

**Chapter 1**  
**Paradiplomacy – Discourse Analysis**  
**and Research Conceptualization**

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## **1.1. Introduction**

Regions and cities are important international actors. If the international community has always been aware of the economic significance of some US states (such as California or Texas) or of regions using foreign policy to leverage their internal autonomy (such as Quebec or Catalonia), today the phenomenon is much more visible. Subnational governments are concerned with what has traditionally been defined as “low policy”: environmental issues, investment promotion, cultural and educational exchange etc. This contrasts “high policy,” represented by the diplomatic and military security agenda of a central government. In other words, paradiplomacy represents the projection abroad of the domestic competencies of subnational governments, which are predominantly concentrated on such “low policy” issues (Tavares 2016).

The international activism of subnational governments is now neither exclusive to federal countries nor to firmly established democracies (Cornago 2010, 17). Obviously it is usually more prominent in the case of federal countries such as Canada, Germany, Belgium, or the US, but it is also visible in unitary countries such as Poland or France. Moreover, paradiplomacy is becoming a truly global phenomenon. Regional and local entities in South Africa, China, Japan, India, Brazil, and Russia, to name just a few, carry out foreign activities on an even bigger scale. They are also becoming better organized. There are over 125 multilateral networks and forums that gather subnational governments to discuss numerous issues – from sustainable development to culture and education or urban development (Tavares 2016).

In this chapter we are going to characterise the external relations of subnational actors as the field of research as well as position our work in the frames of academic discourse of paradiplomacy. The author has

neither the ambition nor plan to present the topic of paradiplomacy in an exhaustive, complex way<sup>1</sup>. Rather, the main aim of this chapter is to set the scene in order to present the fruit of the conducted research in the successive parts of this book.

First, a brief explanation of the problems with definitions and presenting academic discussion over terms as well as our understanding of the research object. Next, paradiplomacy will be set in the frames of international relations theories. Kuznetsov's book entitled "Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy. Subnational governments in international affairs" has been the main point of reference for this part. In the third section a brief literature review is done to present the current state of the art. A more detailed analysis of academic discourse on paradiplomacy in China, India and Russia are included in the thematic chapters. The fourth section is devoted to an in-depth presentation of our methodology and the whole concept of our research. Again, we derive extensively from Kuznetsov, trying to apply his analytical framework for our case studies.

## 1.2. Problems with definition

The contemporary international system may be characterised through the prism of two, somehow opposing, phenomena: globalization processes (defined in terms of integration and cooperation) and regional processes of world fragmentation or disintegration. These two factors are mutually interconnected and lead to the creation of a sophisticated system of international relations in which the traditionally dominant role of nation states has been impugned. Non-state actors, such as international organisations, multinational companies (MNCs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or terrorists groups, have become inherent elements of international relations. In this regard, we can mention Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1973), who first popularised this concept that later laid the basis of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. The "state-centric world" in which states operate as principal agents was replaced by the diverse "multicentric world" of various state and non-state actors.

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<sup>1</sup> For an extensive discussion and definition on the matter, refer to Kuznetsov (2015), Aldecoa and Keating (1999) or Tavares (2016)

The international activities of regions, as non-state actors, have attracted considerable scholarly attention, such as in the 1980s, together with an increasing involvement of regional governments in the international arena. This phenomenon was named as “paradiplomacy,” which is defined by Kuznetsov (2015) as:

a form of political communication for reaching economic, cultural and political or any other types of benefits, the core of which consist in self-sustained actions of regional governments with foreign governmental and non-governmental actors.

The first mention of paradiplomacy is found in the work of diplomatic historian Rohan Butler (1961). But only Ivo Duchacek’s article published in the autumn 1984 issue of “*Publius*” (Duchacek 1984) found its way to the mainstream diplomatic studies. Duchacek used the term as an abbreviation of “parallel diplomacy” understood as “direct international activity by subnational actors supporting, complementing, correcting, duplicating, or challenging the nation-states’ diplomacy” (Tavares 2016).

