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The State of Paradiplomacy: Sub-State Entities as the Better Representatives of Population?

Towards an Analytical Framework

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Abstract

Paradiplomatic practices are on the rise. More and more competences shift towards sub-state entities and these entities seek to articulate their interests in foreign territories as well. From "twin cities", to trade facilitation, the ratification of international treaties, and even secessionist movements, paradiplomacy can take various forms. Its motivations are consequently case-specific. Therefore, most of the existing studies focus on peculiarities, or are quite broad. This paper now seeks to find a way to cluster and categorize paradiplomatic behaviour. The categorization variables stem from the larger body of literature and shall be validated and enlarged by qualitative means of interviewing practitioners and scholars in the field.

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1. Introduction

Paradiplomatic practices are on the rise. We need to acknowledge the importance of cities and regions for every aspect of human sociability. For example, there is an ongoing process of urbanization. More than 80% of the global economic output is generated in cities (UN Habitat 2016, 7). Additionally, 68% of the world`s population is expected to reside in agglomerations by 2050, while already in 2018, more than half of the globe`s inhabitants lived in cities (UN DESA 2018, 1). Historian Philipp Blom goes as far as to say that the major benchmark of the modern world order is the power shift from the possession of land (e.g. aristocracy) to its concentration in urban areas, taking place since as early as the beginning of the 20th century (at a time where a first big wave of market internationalization took place due to the existence of new technologies, see Blom 2008, 40). To add to this, Rodrigo Tavares provides us with an understanding of diplomacy being first practiced by cities (although those cities could claim sovereignty, see Tavares 2016, 10)

It then feels quite natural to link these developments to sub-state entities exceeding their jurisdictions and communicating abroad in order to compete for their share of power and prosperity, as well. This new-found agency may take various forms, such as commercial treaties, representative offices (analogous to embassies), partnering international conventions, networking and others. It is for this reason that Manuel Duran, in his attempt to paint a coherent picture, called paradiplomacy "a mature political practice and reality" (Duran 2016, 2). And yet, although there have been efforts of several scholars, paradiplomacy remains a comparatively understudied field that offers room for questioning. The lowest common denominator of scholarly consent seems to describe sub-state`s extra-jurisdictional involvement as a product of globalization (compare Hocking 1999, 19; Keating 1999, 1; Zürn 1992, 491). More specifically, dynamics to be found in the 1990`s still reoccur as the main narrative:

> "Globalization and the rise of transnational regimes, especially regional trading areas, have eroded the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs and by the same token have transformed the division of responsibilities between state and subnational governments." (Keating 1999, 1)

This might of course hold true. But one equally finds oneself in the paradoxical debate: On the one hand we witness the declining role of the nation-state, while on the other the international system is still nation-state composed. Underpinning this is the cosmopolitan versus communitarian worldview, within which paradiplomatic practices feature prominently and are (re-)defining the global sphere. These sub-national powers seem to either be endangering the very existence of the nation-state or dismissed for having only limited impact regarding challenges that should urgently be countered on a global scale by multilateral agreements, notably climate change.

There are as many forms of paradiplomacy as there are motivations, but also different forms of sub-national internationalism in different areas around the globe. Some communities, such as the cities of Hongkong and Macau, are independent members of the WTO, whilst Flanders holds specific agreements with UNAIDS, UNESCO, ILO and the WHO. Little to no research at all has yet focused on the intra-institutional relationships between non-state entities, and global organizations which are traditionally composed of nation-states. To increase this unbalanced nature, some spaces such as Europe witness a macro-regional organization, a nation-state, a micro-region, a city as foreign policy actor. In other parts, we might find a strict separation of competences that favour the nation-state only in that regard.

Henceforth, this paper attempts to put together different pieces of the puzzle of a very contemporary, but unbalanced phenomenon, which comprises significant differences in space and power allocation. The central question at stake therefore asks the following: What are the key elements of paradiplomacy research? How can one account for paradiplomatic behaviour without generalizing or being too case-specific?

In order to find an answer, and to possibly add conceptual sharpness, the first part of this paper will review the contemporary literature on the issue. In the following section, first insights shall be categorized and formed into literature-based indicators. Afterwards, different explanatory endeavours that stem from several conducted semi-structured interviews will be presented. Thereby, the intention is not to generalize any insights and to then declare to have found definite answers on paradiplomacy. Rather, the aim is to juxtapose several temporal and spatial views on the issue, and to try to solidify patterns that can be compared. Generally, this paper's intention is to promote further research on the issue by offering a system of categorization that consolidates different forms and circumstances.

2. The concept of paradiplomacy

2.1 Changing Diplomacy

How does one understand traditional state foreign policy then? For long, foreign policy building has significantly been associated with national interests. National interests are formed through meanings that are ascribed to certain objects by the international sphere, but also by domestic audiences (Weldes 1996, 280). Acting officials would draw upon an imagery of representations of the world, their own situatedness within this world as well as a variety of actors that might encompass the pure state-to-state relation (Weldes 1996, 281). Those objects would then be given an identity to relate to, combining several characteristics (ibid). The imagery would further be underlined with "warranting conditions", in order to identify and to justify a certain policy towards the object (Weldes 1996, 282). Likewise, these identities would lay foundation to interests, and thus is the modus operandi of foreign policy (ibid.). Now acknowledging that this field has for long been one exclusive to states, it has already been mentioned that not only other states are objects of being assigned to an identity, but also further actors, and that it is identity that constitutes interests.

