

The four motors for Europe, lessons to Latin America from an integration of non-continuous territories.

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Introduction

The historical entailment that Europe has had with Latin America continues existing at the present time. For that reason, new territorial dynamics which have been taken in the old continent has had a repercussion on the other side of the Atlantic. Being European supranational integration an example of this, the new structures within it are examples that Latin America could explore.

Inside this new reorganization and new bonds that the territories develop, the four motors for Europe is a form of integration that, since the end of the Eighties, has tried to improve the conditions of its members as well as influence the decisions of its respective national governments and the reinforcement of the European Union. This type of association responds to special characteristics and space; nevertheless, the concepts that are behind them could be adapted to the complicated Latin American territory and its historical impossibility to integrate the continent.

The paper will be divided in two parts. The first part focuses on the relevance that the territories have had at a general level and how it reevaluates the role of their governments. Facing the new assigned functions, the cooperation is a tool that integrates the spaces and by networking do viable ideas of integration of non-continuous spaces, as it shows the case of the four motors for Europe. The second part is concentrated in Latin America, returning to explain in the first section how territories retake importance. Finally, after understanding its differences, the viability in the new continent of a concept like the four motors for Europe is analyzed.

The four motors for Europe: more than a theory, a practice.

As the association defines itself, from its origin at the end of the Eighties, the four motors of Europe is an organization “*ahead of its time in terms of decentralized cooperation.*” The organization looks to be supported by the experiences and knowledge that each of its participants has in order to generate a synergy between their territories.

Before going further, it is important to clarify that the decentralized cooperation, aside from having a practical vocation, has been developed mainly from an institutional point of view than from an academic one. Thus, although most part of the investigation that has been made on the subject is responsibility of excellent scholars, research and publications is handled by independent institutions, not directly related to universities, but always next to them.

This first part will show the importance that occurs in the decentralized cooperation and explains how this activity responds to different areas from the knowledge which revaluated their positions and valorized the territories, as it is the case of the economy and political science; however, at the present time the preponderant investigations are being developed in the international relations field. After showing the areas of the knowledge where territories have been revaluated, the document will focus explaining that decentralized cooperation more than a theory is a practice that has been supported mainly by the governments and the multilateral organisms.

Finally, the second part of the section is concentrated in the four motors for Europe. This association arises like a perfect example of decentralized cooperation, but it has special characteristics which deserve to be studied deeply because they can be the answer to problems that other territories have, like Latin America. This part tries to focus in the concept without entering the detail of the different programs and policies that are carried out jointly.

The revaluation of the territories, its cooperation and integration.

The last quarter of the XX century showed the reborn of the geography influence within the economy and the politics, not only in theory but also in practice. A good example is that, as put in the international scene by Paul Krugman (1991, 1998), and remarkably promoted by the multilateral organizations, the economy revaluated its definition of development, putting geographic adjectives (local, regional, territorial, etc.) to it and also thinking about the economic relations at a territorial level. Additionally, abundant literature on the industrial districts and agglomeration economies has been made in Europe (Benko & Lipietz, 1992; Callejon & Costa, 1996; among others.)

On the other hand, it was studied and implanted policies which redefined the role of the government levels. Thus, although it was already an old concept and more clear in the federal states, the efficiency in the allocation of the public goods and the decision making at local level were retaken like an obligation.¹ At the same time, in the different parts of the world decentralizing policies were implanted, giving political relevance to the territorial organizations. For the European countries it was a territorial vindication coming from inside; for the developing countries, it was an obligation coming from outside where multilateral entities played a preponderant role.

Within this context, it is important to recognize that this valuation of the subnational territories, economic and political, puts in jeopardy the limit of the relations with international pairs. Although it is true that the cooperation and the links between territories had existed from long time before, the changes in favor of the territorial freedom encouraged extremely the relations outside the national borders.