It took some time before this controversial term was popularised and became commonly used by scholars and policymakers. At the beginning “paradiplomacy” was used as the twin of the previous neologism “microdiplomacy,” also created by Duchacek. Later, other terms appeared such as “protodiplomacy,” “subnational governments’ diplomacy,” “regional diplomacy,” and “constituent diplomacy.”<sup>2</sup> In Poland the phenomenon of international cooperation of regional governments is sometimes referred to as “self-governmental diplomacy” (Skorupska 2015), what is appropriate to describe the activities of Polish self-governmental units but definitely not suitable to portray, for instance, Chinese regions. Regional authorities of this country are not democratically elected and due to this fact using the term “self-government” would be misleading. Such problems are with all of these terms, because all have their advantages and disadvantages. The brief overview of the academic discussion about them was written by Alexander Kuznetsov (2015) and the deep semiological analysis by Aguirre (1999). A critical analysis of the term and its definition was also provided by Frankowski (2013). For the purpose of the following piece of work, we follow the majority of scholars who use the term “paradiplomacy” interchangeably with the abovementioned

<sup>2</sup> But also “subnational foreign affairs,” “subnational foreign policy,” “substate diplomacy,” “multilayered diplomacy,” “local government external action,” “local diplomacy,” “local foreign policy,” “regional diplomacy,” “plurinational diplomacy,” “pos-diplomacy,” or, one may speak of “foreign policy localization.” (Tavarez 2016, p. 9).

synonyms or simply as an “umbrella term”, which cover many different types of sub-national international activities (e.g. protodiplomacy would be a sub-category of paradiplomacy).

Another principal point that has to be considered is the question of including municipal and city authorities in the concept of “paradiplomacy.” Some researchers, such as Kuznetsov (2015) or Cornago (2010) argue that there is a “principal dissemblance” between regional and local levels of governance. The latter, unlike regions, are not part of state power and their nature is different. As Kuznetsov states:

In other words, the Canadian province of Alberta can be considered as a non-sovereign state actor in international affairs, but the capital of the province, Edmonton, should be viewed as a non-sovereign and non-state actor in its external performances. The only exception can be applied to those municipal bodies that occupy a place in state hierarchy right after the central government, and, as such, they are recognized on legal bases as “regions” in their power competence like, for example, the two Russian “federal cities,” Moscow and Saint-Petersburg.

Taking into consideration the growing role of cities (65% of people live in cities) and the fact that many of them became powerful political units with resources much bigger than many states, it is difficult to agree with such an approach. Global cities such as New York or London – denationalised platforms for global capital and a mixture of people from all over the world – can serve as the best example of cities with great political power. The annual expenditure of London is much bigger than the whole GDP of Malta, an EU member state. Such great economic power has impact on the political position of London’s mayor vis-à-vis the political leaders of Malta and many other states.

Benjamin Barber convincingly presents this political phenomenon of the growing importance of cities in the book “If Mayors Ruled the World. Dysfunctional Nations, Rising cities” (2013). Many other researchers (Pluijm, Mellisen 2007; Munsch et al. 2008) conceptualise “city diplomacy” as a form of decentralizing international relations management, with cities being the key actors. As far as motives, methods, and other determinants of their engagement in the external relations, they are similar to those of regions<sup>3</sup>.

Due to this fact there is not much sense in excluding cities from an analysis of paradiplomacy. Both cities and regions can be labelled as “non-

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<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the political importance of global cities and their rising influence on international relations and global governance in particular was presented by Acuto (2013).

central government units” and both can act as separate political actors, competing and cooperating with state authorities and each other. Their ability to be actors of paradiplomacy depends in practice not only on their legal status but rather on the resources they command, political will of leaders, level of autonomy within the state, and nature of relations between the city as well as regional and central governments. Those factors are very much the same in the case of regional and municipal authorities. Due to this fact, cities shall not be excluded a priori from the following research.

Paradiplomacy has many faces and is now a global practice, although “in each regional context it usually adopts some specific profiles” (Cornago 2013). It could be carried out in many forms: from mostly ceremonial contacts between regions or cities to much more tangible collaborations. Twin towns or sister states agreements, non-binding cooperative arrangements made between subnational governments in geographically and politically distinct areas to promote cultural and commercial ties, usually belong to the former, ceremonial, form of paradiplomacy. Bilateral trans-border connections, that lead to the creation of specific bodies to enhance cross-border economic cooperation, on the other hand, belong to the latter. Regions that fight for more autonomy or sovereignty are the special case. In these cases, paradiplomacy is usually coined as “protodiplomacy,” a term that refers to “the conduct of international relations by a non-central government that aims at establishing a fully sovereign state.” It “represents diplomatic preparatory work for a future secession and for the international diplomatic recognition of such an occurrence” (Duchacek, Latousche, Stevenson 1988).

Despite prominent differences, in both end and means, subnational governments have been able to design and implement a truly innovative diplomatic field, with its own channels for international cooperation and new policy instruments (Cornago 2013)

### **1.3. Paradiplomacy in the frames of international relations theories**

In this section the phenomenon of paradiplomacy will be analyzed through lenses of three international relations theories. We start from the liberal paradigm, then move on to realism, and finish with constructivism.