However, statehood (and identity) has been debated in International Relations scholarship for at least three decades now, yet it still poses a major question. This work now is not meant to question statehood. However, it picks up on scholars that remark upon a changing nature of state communication, and hence diplomacy. This is of interest, because contemporary problems occur on a global, and if not, at least regional scale, so that they would not allow for a division into "us" vs. "them"-kind of politics anymore (Constantinou & Der Derian 2010, 5). Paradiplomacy, this works core topic, therefore needs to be linked to processes of pluralizing traditional state-to-state diplomacy (Neuman 2002, 627). Only under the paradigm of Westphalian statehood has diplomacy both been centralized and formalized (Constantinou & Der Derian 2010; Cornago 2010, 89; Cornago 2014, 126; Tavares 2016, 10). Today, however, one could say that there is a dynamic moving away from purely national interest towards more regional and global interests, in which several peacefully and pragmatic co-existing forms of diplomatic endeavours are existent (Constantinou & Der Derian 2010, 3). Diplomacy must then be seen as a virtue of people-to-people signalling

and transmission, rather than a formalized and strict practice (Constantinou & Der Derian 2010, 4; Cornago 2010, 89; Cornago 2013, 82).

Paradiplomacy then has the potential to make actors and voices visible and comprehensible that used to be silenced by these means of centralization, thereby rendering diplomacy into a technocratic function of the state that did not, and could not, account for various local concerns (Cornago 2010, 90). As result, Hocking suggested to not only treat questions of governance and decision-making as being multi-layered, but also the practice of diplomacy as a means of communicating the former (Hocking 1993, 68). In that light, James Rosenau's neologisms of "Glocalization" and "Fragmegration" seem to capture the dynamic of a localization of policies and actors, whilst having implied international appeal and outreach (Rosenau 1992, 281; Rosenau 1997, 38ff.; Rosenau 2003, 11, 257).

2.2 Conceptual Origins

The concept of paradiplomacy can in its origins be related back to two scholars, namely Panayotis Soldatos and Ivo Duchacek. The latter has been writing on federalism and international relations from the 1970`s onwards, giving birth to the term of paradiplomacy, yet first more frequently referring to "micro diplomacy" (Duchacek 1984, Kuznetsov 2015, 27). Soldatos, on his behalf, picked up on Duchacek's terminology of paradiplomacy as an abbreviation of "parallel diplomacy" and thereby largely contributed to its establishment (Soldatos 1990, 35ff., Kuznetsov 2015, 27). Originally, the concept needs to be understood as a sub-state level addition to nation-state diplomacy, deeply linked to structural systems of federalism that grant certain levels of autonomy (Duchacek 1990, 2). Thus, Duchacek relates the appearance of paradiplomacy to a fragmentation of foreign policy, distributing several segments to subnational units (Duchacek 1990, 7f.). Panayotis Soldatos further offers several types of segmentation, in order to trace the enabling conditions.

Henceforth, we would experience objective and perceptual segmentations. The former designates external conditions, such as economic structures, geography, and cultural components, whereas the latter describes internal aspects such as attitudes, perceptions, loyalties, and interests (Soldatos 1990, 36). Those basic elements then lead towards segmentation in policies and actors, due to the different positions and stakeholders on the issue (Soldatos 1990, 37). Eventually, the preponderance of specific fragments within the segmentation scheme can lead to different forms of paradiplomatic practices. Here, one could find cooperative actions, which are either federally coordinated or joint initiatives with the central government, or parallel actions, either in harmony or in disharmony with the central government (Soldatos 1990, 38, similarly to be found in Hocking 1993, 2).

The reasons for accelerated segmentation and thus forms of paradiplomatic endeavours are to be related to increasing patterns of interdependence, where events taking place far abroad could still impact not only on national, but also on very local levels (Duchacek 1990, 6f., Hocking 1993, 2f.). Moreover, Duchacek argues that an important driver needs to be seen within the governmental task of welfare and social security provision on all levels, leading to a stronger involvement of cities and regions to influence and/or act independently (Duchacek 1990, 8ff.). Ensuing, sub-state entities would engage in foreign policy practices for the sake of ameliorating their population`s living conditions.

During a time when widespread globalization was just about to start, Hocking already understood the difference between citizen`s needs and demands, and the urge to integrate

localities into global economic schemes (Hocking 1993, 4). A conclusion one can draw from the foundational years of conceptual paradiplomacy is the following: While globalization procedures and global governance as systemic structural condition challenge the nation-state, it would be a mistake to subsume paradiplomacy under the same characteristics as well. Although being a by-product of the changing patterns of politics and economics (for instance, the large-scale expansion of capitalism), it must not necessarily incorporate a nation-state contestation as such but can also take the shape of an integrated process due to the division of competences and a response to specific needs. Hocking therefore argues that, for the European case, we should not speak of a Europe of the regions, as often suggested, but a Europe *with* the regions (Hocking 1993, 6).[1]

At that point, one can question federalism as (central) causal variable in the equation. Rightfully, Brian Hocking acknowledges that local governments in highly centralized countries (using France as an example) have become aware of the need for international involvement for the purpose of immediate well-being, as well (Hocking 1993, 1). In that regard, Hocking fundamentally aims for an understanding of localization of foreign policy, which considers both influences in decision-making at the national level, and the emancipatory act of acting on one`s own (Hocking 1993, 2). The key message here is that foreign policy making should, and indeed did more and more involve local needs. This reiterates the narrative of localities' integration into multi-level or even global governance systems, in which statehood becomes less important. Methodologically, one can further differentiate between system-based explanatory efforts, and those who focus on government officials (Hocking 1993, 4). It is probably for that reason that Francesca Dickson, in her methodological inquiry on para-diplomatic practices, observed that paradiplomacy is often treated as actor-centred by-product of rather descriptive systemic concepts, such as multi-level governance (Dickson 2014, 690). Her observation is that paradiplomacy is used in either a complementary, parallel or alternative sense (Dickson 2014, 697). This brings us to a reflection of today's paradiplomacy research.

