

When Regions Go Abroad: Globalization, Nationalism and Federalism
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The relationship between globalization and sub-state nationalism has attracted much scholarly interest in recent years. The main research question on this relationship generally relates to the impact on nationalism of economic interdependence/free-trade, new communication technologies and the projection of Western, more specifically American culture. From this perspective, researchers are interested in how globalization shapes territorial politics and organization. There is another, less studied angle, to the relationship between globalization and territorial politics: regional governments becoming international actors. This phenomenon, often called ‘paradiplomacy’, represents a manifestation of globalization, namely the complexification of world politics through the multiplication and differentiation of actors. In other words, in acquiring international agency and developing international relations, regions become part of globalization rather than simply being acted upon by its processes. At the broadest level, paradiplomacy is therefore intertwined with globalization, territorial politics and decentralized institutional structures. But what explains paradiplomacy?

This paper suggests it is nationalism. It makes two arguments: first, that nationalism is the crucial force behind paradiplomacy; second, that domestic and international institutional contexts play an important role in conditioning the consequences of nationalism for regions operating internationally. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section discusses paradiplomacy as a relatively new phenomenon and object of study. The second section argues that paradiplomacy is a likely consequence of the existence of a strong nationalist movement because it provides opportunities for identity/nation-building, the promotion of regional interests, and political-territorial mobilization. The third section suggests that regional autonomy and constitutional frameworks are the crucial structures of the domestic context shaping the level and nature of paradiplomacy while political and/or economic continental regimes play a similar role with respect to the international environment. The fourth section compares two regions that have developed very active paradiplomacies: Québec and Wallonia.

Paradiplomacy: Tackling a Recent Phenomenon.

International politics in the last decade or so has often been characterized as being in transition and penetrated by new trends. Indeed, there is a general feeling of uncertainty relative to the exact nature, structure and configuration of the international system which has translated into a particular focus on new (or surging) processes such as economic interdependence, democratization and ethnic accommodation. Considering the magnitude of these issues and the momentous events that underlie them (the end of the Cold War, European integration, and so on), it is hardly surprising that another new

development has remained, although not unnoticed, largely under-studied: the increasing international presence of sub-national entities, particularly regional governments. The international activity of these governments is easily noticeable: they have representation abroad (usually called 'offices' or 'houses'), lead 'trade missions', sign agreements or even treaties, participate in regional/international organizations and enter into bilateral relations with states and/or other regional governments (Balthazar, 1993; Philippart, 1998). Regions getting involved in international affairs may not have as dramatic importance and consequences as civil/ethnic wars, post-communist/authoritarian transition or the changing structures of the global economy; nevertheless, it is an intricate part of the re-configuration process of international and domestic politics or, more accurately, global politics.

Regional governments operating beyond national borders is not a new phenomenon. Many American states from the South developed an international presence as early as the late 1950s to stimulate export and attract foreign investment while their Northern counterparts followed in the mid-1970s for similar reasons (Kincaid, 1999; p.111). Québec became internationally active in the wake of the 1960s Quiet Revolution; other Canadian provinces, most importantly Ontario and Alberta, did the same, albeit in a much more limited fashion, in the 1970s (Bélanger, 1994; Bernier and Thérien, 1994). The first Basque government (1936-1939) sent delegations abroad and had contacts with foreign governments, diplomats and other interlocutors in the context of the Spanish Civil War (Ugalde Zubiri, 1999). Nevertheless, the international activity of regional governments has acquired new prominence in the 1990s. In all of the cases previously mentioned, and others such as Australian states (Ravenhill, 1999), the scope and intensity of paradiplomacy has greatly increased in the last few years. Regions open offices and conduct 'trade missions' abroad; become involved in regional/international organizations; participate in regional/international conferences; establish bilateral relationships with states and other regions; and so on. This new prominence is the result of both domestic and international change: domestically, crucial processes include a surge in territorial politics, most importantly nationalism, and institutional transformations towards decentralization, while internationally they correspond to economic globalization and the construction of supra-national institutions. Of foremost importance is the fact that these processes feed off each other to put pressure on central states and empower regions.

