citizens and organised groups in the search for solutions to the major social problems. By their nature, the democratic territorial governments are called to stimulate SI, dynamically adapting their policies and means of intervention. In order to be sustainable, this task also calls for the active cooperation of other actors and institutions: the specialised agencies of the central governments, companies, the technical, scientific and educational spheres, and the organisations of civil society. In this way, the territories will be closer to building more open and interactive dynamics of social agents and development strategies endowed with greater legitimation and with a greater capacity of mobilising local society.

43. For the territorial administrations, SI is a means to achieve higher government ends; as such, it is also a tool for the promotion of social cohesion. The aspiration to live in societies that provide their citizens with assurance of basic levels of social and economic security tends to be constantly fractured by the corrosive action of exclusion dynamics that trigger material and symbolic inequality of individuals,

attacking their sense of belonging to the community. In recent years there has been a growing awareness with respect to the need to fight these dynamics by means of systemic approaches of public policy that seek to favour the emergence of positive synergies between economic growth and social equity in a context of productive modernisation. This innovative approach of public policy tends to be increasingly assumed above all by the territorial governments. Both in Europe and in Latin America, some territorial governments have demonstrated the validity of innovative experiences for confronting the structural problems that curb the social integration of individuals. Beyond their contextual differences, these experiences have in common the promotion of citizen participation and occupational integration of excluded people within a framework firmly committed to the goal of strengthening participatory democracy.

Winning through Twinning: Municipal International Cooperation in Flanders (Belgium)

Bert Janssens *

KEY WORDS

Municipal international cooperation |
Municipal twinnings |
Monitoring processes, |
Local government as protagonist |

What role can a local government in Flanders (Belgium) play in the field of decentralised cooperation? This is the main question posed in this article, which aims to discuss the context of municipal international cooperation from the point of view of Flemish local governments.

We describe the legal framework for the different subsidy programmes and their different approaches, before concentrating on the instrument and characteristics of twinning between two local governments. It should be pointed out at the start that subsidies are always used through the formula of co-funding so that, in the end, it is the local governments themselves that invest most of the resources in international cooperation. The motivations that make local government act in the field of international cooperation are related to the concept of glocality. This enables the global world to be analysed from the local perspective and vice versa. Furthermore, twinning is characterised by key words such as institutional reinforcement, partnering, reciprocity and strengthening local democratisation processes. The article concludes by mentioning a number of new challenges in the field of twinnings, such as the search for other monitoring formulas and new forms of cooperation.

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1. Introduction

The fact that local governments play an important role on a global level in the field of international cooperation has already been widely documented. From Local Agenda 21 to recognition by the European Commission[1], it has been a long and important road for local governments to achieve recognition as real actors in this area. At the same time, Flemish local governments took their first steps in municipal international cooperation. After an initial pilot project, different opportunities of subsidisation were formally established by both the Flemish and federal governments[2].

There are currently 36 Flemish local governments involved in a partnership or twinned[3] with a town on the other side of the world. The practice of creating links between towns (*twinnings*) started after the Second World War to promote peace and unity between old enemies. However, although there are similar elements, twinnings between local governments from North and South[4] have fundamentally different characteristics. Partnering, equality and reciprocity are key words for the processes of capacity building with the aim of strengthening the institutional capacity of local governance.

The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG, in its Dutch abbreviation) accompanies these twinnings very closely. Municipal partnering is a new form of cooperation and is somewhat different from other, possibly more traditional, forms of cooperation, between (other) governmental and non-governmental bodies. Thus, at VVSG, we aim to systematise and document the added value of this specific type of direct cooperation between local governments. This contribution is part of that goal. However, we believe that, despite the efforts made so far, it is a work in process and the systematisation is still incomplete, as reflected in this text, which, we stress, only includes municipal cooperation as undertaken in Flanders.

We realise that there are other expressions of decentralised cooperation in Flanders but consider them to be outside the scope of this article. We also wish to stress that this article is influenced by a perspective based on the practical work carried out with Flemish local governments and people involved in municipal international cooperation.

2. Legal framework of municipal international cooperation

2.1. Three levels of international cooperation

Discussing local governments in Flanders involves explaining the state and

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[1]| *COM (2008) 626 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions, 8/10/2008.*

[2]| *Although we are mentioning subsidisation programmes, in fact they are co-financing programmes. Flemish local government provides most of the financial, human and logistic resources. The subsidies are additional contributions to this.*

[3]| *This article talks about twinning and municipal international cooperation. It is true that there are other terms used to describe these concepts. In particular, this article refers to twinning and municipal cooperation as a form of city-to-city cooperation.*

[4]| *North and South, developed and developing countries… It is well known that each of these concepts is incomplete. We have opted for these terms, where 'North' refers to Europe (specifically Flanders) and 'South' refers to Latin American, African and Asian countries.*

governmental reality in Belgium, which is a federal constitutional monarchy. Through a series of constitutional reforms in the '70s and '80s the regionalisation of this unitary state led to the establishment of a federal system structured on three levels and to the creation of linguistic communities and regional governments. Thus, Belgium is the only federal state based on three levels:

1. The three regions: the Region of Flanders, the Region of Wallonia and the Region of Brussels-Capital.

2. The federal government.

3. The three linguistic communities: the Flemish Community (which speaks Dutch and represents 60% of Belgians), the French Community (which represents 40%) and the German-speaking community (which speaks German and represents around 1% of Belgians).

Through different stages of state reform, the process of regionalisation led progressively to more powers being handed to regional governments, such as education, culture, the environment and social affairs, among others.

After the last state reform, an intense debate started regarding entrenchment of the Lambermont Agreement of 16 October 2000[5] to transfer 'aspects of international cooperation' to regional governments. In Belgium, the regions have legislative power and regional governments can approve decrees. Furthermore, it is important to know that

since the 1990s, Flanders has implemented a policy of international cooperation. Therefore, when discussing (decentralised) cooperation in Belgium, one has to refer briefly to three levels: national (federal), regional (Flemish) and local. In each case, we aim to present the general context before focussing on the aspect of municipal international cooperation.

2.2. The federal government of Belgium

Belgium's official cooperation, Official Development Assistance or ODA, still mostly comes from the Belgian federal state. In general, the budget of the Directorate-General for Development (DGD[6]) has risen by €438 million in the last two years (from €848 million in 2007 to €1,249 million in 2009). This means that in 2009 total ODA was 0.55% of the GDP[7]. A political agreement between the parties reiterated the commitment to reach 0.7% in 2010, but a major effort is still required to achieve this. Belgian international cooperation is framed within the fight against poverty and this principal goal is reflected in the 1999 Law on International Cooperation for Development. Furthermore, official policy stresses its support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), putting into practice the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Bilateral official cooperation is concentrated in 18 partner countries[8] and attempts are currently being made to increase the geographical concentration of interventions, encouraging involvement of actors from civil society in this revi-

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[5] | *See: Lambermont Agreement of 16 October 2000: http://www.vlaamsparlement.be/vp/informatie/lambermont.html.*

[6] | *See www.dg-d.be.*

[7] | *11.11.11 (2009), Jaarrapport. De Belgische Ontwikkelingssamenwerking in 2009, p. 7.*

[8] | *The 18 partner countries for Belgian bilateral cooperation are: Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Congo DR, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, the Palestinian territories, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and South Africa.*

sion process. For some years, local governments twinned in one of 41 officially approved countries[9] have been able to apply for a federal subsidy. Within this, the VVSG acts as the programme administrator and coordinator. In 2008, the VVSG, together with 12 twinnings, received the approval of a 5-year subsidy for a municipal international cooperation programme. Strengthening institutional capacities in local governments in the South aims to contribute to sustainable human development and the fight against poverty. The federal municipal international cooperation programme is limited to strengthening institutional capacities in the areas of youth, environment and local economy. To apply for a subsidy, each Flemish local government, together with its partner, has to produce a detailed file based on the logical framework and on defining intermediate results and indicators. It should be mentioned that the Directorate-General for Development establishes the same administrative and financial regulations for the VVSG as for NGOs. However, local governments try to respond to the challenge of maintaining a process of dialogue, and firm and on-going consultation with their Southern partners. Despite these efforts, which we believe are producing positive results, local governments represent a non-specific actor[10] in the field of international cooperation and the VVSG continues to press for the use of regulations better adapted to municipal reality. In any case, this is the first time that the VVSG has implemented a five-year programme together with local governments. This issue is considered to be a unique op-

portunity to experiment in the field of direct cooperation between towns.

The federal subsidy programme is aimed mainly at Southern countries. In particular, the programme and financial investment this implies is focussed mainly on strengthening twinning, i.e. in strengthening local government institutions in the South. As a result, the 12 twinnings in the subsidy programme are generally able to invest some €60,000 per year. This amount is divided into five areas: investment, operating costs, training, personnel and missions.

Within the federal programme, at the VVSG we believe that the most serious limitation is the list that limits the number of partner countries. This restriction means that successfully operating twinnings cannot receive a federal subsidy, just because the partner country does not appear on the official list. Furthermore, with this list of priority countries, there are some twinnings that cannot now present a file to federal government. In Namibia, for example the twinning between Lommel and Ongwediva was able undertake projects within the framework of the federal programme, while a new twinning established between Harelbeke and Eenhana cannot present its file to the federal government because Namibia is no longer on the list. However, it should be pointed out that the federal subsidy programme started in early 2000 and is gradually increasing, as shown in the following figure:

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[9] | *If the twinnings wish to join the federal government subsidy programme, they can only apply for the subsidy when the twinning is in one of the Belgian priority countries. This list consists of 18 priority countries for bilateral cooperation and 21 countries for indirect actors.*

[10] | *Niet domein specifieke actor: means that international cooperation is not a main task or goal for Flemish local governments. They are committed to the field of international cooperation because of their knowledge and expertise in other sectors and fields.*

The figures given for 2010 represent budgets already approved. However, these figures may still vary as VVSG is negotiating a budget increase to include three new twinnings that are in the process of producing their file and which aim to start implementation in early January 2011. Another aspect that will influence these figures is the possibility of transferring unused amounts from the current year to the following year.

