FROM LOCAL TO *GLOCAL* NETWORKS: LESSONS FROM THE BALKANS

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1. Non State and Local Actors in the International Arena: a Framework for the Analysis

Recent years have seen a growing involvement of non-state and local actors (civil society, enterprises, regional and local authorities) in the international arena. This may be considered mainly as a result of globalisation, which has eroded the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs and increased the inter-dependence between territories, leading to the internationalisation of the activities of non state-actors alongside States. The local level is increasingly active beyond its own boundaries and connected with other territories at a global scale (*Glocalisation*).

According to James Rosenau (1990), globalisation marks the end of State-dominated international politics, and the re-shaping of international relations and represents, in Keating's words (M. Keating, 1999), one of the main 'opportunity structure' of non-state actors' international activities. Keating stressed that such phenomenon is mostly ascribable to the weakening of the state sovereignty vis-à-vis various actors, including international and supranational organisations (e.g. the European Union) as well as sub-state authorities[1] following the intensification of de-centralisation and de-concentration processes, since the '80s. It is possible to say that the nation state monocentric structure starts being replaced by a "polycentric distribution of power" among national and international actors, which transforms international politics in an arena, where traditional nation-states, new business and civil-society actors compete or cooperate (U. Beck, 1999; V.E. Parsi, 1998; V. Ianni, 2004a).

The growing external action of non-traditional actors has led to proliferation of the literature trying to explain and analyse the qualities of the international action (*actorness*), of civil society (Global civil society) and regional and local authorities (Paradiplomacy). Both the literature on global civil society and on paradiplomacy has often tended to study the *actorness* of the different categories of non-state and local actors without taking sufficiently into account the relationships between them. Here the assumption is that the international activities of state and non-state actors are strongly inter-related with each other. Thus, their *actorness* should not be analysed in a separate way and the relationships between them should not be seen in a zero-sum terms, since the international activity of an actor impacts on the international activity of the others. Put in concrete terms, the international policy initiative of an actor can open *channels* of action for others, and in turn favouring the creation of networks and the establishment of new relationships.

The aims of the paper is to understand the ways in which different categories of actors (State, sub-national authorities, civil society) interact with each other when they operate beyond national borders; and in which way they influence each other, both at horizontal level (the civil society one) and vertical level (links among non-State actors, sub-national authorities, State).

To this end, Hocking's contribution to the study on the *actorness* of sub-state authorities provides some interesting elements. In particular, Hocking thinks that "the complexity of this domestic-international interface has revealed several dimensions to the involvement of NCGs [non central governments] in the web of world politics. First, they can be *purposive actors or initiators*, seeking to pursue local/regional policy goals outside their national setting. Second, they can act as *channels* through which other actors, particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can articulate their own concerns […] – thereby using the locality or region as a base for global strategies. Third, they may become targets of international activity where their own policies and activities affect the interests of other international actors" (B. Hocking, 1999, p.22).

The extension of the three dimensions (*purposive actor or initiator; channel; target of international activity*) of sub-state authorities international involvement identified by Hocking to other categories of actors (civil society organisations; international organisations; central governments) offers an interesting key to analyse the way actors operating at different levels interact and influence each-other.

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[1] "Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of [sub-national authorities], within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.", Charter of European Local Self Government, Council of Europe, 1985

The hypothesis put forward by the following paper is that, during the conflicts that led to the collapse of former Yugoslavia, civil society[2] played a key role as *initiators*, also acting as *targets of international activity* and stimulating the initiatives of other actors, which subsequently served as important *channels* for civil society's international activity, during and after the Balkan conflicts of the '90s.

The driving power of civil society seems to be confirmed by the literature on global civil society, which considers the conflicts of the early '90s, and especially the one that led to the disruption of former Yugoslavia, as a decisive step towards its establishment as a global actor. The studies carried out by the Global Civil Society Yearbook (2001) produced significant results. First of all, various authors consider the early '90s as a turning point in the international action of civil society, due both to the proliferation of civil society organisations ("around one quarter of the 13,000 INGOs in existence today were created after 1990"), and "the emergence of a supranational sphere of social and political participation" (H. Anheier, M- Glasius; M. Kaldor, 2001, p.4). This does not mean that the international activity of civil society dates back to the '90s, but only that since then it has been going through a remarkable evolution: "what seems new […] is the sheer scale and scope that international and supranational institutions and organisations of many kinds have achieved in recent years" (H. Anheier, M- Glasius; M. Kaldor, 2001, p.4).

Another and more interesting element is that "not only has the global range of INGOs [International Non Governmental Organizations] presence grown during the last decade, but the networks linking these organisations are becoming denser as well" (H. Anheier, M- Glasius; M. Kaldor, 2001, p.4). In particular, the interactions between and among civil society organisations are mostly related to humanitarian activities, initially linked to the emergency of the war in Bosnia. In this respect, Kaldor explains that "the advantage of networks is that they provide an organisational form that allows NGOs and grass-roots organisations outside war zones to link up with local groups within war zones […] This was very important during the Yugoslav war: important examples were the Helsinki Assembly and the Verona Forum established by the Italian Green MEP Alexander Langer" (M. Kaldor, 2001, p.114). Furthermore, Kaldor goes as far as to state that "the changing international norms concerning humanitarian intervention can be considered an expression of an emerging global civil society" (M. Kaldor, 2001, p.110). In particular, she refers to the "Helsinki citizens Assembly", and the essential contribution of its lobbying action to the establishment of international administrations in Bosnia and, later, in Kosovo.

In that period, civil society actions were not self-referential but, rather, linked up with those of other actors. According to the relevant literature, national governments and international organisations (e.g. the UN and World Bank) played an important role. On the one hand they recognised civil society as a major actor within the Balkan conflict scenario and, on the other hand, served as a *channel* for civil society actions, by increasing the amount of funds towards them: "Governments and international institutions have greatly increased the amounts of development funds channelled through NGOs" (H. Anheier, M- Glasius; M. Kaldor, 2001, p.6).

Another level should be added to the series of interactions between global civil society and national and international actors: sub-state authorities.

As it was highlighted above, civil society is not the only actor whose international activity was intensified by globalisation. Actually, over the last few decades, the activity of sub-state authorities beyond national borders also recorded a dramatic increase, thus entailing a development in the literature known as paradiplomacy. Over time, the sub-state authority's international, and above all,

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[2] The following definition of the London School of Economics and Political Science was adopted: "organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group" (http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm)

development cooperation (decentralised cooperation[3]) activity, represented a major *channel* in the international action of civil society organisations.

Although Keating considered among the possible forms of paradiplomacy «a more altruistic» (M. Keating, 1999, p.4) type of action targeting Developing Countries, the relevant literature, generally speaking, has placed little focus on such aspect of paradiplomacy. Actually, it has rather stressed its prevailing economic internationalisation-oriented nature (e.g. missions abroad of regional politicians, the establishment of offices in third Countries, etc.), its political nature leading to the search for channels of influence (including the EU decision making process), but also, in a few cases, greater autonomy or even independence, through the separation from the State it belongs to (Protodiplomacy).

Conversely, in-depth analyses were carried out within the framework of research studies that considered the decentralised cooperation as a branch of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation; or more specific studies that highlighted the peculiarities of this type of cooperation (A. Stocchiero, 2000; A. Stocchiero, O. Frattolillo, N. Gonella, 2001; A. Stocchiero, M. Zupi (ed), 2005; CeSPI-TECLA, 2007).

In general, in the European experience, the evolution of decentralised cooperation seems to be linked to the process of "polycentric distribution" of international activity between State and sub-state authorities, which mostly characterised the early '80s, with the coming into force of laws regulating the sub-state authorities international action by fixing its scope and boundaries. In most cases, such legislations fall within a more general decentralisation process.