Paradiplomacy: A Global Process in Need of Comparison and Theorizing

The international relations of regions has the peculiarity of being an object of study for both comparative politics and international relations scholars (Philippart and Van Cutsem, 1999). Comparativists tend to see the subject matter in terms of the extension of domestic situations related to territorial division of power and cultural diversity (Michelmann and Soldatos, 1988; Duchacek, Latouche and Stevenson, 1990) while international relations specialists situate it more within the context of a turbulent world order and the complications it entails for national foreign policy (Hocking, 1993). Both groups of scholars view the parallel international action of state and regions, where the latter is partially autonomous but clearly secondary to the former, as a possible outcome of this conjunction between domestic, often federal dynamics and external turbulence. Scholarship on paradiplomacy has been heavily case-oriented. A typical contribution discusses the international relations of a particular region by documenting its

international presence, identifying the focus of its foreign policy and evaluating that policy's success (Palard, 1999; Bernier, 1994). There is usually also an effort to explain the existence and nature of a region's international activity; however, this effort is rarely guided by general theoretical considerations and corresponds primarily to the identification of causal factors *specific* to a region. The work on paradiplomacy that does not primarily or exclusively involve case studies tends to focus on the 'nature of the beast'; it seeks to make sense of the phenomenon, categorize its various forms and interpret its consequences for the state. There has been little effort to ground the study of paradiplomacy in a theoretical and comparative perspective. This paper represents a first step into that direction.

Problematizing the International Agency of Regional Governments.

The defining features of regional governments as international actors are their lack of external legitimacy and, in most cases, the absence of a formal-legal capacity to act beyond national borders. Their lack of external legitimacy stems from the fact that rules and practices in contemporary international politics have been designed and established by and for states. State agency has in turn provided further legitimacy to these rules and practices which tend to exclude other potential actors from the international arena. International and regional organizations generally reserve memberships to states. This is the case for the United Nations, an organization whose prestige greatly contributes to consolidating the international status of states, and the European Union. States are also the designated parties to regional economic arrangements such as the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). They are the exclusive participants of military alliances and multilateral peace-and-war diplomacy. They dominate the web of international bilateral relations, whatever their specific nature (military, economic, cultural, environmental, and so on). States are the centrepiece of institutions and regimes of global economic/financial management such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank.

The current international rules and regime do not affect all potential actors, or forces seeking actor status, equally. Political or economic agents such as social movements, non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations have all become prominent in world politics over the last several decades. However, these actors do not use the conventional channels designed for states because they are not state-like structures. Regional governments are in a different, more delicate position since they are institutional-territorial entities which can not readily use strategies of demonstration, advocacy or political/economic pressure to get involved in world politics. They have to rely on the state-centric networks and mechanisms of traditional diplomacy which tend to be closed to them. Therefore, from an international perspective, the very notion of regional governments as actors of world politics is far from being a 'given'.

Regional governments also operate in internal-domestic contexts that do not favour acquiring an international presence. They are almost never endowed with the formal power to perform international acts such as the signing of treaties and agreements with foreign actors. Central states are generally unwilling to make any room for their regions to project themselves onto the international scene, and indeed do not take kindly to any such efforts. The issue of regions as international actors is very sensitive for states because it involves another challenge to their sovereignty and is viewed as troublesome for the articulation of a coherent national foreign policy. It runs counter to the standard

model of national institutions synthesizing societal preferences/ interests, and expressing, defending and promoting them abroad. Moreover, the question of the international activity of regions is often tied up with power struggles between levels of governments, which means that states are likely to associate it with, or rather in opposition to, national/domestic imperatives such as the preservation of a given constitutional, political or even social order, and the building, consolidation and promotion of a national identity. In sum, the doctrines of national interests, state sovereignty and national integration all contribute to making, from the domestic perspective, the international agency of regional governments less than self-evident.

International rules/practices and domestic political orders are not friendly to regional governments projecting themselves onto the international scene. The key theoretical implication of this situation is that regions are not 'natural' international actors in the sense that their agency beyond national borders can not be taken for granted; it has to be problematized, explained and theorized. Of course, state agency should not and can not be considered a 'given' either, but the structure of international politics leads to its 'routinization'. Regional governments benefit from no such mechanisms. However, recent developments in the domestic institutional contexts of several Western states and new trends in some aspects of international structures have combined to both push and draw regions into world politics. In other words, cracks, albeit small, have begun to appear in the order which effectively precluded any territorial-institutional units other than the state to acquire an international presence.

Nationalism and the International Agency of Regions.

Empirical evidence shows that regions which have been most successful in becoming international agents (Québec, Flanders, Wallonia, Catalonia, the Basque Country) are penetrated by strong nationalist movements. Indeed, nationalism involves three processes (Lecours, 2000) which can be logically and functionally related to paradiplomacy. The first process is identity construction and consolidation. Nationalism is a form of identity politics. It involves establishing boundaries between groups by providing objective markers such as language with subjective meaning. Identities are constructed and consolidated through a variety of mechanisms whose relative importance vary from one situation to another: cultural change, institutional development, socio-economic transformations, political context/competition. However, above and beyond these structural variables, the articulation, and therefore construction, of the identities underlying nationalism is ultimately the product of discursive practices. Creating and shaping national identities necessitates 'speaking the nation', that is, promoting the idea of a national community. These claims have most impact when put forward by political leaders since, in the context of liberal-democracies, they combine popular legitimacy with policy-making powers.