2.3. The regional government of Flanders

Since the last state reform, the Flemish region's direct budget for international cooperation has increased significantly, as shown below.

Figure Nº 1 | Development of the MIC federal programme
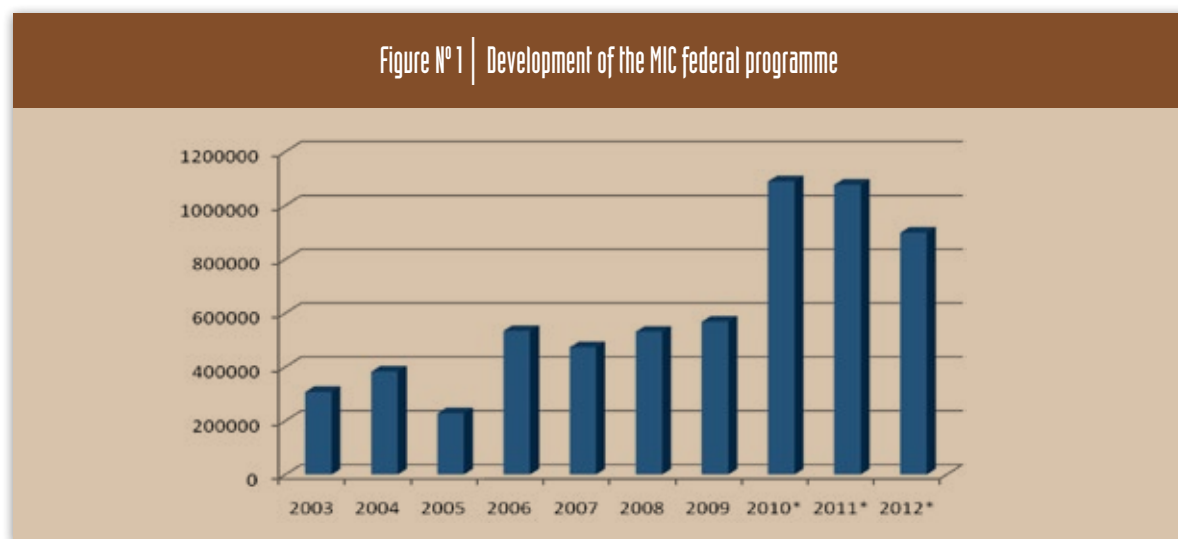
The regional government has reiterated its intention to multiply the international cooperation budget for 2020, reaching a figure of €83 million that, together with other decentralised bodies, will represent 7% of all ODA[11]. **As currently implemented, the municipal cooperation programme covers 3% of the €49 million provided by Flemish ODA.** Flemish bilateral cooperation is focussed on southern Africa, with official programmes in South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique.

It is clear that municipal international cooperation represents a small amount of the total ODA, but the financial support in itself is significant:

Due to particular circumstances, there was a drop in the 2005 budget, but the budget available to local governments in general is still increasing slightly. The figures[12] include both the subsidy for local governments and the contribution of the VVSG though its training and support role.

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[11] *Interview with the Minister-President of the Flemish government, Kris Peeters, in the magazine MO*: Goris, Gie (2010), 'Vlaanderen wil nog steeds overheveling Ontwikkelingssamenwerking', available at: http://www.mo.be/index. php?id=348&tx_uwnews_pi2[art_id]=28610&cHash=6c3a45892c*

[12] *Calculation based on the Flemish ODA reports 2001-2009, Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs, Policy Division, May 2010.*
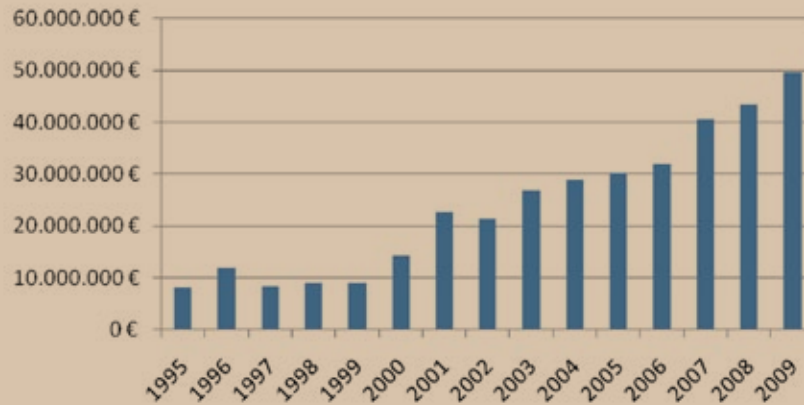
Figure Nº 2: Development of Flemish ODA

Figure Nº 3: Development of the Flemish MIC programme

The conditions for obtaining a Flemish subsidy are explained below, after discussing a more complicated issue, the legal framework. On 2 April 2004, the Flemish government and parliament approved the Decree on Municipal International Cooperation Agreements,[13], which was put into operation in an application decree in 2005.

Since 13 June 2007, the International Cooperation Framework Decree regulates all previously signed legislative decrees, including the Decree on Municipal International Cooperation Agreements.

What exactly does the subsidy for municipal international cooperation consist of?

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[13]| *ee: http://ontwikkelingssamenwerking.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?fid=121*

Flemish policies include stimulating initiatives to extend the support for international cooperation, both with regard to citizens and in the different municipal departments and services. In election years, the Flemish government does not approve any agreements. Once the project has been approved by a committee of experts, the local government is provided with €48,000 for three years for an indirect cooperation agreement, without twinning. Also, local governments that sign a direct cooperation agreement, prior to twinning, are provided with up to €96,000 for three years. Additionally, local government receives a contribution for personnel (€15,000 per year for an equivalent of full time) and the Flemish government awards a bonus of €5,000 to towns with a twinning in southern Africa. The implementation section is divided into the categories of sensitisation, training and missions. Finally, every three years, Flemish local governments have to draw up a strategic plan focussing on intermediate results rather than the construction of the logical framework. Furthermore, an operational plan has to be presented every year.

An important characteristic is that the agreement aims to sensitise people who are not normally in contact with the field of international cooperation. These are personnel who also work within Flemish local government in positions such as reception, the technical department, cleaning and others. They represent sections of society normally not reached by the traditional actors in international cooperation and thus, through this subsidy, local government aims to provide another image of the South and break with stereotypes.

2.4. The role of local government

Why should a Flemish local government be concerned with issues of international cooperation?

If it is not within their basic powers, what are their reasons for appearing on the international arena? Lommel's North-South civil servant[14] offers an explanation:

Every day, global processes enter into different areas of administration and politics and this clearly happens at a local level too. In other words, the world enters our town.

We believe that a local government has an exemplary and indicatory role. It is our job, as local government, to contextualise international issues and translate them to the local level. As a central axis within North-South politics, the role of local governments varies from that of actor, facilitator and, occasionally, manager.[15]

Thus, local government also responds to the show of solidarity among its inhabitants, not just by channelling resources for international cooperation locally, but also by showing how it contributes to a better world. Thus local government acts in different ways, for instance, within a twinning relationship. Also, local public administration, in its role as facilitator, is positioned to provide the human, logistic and even financial resources so that other initiatives may be carried out within its own territory or on the other side of the world. It involves offering citizens, through subsidies, the logistic support to organise their own activities.

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[14]| *The North-South civil servant's work is that of direct cooperation within a twinning and is responsible for carrying out sensitisation activities within his or her town.*

[15]| *The North-South civil servant for Lommel, Toon Jansen, quoted in De Bruin, T. & Huyse H. (2009), p. 41.*

As mentioned above, Flemish local governments can access two different subsidy programmes, although the largest contribution to international cooperation comes from municipal government itself. Large cities such as Antwerp or Gent have an annual international cooperation budget of over €300,000, without counting the contribution of subsidies. Almost every town has regulations regarding subsidies so local government itself becomes an important donating body, subsidising structural initiatives from civic organisations or private initiatives.

Of the 308 Flemish municipalities, at least 257 (83%) spend a certain amount of their annual budget on international cooperation. At least 267 (87%) local governments have a councillor for international cooperation and at least 168 (55%) municipalities have an active advisory commission on these issues. Furthermore, up to a total of 147 (48%) local governments have a civil servant (part-time or full-time) responsible for international cooperation[16].

3. The role of the association of local governments

The VVSG plays an important role in three main areas: providing information, training and advisory services to 308 Flemish local governments; lobbying to defend local government interests; and creating networks promoting international municipalism.

In this context, the VVSG[17] organises training sessions on topics that are relevant to towns involved in municipal international cooperation. The VVSG's role differs within the two subsidy programmes. Firstly, in the Flemish programme, the VVSG organises training sessions and general support for local governments that wish to sign, or that have already signed, an agreement with the Flemish government. In this case, the local government has direct relations with the Flemish Agency for International Cooperation (VAIS, in its Dutch abbreviation). The VAIS is the body with overall responsibility for administering the programme. For its part, the VVSG has also signed a management agreement with the Flemish VAIS agency, which is valid until 2011.

Secondly, in the federal programme, the VVSG manages the whole municipal international cooperation programme, from the start the files production process to the delivery of financial reports and reports on content. The work of the VVSG does not just include the administration and assistance for local government, but also all financial management of the 12 twinnings within the federal programme. In this case, the VVSG works as a bridge between local governments and federal administration, represented in this field by the Directorate-General for Development (DGD).

Despite the different approaches of the two programmes, the VVSG considers them to be highly complementary. The Flemish programme is aimed at strengthening the

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[16] *These figures are now several years old. The VVSG is now conducting a survey with more recent municipal data. The incorporation of these data can be seen at: www.noordzuidkaart.be.*

[17] *The association is made up of different political and administrative bodies (governing body, annual assembly, etc.) and 10 working parties (environment, social policy, safety and others). Within this structure, the international team is responsible for the field of municipal international cooperation, including the European dimension, and has five people to provide support for local governments*
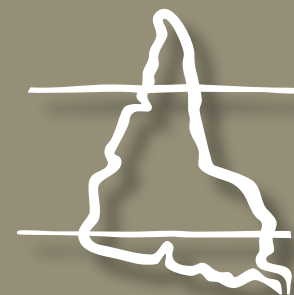
basis of support for international cooperation, sensitising the citizens of municipalities, while the federal programme implies heavy investment in the Southern twin. In both programmes, the VVSG maintains a 'top-down' vision of municipal projects, promoting networks and information through representations in (inter)national forums.