Once the importance of the territories, their governments and the process of decentralization are understood, decentralized cooperation can be defined, from an ample form, as the relations of cooperation between two actors where at least one does not belong to the national sphere. In one of

¹ All the previous explanation is framed under the theory of the fiscal federalism which began with Tocqueville in the XIX century and that was retaken by Oates (1972, 1999) and Musgrave (1959).

the most complete works about decentralized cooperation definition and chronology, Hafteck (2003) shows how this definition has different perspectives: according to who develops the investigation and the moment when it is done. If this was a reality at the beginning of the new century, with the time, these relations expand and they are more complex, generating an enormous range of definitions related with the different stakeholders. An example is the concept developed by Malé (2006) of the public decentralized cooperation which is restricted to *“las relaciones directas de cooperación que se establecen entre gobiernos locales y regionales... sobre la base de la implicación y autonomía de dichos agentes.”* (The direct cooperation relations which are established between local and regional governments... settled down on their implication and autonomy.) This explanation could be made trying to go over the role of many local NGO's.

The activities of the organizations who were dedicated to the interaction between territorial entities started after the second world war, process that was accompanied by the construction of multilateral organisms. Thus, twinning, sister cities in North America, happened like an integration process “to contribute to the maintenance of peace in Europe in the aftermath of World War II.” (Hafteck, 2003). For that reason, at the beginning, it was search to create bonds at cultural level; vision that still having validity for the USA (Wolfe, 2000). Nevertheless, with the time the cities (or regions) have taken more importance; especially for the European case.

Consequently, after bilateral treaties and the associations where the territories simply had a representative and symbolic tied, these spaces were seen like a door for the discussion and the resolution of common problems. Neither is a surprise that similarly under the frame of decentralized cooperation cross-border cooperation has been developed. Normally, two geographically contiguous territories share problems that can be solved together, even if they are separated by political borders.

Finally, at present it is observed that the concept of decentralized cooperation is concentrated in the North- South relations where southern countries are just interested on the management of foreign resources. Lately, new functions are being developed for the territorial agencies, giving them the responsibility not only for management of the aid resources but also for synergies search in favor of a sustainable development.² On the other hand, in Europe the cooperation agencies are constituted just to develop external aid; these are then generally isolated to the cooperation projects with other territories of the north.

The four motors for Europe, the integration and cooperation of non-continuous territories.

The 4ME is a concept which goes further than North/South cooperation and established principles to take advantage of the members' resources. As well, at a conceptual level, the possibility to integrate non-continuous spaces was an important challenge to know how to find the way to connect them. Therefore, the first act is to settle down a flexible structure where the agreements occur in the way to confront common problems. This can be shown by the organization:

² Examples are ProCordoba Agency in Argentina and the Agency of cooperation and investment of Medellín and the metropolitan area (ACI) in Colombia.

“Unhampered by a shared border or a permanent bureaucratic structure, the Four Motors is a flexible alliance, ahead of its time in terms of DC, which has proved capable of perpetuating its actions and forging solid links between the four member regions.”

Nevertheless, before explain the great conceptual contribution that the 4ME has, it is necessary to describe that the departure point of their members had huge advantages in front of other territories of Europe, explaining why in the Eighties *“quand d’autres Régions en étaient encore à réfléchir à une « Europe des Régions », les Quatre Moteurs prenaient l’initiative.”* (When the other regions were thinking about the Europe of regions, the 4ME was taken the initiative) (4ME 20 years report, 2008.)