The development of a region's international presence constitutes for nationalist leaders an additional opportunity to build and consolidate a national identity. Indeed, the discourse of international relations is one of nations and, considering that states and nations, are systematically conflated, so is international relations practice. In other words, the very definition of international agents, at least with respect to territorial-institutional units, entails nationhood. From this perspective, the development of an international agency on the part of a regional government is full of symbolic meaning, and therefore an

attractive strategic option for nationalist leaders. There are forms of paradiplomacy which are more significant than others with respect to identity construction and consolidation, namely those involving most specifically, albeit implicitly, a recognition by one or more sovereign states of the legitimacy of a region as an international actor. Bilateral relationships with states, as the closest thing to traditional diplomacy, are particularly important symbolically. So is participation in regional and international organizations/conferences. The relevance for identities of these acts of paradiplomacy is not limited to the acts themselves; as important is the fact that these highly visible paradiplomatic activities give nationalist leaders the opportunity to play to their domestic audience. They provide a scene from which nationhood can be proclaimed most forcefully, as foreign, regional or even international focus offers legitimacy and discursive/communication opportunities. In short, through paradiplomacy, regions can both behave as nations and present themselves as such.

The second process of nationalism is the definition and articulation of regional/group interests. Indeed, the development of subjective communities associated with the erection of boundaries between groups involves not only identities but also a specific conception of the common good, or at least the identification of certain elements which should be promoted and/or defended. In turn, the regional/group interest definition is linked to, and becomes an integral part of, the collective identity. There are generally two dimensions to this definition. The first is centred on culture. In building and shaping identities, nationalist movements emphasize and politicize cultural distinctiveness; consequently, they tend to define the 'national interest' primarily in terms of cultural protection/preservation. The second dimension is more clearly ideological. The emergence of nationalist movements tends to be associated with, and supported by, ideologically-specific political forces. This has been the case in Flanders, where the Flemish Movement is strongly associated with the Christian-Democracy, and in Québec where nationalism is close to trade-unions and left-leaning organizations. As a result of these linkages, nationalist movements, and the regions they seek to represent, although never monolithic, often have an ideological personality.

Processes of interest definition and articulation are highly intelligible in international politics. After all, traditional foreign policy is fundamentally about the definition, defense and promotion of a (state) national interest. This is why the interest component of paradiplomacy is the most straightforward and visible; indeed, regional governments operating on the international scene adopt state-like discourses, that is, they express preferences in the context of a 'national interest framework. These preferences may be ideological in nature, and therefore lead regional governments to take stand on such issues as free-trade or the social nature of the European Union. In such cases, the issues put forward by paradiplomacy may be understood in terms of domestic dynamics surrounding nationalism. Paradiplomacy preferences may also follow the cultural aspect of interest definition. In fact, cultural defense and promotion tend to be the most important issues of paradiplomacy *because they are central to its underlying force, nationalism*. Paradiplomacy extends the domestic struggles of nationalist movements for cultural preservation into international politics. The Québec government, for example, expresses concerns over the linguistic nature and consequences of such international processes as globalization and the liberalization of trade, a preoccupation stemming from its domestic struggle for the prominence of French in Québec society. Culture therefore

shapes the foreign policy agenda of regional governments, including targeted interlocutors. Flanders' paradiplomacy focuses on countries such as the Netherlands, Surinam and South Africa where there exists a cultural kinship (Massart-Piérard, 1999, pp.722-723).

The third process of nationalism is political-territorial mobilization. Nationalism is a form of politics, and therefore is fundamentally about power. The development of nationalist movements is the product of power struggles between and within groups. It involves most importantly competing political elites claiming to speak on behalf of communities, that is, presenting themselves as their 'true' and legitimate voice. In liberal-democracies where political legitimacy ultimately emanates from civil society, nationalist leaders seek popular support, in the form of political mobilization, to substantiate their various claims (representation, policy, institutional arrangements, and so on). The peculiar feature of nationalism compared to other forms of politics is that mobilization has to have a territorial basis; indeed, nationalist leaders need to structure mobilization in a way that transcends social cleavages and emphasizes a commonness linked to territory. Political-territorial mobilization, although generally sporadic and fluctuating in intensity, is necessarily a feature of nationalism because it underlies both claims for power and for policy/institutional change. The power of nationalist leaders rests on the prominence, even the hegemony, of nationalism as a form of politics. In turn, this state of affair is itself conditional to popular support, as is the ability of these leaders to bring about policy and institutional change corresponding to their specific claims, usually formal recognition/distinct status, autonomy, federalization or independence.

