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# Neighborhood paradiplomacy in Chile: thought and practice of non-state foreign policy

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## Abstract

The text analyzes Chilean neighborhood paradiplomacy with Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, practice carried out under three conditions: a history of conflicts and border problems with the three neighbors; the absence of diplomatic relations between Chile and Bolivia and the existence of subnational and social actors paradiplomacy, restricted by the power of the State, whose vision is dominated by security perceptions.

**Keywords:** Chile; neighborhood paradiplomacy; Bolivia; Perú; Argentina.

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## Introduction

When addressing neighborhood paradiplomacy, an important difference exists when the subject or subjects of the study are unitary or federal States. For example, in Brazil and Argentina, studies on paradiplomacy are more developed because their federalism guarantees freedoms to the provinces and federal states that the unitary Chilean State does not allow to its national regions. Based on this difference, Chilean paradiplomacy is very different.

Paradiplomacy is not a practice far from what we know as traditional diplomacy. For Duchacek (1990), paradiplomacy is subsidiary or accessory to state diplomacy. According to Barston (2019) there are practices that are part of the new diplomacies and that their variety was related to the emergence of new agendas, beyond security and high politics and a diplomacy undertaken by a wide range of actors. Sub-national governments and actors from national civil societies project themselves into the international field, developing practices that are diverse due

to their themes, agendas and interests and the degree of involvement of the actors. Civil society, an active and proactive actor in the face of the authoritarian State (Romero, 2012), or strongly centralized (Fuentes 2015), such as the Chilean State (Ovando Santana 2013), has been a key actors in these processes. Despite the set of laws approved since 2009 which have modified the regional government and administration system, the centralism of the State is based on the current Constitution.

## Political limitations as a consequence of complex neighborhood relations

Chile has a history of complex relations with its three neighbors [Chile fought two wars with Peru and one with Bolivia during the 19th century. The War of the Pacific (1879-1884), in which Bolivia and Peru formed an alliance against Chile, resulted in significant territorial losses for both Bolivia and Peru]. There have been conflicts with Argentina over border delimitations since 1881. In 1978 both countries were on the brink of war. Chile and Bolivia have not had diplomatic relations (only consular) for more than four decades. Peru and Bolivia have taken Chile to court before The Hague, for maritime delimitation (Peru, 2008-2014), and to force Chile to negotiate an exit to the sea (Bolivia, 2013-2018). In this scenario, paradiplomacy, exercised by social actors has contributed to maintaining friendly ties between the respective societies and to mitigating animosity within regional communities, exposed to nationalist media and an agenda around the rulings, which do not favor interdependence between border regions (Ovando Santana and González Miranda 2018). Colacrai (2019), observing from Argentina, provided coincident and divergent readings regarding Chilean-Argentine relations, comparing them in contrast to the Chile-Peru and Chile-Bolivia links. While Chile and Argentina renewed their commitment to advance greater integration by signing the Maipú Treaty in 2009,<sup>1</sup> the judicialization of disputes in maritime and territorial areas with its northern neighbors caused speeches and actions that stimulated the search for peace among paradiplomatic actors better neighborhood relations and at other times encouraged “outbreaks of nationalism” and increased distrust. Despite the absence of judicialization with Argentina, there is no evidence of an expansion of sub-national diplomacy or the paradiplomacy of social actors.

With weak civil societies in the face of strongly centralized governments, paradiplomacy has acquired new dynamics and characteristics. They respond to the emergence of regional and local autonomies, as in the case of Bolivia (Bernal-Meza 2015), to the active participation of local governments in issues of international relations, which translate into local diplomacy that

<sup>1</sup> The Maipú Treaty of Integration and Cooperation between Chile and Argentina was signed on October 30, 2009. It is complementary to the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1984. The commitments derived from this Treaty and its Complementary Protocols refer to issues of physical connectivity, border facilitation, trade, defense, and consular matters, to strengthen bilateral integration. See Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile: [https://www.minrel.gob.cl/tratado-de-maipu-el-futuro-de-la-integracion-chileno-argentina-los/minrel\\_old/2011-09-15/175751.html](https://www.minrel.gob.cl/tratado-de-maipu-el-futuro-de-la-integracion-chileno-argentina-los/minrel_old/2011-09-15/175751.html).

