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# EUROPE AND BEYOND: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUB-STATE PARADIPLMACY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CATALONIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This article will argue that the locus of effective political power is no longer monopolised by national governments but is effectively distributed between national, regional and international levels. Subnational governments are no longer minor actors in the area of intergovernmental collaboration. This article will explore the phenomenon of substate paradiplomacy in order to highlight the transformation of the European nation-state as a result of the combined forces of globalisation and regionalisation. It seems likely in the Catalan case that the regional government is attempting to raise its international profile while ensuring that its promotion of Catalan interests on the EU and international level does not conflict with those of Spain.*

## KEYWORDS

- Europe
- European Union
- Sub-state diplomacy
- Catalonia
- European Studies

## Introduction

It would be something of an understatement to observe that the traditional, 'Westphalian' state-centric international system has been in a state of profound upheaval since the end of the Cold War. Globalisation and transnational integration have created, or at least reinforced, potent challenges to nation-states, and simultaneously allowed sub-national entities to accentuate their separateness from centralised nation-state structures<sup>1</sup>. Globalization has underlined the fact that the modern nation-state is no longer the exclusive preserve of economic, political and cultural sovereignty.

<sup>1</sup> JM Magone, Paradiplomacy Revisited: The Structure of Opportunities of Global Governance and Regional Actors [online], Paper presented at the International Conference on the International Relations of the Regions: Sub-National Actors, Paradiplomacy and Multilevel Governance, Palacio de la Aljazeera, Zaragoza, Spain, 5-6 October, 2006, p.1. Retrieved 10 October 2009 from: [http://www.unizar.es/union\\_europea/files/document/conferencia%2010.2006/JoseMAGONE%20final.pdf](http://www.unizar.es/union_europea/files/document/conferencia%2010.2006/JoseMAGONE%20final.pdf)

Benedict Anderson<sup>2</sup>, was undeniably right to observe that many old nations now find themselves confronted by assertive claims from sub-nationalisms intent on “shedding their subness”. In an increasingly globalised world, the once clearly differentiated distinction between the foreign and domestic realms has dramatically blurred. At the same time, there has been a tendency toward what Brian Hocking<sup>3</sup> has termed ‘the localization of foreign relations’ as subnational governments vocally project themselves in the international sphere. Overall, diplomacy is no longer the exclusive property of foreign ministries as it once was during the nineteenth century or twentieth centuries. The phenomenon of regional governments developing international relations has been most pronounced, but not restricted to, the democratic societies of the industrialized West.

The evolution of an increasingly post-sovereign political space stimulated by the European Union (EU) has actively facilitated the revival of claims by ‘stateless nations’. Guibernau<sup>4</sup> denotes stateless nations as nations which, in spite of having their territories included within the territorial limits of one or more states, largely do not identify with those same states. In Europe, the emergence of territorial politics has been particularly pronounced in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Brittany, Corsica, Catalonia, the Basque country and in Belgium.

Within Europe, the EU increasingly serves as a potential reference point and even ally for ethno-national political movements against what are perceived as the redundant constrictions of the nation-state. Membership of the EU offers an alternative institutional framework which can help to diminish the political and economic costs of secession. The EU constitutes a political regime which provides previously domestic actors such as regional governments with diverse opportunities to take advantage of new opportunities to access the international scene. In recent years, many regional governments and other interests have actively attempted to forge more direct links with the decision-making institutions of the EU. Overall, the dual phenomena of European integration and the increasing tendency of regional governments and movements to frame their demands in EU terms poses an immediate threat from above and below to the authority and functional competence of the nation-state. Globalization and European integration have transformed not only the state, but also the politics of nations without states<sup>5</sup>.

This article will attempt to emphasize the ways in which one region-Catalonia-has become an active international actor and has implemented an array of external policies and approaches similar to those employed by many other sub-state authorities. Overall, the Generalitat’s (the Catalan regional government’s) foreign affairs ‘strategy’ has been preeminently focused on developing a cohesive network

<sup>2</sup> B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1991, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> B Hocking, ‘Regionalism: An International Relations Perspective’ in M Keating & J Loughlin (eds), *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 90-112

<sup>4</sup> MM Guibernau, *Nations Without States: Political Communities in a Global Age*, Blackwell, London, 1999, p. 16

<sup>5</sup> M Keating, ‘European Integration and the Nationalities Question’ in *International Political Science Association*, Durban, South Africa, 29 June - 4 July, 2003, p. 3

of interconnections between Catalonia and other territories in the EU that are primarily concerned with the development of trade and the exchange of best practice while always underlining the primacy of 'relations with Spain. Catalonia, as the later sections of this article will demonstrate, has played an active role in projecting its voice both within Europe and the global world more generally.

## Paradiplomacy

Subnational units of government are increasingly in a position to promote their interests using the instruments and channels afforded by what is commonly understood to be paradiplomacy.

However, as Requejo has rightly noted, in analytical terms, '... it can be said that there is a lack of detailed knowledge about sub-states' actions abroad...'<sup>6</sup>.

The aim of this section is to explore the distinction between diplomacy and paradiplomacy and to use this discussion as a means to contextualizing the importance of paradiplomacy in the Catalan case.

