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Paper title
Does the International Decentralized Cooperation contribute to increase State Influence in the Global Arena? An Approach of European Union/Brazil Sub-national Relations.

Abstract
The new international order that emerged after the Cold War did not bring sudden changes in the field of international relations. Many processes were underway when the bipolar order was abolished, as regionalism, globalism and the international participation of actors other than States. However, these phenomena were accelerated and intensified from the new established order, which takes a more interdependent and multilateral bias. It is marked by the rise of new autonomous power centers and the common practice of other forms of influence (soft power) in the international system rather than the traditional military power. The practice of international relations by the State constituent units reflects, on the one hand, the private interests of sub-state governments to implement policies for the welfare of their citizens, and, on the other hand, functions as a form of power projection as the cooperation actions result in a strengthening of relations (political and economic) established between the subunits and also propagate the image of the State as a whole. The aim of this paper is to verify how the Decentralized International Cooperation managed by subnational units has served to strengthen State global insertion capacities. In this sense, the bilateral programs of decentralized cooperation developed between the Brazilian states and some Member States of the European Union in the 1999-2014 period will be analyzed.

Marcelo de Almeida Medeiros
Rio Branco International Relations Chair – St Antony’s College – University of Oxford (2015). Associate Professor of Political Science, Federal University of Pernambuco (Recife – Brazil), and PQ-1D Research Fellow, CNPq (Brasilia – Brazil).

Liliana Ramalho Fróio
Adjunct Professor of International Relations, Federal University of Paraíba (João Pessoa – Brazil).
Introduction

It is remarkable that the participation of sub-national authorities in the international arena, although not recent, becomes more intense in recent decades as a result particularly of global interdependence, which has provided trans-sovereign contacts as Ivo D. Duchacek (1988) points out. A globalized and interdependent world means greater mobility of people and easy access to information, facilitating interaction between societies and bringing issues that transform the traditional state-centric logic and instigate other players to get involved in international politics. From thereon borders have become more porous and sovereignty perforated by the movement of people, goods, and pollutants, that is, national boundaries cannot always effectively protect countries and their sub-national units of external events (Duchacek et al. 1988).

Therefore, the rapid impact of world events on economic, political and social strategies of sub-state actors leads them to initiate and receive trans-sovereign signs, even though their wealth and power goals remain primarily intra-sovereign. Searching for alternatives to promote development, regional and local governments have stepped up the establishment of direct relations with foreign actors – a phenomenon well known as paradiplomacy. These international actions may reflect both their interest in implementing policies for economic growing and welfare of their citizens as a form of power projection, since the cooperation actions can result in a strengthening of relations (political and economic) established and also propagate the image of the State as a whole.

For instance can be mentioned protodiplomacy cases, when given territorial communities aims to become a separate political entity and there is a sub-national diplomatic effort to establish foreign links and obtain support for future secession and international recognition (McHugh, 2015). This should be the most commonly reported form of soft power practice by subunits, thinking specifically in persuasion and attraction capacity to get what one wants. However, this probably should not be the only form and we can also refer the idea of knowledge regions, “whose

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1Monnet (1976: 07)
2As Keating (1999: 06) points out: “Paradiplomacy is part of a broadening of the universe of international affairs, in which states are no longer the sole actors. Regions operate alongside firms, trade unions, social movements and transnational organizations like Greenpeace or Oxfam. This universe is complex, fragmented and unstructured.”
strategic relevance derives from the very nature of tacit knowledge production and dissemination” and this is a powerful ingredient to pursue their interests and project identity (Neves, 2010: 15).

The concept of constituent diplomacy, forged by Kincaid (1990: 74) intending “to be a neutral descriptor, one that avoids the implication that the activities of constituent governments are necessarily inferior, ancillary, or supplemental to the high politics of nation-state diplomacy” seems to be useful considering that what is called here Decentralized International Cooperation is understood in this terms, i.e.: as a local public policy searching for both the development of the region and the State.

The aim of this paper is instigate to go further and analyze whether other forms of attraction have been exerted beyond the attempt to approach external actors and influence them aiming their support to separatist cause. Our more specific purpose is to verify how the Decentralized International Cooperation managed by subnational units has served to reinforce alliances, reduce competitors and set rules. In this sense, the bilateral programs of decentralized cooperation developed between the Brazilian states and some Member States of the European Union in the 1999-2014 period will be analyzed.