complements a foreign policy with a vision of the State, as is the Mexican case (Gobierno de México 2021) and the decentralization of central power. Paradiplomacy can be considered a more open and participatory type of relationship than traditional diplomacy, whose practices derive from decision-making processes that civil society is unaware of, because they are in the black box of power (Amorin Neto and Malamud 2019). This article carries out a qualitative and descriptive systematization analysis of paradiplomacy in Chile. We investigate how Chilean regions and municipalities can achieve more autonomy and civil society can reach, in turn, greater rights of expression. We analyze Chilean paradiplomacy in the Northern Strip (Bolivia and Peru), which we confront with Chilean paradiplomacy with Argentina.

## Theoretical-methodological framework

This has been built from the assertion that in Chile there are two types of paradiplomacy: that of subnational or substate actors -as paradiplomacy is known in general- and the paradiplomacy of social actors. Methodologically, the selection of authors used as secondary sources has dealt primarily with the Northern Strip. The choice has been made considering those most disseminated through articles, book chapters and book editions and, subsequently, considering the authors they themselves cite in their works. The number of works consulted is in the order of thirty. For the study of paradiplomacy with Argentina, works of doctoral theses and bachelor's theses have been traced, having used as one of the main axes a field study, whose main objective was to know the perception of subnational actors and private economic actors. and semi-private, on the state of Chile's relations with its neighbors and learn about the current actions of subnational paradiplomacy and social actors with Argentina. The selected authors are essentially Chilean. This is explained because the objective has been to provide a vision of Chilean paradiplomacy from the perspective and vision of this country. However, Argentine authors have been cited, who provide visions on Chilean-Argentine paradiplomacy, which is even less developed. The temporal period, although in its beginning it refers to the historical processes that have marked Chile's bilateral relations with its neighbors, has focused on the contemporary period, after the return of democracy (1990). According to Arenas Arias (2018), the analytical frameworks that today guide the study of paradiplomacy do not require a "priced list of causes that explain why such a determined will for projection and active participation in the foreign sphere has become widespread among sub-state entities."

As Keating (2000) has pointed out, paradiplomacy is characterized by a high degree of participation by civil society and the private sector, with variations depending on political and institutional factors and the constitutional regime. It represents a new dimension of regionalism and international relations, which shows the growing distinction between internal and international affairs and between national and regional spheres. Despite institutional and political restrictions, paradiplomacy has different expressions of cooperation, including border integration and border

regionalism. Theoretically, the international political economy approach helps to understand the presence of social actors, who bring their own agendas to paradiplomacy. On the other hand, constructivism facilitates the understanding of the social relations that occur through paradiplomacy, since they depend on what they themselves mean for the actors involved, whose practices reproduce or alter the system (national or international) through of their usual actions. Constructivism facilitates the understanding of social practices (Santa Cruz, 2009). Both visions argue in favor of the internationalization processes of subnational and transnational entities. Without ignoring the importance of States as main actors in the international system, the visualization of internal (national) problems pressures for solutions of greater importance, in the matters of the internal and external policy of the States themselves (Mejía Martínez, 2019), which stimulates trans/inter/regional/border paradiplomatic relations. New actors (social; regional, transregional, transnational) were driven by the processes of transnationalization and interdependence (Tomassini, 1984), which deepened with the end of the Cold War. International relations under the new international order advanced towards regional contexts, seeking to respond more directly to globalizing and interdependent problems (Soldatos, 1990). But the change in the world order also empowered new actors, as Cornago (2013) and Khana (2016) argue. These actors would express themselves through paradiplomacy, assuming new roles: national, inter-regional and transnational and, in our case, following Soldatos (1990), through the “regional” category. But, just as these processes lead to regional integrations, they also open the way to new manifestations of nationalism, through heterology (Ovando Santana and González Miranda 2014), as we point out in this text.