Liberals, such as the already mentioned Keohane and Nye, questioned the traditional paradigm of international relations, in which state and

interstate relations are the only components in world politics. For them world politics is not a system of political relations between states but rather:

political interactions between any “significant actors” whose characteristics include autonomy, the control of substantial resources relevant to a given issue area and participation in political relationship across state lines (Keohane, Nye).

State government subunits, along with various international and transnational organisations, are in the list of those “significant actors”. For Keohane and Nye the concept of state government subunit has a broad meaning and includes different entities (e.g. departments and groups) within the central government as well as from the side of regional authorities. Therefore, liberals see non-central governments as autonomous actors in the international relations.

Keohane and Nye’s concept is further strengthened by the fact that the once very important division between “high” and “low” politics has faded away. The assumption that “high politics,” a state’s security relationship with other states in the international system, is autonomous and therefore distinct from “low politics,” meaning societal pressures and the domestic political economy, is questioned by liberal thinkers (Barnet 1990). A number of “low” policy issues, such as climate change, sustainable development or education, became an important part of foreign relations. In consequence, regions and cities, as entities dealing with those problems on a daily basis, have naturally tended to develop various international links. Organizations such as “C40 Cities” can serve as a good example. It is a network of the world’s megacities committed to addressing climate change. C40 supports cities to collaborate effectively, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change. The organization connects 80 of the world’s greatest cities, representing over 550 million people and one-quarter of the global economy. Due to this fact, the voice of the organization is heard and important (<http://www.c40.org/>).

Finally, the liberal theory refers to the problem of correlation between transnational relations and the type of political regime (Kuznetsov 2015). Paradiplomacy is seen as one of the channels to promote regional identity besides the loyalty to the state. The rise of regions as transnational actors can be explained as a result of strengthening subnational identity. According to liberal popular belief, authoritarian regimes cannot accommodate the presence of any plurality in the



decision-making process. Therefore, in such countries people's interests cannot be realized through autonomous activities of regional or local authorities. As Nye and Keohane noted:

In totalitarian societies, and in areas in which one version or another of integral nationalism has taken hold, dual loyalties are regarded as treasonous [...] In the modernized western world and its ancillary areas the acceptability of multiple loyalties is taken for granted.

To conclude, paradiplomacy seen through liberal lenses is a logical consequence of the major changes in the international system: the diminishing the role of interstate relations, evanescent difference between "high" and "low" politics, as well as democratization and modernization that allows linking state loyalty with local or regional.

The realist school of international relations looks at paradiplomacy in, quite obviously, a different way than liberals. Realists do not believe that the state-centered paradigm of global politics is either out of date or explain adequately world affairs. The will to maximize the national interests of the state is still the most important force that shapes the global landscape (Waltz 1979). Realists have noticed the emergence of new transnational players in the world politics but do not perceive them as autonomous powers. Their existence results from the rational decisions of nation states that use them to reach their national policy goals. In other words, transnational actors are derivatives of the foreign policies of national states and not independent actors.

Paradiplomatic activities of regions and cities, when looking through realist lenses, are no more than effects of "the rationalisation of the foreign policy of central national governments, who consider regional authorities' activities abroad beneficial rather than noxious tendency for state interests" (Kuznetsov 2015). That means that paradiplomacy is just an instrument in a state's foreign policy toolbox. Regions participate in international relations with formal or informal approval of the state government and promote the state's interests. Realists do not neglect the fact of the growing decentralization of states and the delegation of freedom and autonomy to regional governments. They claim that this process has been possible because it serves the national interests of states.

The realist approach allows explaining the existence of paradiplomacy in countries ruled in an authoritarian manner. Contrary to liberals, the realist school does not link the external activities of regions with political pluralism within a state. Due to this fact, engagement of, say, Chinese

provinces, in paradiplomacy is quite natural, as long as it is line with the central government's foreign policy. In the Chinese context the realistic explanation seems very much to the point, since the constituent diplomacy of regions is strongly encouraged by the government in Beijing.

The third dominant school of international relations is constructivism. For the constructivists, state behavior is influenced by intersubjective structures rather than material capabilities. Intersubjectivity is constituted by collective meaning systems in which states participate and which they reproduce through their practices. Sovereignty is the single most important intersubjective structure. Similarly to the concept of identity or interests it has been constructed by political and cultural elites (Wendt 1999).

Paradiplomacy appears in the works of constructivists mainly in the context of constructing regional identity as a state. As Sharafutdinova (2003) noted:

If a region has the goal of constructing its identity as a state, it would attempt to engage in foreign activities with the aim of 'signalling' its statehood to the outside world and with the ultimate aim of having other international actors reciprocate and recognise the entity as a sovereign state. Thus foreign activities might constitute politics of representing a region in a certain image and could be an essential part of the identity construction project, through which the regional government attempts to incorporate elements of sovereign statehood in the regional identity.