Political-territorial mobilization as a process of nationalism may be logically related to regional governments looking to develop an international agency. The peculiarity of paradiplomacy as a form of international expression is its highly conflictual domestic dynamic. Paradiplomacy does not merely feature conflict over the definition of foreign policy objectives as is the case for traditional (state) diplomacy; it also involves struggles over the very expression of the foreign policy. States rarely welcome the idea of regions 'going abroad'; in fact, they tend to oppose it vigorously. Some regional political forces may adopt a similar attitude. Consequently, paradiplomatic activity, particularly in its most visible forms (regional-international conferences, bilateral relationships with states, and so on), present nationalist leaders with opportunities to stimulate political-territorial mobilization because it pits the region against the centre, and sometimes regional nationalist forces against non-nationalist ones. Since foreign policy is one of the last reserved domain of the state, paradiplomacy represents, in the context of domestic politics, a statement about power. It can therefore be understood not only as the emergence of new actors on the international scene, but also as the most recent dimension of historical territorial conflicts whose most prominent and acute manifestation is nationalism and nationalist mobilization.

Paradiplomacy is closely linked to political-territorial mobilization not only because it represents an additional variable in political conflicts and power struggles which tends to provide opportunities for stimulating this process, but more specifically because it can serve as a tool for achieving domestic policy objectives. The development of a strong international personality gives regional leaders a prestige that can be used as leverage in negotiations on constitutional and institutional change. In fact, a region that is very active internationally projects the notions of distinctiveness and autonomy in a way

that may lower the degree of contention surrounding certain regional claims and demands. In the special cases where institutional change sought by a regional government is independence, international activity becomes a functional necessity. Secessionist forces need to establish an international network and present their project to foreign states in the hope of obtaining formal recognition following an eventual declaration of independence.

Paradiplomacy and Opportunity Structures

Nationalism is the single most important variable conditioning paradiplomacy. Regions where there are strong nationalist movements are much more likely to develop an international presence than regions where no such movement exists. Also, the paradiplomacy of the former is generally more intense and extensive than that of the latter. However, structural contexts, both domestic and international, also play an important role in determining the likelihood of regions becoming international actors because they provide opportunities for action while imposing constraints. These contexts also shape paradiplomacy agendas because they dictate the type of opportunities available to regional governments.

Three elements of the domestic structural context are particularly important in conditioning the international agency of regions. The first is the level of autonomy enjoyed by a regional government. The literature on paradiplomacy has typically considered the linkage between federalism and the international activity of regions to be of foremost importance. While this paper has argued that nationalism is the critical variable, the structure of territorial distribution of power also needs to be considered. Federations, and some other decentralized systems such as Spain's Autonomous Communities and devolution in the United Kingdom, create regional agents. In turn, this agency is susceptible to developing an international dimension, and the greater the regional autonomy, the better the opportunity for paradiplomatic activity. This means that the active paradiplomacy of Québec and Flanders, while primarily explained by nationalism, is also shaped by the decentralized structures of the Canadian and Belgian federations. Similarly, the weaker international presence of American and Mexican states, while primarily the result of the absence of nationalist movements, is partially attributable to the more centralized federalism in the United States and Mexico.

The constitutional framework accompanying these institutional arrangements represents a second element of the domestic structural context that shapes paradiplomacy. Typically, constitutions are not conducive to regions operating in the international arena; they tend to make international affairs the reserved domain of the central state. Some constitutional frameworks are particularly austere in this respect and, as a consequence, make paradiplomatic activity quite difficult. Mexico's constitution, for example, explicitly forbids regions to sign agreements with foreign powers. The stranglehold of the federal government on international relations stemming from this original 1917 provision was further reinforced in 1988 when the constitution was modified to give the president power over 'foreign policy' rather than the narrower 'diplomatic negotiations' (Julián Durazo-Hermann, 2000; 480-81). At the other end of the spectrum are the (rare) constitutions which explicitly give regional governments power over some aspects of international affairs. These constitutional frameworks remove a crucial obstacle for regions to access the international sphere and, as a result make paradiplomacy more likely. The 1993 reform of the Belgian constitution, which included a transfer of power to

the constituent units with respect to international affairs, triggered a flurry of international activity from governments in Flanders, Wallonia and the French-speaking Community.