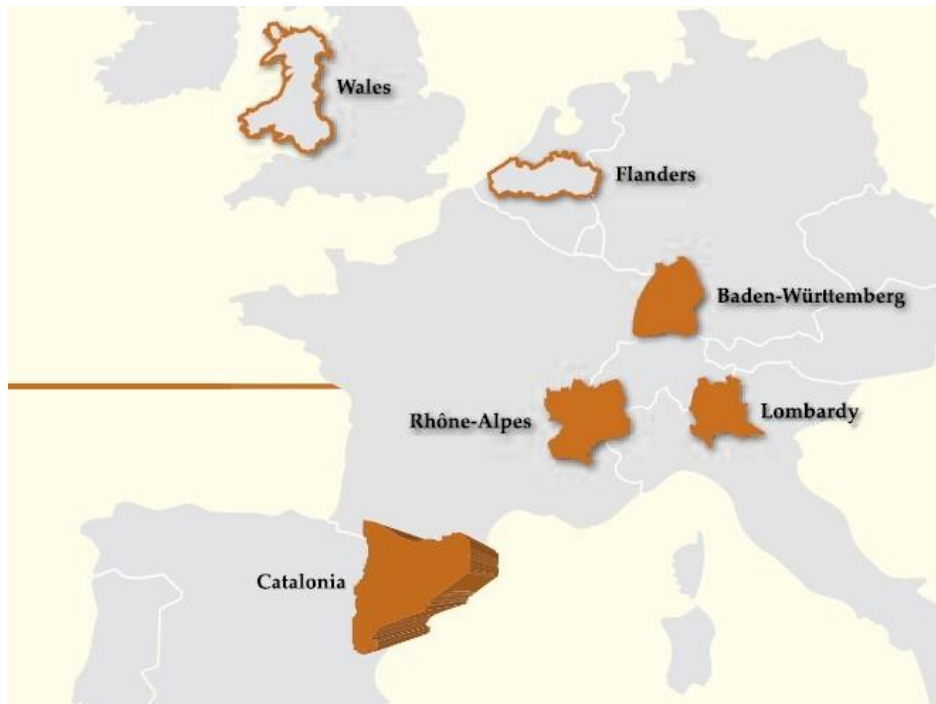
Clearly, since the beginning the structure must have had a time to fit. First because the perspective how each of its members perceived the project was different; and second because the integration policies, carried out for the construction of the European Union, were lived on different way. Thus, the allocation of functions defined by each one of the nations was a restriction for the development of joint projects. As well, few years after its creation, there was not a joint vision when subjects of regional interest were discussed at the European level (Borras, 1993). This situation changed with the years, being mandatory to arrive with previous agreements at the discussion of territorial topics in Brussels. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the common position recently assumed on the future of the European cohesion policy.

At the same time, a double relation exists between how this association was gaining with the construction of the European Union and how these actors influenced their national parliaments to adopt norms in favor of the continental integration. During the nineties and the beginning of this century, Borras & Al. (1994) and other authors indicated the fortification of the intermediate territorial entities and how these could compete with the nations under an integration frame. Nevertheless, what has occurred is a counter-balance process where the European Union is a space for discussion. For that reason, which has been observed is the utility of the different levels of government. In the case of the four motors, their governments maximize their functions due to their capacity of management that previously would have been impossible because the functions were decided by the national governments.

On the political sphere, within the 4ME none of the members is the political center of their countries. However, this situation is counteracted by the territorial liberties that they have. In the case of the Latin-European countries (Spain, France and Italy) they are regional unitary countries, and for the most extreme case Baden-Württemberg pertaining to the German federation. Additionally, at economic level, the title of the organization expresses precisely the reality: they are economic motors. Catalonia and Lombardy represent a fifth part of the respectively national GDP. At the same time, Baden-Württemberg has on a GDP greater than some of the richer European countries as Belgium or Switzerland³. The four motors together are important at a European level, concentrating 6,6% of the total EU population and 7,8% of European GDP (Four for Motors Europe Report, 2006).

³ Presentation of the four motors for Europe for the construction of the four motors for Mercosur.

Image 1. The 4 motors for Europe and its partners.



Source: Catalonia presentation four motors for Mercosur, January 2010.

At geographic level, as it was previously said, it is recognized the non-existence of physical borders between the members. Three of their members share the center of Europe, and Catalonia is the only member with Mediterranean coast. Nevertheless, this implies neither a big distance among them nor a complicated way for connections, especially true with the current European integration.

Altogether the immense European railways and highways, their members count with direct flights towards the other territories. However, Baden-Wurttemberg is a special case⁴ because, despite of the importance of the Stuttgart airport, its proximity with the airport of Frankfurt, one of the biggest international hubs, puts in doubt the relevance to connect the territory by air.

Thus, that entire situation supports the idea that these regions want to continue having this preponderant position, at national and European level. Therefore, they agree to develop common policies as well as offer ample liberties to their participants to develop programs outside this group. In the first place the importance of partnership for the organization as it is the relations within Europe with Flanders and Wales is recognized, as well as the integration with Ontario; breaking the continental borders and extending the integration of non-continuous spaces (Wolfe, 2000). Currently, further on the same direction is the recent support to the four motors for MERCOSUR which will be studied later.