Hence, as Ianni pointed out, "decentralised cooperation stems from the match between bottom up forms of action and a top-down will to identify new frameworks and action strategies, although sometimes uncertain and ambiguous" (V. Ianni, 2004a, p.142).

Based on the above remarks, it is possible to share Hocking's idea, when he proposes to discard the notion of paradiplomacy considering diplomacy as a fragmented process within a State, and adopt a "multilevel diplomacy" or "catalytic diplomacy" approach, based on cooperation between different actors within a State, and whose composition varies depending on "the issue, their interests and capacity to operate in a multilevel political environment." (B. Hocking, 1993, p. 53)

Moreover, "in those years, the primary role played by local autonomies in development processes was acknowledged by various international players, and such recognition was often combined with civil society ones" (V. Ianni, 2004a, p.142)

The increasing interest shown in sub-state authorities and civil society as actors for development fells within the critical debate of the early '90s on development cooperation policies. This debate resulted in general consensus on the need to review the approach used, by further involving non-state actors and promoting partnerships among them. The involvement of those actors might give added value to development cooperation activities; going beyond the traditional government-to-government strategy to adopt a participatory approach, based on the co-development and *ownership* principles, as well as promoting the capacity development (*empowerment*) of all stakeholders (M. Tommasoli, 2001).

Definitively, the development cooperation activities of sub-state authorities have begun a *channel* for civil society international action, partially thanks to the role played by other actors – namely central governments and international organisations – which have encouraged sub-state authorities to undertake such role.

This paper shall focus on the experience of Italian civil society, sub-state authorities, and central government within the framework of the Balkan conflicts. Italy's experience shows the driving force of civil society, how it favoured an increasing involvement of other actors and, more importantly, sub-

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[3] In this paper, the expression "decentralised cooperation" designates the development cooperation activities carried out by sub-state authorities that, in Italy, include Regions, Autonomous Provinces, and Local Authorities (that are Provinces and Municipalities).

state authorities, thus stimulating the development of decentralised cooperation and the multi-actorness of Italy's international cooperation.

The first section of the Paper shall deal with the evolution and forms of mobilisation of Italian civil society with respect to the Balkans, with special focus on the relations established with other actors at various levels (international agencies, central government, regional administrations, and local authorities).

The second section shall highlight and diachronically analyse the impact of civil society mobilisation for the Balkans on Italian sub-state authorities, also considering the administrative decentralisation process that took place in those years. Furthermore, it shall focus on Italy's pilot strategies implemented to coordinate traditional and new international cooperation actors during and after the conflict under consideration.

Finally, conclusions shall be drawn.

2. The Balkan Conflict and Civil Society Mobilisation

2.1 Italian Civil Society and the Balkan Conflict: New Actors and New Contents

Conflicts in former Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, affected the global consciousness like no other recent war. International involvement took various forms, ranging from a huge political effort, with talks and missions involving top representatives of all main governments, to extensive media coverage and humanitarian efforts of international and non-governmental organisations. The efforts made at different levels to cope with the situation were a major novelty in the field of international action, both in terms of goals and scope, and for the way they promoted interaction between international organisations and civil society (M. Kaldor, 1999).

In this scenario, since the early '90s, that is the period of time from the implosion of former Yugoslavia to the creation and strengthening of the new states, the Balkan events contributed reshaping the role and structure of the peace movement and Western civil society internal and external relations.

This was particularly manifest in Italy: Its proximity to the war zone, its traditional ties to the area, the exacerbation and violence of the conflict, as well as the huge number of refugees that asked for asylum in Italy when war broke out in Croatia and, later, in Bosnia and Kosovo, raised people's awareness and engaged people's conscience[4].

In Italy, the growing importance of social actors, that is a phenomenon that spread throughout the world in the '90s, was closely linked to the Balkan events, which shook up the pacifist movement and led to the establishment of social networks, also including actors that, up until that moment, had only acted locally (G. Marcon, 2000, p.139).

Actually, traditionally international solidarity-oriented Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)[5], maintained their predominant role, but a remarkable number of diverse and new actors also rallied round the Balkans; most of them had links with the peace movement, and carried out either independently or synergically with some NGOs, solidarity activities targeting the people affected by the conflict. A significant number of local associations and committees started acting internationally, thus making the Italian involvement in the Balkans as *glocal* action.

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[4] It has been estimated that more than 800 anti-war demonstrations took place in Italy between 1991 and 1995 (G. Marcon, 2000, p. 171). Moreover, demonstrations and interventions were organised by various peace movements, including the Peace Caravan that passed through Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo (1991), the Sarajevo March organised by the "Blessed Builders of Peace" (1992), Mir Sada (1993) or the "Three Towns, One Peace" initiative organised by ICS between 1993 and 1994.

[5] Under the Italian Cooperation Law n° 49 of 1987, the term NGO designates non-governmental organisations that are eligible for funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The early '90s peace movement consisted of a series of very different actors both in terms of goals and operating methods, which were all very critical of the prevailing globalisation system. Many of such peace movements stemmed from Western European social democrat, feminist, and peace movements, which had experienced a structural crisis due to the shortcomings of their claims and lack of ideas. The Balkan crisis showed that governments and international organisations were unable to understand the situation and identify viable solutions, thus giving momentum to the above movements, which were also encouraged by some major NGOs. They were spurred to redefine their goals and shifted from previous generic criticism of the prevailing policies, to the formulation of shared principles such as fight against all forms of nationalism, conflict prevention, and the building of a non-violent world.

By the early '90s, the peace movement consisted of three main branches (G. Marcon, 2000): 1) protest radicalism, which considered any war as an expression of the interests of capitalism and the USA; 2) the "conservative" approach, which stuck to non-violence and Non-Violent Popular Defence principles, opposing any kind of international armed action; 3) and what Alexander Langer, one of the most outstanding Italian pacifists of that time, defined as *tangible pacifism*[6], combining concrete solidarity with political action against nationalism, through material aid to all war victims, thus countering nationalism based on individual needs, against the logic of rival ethnic groups, meanwhile hoping for UN military action following the conflict escalation. Langer declared the old forms of partisan and dogmatic pacifism inappropriate, as new wars required active pacifism and practical action promoting peace and supporting the local forces that opposed war and pursued reconciliation.[7]

When confronted with the events were taking place in former Yugoslavia, the Italian peace movement chose tangible pacifism, thus siding with all the victims. They promoted solidarity campaigns in sympathy with deserters, sending humanitarian aid and volunteers to refugee camps, implementing programs to support cultural, school and civil society activities. The most significant challenge the peace movement had to face was intervening in war zones by building reconciliation bridges.

The Italian civil society organisations that existed or were set up at the beginning of the war in Yugoslavia were extremely varied, but they shared common cultural approaches and practices, which stemmed from the main general principle of non-violent action, based on a culture of doing and acting, within a context where the relevant institutions were not able to meet the war population needs due to their lack of decision-making power, and inability to quickly respond to crises. Cooperation often entailed real exchange, and not only a mere transfer of material aid to the population in humanitarian crisis situations.

Within the emergency scenario, the most significant actions of Italian organisations operating in the Balkans aimed at supporting former Yugoslavian civil society forces fighting against the war, and independent media; providing tangible support to civil society facilities that were still functioning under the bombings (including schools, hospitals, municipalities, etc.); admitting refugees to Italy and protecting displaced people. In other words, they always supported and helped those actors that had suffered the most from ethnic cleansing (in that case, it was a real "social cleansing"), that in some cities had almost destroyed the middle class, intellectuals and professional people, as well as non-nationalist

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[6] Internationally speaking, it is worth mentioning the new active pacifism theories that took root through the *peace researches* developed in the '50s in the United States and Central- Northern Europe, with respect to the cold war and the questions raised by the second World War. P*eace researche* subjects were the causes for the war and peace conditions, tackled with a new approach and from a different angle by academic international relation experts; they moved from the premise that they rejected violence and war as conflict resolution tools, and considered international cooperation of researchers and multidisciplinary work as the mainstays of their action. In the '60s and '70s, their research field that included negative peace (considered as the absence of war or, anyway, of any organised violence) was extended to include positive peace (as a scheme of cooperation and integration of human groups).