Modern diplomacy and territorial (and later nation-) states have co-evolved in a '...mutually constitutive set of processes...'<sup>7</sup>. Kincaid<sup>8</sup> notes that the authority to '...conduct foreign relations is an intrinsic attribute of a national government. For purposes of international relations, the nation-state is held to be unitary...'<sup>9</sup> Berridge<sup>9</sup> has observed that diplomacy is an important means by which states pursue their foreign policies and these policies are still framed in significant degree in many states in a ministry of foreign affairs...'. Diplomacy is located firmly in the organisational structures, procedures, routines and habits of foreign ministries<sup>10</sup>. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has archetypically been the channel through which representations should be made to a government by another state, its diplomatic representative or an international organisation<sup>11</sup>.

Foreign policy has normally been one of very few areas, along with defence and monetary and fiscal policy, that is excluded from the devolution of competencies to

<sup>6</sup> F Requejo, 'A Comparison of Sub-State Entities' Foreign Affairs Action Plan for Catalonia', *Working Paper*, no. 3, May 2009, p. 9. Retrieved 2 July 2011 from: <[http://www.patronatcatalunyamon.cat/suportAccioExteriorGovern/doc/WP3\\_en.pdf](http://www.patronatcatalunyamon.cat/suportAccioExteriorGovern/doc/WP3_en.pdf)>.

<sup>7</sup> J Batora, 'Does the European Union Transform the Institution of Diplomacy?' [online], *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, no. 87, July 2003, p. 2, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', The Hague. Retrieved 27 March 2010 from: <[http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2003/20030700\\_cli\\_paper\\_dip\\_issue87.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2003/20030700_cli_paper_dip_issue87.pdf)>.

<sup>8</sup> J Kincaid, 'Constituent Diplomacy in Federal Politics and the Nation-State: Conflict and Cooperation' in HJ Michelmann & P Soldatos (eds), *Federalism and International Relations: the Role of Subnational Units*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> GR Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Batora, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> RG Feltham, *Diplomatic Handbook* (2nd edition), Longman, London, 1988, p. 12.

autonomous sub-state entities<sup>12</sup>. Lecours<sup>13</sup> 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...’.

The involvement of regions in international affairs is an intricate part of the re-configuration process of international politics and negotiation<sup>14</sup>. Territorial politics in advanced industrialised societies are undergoing a fundamental change with respect to their relationship with the ‘external’. Importantly, the conventional diplomacy of the nation-state is made relative and is changing against the background of trans-national politics, the growth of international and supra-national organisations and the cross-border politics of social and non-governmental organisations<sup>15</sup>. One of the major aspects involved in the mobilization of sub-state paradiplomacy has been the focus on public diplomacy. Public diplomacy can be seen as the instrumentalisation of soft power overseas<sup>16</sup>.

Lecours and Moreno<sup>17</sup> note that paradiplomacy is closely linked to political-territorial mobilization ‘...because it can serve as a tool for achieving domestic policy objectives...’. Pacquin and Lachapelle<sup>18</sup> argue that the phenomenon of paradiplomacy is not of recent origin and that the Quebec government began to engage in active paradiplomacy as early as the nineteenth century. However, the current era of paradiplomacy beginning in the 1960s, is considered a distinct historical period defined in terms of growth, dynamism, and its repercussions on the international behaviour and activities of nation-states. This same period was notable for the emergence of an argument from Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye of what they termed ‘complex interdependence’. They argued that modern states were characterised by “multiple channels of access”, which, in turn, progressively reduce the hold on foreign policy previously maintained by central decision makers. Technological progress has produced what Rosenau<sup>19</sup> referred to as ‘...an interdependence of local, national, and international communities that is far greater than any previously experienced...’.

<sup>12</sup> S Wolff, ‘Paradiplomacy: Scope, Opportunities and Challenges’, *Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*, no. 12, Spring, 2007 [online]. Retrived 10 July 2009 from: <<http://www.bcjournal.org/2007/paradiplomacy/>>.

<sup>13</sup> A Lecours, ‘Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy and International Relations of Regions’, *International Negotiation*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2002, p. 95.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 93

<sup>15</sup> B Ehrenzeller et al., ‘Federalism and Foreign Relations’ in R Blindenbacher & A Koller (eds), *Federalism in a Changing World: Learning from Each Other*, McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, 2003, p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> J Melissen, ‘Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice’ [online], *Clingendael CDS&P Paper*, December 2006, p. 2. Retrived 10 July 2009 from: <[http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2006/20061200\\_cds&p\\_paper\\_melissen.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2006/20061200_cds&p_paper_melissen.pdf)>.

<sup>17</sup> A Lecours & L Moreno, ‘Paradiplomacy and stateless nations: a reference to the Basque Country’ [online], *Unidad de Políticas Comparadas (CSIC) Working Paper*, 01-06, 2001, p. 5. Concordia University and Spanish National Research Council. Retrived 20 July 2009 from: <<http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/1472/1/dt0106.pdf>>.