Constructivists, thus, look at external activities of regions as a form of "identity-constructing." Therefore, they have conducted research on regions in which the separatist movements are strong and through paradiplomacy express their political ambitions. In this context such regions as Canadian Quebec, Spanish Basque country and Catalonia, or Russian Tatarstan, have attracted a lot of attention (Balhazar 1999; Lecours and Moreno 2001, Paquin 2004, Sharafutdinova 2003). Paradiplomacy in these regions is directly related to a search for external recognition as well as self-recognition of the region (identity-building).

Summing up, for social constructivists paradiplomacy is interesting in the context of a region's pursuit of sovereign statehood and not as a functional response to globalization and economic interdependence (liberal approach) or merely as an instrument of a state's foreign policy (realist approach).

Those three dominant schools in academic debate about international relations offer us alternative views on paradiplomacy. Although contradictory in some elements, they give a wide array of analytical options. Depending on the particular case we can employ the most suitable

one to give the best possible explanation. Taking into consideration the huge variety of reasons behind the paradiplomacy of regions, such a multi-theoretical approach seems to be justifiable.

## 1.4 Literature review

The first studies on the involvement of subnational governments in foreign policy date back to the 1970s, when the first surveys appeared in North American academia (Atkey 1971, Levy 1973). But the real development of serious research in the field began in the 1980s. Ivo Duchacek published “The International Dimensions of Self-government” (1984), which later became perceived as a seminal work in the field. Duchacek coined the special term of “paradiplomacy” and proposed the first typology. He identified five types of action on subnational actors: “microdiplomacy of bordering regions, transregional diplomacy, global paradiplomacy, protodiplomacy, global protodiplomacy.” Duchacek, followed by some other scholars (Kincaid 1990, Soldatos 1990, Michelmann 1986) created the theoretical framework for future research on paradiplomacy. In those first periods paradiplomacy was mainly analyzed in frames of studies on federal systems and federal states. Due to this fact the development of paradiplomacy was analyzed through the prism of the process of a state’s foreign policy federalization. Scholars focused rather on changes that take place on the domestic level and push regions into a more active international presence (Kuznetsov 2015). This federalist dimension dominated till the end of the 1990s and even today is a very important part of academic discourse over external activities of regions. Frankowski (2013) published a comprehensive study on the place of external policies of US states within the frame of the US government’s foreign policy making. Bursens and Deforche (2010) analyzed the case of Belgium and explained the evolution of regional foreign competences through the prism of institutionalism.

In the 1980s another important stream of research began concerning paradiplomacy – border studies. In this type of studies scholars try to understand the general picture of trans-border political, economic and cultural relations. Regional authorities are in this context interested as they are major institutional actors responsible for the development of contacts, initiatives and communication in border spaces. The mainstream of scientific works in border studies dimensions is represented by case

studies of region trans-border cooperation. Researchers studied regional cross-border interactions either by giving a general outlook or focusing on a particular sphere of cooperation (Duchacek et al. 1988, Briner 1986, Duchacek 1986).

Border studies, particularly in Europe, developed during the 1990s and early 2000s – with a specific focus on multi-level governance (MLG) (Perkmann 1999). MLG from the mid-1990s established itself as a one of the main analytical frameworks in research on the EU. It started from the observation that much of EU policy-making relies on networks of actors, but goes far beyond this by emphasizing the significance of different territorial levels in this process. MLG points to the direct relations that have developed between EU actors and regional as well as local representatives within states. It is worth noticing that although the initial statement of MLG was rational in its emphasis on cost-benefit calculations, informational asymmetries and institutional self-interests, other contributions to the field have sought to demonstrate the constructivist potential of MLG (Aalberts 2004).

MLG became a major theoretical focus in European studies on paradiplomacy and European integration was one of the major drivers behind rising foreign engagement of regional authorities. What is interesting, empirical studies on paradiplomacy of European regions (e.g. Blatter et al. 2008) were concentrated rather on intra-European activities and not on the relations with third countries. It mirrors the real dynamics of paradiplomacy in European regions in the 1990s. Setting up an office in Brussels in order to adapt to the political integration of Europe was very common among regions, but having an office in a non-European state was scarce. Although in recent years we have experienced rapid development of contacts outside of Europe, for instance with Chinese provinces (special relationship between the state of Bavaria and Shandong province or Łódź and Łódzkie Voivodship with Chengdu and Sichuan province), this intra-European research perspective prevails. Apart from sparse case studies there is a lack of comprehensive studies on the non-central governments' relations with partners outside Europe.