On the other hand, the organization recognizes that as being part of a nation, each member will have obligations, attributions and liberties against their respectively central government. Within this type of

⁴ It has just direct flights to Barcelona.

functions, it enters the DC for development; perfect example because the territorial entities are more involved in the allocation of resources with their in the southern countries. Under the same frame are the Catalanian representations abroad as well as the different bilateral agreements signed by Rhône-Alpes. Independently of the 4ME, those individual approaches can be a space to show to the relevance of this organization and door to new agreements in benefit of it as it shown with the four motors for MERCOSUR.

Recognizing the importance of the 4ME, the following section will analyze how Latin America can learn from this experience; and if it is possible or not, with the territorial specificities of the continent, to apply and succeed with the concept of this association.

Latin America, the cooperation as the way to integrate territories.

The previous part started valorizing the territories; explaining how this conceptual relevance contributes to the DC valuation, as it is the case of the 4ME. This section will follow the same structure; starting seeing how the territories were revaluated from a research point of view. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that when comparing Latin America to Europe one of the greater differences is the extension of its territory as well as the difficulty to integrate it. Thus, a motivation exists to explore the type of territorial policies that have been implemented in Europe. In that sense, this part of the text is divided in two sections. The first section is concentrated in understanding the territorial, political and economic specificities of Latin America. After this analysis, it is observed how the concepts previously shown for the 4ME can be useful to respond the challenges that the new continent face.

Latin America and its territories

Before to describe the practice of the DC which has in Latin America a long way to cross, it has to be characterized the continent to understand why its extension and broken geography have given as a result a territorial fragmentation between and within its countries.

Thus, although it is possible to discuss between the territorial fragmentation or disintegration in Latin America, it is unquestionable the great number of studies that have been developed from the last quarter of the XX century which analyze the territorial aspects on the political and economic spheres, widely influenced by the CEPAL (Ilpes)⁵.

From a political-historical perspective, after the independence many of the nations were faced to establish a type of government that could control the vast and fragmented territories of Latin America. This problem caused the fight between parties throughout the biggest countries of the continent like Mexico, Colombia or Peru, where conservative movements searched a national unit against the federal systems proposed by the liberal. The 20th century consolidated the form of State; nevertheless, it could not guarantee the governmental stabilization.

⁵ Finot works (2001, 2002) studies decentralization and Boisier in the local/regional development which is summarized on his document of 2006.

In addition, it is undeniable the urban supremacy and precisely the domination of the Latin American nations since their political capitals. Consequently, the process of uncontrolled growth of the political capitals generates a negative effect in the rural areas and the municipalities of small size as well as the loss of relevance of the intermediate territorial organizations⁶. Also, the political capitals concentrated the attention of the central governments and brought with them greater investments, giving them the economic supremacy that even now continues having. (Table 1).

Table 1. Supremacy of the great Latin American capitals

CITY	% National GDP	% National population
BOGOTA	29.20%	18.34%
BUENOS AIRES	51.35%	35.98%
DF	26.55%	19.99%
LIMA	31.55%	29.18%
SANTIAGO	56.35%	40.90%

Elaborated by author. Information from America Economy, DANE, INDEC, INEGI, INEI and INE.

Nowadays Latin America can be divided in different groups as Freres (2008a) does. The author groups the latinamerican states on Federal: Argentina, Brasil, México and Venezuela; regional Unitarians: Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay; Unitarians: Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru. This analysis is important because the author, along with other works that are not necessarily tied with the DC, shows the existence of centralization even in the federal countries⁷. This is important for the DC analysis because the new type of state structure gives liberties to the territories to interact with international pairs; nevertheless, with the existence of this urban supremacy, all the organizations do not have the capacity needed to carry on the internationalization of their territories.