## Two forms of paradiplomacy

Chilean paradiplomacy is poorly developed, for institutional reasons (political Constitution, unitary State), due to the state policy of a strong presidentialism and the predominant influence of the border and neighborhood security agenda. The authors have concentrated their research essentially on the Northern Strip (Peru and Bolivia), with few works that address neighborhood paradiplomacy with Argentina. Particularly in the Northern Strip, it is proving to be an exercise in multi-level social citizenship, where institutionalized citizenship (regional governments, municipalities) coincides with citizenship that is manifested through actions and activities of civil society. They practice innovative forms - such as ZICOSUR, the only cross-border regional instance with a subnational dimension, where subnational actors and civil societies from Chile and the regions, departments and provinces of its three neighbors actively participate. Regional actors -public and private- of the Northern Chileans see ZICOSUR as the main area of bilateral economic cooperation with the northwest provinces, bordering or close to the border with Chile; or the “Aymaras Without Borders (AE)” alliance, which involves a population of close to 200,000 people, distributed among the three national territories -in order to redefine neighborhood relations,

overcome social and cultural barriers and promote economic growth, through two main forms of cooperation: border integration and border regionalism that can involve national, binational and transnational activities, without subnational actors and States intervening. These local historical actors in the formation of identities and territorial settlement, today participate as actors in the formation of identities, settlement of territories and in transnational macro-regional activities, such as the exploitation of lithium, stimulated by transnational agents, which generate processes of economic deterritorialization.

Ovando Santana and Riquelme Gómez (2019) point out as a trigger for actions the emergence of paradiplomatic phenomena based on the economic, social and political projection of the regions, due to the relativization of the national dimension of international action, and the emergence of regional and scales cross-border as axes of this activity (González et. al. 2016). This dynamic of paradiplomatic cross-border relations has been addressed from the political economy of cross-border regions (Bernal-Meza 2020). In bilateral relations linked by common non-militarized borders, border regionalism or cross-border regionalism has been influenced by three processes that influence its recent dynamics: 1) the change in the nature and meaning of the border concept; 2) the processes of transnationalization and interdependence of the world political economy and, 3) changes in techno-productive patterns and international trade norms. None of these dynamics has been present. Not even the push of the interests of transnational companies has modified the situation, including the case of Argentina and Chile, which are linked by a binational exploitation mining agreement (December 2000), an instrument promoted by mining transnationals to exploit the Andes.

In this political context, the question we try to answer is why the Chilean paradiplomacy has not developed neither or made achievements along with that of its neighbor to make of those difficult environments some regions with a better welfare and good political relations. Considering the time between the first proposal from a civil society actor, that put forward some alternatives for a border integration of Arica, Tacna and Oruro (Bernal-Meza 1986) and the present time, it has only been formulated another initiative, coming from a sub-national actor, the municipality of Iquique, that in 2001 came up with an alternative to the central government of a possible non-sovereign way to the sea for Bolivia, in exchange for water supply for mining activities in north Chile (Aranda et al. 2010). The issue corresponds to a high political agenda.

After The Hague ruling benefiting Peru, paradiplomatic actors from Tacna and Arica, in collaboration with the consulates and universities of both countries, have tried to overcome the negative consequences of the litigation, through cross-border neighborhood agreements, taking advantage of the economic complementarity of the valley (Tacna) and the port (Arica). Ovando Santana and González Miranda (2018) have pointed out the good returns of these practices. More recently, Chilean and Bolivian academics have resumed bilateral exchanges, seeking to bring positions closer together regarding different historical visions and trying to establish lines of cooperation overcoming recent periods of bilateral confrontation.

## Decentralization and autonomy for sub-national paradiplomacy: state institutions

In paradiplomacy there is a close relationship between decentralization and autonomy (Moreira, 2015) and this with the external actions of social actors and their own agendas. The Chilean State does not encourage the international projection of domestic actors whose practices address agendas, considered exclusive attributions of the central power. The creation of state organizations to promote the external projection of the regions soon lost its momentum.