2.3 Contemporary Approaches

In more recent scholarship, one witnesses a momentum of broadening up the debate to the manifold drivers of paradiplomacy. Accordingly, Manuel Duran ascribes it to be a product of either political dichotomy (e.g. Catalonia), multifaceted state structure (most prominently referring to federalism), inner-state division of labour or due to opportunities brought along by the EU's multi-layered system (Duran 2016, 46). Thus, the degree of regional authority seems to be a decisive factor for international activity (Marks, Hooghe, Schakel 2008, 176). Using constitutional freedoms (that might vary due to de-/centralization) thus pays a huge role. This is not only reduced to the visible pursuit of foreign action, but also to inner-state interest channelling via funds and ministries (Joenniemi & Sergunin 2014, 27). Consequently, paradiplomacy can be used to describe the pursuit of sub-national interest in extra-jurisdictional spheres, exceeding its initial attributes such as federalism and global economy (Rioux Ouimet 2015, 110; Duran 2016, 1).

I would like to conclude this chapter by stating that the foundational decade of paradiplomacy as distinct concept has still important impacts on how sub-state foreign action is imagined today. The collection of drivers and forms has been enlarged, and

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[1] Italics added

concepts have been freshly arranged to paint slightly different pictures. In the pursuit of interests, paradiplomacy still relies on patterns that we know on different scales. The narrative has therefore not been changing too much. What is different though, is that paradiplomacy has matured and evolved into a more coordinated and pragmatic behaviour, both in theory and practice (Joenniemi & Sergunin 2014, 31). This can only be beneficial when studying the field. Paradiplomacy mirrors those tensions between federalism and high centralization, those between rich and poor sub-state regions, as well as divides between the explicatory approaches being either agent- (e.g. government) or structure- (e.g. interconnectedness) centred. Contrarily, what remains a blind spot is analytical rigor when studying foreign behaviour of sub-state regions. Dickson, with whom I agree at this point, links it to the fundamental difference between states as established and shared concept, and regions inheriting widespread conceptual application (Dickson 2014, 689).

As paradiplomatic activities are conducted at a range of different levels and by a range of different actors they consequently take a range of different forms. Tavares provides us with a classification of forms of foreign actions, which are summarized under Table 1.

Type/Element	Intention	Form	Impact
Ceremonial Paradiplomacy (CP)	Image-building, Public Relations (p. 29)	"Twin town", "Sister region" – agreements of mutual understanding	Non-binding, generalist, (p. 33), without actual implications (no substance or commitment), leading to fewer, but more considerate agreements (p. 32), positive aspect: inauguration of channels of communication and cooperation (p. 33)
Single Themed Paradiplomacy (STP)	Fragmentation of International Relations, pressing sectorial issues to be tackled on an international scale (pp. 33/34)	Memorandum of understanding (often neighboring border regions), macro-region-building due to common interests in specific themes	Reduced to project-specific outcome, but thereby developing a pool of contacts and best practice examples
Global Paradiplomacy (GP)	Internal affairs projected on the global stage, multithemed, especially rich and powerful regions seek for more opportunities than relying exclusively on what the state`s administration would offer them (p. 36), although not necessarily more autonomy (see France)	Attract direct investment, economic cooperation, but also leadership	Can lead to the installation of global networks and organizations, hence crating actual power options and global leadership (see California and its outstanding role in climate change mitigation)
Sovereign Paradiplomacy (SP)	Paradiplomacy as consequence of statehood aspirations (with diplomacy being a traditional state	Proto-diplomacy symbolizing para-diplomatic practices with statehood aspirations	Between identity politics that represent and enhance a certain status (Quebec, see Paquin 2018, 19f.), to

	trademark), strong identities, most successful cases of paradiplomacy due to identity urges (p. 38)	(sovereignty). Distinction: paradiplomacy as mirror of subsidiarity, proto-diplomacy as secessionist and separatist movement	secessionism and political uprisings – as most recent example, one needs to consider the case of Catalonia (Duchacek 1990, 27ff.)

Table 1: Forms of Paradiplomacy (Tavares 2016)

Those different forms appear due to a wide array of different drivers (at which Tavares is more precise than his predecessors in the 1990`s). Thus, he lists seizure of global opportunities, provision of citizen services, promotion of decentralization, personal interests, electoral opportunism, address of local claims, cultural distinctiveness and nationalism, diaspora, geography and the aim to overcome isolationism as explanatory elements (Tavares 2016, 41ff.).

A similar, layered-division can also be found in André Lecours' work, although his layers follow a more functional logic (and therefore appear a bit reductive): economic issues, cooperative collaboration, political considerations (compare Lecours 2008, 4ff.).

An even earlier form of classification stems from Brian Hocking. It is a more comprehensive attempt to provide a fuller account of paradiplomatic activity, including the following elements: aims/motivations, extent and direction of involvement, structures and resources, levels of participation, as well as strategies (Hocking 1999, 21). Here again, we can draw upon forms and level of outreach as two core ideas, although formulated differently and rather in a cross-sectorial manner. However, it reaffirms the idea of shedding light to these two parameters. As for the rest of Hocking's categorization, they shall be discussed at a later point of this paper, since they will reappear in meaning.

3. Mapping Forms and Outreach

If one holds with Robert Trager, then diplomatic practices can be interpreted as external signalling (Trager 2017, 133ff.). Acknowledging that both the individual intent as well as the signalling actor itself might vary, the employed form becomes more tangible in its stead. With Tavares` classification of forms in mind, this section will seek to trace how, and on which levels this interaction takes place.

Based on the insights of the literature, with specific reference to Tavares and Soldatos' and Duchacek`s work, I would suggest the following scheme:

  I.   Bilateral
   a. Cross-border
   b. Macro-Regional[2]
   c. Global
 II.   Multilateral
   a. Cross-border
   b. Macro-Regional
   c. Global

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[2] The term "Macro-regional" might indeed be a rather shallow one. To employ it in a very functional manner, one can think of continental configurations.