Finally, the focus of a national foreign policy, and of international affairs more generally, also condition the opportunities for paradiplomacy. In a context where strategic and military issues are emphasized, regions have little to say since defense policy remains the exclusive prerogative of central states. There is more room for regions to find their way onto the international scene if cultural and economic issues are more prominent, as regional governments often have, in virtue of the domestic distribution of power, an initial interest and some degree of empowerment with respect to these matters. It is no coincidence that paradiplomacy has become more important since the end of the Cold War; indeed, the breakdown of the conceptual categories of 'high' and 'low politics' has rendered national foreign policy agendas less hierarchical and therefore more likely to attract the attention of regions.

It is interesting to note that these three sets of domestic opportunity structures which complement nationalist movements in analyzing the origins and nature of paradiplomacy tend to be most favourable when these movements exist. In other words, the domestic structural context can not always be neatly separated from nationalism. Great regional autonomy is often, although not always, the product of nationalism. Constitutions that give regions power over international affairs are likely to have their roots in nationalist conflicts as is the case for Belgium. Culture as a foreign policy issue may be important to various types of states, but particularly for multinational ones which tend to be naturally sensitive to cultural differences.

The international agency of regional governments in the West is also shaped by at least two sets of international structures. The first set of structures is continental regimes. In Europe, the EU represents a political regime which provides regions with the opportunities and impetus to act beyond national borders. It does so in at least three ways. At the broadest level, the EU has fundamentally changed the nature of the West European state by capturing some of its sovereignty. In doing so, it has changed the way political actors view the state, from a coherent, monolithic unit serving as the only possible linkage between inside and outside to a perforated entity, and invited previously domestic actors such as regional governments to take advantage of the new openings to access the international scene. Second, EU policies such as structural adjustment programs which make regions their central units build regional governments as potential international actors by establishing a conceptual and political link with the 'outside'. Third, the EU, through the Committee of Regions, offers immediate channels for regional governments to become international actors (Hooghe and Marks, 1996). Not only does the Committee present regions with a concrete opportunity to operate beyond national borders, but it also draws regions which might not have the means or motivations to actively seek an international role. In other words, the EU can be seen not merely as an opportunity structure, but indeed as a force behind the very international agency of some West European regional governments.

Of course, the EU is also an economic regime. As such, it also shapes the relationship between regions and the 'outside', as does less developed free-trade structures like those existing in North America. Continental economic integration, and the larger process of globalization, has diminished the capacity of states to structure the

domestic economy, including and perhaps most importantly their ability to tackle issues of territorial economic inequalities and discrepancies. Consequently, states losing power to market forces is a particularly significant development for regions (Courchene, 1998). In response to this weakened leadership of central states in governing the economy, many regional governments have taken upon themselves to actively seek to attract foreign investment and promote exports. These are core objective of most, if not all paradiplomacies, and they involve some international network/action: offices abroad, trade missions, and so on. Economic integration and liberalization of trade, because they come with a set of norms and rules, also involve challenges to forms of socio-political and cultural organizations that may be specific to some regions. Consequently, some regional governments (Québec for example) have viewed the development of an international voice as a necessary condition for dealing effectively with these processes.

The second set of international structures shaping paradiplomacy is the state system. Regional governments are generally excluded from formal bilateral and multilateral relationships. In fact, traditional diplomacy has been built around the sovereign state, and the rules and procedures which structure it have further reinforced the hegemonic role of states as actors of international politics. However, states are increasingly willing to have bilateral relations with regional governments. Flanders, for example, has signed cooperation agreements with Canada, the United States, South Africa, Russia and Japan (Massart-Piérard, p.723). Some states have in fact developed particularly significant relationships with foreign regions. France, for example, treats the Québec premier very much like a head of state, and deals with the province in a fashion approximating its traditional bilateral relations. These opportunities for regional governments to enter into formal relationships with states give them new legitimacy and enhances their international personality. Finally, bilateralism in paradiplomacy is not limited to state-region relations; in fact, the bulk of paradiplomatic activity occurs between regional governments, that is, in the form of inter-regional and trans-border/transnational relationships. The Four Motors of Europe is a well-documented instance of this type of paradiplomacy. Bilateral relationships between regions trigger a dynamic process which is central in developing the international activity of regions: indeed, because these relationships are not contingent on foreign states recognizing regions as international actors, they offer great potential for the autonomous development of regional governments' international legitimacy, an outcome which in turn fosters these same transnational relationships.

Québec and Wallonia

Wallonia has one of the most extensive paradiplomacy of any European region It has developed bilateral relations with states in virtually every area of the world: Western Europe (France, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria); Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Russia); North America (Québec); Latin America (Bolivia, Chile, Haiti, Cuba); Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia); Sub-saharian Africa (Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo); the Middle East (Lebanon and the Palestinian authority); and Asia (Vietnam). It is involved in European Union institutions, and has developed relationships with neighbouring regions. It also participates in multilateral

forums such as La Francophonie and United Nations agencies (Division des relations internationales de la Région wallonne, 2001).