In the 1980s, the “Border Committees” were created as spaces for cross-border consultation between the State and neighboring countries to conduct “a work policy on issues of regional, local and neighborhood interest”. This experience was projected to different Latin American countries, to address operational problems of transit and trafficking of people, vehicles and goods; promoting the development, regional cooperation and integration and better understanding between border populations. Since the beginning of 2000, the structure of the central government, in charge of providing viability to the foreign actions of the Chilean regions, has the collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. Both perform coordination functions. The first, through the Regional Coordination Directorate (DICORE) and the Borders and Limits Directorate (DIFROL); the second, through the Undersecretary of Regional and Administrative Development.

For Ovando, et. al. (2021), the trends of public policies towards borders show that there is a certain struggle between authorities and academics over how to conceive borders, still based on geopolitical analysis. A valorization of spatial factors is maintained based on geopolitical postulates regarding the mobility and intrinsic conflict of borders or the disparity of power between neighbor countries as a factor of conflict. The Direction of Borders and Limits, DIFROL, complements the work of the SUBDERE. Since its beginnings, in 1969, a legal-territorialist emphasis has predominated in the conception of the border and an incipient cross-border cooperative vision, supported by the integration and border committees present in the territory (Álvarez Torres 2019). The Strategic Development Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeks to address the depopulation and the downcast economy of the province of Parinacota by managing the structural weaknesses of the highland territory, promoting tourism, agriculture and connectivity. The vision that the representatives of the areas of “Alto Andino Indigenous Development Arica-Parinacota”, ADIS (Created by the National Indigenous Development Corporation, CONADI, in 1995), have on this initiative, indicates that the plan must consider the obligation of the State to generate spaces for participation and collaboration with indigenous peoples in initiatives that may affect them and propose to recognize the dynamics of the Aymara people to deliberate on time, space, resources and assistance. The weaknesses of these border territories tend to be considered a threat per se to the State; a vulnerable geographical position due to the absence of controls. Ovando et. al (2021), maintain that there is a tension in the northern strip between perspectives that emphasize border integration, which are confronted by geopolitical strategies of neighbors, including Argentina

(Patagonia) in the south. From these images on the border, it is plausible to think that in historical Tarapacá (the current regions of Tarapacá and Arica and Parinacota) old territorial threats persist. The Regional Coordination Directorate (DICORE) is the unit responsible for supporting and collaborating with the international management initiatives of regional governments, provincial governments and municipalities. It collaborates with the Regional Governments through the Regional Units of International Affairs (URAI), which serves as a link between the Foreign Ministry and the regional authorities, assisting in the organization, promotion and management of international activities and projects. Ovando Santana and González Miranda (2018) point out that the foreign and cross-border action of the regions had a boost with the creation of DICORE and the support of SUBDERE, to promote the international management of the regions. This will decline over time, especially in the northern stripe regions; consequence of the diplomatic disputes with Peru and Bolivia, which discouraged state support for these activities -seen in the scarce diplomatic professionalization in paradiplomatic issues, the limited availability of resources to support its praxis and the lack of updating of foreign policy ideas to address the challenges of paradiplomacy (Fuentes 2015).

The bilateral problems and the lawsuits against Chile before The Hague provoked two responses from the central government: they discouraged international/border action with its neighbors in the Chilean regions of the northern strip and concentrated the management of neighborhood relations in their hands.

The form of civil participation in neighborhood affairs has been paradiplomacy. It has allowed societies linked by the border to develop a cross-border identity that silently affects the diplomatic work undertaken by consular bodies. Without being their objective, they contribute to the decentralization of the diplomatic system, tending to seek greater commitment with the other diplomat, the foreigner (Ovando Santana and González Miranda 2018). Paradiplomacy has made it possible to maintain a level of non-conflictive neighborhood relations between Chile and Bolivia. Paradiplomatic practices are contributing to the emergence of a geopolitics that opens new windows of bilateral understanding (Ovando Santana and González Miranda 2016). Favored by the Bolivian regional autonomies, paradiplomacy has contributed to maintaining the link between communities and local societies – today separated into different national societies – that go back centuries of history (Bernal-Meza 2015). In a way, *Aymarás Sin Fronteras* takes up that story.