This classification then helps us to cluster paradiplomatic practices with help of (political) geography. This is of importance, because as seen in Jutta Weldes` section on foreign policy interest construction, distances of course play a role. A similar route to mapping behaviour can be found in Manuel Duran`s work on paradiplomacy in the Mediterranean territory. Here, he draws upon a distinction that has as first element the *operational milieu*, meaning the set-up for a certain behaviour, such as the socio-economic and the geographical environment, as well as historical facts (Duran 2015, 71). The second element, the psychological milieu, then describes the actual implementation of foreign policies due to experiences and the imageries already discussed under the literature review regarding Jutta Weldes (Duran 2015: 72). A similar approach has already been used by Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos (with the former referring to actual geographical distances, and the latter rather describing in functional terms), equally having three levels: transborder-regional, transregional (= macroregional, e.g. EU, ASEAN etc.), and global (Duchacek 1990, 16; Soldatos 1990, 37f.). This of course leaves a blind spot with regard to bi- or multilateralism, which I find to be an important add-in considering contemporary international organization. Looking at the types of paradiplomacy, where it is sometimes employed in a state-alike fashion or sometimes following less formalized paths, there is a need for specific scrutiny on sub-state entities' channels of communication. This indeed directly relates to the Francesca Dickson's article, in which she closes her endeavours by suggesting to gain analytical sharpness (rather than being descriptive), and to show up how sub-state regions communicate, and how this might challenge the state (Dickson 2014, 698).

Paradiplomatic practices, analogous to states` external behaviour, can then either follow a bilateral or multilateral track. By bilateral means, we can think of loose agreements as Tavares mentioned with twin cities or sister regions, either in geographical proximity (think of the twin towns along the U.S.-Mexican border), or in a macro-regional sense that refers to the respective continent, or any other form of (political) regional configuration. But we can also move towards foreign offices, representations and alike, run by cities and regions in foreign territories. These three sub-categories can rank from image-building, to project-oriented work, trade facilitation or identity promotion.

Type II, multilateralism, then refers to a more institutionalized setting in which cities and regions are organized via networks or institutions. II.a is most likely to describe cooperative patterns amongst different cross-border stakeholders. II.b, the macroregional mode, has its most established formation in the EU, considering the Committee of the Regions and others. II.c then refers to global networks, such as the Global Covenant of Mayors. These sub-categories are then most prominently referring to either single- or multithemed paradiplomacy (with the latter already having been coined as global paradiplomacy by Tavares). Different from Tavares, it offers us the possibility to differentiate between the three levels of communication. This way, it could now become possible to categorize a specific region`s extra-jurisdictional behaviour, without either reducing the para-diplomatic practice or the region to one specific type only. Rather, this enables to interlink the specific form of communication to a certain layer or outreach. When Tavares says that cities and regions are quicker to react and therefore ahead of states, whereas the quality of foreign action varies significantly (Tavares 2016, 28f.), this may be traced here. Of course, not every action can be rendered to be easily mapped, but one can take this grid as a model.

A very basic matrix could then look like this:

Name of the Region	Level of Communication (I.a – II.c)
CP	
STP	
GP	
SP	

Why is this of further importance? With the massive variety of drivers and reasons for regions to conduct their own foreign policy, any claim for generalizability seems to be too imprecise. That is, to refer to Francesca Dickson:

> "Necessary, however, is proper recognition of the phenomenon's scope: different types of international activity are conducted by different types of regions for different types of reasons." (Dickson 2014, 690)

The manifold dynamics going on within the nation-state frame or on a more local level, can hardly be accounted for, whilst globalization and centralization/decentralization remain the larger narratives. Rather, an approach for the sake of comparability, but including peculiarities, can be to look at the forms and levels of communication. With this scheme, one can attempt to shed light on the behavioural and networking side.

A second step in building an analytical framework is then to address the region`s domestic surrounding: constitutional freedoms, involvement in several layers of decision-making, ruling coalitions, and so forth.

4. Methodological Framework

4.1 Data Gathering

However, since this inquiry is not reliant on a grand theory, I opt for a qualitative, data-grounded approach. To expand the analytical focus of the previous works of paradiplomacy scholarship, it appears vital to include experiences and opinions of both scholars and practitioners. Scholars might hint towards conceptual disparities and give insights into their own empirical research (and hence give indirect access), whilst practitioners display their immediate work surroundings. In order to confirm the already mentioned, and to enlarge the set of indicators, semi-structured interviews have been conducted to draw upon insights of both, practitioners and scholars. Within this array, a list of 12-13 questions (partly differential for practitioners/ scholars) has been asked. Hereby, I hold with Wellington and Szczerbinski that when dealing with qualitative data, some categories influence the work as pre-existing assumptions, as seen with the literature-based indicators, while others are meant to derive during the actual interviews (2007, 74).

What should not be forgotten, though, is that conducting interviews also poses logistic and access problems. When it comes to selection procedures, then what is feasible and who actually is willing to partake should not be underestimated.

Semi-structured interviews were hence used as a means of information gathering. The semi-structural aspect must be seen as a reflection of the preliminary information stemming from

the body of literature. Ergo, there are pre-existing categories that find their application in the interview questions, whilst new and complementary information shall derive during the interview and in conjunction with said questions (van Peer, Hakemulder & Zyngier 2012, 82).

The interviews questionnaire reflects different theoretical engagements, among them thematic cornerstones such as definition (e.g. to understand what is considered to be paradiplomacy), forms & quality (e.g. how is it conducted), impact (e.g. its capacities), indicators (e.g. pre-conditions & structure), actors (e.g. by whom it is conducted) and the respective legal framework (e.g. what is the scope of action?).