In the first place is clear that DC is day after day more important for Latin America. It has to be considered the relevance of the relations between the sub-nationals administrations of the Latin Arc⁸ have with their Latin American pairs; representing 80% of the existing bonds between Europe and Latin America, where only Spain contributes to half of them as it is emphasized Freres (2008b). The author stresses that the same behavior does not occur in another type of cooperation between both continents. This behavior is explained by the historical link between the Iberian Peninsula with Latin America as well as the Spanish internal dynamics, as Cornago (2010) shows, in 2003 Spain dedicated 18% of its external aid to the DC; being by ample margin the country with more percentage within the northern countries.

Accordingly, the external influence of the DC has been shown to come mainly from the old continent, although is also because of the little advances on this matter on the other northern countries. On the

⁶ Complementing this urban supremacy, the intermediate territorial level was forgotten on the decentralization, as shown on the Bolivian and Colombian cases. Thus, it was diminished the fiscal resources of the intermediate entities as well as their influence on the decision making.

⁷ Argentina and Mexico created during their history central agencies to control the action of their federated states.

⁸ Portugal, Spain, France and Italy.

other hand, the dynamics within Latin America are different, showing the competition between the levels of government as well as between the rich and the stagnant territories. Positively, there is an aspect in where it has been some advances, also because the identification of a common territory and to the collaboration of the corresponding national organizations, this is the cross-border cooperation (Rhi-Sausi, 2008).

In general, the word cooperation in Latin America is synonymous of aid reception. Even though it has been changing with the time, this definition continues being predominant, especially on the stagnant zones. This is explained because their resources are inexistent and they conceive the aid as the only financial income, still more after decentralization, where many of these organizations diminished their budget even more. This implies that the liberties that occurred in front of the decentralization process, gave responsibilities to organizations which did not had form to face them, and within them many did not know the existence of the entailment with international pairs.

On the other side, the great capitals were the ones that first faced the internationalization and the breaking of economic borders. Together with the resources that they already have, financial and technical, they have seen DC as a good way to capture funds and knowledge from advanced areas, helping to develop their territories. In the middle, there are territories which have had potentialities and were on a favorable position, economically and politically. Thus, after decentralization they saw the possibility to manage their own resources. It is in this group is where the most interesting cases could be observed on the DC. As well, these territories recognize that the DC is not only money, but the front door to generate a political-territorial counterbalance to the historical political centers⁹.

Lessons to Latin America from the four motors for Europe

Continuing the same sense, the cases of Córdoba and Medellín show the first lesson to Latin America. Olaya & Barbosa (2007) emphasize that DC is not a synonym of help. The DC can be the door of entailment of the territories to foreign investors, as well as the technical assistance that would optimize the local resources. Thus, territorial entities must understand that the projects of cooperation outside the national borders are not only to receive donations of the northern countries of but to generate synergies in favor of a sustainable development within their borders. However, the question that remains is: who is moving to receive this kind of cooperation? As we have explained, the territories which had already technical and financial resources are developing in a better way this new situation. This origins the question of how to balance the opportunities between territories.

Secondly, the territories which want to build this type of associations must define the common objectives, interests and problems that they wish to solve. It is clear that the members of any kind of association must understand that part of its bureaucracy must be dedicated to this type of projects. For that reason, each participant must understand that, being necessary, they will have to fortify with financial resources an existing office or to create one. In the same sense, it is understood that the initiative to form a group must come from the same territorial entities which must understand the

⁹ As previously presented, the cases of Córdoba (Argentina) and Medellín can be observed (Colombia). This reality is shared by Nuevo León in the North of Mexico or Santa Cruz in Bolivia.

different challenges that they will have to face, such as the national regulation or the international treaties. From the opposite perspective, the national organizations as well as the international entities¹⁰ play a role supporting and promoting of these integrations, although Freres (2008) doubts about the limit of the central entities role on the promotion of a decentralized activity, knowing that collaboration could become an intervention.

Finally, the territory legitimization is a key element of the 4ME. It puts in the first place the European concept of region as a level of subnational government and it shows how each of these territories has its respective cultural identity. For that reason, Latin America has to renovate the importance of the territorial entities beyond the large cities and it should give value to territorial identities which were limited by centralist and authoritarian governments.