To conclude this topic, the characteristics of the two programmes and the role of the VVSG within each one may be summarised as follows:

Table Nº 1		
	Flemish Agreement Programme	**Multi-year Federal Programme**
Duration	Three years	Max. five years
Characteristics	Education and sensitisation in the North With or without direct cooperation (twinning) Financial support for the South is limited Stimulation policies to extend the grassroots support for international cooperation	Only for local governments in the South within the twinning programme Municipal partnering = twinning between cities Focus on the fight against poverty Commitment to results
Legislative framework	International Cooperation Framework Decree (2004) and Application Decree (2005)	1999 Law on International Cooperation for Development
Sectors	Youth, environment, local economy, civil status, education, culture, ICT, municipal management	Youth, local economy, environment
City twinnings	Unlimited, additional economic stimulus for twinnings in southern Africa	Limited to a list of 41 countries
Subsidy (=co-financing)	70% subsidy, 30% own resources	100% subsidy
Role of VVSG	Training and assistance	Management, assistance and coordination
Administrative management	Portfolio of training, sensitisation, mission and training	Investment, operation, personnel, mission, training
Local governments	Sign an agreement with the Flemish government	Royal Decree (RD) establishes twinnings that are managed by the VVSG
State bodies	VAIS (Flemish Agency for International Cooperation)	DGD (Directorate-General for Development)

4. A glocal (global + local) approach: characteristics of municipal international cooperation

4.1. GLOCAL: the autonomy of local government

Municipal international cooperation is mainly aimed to strengthening local governmental power, through acquired experience and knowledge. This means that direct cooperation specifically strengthens the capacity of local government to develop its own organisation in such as way to make politics meet citizens' expectation. In other words, it is the opportunity for local government to play an autonomous role in relation to the community that elected it. In this context, it is important to underline the added value and particular role of local public institutions in the scope of cooperation. Local government is a public body, whose fundamental task is linked to strengthening the roots of local democracy in its territory. Therefore, inside the field of international cooperation, its role is different from that of an NGO. Local governments exceed the level of technical assistance precisely because of their public role and because they involve civic actors in their management and in their politics.

Bearing in mind the two complementary subsidy programmes, it is important to underline that government's act from a *glocal* approach. In other words, the wish to connect to an increasingly globalised world with their own town and community. This glocal perspective is crucial for Flemish local governments: institutional strengthening in twin town functions only when a part in the North works to increase grassroots support for international cooperation. Extending grassroots support means promoting greater public understanding of world structures, the importance of human development, solidarity between peoples, among others.

And vice versa! In other words, it is a two-way relationship. A twinning aimed at strengthening local government power must be based on a relationship between partners, based on the principles of equality and reciprocity. Local governments have more or less similar tasks in different parts of the world. This characteristic enables them to enter into a dialogue between equals, between equivalents. Despite the socioeconomic and cultural differences, the fact of being a public body that provides services to its citizens links local governments throughout the world. The environment civil servant for the town of Edegem, for example, speaks the same language as his equivalent in the twin town of San Jerónimo, Peru. Thus, the training process, which includes a dialogue on strengthening institutional capacities, is easier.

The aspect of reciprocity is a fundamental element that distinguishes municipal international cooperation from other forms of (in)direct cooperation. **The fact that both partners, both twins, can learn from each other requires a new way of thinking about models and forms of cooperation.** Indeed, glocality operates in two directions: the towns of the South do not only receive institutional support in their own location but they can also contribute elements of discussion and reflection to their Flemish partner. For example, the party from the town of Herent, during a visit to their twin in Guatemala, noted the astonishment on the faces of their Guatemalan equivalents when broaching the subject of poverty in Flanders and so asked them to critically analyse their social policy. In Flanders (Belgium), the poor do not tend to talk about their problems in groups; they consider it taboo and live their circumstances in isolation. Therefore, public social healthcare centres implement a more individual policy, warning and advising on a personal or family level. This approach appeared very strange to the Guatemalans, who recommended trying group work, giving people the opportunity to discuss their problems in the company of an expert in social affairs. In Herent, the fulfilment of this recommendation ended with a successful result. In this case, their experiences within the twinning programme served as a mirror to reflect and consider their own policies.

When the Q'eqchi'es of Nimlaha'kok (Guatemala) were visiting the twin town of Herent, they saw the relationship between the two local governments as that of a younger brother (Nimlaha'kok) who needs the support of an older brother (Herent). Immediately, the councillor for Herent, Luk Draye added, stressing the aspect of equality: *Rather than an older brother and a younger brother, we feel like twins, who are now separated by the sea, but who share the same interests and who are in the same position.*

Within the context of glocality, it should also be noted that VVSG, as the head of the towns, strongly defends the basis of Flemish local government autonomy. This means that, in the end, Flemish municipalities decide with which town and in which country to establish a twinning based on their own profile, their strengths and their weaknesses.

4.2. GLOBAL: the direct relationship with the South

4.2.1.Requirements for a twinning

Although, we have noted that the two subsidy programmes complement each other, however, in practice a twinning first passes through the Flemish programme through an agreement with a local government signed with the Flemish government. After letting the twinning mature over a few years, a number of them decide to join the federal programme, to strengthen certain aspects of the Southern municipal partner. It is worth stressing that in this case, twinnings receive subsidies from both programmes at the same time. However, this does not mean that all twinnings meet the conditions required by the Flemish government to grant subsidies.

Due to the fact that they are a factor in promoting municipal international cooperation, it is worth listing these requirements.

1)   Flemish towns that wish to receive a subsidy from the Flemish government must set up an international cooperation advisory committee, recognised by the municipal council. This commission consists of different civic actors and serves to issues warnings and advice on municipal international cooperation policy. Thus, civil society participates actively in local government policy. In this way, each annual monitoring report or each new strategic or operational plan first has to receive notice from the international cooperation advisory committee. This procedure ensures the participation and involvement of civil society in a municipal twinning.

2)   The towns have to include an item in the municipal budget specifically for international cooperation. Furthermore, they must draw up and approve a management plan for the international cooperation sector. These two conditions depend on the fact that local government has its own resources that can be invested in sensitisation activities and/or the twinning relationship, on top of the subsidy.

3)   The Flemish government requires the municipal council to appoint a councillor for international cooperation, as the town's politically responsible figure. As well as this political post, it requires a North-South civil servant to be contracted to implement the municipal policy established in the management plan. The North-South civil servant is the person responsible for coordinating the twinning from the Flemish side and, after three years of receiving the twinning subsidy, the town has to guarantee this figure's continuation on a full-time basis.

Although these conditions are rather strict they do make it possible to start a dialogue and consultation process within the town. Local government does not only operate as an actor in direct cooperation, but also facilitates the sensitisation process within its own territory. This is why the support of civic society is essential. At the same time, as mentioned above, the advisory commission also advises local government on the distribution of municipal subsidies among local civic associations and organisations. Finally, we believe that the strong emphasis on these conditions serves to guarantee quality, not just in the activities within the twinning programme, but also to extend grassroots support for international cooperation and solidarity.

4.2.2. In search of a twin

Establishing a twinning relationship is a long process lasting a year and a half, which initially involves as many people as possible. Starting a twinning requires grassroots support from both the local government's administrative and political personnel and the town's citizens. Experience shows that the twin or partner selection process is essential to success. Many of the difficulties that occur within the twinning, once the relationship has been established, stem from the selection process.

To avoid these difficulties, the VVSG supports local governments in their search and has produced a plan to follow.

Table Nº 2 │ Steps to establish a twinning
Preparation
Step 1: Concept of twinning, based on the policy of international cooperation
Step 2: Wide consultation on the aims and execution of the twinning
Step 3: Feedback to the current municipal management plan
⇕
Search
Step 4: Twin town profile
Step 5: Search for and selection of twin town
⇕
Cooperation
Step 6: Confirmation of choice and first visit
Step 7: Drawing up a long-term cooperation programme
Step 8: Evaluation of the twinning and possible prolongation

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In discussing these steps, it is worth analysing certain issues in a little more depth. For example, drawing up a profile is one of the things that require most diligence. The VVSG encourages local governments to elaborate de selected candidate towns' profile for twinning on the basis of their own town's characteristics and strengths. This means taking into account the number of inhabitants and certain other special characteristics (such as a port, university or historic links, among others). The subsequent matching process is no guarantee that the twinning will work well and effectively, but we have observed that the opposite case, i.e. twinnings between towns whose profiles are too far apart, already contains the elements for possible failure.

Another important element that the selection committee should always bear in mind is the specific and particular role of municipal international cooperation. This is a form of cooperation that is somewhat different from other, more traditional, types of cooperation, which adds a specific value to these other forms. This implies that the decision on a twinning has to be preceded by the task of sensitisation regarding municipal international cooperation. However, in towns in both the North and South, one still finds a charitable mentality based on the transfer of infrastructures. Indeed, evolving from a purely infrastructure-based or, more problematically, an aid approach towards a more structural approach remains one of the VVSG's on-going challenges.

This approach involving partnership, equality and reciprocity must be continually reiterated to both twins.

However the international municipal relationship between two local governments can have different origins. In some cases it is initiated an inhabitant of the Flemish town who has lived and worked for several years in the region, town or country of the partner town[18]. Most twinnings pass a candidate town selection committee, which looks at proposals from civic organisations or the town's citizens. Its work consists of matching profiles.

Once the candidate twin town has been selected, the Flemish municipalities use project cycle management (PCM). This methodology consists of the consecutive phases of identification, design or formulation, implementation and evaluation, before reaching a new programming phase. This is a participative process, in which both partners, or twins, have to get to know each other through several working visits. Then, after having agreed to the areas of work, these topics are reflected in a long-term twinning agreement.