Starting from the 1990s we observed a heyday of various studies that look at paradiplomacy through many different angles. These research efforts contribute to the fast development of paradiplomatic studies. One of the most important books from that time is a volume edited by two scholars, Francisco Aldecoa and Michael Keating (1999), entitled: *Paradiplomacy in action: the foreign relations of subnational governments*.

This book was packed with valuable contributions mainly by European scholars. Apart from a great overview of previous research development they opened a new important research dimension – the nationalistic perspective. They very much concentrated their attention on those regions that are searching for autonomy and use paradiplomacy as an instrument of building their international presence. Those problems were at the time much higher on the political agenda in Europe than in North America, which was one of the reasons why European scholars undertook this topic earlier than others.

Lecourse and Moreno (2001) made further research of the nationalistic dimension of paradiplomacy. Using the lenses of nationalism they constructed important theoretical frames for the regional involvement in international relations. They distinguish three main process through which nationalism can be logically related to paradiplomacy: national identity construction and consolidation, definition and articulation of regional interests, and mobilization of societies. The first process is understood as shaping national identity through various paradiplomatic activities such as cultural exchange. The second is related with stressing political and cultural distinctiveness that is expressed by common, regional interests that could be contradictory to a state's interest. The third process is a form of power politics that is oriented on the political mobilization of regional societies on the basis of commonness. That mobilization "gives regional leaders a prestige that can be used as leverage in negotiations on constitutional and institutional change."

Apart from the nationalistic dimension, in the 1990s regional foreign activities started to be analyzed from the legal perspective. The researchers examined national constitutions and other legal acts in order to understand the scope of competences in possession of regional and local authorities. One of the most important books in this field was written by John Trone (2001). In his broad comparative study of a number of federal states (Australia, Germany, Canada, the USA and others) he analyzed the participation of subnational authorities in external relations mainly in two aspects: the level of legal permission of treaty-making with foreign actors that is granted to the regions and consultation mechanisms between regional and central authorities.

Legal aspects of paradiplomacy attracted attention of scholars in many other countries. In Poland for instance, the Faculty of Law at University of Białystok published in 2012 a series of articles in the special volume of journal *Białostockie Studia Prawnicze*. The contributors did not

concentrate only on federal states but rather tried to give a comprehensive overlook of the most important legal aspects of self-governmental foreign activities. Beside legal analysis of regions' foreign activities (Perlikowski 2012) in this special issue one can find interesting case studies such as the Polish-Belarusian cross-border cooperation of cities of Białystok and Grodno (Musiał 2012).

Another dimension of paradiplomacy discourse was connected with the globalization. Obviously globalization determines mostly all processes that take place in the world politics and regions or cities are affected as well. No wonder that among thousands of academic works about globalization there are some dedicated to paradiplomacy (e.g. Keating 1999, Fry 2005). They are two major contexts in which scholars analyzed constituent diplomacy through the lenses of globalization (Kuznetsov 2015). The first is the economic one. In a globalized economy subnational actors search for opportunities to promote their economic interests without intermediation of the central government. In this perspective paradiplomacy is in a sense enabled by globalization but at the same time it further accelerates globalization. The second is cultural. One of the visible effects of globalization is the cultural homogenization that is often perceived as a negative side of the whole process. Sometimes, paradoxically, regions are more efficient in resisting cultural globalization than states. As Kuznetsov notes: "Regions protect their cultural heritage by actively promoting their identity in the international arena. This is especially true for regions with high nationalist, linguistic and cultural aspiration such as Basque Countries, Flanders and Catalonia (...) Globalisation did not exacerbate their position in the field of cultural conservation but in contrast provided them with new opportunities for promotion of their peculiarities at the international level."

Paradiplomacy became also a part of security studies. International cooperation of regions was perceived as a potential instrument for reduction of the transnational dimensions of ethnic conflict. Cornago (1999) gave an example of the conflict concerning the rights of the German-speaking minority in the Italian part of Tyrol. The cooperation between authorities of both Austrian and Italian border regions played a crucial role in the settlement of this difficult ethno-political problem. The security dimension can be also found in academic works that link external activities of regions with security problems emphasizing the role of subnational units in dealing with international crime, migration, or problems of environmental protection.