As primary hypothesis it is argued that some European countries are managing their prominence as Brazil’s partners over the past decade, despite the prioritization of South-South Cooperation within the Brazilian foreign policy from 2003 (Lula’s presidency), because, among other reasons, the cooperation with Brazilian subnational entities (states). Therefore, a soft power exercises by using a paradiplomacy instrument, which gives them an ‘attractive’ power. There are three sections to present this thesis work, beginning by addressing particularities of the paradiplomacy case study, in order to first present the context of the events analyzed. Afterward is shown how decentralized cooperation can act as a form of soft power more generally for then, in the last section, will analyze the specific case of Brazil-Europe decentralized cooperation.

Uncovering paradiplomatic context

Studies that include changes in the international context in recent decades are recurrent and have provided both traditional thematic revaluations as the analysis of new challenging issues for the International Relations field. These transformative trends are observed in the conduct of foreign policy, area designed by traditional theorists as
the expression of national interest and has the State as the leading actor and decision-making intermediary of other domestic actors. The global context, however, has provided growing interest and direct participation of internal actors in international affairs - concerning the environment, for instance, there is a recent trend of performance of countries subunits. As Hudson (2007: 07) noticed:

“The single most important contribution of FPA to IR theory is to identify the point of theoretical intersection between the most important determinants of state behavior: material and ideational factors. The point of intersection is not the state, it is human decisionmakers”\(^3\).

And those determinants and human decisionmakers could be situated in different government levels.

The theoretical and conceptual reflections about subunits actions start up through two trajectories of studies in 1970-1980 decades, which interact with each other and result in pioneering studies of systematization of the phenomenon in the late 1980s. On the one hand, there are studies of International Relations field debating the movement of actors diversification in international politics and therefore sought to question the theoretical and classical argument that the State is the only relevant actor of international system. The focus fell on global interdependence scenario and on new possible actors, particularly domestic actors and international institutions, such as agents promoters of cooperation and integration processes. Were then developed new theories that addressed the interdependence and forms of interconnection between the plurality of actors, the functioning of institutions, the regional integration process, the possibilities of international cooperation and the international regimes configuration (Keohane and Nye, 1971; 1989; Axelrod and Keohane, 1985; Rosenau, 1984; Krasner, 1983). As recently stated by Heine (2013: 56):

“*The logic of flows and of networks has had a double impact on the modern nation state. On the one hand, it has forced the state to give up a measure of its national sovereignty to link up with a variety of supra-national and intergovernmental units that attempt to introduce a measure of coordination among national policies. On the other hand, it has opened the ‘black box’ of the nation state, as many sub-national units and civil society actors link up with their own peers across the world, giving a further impetus to transnational relations. All of this has led to a growing number of actors, both domestic and international, and the always critical ‘foreign policy community’ to make their presence felt and to add layers of complexity to government decision-making, foreign policy, and the conduct of diplomacy*”.

\(^3\)FPA- Foreign Policy Analysis. IR – International Relations.
These theoretical constructs about global interdependence and the role of other actors than the central states found space in a scholar’s research about federalism and the changes in the organization and operation of the federal states, especially in relation to its territorial and political integrity (Duchacek, 1970; 1986; Elazar 1966; 1987). They made use of these theoretical inferences of international relations and advanced the analysis to include sub-national governments and international actors. As pointed out by Elliot Feldman and Lily Feldman (1984: 34-36), although Keohane and Nye recognize that foreign policy is not the exclusive domain of foreign ministers of the central government, they underestimate the scope, magnitude and significance of transgovernmentalism and do not give greater attention to the activities of the subunits.

Were the publications of political scientists from European, Canadian and American universities (Ivo Duchacek, Panayotis Soldatos, Hans J. Michelmann, John Kincaid, Earl Fry, Daniel Latouche) that began to give meaning to the international activity of subnational government entities. In their research, they discussed the relationship between federalism, international relations and foreign policy, influenced by the works of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye on interdependence and transnationalism. Ivo Duchacek wrote most of the articles of the time on the international role of subnational governments, being the pioneer to identify and study the new phenomenon, including giving him the first terminologies.

Duchacek initially uses the term microdiplomacy to define the relationships between subunits from different countries and macrodiplomacy as traditional diplomacy of central governments. However, he later clarified that this terminology could acquire a derogatory image and therefore he chooses to use the term paradiplomacy created by Panayotis Soldatos. That is because in his view the term 'para' express more accurately the phenomenon: as a parallel activity, oftencoordinated, complementary and sometimes in conflict with the traditional diplomacy of central governments (Duchacek, 1990: 32). The concept of paradiplomacy becomes widely used since then, including the Brazilian scholars.