4.2.3. Sectors of direct cooperation in the twinning

It is obvious that the topics for cooperation defined in the twinning framework are related to local government's powers and role. These powers can vary from country to country, but identifying them in a new matching process helps align strengths and priorities in both local governments. Generally, the choice is limited to the sectors of youth, environment, local economy, civil registry, culture and education.

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[18] *This is the case, for example, of the twinnings between Herent–Nimlaha'kok/Nimlasa'chal, between Sint-Truiden–Nueva Guinea and between Lommel–Cuidad Darío. In the first two cases, the current cooperation civil servants of the Flemish town have spent various years in the partner town, working with an NGO. In the latter case, one of the inhabitants of Lommel is still working in the region of the twin town.*

The town of Edegem, twinned to the town of San Jerónimo, 10 km from Cuzco, in Peru, is given here as an example of how a twinning works. The twinning started in 2004 and has various areas that are targets for cooperation. After a consultation process, it was decided to focus the twinning on the areas of the environment and the local economy. San Jerónimo has one of the largest markets in the region, where wholesalers, retailers and people from Andean villages buy and sell their products. It was decided that the twinning should strengthen the market management structure, supporting both the hygiene and quality of the products. At the same time, in the environment sector, it was decided to work on making compost from organic waste using the twinning funds.

In this context, the twinning is not only focussed on financial resources but also training. In San Jerónimo, the civil servants had already experimented several times with processing organic waste anaerobically into compost, but without appreciable results. During a visit to Edegem, the San Jerónimo civil servant for compost was trained by his equivalent and taught how to process organic waste aerobically. With this experience and the assistance of Edegem, San Jerónimo started a pilot project. Given the size of the market and the fact that 2.6 tonnes of waste are produced daily, the pilot project consisted in collecting this waste and processing it into a high-quality fertiliser. In doing this, San Jerónimo combined the two main sectors involved in the twinning: the local economy and the environment. After this successful exercise, a compost plant is being built in San Jerónimo to process not only organic waste from the market but also waste produced in the town's neighbourhoods.

Another aspect of the project linked to the local economy in San Jerónimo, is related to the market of regional products is organised once a month with the name: *Sabor Andino* (Andean Flavour). Once a year in Edegem, a culinary festival is organised with the same name, to draw the population's attention to the twin town.

Another example demonstrates collaboration between various twinnings in a youth network called JOPAC, *JÓvenes PAra el Cambio* (Young People for Change). Six twinnings are involved in the network (three from Nicaragua and three from the Andean region) to exchange experiences both in the North and South, on how to strengthen municipal policy for young people in the framework of the twinning programme. JOPAC was started by two young Flemish consultants who became aware of the need to create a coordinated structure to give voice to the youth associations in the territory, in the framework of two twinnings in Central America and the Andean region. Once started, the process has continued through exchanges between young people and civil servants in the respective towns to make the most of each other's experiences and to formulate specific joint actions. In Nicaragua, for example, the young people of Ciudad Darío, Santo Tomás and Nueva Guinea meet regularly to discuss topics such as youth leadership, setting up youth organisations and networks, and so on. Furthermore, the civil servants from the three Nicaraguan towns are following the example of their young folk and are organising exchanges of experiences on farmers' markets, clean laundries and ecological bathrooms, among other topics.

4.2.4. Geographic scope

Respect for local government autonomy and the partner town selection process (the profile matching process) involves certain consequences. The most obvious is, of course, the geographical spread. *Flemish local governments have 36 twinnings in 19 countries, as shown in the following table:*

Cuadro 3			
List of Twinnings			
Flemish Local Government	Twinned with	Agreement with the Flemish Government	Participating in the Federal Programme
Aalst	/	●	
Balen	/	●	
Beringen	/	●	
Bierbeek	San Felipe de Oña (Ecuador)	●	● (in progress)
Bornem	Nquthu (SouthAfrica)	●	● (in progress)
Brasschaat	Tarija (Bolivia)	●	●
Brussel	Kinshasa (RDCongo)	●	
Diepenbeek	/	●	
Dilbeek	Franschhoek-Stellenbosch (South Africa)	●	
Edegem	San Jerónimo (Perú)	●	●
Essen	Witzenberg (South Africa)	●	●
Etterbeek	Essaouira (Marruecos)	●	
Evergem	Guaranda (Ecuador)	●	●
Geel	Umlalazi (Sud Africa)		
Genk	Francistown (Botswana)	●	
Gent	Mangaung (South Africa)	●	●
Halle	/	●	
Harelbeke	Eenhana (Namibia)	●	
Hasselt	Missour/Outat-Oulad-El-Haj (Morocco)	●	●
Herent	Nimlaha'kok y Nimlasachal, Cobán (Guatemala)	●	● (with Nimlaha'kok)
Herentals	/	●	
Ieper	Wa (Ghana)	●	
Izegem	/	●	
Koksijde	Albina/Galibi (Surinam)	●	
Kortrijk	Cebu (Filipinas)	●	
Leuven	Para (Surinam)	●	
Lommel	Ongwediva (Namibia)/Ciudad Darío (Nicaragua)	●	● (with Ciudad Darío)

List of Twinnings			
Maaseik	/	●	
Maasmechelen	Tshwane (Sud Africa)		●
Mechelen	Sucre (Bolivia) y Nador (Marruecos)	●	
Merelbeke	/	●	
Middelkerke	/	●	
Mol	Santo Tomás (Nicaragua)/ Kara Kara (Niger)	●	● (with Santo Tomás)
Olen	Ixcán (Guatemala)		
Oostende	Banjul (Gambia)	●	
Roeselare	in progress (Benin)	●	
Sint-Niklaas	Tambacounda (Senegal)	●	●
Sint-Truiden	Nueva Guinea (Nicaragua)	●	●
Ternat	in progress	●	
Turnhout	Hanzhong (China)	●	
Waregem	Gatsibo (Rwanda)	●	
Westerlo	in progress	●	
Zemst	Sokone (Senegal)	●	
Zoersel	in progress (Benin)	●	
Total	36 twinnings	41 agreements	15 programmes

One explanation for this spread is precisely the fundamental vision of municipal international cooperation. **Respecting the autonomy of local governments, towns can establish a municipal twinning in any developing countries. Before doing so, they must first invest in sensitisation and training (of their personnel, politicians and advisory committee) in their own town.**

The geographic spread makes it difficult to coordinate the work and create networks for exchanging experiences. In a single continent, the reality and context can vary to such an extent that successful projects cannot be adapted from one twinning to another.

On looking at direct cooperation in Latin America, one can see, as shown in the table, that there are currently 12 twinnings, some of which have historical or personal roots. The twinning between Mol and Santo Tomás in Nicaragua celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2010. It started with the solidarity and support of civic volunteers in Mol during the period of the Nicaraguan revolution. Since then, solidarity has continued to be the basis of the twinning, which in Mol has grassroots support from hundreds of volunteers. However, over the years, strengthening local governmental power was included in the municipal international relationship.

Another factor involved in the selection process is language. Good communication is a fundamental condition for the smooth working of the twinning. For the Flemish, speaking or learning Spanish is not always an immediate necessity, hence the obvious

motivation to twin with a town in Africa. The language factor also explains the attraction of Surinam, where Flemish municipalities can communicate in their own language.

4.3. LOCAL: in the North

We have already mentioned that within the agreement signed between a Flemish local government and the regional government, great emphasis is placed on sensitisation activities in the territory. Local governments use this subsidy but it should again be stressed that they often invest their own resources in sensitising the public. In this context, two initiatives are worth special mention.

The first is the campaign for fair trade among municipalities, which is part of a larger worldwide campaign (Fair Trade Towns). In Flanders, a consortium of organisations drew up six criteria for obtaining the title 'Fair Trade Town'. These are:

1. The local government promotes and supports fair trade (and uses fair trade products).

2. Shops and restaurants sell or serve at least two fair trade products

3. Schools, companies and local organisations consume fair trade products, to spread knowledge about, and involvement in, fair trade.

4. The local media are involved.

5. There is a coordinating group.

6. Through its own initiatives, local government promotes local consumption and production of sustainable foods.

Once these six criteria have been met, the town receives the title of 'Fair Trade Town'. Currently, 84 (27%) towns have the title while another 228 (74%) are active in one or more criteria [19].

Secondly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) campaign. This campaign is promoted in Flanders by another consortium *2015 DE TIJD LOOPT* (2015, TIME FLIES) under the chairmanship of the NGO 11.11.11. With the collaboration of the city of Gent, this consortium has organised an event to mobilise thousands of people in one night on 11 September 2010. The initiative is called 'Night of Waiting', indicating that we are still waiting for the MDGs to be met. The event also serves to put pressure on national politicians to take this message to the summit on the MDGs in New York at the end of September. In this context, local governments are invited to sign a motion with the same message of waiting. During the 'Night of Waiting', on 11 September, all the mayors who have signed the motion will be meeting.

Alongside this, a number of local governments are organising sensitisation activities regarding the MDGs. The city of Bruges (or Brugge, in Dutch), for instance, has linked the MDGs with the World Cup, inviting its inhabitants to score goals for 2015 through a variety of activities (such as tournaments and concerts).

As well as the existing campaign activities, many local governments also organise so-called 'world festivals': the Africa festival in Louvain and Turnhout, Third World Week in Dilbeek, the Bruges

[19] *See:* www.fairtradegemeenten.be, *consulted on 25 May 2010.*

Figure 4 | Twinnings in Latin America

Surinam; 2
Nicaragua; 3
Ecuador; 2
Bolivia; 2
Guatemala; 2
Peru; 1

Figure 5 | Twinnings by continent

Asia; 2
Africa; 22
Latin America; 12

Park Festival, Villa Pace in Sint-Niklaas, Southern Madness in Geel and others. Over these days, the public can meet the municipal organisations that work on co-operation projects, while enjoying food and music in solidarity with the South.