Another prism through which paradiplomacy is explored by the scholars is the role of regional governments in the global economy. As was already mentioned, many regions and even cities are very powerful in terms of economy with their GDP being much bigger than many states. California has a GDP at a level comparable to Italy, while Chinese Guangdong can hold its own against Indonesia. Obviously, GDP is not the only factor that determines international influence of the region or city, but it can give an idea of the economic power of many subnational units. Not surprisingly though, the economic incentives for diplomacy dominate all other subnational motives to act internationally. One of the first books that describe this phenomenon was the collective volume edited by Douglas Brown and Earl Fry (1993). The authors emphasized that paradiplomacy may serve not only to promote economic interests of the region outside borders but also to increase regional competitiveness inside the country. They also propose a typology of economy-related activities of the regions abroad, dividing them into five categories: technical assistance, offices abroad, participation in the trade shows, market research for regional companies and financial assistance.

In the 2000s the academic discourse about paradiplomacy was broadened by the environmental perspective. Environmental studies have developed tremendously and became an important, interdisciplinary research field in social science. Scholars working in this field look at the regions and cities as actors that are responsible for the practical implementation of environmental policies, formulated often at the supranational level. Happaerts et al (2010) gave three reasons why subnational units should be taken into account in environmental studies:

[...] First, subnational entities are important spatial entities, giving their policies significance for ecosystems, resource use, etc. Secondly, they are often responsible for the implementation of national and supranational policies, especially in the EU where they have responsibilities concerning the management of programs important for sustainable development, such as Structural Funds. Thirdly, it is frequently stated that subnational entities are in proximity to citizens, which is important for stakeholder participations and vital for the effectiveness of sustainability processes.

Kuznetsov (2015) noticed that the existing literature on “green” paradiplomacy can be divided into three main types: case studies on regional cross-border environmental projects, the development of global environmental networks of subnational governments, and the treatment of subnational governments on the issues related to the global environmental agenda. Similarly to other streams of paradiplomatic scholarship, the



environmental dimension is also very much concentrated on Western countries.

The overview presented above of various dimensions of paradiplomatic studies lead to the important conclusion that academic discourse about external activities of regions is very much Western-oriented. Western researchers do research about Western regions and publish in Western books or journals. Obviously, it does not mean that there is no research on the field of paradiplomacy in other parts of the world, but definitely the disproportion in the number of publications is substantial. Big Asian states – China, India, and Russia – can serve as good examples. In all three cases research on paradiplomacy is underdeveloped. In China Chen Zhimin, who was the first Chinese scholar to provide a systematic analysis of the local level of diplomacy, published his book on constituent diplomacy in the 2000s (Zhimin 2001). He compared motives and mechanisms of paradiplomacy and its influence on the central level diplomacy in the US, Canada, the European Union, and Japan. Later he extended his analysis to 13 coastal provinces of China and their influence on Chinese foreign policy (Zhimin 2005). Some other scholars also conducted research on paradiplomacy (see Chapter 3) but studies on the international activities conducted by Chinese regional authorities are relatively scarce.

India, as the largest country with a federal structure in the world, should naturally be decentralized and conduct intensive paradiplomacy on a regional level. Apparently it is not the Indian case. The power in the country is centralized and regional authorities are rather cautious in international activities. However, for several years we have observed an increase in activism by state governments on the international arena (mainly the richer states of Punjab, Gujarat, and Maharashtra) and more incentives for them to do so from the central government.

Academic works of Indian paradiplomacy are also scarce (see Chapter 4). As Jha (2014) noted in the conclusion of his paper on paradiplomacy in India: “the systematic study of the paradiplomatic activities of various states in India is overdue. [...] More thorough examination is still awaited.” These words correspond with the references of his paper where he was able to refer to just a few academic works about constituent diplomacy in India (Shridan 2003, Jenkins 2003, Jacob 2011).

The situation is a little bit different in the case of Russia, where the academic discourse on paradiplomacy is relatively better developed (see Chapter 2). There are some papers about foreign activities of Russian regions (e.g. Sharafutdinova 2003) as well as the post-Soviet space, in



particular non-recognized states like Abkhazia (Coppieters et al. 2003). Kuznetsov (2015) even claims that the cases of some post-communist non-recognized states greatly influenced the development of paradiplomatic discourse, introducing a new “separatist” perspective. However, the paradiplomacy of regions in the Russian Far East is rarely examined and this “Eastern” dimension of research on foreign activities of regions needs to be developed.

To conclude, the analyses of academic discourse on the topic of paradiplomacy shows that there are still a lot of gaps and questions that need to be answered. Research on foreign activities of non-Western regions should be developed in particular because the amount of academic works in this field is not sufficient. Moreover, there are still too few comparative studies that allow comparing and contrasting international activities of Asian regions. Due to this fact, for instance the question about determinants of paradiplomacy in Asian states remains open.