In short, it is noticeable how monopoly of nation-states central governments in the conduct of foreign policy have been undermined over the years and its territorial units assumed starring role in various negotiations, especially those that influence them directly. In Europe, the issue of subunits international autonomy became more prominent from the 1990s with the progress in European integration and creation of the Committee of Regions. Furthermore, David Crique man (2008) assumes that sub-states
diplomacy are undergoing a ‘third wave’, especially in Europe. The first wave occurred in the 1980s, when an increasing number of non-central governments tried to attract foreign direct investment or to use cultural elements for international recognition. The second wave is from the 1990s and is marked by the institutionalization of subunits diplomatic activities, both in legal terms as administrative. Lastly, the third wave means advances in diplomatic tools and structural reorganization, *i.e.*, improvement at paradiplomacy apparatus\(^4\).

In Brazil, the democratization context in the 1980s resulted in political changes in the federal system, from the transfer of powers to states and municipalities. The Federal Constitution of 1988 deepened the autonomous capacity of states and municipalities in various subjects, however, retained the exclusive competence of the Brazilian central government to manage foreign affairs and conclude international acts\(^5\). The absence of constitutional provision has not inhibited, however, the so-called Brazilian paradiplomacy, manifested through missions abroad, fundraising, trade promotion, establishment of international partnerships. It is argued that paradiplomacy can do without international legal norms and is legitimate insofar as it relates to matters that the subunit has constitutional authority.

Indeed, Brazilian paradiplomacy has been consolidating in recent years and the federal government has been concerned about this movement and taken steps to respond to the phenomenon, while states and municipalities have been working in their areas of competence and also using their constitutional guarantees in order to increase its activities internationally\(^6\). Nevertheless, Brazil is in a lower stage to what operates in Europe, as many European countries guarantee in internal rules the international participation of its subunits and can still be represented in supranational EU bodies, things that Brazilian subunits are far from achieving. The difference can be seen even in the way these subunits do international relations and the instruments they use to act abroad.

In general, paradiplomatic international instruments are reclassified according to their content and their obligatory character, as seen in the table below.

| Table 1 – General Paradiplomatic Tools |

\(^4\) The waves’ frame proposed by Criekeman is, in some way, inspired on Duchacek’s geopolitical dimensions typology: (1) transborder regional paradiplomacy; (2) transregional (or macroregional) and paradiplomatic contacts; (3) global paradiplomacy. (Duchacek, 1990: 16)

\(^5\) Brazilian Federal Constitution, Article 21.

\(^6\) Brazilian paradiplomacy develops under common competences, which includes, for example, the areas of health care, environment, culture and education. *Cf*. Brazilian Federal Constitution: Title VIII.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political representation abroad</strong></td>
<td>Sign that the constituent unit wishes to further expand and deepen the existing cooperation beyond the level of the traditional diplomatic relations or facilitate contact with strategic partners. Usually working closely with the diplomacy of the central government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treaty-making power</strong></td>
<td>Create substantial content-based cooperation with other partners. Build and enhance the international-legal recognition of the respective subunit. Depends on the legal power given to the subunit or conquered by it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal agreements</strong></td>
<td>Declarations of intent, memorandums of understanding, cooperation agreements, transnational contracts, cultural agreements or partnerships. They are non-enforceable and do not compel the contracting parties to follow up on or implement their initial intention to cooperate. Much more flexible compared to the rather rigid structure of formal treaties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programmes of assistance and sharing of know-how</strong></td>
<td>Bilateral programmes, programmes on cross-boundary cooperation, programmes which want to bring the civil societies of the region and other regions/countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Detachment</strong></td>
<td>Professional training - send out a limited number of regional officials to come and work outside for a short period to further gain experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other forms of participation in multilateral frameworks and organizations</strong></td>
<td>Observing or participating in (technical) committees, the creation or participation to funds within multilateral organizations, becoming an associate member of multilateral organizations. Access to important multilateral debates that affect their internal competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in other formal and informal networks</strong></td>
<td>Try to set the international agenda, bring the necessary know-how and actors together to achieve specific goals, learn from other regions with similar or different experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing a public diplomacy</strong></td>
<td>Personal or regional promotion. Publicity. Making the international public more familiar with the reputation of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subcontracting to associations, non-profit societies, or third parties</strong></td>
<td>Try to utilize the know-how and networks of societal groups to advance the policy goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political statements</strong></td>
<td>Try to let their voice heard. To position themselves politically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Going abroad and foreign missions</strong></td>
<td>Through which official contacts are laid and maintained. Trade promotion, participation in international exhibitions, technical visits, prospecting visits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Adapted from Criekemans (2008).