In total, ten sources from four continents were considered. Thereby, one should specify that nine interviews were conducted, whereas one informational exchange took place via email and via web-page consultations. Out of the ten participants, 50% were academic experts, and another 50% were practitioners in the field. The intent was to interview both practitioners and scholars to receive valuable insights into both conceptual debates, and the quotidian paradiplomatic experiences. However, as it turned out during the interviews, the borders between the "academic" and the "practical" are not always as sharp. Hence, academics have often enough had practical experiences in paradiplomacy and vice versa. Moreover, interviewing scholars not only had the advantage of gaining conceptual clarity on paradiplomacy, but also to access information of specific regions or cities (e.g. Québec or Johannesburg) in a secondary manner. Generally, this study relies on a variety of experiences and narratives tied to paradiplomacy in which recurrent or outstanding patterns were used to create an analytic scheme. None of the participants wished to be anonymized. Therefore, a list of the interviewees can be found under the "acknowledgements"-section. The interviews have been conducted between November 2019 and January 2020 (with the exception of the email exchange being finalized in February 2020). The selection rational was respectively oriented towards current publication track records, or access to bureaucratic staff involved in paradiplomacy.[3] With regard to practitioners, positions rank from regional Governor, to (leading) international affairs staff in cities and regions. Scholars were, with one exception which chose to leave academia, situated in universities in North and South America, Europe and Africa.

4.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to analyse the interviews, I am going to use Qualitative Content Analysis. The aim is to construct an analytical framework that assembles the information of the literature and adds more indicators to paradiplomacy research. Qualitative Content Analysis then serves to systematically interpret interviews (Mayring 2001, 2). In that light, I do not want to reiterate the qualitative-quantitative dichotomy. Rather, I hold with Kracauer that quantitative analysis entails qualitative pre-selection, as well (1952, 631). Thus, qualitative and quantitative information can be said to have close ties.

Such a method can of course be contested, relating to the researcher not maintaining a neutral distance towards the object of research (Kohlbacher 2006, 3). This could translate into a bias in the interview questions as well as the selection of participants and their actual interpretation. However, Qualitative content analysis in the sense of Philipp Mayring already

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[3] Admittingly, only those practitioners could be interviewed that were ready to speak to me. In a majority of cases, those practitioners came from Europe, probably due to spatial proximity.

inherits specific scientific standards and rules that are to be applied here (2000, 3). The aim of this method is thus to preserve benefits of quantitative ways of analysis, but to transform them into more interpretive means (Mayring 2000, 1). Thus, it is not only the manifest content of, e.g. an interview transcript that matters, but also its latent context (ibid., 2). This translates into inductive category building that partly stems from what is known from the literature without having found a satisfying answer (ibid., 3f.). Those categories, however, must themselves be subject to scrutiny and adaptation in case they diverge from previous assumptions (ibid., 4). This is why I wish to recall claims that categories and coding rules should rather correspond to the data that are giving meaning to them, different from being imposed (Elliot & Timulak 2005, 154). The general analytical process takes place by inductively developing categories, summarizing, analysing latent contexts, to then apply categories deductively (see Mayring 2000, 8).

I hold that the tension-loaded relationship between region and state, between paradiplomacy and diplomacy, as well as the ongoing dynamic between engagement and disengagement of sub-state actors in the international arena, rather favours a dynamic observation and interpretation of paradiplomacy's basic features. While I then still want to employ quantitative content analysis, I also want to consider Strauss' argumentation of maintaining a reflexive spirit to being able to adapt the categories to dynamic processes, since the object of research is not static (Corbin & Strauss 1990, 5). I intend to preserve this dynamic procedure, in which changes of conditions nurture into the method itself (ibid.), since qualitative content analysis follows strict rules, but also offers the space for this adjusting momentum. Generally, the aim is to construct a picture with the necessary information grounded in a particular context, rather than to excavate information as such (Mason 2003, 228f.).

Coding will then proceed along three steps: First, there will be a line-by-line coding procedure, in order to consolidate the texts. Afterwards, axial coding is meant to clarify the properties and relations of these codes. Lastly, these axial codes shall be assembled into meaningful categories.

5. Codes, Categories & Results

5.1 Codes

Qualitative work, as mentioned above, requires being as transparent as possible. However, I refrain from displaying the total amount of line-by-line codes, simply due to spatial limitations of this paper. Instead, this section shall list the axial codes, and hence already consolidated information. Nonetheless, deviating responses and statements will be juxtaposed. This is necessary because this paper is an attempt to create an analytical framework, but also intends to shed light on conceptual disparities. Given the rather small number of participants, these codes can of course not claim generalizability. Notwithstanding, they display certain patterns.

Theme	Axial Code	Accumulated Total (out of 10 participants)
	inclusive communication of any sub-state entity	7

Definition [4]	specific foreign policy mandate	2
Quality	Difference between Declarations & Impact	4
	Addressing Local Concerns (due to internationalization)	10
Legal Framework	administrative size	3
	legal authority as enabler	9
	constitutions	7
Actors	Governmental Actors	10
	Private Actors	7
Forms	networks	10
	bilateral contacts	10
	international organizations	4
	trade agencies	3
	development cooperation	3
	education cooperation & promotion	4
Further Indicators	budget, staffing	6
	time resources	1
	historical circumstances	4
	party politics and agenda	6
	staff connections	1
	degree of involvement	3
	continuity of involvement	3
	Blueprint & International Strategy	4

These codes must be seen as a summary of the interview content. Therefore, several discourses are present, notably the different understandings of what paradiplomacy ought to be. In a next step, these codes are assembled into meaningful categories.