In the framework of twinning, other sensitisation activities are organised. There are photo exhibitions on the twin towns: the towns of Malinas and Sucre, for instance, have recorded a video presentation of how they work.

5. By way of conclusion: challenges for the future

The indigenous mayor of the region of Nimlaha'kok (Guatemala), Herminio Caal, states that twinning 'means joining hands; one partner picks up the other when we fall and we carry on together.'[20] This is clearly shown by the characteristics on which twinnings are based: showing solidarity within a relationship of equals, involving

a process of institutional administrative empowerment. Within this, certain important challenges must be faced:

• The main challenge lies in translating good ideas into worthwhile action plans in an administrative format. However, this represents a challenge for all the actors involved in international cooperation and who work within the logical framework. Another important aim is to ensure, within the two subsidy programmes described above, that the strategic plans and logical are formulated and managed by the local government itself, while the VVSG merely plays a supporting role. As well as the need to improve the quality of the files, local governments feel limited in the use of the logical framework is it is not adapted to municipal reality. Thus, the VVSG is currently working with a number of towns in trying out various methodologies to enrich the current monitoring system. Firstly, two methodologies are being explored in more depth, the most significant change

[20]| *De Mets, Jan; De Wachter, Betty; Palmaers, Bart; & Renard, Ilse (2006), p. 6.*

(MSC) technique and outcome mapping[21], which could help provide additional information on the twinning process.

• Another problem facing municipal international cooperation is a possible change in political management on both sides of the twinning. This is a risk factor that can threaten the continuation of the partnership. New political management in the Southern partner's political government often means a change in administration as well. In other words, in the absence of a municipal career, new municipal management means there are new people within the administration. However this is a shared problem and difficult to solve.

• Another major topic of debate revolves around broadening the twinning's field of work towards a greater institutional relationship between associations in the twinned countries. In this context, we consider it important to twin structurally with a number of local government associations in order to link the effects and the learning process of a twinning beyond municipal international relations.

• Another way of disseminating the lessons learned to other towns is through South-South exchanges, or the possibility of promoting 'triangulation'[22]. For example, the city of Lommel is twinned with the town of Ongwediva in Namibia. Ongwediva, for its part, has signed an agreement with the town of Musina in South Africa. If municipal international cooperation is extended to the triangle it could have a greater effect and impact while using the same resources.

• To document and nourish the vision of municipal international cooperation, the VVSG is organising two regional conferences, one in South Africa in October in 2010 and another in Nicaragua in 2011. This systemisation of experiences will culminate in a (new) shared and deeper vision in the international conference in Belgium in autumn 2011.

Indeed, the VVSG considers it important to consolidate existing international links between local governments, once new (innovative) forms of international cooperation have been stimulated and tried out. However, for the moment, the search continues…

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[21]| *See: www.idrc.ca for the 'outcome mapping' manual; for the 'most significant change' manual see: http://www.mande. co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf. More information is available from the Yahoo mailing list: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Most-SignificantChanges/*

[22]| *The rationale underlying triangulation is that Southern contributors, which are still themselves developing, are felt to be better placed and have the relevant experience to respond to the needs and problems of programme countries. In particular, many Southern contributors have come up with successful models or practices, which can be more appropriately transferred to other developing countries, than those of Northern donors. (ECOSOC, background study for the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), 2008).*

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Decentralised Cooperation: some notes on the case of Brazil

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KEY WORDS

*Decentralised cooperation |
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In recent decades, cities have played an increasingly important role in the conception, structuring, implementation and execution of public policy. More and more cities are discovering that in strengthening their actions in cooperation networks, associations, exchange schemes and other such initiatives they can find an alternative way of participating in the debate on global issues and macro-political orientation. This new role has a name: municipal diplomacy. It entails the formation of suitable platforms for international dialogue, where information can be exchanged, regional strategies can be defined for dealing with problems common to the regions involved, and decision-making dynamics in the local power sphere can be formulated. The actions taken and the policy defined as part of decentralised cooperation are articulated in this context.

But what are we talking about here? What does decentralised cooperation mean? What does the international affirmation of subnational authorities mean? How and in what context does it occur in the case of Brazil? Which actors are involved? What are the obstacles and the challenges? These and other questions on the internationalisation of Brazil's cities will be addressed in this paper.

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1. Introduction

This paper examines decentralised cooperation and the international affirmation of cities based on observation of the case of Brazil.

In Brazil, the first moves towards the formation of structures for international action in the sphere of subnational government came in the 1980s. The most frequently cited examples are the State of Rio de Janeiro and the State of Rio Grande do Sul (Salomon 2008). Since then, and since the turn of the new millennium especially, initiatives directed at the institutionalisation of international relations on a subnational level and decentralised cooperation have proliferated, as have the literature and the debates on this issue in political and academic circles.

But what are we talking about here? What does decentralised cooperation mean? What does the international affirmation of subnational authorities mean? How and in what context does it occur in the case of Brazil? These and other questions on the internationalisation of Brazil's cities will be addressed in this paper.

When we talk about 'subnational authorities', we're talking both of local and regional government. Both are involved in the production of goods and services and are characterised by their alliances, hierarchies, and concurrent, shared and exclusive authority in the political, economic and social issues in which the natural internal tensions of national states are traced. This relationship exists in countries with different political systems, parliamentary or (as is the case of Brazil) presidentialist. In Brazil, local authorities are called *municípios* (municipalities) and report immediately to the *estado* (state), which in many instances would be called a 'regional government'. The *estado* reports in turn to the central government or *União* (Union); thus we have a three-tier system with the *União* at the top, the *estados* occupying the intermediate, regional government layer, and the *municípios* or local authorities at the bottom.

It is the municipalities in particular, with their specific legal status, powers and capacities in the management of public policy, together with the executive and legislative powers, that this paper focuses on.

We must remember, too, that the debate on the internationalisation of cities is based on certain assumptions. First of these is that cities are integral parts of a national state. Secondly, that the power complex represented by the government of a city is the most visible manifestation of power and the one closest to the citizens with regard to the actions of the state.

2. The Brazilian Federation Today

Since the proclamation of the *República Federativa do Brasil* (Federal Republic of Brazil) in 1890, the Brazilian federal system

has evolved with regard to the centralisation of power in the hands of the federal government. The Brazilian Constitution of 1891, which marked the introduction of the federal system, was strongly influenced by the Constitution of the United States of America, and recognised the municipalities as autonomous entities. Over the course of the 20th century, central control over the Brazilian federal system has been more or less complete. With the military coup of 1964, for example, there was a return to centralisation, and the federal government, under an authoritarian regime, took direct control over regional and local government, with states and municipalities losing all political autonomy.

Under the Constitution of 1988, which provided a framework for the newly restored democracy, the Brazilian federal system adopted the principle of the recognition of the autonomy of states, municipalities and the *Distrito Federal* (Fed-

eral District), and consolidated the model for the territorial organisation of political power. The Constitution of 1988 marked, therefore, the decentralisation of the Brazilian state and the recognition of the municipality as a federated entity, and also introduced tax reforms which channelled more funds to the municipalities. Local government—the municipalities—and regional government—the states—were given new powers and greater autonomy. At this point, strengthening local power was an essential step towards the construction of a democratic state in Brazil.

In the words of Eduardo Kugelmas, from the Constitution of 1988 there emerged '[…] a strongly decentralised federal model with one peculiarity that made it unique in the international context: the explicit mention of the municipality as a federal entity in the actual constitutional text (Article 18)' (2001: 29). This also signified

structural change in the implementation of public policy, principally in social policy, an area in which the municipalities now had significant powers and responsibilities.

In the Brazilian federal system, the three spheres of government— federal, state and municipal—each have their own legislative powers, while the federal and state spheres have their own judiciary powers (i.e. existing only at state and national level).

But what is the role played by each of these spheres of government? And more particularly, what are the powers of the municipalities?

Since the Brazilian political model is a presidentialist one, the President of the Republic is both head of state and head of government, and also supreme commander of the armed forces. Public power in its three spheres may implement public policy in the form of direct administration—with its own budget, management and supervisory mechanisms—or in the form of indirect administration, with local authorities, foundations, public companies and regulatory agencies given the responsibility for implementing policy.

All parties of the federation—union, states and municipalities—have exclusive competencies and legislative powers. There is no proportionality in this distribution or division of powers: the Union has the greatest power and this power concerns issues of the greatest importance.

Although the three spheres of government are responsible for the provision of most public services (health and social services; preservation of historic, artistic and cultural heritage; protection of the environment and natural resources; culture, education and science; housing and sanitation; the fight against poverty and social exclusion; road safety, etc.), with the Constitution of 1988 the municipalities became the principal providers of basic healthcare and infant (day care and pre-school) and primary education (the early years of the 9-year basic education programme), with rules and minimum requirements with regard to the application of resources (15% of the total municipal budget on healthcare and 25% on education) established by the Constitution.

The decentralisation[1] of major areas of social policy ended up making the municipalities responsible for implementing social change.

The municipalities, as we saw earlier, enjoy autonomy under the Federal Constitution. Every municipality is subject to an organic law, a kind of 'municipal constitution', which effectively endows the municipalities of Brazil with an autonomy practically unknown in most countries. The head of the municipal executive power is the prefect, who is chosen by the citizens by direct vote to exercise a mandate of four years, and may be re-elected to an additional mandate.

But what does all this have to do with the question of decentralised cooperation and the international affirmation of Brazilian cities?

The process of re-democratisation in Brazil involved a more relevant political

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[1] *From the conceptual point of view, the term designates a transfer or delegation of legal and political authority to the subnational levels of government (from the Union to the states and municipalities) for planning, making decisions, and managing the public functions of central government. But it may also involve the transfer of powers from the state to the private sector (FARAH, JACOBI, 2000).*

and administrative role for local governance, although at the same time it did not extend the latter's financial capacity for governing in proportion to the transfer of powers. The new political regime assigned no new resources to confront the economic crisis which had been unfolding since the final phase of the military government. On the contrary, and as has occurred in many Latin American countries undergoing re-democratisation, what happened was that the neoliberal agenda for macroeconomic readjustment prevailed (deregulation and opening of the economy to foreign capital, large-scale privatisation and state divestiture, fiscal reform which went beyond the capacity for absorbing cutbacks in the already foundering social welfare systems, for example), with the adoption of the minimalist state model and the market economy as alternative drivers of development.