The treaty-making power depends on the autonomy degree that is granted to subunits. The subunits of some federations have competence to conclude international treaties and contract obligations on the international scene, approaching the condition of
full subjects of law. Such is the case of the German Länders and Belgian regions (Jones & Keating, 1995). In other federations, however, the authorities have limited capacity in international legal terms. Brazilian states and municipalities can not make treaties, consisting of central government exclusive capacity and forbidden to federated entities. Even formal agreements should be informed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The guidelines of the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ABC-MRE) states that only central government has the authority to sign international agreements on technical cooperation, especially due to the commitment of these acts. If states and municipalities are interested in establishing partnership in the field of technical cooperation, with an international organization or foreign government, it must happen with ABC-MRE mediation.

Brazilian subunits do not tend to establish political representation abroad. The mechanisms most used by them have been networks participation, formal agreements, missions abroad – rarely making use of other tools listed above. This reflects somewhat the objectives of Brazilian subunits focused on economic interests (elementary goal of paradiplomacy), such as promotion of local businesses, attract investment, stimulating foreign trade. Political goals are unusual.

In Europe, on the other hand, although there may be some countries limiting the formal power of their sub-states to operate abroad, it is clear that they generate more diplomatic activities than Brazilian ones, especially given the advanced condition of regional integration process which has forced them to improve their international participation to defend their interests. While Brazilian paradiplomacy acts on a limited basis, considering the tools used, human and material resources, organization, structure and functioning, European paradiplomacy conquest his ‘third wave’, as Criekeman argues: a defined ‘foreign policy’; higher degree of institutional agreements; investments in new forms of diplomacy (like ‘public diplomacy’); professionalisation; expansion and deepening of cooperation (Criekeman, 2008: 34-35). Taking into account this advanced stage, it is more than significant to question their intentions.

From this context, it is possible to conclude that European countries seek to achieve other goals with paradiplomatic activities, not the same that Brazil, since they are in another degree of the process. Thus what they want to achieve and what interests want to realize with cooperation in these lines? Our interest in this research is trying to unravel a part of that question by analyzing the international decentralized technical cooperation agreements involving Brazil and some European countries. The next step is
therefore to understand the decentralized cooperation and how it works, particularly as an attraction mechanism.

**Decentralized International Cooperation: Is it a soft power?**

The Decentralized International Cooperation (DIC) could be defined more broadly as a sort of paradiplomatic action characterized by the establishment of bilateral or multilateral partnership involving sub-national actors. However, it is good to note that literature is reluctant to set a closing concept. Hafteck (2003) sought to point out the conceptual differences, highlighting that decentralized cooperation is located at the intersection of two parent fields: development aid cooperation and international relations of sub-national governments (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Decentralized Cooperation**

![Diagram of Decentralized Cooperation](source: Hafteck, 2003.)

In Hafteck diagram, it is possible to realize that not all development cooperation and paradiplomacy activities consists in a decentralized cooperation activity. The latter should involve sub-national governments (actors), aim the local development (goal) and focus on exchange and support (nature). However, “various organizations involved in development cooperation use and interpret the term in different ways” (Hafteck, 2003:334). The European Union interpretation follows the Lomé Convention of 1995 and the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, which have a broader view of decentralized...
cooperation projects actors: all possible project-implementing entities other than central government can execute decentralized cooperation as long as they engage in non-profit activities. “A partnership between two universities, or two private foundations, or even two political parties could fall into the field of DC, according to the EU” (Hafteck, 2003: 334).

For others, like the United Nations Development Programme, what matters is where activities take place. There is a geographical meaning in the concept, thus corresponding to international cooperation links between actors belonging to two sub-national geographical areas. “These refer to areas of jurisdiction of specific local authorities, where the actors of DC are not necessarily the local authorities themselves” (Hafteck, 2003: 334).