The motor behind this paradiplomacy are the processes of identity construction, group interest definition/promotion, and territorial mobilization which have permeated Belgian politics for the last thirty years. In the case of Wallonia, it is debatable if these processes correspond to nationalism *per se*. Indeed, Walloon leaders rarely speak of Wallonia as a nation; they tend to use the concepts of region or political community. Nevertheless, the logic of this politics is similar to nationalist politics, and it is indeed at the heart of the region's international aspirations.

It is often said that Wallonia is a region with no past and an uncertain future. This is problematic for Walloon leaders because politics in Belgium is heavily dichotomized between the language groups as well as divided along regional/community lines, and because the 'Flemish side' is united politically, institutionally and with respect to identity. In this context, it is hardly surprising that Walloon leaders would want to create a strong identity/political community capable of measuring up to Flemings. Paradiplomacy serves as a mechanism to do just that (Massart-Piérard, 1999; 714). Three aspects of Wallonia's international relations serve to highlight this role of paradiplomacy. First, Wallonia has chosen many of its partners for their Francophone character (France, Québec, Maghreb countries) thereby using the international arena to assert its French-speaking personality. Second, Wallonia has argued, albeit it largely unsuccessfully, for a strengthening of an institution, the Committee of Regions, which provides great visibility to regional leaders and legitimacy to their political community (Division des relations internationales de la Région wallonne, 2001; 86-87). Third, leaders of both Wallonia and the French Community are currently altering the design of their international relations bureaucracies (Division des relations internationales de la Région wallonne, 2000; 86-87) in the hope of re-shaping the larger institutions of Francophones and, indeed, their political identities. One of the reasons why Belgium's French-speaking population has a weaker regional/sub-state identity than Flemings is that they are institutionally divided: French-speakers in Wallonia are members of both the Walloon Region and the Francophone Community while those living in Brussels belong to that same Community and the Brussels Region. Meanwhile, the Flemish Community and Region have merged. In this context, Walloon/Francophone leaders are increasingly considering focusing on a Francophone rather than Walloon and Brusseler identity. This move would involve a process of institutional convergence which arguably was launched with the merger of the sectorial divisions of their international relations departments.

In its struggle with Flemish nationalism, the Walloon Movement has defined the interests of Walloons in three different ways. First, and at the broadest level, it has made the economic development of Wallonia, which is poorer than Flanders, a priority. Second, it has focused on the promotion of French. Finally, the Walloon Movement has historically associated Walloons with the working-class of Belgium (industrialization occurred early in this area and socialist and trade-unionist forces are very strong), thereby defining group interests partly in terms of relations of production. Wallonia's paradiplomacy reflects these concerns. On the economic/development front, Wallonia has created *l'Agence wallonne à l'exportation* whose main role is to help Walloon companies do business abroad. It has also, in its bilateral relationships, emphasized scientific and technological cooperation as a means of improving the Region's position in the new

economy. The Region's linguistic concerns have shown in its choice of partners (France, Québec...). Indeed, affirming Wallonia as an international French voice actively working to promote the language is a logical extension of its domestic struggle. Also, Wallonia has taken a particular interest in the protection of linguistic minorities, for example working, albeit it unsuccessfully, to include this type of clause in the EU Charter of Rights adopted in principle at the Nice summit in 2000. This position is unsurprising : Walloon regionalism/nationalism is closely associated with feelings of powerlessness vis-à-vis the numerically superior Flemings and, furthermore, one of the most contentious issues between the two linguistic communities is the Francophone minority in Flanders which the Flemish government seeks, by its own admission, to assimilate. Finally, the connection of the Walloon Movement with the Socialist ideological family has also transpired in the Region's paradiplomacy. In discussing employment policy in the European Union, Wallonia was careful to avoid 'des formulations qui auraient pu mettre en cause les acquis sociaux des travailleurs wallons.' (Division des relations internationales de la Région wallonne, 2001; 95).

The international relations of Wallonia also serve purposes of territorial mobilization. Walloons are reluctant regionalist/nationalists; they have been put in the position of having to turn to regional institutions rather than the Belgian state because the Flemish Movement, when it was able to translate its numerical majority into political power, forced the federalization process. The emptying out of the Belgian state, and perhaps even its eventual disappearance, is somewhat of a frightening process for Walloons/Francophones. In this context, playing the European Union card is a reasonable move since a federal-type EU would mean that Wallonia would never be 'alone' but rather always part of a larger, meaningful political structure. It is therefore unsurprising that Walloon leaders would strongly promote a federal Europe. It stresses the ideas of efficiency in decision making (read an increase in qualified voting), democracy, and citizenship (Division des relations internationales de la Région wallonne, 2001; 85).