[7] Alexander Langer (Vipiteno 1946 – Florence 1995) was among the founders of the Italian Green Party and promoter of many initiatives supporting peace, coexistence, human rights and environmental protection. He is considered as an example by all social actors operating in the Balkans, due to his commitment in the field of multi-ethnic society and peaceful settlement of the Yugoslavian conflict. On tangible pacifism, please refer to Langer A. (1995). For a comprehensive collection of Alexander Langer's most significant papers, refer to Valpiana M. (edited by) (2005).

political leaders. Ethnic cleansing succeeded in forcing all anti-nationalists who played key roles within national institutions to flee the Country.

Through the practical commitment of many social actors, the notion of reciprocal cooperation, the importance of being able to establish relationships, sharing responsibilities and powers over territories, communities and individuals typical of modern politics gained ground (M. Revelli, 2003). The horizontal logic of reciprocity is "a matter of observation. It is about starting observing other people (...). Most importantly, learning how to look at ourselves through other people's eyes (after forcing for centuries other people to look at themselves through our own eyes) (…). As that reflective look is also a post-political look. A way of seeing (...) that Politics – as they have been interpreted to date – with their absolutely self-referential nature, entrenched in their boundaries, cannot know. Cannot practice. And cannot understand." (*Ibidem*, p.126).

During the Balkan reconstruction phase, social actors showed their commitment to the building of a new civil society and active citizenship participating in State activities; they showed awareness of and ability to meditate about the system, as well as remarkable ethical and political critical faculty; they married action with alternative reformist policies, which may be defined as bottom-up globalisation. Italian civil society adopted a strategy aiming at rebuilding confidence between the various national groups that had fought against each other, mainly restoring their welfare systems, and carrying out cross-cultural reconciliation activities. Hence, a real social capital was brought about, consisting of a network of formal and informal relations (the structural component), and a series of shared social rules and values (the cultural component), which, over time, allowed restoring mutual confidence[8] through cross initiatives; the latter, are also bringing about slow economic recovery, which is not related to traditional development aid.

Overall, the Balkan experience entailed the appearance of new actors, and gave new meanings to the Italian civil society.

2.2 The Impact of the Mobilisation of Civil Society on Political Dialogue and The New Role Played by NGOs

What happened in Italian civil society was not a zero-sum game. One of the main consequences was the establishment of decentralised cooperation, which shall be thoroughly dealt with in next Chapter. Besides this, civil society simultaneously stimulated the creation of dialogue networks linking the different levels and new institutional and non-institutional actors operating in the Balkans. The Italian civil society organizations that operated in the Balkans, established not only horizontal relations among themselves, but also vertical ones with donor institutions (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, UN Agencies) and local and regional institutions that, in those years, were starting participating quite regularly in cooperation initiatives.

One of the earliest examples of pilot dialogue and consultation mechanisms was the Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid (*Tavolo di Coordinamento degli aiuti alla ex Jugoslavia*) established by the Prime Minister's Office during the Balkan crisis, which included the representatives from the Italian Central Government, sub-national authorities and civil society. The Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid came to grief through the political *empasse* that followed Kosovo war (see box below) and through lack of funds, which were mostly diverted to Italian Cooperation in international peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions; however, it was essential to draw Italian Institutions closer to the work carried out by sub-national authorities and social actors.

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[8] Confidence is an essential element of social capital, and is a subject many authors have tackled, including Mutti (1998), who defined it as "experience expectations that are positive for the actor involved, developed in a situation of uncertainty, but with such a cognitive and/or emotional load that allows going beyond mere hope", p. 42. For a definition of social capital linked to the notion of confidence, please refer to Putnam R.D. (1993), who defined it as "the confidence, the norms that regulate cohabitation, civil-society association networks, factors that improve social organisation efficiency by promoting agreed upon initiatives", p. 196.

Box 1 - Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid

On the insistent demands of civil society, and the *Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà* (ICS)[9] in particular, Law n° 390 of September 24, 1992, paved the way for the Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid. Said Table was established and supervised by the Prime Minister's Office, with a view to regulating the shipment of relief supplies and aid to former Yugoslavia and provide support to refugees in Italy.

It stemmed from the need to avoid dispersing and overlapping spontaneous initiatives, and was an interesting and unprecedented experience in terms of number and variety of civil society and institutional actors involved (V. Ianni, 2004b). Some voluntary organisations, national associations, and a wide variety of institutional central and local bodies, including six Ministries – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Defence, Health, and Education Ministries, as well as the Ministry of Justice – took active part in the initiative, together with the Conference of the Presidents of the autonomous regional and provincial governments, and the representatives of a large number of municipalities.

It was essentially aimed at sharing information, contact points and logistic facilities, based on a common acceptance of some general principles for action, with the most relevant one being the rejection of any form of ethnic discrimination, placing focus on the weakest groups and being willing to avoid carrying out overlapping activities. The Table, which consisted of four working groups, was required given the increasing number of central and local institutional contact points, and the need to identify new forms of synergic "networking" for the various actors involved and linking national asylum policies and international solidarity ones (*ibidem*).

The Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid was, for a few years, a good practice in terms of horizontal and vertical dialogue involving the main categories of actors operating in the Balkans that, however, showed very different approaches, values and goals.

The Kosovo crisis and NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia put an end to the Table activity (G. Marcon, 2000). The Italian Government participation in the bombings, and the almost simultaneous Rainbow Mission, which stemmed from the government's will to contribute reconstructing Kosovo but was immediately considered by most of civil society as an hypocrite attempt to redeem its honour, caused a serious hindrance in the social movements-government dialogue that had started a few years before.

In January 1996, a national working group was also established within the framework of the *Atlante Project* for human development decentralised cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996-1998)[10], aiming at networking Italian and Bosnian local committees. Besides the organisations concerned and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid and some civil society actors also took part in the Group[11]. Its equivalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a similar national working party, consisting of some representatives of the central government and civil society, which was in charge of guiding all *Atlante* activities and drawing up a document on the Government's human development strategies. It was supported by a political coordination unit, which consisted of the UN Agencies participating in the Project, DGCS[12] and a technical team made up of WHO and Italian civil society experts (V. Ianni, 2004b).

In such fields, decentralised cooperation seems to be very important. Although it is sometimes considered as disorganised and confused in terms of goals, it is an innovating and interesting form of cooperation for all social actors, in that it establishes and strengthens relations between territories and communities, tends to proactively involve a wide variety of actors, and draws more dynamic and sustainable paths towards territory interdependence at a global level.

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[9] ICS is an association consisting of 70 groups and associations. It was set up in 1993 by some important voluntary associations and local groups, which developed spontaneously to help the victims of the war in former Yugoslavia.

[10] The UNDP was in charge of coordinating the Project, which was financed by the Italian cooperation, while UNOPS directed its implementation. The World health Organisation and IDNDR (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction) also took part in the Project. For further information about Atlante refer to Rhi-Sausi J.L. and Aprile S. (2000).

[11] Among others, the Prijedor Project Association (Associazione Progetto Prijedor) (see Box 2).