This paradox encouraged local government to develop, or extend, international relations on a municipal level in an attempt to find the resources or technical solutions they needed for surviving the crisis of transition that this new development model entailed, frequently driven by the effects of economic globalisation in its opportunities as well as its risks and negative consequences.

For example, the formation of subregional economic integration treaties in Latin America, such as MERCOSUR and the *Comunidad Andina de Naciones* (Andean Community of Nations - CAN), encouraged the creation of supranational associations of cities belonging to signatory nations, with the cities funding their membership from their own resources: examples are the *Red de Mercociudades* (MERCOcities Network) and the *Red*

Andina de Ciudades (Andean Network of Cities), and the objectives are to influence ways of integration on the basis of municipal-level action.

However, it was only the large cities, and some medium-sized ones, which had the capacity and the resources necessary for launching and maintaining their own initiatives on an international level. In the case of most medium-sized cities and practically all the smaller cities, early attempts at international affirmation were dependent upon offers of international cooperation.

A good example of the potential of this cooperation was the European Union-financed URB-AL Programme. This programme offered funding for the formation of associations linking Latin American and European cities for the joint implementation of public policy projects. As noted in an earlier study (Jakobsen 2007), this programme made it possible for many medium and small Brazilian cities to take part in international initiatives for the first time, while it also gave an additional boost to large cities that had already formulated their own external policies. Many of the cities whose first experience in international relations occurred as a result of this external programme have kept these relations in place, even after the associations themselves have ceased to exist.

If we consider that 90% of the 5,562 municipalities in Brazil have between 10 and 50 thousand inhabitants (see Table 2), this point is highly significant. And if we add the medium-sized municipalities—those with between 50 and 100 thousand inhabitants—his brings over 95% of the municipalities in Brazil into the equation.

Table 2	Brazilian municipalities – a profile	
Number of inhabitants	Municipalities	%
10.000 and under	2.674	48,07
10.001 hasta 50.000	2.326	41,83
50.001 hasta 100.000	309	5,56
100.001 hasta 500.000	219	3,94
over 500.001	34	0,61
TOTAL	5.562	

Source: IBGE, 2004.

Table 3	Brazil in numbers	
Population:	193.73 million (UN, 2009)
Urban population:	86.5 % (UNDP/HDR 2009)
Life expectancy:	72.2 (UNDP/HDR 2009)
Literacy rate (population aged 15 and over):	90% (UNDP/HDR 2009)
Population living below the poverty threshold (2 USD per day):	12.7 % (UNDP/HDR 2009)
GDP:	1.62 trillion (USD - 2008)
GDP per capita:	8,311 (USD - 2008)
HDI (position in ranking):	75th (UNDP/HDR 2009)1)[2]

Source: IBGE, 2004.

3. Decentralised Cooperation in Brazil

3.1. The city as an international player

Urban issues and policy have become increasingly important in recent decades. This process has occurred as part of the increasing urbanisation of society and the new social needs and requirements which have arisen as a result of such urbanisation, challenges which have been felt most acutely by the governments of the cities, as the authorities closest to the citizen. According to data from the United Nations, in 2008 some 3.3 billion people, or half the current population of the planet, lived in urban areas.[3] This fig-

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[2] *Total countries included in ranking: 182*

[3] *UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND. 'Situation of the World Population 2007 – Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth', UNFPA, 2007.*

ure is expected to rise to 5 billion people, or 60% of the world's population, by 2030.

In the case of Brazil, the urban population represents 80% of the total national population. Over 68 million people now live in the country's metropolitan regions.

According to recent studies and surveys, together with pre-existing relative and absolute poverty, many of the new inhabitants of the major urban agglomerations will be poor, and cities therefore face the challenge of preparing for the growth they will undergo in the future. For many analysts, 'the time for national [and local] governments and international organisations to act to exploit what this growth can bring is now.'

In parallel with this scenario, the debate on the role of cities on the international stage is beginning to intensify. This is a debate that drives reflection on the effects of financial globalisation and on the presence of new actors and new practices in international relations— practices which were previously the exclusive domain of sovereign states.

As Wanderley and Raichelis (2009) rightly point out, this revaluation of the role of cities on the international stage may take diverse forms. The concept of the city as 'political actor' can be viewed from a dual perspective: thus the city is either a *unified actor* preparing itself for belonging to, and competing in, a new globalised world; or it is the representative of a *new forum for the construction of public interest*, the possibility for interaction between different actors (local, regional and global) seeking to redefine the city as a multiple, heterogeneous territory of dispute and convergence, which accommodates diversity instead of annihilat-

ing it in the name of a fabricated consensus.

The debate on decentralised cooperation and the role of cities as international actors can view cities in two ways, as unified actors or as territories in which various actors can interact. When we speak specifically of 'decentralised cooperation', we will be taking as our focus the activity of local public administration, i.e. one of the actors whose stage is the city—but this does not mean that we do not acknowledge that when we speak of the 'city' in its wider sense, we are speaking of a composite of diverse actors such as social movements, business, universities etc., of which 'local public administration' is just one among many.

3.2. Types of cooperation in Brazilian municipalities

The instruments and modes which sustain decentralised cooperation include twinning, or 'sister city' programmes, bilateral agreements, international associations of cities, the URB-AL Programme, and projects in which technical and financial cooperation can take place either directly or indirectly.

On the basis of the above, in the case of Brazil, three models for international relations and cooperation are predominant:

1. The traditional model: based on the twinning agreements which often come into being as a result of pressure from local immigrant communities seeking specific forms of cooperation between their city/region of origin and their place of residence. In many cases these agreements take the form of sporadic actions which do not

generate change or make any significant contribution to the public policy being implemented locally.

2. The protagonist model: this model is based on the premise of empowerment of municipalities with regard to international relations and international cooperation activities. The initiatives and actions implemented under the protagonist model are bilateral agreements or technical and financial agreements designed to articulate the action of local governments on a common public policy platform in an attempt to address the effects of globalisation.

3. The passive model: The passive model: with this model there is no international cooperation policy on the part of the municipality. This is the model adopted by many local administrators in Brazil, in their belief that it is not the job of the municipality to effect this political-economic articulation with regard to the municipality's role on the international stage, or in their doubts that such action can bring any benefits for the implementation of public policy on the local level. Instead, they limit their action to administering international cooperation actions originating in the exterior; in other words, they react to cooperation initiatives implemented by associations or other cities, but they do not place these initiatives at the centre of their strategies for local governance.

The institutionalisation of international relations in subnational authorities, i.e. the formation of administrative structures for the systematic realisation of decentralised cooperation actions, has been underway in Brazil since the 1980s. The most commonly cited examples are the State of Rio de Janeiro (1983) and the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1987).[4] Since then, such administrative structures have multiplied on the local and state levels.

The trend did not really gain momentum in the cities and their administrative structures until the early years of the new millennium, however, when more and more local public administrations began to take systematic action in the field of international cooperation—in terms both of technical and budgetary arrangements and in the field of the definition of an international cooperation policy integrated with the other areas of administration. In other words, a decentralised cooperation policy which maintains with other areas of administration a relationship based on two-way communication, a policy defined on the basis of the contribution of other areas of local administration, in alignment with other aspects of the programme of the government in office. The decentralised cooperation policy in turn also serves as a propellant of the public policies implemented by the diverse areas of government. It does this by giving international visibility to these policies, and by capturing resources for the implementation of new actions as part of these policies, and also by facilitating the exchange of experiences and skills.

As observed in an earlier study (Jakobsen et. al., 2007), in the case of the ci-

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[4] | *SOLOMÓN, 2008.*

ties of Brazil we can also identify dynamics similar to those existing in other Latin American cities. These are:

Cities only began to take action towards international cooperation in the last two decades, with this action intensifying over the last eight years.

The catalysts for international cooperation actions in most instances involve participation in international or regional associations of cities, such as Red de Mercociudades or the URB-AL Programme, as well as twinning agreements and contacts with international agencies with a view to securing resources.

In the case of small municipalities, international associations of cities and the associations formed as part of the URB-AL Programme have played a central role in giving these cities the incentives to implement action for international affirmation. A study published in 2007 by the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation provided empirical evidence that most small municipalities, in Latin America in general and in Brazil in particular, had first taken sporadic actions in, or introduced policy on, decentralised cooperation as a result of their participation in international associations of cities.

With regard to institutional-administrative structures, most cities involved in international relations—albeit medium or large cities in most cases—do so via a specific administrative area which is normally subordinate and/or linked to the office of the prefect.

d) Regional integration processes dovetail with those underway on international level and are also fuelling the growing trend for international action by local government in Brazil, especially in the south of the country.

Articulation of local government and federal government in the field of international cooperation

As noted by researcher Manoela Miklos in a recent study, there are some significant trends inside the Brazilian State with regard to initiatives addressing international affirmation at subnational level as part of Brazil's foreign policy agenda (Miklos, 2010). These are:

1. The construction of the concept of federal diplomacy and its implementation as state policy, from 1994.

2. The creation in June 1997 of the Assessoria de Relações Federativas (Department for Federal Relations - ARF) of the Ministério das Relações Exteriores (Ministry for Foreign Affairs - MRE). In 2003, the Assessoria de Relações Federativas (ARF) was merged with the Assessoria de Assuntos Parlamentares (Department for Parliamentary Affairs), giving rise to a new body designated as the Assessoria Especial de Assuntos Parlamentares e Federativos (Special Department for Parliamentary and Federal Affairs - AFEPA).