Our understanding is closer to French, Italian and World Bank perspectives. In their view, quoting Hafteck once more, what matters is what is done and how it is done. Some features of these perspectives can be emphasized, such as the importance of having a written agreement, the goal of socio-economic development along with the strengthening of skills and competencies of the partners involved, and also the role of civil society. DC does not exclude other agents of being involved in cooperation and civil society is seen not only as beneficiaries but also as protagonist. In this sense, the author finally summarizes the DC as “substantial collaborative relationship between sub-national governments from different countries, aiming at sustainable local development, implying some form of exchange or support carried out by these institutions or other locally based actor” (Hafteck, 2003:336).

This means that decentralized cooperation embraced a relationship of mutual benefits (as is the essence of cooperation) with key involvement of civil society. Indeed, the terminology that appears at the end of the 1980s, within the Lomé Convention, was intended to review the traditional idea of cooperation to improve their applicability, efficiency, transparency and inspection. This type of cooperation includes a wide range of actors closer to the focal point of the projects, thus allowing the active participation of the beneficiaries. The most impressive in this phenomenon is the large scale it has reached in these years, especially when analyzing the European case.

For instance, it is worth report the case of Cités Unies France, an organization created in 1975 out of the World Federation of Twin Cities that has a “membership of 500 local authorities at all levels of the French decentralized structure, and a network of some 2,000 cities in France and in low - and middle-income countries” (Stren,
Draws attention the French central government support to the initiative of its subunits. The document “Governance Strategy for French Development Assistance” from French Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasizes the importance of working with local authorities on overseas projects, to develop exchanges with local government through the various representative bodies in existence (Stren, 2008). Put another way, it is one more possibility to establish strategic partnerships and strengthening alliances that can bring them benefits. This is the attraction power that decentralized cooperation can provide. Giving States visibility, strengthening leadership position, occupying open spaces and project values that form part of their image. That is, developing the “ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment” (Nye, 2008:94).

Josep Coll (2015) goes further by stating that emerging cities, in particular, adds a more efficient model than nation states, introducing a new governance more adapted to the reality of a liquid and uncertain society. This model of governance operates behind the scenes of macro politics and its influence and implications is what we want to understand. Our contribution within these reflections is by analyzing the case of decentralized cooperation between Brazil and Europe.

Analysing Brazil-Europe cooperation

International technical cooperation is understood as a tool for development of technical capabilities through the access and incorporation of knowledge, information, technologies, experiences and practices on non-commercial basis in all areas of knowledge. Through technical cooperation, the beneficiaries have access to experience and expertise that aggregates the previously existing institutional and human capacity, which contribute to the development of the country. The projects presented in this area can aim the exchange of knowledge, training and qualification of institutions and individuals, consulting and training support programs. Cooperation also occurs through technical missions, studies and development of joint activities in order to solve a given problem.

Whether Brazilian states and municipalities wish to establish technical cooperation partnerships with countries and international organizations, they must submit the project to ABC/MRE that first checks for the Basic Agreement between
Brazil and the international entity. Confirmed the validity of the Agreement, the projects could be developed. These acts may be concluded without topical congressional approval, since nothing add to the obligations under the Basic Agreement and are its complement, not resulting in charges to the national patrimony. Such projects are then implemented through Complementary Agreements and Executive Programs, the negotiation and necessary referrals for your celebration is done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2010, International Acts Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to include in its manual the international acts signed by subnational governments in the country.

Subunits are not contrary to the guidelines of the national foreign policy or even carried on matters of high politics. Paradiplomacy develops under common skills, which includes, for example, actions for health issues, environment, culture and education. The Federal government seeks follow the international activities of entities and aware subnational leaders the need to communicate in advance the foreign ministry about their activities. The main purpose is to prevent subnational governments establish relationships with actors that the State has not diplomatic relations and to celebrate international acts that are outside of its mandate.

The international technical cooperation projects mapped in this study were obtained from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The study period was from 1999 to 2014. Thus, we obtained 273 international technical cooperation projects involving the participation of Brazilian states. The main mode of technical cooperation that appears is in the bilateral mode: there were 150 acts of bilateral cooperation and 123 of multilateral cooperation. The prioritized sectors of activity in technical cooperation were environment (23.5%), economic development (18.7%), social inclusion (17.6%), public administration (15.4%) and health (9.9%). For the infrastructure, there were only 11 technical cooperation projects. On the other hand, the health sector also was highlighted in international technical cooperation with almost 10% of all analyzed projects. However, the priority area of technical cooperation has been the economic development area. That is what Brazilian subunits seek to prioritize when they cooperate with other countries.