5.2 Categories

As indicated before, the different codes are, even in their accumulated totality, not meant as axioms with universal validity. Rather, they represent patterns that allow one to deduce insights into paradiplomacy in theory and practice. Hence, this section is concerned with the development of categories that shall be assembled into an analytical framework for

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[4] Consideration: One participant did not hold a specific definition of the concept of paradiplomacy.

further research. Thereby, what is visible from the codes alone already confirms those elements of the literature that have been subject to greater scrutiny: Paradiplomacy has the primary aim to address local concerns (indifferent of what sort those concerns might be). Moreover, it is articulated in different forms and at different scales, having a bilateral and a multilateral component. The rationale for the way it is articulated, however, is dependent on several other factors, such as strategy, motivation, actors, and legal permissibility. This brings one to the preliminary conclusion that while it is possibly a good step to acknowledge the individuality of motives and drivers, forms and level of communication are not sufficient in order to account for paradiplomatic behaviour. Instead, there is a need for more scrutiny in clustering the various circumstances accompanying a specific region. Therefore, this section begins by discussing forms and outreach as categories again, to then enlarge the array of factors.

5.2.1 Complementary Information to Forms and Outreach - Defining Paradiplomacy

If we talk about forms and outreach of paradiplomacy, then we also need to know how inclusive the concept of paradiplomacy shall be and how much of a stretch we need to make. Both might be indicators standing on their own, however it makes sense to subsume them here due to their interconnectedness with the question of what it actually is that we are talking about.

What is interesting then is that most interviewees understood paradiplomacy as a broad umbrella term for all sub-state external action. Only two responses varied: First, a clear mandate from the government to a certain actor would be necessary for it to be considered paradiplomacy (Interview Paquin 2019). Another response foresaw that only regional governments in the form of administrative units would have state-mirroring institutional set-ups, and therefore be capable to maintain foreign relations (Interview Lecours 2019). Nevertheless, the majority of participants related reasons and forms of paradiplomacy to the internationalization of formerly domestic affairs in light of globalization procedures. Hence, forms and outreach as elements of paradiplomacy research might give us an idea of a respective region's targets. They can be understood as the visible channels of communication of paradiplomacy. However, they fail to recognize domestic factors, so to say the enabling conditions or the operational milieu, to recall Manuel Duran at that point (2015, 71).

5.2.2 Legal Frameworks as Scope of Action

To know the (actor) possibilities, or autonomy, of a sub-state entity, we need to understand the larger frame in which they are situated. City-regions pose as "the principal scale at which people experience lived reality" (Jones 2014, 110). This momentum of representing the experience of people, in a direct sense, can have an empowering effect for regions that crosses borders. If in their vital interest, they may claim a certain autonomy and authority on their own. At the same time, they remain bound to the structural system dominated by either the nation-state or the supranational sphere. A concept that might carry the findings further is the one of relational autonomy. As Martin Jones puts it very broadly, we can understand relational autonomy as "the making of territorial politics in and through power relations, which are in turn formed through struggles around multiple and polymorphous sociospatial relations" (Jones 2014, 110). The scope of action for any city or region is

therefore dominated by the larger political framework, which can be both a state and/or a supranational configuration. That means that paradiplomacy can have actual impacts and can function as either a complementary or as a contestant of traditional foreign policy. Yet, it`s impacts and forms need to be related to its embedding within national and supranational systems. The legal framework then has an enabling function, and is notably reflected within the Regional Authority Index (Hooghe, Marks, Schakel et al. 2016). The greater the legal freedom a certain entity enjoys, the larger are its actor qualities. This can rank from sister cities as a not only tolerated but also supported form of international agreement with low conflict potential regarding the national sphere, up to becoming an independent legal subject in international treaties (as has been confirmed by e.g. Interview Schmidt 2020 and Interview Evens 2019). This pattern has been consolidated to the extent where the legal framework has repeatedly been cited as the main enabling condition:

> "If you want to become a paradiplomacy scholar or student, you need to understand the constitution and administrative law of each country. You need to know the legal framework to understand the specific capacities of local authorities to play an international role. And this depends on the country; it is not the same in federalist countries compared to a Unitarian one. It also depends on centralization and decentralization. You have to consider a lot of legal and institutional variables to understand the real capacities of local authorities in each country."

> (Interview Oddone 2019)

5.2.3 Capacities

If one then speaks of capacities to act, then one should of course include a more material side to it.

Clearly, in any empirical study, one would also need to consider the resources a specific entity can mobilize for its foreign efforts. Thereby, budget and staff alone are of course important variables which allow for a certain comparability and relativity. However, especially in smaller and possibly less well-equipped regions, it is not financial resources alone that matter but also the temporal investment, or, the continuity of foreign efforts (Interview Kompatscher 2019, Interview Oddone 2019). In that light, pure foreign policy as such would be less costly than other policy domains (Interview Kompatscher 2019). In order to get an idea of a region's paradiplomacy, one should hence judge the continuity with which it conducts foreign relations. It is then under this paradigm that budget and staff become even more important as continuous elements of an important policy aspect.

As indicated above, this is clearly intertwined with the permissibility of the legal framework. Several interview participants stressed the importance of macro-regional configurations (such as the EU or MERCOSUR, but also smaller projects, such as EURALPS) as important entry point to build these capacities and to engage continuously (e.g. Interview Kompatscher 2019, Interview Oddone 2019).

What one can draw from this category then is that the size of a certain entity's budget and staffing can be interesting, but does not automatically allow for a prioritization or a hierarchic order, since there might be different approaches to paradiplomacy again. Notwithstanding, having a significant budget and staff (for Flanders and Québec we can speak of entire ministries) that is treated as integral part of a sub-state entity's political apparatus enables a multi-faceted foreign policy that comes close to those of states.