3. This new structure (created in 1997) operates under the aegis of the Ministério das Relações Exteriores as an intermediary between the Chancellery and the subnational authorities of Brazil, and is considered to be the first initiative undertaken at national level in Brazil to consolidate federal diplomacy

as a state policy. Behind the initiative there was, however, an ulterior motive—that of creating a body capable of providing the Ministério das Relações Exteriores with the ability to control the international activities of states and municipalities to ensure that they are in harmony with Brazilian foreign policy at national level. One of the challenges that has arisen with the creation of the department has been that of finding a place for the subnational dimension in the decision-making process of Brazilian foreign policy.

4. The opening in 1997 of the Escritórios de Representação Regional (Regional Representation Offices) of the Ministério das Relações Exteriores. At present, eight such regional representation offices exist. As with the creation of the ARF, these regional offices have the job of coordinating the international activities of subnational authorities —states and municipalities—by intensifying the presence of central authority in local government.

5. The activity of the Subchefia de Assuntos Federativos (Deputy Department for Federal Affairs), operating in the ambit of federal government, and responsible for international issues addressed at subnational level. The Deputy Department, created in 2007, has the general mission of strengthening dialogue among the three parties to the federation—union, states and municipalities—and, in regard specifically to the international aspect and the action of subnational authorities, the Deputy Department has the role of stimulating and supporting the international cooperation processes, activities and projects of the parties to the federation.

6. For the first time, central government incorporates in its president-directed structure an area specifically responsible for international affirmation on the subnational level and decentralised cooperation. This, conceptually at least, is a unique trend and one which is significant of the dialogue between the Brazilian state with regional and municipal government on questions related to decentralised international cooperation. Conceptually is an important qualifier, however, because since its creation the Deputy Department has not yet succeeded in systematically and actively promoting a dynamic of exchange between the parties to the federation with respect to international cooperation actions and opportunities.

7. The formulation, at federal government level, of the concept of federal international cooperation and its implementation as state policy.

8. The appointment, in 2004, of a diplomat detailed to the Brazilian Embassy in Buenos Aires with the specific brief of managing federal-level ties between Brazil and Argentina.

9. Recent initiatives for the institutionalisation of the international activities of subnational authorities in Brazil by the legislative wing: the Constitutional Amendment Bill of 2005 (474/2005), known as the Paradiplomacy Bill, tabled by Brazilian Deputy André Costa; and Senate Bill 98 of 2006, tabled by Senator Antero Paes de Barros, and amended by Senator Arthur Virgílio.

10. The action of the Agência

Brasileira de Cooperação (Brazilian Cooperation Agency - ABC), under the aegis of the Ministério das Relações Exteriores, on international cooperation at subnational level.

3.4. The role of the municipal associations

Besides federal government, associations of municipalities provide another important interface with local government in regard to decentralised cooperation. Unlike many other Latin American countries, these associations have only begun to play a major role very recently. Although some were created over 30 years ago, only now are they waking up to the potential of more systematic action in the field of decentralised cooperation.

To cite only three such associations in Brazil:

1. The Confederação Nacional de Municípios (National Confederation of Municipalities - CNM). Founded in 1980, the CNM was constituted on the initiative of state-level federations and associations of municipalities who saw the benefits of a strong national body representing all the municipalities in Brazil. The CNM is active all over Brazil, giving political/institutional and technical assistance to the municipalities.

2. The Frente Nacional de Prefeitos (National Prefects' Front - FNP). Created in 1989, the FNP is a non-partisan body whose membership is constituted exclusively by the incumbent prefects of Brazilian cities. The FNP was created immediately af-

ter the introduction of the Constitution of 1988, which, as we saw earlier, for the first time in the history of Brazil gave regional government political autonomy and significant powers in the formulation and implementation of public policy. In their need to create channels of dialogue with central government, the prefects of many Brazilian cities created a body specifically for this purpose—the FNP.

3. The Associação Brasileira de Municípios (Brazilian Association of Municipalities - ABM). Founded in 1946, the ABM is a non-commercial organisation acting at national level and is currently based in Brasília–DF (Federal District). It works in close cooperation with municipalities, counterpart institutions, and state, federal and international bodies.

In the case of Brazil, these organisations are comprised of municipalities, local authorities and local administrators. Very recently they have created specific areas for promoting the international affirmation of Brazilian municipalities and increasing the international visibility of local public policy. They provide a channel for dialogue between municipalities and international actors, whether these are multilateral bodies, cooperation agencies, or international associations of various remits.

Generally speaking, these associations seek to promote the following processes when articulating action and strategy for international cooperation:

- Representing specific municipalities, or in a wider sense, representing the Brazilian municipal system as a united front vis-à-vis international bodies.

- Finding municipalities new resources from international agencies and foundations.

- Enabling the international participation of small municipalities which often lack the structure and budget for taking part in actions directed at international affirmation.

- Promoting 'technical cooperation', i.e. the exchange of experiences among local governments, and disseminating the practices adopted by Brazilian municipalities on an international level.

- Strengthening the institutionalisation of the international activities of municipalities, whether large, medium or small.

- Producing knowledge on the international relations of municipalities, in an attempt to stimulate debate on this topic in academic and political circles and provide ongoing assistance to the structuring of the international activities of municipalities.

- Promoting the democratisation of Brazilian foreign policy, encouraging greater protagonism and participation by the municipality, a party to the Brazilian federation which has no formal role in the design or execution of foreign policy.

Despite all these objectives, the action of these associations is often concentrated on just two fronts: providing intelligence on the exchange of experiences, and political articulation between municipalities and international bodies—in the form of assistance in the organisation of international delegations of Brazilian prefects and local administrators, and in the reception of foreign delegations.

This action has significantly increased decentralised cooperation activity by smaller municipalities. In most cases, only medium-sized and larger municipalities have the financial and technical resources to be able to act internationally. As they are smaller operations, small municipalities often turn to these associations when looking to participate in international cooperation initiatives. On many occasions the associations are capable of dealing with international issues in a unified manner, reducing overheads such as translations, international empowerments and contacts, and also contributing to the elimination of the linguistic and cultural barriers that arise wherever decentralised cooperation occurs.

The action of these associations, however, varies in its effectiveness. The *Confederação Nacional de Municípios* has produced the largest number of technical studies for municipalities in the field of international affirmation. It is also the most active organisation in international associations and forums, where it represents Brazilian municipalism.

If we also consider the history of the foundation of specific areas within these associations for the promotion of the international action of municipalities, we see that in addition to the fact that these areas have only very recently been created—in the last 5 years—they have been strengthened by two factors: the significant, and intensifying, international activity of certain Brazilian municipalities, such as Porto Alegre and São Paulo, and the growing articulation between Brazilian municipalities and the international associations of municipalities (regional or international), which began to
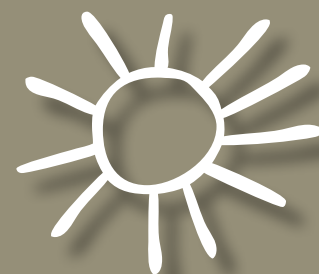
gain in critical mass and reach in the early years of the new millennium. The appearance of secretaries for international relations in different state capitals and medium and large municipalities is a parallel trend which has also helped draw the attention of Brazilian municipalities to an emerging field of activity into which they would sooner or later have to venture.

3.5. Decentralised cooperation in Brazil: obstacles and challenges

When discussing the obstacles and challenges involved in decentralised cooperation, two issues immediately spring to mind: one is the budgetary issue, and the other, equally important, is the political issue. In a large majority of cases, not only does local government lack the resources necessary for it to take part in international activities, it also fails to engage political debate necessary to the construction of this type of activity, in its belief that the returns—gains and benefits—for local administration will be very slow in coming. Many municipalities do not even see themselves as bit players, let alone protagonists, in the field of so-called 'paradiplomacy'. Engaging in political debate with other representatives of the executive power, with representatives of local legislative power and with society at large, on the issues involved in international cooperation implemented and driven by local power is something local administrators often avoid. Developing an international relations policy on the basis of local power is often viewed with reticence and suspicion in many sectors of society. They see no short-term gains to be had from such activity, and therefore see no reason to participate.

Another major difficulty in the development of international cooperation is the administrative structure of local government. The profile and size of the teams appointed to these activities by local government is a salient point here. These teams are normally small, made up of people who do not necessarily have any training in or specific knowledge of international relations and cooperation. As for the administrative structure, the most frequent problems are the non-existence of a specific office for the realisation of international cooperation; the lack of specific resources in the municipal budget; bureaucratic difficulties; and difficulties in establishing contact between the international relations area and higher levels of administration.

As for what could be done to improve articulation between cities on the international stage, when asked this question in a recent study, local administrators made a number of suggestions: recognizing the importance of stronger national strategies for supporting local development, i.e. the better the administrative structure of the city the more efficient its affirmation on the international stage; developing strategies for encouraging local government to create areas which can coordinate and articulate issues related with international cooperation; improving and simplifying relations with cooperation and promotion agencies, especially credit agencies and promotion of the international financial system; strengthening local development assistance programmes; and intensifying exchanges occurring as a result of membership of international associations of cities.

4. The Experience of some Brazilian Municipalities

We can cite numerous examples of international activity by Brazilian municipalities. Most of these are medium-sized or lar-

ge municipalities, as these are generally the ones with a larger and more consistent institutional structure necessary for the implementation of international cooperation activities. This is the case of the municipalities of Curitiba, Santa Maria and Porto Alegre, in southern Brazil; of Salvador and Recife, in the north-east, of Belo Horizonte, in the central-western region; and of São Paulo, Santo André, Osasco, Guarulhos and Vitória, in the south-east region.

4.1. The case of São Paulo

The city of São Paulo has 10.4 million inhabitants and has been involved in international relations since 1989—under the administration of its prefect, Luiza Erundina—but only in 2001, with the election of a new prefect, Marta Suplicy (elected in the second round of the elections held the previous year) did the city appoint a secretary for international relations. This office, a formal component of the administrative structure of the municipality, has the job of developing and monitoring international relations policy, not only decentralised and unarticulated international affirmation and/or cooperation (Fronzaglia, 2005, and Vigevani, 2007).