<sup>18</sup> S Pacquin & G Lachapelle, ‘Why Do Sub-States and Regions Practise International relations’ in G Lachapelle & S Pacquin (eds), *Mastering Globalization: New Sub-States’ Governance and Strategies*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 77

<sup>19</sup> J Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1990, p. 17

There is certainly no shortage in the number of federated or subnational units of government to be found around the world<sup>20</sup>. Watts<sup>21</sup> notes that ‘... there are at present, among the 192 politically sovereign states recognized by the United Nations, 25 that are functioning federations in their character, claim to be federations, or exhibit the major features of federations...’. The term subnational government usually refers to ‘...lower tiers of a nation-state government, not to constituent nationality governments, or to coordinate governments possessing exclusive and concurrent powers on a co-equal constitutional basis with a national government...’<sup>22</sup>. Subnational governments do not restrict their action to the domestic arenas. Sub-states increasingly tend to project themselves as international actors and regard paradiplomacy as an important element in the promotion of their interests<sup>23</sup>. It is increasingly the case that ‘...not only nations but subnational territorial communities have to engage in trans-sovereign activities that often catapult them politically and physically far beyond the national frontiers...’<sup>24</sup>.

At the EU level, it is worth-noting that in recent years, many regional governments have attempted more direct links with the decision-making instances of the EU. Many regions have opened permanent offices in Brussels to lobby Commission officials. For instance, every German Lander, all three Belgian regions and all Austrian Lander are fully represented in Brussels. The regions of other member states tend to be represented to a lesser degree. These offices gather intelligence about new initiatives, allowing regions to be more proactive in lobbying their national governments and also offer a direct conduit of regional information to Commission officials. These representative offices also allow regional politicians to present themselves as actors in the European arena and to take the maximum political capital for EU initiatives that are beneficial to their individual regions.

In Brussels itself, the Scottish devolved government has created an institution-Scotland House-which is designed to assist the Scottish government in supporting the European responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament and to promote Scotland’s wider interests in the various European institutions. While extending beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note also the countless forms of paradiplomacy established by sub-state entities within existing federal and con-federal states, such as those undertaken by the Swiss Cantons, the provinces of Argentina and Canada or the federal American or Australian States.

<sup>20</sup> M Mingus, ‘Transnationalism and Subnational Paradiplomacy> Is this Perforated Sovereignty or Are Democracy and Civil Society Just Reaching Across Borders?’ [online], 2003, p. 8. Paper presented to the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Public Administration Theory Network Anchorage, Alaska, June 20, 2003. Retrieved from: <<http://patnet2003.alaska.edu/pdf/papers/Mingus%20full%20paper.pdf>>.

<sup>21</sup> RL Watts, *Comparing Federal Systems*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2008, p. 1

<sup>22</sup> Kincaid, p. 58

<sup>23</sup> L Moreno, ‘Scotland, Catalonia, Europeanization and the ‘Moreno Question’, *Scottish Affairs*, no. 54, Winter 2006, p. 11. Retrieved 2 July 2009 from: <[http://www.scottishaffairs.org/onlinepub/sa/moreno\\_sa54\\_winter06.html](http://www.scottishaffairs.org/onlinepub/sa/moreno_sa54_winter06.html)>

<sup>24</sup> I Duchacek, ‘Perforated Sovereignties: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations’ in HJ Michelmann & P Soldatos (eds), *Federalism and International Relations: the Role of Subnational Units*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 6.

Peter Lynch<sup>25</sup> notes that paradiplomacy has two distinct political ends. Firstly, paradiplomacy can be used as a nation-building strategy to raise the profile of the region in preparation for a bid for statehood. Second, paradiplomacy is a political defence mechanism for regional governments and political parties that seek to resist secession and statehood, and they use paradiplomacy to emphasise the extent to which the region can become an effective role in international politics while avoiding the uncertainties of secession. Paradiplomacy is ‘...not the same as conventional state diplomacy, which is about pursuing a defined state interest in the international arena. It is more functionally specific and targeted, often opportunistic and experimental...’<sup>26</sup>. Paradiplomacy might be directly related to a search for external recognition on the part of the sub-national units-recognition of the regional ‘self’ as presented by the governments of these political entities<sup>27</sup>. Soldatos<sup>28</sup> denotes two main kinds of paradiplomacy: first, global paradiplomacy, where federated units deal with issues concerning the whole international system such as the liberalisation of international trade. The second type of paradiplomacy is regional, where the issues involved are of regional relevance to the communities taking part in a subnational activity (e.g, relations between devolved sub-states such as Scotland and Catalonia). Keating<sup>29</sup> has discerned several reasons for regions to enter into paradiplomacy. Economically, regions seek investment, markets for their products, and technology for modernization. Culturally, regions with their own language or culture also seek support resources and support in the international arena. Soldatos<sup>30</sup> observes that there are two kinds of regional paradiplomacy: macro-regional paradiplomacy, which occurs when the actors are dealing with issues concerning communities which are non-contiguous, and micro-regional paradiplomacy, when the actors deal with issues concerning communities that have a geographical contiguity. Micro-regional paradiplomacy can be transborder or transfrontier. The participation of regions 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...’ but this involvement ‘... is an intricate part of the re-configuration process of international politics and negotiation...’<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> P Lynch, *Scottish Government and Politics: an Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, Edingburgh, 2001, p. 159.