The construction of a peaceful and cooperative neighborhood environment is essential for Chile. According to former Foreign Minister Walker, the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs spent more than 50% of the time resolving neighborhood problems.

Chile shares the longest border with Argentina, which has been the cause of conflicts since the 19th century, some of which have been close to the outbreak of acts of war (1958 and 1978). Bilateral relations, both State to State and society to society, have historically been the subject of conflicting perceptions and visions, a fact that has manifested itself in cycles of greater closeness, alternating with others of distancing between societies and their governments. The Treaty of

Maipú, which sought to strengthen bilateral ties, was an important step for Chile, given that it dominates the perception that considers Argentina as a neighbor that is not always predictable.

## Chilean paradiplomacy in the Northern Strip (Peru and Bolivia) and with Argentina

### 1) Approaches to Chilean paradiplomacy towards Bolivia

The two types of paradiplomacy –subnational or social actors– practiced with Bolivia are of great importance, due to the absence of diplomatic relations. The various expressions of paradiplomacy constitute instances of contacts and dialogue, including high political issues, such as Bolivia's Mediterranean nature, in their agendas. Among the various bilateral meetings, at the regional level, is the creation, at the initiative of the mayor of the Chilean city of Putre -Francisco Humire Alejandro-, of the strategic alliance “Aymaras Sin Fronteras (AE)”; a project that brings together 56 municipalities from the three countries.

Considering the restricted nature of the practices, the border dimension is the most widespread (Ovando Santana and González Miranda 2016), and the one that offers the greatest perspectives, in terms of well-being and development, both with Bolivia and Peru; having local groups as historical agents and actors in the formation of identities and territories (Ovando Santana and Riquelme Gómez 2019). The relational flows that go beyond borders and that develop between social groups other than national political entities are highlighted; the deployment of new, transnational actors, on regional scales –today attracted by the demand for lithium– that generate processes of economic deterritorialization, with the emergence of an economic space defined by global actors that does not coincide with national borders, while the impact of transoceanic transportation corridors affects the environment of local communities.

González Miranda and Ovando (2016) have pointed out that “revindicationism” has been the most widespread current in Bolivia, although there are more pragmatic positions that have adopted visions realistic, based on the factual situation, derived from the Peace Treaty of 1904, which established the limits between both countries. The vindicationist visions and emotivist, have become, in the last decade, a very influential source, both in that country's foreign policy and in the media and domestic politics. This vision, incorporated into the preceding vindictive nationalism, has even influenced areas of regional economic cooperation such as ZICOSUR, where the positions of representatives of civil society from both countries have confronted each other. The social actors have their own agenda, although the convocation of all of them, plus the sub-national actors and the consular representations themselves, as members of the Border Committees, have seen their bilateral ties decline. After seven years, in 2023, the Chilean-Bolivian Border Committee met again.

## 2) Approaches to Chilean paradiplomacy towards Peru

Historically Arica and Tacna have seen in physical and cultural integration and energy cooperation an opportunity for their mutual development, regardless of the occasional diplomatic disputes that their capitals sustain and that affect the possibilities of cooperation. Tacna-Arica is the most important international crossing in Chile due to the number of citizens who cross it annually. In 1997, the Chile-Peru Border Integration and Development Committee was created, a variant derived from the Border Committees with Argentina, to address similar issues concerning border transit. Paradiplomatic rapprochement initiatives have emerged between both cities, such as the work undertaken by the Tacno-Ariqueñas Neighborhood Councils for Integration and the Arica-Tacna Binational Youth Council (Ovando Santana and Riquelme Gómez 2019). These practices reveal various institutional mediations, from national hierarchies (Border Committees) to social actors who express a different vision from the traditional political-diplomatic agenda supported by the Chilean and Peruvian authorities (Ovando Santana 2017). Over the years, the paradiplomatic activity of the Arica-Tacna axis was growing, including diplomatic pluralism (Ovando and González 2016), in which actions by the neighborhood associations of Arica and Tacna stood out, under the Chilean-Peruvian Border Integration Committee and the “Tacna and Arica Neighborhood Leaders Manifesto” (Pachúa, January 18, 2014), until the impact caused by the Peruvian lawsuit against Chile in The Hague. The Manifesto demanded from both national governments a State policy for Border Integration, with a local perspective that strengthened coexistence. These actions of paradiplomacy entered the “high politics” agenda. Fifteen neighborhood leaders from Tacna, together with fifteen neighborhood leaders from Arica, discussed common concerns, such as security, health and education, and presented their conclusions to the Regional Governors of Tacna and Arica.