[12] Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo – Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Moreover, it is worth highlighting that NGOs played a major role in those areas. Actually, they maintained a guiding role in respect of new civil society actors, due to their experience in different emergency situations and their credibility vis-à-vis Balkan local associations and authorities.

Before the Balkan crisis broke out, NGOs were accused, more or less explicitly, to be "non governable organisations. Conversely, the Balkan experience showed that, when there is a plausible and effective coordination framework, NGOs are sometimes more willing to coordinate different action approaches and logics than many other cooperation actors. Although they had not been traditionally present in those territories, NGOs succeeded in establishing themselves as actors that were able to authoritatively and effectively contribute to ongoing processes; they were able to meet specific expertise needs; and succeeded in enhancing and adjusting their cooperation culture – based on the values of peace, coexistence, mutual acceptance, the primacy of the human being and justice in social relations – to a new environment." (S. De Luca, 2000, p.64)

Overall, the cooperation of civil society organisations with governments and supranational actors was essential, and allowed operating in a transition phase carrying out emergency and development actions; however, it was not always easy, due to the differences that existed in terms of values and operational approaches. Constructive dialogue with the relevant institutions allowed civil society actors and movements that supported local populations during the emergency to continue working even after the conflict was over, though access to Italian, EU, and UN programs and funds.

Still, Italy's participation in the military action in Kosovo (the last Balkan conflict) showed that it is not always possible to reach convergence of different positions and open dialogue between the political and institutional world on the one hand, and civil society on the other hand; it also showed that civil society encompasses different souls and different kinds of responsiveness. The various Italian civil society organisations that had reached some consensus of opinion during Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina activities, split into two groups, namely those that joined the Rainbow Mission (see box 1), and those that backed it externally but did not accept government funds in order to avoid losing independence in terms of approach, project contents and credibility vis-à-vis the local actors they interacted with[13].

3. From Social Mobilisation to Decentralised Co-operation: The New Institutional Actors of International Co-operation

3.1 The B*ottom-up A*spect of the Mobilisation of Civil Society

It is within the framework of the Balkan conflicts and the subsequent mobilisation of civil society that the co-operation activities of Italian sub-national authorities started gaining momentum. Up until the 90s, the co-operation on the part of local entities "was non-existent, with the exception of few pioneers (e.g. Reggio Emilia in Mozambique in the 60s and the 70s already). Regional and Local Authorities, apart from some indefinite twinning and occasional relief administered in the event of widespread catastrophes, had mainly guaranteed a form of indirect co-operation by helping Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) through subsidies, which were however quite modest, aimed at supporting the projects that were independently promoted and realised by them" (G. Baraldi, 2001).

In this regard, civil society acted as an *initiator,* thus spurring the many institutional levels into taking action in the event of a crisis. The first level involved in this connection was the closest to civil society and the one that better epitomised the aggregation of local communities, that is to say Municipalities: "the crisis of former Yugoslavia and the humanitarian missions promoted by several voluntary associations have played a key role in spurring Municipal authorities into collecting resources and granting the necessary institutional support. (…) Solidarity and humanitarian aids offered by the Italian population organised in associations, structured or unstructured alike, have urged Italian Municipalities

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[13] This second group includes Caritas and *Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà* (ICS), which lost some of its members following its choice not to accept Rainbow Mission funds.

to take political responsibilities upon themselves in regard to the cities of former Yugoslavia with an attempt to carry out emergency actions, restore peace and live together in a civilized manner" (A. Stocchiero, O. Frattolillo, N. Gonella, 2001, p.27) . On the other hand, the development of co-operation activities carried out by Municipalities is by definition a bottom-up process: "local authorities are encouraged by local organisations, and the society they represent, to share a common interest in the development of poor countries or those going through political and humanitarian crises. (…) In the following phase, the idea of the local government playing a major role in the information dissemination, promotion and co-ordination of initiatives aimed at co-operation for development started taking shape (…)". (A. Stocchiero, O. Frattolillo e N. Gonella, 2001, p.26).

Over the 90s, Municipalities in Italy took several problem-solving and solidarity actions to offer their support within the more general framework of social mobilisation following the Balkan conflicts: "decentralised co-operation in Italy saw the light of the day just at the time of the Balkan war, and was the result of an objective need when faced with the impossibility or inability to achieve a national co-operation on the part of States, Countries and Governments. When confronted with a fully European crisis, civil society made a first attempt in terms of co-operation and solidarity through cities and Mayors, thereby adopting a vaguer policy characterised by the wish to act with a view to helping the civilian populations involved in the conflict. Decentralised co-operation in Italy and the Balkan conflict were bound forever because co-operation was originated by the Balkan conflict itself, further to an involvement on the field, whereby all the aspects of the conflict were directly experienced by Italian cities" (V. Magiar, 2005).

As regards autonomous Regions and Provinces, being large-sized entities having legislative power, the impact of the commitment shown by civil society, albeit crucial, was mediated by a set of other issues, including the very same Balkan conflict - thereby setting the stage for the opportunity to take a clear stance in a very delicate moment when regional institutions were starting to play a role in international relations (and more specifically co-operation for development) - along with the commitment of Municipalities, who have gradually joined civil society in calling for Regional Authorities to assume responsibilities[14]. An example of this type of dynamics is represented by the Prijedor Project Association, whose activities were supported by the autonomous province of Trent.

Box 2 - The Mobilisation of Civil Society and Sub-national Authorities as Drivers in Decentralised Co-operation Processes: the Prijedor Project

The Prijedor Project put the finishing touches to the commitment that some Trent-based entities and organisations, especially the *Casa per la Pace di Trento*, had shown in former Yugoslavia since 1993 through solidarity actions and the support to active pacifist movements operating in that area[15]. More specifically, in the autumn of 1995, the said organisations put all their efforts in offering their help to the city of Prijedor, which had become the emblem of ethnic cleansing and Serbian nationalism with its three concentration camps of Omarska, Keratern and Trnopolje.

The Project was promoted by the Prijedor Project Association, a non-profit institution established in 1997 which grouped together twenty Municipalities within Trent province, the district of the Adige Valley and the Alta Valsugana, some associations and co-operatives based in Trent, such as Mosaico di Levico, Ancora di Tione, Associazione Trentini nel Mondo and approx. 150 private citizens. Apart from the partners, the Association aimed to involve in its activities as many associations, families, and private citizens as possible.

The Prijedor Project was never granted any subsidies from the Italian government, mainly as a result of the difficulties in finding an agreement with the state foreign policy, which was often perceived as distant from real problems. Their activities were self-financed by the members, the municipalities around Trent, as well as the

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[14] Please note that the systematic involvement in co-operation activities on the part of the Provinces (which are in between Regions and Municipalities), will take place only afterwards, basically from 2000 onwards (CeSPI - Tecla, 2007) and is still underway in many cases (2007). That is why they are hardly mentioned in this paper. Conversely, the autonomous Provinces of Trent and Bolzano play a different role, since their powers are comparable to those of Regions, which have been active in the field of international co-operation since the end of the '80s.

[15] The most significant experiences in terms of distance foster care concerned the city of Rijeka, where thousands of Bosnian refugees had fled, as well as Prijedor; 550 families from Italy and the Balkans alike were involved in this project.

autonomous Province of Trent itself, which granted its support in pursuance of the Provincial Law on Cooperation for Development.

After the establishment of the Association, and especially after the Dayton agreements, a form of decentralised co-operation and popular diplomacy started taking shape around Prijedor and gradually evolved over the years including (apart from twinning between schools and distance foster care) support to the poorest, integrated local development, micro-credit activities, homecoming support, promotion of cultural exchange, training, animation for the youth, local democracy and conflict working-through. In 1996, the *Atlante* project for decentralised co-operation in Bosnia Herzegovina was launched under the auspices of the UNOPS, and was first joined by the Municipalities around Trent working with the *Casa per la Pace di Trento* and then followed by the Prijedor Project Association, which since 1997 has carried out monitoring activities over Prijedor in the five thematic areas provided for by the project[16].