At the outset, five vectors of action were outlined for the municipal secretary of international relations: 1) participation in international associations of cities; 2) establishment of contacts and cooperation projects with multilateral organisations, attempting to secure grants from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Health Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, UN-ESCO, UN-Habitat and others; 3) development of exchange programmes on public policy and cooperation agreements between São Paulo and other cities—bilateral decentralised cooperation agreements; 4) Securing and stimulating investment by multinational companies and extending partnership projects between business and prefecture; 5) international dissemination of successful experiments in innovative public administration and social projects developed by the Municipal Prefecture of São Paulo.

Each of these five areas has been modified and extended as the administration of international relations in the municipality has become more institutionalised and consolidated. The emphasis has always been on international cooperation, which can take the form of: twinning agreements or bilateral decentralised cooperation agreements (city to city or city to region) of a technical nature, involving the transfer and exchange of experiences and/or skills; financial agreements, involving the transfer of financial resources; and combined technical and financial assistance, which embraces both dimensions (Fronzaglia, 2005).

São Paulo has been systematically active in international associations of cities since 2002. The principal associations in which São Paulo is currently active via its secretary for international relations are: *União das Cidades Capitais Ibero-Americanas* (Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities - UCCI), of which São Paulo is a member since 1989); the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), of which it has been a member since 2001; and C40–Climate Leadership Group (member since 2005 and currently a member of the Executive Committee).

Until 2005, São Paulo was also an active participant in the following international associations: *Red de Mercociudades*; *Federación Latinoamericana de Ciudades,*

Municipios y Asociaciones (Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations - FLACMA); *Red de Ciudades Educadoras* (Ecuadorian Cities Network) (member since 2004); the URB-AL Programme (coordinator of Network 10 until 2005); United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (a member since 2004, São Paulo was also the first president of the organisation).

In the field of cooperation projects with multilateral credit bodies we can cite:

1) United Nations Human Settlements Programme – UN-HABITAT. In 2003, HABITAT signed a Charter of Intent with the Prefecture of São Paulo and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of UN-HABITAT. Under this charter, a range of technical and financial cooperation actions were implemented. Cooperation with HABITAT addresses the urban development and housing policy of the city of São Paulo, including: financial assistance for the implementation of the Master Plan for Solid Waste Management; assistance for the consolidation, dissemination and supervision of the housing and land ownership regularisation programmes implemented by the *Secretaria de Habitação* (Secretariat for Housing); and also the creation of the *Observatório Urbano de São Paulo* (São Paulo Urban Observatory), a UN-certified structure which monitors data on the city.

2) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP provides assistance to the Economic Development Programme for the eastern zone of São Paulo. This programme is designed to combat the economic stagnation that affects the zone, which is home to 3.3 million people, or one third of the population of São Paulo. The programme comprises three areas of intervention: **physical and territorial integration**, with the extension of major road arteries and connections with the airport of Guarulhos and the port of Santos; **education and knowledge**, for the training of human resources at technical college and university level, including the creation of a free institution of higher education in the zone; and **institutional articulation**, for cooperation between the public and private sectors, attracting investment and generating jobs.

3) *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo* (Inter-American Development Bank - IADB). In May 2004 a cooperation agreement was signed between the Prefecture of São Paulo and the IADB, in a project funded by the Trust Fund of Japan, via which the *Secretaria de Habitação e Desenvolvimento Urbano* (Secretariat for Housing and Urban Development) of São Paulo and the *Companhia de Habitação de São Paulo* (Housing Enterprise of São Paulo - COHAB) were to carry out studies for the administration of the *Programa de Locação Social* (Social Housing Programme) and implement a pilot programme. The mission of the *Programa de Locação Social*, coordinated by COHAB, is to reduce the city's housing deficit by extending access to housing among the lower-income sectors of the population who are unable to benefit from regular programmes offering funding for the purchase of homes, by offering them social housing in pre-existing housing. The *Programa de Locação Social* is not a homebuyer programme in that the houses in question remain public property.

4) Cities Alliance. Created in 1999 in a partnership between the World Bank and UN-HABITAT (the UN Human Settlements Programme) in response to the de-

mand expressed by various cities for more technical cooperation and lines of funding specially designed for municipalities. The Cities Alliance is now one of the principal assistance programmes at the service of cities in their efforts to combat urban poverty on the housing front. It acts, via technical and financial cooperation, on two fronts: the redevelopment of the *favelas* or shanty neighbourhoods, and the articulation of development strategies for cities. Since 2002 it has been implementing a major process of cooperation with the city of São Paulo via grants for the *Bairro Legal* (Legal Neighbourhood) programme (I and II) of the Secretaria Municipal de Habitação e Desenvolvimento Urbano (Municipal Secretariat for Housing and Urban Development).

5) European Commission. Active on many fronts, the European Commission has been a major partner in the implementation of countless cooperation initiatives with the Prefecture of São Paulo. These initiatives, which have always included financial assistance, have addressed the following areas: a) an ancillary project by URB-AL 5 on women and job/income creation, *Coordenadoria Especial da Mulher* (Special Coordination Office for Women); b) coordination of 'Network 10– Fight Against Urban Poverty', involving over 100 cities of Latin America and the European Union; c) *Nós do Centro*, a major programme for the rehabilitation of the inner-city neighbourhoods of São Paulo, in articulation with other areas of social action.

6) Region of Île-de-France (France). As a result of the 2004 Cooperation Agreement between the Prefecture of São Paulo (PMSP) and the Conseil régional d'Île-de-France (Regional Council of Île-de-France (CRIF)), in 2006 a convention was signed with the objective of implementing projects in the areas of health, culture and economic development in the city of São Paulo. Five projects were implemented as part of this convention, all of them grant-funded by the CRIF with an equal or greater apportionment of funds by the Prefecture of São Paulo. Up to the present—the first six months of 2010—these projects are at different stages of development. Some are still underway, while others have been completed.

At present, the administration of international cooperation in the city of São Paulo is focused not only on securing funding and investment agreements, some of which we have mentioned above, but on increasing Brazilian foreign trade via São Paulo and attracting new external investment for internationally competitive projects. To do so, the current administration proposes that the municipality acts as a facilitator of self-sustainable projects originating in the private sector.

4.2. The Case of Recife

The current administration of the municipal prefecture of Recife took up its first mandate in 2000, with the prefect, João Paulo Cunha, re-elected in 2004. Previous administrations had left little or no legacy in the area of international relations, except for a twinning agreement with the Portuguese city of Porto, an agreement which seems to have existed only in the form of personal relations between the respective leaders of the local administrations, as the current administration has been unable to reactivate bilateral ties between the cities.

During the first term of office of the current prefect, the preoccupation with

regard to international relations was on how to capture resources for cooperation, particularly from international financial institutions such as the IADB and IBRD. To do so, the prefect appointed a consultant working directly with his own office. Meanwhile, via the mediation of the different municipal secretariats, a number of agreements for technical cooperation and participation in some of the associations working under the aegis of the URB-AL Programme have been established. The city's health department is participating in the @lis programme for the computerisation of its records and processes.

With the re-election of the prefect, the prefecture has introduced administrative reforms including the creation of an Coordenadoria de Relações Internacionais (Office for the Coordination of International Relations), which reports to the Secretaria de Gestão Estratégica e Relações Internacionais (Secretariat for Strategic Administration and International Relations).

Activity has intensified with the entry of Recife in the Red de Mercociudades, and the signing of two bilateral agreements on decentralised cooperation: one with the city of Nanterre in France and the other with the region of Guangzhou in China. Recife is also participating in a project for the metropolitan regions of Brazil, with assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

In entering the international cooperation market (and it could have done so with more resolve), Recife in many ways followed the model of many Brazilian cities. It began by securing resources, at a time when no specific structure existed for doing so, with little investment in inter-

national policy, before taking more decisive steps with the renewal of the prefect's mandate. Even so, the structure responsible for managing the city's international relations is small and has little direct power.

5. In Closing

As we have seen, in recent decades cities have played an increasingly important role in the conception, structuring, implementation and execution of public policy—especially policy designed to combat social exclusion. Although local government is never invited to participate in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policy—a role monopolised by central government—it is invariably the cities who have to answer for the local consequences of such policy.

Cities are increasingly discovering that one way of counteracting this effect, without attempting to replace or compete with national government in the negotiation process for macroeconomic policy, lies in intensifying their participation in networks of cooperation, associations, exchange programmes and similar initiatives, and in playing a relatively new role on the international stage: municipal diplomacy. This includes the creation of platforms for exchanging information and defining regional strategies for addressing problems that are common to the region, as well as the decision-making dynamics within the local power ambit.

As decentralisation of power in the organisation of the Brazilian State has transferred many state competencies in social areas

to the municipal sphere, direct management of the major requirements of the population in areas of social policy and the provision of public services in these areas is now a daily occurrence in the municipal prefectures of Brazil. It's important to bear this in mind when we discuss decentralised cooperation in Brazil.

The municipalities of Brazil have major powers in the implementation of basic health and education policy, for example, and many experiments in decentralised cooperation have addressed these areas. The bilateral agreements and technical cooperation initiatives implemented by Brazilian municipalities in many instances seek to provide the municipalities with additional input or support in the difficult task of implementing local policy.

Most municipalities attempting to set up decentralised cooperation initiatives are faced with a variety of problems. As we have seen, these problems range from struc-tural obstacles within the administration, to budgetary constraints that make it difficult to actually implement decentralised cooperation policies. Even so, the trend towards international affirmation on the subnational level in Brazil—and in municipalities especially—has gathered much momentum since the turn of the millennium. Many actors—local administrations as well as state and federal power and associations of municipalities—have begun to define structures and strategies providing an interface with municipalities in the field of decentralised cooperation. Ten years ago, success stories in the international affirmation of Brazilian municipalities were few; now there are many. The trend towards decentralised cooperation among the municipalities of Brazil is steadily intensifying and gaining in strength. Obviously there have been setbacks, for these are political questions, perspectives on the implementation of international policy, which are at stake here. And success especially depends on political will, and on the action of those in power on the state and municipal levels.

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