<sup>26</sup> M Keating, ‘Regions and International Affairs: Motives, Opportunities and Strategies’ in F Aldecoa & M Keating (eds), *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*, Routledge, London, 1999, p. 11

<sup>27</sup> G Sharafutdinova, ‘Paradiplomacy in the Russian Regions: Tatarstan’s Search for Statehood’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2003, p. 615.

<sup>28</sup> P Soldatos, ‘An Explanatory Framework for the Study of Federated States as Foreign Policy Actors’ in HJ Michelmann & P Soldatos (eds), *Federalism and International Relations: the Role of Subnational Units*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> Keating, ‘Regions and International Affairs...’, p. 4

<sup>30</sup> Soldatos, pp. 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> A Lecours, ‘Paradiplomacy Reflections...’, p. 93

### Catalonia: A stateless nation *par excellence*

Lecours and Moreno<sup>32</sup> (2006) have accurately noted that the development of a region's international presence constitutes an opportunity to develop and consolidate a national identity for nationalist leaders. Catalonia has long been one of the most economically advanced regions of Europe: it has also possessed a very strong sense of identity as a minority nation within Spain<sup>33</sup>.

Catalonia is a historic region of six million people bordered to the north by France and Andorra, and to the south and east by the Mediterranean Sea. As early as the beginning of the twelfth century, the term Catalonia was used in its modern form<sup>34</sup>. The joint rule of Ferdinand and Isabella from 1479 over Castile and the Crown of Aragon (of which Catalonia was its main element) did not bring about radical institutional change in Catalonia. Catalonia maintained laws and institutions derived from a long tradition of political liberty<sup>35</sup>. After the Spanish Succession War of 1702-15, Catalonia was integrated into a newly-unified Spain, the Generalitat was disbanded, and Catalonia's rights and privileges were abolished. In the 19th century, Catalonia became the most industrialized and urbanized territory in Spain. As the most economically developed part of Spain, Catalonia found itself governed by a backward state in which political power resided with Castile<sup>36</sup>.

The first Catalan political organization, the Unió Catalanista, formed in 1891, was followed by the Lliga Regionalista. The Lliga increasingly dominated parliamentary politics in Catalonia during the following twenty years but was challenged by the left-democratic Acció Catalana, after World War I<sup>37</sup>. From the beginning of the twentieth century to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Catalan nationalism was primarily a middle-class movement that combined demands for more regional autonomy with an interest in cooperation with central government<sup>38</sup>.

As in most regions of Spain, Catalan autonomy and culture were suppressed to an unprecedented degree after the defeat of the Second Republic in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Hargreaves<sup>39</sup> notes that in the transition to liberal democracy after Franco's death, Catalan nationalism asserted itself vigorously and the 1978 Spanish Constitution opened the way for the 1982 Statute of Autonomy for

<sup>32</sup> Lecours & Moreno, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> M Keating, J Loughlin & K Deschouwer, *Culture, Institutions and Economic Development. A Study of Eight European Regions*, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, Cheltenham, 2003, pp. 43-44.

<sup>34</sup> J Trueta, *The Spirit of Catalonia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> M Guibernau, 'Spain: Catalonia and the Basque Country', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2000, p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>37</sup> SG Payne, 'Catalan and Basque Nationalism: Contrasting Patterns' in S Ben-Ami et al. (eds), *Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation State*, Palgrave Publishers, New York, NY, 2000, p. 98.

<sup>38</sup> FL Solís, *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia: Competing Narratives of National Identity*, Intellect Books, Bristol, 2003, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> JER Hargreaves, *Freedom for Catalonia?: Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity and the Barcelona Olympic Games*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 29.

Catalonia which restored the *Generalitat* and parliament. The 1978 Constitution laid the foundations for a new territorial organisation of the Spanish state, divided into seventeen Autonomous Communities<sup>40</sup>. The Statute recognises the collective identity of the Catalans within the state but they cannot aspire to independence unless the Constitution is changed<sup>41</sup>. The Convergence Party is the dominant partner in the Convergence and Unity (CiU) coalition, a centre-right nationalist coalition which has won every regional election since 1980. The CiU has specifically ruled out any move towards independence, while at the same time stressing the need to strengthen Catalan identity and autonomy<sup>42</sup>. Today's Spain is frequently regarded as being a model for constitutional devolution which offers a wide range of powers to its autonomous communities<sup>43</sup>. The *Generalitat de Catalunya* (Autonomous Government of Catalonia) comprises a parliament, a president and an executive council.

### The Structure and Nature of Catalan Foreign-policy making

The Catalan administration has gradually equipped itself with a strong set of institutions with which to promote its global interests both within the EU and beyond. The Catalan cabinet first created a Commissioner of Foreign Relations in 1992. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs or *Direcció General de Relacions Exteriors* (SFA) is located within the Department of the Presidency of the *Generalitat* and is headed by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The SFA is responsible for promoting and coordinating the *Generalitat's* foreign policy. The SFA is structured around the management of International Relations, Development and Humanitarian Action, and the management of the International Promotion of Catalan Organisations. To this end, the Catalan Government's main objective in the area of foreign policy is for Catalonia: '...to become an international actor of the first order, responsible and committed to a multipolar world that is more just, peaceful and sustainable...' (Autonomous Government of Catalonia. Vice-presidential Department of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Strategic Objectives. General Objectives 2009). The Catalan Government's specific strategic objectives in the area of foreign policy seek *inter alia*:

- To intensify bilateral relations with state and sub-state governments, both within the European Union and in the rest of the world.
- To establish a network of Government delegations at various strategic points around the world.
- To consolidate the presence of Catalonia within multilateral organisations, particularly within UNESCO.