5.2.4 Political Actors & Agenda

A recurring feature of the interviews was the importance of a political interest in conducting paradiplomacy. This interest was, according to several narratives, often tied to individuals having the aim to address local challenges internationally. Of course, there are very different stories to be told here. One could think of Parks Tau, former mayor of Johannesburg, becoming the head of the United Cities and Local Governments-organization (Interview Nganje 2019), the aim of collaboration irrespective of state borders in Latin America (e.g. the case of the small town of Monte Caseros in Argentina, Interview Oddone 2019), or overcoming state-centralism through international activity (as was the case for the French *département* of Rhône-Alps, Interview Lecours 2019). Whatever the actual aim might be, it shows well that paradiplomatic activity also stands and falls with political vision and leadership. This has of course another, more personal dimension, which is the network and relative importance of a person. Thus, the personal contacts and attraction of foreign leaders was equally an often cited feature. An observation narrated in the interviews notably describes the relationship between political rule and paradiplomacy as follows:

> "The funding for the development of foreign relations gets typically cut by conservative governments. Here again, we would talk about a very functional, utilitarian and economics-based paradiplomacy. This is not the case in Québec. It is driven by nationalism and nationalism is multidimensional here: it is about promoting Québec's identity abroad without it being mediated by the government."

(Interview Lecours 2019)

Moving beyond focusing on the details of party politics and the coordinates of the political spectrum, one could interpret that paradiplomacy is not only person-, but also aim-dependent. Hence, one could interpret that the weaker its institutionalization, the greater its vulnerability to political contingencies. It is probably for that reason the importance of a clear blueprint and international strategy was also emphasized (Interview Kaminski 2019, Interview Schmidt 2020). This is something to be found in the most accomplished cases, such as Scotland or Flanders. However, some participants claimed the need for more focus and strategic aims to be developed by more paradiplomatic actors (e.g. Interview Schmidt 2020).

Lastly, an important element is that historical circumstances also play a role in shaping today's political realities. Hence, if one considers contingencies, than historical developments must be incorporated, as well. Not only may it lead to a deeper understanding of specific policies, but also to take regional coherence into account. Both variations can be understood when thinking about cautious paradiplomacy due to the Apartheid legacy (Interview Nganje 2019) or historical territorial disputes (Interview Kompatscher 2019). Thus, there is a certain sensitivity that has implications on the adherence and the integrity of societies. Political actors and agendas are, first and foremost, to be embedded into these collective memories

5.2.5 Non-Governmental Incentives

, Now that a very important aspect for paradiplomacy has been discussed, namely political actors carrying out foreign relations, it is important to also shed light on the private sector. Here, one needs to distinguish between two predominant views:

On the one hand, just as much as in traditional state-to-state foreign policy, private actors such as business leaders or university representatives can form part of delegations and visits. Once again, this is dependent on the exact form of paradiplomacy. But especially in topic-oriented ways of collaboration (be it commercial or educational), the private sector acts as the implementing and benefiting level of paradiplomacy. When asked for the determinants of successful paradiplomacy in the past, one response has emphasized the level of attraction the government has on local businesses with regard to delegations and fairs (Interview Evens 2019). Here, we can speak of a more hierarchical, top-down level of involvement that mirrors the state on the international stage.

However, another view would describe the private sector as vital incentive to constitute international strategies, and to ultimately conduct them, as well. One participant has modelled this engagement as a "triple helix", consisting of universities, businesses and self-government (Interview Kaminski 2019). Another example focused on the foreign endeavours of the Canadian province of Alberta due to their paradiplomatic efforts being shut down and only being re-launched due to the pressure of the oil industry, looking for good (political) relations with oil refineries in neighbouring U.S. states (Interview Paquin 2019).

Generally, one can discuss aim-dependency again at this point. However, with a large array of paradiplomacy being dedicated to commercial, economic, and generally amelioration purposes (of any sort), the partaking of the private sector as implementation grounds is crucial. The question is then whether this happens in a top-down, bottom-up, or horizontal manner. One conclusion one can draw from the above-stated is, just as much as in the section on political actors related to the degree of institutionalization and the legal framework: The more permissible a legal framework is, and the more "normalized" paradiplomacy is in a political apparatus, the more contacts will take place on a more political and governmental level. In turn, this means that the private sector, including its business and university contacts, plays an even bigger role for entities that find themselves in highly centralized countries.

Those contacts are in their stead related to specific degrees of internationalization (or the need for it). As was pointed out repeatedly, internationalization remains a premise for the role of the private sector (Interview Njanje 2019, Interview Oddone 2019). While big companies are usually quite well-connected already, smaller businesses would have difficulties in becoming part of global value chains in the first place (ibid.). A municipal example helps to underline this claim of structural differences in that regard: While Kiel and its respective *Land* of Schleswig-Holstein. Germany rather contain SME's, staff of the city of Munich would always consider representatives of big companies like Siemens in their foreign strategies (Interview Schmidt 2020).
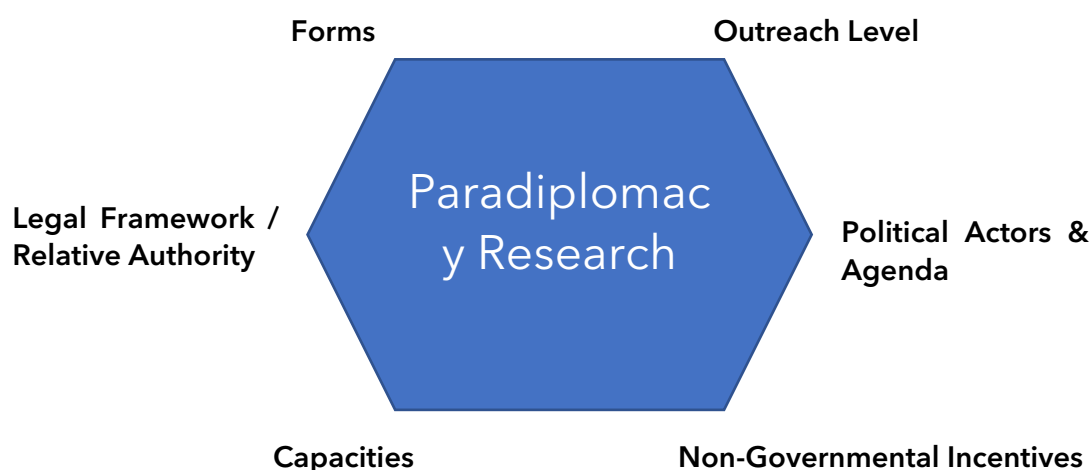
This leads me to believe that while the private sector can play a very active and enabling role for paradiplomacy, its embedding in national and international economic structures might be worth considering before estimating its role.