## **1.5. Research conceptualization and methodology**

Writing this book the authors are going to fill the research gaps described above. In particular we would like to contribute to the research on the role of paradiplomacy in the foreign policy of Asian states. In recent years we have seen a growing foreign presence of Asian regional and local authorities. Provinces and cities actively invite and host international delegations, organize events, and even establish representative offices abroad. It is important to note that these activities are not limited to traditional areas of cultural and people-to-people exchanges with bordering regions, or within one continent. Lately, economic or even political issues have become fields of cooperation, and sub-state actors find partners in distant countries.

Central governments in Asia have begun to acknowledge the importance of the aforementioned cooperation. Asian countries deemed largest in terms of territory, China, India, and Russia, constitute an especially interesting case in this matter. The potential of their local authorities make the geographical distance less of an obstacle, while simultaneously the growing economic and political role of the discussed countries makes them increasingly integrated into the global economy. Some of them undertake a host of international interactions to promote exports and attract investment. The size of these countries, compared with the limited number of professional diplomats, brings about a need from

other countries to become interested in intensifying their interactions at the local and regional level.

The main problem addressed by this study is the question as to what determines the paradiplomatic activities of the three biggest Asian (in terms of geography and not identity and culture) states with complex administrative systems, that is: China, India, and Russia. We aim to answer a few of research questions. First of all, to what extent are foreign activities of regional authorities dependent on the degree of decentralization and economic potential of the region? How important is the democratic legitimization of regional authorities in this context? Secondly, we would like to examine the link between central governments and regional authorities that actively pursue their goals abroad. To what extent is paradiplomacy used as a tool of foreign policy by the state? How do central governments influence the international activities of regions? Finally, we are going to answer the questions about the differences and similarities between the examined states. What are the specific features of paradiplomatic activities in each of the selected countries? Which of the examined states' regions are the most independent in their foreign activities?

Basing on the assumption that all three analysed states are rather centralized in terms of policy making, we have stated two hypotheses:

- H1. Paradiplomacy serves as an instrumental governmental foreign policy and reaches the political and economic goals of a state.
- H2. International activities of the regions are dependent on the degree of decentralization and their economic potential but also on the system of incentives created by the central government.

We would like to test this hypothesis using a comprehensive research method that combines political science research with economics. The research on international activities of regions in the Russian Far East, China and India starts from analysing the political system and legal framework for regional/local governments' foreign activities. Then we move to assess the level of decentralization in the country and role of paradiplomacy in the political and academic discourse in the examined countries. Apart from academic works we examine also documents passed by the central government regarding the autonomy of regions and their foreign activities.

In the next step we choose regions from each country for an in-depth case study analysis. We have attempted to choose those regions on the basis of the level of a region's "internationalization." To measure this we constructed a special "Regional Internationalization Index," based on quantitative research. The index is composed of eight major factors, presented below:

1. The value of FDI incoming to the region.
2. The value of FDI incoming to the region/per capita.
3. The value of international trade.
4. The value of international trade/per capita.
5. The number of foreign students coming to the region.
6. The number of foreign students coming to the region/per capita.
7. The number of foreign tourists coming to the region.
8. The number of foreign tourists coming to the region/per capita.

As far as the method of composition of the index is concerned we have to make a few remarks. Firstly, there were two decisive reasons behind the composition of the index: adequacy and availability of data. The final choice was consensually accepted by the whole research team. Secondly, the data taken into our calculations was from the last available year. Capital cities were excluded from the calculations as their internationalization is naturally linked with central level administrative functions and to a lesser extent with activities of regional or local authorities. Thirdly, we were not aiming at creating a comprehensive ranking of regions' internationalization, but rather chose those that are the most internationalized. Therefore, partial lack of data for some peripheral regions would not question the usefulness of the research's results. Finally, to calculate the index we took the region with the highest result in a category and counted it as 100 points. Points for the rest of the regions were calculated proportionally to the highest score. Each component has the same weight. Due to this, the index is finally calculated in points (see Annex 4).

To examine the selected regions we use the analytical framework created by Kuznetsov (2015). He constructed a useful template for other researchers to conduct a study of chosen cases of paradiplomacy. In order to understand this method we are going to present it briefly below.

The analytical framework is based on the multiple response questionnaire (MRQ) technique (see e.g. Foddy 1993). The model consists of a list of questions and a given set of possible responses regarding subnational activities in the international arena. Substantially, the abovementioned framework can be summarized into six major problems formulated as follows:

1. What are the causes of the blooming of the paradiplomatic activities of the region?
2. What are the legal grounds of paradiplomacy in the analysed state?
3. What is the predominant motive of the government of the region to be involved in international affairs?
4. How has paradiplomacy been institutionalized in the region?