It is unimaginable to assume that paradiplomatic practices can be maintained and developed without the control of the respective ministries of Foreign Affairs since it is the ministries who call the meetings, chaired by the respective consuls. The centralism is reflected in a double sense: in the approach that permeates the general coordination in the Committee for Integration and Border Development (CIDF), which is in charge of consular diplomats from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Chiani 2019) and in the limited capacity of the social actors that participate in the subcommittees to influence the different thematic agendas of the Committee (Álvarez Torres 2019).

The Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs has seen the need to consider the opinion of social and subnational actors, which is seen in the inclusion of the CIDF within the framework of the Border Committee. This change did not translate into modifications in the functions of the Committee, but it allowed the subcommittees to expand, addressing new topics and facilitating the entry of new actors, such as the Youth Volunteer Group of both cities, which discusses issues related to integration and regional policy. Other examples of thematic innovation have been the creation of the subcommission on Human Trafficking and Illicit Smuggling of Migrants, founded

in 2014; the binational educational project “Diploma on Integration and Culture of Peace”, executed jointly by the University of Tarapacá (Arica) and the Private University of Tacna; the binational meetings on Environmental Integration and the demands for the improvement of transport routes, railways and border transit of people (Álvarez Torres 2019).

### 3) Approaches to Chilean paradiplomacy towards Argentina

Although relations are evaluated positively on both sides, thanks to the growing links of interdependence (Colacrai 2019; Fuentes Lazo 2007), they are sporadically stressed by nationalist and xenophobic demonstrations, coming from Argentina, founded on the aid that Chile provided to UK during the Falklands War. This also strained by land and maritime border disputes in the southern zone. The “security” factor is a permanent agenda topic.

Being the border constituted by the Andes mountains range, the opening and improvement of cross-border crossings is a common objective of the Chilean regions and bordering Argentine provinces. The international policy of Chile’s liberal political economy does not have the region or its neighbors as preferential partners (Flisfisch 2012), and Argentine foreign policy, whose central axes pass mainly through relations with Brazil and Mercosur, make it both countries, the neighbor is not the preferred link. This situation should provide greater freedom of action to sub-national governments and social actors that promote paradiplomatic agendas, but that is not happening. Thus, the so-called “two agendas” coexist: the historical-conflictive one, of mutual distrust, which returns from time to time, and the future one, positive and open to new issues (Klaveren 2011). Although both agendas are also present in Chile’s relations with its other neighbors, Argentina has received more positive treatment from Chile (Colacrai 2016).

According to Venegas San Martín (2019), the Border Committees have demonstrated decisive and proactive effectiveness in addressing border problems and the ability to adapt to the changing scenarios of the regional political geography, but they have not achieved sufficient autonomy with respect to the decisions of the central State to be able to achieve greater relevance and influence and involvement in regional processes, which calls into question the importance of an approach that is capable of incorporating civil society in paradiplomatic actions.

Paradiplomacy is linked to the internationalization of border regions, with economic actors being its main agents. A field research developed by Bernal-Meza (2021) concluded that perceptions about Argentina, in the Chilean regions, are not homogeneous. In all of them there is an interest in deepening ties. The interests range from more economic-commercial issues in the north (II Region), social and tourism in the southern regions (X Region) and concerns linked to security and sovereignty, in the southern zone (XIII Region). Comparatively, the most opposite perceptions and visions occur in Antofagasta and Punta Arenas. In the first, private and sub-national economic actors advocate the deepening of economic, commercial and cooperation links with the northwest region of Argentina, seeking to project the positive relations that have developed since 1973, under the GEICOS group, and that today they remain in ZICOSUR. In the opposite corner is