<sup>40</sup> M Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism, Francoism, Tradition and Democracy*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 74.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 77

<sup>42</sup> K Cramer, 'Banal Catalanism?', *National Identities*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, p. 146

<sup>43</sup> S Edwards, 'Reconstructing the Nation: the Process of Establishing Catalan Autonomy', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 52, no. 4, 1999, p. 666.

- To support the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.
- To consolidate the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion project.
- To give impetus to the Working Community of the Pyrenees (CTP) and the Spain-France-Andorra Territorial Cooperation Operational Programme.
- To actively participate in the European regional networks of the Four Motors, the CPMR and the AEBR.
- To give impetus to the establishment of a eurodistrict made up of the Eastern Pyrenees (France) and the counties of Girona.
- To increase the presence of Catalans within international organisations.
- To establish electoral observation missions to observe elections taking place in countries in conflict, post-conflict or in developing countries. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia. Vice-presidential Department of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Strategic Objectives. Specific Objectives 2009).

In general terms, the Spanish state retains exclusive power over immigration, international relations, defence and armed forces, administration of justice, and the monetary system<sup>44</sup>. The revised *Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia* (2006) recognises and formulates Catalonia's relations with the European Union (Title V, Chapter 2, Articles 184-192) and the rest of the world (Title V, Chapter 3, Articles 193-200). According to the Catalan Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, the 2006 Statute '...makes Catalonia a leader among local governments of the world in terms of its international powers...' (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *The European Union And The Foreign Action Of The Government Of Catalonia Under The New Statute*, 2007). Equally, Article 3 of the Preliminary Title of the Statute of Autonomy states that Catalonia '...has its political and geographical space of reference in the Spanish State and the European Union, and it incorporates the values, principles and obligations implied by being a part thereof ...' (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, Preliminary Titles (articles 1-14)*, 2006).

### Relations with states and Regions in the EU

Perhaps inevitably, the Catalan Government has proclaimed that '...Europe is the first point of reference for Catalonia in foreign action: participating in the European Union is first priority...' (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *The European Union And The Foreign Action Of The Government Of Catalonia Under The New Statute*, 2007). Indeed, Catalan nationalists have always emphasized their "Europeanness". Cram<sup>45</sup> notes that '...Europe, conceived

<sup>44</sup> Edwards, p. 670.

<sup>45</sup> L Cram, 'EU-Civil Society Relations: the Impact of the EU on National Movements and National Identity' in K Kohler, D De Bievre & W Maloney (eds), *Opening EU-Governance to Civil Society: Gains & Challenges*,

of as a multi-national body which transcends defunct ‘nation-state’ boundaries...’ coincides neatly with the Catalan vision of one region containing many identities.

Catalonia has, over the past thirty years, formulated and enacted a range of strategies, structures and procedures to ensure that Catalonia’s interests are promoted successfully in EU institutions. In particular, Catalonia is committed to strengthening ‘...the role of local and regional entities by being a member of the Committee of the Regions and other European bodies, as well as participating ‘... actively in the European policies of the Spanish State...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Catalonia in the World*). Indeed, Catalonia has been very active in the Europe of the Regions movement generally and particularly in the Committee of the Regions<sup>46</sup>. In addition to its participation through the Committee of the Regions, the Spanish regions use three main channels to achieve their goals in the EU: permanent offices or delegations in Brussels, coalition building and regional networks.

Catalonia strongly supported the now defunct European Constitution in part because it had acknowledged the right of the Committee of the Regions to file an appeal with the European Court of Justice in order to defend the principle of subsidiarity (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Speech by the president of the Generalitat at the function held to celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> REGLEG Conference*, 2007). In 1995, a Committee of the Regions report, overseen by the Catalan President, Jordi Pujol, proposed that subsidiarity should automatically extend not only to state level but to sub-state level as well<sup>47</sup>. Bogdanor<sup>48</sup> noted that in the 1990s Catalonia and the German *Länder* had wanted the Committee of the Regions to become a second chamber of the European Parliament- a prospect which appears remote.

In general, the *Generalitat*, participates in EU matters ‘...affecting the powers or the interests of Catalonia. This includes EU Treaty-making as well as ordinary decision-making...’<sup>49</sup>. Representatives of the Spanish state, Catalan and other “Autonomous Community” ministers have been able to directly participate in certain meetings of the EU Council of Ministers and its working groups since 2005. Currently, participation by Autonomous Community ministers is restricted to involvement in meetings and consultative committees that cover the following policy areas: Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (including Tourism), Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment and Education, Youth and Culture (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Catalan participation in the Community policy of the Spanish State*, 2007).

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CONNEX Report Series, no. 5, Mannheim, 2008, p. 115 [online]. Retrieved 7 June 2010 from <[http://www.mzes.unimannheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/BookSeries/Volume\\_Five/Chapter05\\_Cram.pdf](http://www.mzes.unimannheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/BookSeries/Volume_Five/Chapter05_Cram.pdf)>.