If the three aforementioned processes represent the driving force behind Wallonia's international agency, there also exists institutional contexts, both domestic and international, which favour Walloon paradiplomacy. Domestically, two elements are significant. The first element is the nature of Belgian federalism. Belgian federated units enjoy great autonomy in a division of power that is exclusive (watertight) and non-hierarchical. Consequently, these units present great potential as autonomous international agents. The second element is the constitutional framework. Belgium's Regions and Communities are formally recognized, since 1993, the authority to conduct their own international relations (including treaty-making) on matters falling within their own jurisdiction. In other words, all their powers are extended to the international sphere.

The European Union represents a major external opportunity structure for Wallonia to develop its paradiplomacy, and not only for the Union's Committee of Regions. Indeed, Belgian federated units are players in the Council of Ministers where they can engage Belgium and flesh out the Belgian position in matters relevant to their own internal jurisdiction (Lagasse, 1997; 53-58). Of course, in this context Wallonia does not act as an independent agent. Rather, it is involved in mechanisms of conciliation and coordination, and in the search for a consensus. Nevertheless, the EU allows Wallonia and the other Belgian units, in virtue of the peculiarity of Belgian federalism, to give their paradiplomacy a very distinctive outlook.

The Canadian federation features no comparable mechanisms that would enable its constituent units to speak in any way on behalf of the Government of Canada or to formally shape Canadian foreign policy. Nevertheless, Québec arguably exhibits the most developed paradiplomacy of any regional government. The province has signed several hundred international agreements since 1964 with partners, both states and regional governments, from every continent (Ministère des relations internationales, 2000). These agreements cover virtually all the fields in which the Québec government is involved domestically : agriculture, economic development, culture, social services, transportation, and so on. Currently, Québec has international representation in over 25 countries, posting more than 250 people abroad.

Nationalism is the force that accounts for this strong international activity and network. Of foremost importance is the issue of identity. Nationalism is a form of identity politics; so is Québec paradiplomacy. For Québec however, engaging in international relations does not serve identity construction purposes *per se* as is the case for Wallonia since its identity is well established and quite strong; rather it represents a way to affirm the distinctiveness of this identity vis-à-vis the Canadian identity and to frame it as a national identity. Indeed, the development by Québec of an autonomous foreign policy is meant to carry the message that the province is in fact a nation distinct from Canada. In this context, the discursive choices made in the province's strategic plan for international relations are revealing : the booklet refers to Québec as a 'small nation' and a 'people' whose original voice needs to be heard internationally, while 'English Canada' is lumped in with the US and the UK as a 'partner' (Ministère des relations internationales, 2001; p.29 and p.42). The practices outlined in this strategic plan also highlight the pivotal role of the French language and culture in Québec's foreign policy France is clearly the province's crucial partner while *La Francophonie* is the key forum. This is coherent with the nationalist project which centres around the shaping of a national identity based on the Francophone dimension.

French also features prominently in the notion of Québec's national interests. More specifically, Québec nationalism has always conceptualized this national interest primarily in terms of the defense and promotion of the French language. Not surprisingly, this logic is extended into the international sphere through the province's paradiplomacy. Its work in *La Francophonie*, for example, is consistent with the objective of strengthening French as a world language, thereby protecting Québec's own cultural position in the Americas. Culture also features in the definition of national interests insofar as it is considered a fundamental good, perhaps the most fundamental. As such, Québec's paradiplomacy seeks to make the argument that culture must be treated differently from purely economic/material goods, and should therefore be excluded from the free-trade arrangements. In this context, one could say that there is a Québec view of globalization which derives from nationalism. In fact, in addition to the cultural element, Québec nationalism also involves, albeit to a lesser degree, the idea of a Québec model of socio-economic relations (a model of the corporatist-consensual type) which is viewed as being at odds with a neoliberal view of globalization.