In order to finish this section, it was necessary to present the recent case of integration of the four motors for Mercosur (4ME.) In the first place, it is undeniable the territorial differences between the two associations without denying the clear reference to duplicate/adapt the model developed in the 4ME. From a positive perspective, conceptually the 4MM initiative contributes with different elements as North/South cooperation, the cross-border cooperation and the integration of non-continuous territories.

Image 2. Four motors for MERCOSUR.



Source: Four motors for mercosur website.

¹⁰ Within these entities are supranational organizations the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and Mercosur.

In the first place, the organization begins in the 2007 with a North/South DC between the State of Parana (Brazil) and Rhone-Alpes (France), taking relevance with the time the contact between the two associations. After its creation, it begun to create an entailment with other partners under the existing frame of the south cone integration: MERCOSUR. Then, being border territories, the integration with the department of Alto-Parana (Paraguay) was simple because they share problems and interests to solve. Finally, but more complex was to define the objectives and interests with pairs in the other members of MERCOSUR; nevertheless, for the case of Rivera (Uruguay) the association is another link with Brazil, with which it shares border. Finally, within their partners, Mendoza (Argentina) is observed as the member with greater visibility at national level and one of the territories that have advanced in the internationalization of its province, being the 4MM another tool to take advantage.

However, the long road to this association is not simple. In the first place, their members do not have the economic nor political power of their European pairs. Secondly, although its flexibility is one of the great contributions of this type of association, it is necessary to have enough resources to operate in the best way; this is not necessarily easy for all the participants. Thirdly, the advances of MERCOSUR and their integration can play a preponderant role in the fortification of this alliance. Finally, the form to connect the territories of Latin America is not as simple as in Europe, generating then the question if the ample distances and geography can continue being a barrier.

In conclusion, it is interesting to see how a concept and its practice can be applied in another context. For that reason, although this process is recent and with the time its viability will be known, it can be an example to integrate the territories developed with common interests and to solve the problems that many stagnant and isolated zones of Latin America share.

Conclusion

The DC is framed under one of the functions attributed to the territorial entities that were previously concentrated in the central governments. Although it is studied on the cooperation for the development and local international relations, Para-diplomacy, it has to be understood that the DC was not an isolated process. Thus, political and economic changes gave base and accompanied the fortification of territorial entities; helping to advance in this type of changes.

It is clear that DC affects the theory of the international relations which generates a progress in the analysis as well as its practices. Nevertheless, it is important to advance on the objective searched while doing DC which will be to transfer tools to maintain the development on the wealthy zones as well as promote it in the stagnant ones. It is not by chance that this process happened but it is still missing to observe from the theory how fits with the reassignment of functions, the political legitimacy and the role of DC on the territorial development. For that reason, Latin America must analyze how the different territorial levels could act.

For the case of 4ME, the main concept that left is that, before beginning any type of integration, the imaginary that cooperation is just the reception of aid without any commitment has to be erased; furthermore, a vision has to be taken of a simultaneous own and common benefit. Changing the

assistance vision, great cooperation opportunities can be seen, generating the creation of networks between the territories outside and inside the continent.

On the other hand, the initiative to cooperate must come from the territorial entities which have interests initiating this type of integrations. At the same time, it is necessary to understand how national and international institutions are relevant to support this type of association. Under this vision, the processes of supranational integration can be promoted by and in favor of the territorial organizations; in the Latin American case, it is a long way to go.

Finally, along with the efficiency question, under a system of different levels of government, is necessary to understand the relevance of intermediate territorial entities, as the regions in the 4ME, a forgotten concept in Latin America and against the urban supremacy. At the same time, it has to be defined by the territorial governments which part of the administration will be in charge of DC. This is important because having a bureaucracy and fixed structures will complement the flexible entailments (partnerships, networks or associations.)

At the present time, there is a long way to cross in Latin America, but due to its geographical difficulty of integration, flexible structures can be agreed to its territorial reality, as shown by the four motors for MERCOSUR. For that reason, with the maintained growth of the continent, the question is if this type of associations will be applied again in the continent, recognizing that this will depend on the interests and motivations that the territories have and the reinforcement of the supranational integration.

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