<sup>46</sup> Keating, Loughlin & Deschouwer, p. 54

<sup>47</sup> P Wagstaff, ‘The Committee of the Regions of the European Union’ in P Wagstaff (ed.), *Regionalism in the European Union* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Intellect Books, Bristol, 1999.

<sup>48</sup> V Bogdanor, *Devolution in the United Kingdom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 277.

<sup>49</sup> F Morata, ‘European Integration and the Spanish ‘State of the Eutonomies’, *Zeitschrift für Staats- und Europawissenschaften*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2007.

Since 2005, Autonomous Community participation in EU Council Working Groups has taken place either through the incorporation of ministers from the Ministry for Autonomous Community Affairs in specific Council Working Groups in the Spanish delegation, within the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU or when direct Autonomous Community representation has been agreed for specific EU Council meetings and committees, through the inclusion of an Autonomous Community member in the Spanish delegation. During the 2003-2006 period, Catalonia was represented on a total of 21 committees (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Catalan participation in the Community policy of the Spanish State*, 2007). Furthermore, since 1994, Sectoral Conferences incorporating representatives at the highest level in the Spanish State and Autonomous Community administrations have been held in order to discuss, cooperate and express the position of the Autonomous Communities on Community matters affecting each of them (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Catalan participation in the Community policy of the Spanish State*, 2007). The Spanish government is obliged to provide the *Generalitat* with complete information about EU initiatives and proposals. In January 2010, the President of the Government of Catalonia, José Montilla, declared that Catalonia sees itself as ‘...jointly responsible for Spanish European policy and as an active participant...’ because ‘...both central government and the autonomous governments have an interest in affairs of state...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Catalonia Participates in the Spanish Presidency of the EU*, *Exteriors Newsletter of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation*, January 2010).

### **Catalonia and Bilateral Diplomacy within Europe**

The Catalan Government’s Delegation to Brussels was created in 2005 to replace the Patronat *Català Pro Europa* (Catalan Pro-Europe Foundation) which had existed as a joint Catalan government–private sector lobby consortium since 1982. The Delegation was reformed by government decision in August 2006 as the “Delegation of the Generalitat to the European Union”. The objectives of the Delegation are ‘...to represent, to defend and to promote the general interests of Catalonia as vested in the institutions and assemblies of the European Union...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Delegation of the Generalitat to the European Union*, 2007). The Delegation is also charged with taking ‘... the appropriate action vis-à-vis relevant European institutions when a piece of legislation, enactment or a programme of the European Union directly or indirectly affects the ambit of powers of the Government...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Delegation of the Generalitat to the European Union*, 2007).

Article 194 of Title V of the Statute of 2006 allows the Government of Catalonia to establish offices abroad ‘...in order to promote the interests of Catalonia...’. For its part, the Catalan Government states that ‘...Direct bilateral relations are always a key factor for Catalonia...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Europe*). To date, the Catalan Government has opened a Catalan Delegation in *Germany* (2008), *Argentina* (2009), *the United States of America* (2008), *France* (2008), *the United Kingdom* (2008) and *Mexico* (2009). As regulated by Decree

42/2008, the functions of these delegations are to foster bilateral relations with the authorities in each country and to coordinate the official bodies and entities dependent on the Generalitat in each country where a Delegation is operating (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *The Government of Catalonia approves the establishment of Generalitat delegations in France, the United Kingdom and Germany*, 2008).

The development ‘...of horizontal institutional links between the regions and the nationalities of Spain and other European regions, reflect the development of some ‘independent’ external relations beyond the Spanish multinational state...’<sup>50</sup>. André Lecours and Luis Moreno<sup>51</sup> rightly note that bilateral relationships between regions ‘...offer great potential for the autonomous development of regional governments’ international legitimacy, an outcome which in turn fosters these same transnational relationships...’ The Catalan Government observes that ‘... Catalonia stands in the first line of the European Regional Movement. Its criteria: to maximize usefulness and efficiency, and to bring the ideal regional interest group to bear for each problem in particular...’ (Autonomous Government of Catalonia. Europe. (n.d.). Catalonia has been actively engaged in political relations expressed through various collaboration protocols and through participation in a variety of European-wide Networks. Catalonia is a member of the Conference of European Regions with legislative power (REGLEG) which was formed in November 2000, with the objective of promoting common ground on various issues with other European regions.

Importantly, REGLEG also believes in ‘...effective multi-level governance involving institutions, Member States and regions...’ (Conference of European regions with legislative power. About RegLeg. (n.d.). It is worth noting that efforts by Catalonia, Scotland, Flanders and other regions to have an expanded role for regions written into the draft of the proposed EU constitution were rebuffed by the convention on the future of Europe, partly due to pressure from Spain and France<sup>52</sup>.

In addition to REGLEG, Catalonia is also a member of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) which was established in 1985 and is the largest independent forum and lobbyist for interregional co-operation and regional interests on the European stage. The AER brings together over 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organizations.