The aforementioned monitoring activities set the stage for the first projects promoted by the newborn Prijedor Project Association: the provision of kitchen and greenhouses to the Natošević school, the establishment of an association of farmers, the introduction of experimental plants and facilities for fruit-farming, micro-credit, and a common house of associations.

When the institutional climate changed at the end of 1998, and all those involved in ethnic cleansing left, people started to come back and so far 25,000 people, almost half of the victims of ethnic cleansing, have returned for good. In 2002, after creating the conditions for their homecoming, the Prijedor Project started a new process to work through the conflict and build a common memory of all existing nationalities, which gave life to a Civic Forum.

Besides, in 2000 the first *Local Democracy Agency* (LDA)[17] of the Srpska Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina was established, which is now one of the twelve LDAs aimed at fostering homecoming, reconciliation and consolidation of local democracies in the communities of former Yugoslavia by co-operating with EU communities.

Between 1991 and 2000, autonomous Regions and Provinces took several initiatives in reply to the conflicts underway[18]; besides, over the same period, seventeen regional laws on conflict-related emergencies and peace were issued, seven of which were specifically meant for the Balkan area and two explicitly referred to countries of that same area[19].

Like civil society, also for Regional and Municipal Authorities conflict-related emergencies and co-operation represented an important training ground. An important role was also played by co-operation projects and programmes financed by International Organisations (e.g. United Nations and World Bank), which acted as important *channels* for the activities put in place by sub-national authorities, giving them the opportunity for an increasing *glocal* projection. Over those years, the scenario of decentralised co-operation was taking shape in Italy: "the Italian vision of decentralised co-operation was born and developed on the basis of a concrete operational experience; it's the sort of co-operation you build up along the way. (…) Decentralised co-operation took shape and gained substance in the '90s thanks to the many humanitarian initiatives taken to support the civilian populations affected by the Balkan conflicts." (J.L. Rhi-Sausi, 2005, p. 234)

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[16] Economy and employment; environment and town planning; education and training services; social services and healthcare; local democracy.

[17] The Local Democracy agencies were established by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as a support programme to foster local democracy, human rights and sustainable development in South East Europe and the Southern Caucasus. For more information: http://alda-europe.eu/alda/front_content.php?idart=1

[18] For further information about the projects carried out by sub-national authorities in the Balkans, please log on to the site: http://www.balcanicooperazione.it/database

[19] Between 1991 and 1998, laws on international solidarity were passed in Tuscany(1991), Friuli Venezia Giulia, Autonomous Province of Trent, Trentino Alto Adige (1993), Basilicata, Marches (1995), Trentino Alto Adige (1996); specific laws on actions to be taken in former Yugoslavia or explicitly referring to the Balkan area were issued in Emilia Romagna, Veneto (1992), Lombardy (1994), Liguria , Lombardy (1995), Latium (1996), Basilicata (1997). After the war in Kosovo (1999), emergency-related laws specifically designed for the Kosovo and the Balkan issues were passed by the following regions: Basilicata, Campania (1999) and Abruzzi(2000);

The definition of decentralised co-operation was then made official in Italy in March 2000, after almost a decade of actions and initiatives, in the form of "Guidelines and Implementing Procedures". In this framework, considering also the "many positive experiences that Sub-national authorities had gained by then in terms of co-operation in developing countries, which were further encouraged by specific regional laws issued for this purpose" (paragraph 3), decentralised co-operation was defined (paragraph 4.1) as "development-oriented co-operation actions taken by Italian sub-national authorities, either individually or jointly, or in conjunction with local organisations of civil society, mainly in partnership with peer organisations of developing countries with a view to fostering the active participation on all levels of civil society of the partner countries in the decision-making process aimed at local sustainable development".

Over a decade, sub-national authorities became key *channels* for co-operation on the part of civil society.

3.2 The Top-down Process and the Role of Sub-national authorities as New *Channels* for International Co-operation

The Balkan issue and the subsequent mobilisation of civil society would have never had such a disruptive impact on decentralised co-operation in Italy if they had not fitted into a wider decentralisation process started off by central governments, whereby sub-national authorities were granted increasing power in terms of international relations. From this standpoint, decentralised co-operation in Italy, with all its features and specific added value, was the result of a bottom-up process (influenced by civil society) and a top-down one, meaning the action of the central government. In turn, the mobilisation of civil society and its impact on sub-national authorities influenced the actions of the central government.

For the first time, Law no. 49/1987 ("New Regulations for Co-operation between Italy and Developing Countries") acknowledged Italian sub-national authorities (Regions, Autonomous Provinces and Local Entities) as implementing actors of co-operation for development in Italy. In particular, they were referred as playing a proactive and active role in terms of co-operation for development, in that it was ruled that "regions, autonomous provinces and local entities can put forward proposals to the General Directorate concerning co-operation for development (…)." (Article 2, paragraph 5). Their proactive role was even reinforced by the directives whereby the law was enforced, as developed by the CICS (*Comitato Interministeriale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo* – Interdepartmental Committee for Co-operation for Development) in 1989, according to which sub-national authorities were specifically responsible for the involvement of civil society. Sub-national authorities must establish "closer relations with local non-governmental organisations and co-operate with them, without prejudice to the distinction of roles. (…) Regions, autonomous provinces and local entities shall put all their efforts into fostering an actual and varied participation of local communities in solidarity and co-operation activities with the populations of developing countries"(CICS, 1989).

In fact, during the 90's, the role of *initiator* was actually played by civil society, which drove the attention of Sub-national authorities towards the Balkan conflicts, making them to play since the beginning an important role as *channels*.

From this point of view, not only did the Balkan conflicts bring to the attention of the central government the need for new management tools (suffice it to think about the passage of Law no. 180/1992, concerning "Italy's participation in international peace-keeping and humanitarian activities", as well as Law no. 212/1992, "Co-operation with the Central and Eastern European Countries", which provides regional and local authorities with a tool for co-operating also with the Balkan area[20]), but they also served to lay stress on the activities carried out by sub-national authorities.

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[20] At least 15% of the funds earmarked by the law are reserved to projects promoted or implemented by regions, provinces and local authorities, universities, public and private non-profit research centres, vocational training organisations,

It can be inferred that the Balkan conflicts impacted on the characteristics and the distinctive features of the newborn decentralised co-operation; likewise, the increasing decentralisation process gave more room to local entities as *channels* for civil society.

It is right along these lines that the rules dating from the '90s, whereby local authorities (Municipalities and Provinces) were attributed a major role in terms of international Co-operation, must be interpreted: from article 19 of Law no. 68/1993 (Enactment, with some changes, of decree-law no. 8 of 18th January 1993, containing urgent provisions in regard to derivative finance and public accounting), that recognised to Municipalities and Provinces financial autonomy for co-operation activities[21], to Law no. 81/1993, which ruled the direct election of mayors, provincial presidents, city and provincial council. As a result, Municipalities were given more clout from a political viewpoint, thereby more thoroughly representing their citizens.

In turn, also Regions used their legislative power to play a role in the field of international co-operation: from law no. 49/87 (which was the first to officially acknowledge their role) to 1991, 11 regions and two autonomous Provinces (Trent and Bolzano) [22] passed a law on co-operation for development; after the outbreak of the Balkan war (June 1991), 12 more laws regulating development cooperation activities were either issued or updated, in addition to the aforementioned laws concerning conflict-related emergencies (see §3.1)[23]. At the end of 2000 only three regions (Campania, Calabria and Sicily) out of 20, plus the two autonomous provinces, had not issued any laws on Co-operation for development (A. Stocchiero, 2000).