Punta Arenas, with heterogeneous perceptions. In the field of academic (universities) and scientific cooperation (Chilean Antarctic Institute) it is considered that cooperation with Argentina is good, beneficial and generating increasingly closer collaborations, which include the stay in Punta Arenas of Argentine academics and scientists. But, according to the declaration in the field research interview, public officers and consultants of the Punta Arenas regional government, the relations with Argentina are considered not to be good (Bernal-Meza 2021), especially when it comes to the transit of Chilean cargo that must cross Argentine Patagonian territory to reach the Magallanes region. There, the “security and defense” factor is a matter of concern.

The Chilean Foreign Ministry speaks of a progressive rapprochement, especially after the signing of the Treaty of Maipú. However, in the opinion of the DICORE management, the Border Committees have been weakening. These committees do not have decision-making power: they are areas for the exchange of ideas transmitted to the central powers, who decide on their scope. DICORE professionals in the regions are not updated according to foreign policy thinking, which opens up to paradiplomacy, because it is considered an anomaly and is underestimated. Paradiplomacy is not liked by career diplomats (Ovando Santana 2023). The annual meetings between governors of the Argentine regions and bordering provinces have lost vitality. According to the conclusions of said project (Bernal-Meza 2021), the only Chilean region in which critical visions vis-à-vis Argentina were noticed, without being the majority among those interviewed, but significant due to the local importance of the social actors, was in the city from Punta Arenas. Regional actors, public and private, from northern Chile see ZICOSUR as the main area of bilateral economic cooperation with the northwest provinces, bordering or close to the border with Chile. Chilean regional economic actors have sought support from their Foreign Ministry to stimulate Argentine export and import transport through the ports of northern Chile, without finding positive responses. In the Los Lagos region, the interests of local social and government actors are related to tourism, on both sides of the border, including binational clusters, and with health issues of the Chilean bordering populations, who receive medical care in the Argentine health system. The interlocutors of the economic actors linked to Chilean tourism are their Argentine counterparts and in health issues, the authorities of the Argentine provinces of Neuquén, Río Negro and Chubut (Bernal-Meza 2021).

In the Chilean regions visited, it is considered that Chile lacks an international vision that can facilitate the border integration of social actors with their counterparts in Argentina, through the use of public and paradiplomatic tools and mechanisms. A thesis from the University of Valparaíso concluded that, regarding the coherence of the international activities developed by the regions of Coquimbo and Libertador Bernardo O’Higgins, it was observed that they corresponded with the Regional Development Strategy. Despite the paradiplomatic actions, they were not enough to cover all the areas that were proposed, highlighting the fundamental role that tourism had. This service sector has developed largely due to the importation of successful models of cities with similar features in developed countries such as Europe (Moreira 2015).

The Treaty of Maipú established bilateral mechanisms to deepen ties. According to Burgos (2019), the relevance and cohabitation of paradiplomacy with parliamentary diplomacy is evident, in a successful cross-border relationship. Interrelation of alternative diplomacies, through eight integration committees and the Joint Parliamentary Commission, managing to build a story in significant decisions, such as the improvement projects of the Cristo Redentor Pass, the low-height railway tunnel and the Agua Negra tunnel; also highlighting the relationship between the Argentine province of Mendoza and the region of Valparaíso, the interconnection between the province of San Juan with the region of Coquimbo and the ties between the provinces of Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, with the regions of Aysén, Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica. It is the social actors who stimulate sub-national action, then subordinated to the efforts with their neighborhood peers (Álvarez 2016).

## Discussions

The negative perception of northern neighbors, less favored by development conditions, converge with the problems derived from border conflicts and the nationalist perceptions of their societies and issues of border delimitation – real or supposed – remain pending, a security logic emerges, incompatible with the cooperation and understanding of civilian communities. Despite this, the concerns of societies located near the border predominate (Maira 2010; Ovando, González and Iturra 2021), and influence the orientation of foreign policy towards the borders (Ovando Santana et al. 2020).