Catalonia is also one of the 160 regions that constitute the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) –an area that produces 46% of EU Gross Domestic Product. (*CPMR-Our Objectives*, 2005). One of the CPMR’s main aims is to ensure increased involvement of the regional level in

<sup>50</sup> J Gibbons, *Spanish Politics Today*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, p. 34

<sup>51</sup> A Lecours & L Moreno, ‘Paradiplomacy and Stateless Nations: a Reference to the basque Country’, *Unidad de Politicas Comparadas (CSIC) Working Paper*, 01-06, 2006, p. 8. Retrived 28 July 2011 from <<http://www.tamilnation.com/conflictresolution/countrystudies/basque/paradiplomacy.htm>>.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Europe’s Rebellious Regions’, *The Economist*, 15 November 2003, retrived 20 July 2009 from: <[http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=E1\\_NNDRRVT](http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_NNDRRVT)>.

European integration. The CPMR advocates EU policies that promote balanced territorial development capable of bringing sustained growth to maritime regions in particular, through the use of EU structural funds, transport, agriculture, the environment and maritime-related activities. (*CPMR-External Cooperation: The Issues*, 2005). In November 2005, the CRPM, with the support of the Committee of the Regions, organized the *Euromed Regional Conference Barcelona +10*. The main goal of the Euromed Regional Conference Barcelona+10 was to promote the exchange of good practices on regional partnership, decentralised cooperation, the processes of decentralisation and effective governance in the Euro-Mediterranean area. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, *Euromed Regional Conference Barcelona +10*, 2005).

### **Projecting a global presence: Catalonia and the wider world**

The promotion of Catalonia's foreign policy goals have not been restricted to the European context but have assumed a broader, global character. The Generalitat has been adept at harnessing its structures and policies to the ends of public diplomacy. The "Generalitat" has maintained close relations with leading multilateral organisations, particularly with respect to the United Nations network. For example, in October 2008, the Catalan Government authorised the Catalan Agency for Cooperation Development to award a grant totalling €490,000 to the World Food Programme (WFP). The agreement is intended to enable funding for the support of a long-term aid project in Somalia as well as food aid and recovery operations to be carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo for victims of armed conflict and other vulnerable groups. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, 'Half a million euros destined for United Nations food...' (2008).

In November 2008, the Government of Catalonia signed an agreement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to contribute 556,000 euros to the supply of sexual and reproductive health products, and to reduce maternal mortality in countries such as Mozambique, Guatemala and Ethiopia. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Government contributes almost 1.5 million euros to United Nations programmes, *Exteriors Newsletter of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation*, 2008).

Catalonia was the first non-state government to sign a framework collaboration agreement with the United Nations Development Programme. In January 2009, the Government of Catalonia concluded a framework agreement of understanding between the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), '...through which both institutions committed to a strengthening of the relationship...' (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Government of Catalonia signs pioneering agreement with UNDP, *Exteriors Newsletter of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation*, 2009).

By means of the Catalan Communities Abroad Unit, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs offers support to private associations all over the world which the Government of Catalonia has recognised as Catalan communities, also known as Catalan centres or houses ("casals"). The Generalitat offers subsidies aimed at the promotion and

dissemination of Catalan language and culture abroad. During the inauguration ceremony of the 4th Gathering of the Catalan Communities Worldwide, the Vicepresident of the Government of Catalonia, Josep-Lluís Carod-Rovira, asserted that the Catalan communities are ‘...fundamental for the international projection of the country...’. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, The Vicepresident of the Government of Catalonia describes the role of the Catalan communities as “fundamental” for the projection of Catalonia abroad, 2008)

The Department of Humanitarian Action and Cooperation of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs is responsible for planning, promoting and monitoring the Generalitat’s activities concerning overseas development cooperation. The Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD) offers subsidies for projects by Catalan NGOs in the area of cooperation for development and humanitarian aid in developing countries, and for awareness-raising and educational initiatives in Catalonia itself. The 2009 budget for the ACCD amounted to 74% of the budget for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. (Autonomous Government of Catalonia, 2009 Annual Plan for Cooperation reinforces aid effectiveness and quality (*Exteriors Newsletter of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation*, 2009).

## Conclusion

The international system is no longer exclusively a states system. Indeed, states are struggling to contain foreign policy within the limits of national control. The tendency towards globalisation has been accompanied by an often countervailing tendency towards localisation and a new emphasis on identity. This article has pointed to some of the ways in which the combined weight of globalization and European integration has undermined the functional purpose of the nation-state and has raised vital questions about sovereignty and territory. Regions with their own distinct identity, culture and language have felt able to seek out resources or support networks that are unavailable to them in the nation-states within which they currently exist. Subnational governments from Scotland to Catalonia have wasted little time in systematically created a growing number of networks that stretch across national boundaries.

Foreign policy is being redefined as policy makers respond to domestic and international pressures. The growth of post-war multilateral diplomacy has seen foreign ministries experience a “demonopolisation” of jurisdiction over statecraft as other departments of government - trade, finance, etc- have commonly felt able to act abroad. Clearly, as the Catalan case would tend to indicate, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (like so many MFAs in Europe) no longer plays the role of a gatekeeper towards the outside world but is now required to share its status with other participants. While highly institutionalized, the international interests of subnational governments tend to be more limited in nature and more economic in orientation than those of national governments. The importance of such activities tend to be focused on coordinated measures across borders. Bilateral relationships with states, as the closest thing to traditional diplomacy, are particularly important

in symbolic terms to substate nations. The same is true of participation in regional and international organizations/conferences<sup>53</sup>.