The most important in this survey about cooperation agreements is that European countries have had relevance as partners in the projects. The main countries sought to collaborate over these 15 years, in order, are: Japan (29%), Germany (26%), France (24%), Canada (8.6%) and Spain (6.6%). As can be noticed, Germany, France
and Spain are countries that have achieved prominence during these years. What stands out is the commitment of these countries to invest in international cooperation projects with Brazilian entities. What are the consequences of many years of dominance?

This presence prevails so that becomes the reference for Brazilian subunits. Projects are constantly renewed or new proposals emerge and the authorities seek to maintain this partnership, which for them becomes the safest option especially for the poorest Brazilian states that have precarious condition to raise new horizons and diversify partnerships and projects. As results there are reinforce in alliances and competition reduction. In the speech of the President of the General Council of Seine-Saint-Denis (France), Mr. Stéphane Troussel, this is the work of rapprocher that decentralized cooperation should play. The aim is not only to affirm commitment to the values they defend, but to assert itself as a reference; turn the logic of North-South cooperation; think more in partnership than in development cooperation; develop a leading logic⁷.

Some events demonstrate the consequences of this strategy. The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 did not foresee the international action of subunits, but this fact does not appear to limit the paradiplomatic activity, although it may generate some disagreements with the central government diplomacy. Subunits agencies often report the Federal Government only after signing an agreement, there are cases in which the agreements are signed without the existence of an earlier treaty framework, duplication cases, presumption of nexus- legality⁸.

To avoid these problems, there have been some proposals in favor of a legal reform to the standardization of paradiplomatic activities. In 2005, a Constitutional Amendment (PEC No. 475/05) was presented in order to allow subnational promote and conclude agreements with foreign subnational entities, requiring however prior authorization. The proposal was rejected and in 2006, another attempt took place. The Complementary Bill (PLS No. 98/06) suggested an adjustment to allow states, municipalities and the Federal District, within its constitutional powers, negotiate and

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⁸The duplication occurs when there is existing framework agreement between the central government but the federal units have signed another agreement. The presumption of nexus-legality is the perception of subnational governments that the agreement produces legal effects from its signature and would be automatically bound to the agreements signed by the central government, dispensing the required formalities.
make deals with other foreign subunits. These acts should be subject to prior authorization from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The bill was also not approved.

There is a more recent proposal in progress. Since 2013, representatives of sub-national governments have discussed, in a series of meetings organized by Under Secretariat for Federative Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic, creating now a Presidential Decree to establish procedures for decentralized international technical cooperation activities. The discussion of the proposal was completed and came to an agreement on the final text, but it still needs the analysis of the legal consultants of the Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The decree is the result of a demand from subunits by a legal framework or reference on decentralized cooperation, which can provide legal certainty and support to paradiplomatic actions. The aim is to strengthen their international areas.

Throughout this process what is striking is the subliminal influence of European presence in the tenders. Brazil used for a long time the conceptual framework "federal" (as federative diplomacy and international federative cooperation) to refer to its subunits - it is an allusion to the Brazilian federalist model. However, the conceptual reference to build the internal rules in this matter has changed recently to "decentralized". One of the strong reasons for this change is the cooperation protocols signed with Italy (2007) and France (2006). These protocols brought two novelties for ongoing discussion and for the rule set: first the replacement of the federative idea for decentralization idea - something that is not part of the national culture as the Brazilian subunits do not acquire the autonomy that the term might suggest and is present in several European countries; secondly, the incorporation of civil society in this process – an unprecedented for Brazilian diplomacy at all levels, since traditionally the international affairs are shut out of society.9

We can continue citing other examples, such as the participation of these countries in official meetings of the federal government to publicize actions and force partnerships (seen up as a form of harassment). In one such meeting foreign participants went further, did criticism of the presidential decree model in progress and even suggested other terminology, such as territorial cooperation 10. That is not being

9 This semantic change should be understood in practical terms, as in the theoretical level a federal system normally involves more autonomy than decentralized ones. Cf. Rougemont (1994).
discussed here the benefits that international technical cooperation can bring to Brazil and its sub-units. But it is important to bring (and this is what we intend to do) a new reflection on the matter and go further, questioning the influence power of these countries and how far it is harmful or not.

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