In general, the said regional laws considered NGOs to play a key role as *initiators* of co-operation activities, and referred to themselves as *channels* for co-operation activities on the part of civil society; in this regard, local authorities (provinces and municipalities) were also mentioned. The role as *channels* for co-operation can differ between municipalities and regions, the former being closer to the territory and using regional *channels* for their own co-operation activities.

The turning point of the administrative decentralisation process was at the end of the decade, which saw the outbreak of the Balkan conflicts: under Constitutional Law no. 3 of 18th October 2001, Title V of the Italian Constitution ("Regions, Provinces, Municipalities") was amended, and sub-national authorities were significantly empowered; among other things, Regions and Autonomous Provinces were granted the faculty to enter into international agreements and co-operation. This way, the Italian State acknowledged the increasing importance attached to the internationalisation of sub-national authorities within the framework of an ever more interdependent world.

3.3 State, Subnational Authorities, Civil Society: How to Manage the *Multiactorness* of International Cooperation

The relations among the many actors of co-operation for development (Central Government, Regions, Municipalities, Civil Society, International Organisations) have hitherto been interpreted diachronically, with reference to the Balkan experience over the decade 1991-2000, with a view to identifying the

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environmental associations, co-operatives, health insurance institutes and associations operating in the field of social economy and non-governmental organisations recognised by the European Union or the Foreign Ministry.

[21] Under this article, Municipalities and Provinces are authorised to "devote no more than 0.80% of the sum of the first three asset items of their budgets to co-operation for development programmes and international solidarity actions".

[22] Friuli Venezia Giulia (1987), Autonomous Province of Trent, Veneto, Abruzzi, Lombardy (1989), Emilia Romagna, Marches, Piedmont, Tuscany, Valle d'Aosta (1990), Latium, Liguria, Autonomous Province of Bolzano (1991).

[23] Between 1992 and 1997 a new law for co-operation for development was passed in the following regions: Apulia(1993), Basilicata, Sardinia (1996) and Molise (1997). Previous laws were updated in the following regions: Lombardy (1994), Abruzzi and Piedmont (1995). Please note that the law issued by the Regional Authorities of the Abruzzi, "Amendments and Additions to Regional Law no. 105 of 14th December 1989 concerning co-operation activities with developing countries", makes explicit reference to the populations of Slovenia and Croatia. Between 1998 and 2000, new co-operation for development laws were issued in the following regions: Liguria (1998), Tuscany , Umbria, Veneto (1999), Friuli Venezia Giulia (2000). For more detailed information about the legislation in force, please refer to the table annexed herewith.

leverage, which has gradually determined the development of decentralised co-operation in Italy in regard to the conflicts underway.

However, the evidence of these relations can also be observed synchronically to better understand the complexity of international relations in the current globalised and *glocalised* world. In this sense, too, the experience in the Balkans offers an important reference framework.

In the light of the new *multi-actorness* of international relations, the first attempts to co-ordinate State, Sub-national Authorities and civil society (especially NGOs) were made during the Balkans crisis: from the aforementioned Co-ordination Table for the aids to former Yugoslavia started off in June 1993 at the Italian Prime Minister's Office (see Box 1), to the Task Force established in 1995 by the Marche Region "to co-ordinate aids to the populations of former Yugoslavia". Hence, the diachronic process whereby decentralised co-operation was born, had right away faced the problem of co-ordinating the activities of the many actors, as well as the relations between beneficiaries and *channels*.

However, the strong energy shown by Italian sub-national authorities and civil society over the decade marked by the Balkan conflicts had not set the stage for an integrated and co-ordinated co-operation system; conversely, humanitarian initiatives were taken separately from one another and beneficiaries in the Balkans did not perceive Italian interlocutors as a united interface acting as a "system". (M. Pomicino, 2007)

Therefore, at the end of the Balkan conflicts, Italy had gained a new wealth in terms of actors and experiences, but had also realised the need to co-ordinate all these activities, with a broader view to making the most of the experiences and the contacts obtained to that point, and helping the populations in the Balkans in the reconstruction and development that followed the end of the war.

At a regional level, a few projects aiming to achieve these twofold goal were recorded, such as the Seenet Programme promoted by the Regional Authorities of Tuscany.

Box 3 - The Enhancement of Experiences and the Key Role Played by Regions: the Seenet Programme

The Seenet Programme, South East European NETwork, is a network of local authorities promoted by the Regional Authorities of Tuscany aimed at systematising and reorganising contacts, projects and experiences, which local authorities and regional NGOs had gained in the Balkans during and after the conflicts that led to the collapse of former Yugoslavia. Over that period several partnership agreements were signed, along with humanitarian aid projects and twinning between local communities in Tuscany and in the Balkans. At the end of the war, the need to make the most of these experiences and create a network to make them widely available, had gradually emerged; therefore, in 1999 the Regional Authorities of Tuscany launched the Seenet project, whose aim was to group together all the actors, in Tuscany and in the Balkans alike, who had worked in partnerships and administered relief during the conflict-related emergency phase.

Between 2003 and 2006, Seenet was jointly financed by the Regional Authorities of Tuscany and the Foreign Ministry, and was implemented by the NGOs Ucodep and Cospe. 21 Sub-national authorities from five Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia) have participated in the Programme, in addition to 22 municipalities and provinces from Tuscany.

The general aim of the Programme was to create opportunities to exchange experiences, create a network of synergies and skills, start off co-operation activities and projects, and adopt shared methodologies and strategies. Under this programme, local development and public administration empowerment projects, especially in the field of water and waste management, were fostered, since Tuscany had acquired first-level skills in this regard. Seenet also worked as a test-bed for new procedures, implementing methodologies and co-ordination forms, which may have been transferred to different settings.

The Programme was aimed at encouraging co-ordination among all the partners and promoting their active participation in the definition of projects and strategies.

The Regional Authorities of Tuscany have for many years tried to create a regional system of international co-operation. The Seenet Programme testifies to these efforts and the will to make the most of regional experiences and formalise a network of actors, who had for some years already established partnerships with peer organisations in the Balkans.

The network put in place by the Regional Authorities of Tuscany, albeit open to the Balkans, was limited to the participation of Tuscan partners only. For this reason, the Italian network was seen by the Balkan partners as a many-sided interlocutor, even if integrated and co-ordinated, unlike what generally happens with decentralised co-operation. As a matter of fact, the territory of Tuscany, which was already very well-co-ordinated, gave an extremely positive image of decentralised co-operation in Italy.

The Seenet Programme was not only aimed at taking concrete actions, rather at transferring an innovative co-operation methodology based on dialogue, mutual listening, shared objectives and participatory planning, thus placing more value on the idea of mutual co-operation.

However, the most significant experience was recorded at a national level with Law no. 84 of 21st March 2001, "Provisions for Italy's participation in the stabilisation, reconstruction and development of the Balkan countries".

The said law represented the first public attempt to explicitly come to terms with the new multi-actor role played by Italy in regard to international relations, which was mainly based on Italy's geopolitical interests versus the Balkan area and was at the same time the result of the experiences and the contact networks established by several actors over the previous decade.

Law no. 84 aimed, on the one hand, to make the most of these experiences, and on the other hand to make a step forward in the definition of the relations between State-Regions-Local Authorities-Civil Society in terms of co-operation, and more in general, foreign policy. The Balkan area seemed to be the ideal training ground to put the governance of international relations in Italy to the test. In this connection, the aforementioned Law was meant to act as a reference also for actions taken in other geographical areas and concerning other issues.