Peter Lynch<sup>54</sup> has argued that paradiplomacy can be used as a nation-building strategy in preparation for a bid for statehood or as a political defence mechanism for regional governments that wish to resist secession but wish also to demonstrate they can still play an effective international role. As Spain's Constitution does not foresee the right to self-determination for any part of the country, it seems likely that the Catalan government is attempting to raise its international profile while stopping short of outright secession. Less than 15% of the Catalan population would favour Independence (as shown by periodic Generalitat surveys) Catalonia has not embraced proto-diplomacy or the pursuance of the political aim of separation from the nation-state. In recent years, Catalonia has considerably intensified its representation abroad and strengthened its trans-and inter-regional cooperation within the EU and regions external to the EU. Catalonia has built strong relationships with foreign national and subnational governments and business contacts with private sector industries and worked to encourage inward investment, export promotion and market competitiveness. Overall, the Catalan government has proven to be an adept proponent of transborder regional paradiplomacy, transregional paradiplomacy and global paradiplomacy. At the same time, the Catalan government has generally been careful to ensure that its promotion of Catalan interests on the international level has not come into conflict with those of Spain.

Clearly, the development of European integration has ushered in an incremental erosion of the ability of central governments in member states to dominate in many areas of what are termed "high-politics". In many respects, the process of Europeanisation has undermined the traditional lines of division between the international and the nation. In the EU no nation-state is fully independent anymore. National politics are, and will continue to be, increasingly penetrated by European influences through law, bureaucratic contacts, political exchange and the role of the European Commission in agenda setting. In the post-modern international system, the EU finds itself at a strategic advantage because its methods, priorities fit more closely with the needs and consequences of globalisation. Thus, the EU represents a political regime which provides previously domestic actors such as regional governments with opportunities to take advantage of new opportunities to access the international scene. It is an indisputable fact that regions such Catalonia are already well embedded in EU structures and institutions.

Bilateral relationships between regions based on economic, social and cultural cooperation are a long-standing and expanding type of paradiplomacy for regional governments as the Catalan case shows. The possibilities presented by the EU have attracted the attention of Scottish, Basque and Catalan nationalists *inter alia*. Furthermore, it is also the case that the complex and ambiguous nature of European

<sup>53</sup> Lecours & Moreno, 'Paradiplomacy and Stateless Nations...', 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Lynch, p. 159

integration, has allowed minority nationalist organizations to actively embrace it as a potential substitute to the contested legitimacy of the nation-state. An important element of the paradiplomacy associated with the Catalan government revolves around its interactions with EU institutions. The Catalan government has initiated determined steps to integrate more firmly with European institutions and other regions/stateless nations within the EU.

While state sovereignty has been eroded, nation-states are, of course, still powerful players in the international system. Governments can still confidently promote their interests. States undeniably retain political, military and symbolic significance. In the context of globalization, states are changing but they are not disappearing. Thus, the EU may substantially fail to satisfy the demands of restive sub-state nations on its territory. Wolff<sup>55</sup> has rightly pointed out that it is the sovereign state that decides how much of its power it shares with autonomous entities. The Committee of the Regions is a purely consultative body that offers little of substantive value to the practical construction of a 'Europe of the Regions'. The principle of subsidiarity does not cover relationships between governments and subnational governments. A subnational government is not in a position to negotiate independently with Brussels or act in opposition to its national government<sup>56</sup>. Ministers in the Spanish government can always overrule Catalan ministers on matters of EU policy.

As the power of economic interdependence has intensified, regions such as Catalonia have needed to actively engage in the global economy. Catalonia has displayed particular interest in the development of cross-border cooperation as a means to strengthen regional and local economies, achieve greater territorial cohesion, and help to reduce regional disparities. The Generalitat is not promoting an alternative foreign policy to that of Madrid but it is clear in its intent to develop distinct territorial aims in Europe and beyond.

That is not to say that Catalonia has restricted itself merely to what might be typically termed "low policy" issues. Human security used to be viewed in terms of traditional national security approaches and interstate conflicts. Threats to international peace and security are, however, no longer exclusively about defending the state from external military attack. Sub national governments such as that of Catalonia have increasingly involved themselves in areas that might be categorized as evolving areas of "high policy", such as climate change, human rights, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and the promotion of foreign aid and development policies. The various processes for dealing with these challenges are of a predominantly multilateral character, are highly institutionalized and accessible to sub-national entities.

While these common challenges to the sovereign state are likely to vary under different national and international conditions, it is arguable that in the current era

<sup>55</sup> Wolff, 'Paradiplomacy: Scope, Opportunities and Challenges'...

<sup>56</sup> Bogdanor, p. 279

of globalization, nation-states can no longer be regarded as the preeminent spatial markers of international relations. The political effects of such a transformation are already visible in the case under study in this article. Catalonia and its position in the global community offer an example of the ways in which a diffusion of autonomy between different layers of government—in this case, Catalan, Spanish and European—have become part of the new *modus operandi* in at least the European space of the global world.

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