Québec nationalism involves efforts at territorial mobilization which typically take the form of attacks towards the federal government, and whose goal is to stimulate support for increased autonomy or independence. This process and objective are clearly reflected in the province's paradiplomacy. First of all, the strategic plan adopts quite a

combative language when referring to the federal government. It criticizes the ‘anachronic character’ of the federal government’s position on the actors of international relations, and dissociates Québec from the federal objective of furthering Canadian culture, arguing that this mission involves the negation of Québec’s own culture (Ministère des relations internationales, 2001; pp.23-24). This suggests that the very action of developing international relations is meant as a challenge towards Ottawa. Indeed, for the PQ government, requesting a ‘Québec presence’ in one forum/event or another is a no lose proposition : if the request is accepted, the government gets its wish; if it is denied, it can denounce the rigidity of Canadian federalism. Finally, Québec’s paradiplomacy puts a lot of emphasis on image, that is on promoting a positive view of Québec abroad. The strategic plan lists this objective as one of the four functions of Québec’s paradiplomacy (*fonction affaires publiques*). This objective is related to territorial mobilization since it can be seen, at least in part, as preparing the international reaction to an eventual declaration of independence.

Québec nationalism is a much stronger force than the Walloon Movement. Why is it, then, that both Québec and Wallonia have developed paradiplomacies which are comparable in importance? The key here is that Québec’s domestic and international contexts are not as friendly to international activity as Wallonia’s. Three differences are particularly noteworthy. First, Québec does not have formal constitutional powers in the area of international relations. In other words, the domestic mechanisms behind Québec’s international activity are less formalized and more conflictual than Wallonia’s. Second, and this is a direct result of the constitutional framework, the Canadian federal government tends to oppose Québec’s international presence. This is not the case in Belgium where the autonomous international action of Regions and Communities is accepted. This is not to say that the different Belgian units do not interact when it comes to international affairs; they do, but it tends to be in a perspective of conciliation and consensus-seeking. Third, there is no political integration in North America and therefore no supranational forum where regions can bypass the state and develop formal relationships. Again, it is not that such transborder/transnational relationships do not exist in North America. They do indeed, and these relationships most likely have been spurred by economic integration. However, if continental free-trade has presented Québec with new opportunities to interact with other North American regions, it has not drawn regional governments into a supranational arena in a way similar to the EU.

Conclusion : Paradiplomacy, Nationalism and Multinational States.

Among recent developments in the politics of Western states and international relations, regional governments seeking to develop international agency is generally viewed as marginal and unremarkable. This is hardly surprising since the last fifteen years have featured ethnic conflicts/civil wars, the liberalization of trade, an acute crisis of welfare-states and other spectacular developments. However, paradiplomacy is a phenomenon which is bound to have far-reaching consequences, especially for multinational states: it will most certainly affect the domestic politics of these states, and indeed the very nature of internal-external linkages.

As previously discussed, nationalism is conducive to paradiplomacy because the latter presents opportunities for political-territorial mobilization, nation-building, and the promotion of regional-specific interests. In turn, once regional governments have taken

interest in developing their own international personality, foreign affairs are likely to become an additional source of conflict in multinational states. At the surface, these central-regional disputes may appear to be about division of power and over different foreign policy objectives; in reality, they are fundamentally about identity and political legitimacy. This makes paradiplomacy a form of territorial conflict more difficult to manage in multinational states than in traditional nation-states. On the one hand, regions where there is a nationalist movement engage in paradiplomatic activities even if they have a foreign policy agenda very similar to that of the central state, therefore rendering almost meaningless compromise over the content of foreign policy. On the other hand, central states, in addition to seeking to preserve a role which is traditionally theirs, associate exclusivity in international affairs with the expression of a coherent national identity. This suggests that a 'federalization' of international affairs whereby each level of government would be empowered to act internationally in areas of domestic jurisdiction is an unlikely solution for most states. It has happened in Belgium but only because nationalism there comes from the group (Flemings) which, as a result of representing a numerical majority, controls central institutions and drives constitutional-institutional reforms.

Through paradiplomacy, multinational societies are at the forefront of a new mode of internal-external linkage. Traditionally, states served as the most important, if not sole connection with the international realm; through foreign policy, they aggregated domestic interests and preferences, and expressed them to other international actors, usually states. This mechanism is still significant, but it now coexists with other forms of domestic-international linkage. One such form are the much discussed social, religious and cultural movements which are increasingly targeting international processes such as globalization, and following organizational patterns that do not recognize national borders. The action of these movements is transnational; it involves individuals, groups and associations establishing connections, many of them through the new technologies, with similar actors in foreign countries without going through the state. Paradiplomacy represents another type of internal-external connection which shares characteristics with traditional state foreign policy and transnationalism without being one or the other. Indeed, it involves state-like units projecting themselves onto the international scene without the help, and often against the will of the central state. Regional governments as international actors have the fluidity of transnational movements yet remain intelligible to states as the result of their territorial-institutional nature. These features make some regions of multinational states the bearers of a special, and potentially very effective international agency, one which connects domestic and international politics in an entirely new way.

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