The very same management of the funds provided for by the Law testifies to the high number of actors involved and the attempt to form a network, which grouped them together: the responsibility for these funds is shared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – MFA (Co-operation for Development) and the Ministry of Production Activities - MPA (Business promotion and support), whereas a part is devoted to decentralised co-operation activities promoted by sub-national authorities (article 7) and environmental monitoring by the Ministry of the Environment[24]; besides, the Prime Minister's Office has set up a technical committee ad hoc (UTOB – *Unità tecnico operativa per i Balcani* – Technical-Operational Task Force for the Balkans), which is responsible for activity management and co-ordination.

Under article 7, the Regional Authorities are free to manage the funds they are allocated. Projects, however, must be implemented in connection with a structured action strategy, the so-called integrated Operational Plans, which are approved by the central government. Therefore, the Regional Authorities must follow some complex action strategies, which are translated into strands and objectives, and subsequently involve local actors for development and implementation.

On the whole, then, the law has fostered decentralised co-operation, which is one of the added values expressed by Italy over the years, and has also tried to provide an important reference framework for the management of inter-institutional relations across the different administrative levels.

However, the original good intentions did not always work properly and the interaction among different partners was not as profitable as it should have been owing to inefficiencies on all levels. In

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[24] Between 2001 and 2003, in descending order, the MPA has managed € 128,291,380; the FM € 61,974,828; decentralised co-operation € 21,691,191 and the Ministry of the Environment € 7,540,272 (E. Cocco, P.P.Proto, 2007).

this regard, the management and strategic monitoring role played by the Prime Minister's Office, with the help of the UTOB, was not always well-planned and accurate, thus undermining the whole system; the MFA and the MPA have faced some procedural difficulties in terms of fund and project management, testifying to their poor inspiration in terms of constructive approach to priority areas of action; the projects proposed by the Regional Authorities (involving municipalities, provinces and local actors, too) have in some cases shown some drawbacks in terms of consistency with the distinctive features of the target areas and a poor ability to focus on limited intervention areas, which were often translated into a "cascade" financing approach. (E. Cocco, P.P. Proto, 2007)

However, Law no. 84/01 has kindled the interest in the need for a better co-operation between State, Sub-national authorities and civil society in terms of international relations management, which is still one of the knotty problems to solve in the near future, considering also the reform involving the Italian regulations on co-operation for development currently underway.

4. Multi-level Governance of International Relations: Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead

This paper analysed the ways various categories of actors – with special focus on the State, Sub-national authorities and civil society– interact with each other when operating outside the national territory, focusing on the Italian experience, during and after the conflicts (1991-2000) that led to the collapse of former Yugoslavia.

In those years civil society actors and sub-national authorities started operating internationally, laying the basis of the present multi-actorness in Italy's external relations.

In line with the analysis carried out by the authors of the Global Civil Society Yearbook, the conflict of the early '90s in general, and the Balkan ones in particular, were essential in the establishment of civil society as a global actor. This was particularly evident in Italy, due to its geographical proximity to the war zone, its historical ties with that area, the conflict escalation and increasing violence, as well as the remarkable number of refugees and displaced people that moved to the Country.

Initially, the Italian civil society mobilised "horizontally", thus reshaping its *internal* structure: NGOs acquired a new and enhanced guiding role; following Alexander Langer's principles, the pacifist movement reorganised based on new values and espousing tangible pacifism ideas. In those years, the notion of *reciprocity* in cooperation activities also gained ground, following the increasing cooperation between Italian civil society actors and local grass-root organisations.

By bringing about a real *social capital*, the cooperation initiatives and horizontal networks established between Italian and Balkan territories made said cooperation a permanent process, thus going beyond mere emergency action and favouring activities aiming at rebuilding mutual confidence among the various ethnic groups that had fought during the war. Civil society organisations remained in the Balkans during the reconstruction and post-conflict periods, mainly carrying out activities aimed at reorganising the local welfare systems and cross-cultural initiatives promoting reconciliation.

With reference to the categories mentioned by Hocking (1999) it is possible to say that the Italian civil society acted as an *initiator* of the solidarity and humanitarian aid initiatives carried out in this period. So, in those years the mobilisation of civil society stimulated a "vertical" mobilisation and in particular of sub-state authorities, shaping the features and evolution of Italy's decentralised cooperation, which started in the '90s. In particular, this vertical mobilisation was characterised by *bottom-up* and *top-down* aspects.

The *bottom-up* aspect is particularly evident with respect to the role played by Italian Municipalities. Being the closest administrations to citizens, they are remarkably stimulated by local communities and their commitment to solidarity and peace, in those years, was a direct consequence of the mobilisation of civil society. As for Regions and Autonomous Provinces, besides said bottom-up impact, they were influenced by other elements, including the political visibility of cooperation actions, considered as

means to state their position and contribute strengthening their role as international actors. Moreover, unlike Municipalities, between 1991 and 2000 they could rely on their legislative powers to organise territorial emergency initiatives and lay the foundations of development cooperation activities.

Moreover, the mobilisation of civil society influenced the relations between the Italian Civil Society and Central Government (*top-down* aspect).

At first, faced with a wide variety of local initiatives, the Government needed to find new forms of dialogue in order to channel and coordinate the spontaneous actions launched. However, its numerous attempts (including the Coordination Table for Former Yugoslavia Aid and the Crisis Unit set up by the Marche Region) were hindered by obstacles including conflicting political positions, as it happened with Italy's participation in the Kosovo military intervention.

Secondly, the Balkan conflicts took place in a period when central authorities were carrying out a decentralisation process, especially in the field of international relations. The Law n° 49/87 on Development Cooperation represented a first attempt in this direction recognising Regional Governments and Local Authorities as international cooperation project implementing and promoting bodies. Later, some other national laws extended the opportunities for Italian sub-state authorities to act abroad. Overall, the ongoing decentralisation process opened new opportunities for sub-national authorities to play their role as *channels* for civil society, within a mutual influence process. With reference to Hocking's classification (1999), Municipal and Regional Governments became important *channels* for the cooperation activities of Civil society; besides, Regional Government became also *channels* for cooperation activity carried out by Italian Municipalities.

So in the late '90s, Italy's action abroad was very different compared to the previous decade. Actually, it adopted a new approach based on multi-actorness of international relations. Humanitarian aid and cooperation activities carried out by Regional and Local Authorities during the Balkans conflicts allowed them to acquire international expertise and experience. At present, decentralised cooperation represents a new form of action, showing specific added value when compared to govern-to-govern and non-governmental cooperation, able "to tangibly support decentralisation, democratisation and institution strengthening processes in partner Countries, mobilise local resources and, with respect to NGO activities, the political value of its cooperation efforts" (A. Rotta, 2001, p.6).

With Law n° 3 of October 18 2001 enabling Regions and Autonomous Provinces, among other things, to sign international agreements and Memorandum of Understandings, the international action of sub-national authorities has reached a wider scope, where cooperation activities are increasingly linked to *low politics* and support to economic internationalisation.

Notwithstanding, to date, both in development cooperation and in wider international relations, the action of the various actors involved (namely the Government, Sub-national Authorities, Civil Society, businesses, etc., in terms of horizontal and vertical relations) appears uncoordinated and poorly structured, with little exchange of information and little cooperation among actors. Although there are situations in which coordination could be difficult (e.g. the case of Kosovo conflict in 1999, which brought about frictions between the central Government and civil society), the increase in the number of actors without consultation and exchange opportunities may be counter-productive. The lack of coordination could reduce the effectiveness of the activities carried out and weaken the stability of international networks.