As Venegas points out, despite the advance that the emergence of sub-state actors means for the praxis of international relations in Latin America, it is necessary to point out that these are still instances that represent (albeit decentralized) the State and their interests tend to mix with the central, so they often do not have powers in their international action and/or are subject to different levels of more or less centralized bureaucracy, which represents a challenge if the objective is to integrate Latin American countries from the sub-state level (Venegas San Martín, 2019: 77).

Neighborhood problems facilitate the central government's perspective. According to Colacrai (2019), the contributions of fluid contact between non-central governments, regions and municipalities lose their effectiveness when a climate of tension predominates in traditional diplomacy. Ovando and González (2014) have concluded that the scope and limitations of regional practices of international scope, overshadowed or silenced by official Bolivian diplomacy, can be interpreted from the perspective of paradiplomacy as a social relationship or heterology: observing the past in search of other diplomatic actors, to expand the possibilities of solving problems between countries or between regions. They concluded that, behind the failures in bilateral relations, there is a historical regional cross-border integrationist behavior that, without ignoring or rejecting differences and litigation, is closer to a paradiplomatic continuity than to a

diplomatic discontinuity, considering 40 years of diplomatic disruption, influencing the center of decision-making power is a challenge of future decentralization.

## Conclusions

There is no single path for paradiplomatic practice and its design will depend on endogenous factors of the subnational authorities, that is, their coordination capacities, available resources, relations with the central power and also on exogenous factors based on international opportunities based on modifications. substantive in the structure of the international system (Oddone et al. 2000). But, in the case of Chile, while the endogenous factors depend on the evolution of the State's institutionality, the exogenous factors will depend on the evolution of its bilateral neighborly relations.

Chile's border and diplomatic problems with its three neighbors have contributed to the reinforcement of the central power of the State. The subnational paradiplomacy and of social actors is conditioned by the central power, being at the same time necessary to promote channels of communication and cooperation with the societies of its neighbors.

Theorizing on the description and the case analysis of the paradiplomatic practice in Chile, allow us to make a conceptualization about its poor development: where there exist border delimitations problems –actual or supposed– a security logic prevails, which is incompatible with paradiplomacy, the cooperation and understanding of civil societies near the borders. By prevailing the security issue, the State institutionality maintains and strengthen the centralism and the central power and put limits to the action of sub-national actors and civil society.

The border peripheries are observed from geopolitics; zones of conflict, crisis and remoteness and this vision strengthens the view of security, limiting the possibilities of paradiplomacy. This paper has evidenced the convenience and need of paradiplomacy, when in the neighbor and regional context there are difficulties such as the pointed out in the Chilean case. Reviewing the little Chilean literature, it can be stated that in Chile there is no city that has an important paradiplomatic activity with any of its neighbors and that projects its influence on the center of decision-making power. Arica and Iquique stand out for their paradiplomatic activity, where there are efforts to create closer neighborhood ties between the Chilean regions and their Peruvian and Bolivian counterparts. The proposal of this article is that state diplomacy incorporates sub-national diplomacy and the paradiplomacy of civil society actors. In the case of civil society, its paradiplomatic incorporation would reduce the weight that States bear under the domination of security agendas, because it would expand the topics of interest of nations, which do not perceive this to be the central issue of bilateral relations, but rather those issues that directly affect their quality of life and the regional and border environment.

It has allowed the weight of geopolitical assessments, which from capitals tend to project scenarios of almost constant tension, to be moderated in border areas, giving rise to cooperative ties. Without replacing but complementing neighborhood relations and promoting new cooperative

views on bilateral ties. The increasingly active participation of local governments in international relations issues, which translate into local diplomacy that complements a foreign policy with a state vision, will also shed light on the black box of diplomacy and its decision-making. It will give presence to social actors who, by exercising paradiplomacy actions, will strengthen the image of a more participatory and plural State. The expansion of Chilean paradiplomatic praxis remains conditional on the establishment of a new Constitution, which transfers to the regions and municipalities more autonomy and rights of expression to their civil society.

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