5.3 Results

The aim of this inquiry has been to add analytical rigor to paradiplomacy research by forming a grid that is then, possibly with adaptations, applicable to a multitude of cases. One could hence speak of a qualitative factor analysis. However, I hold that whether to call it factor, variables, or indicators, is rather a question of semantics, at least for this work. By examining the literature, the paradiplomatic form that is employed as well as the level at which it is communicated have already been categorized and found to be key parts of researching paradiplomacy, its role, and what it is capable of achieving. Moreover, these two elements allow for certain conclusions on why paradiplomacy is conducted and on what made it possible. However, it failed to account for the more latent contexts that seem to be constitutive for said forms and levels of outreach. The interviews, as much as analysing them with the help of Qualitative Content Analysis, then enabled one to work empirically oriented and to shed light onto elements that are have been touched upon in paradiplomacy research, but have never been assembled and systematically used. Hence, the completed analytical framework now reads as follows:

Indicators:

(1) *Forms*:   ceremonial, single themed, global, sovereign (e.g. treaties, visits, partnerships, regional cooperation patterns, networks, commercial paradiplomacy / bilateral or multilateral tracks)
(2) *Outreach Level*: cross-border, macro-regional, global
(3) *Legal Framework*: regional, national, supranational legislation, resulting in degrees of relative sub-state autonomy (and hence, authority)
(4) *Capacity*: Institutions, Budget, Staff, Time or Continuity
(5) *Political Actors & Agenda*: political will or profiling, strategies, individuals, parties, historical circumstances
(6) *Non-Governmental Incentives*: top-down, horizontal or bottom-up dynamics, business partnerships, fairs, delegations, cultural and education cooperation

Forms   **Outreach Level**

Legal Framework /   Paradiplomac   **Political Actors &**
Relative Authority   y Research   **Agenda**

Capacities   **Non-Governmental Incentives**

Although I tried to isolate the different key features, the interviews have confirmed that it is necessary to take a holistic stance on the issue. Of course, the legal framework has influences on the range of choices an actor has, as much as on the material capacities of an entity. This has, in its turn, consequences on how and where paradiplomacy is used. This totality of factors can be understood as follows:

"I have come across quite ambitious 'paradiplomats', if you wish, quite intelligent and smart, but they were constrained by the legal framework and could not do much. The

space in which they can manoeuvre is very limited. I should also qualify that in addition to the legal framework we should also look at the political and institutional culture. Because what we observe across the continent[5] now, is that the law may say one thing, but if the political and institutional context permits, sub-national governments can do what they want as long as they do not step on the toes of the political principles at the national level." (Interview Nganje 2019)

Compared to Hockings proposal of considering aims and motivations, extent and direction of involvement, structures and resources, levels of participation, and finally strategies as indicators, this scheme can offer a more hands-on approach that is still within reach of Hocking's work. The most important difference however, is in giving more space to legal circumstances, on the other hand subsuming motives and aims partially under political agenda and forms of paradiplomacy. This is clearly an outcome of the interviewee's opinion, as much as of my own interpretation that generalizing aims and motivations would not do justice to case peculiarities. They are, instead, latent drivers to why, how and where paradiplomacy is conducted, and might hence be deduced with the help of this scheme. It is therefore a more contemporary way of describing forms and outreach as much as to account for paradiplomacy by looking at its embedding and surrounding.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has not been to introduce a sort of paradiplomacy of scope, in which specific types are weighted heavier than others. Instead, the majority of the interviews have shown that paradiplomacy is a means of addressing local concerns, rather than a hierarchical or prioritized practice. As mentioned many times, there is no single isolated type of paradiplomacy, and neither are there single isolated motives. However, the six indicators I propose can help to account for paradiplomatic endeavour: This is an attempt to paint a coherent picture. If, for example, the legal environment of a certain administrative unit is rather restrictive, than we might see a higher engagement of indirect forms, as well as an increase of private sector incentives. If we find an outstanding legal position, as in the case of Flanders or Québec, that actively allows for maintaining state-alike international affairs on their own, then capacities might be advanced and communicated on higher levels in comparison to entities in highly centralized states.

My intention was neither to render paradiplomacy into a quantifiable practice, although I admit that the terminology of "indicator" might suggest such a way. It is true though that these indicators can be elaborated into a quantifiable scale, leaving space for future research endeavours. I now hold that this analytical framework has the potential to serve as a lens to look at paradiplomacy, or even better, to understand it. As much as one can talk about individual drivers, this map of indicators can give an idea of paradiplomacy categorization in an explicatory manner.

Hence, what has been achieved is to offer a fuller account on paradiplomacy. Tracing a regional or municipal foreign policy can now be undertaken along the proposed lines. That still does not mean that every individual driver and motive can be understood. But next to seeing how and at which levels regional concerns are addressed, one can also account for the positioning of said region within domestic and international contexts, as well as for its inner structure. From my point of view, this is an enabling assemblage that brings us closer

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[5] Author: The African continent

to comparing and explaining sub-state foreign behaviour. Lastly, this scheme relates to the changing nature of diplomacy. More than everything, its embedding must be seen in the pluralization of actors in international affairs, seeking to trace Rosenau's creation of "Fragmegration" of the international system. Nevertheless, it is only applicable to sub-state entities, and might of course be subject to adaption when applied. Its use therefore stems from being a starting point, or guideline, for further inquiries into paradiplomacy and beyond.

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