The regional governments (and autonomous provinces) are the first important level where various local actors establishing their international relations may be coordinated. This is mostly due to the size of regional governments; their legislative and international relations-related skills and expertise, which enable them to play a guidance and support role; the variety of actors operating locally (including civil society, sub-national authorities, entrepreneur associations, etc.). However, the relations among the various actors operating internationally should be considered also within a national framework. As Hocking explained (M. Hocking, 1993), the notion of paradiplomacy as a fragmented process within a

State should be replaced by a "multi-level diplomacy" approach based on cooperation between actors within a State.

Gathering different actors (Ministries, Sub-national Authorities, Civil Society, and businesses) and fields (institutional relations, solidarity, economy), Law n° 84/2001 was the first significant attempt to reach that goal, built upon the long-lasting relations between Italy and the Balkan Region. A thorough analysis of the Law, aiming at identifying its strengths and weaknesses, is a relevant research agenda for the near future. It shall allow defining, in the light of past experience, the steps to be taken to define a *multi-level governance* in the field of international relations. The Balkan area is, once again, a valuable training ground for Italy's external relations.

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ANNEX

Italy's Regional Laws Concerning Development Cooperation and Emergency, 1987-2000

Regions	Law	Title	Tipology
Abruzzo			
	n.105 - 14/12/1989	*Svolgimento di attività di cooperazione allo sviluppo dei Paesi in via si sviluppo da parte della Regione Abruzzo*	Development Cooperation
	n.63 - 20/4/1995	*Modifiche ed integrazioni alla LR 14 dicembre 1989 n.105 riguarante lo svolgimento di attività di cooperazione con i paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n. 80 - 28/4/2000	*Iniziative di solidarietà della Regione Abruzzo a favore delle popolazioni dell'Albania*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity
Basilicata			
	n. 12 - 23/1/1995	*Costituzione di un fondo di solidarietà per interventi umanitari a favore di popolazioni in paesi in via di sviluppo*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity
	n. 26 - 8/5/1996	*Interventi regionali per la pace e la cooperazione tra i popoli*	Development Cooperation
	n. 155 - 23/12/1997	*Iniziative di solidarietà della Regione Abruzzo a favore delle popolazioni della Bosnia - Erzegovina*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 17 - 11/5/1999	*Interventi per il soccorso e l'assistenza alle popolazioni provenienti dalle zone di guerra dell'area balcanica*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
Campania			
	n. 3 - 12/5/1999	*Interventi a favore dei profughi del Kosovo*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
Emilia Romagna			
	n.18 - 9/3/1990	*Partecipazione della regione Emilia - Romagna ai programmi statali di cooperazione con i Paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n.31 - 4/8/1992	*Iniziative di solidarietà a favore degli sfollati delle repubbliche sorte nei territori della ex Jugoslavia*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
Friuli Venezia Giulia			
	n. 15 - 1/6/1987	*Interventi regionali per la promozione di una cultura di pace e di cooperazione tra i popoli*	Development Cooperation
	n. 56 - 30/12/1993	*Iniziative regionali di promozione e sostegno delle attività si solidarietà internazionali*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 19 - 30/10/2000	*Interventi per la promozione, a livello regionale e locale, delle attività di cooperazione allo sviluppo e partenariato internazionale*	Development Cooperation
Lazio			
	n. 30 - 26/7/1991	*Disposizioni ed interventi regionali in materia di cooperazione internazionale con i paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n. 26 - 8/7/1996	*Interventi di solidarietà a favore di popolazioni coinvolte in eventi eccezionali causati da conflitti armai, calamità naturali e situazioni di denutrizione e di carattere igienico - sanitario e intervento straordinario in Bosnia*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
Liguria			
	n.37 - 9/12/1991	*Interventi per la cooperazione allo sviluppo e per la pace*	Development Cooperation
	n. 47 - 8/9/1995	*Iniziative di solidarietà della Regione Liguria a favore delle popolazioni della ex Jugoslavia*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 28 - 20/8/1998	*Interventi per la cooperazione allo sviluppo, la solidarietà internazionale e la pace*	Development Cooperation
Lombardia			
	n. 20 - 5/6/1989	*La Lombardia per la pace e la cooperazione allo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n. 7 - 28/3/1994	*Iniziative di solidarietà della Regione Lombardia a favore delle popolazioni della ex Jugoslavia*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 38 - 9/12/1994	*Integrazione della LR 5 giugno 1989, n.20, La Lombardia per la pace e la cooperazione allo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n. 41 - 17/8/1995	*Interventi urgenti a favore delle popolazioni profughe della Bosnia*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity

Marche	n. 38 - 26/4/1990	*Partecipazione della Regione alle attività di cooperazione allo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n.60 - 30/9/1995	*Interventi umanitari della Regione a favore delle popolazioni colpite da eventi straordinari diversi dalle calamità naturali*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity
Molise	n.23 - 31/10/1997	*Norme in materia di cooperazione allo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
Piemonte	n. 31 - 17/4/1990	*Interventi regionali per la cooperazione, la pace e lo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n. 67 - 17/8/1995	*Interventi regionali per la promozione di una cultura ed educazione di pace per la cooperazione e la solidarietà internazionale*	Development Cooperation
Puglia	n.11 - 2/8/1993	*Cooperazione della Regione Puglia con i paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
Sardegna	n. 19 - 11/4/1996	*Norme in materia di cooperazione con i paesi in via di sviluppo e di collaborazione internazionale*	Development Cooperation
Toscana	n. 66 - 10/10/1990	*Interventi di cooperazione con i paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n.14 - 22/4/1991	*Contributi per soccorsi rivolti a profughi, rifugiati, prigionieri e popolazioni coinvolte in eventi eccezionali causati da conflitti armati, calamità e sitazuoni di denutrizioni e carenze igienico sanitarie*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 17 - 23/3/1999	*Interventi per la promozione dell'attività di cooperazione e partenariato internazionale, a livello regionale e locale*	Development Cooperation
Trentino Alto Adige	n. 11 - 30/5/1993	*Interventi a favore di popolazioni di Stati extracomunitari colpiti da eventi bellici, calamitosi o in condizioni di particolari difficoltà economiche e sociali*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity
	n.5 - 29/11/1996	*Modificazioni alla legge regionale 30 maggio 1993, n.11, Interventi a favore di popolazioni di Stati extracomunitari colpiti da eventi bellici, calamitosi o in condizioni di particolari difficoltà economiche e sociali*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity
Umbria	n. 26 - 27/10/1999	*Interventi regionali per la promozione della cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo e della solidarietà tra i popoli*	Development Cooperation
Valle d'Aosta	n. 44 - 9/7/1990	*Interventi regionali di cooperazione e solidarietà con i paesi in via di sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
Veneto	n. 18 - 30/3/1988	*Interventi regionali per la promozione di una cultura di pace*	Development Cooperation
	n. 18 - 16/4/1992	*Istituzione di un fondo regionale per interventi di solidarietà internazionale*	Emergency, Peace, International Solidarity
	n. 55 - 16/12/1999	*Interventi regionali per la promozione dei diritti umani, la cultura di pace, la cooperazione allo sviluppo e la solidarietà*	Development Cooperation
Auronomous Province of Bolzano	n. 5 - 19/3/1991	*Cooperazione allo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
Auronomous Province of Trento	n. 10 - 17/3/1988	*Sostegno alla cooperazione per lo sviluppo*	Development Cooperation
	n.14 - 29/4/1993	*Modificazioni alle leggi provinciali 17 marzo 1988 n.10 sulla cooperazione per lo sviluppo, 28 aprile 1986, n.13 sull'emigrazione e 13 febbraio 1992, sul volontariato, nonché disposizioni sugli interventi per l'emergenza.*	Emergency, Peace, Iternational Solidarity

Source: Chamber of Deputy's Database, http://camera.ancitel.it/