5. What is the attitude of the central government towards the paradiplomacy of the examined region?

6. What are the consequences of the region's paradiplomacy for the development of the whole nation?

For each of the questions Kuznetsov's analytical model proposes potential answers to choose from or supplementary questions that suggest the direction of research. For the first question about the causes of the development of region's international presence the explanatory framework offers eleven potential variables that can determine the growth of paradiplomacy: A1) Globalization; A2) Regionalization; A3) Democratization; A4) Foreign policy domestication and internationalization of domestic politics; A5) Federalization and decentralization; A6) Problems with the nation-building process; A7) Central government insufficient effectiveness in foreign relations; A8) Asymmetry of constituent units; A9) Outside stimulus; A10) Regional leader/political parties; and A11) Borders. The impact of each variable from the list of eleven should be evaluated by a scale with four meanings: (1) strong, (2) moderate, (3) weak, and (4) none.<sup>4</sup>

The second problem, in accordance with Kuznetsov's explanatory framework, should be solved by trying to find answers to two questions:

1. What is the level of legal permission of treaty-making with foreign actors granted by the constitution/legal acts to the provincial authorities?

2. What are the legal requirements for national-provincial consultations on foreign affairs issues in case when the solution to the problem, related to the international relations sphere completely, or partly, lie within region's competence?

Obviously in many countries there is a visible contradiction between legal norms and real performance on the ground. In other words, sometimes pure legal analysis would have limited validity because political processes are determined by non-constitutional mechanisms. This contradiction between *de jure* and *de facto* is particularly important in states that are recognized as non-free, such as China or Russia.

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<sup>4</sup> Following Kuznetsov's model: *the meaning "strong" will be given to those variables that can be defined as factors that have a high impact on the blooming of regional external activities. The scale item "moderate" labels those causes that bring not major but quite important additional synergy effects for the rise of paradiplomacy. Under the tag "weak" the causes with secondary significance will be labeled. And the scale item "none" simply means that the variable has no tangible power for the research case.*

The motivation behind paradiplomatic activities is the third research problem in the analytical framework we use. There are four main potential motives for regions to go abroad: economic, political, cultural, or cross-border housekeeping, in cases of frontier regions. All four motives usually overlap in various combinations, because seldom is a subnational government determined only by one aim in its international activities. However, for a better understanding of the situation in the examined region it is useful to find out which motives are dominant.

The fourth research question refers to the institutionalization of paradiplomacy in the region. There are a few popular ways in which subnational units organize their foreign activities. When the region is active abroad it uses a few from the organizational forms listed-below:

- Establishment of a special Regional Ministry of Foreign Affairs or department which is responsible for the international affairs
- Opening of permanent subnational offices abroad
- Official visits of regional authorities to other countries
- Participation in various international events such as exhibitions or forums, that are organized by foreign actors
- Establishing and participation in global and trans-border multilateral regional networks and working groups on specific problems, such as agriculture, sustainable development, energy, transportation etc.
- Participation of regional authorities in international events organized by foreign entities within the official delegation of their central government

The fifth question examines the attitude of the central government to paradiplomacy of its constituent units. Kuznetsov proposed a two-dimensional approach to this research problem. Firstly, we should characterize the general perception of paradiplomacy in the eyes of the central government by positioning this attitude between negative (paradiplomacy as a challenge for the nation) and positive (paradiplomacy as an opportunity for the nation).

The practical dimension refers to the question how the central government deals in practice with international activities of subnational units. It can be classified in four principal patterns presented by Soldatos (1990) and then incorporated to the Kuznetsov framework. These two dimensions are presented in the table below.

The sixth and final problem applies for the consequences of paradiplomacy for the development of the whole nation. Kuznetsov proposed two positive consequences and one negative. The first is the rationalization of the national foreign policy that reflects a principle of

subsidiarity, which means that the central government should delegate on the subnational level all tasks that can be effectively performed on this lower level. The second is the democratization of the decision-making process in national foreign policy, meaning that it brings more plurality and better representation of various interests. The third consequence is the disintegration of the state if paradiplomacy is treated by the region as a step towards secessionism.

**Table 1.1.** The two-dimensional explanatory framework of the attitude of central government to paradiplomacy of its constituent units

Perceptual dimension	Practical dimension
Paradiplomacy as a challenge for the whole nation	Cooperative-coordinated pattern. This model assumes regional involvement in international relations under a formal or informal coordination with the federal government
	Cooperative-joint pattern. This formula means formal or informal inclusion of paradiplomacy within national foreign policy
Paradiplomacy as an opportunity for the whole nation	Parallel-harmony pattern. This model presumes that regional governments act independently in the international arena in accordance with their competency, at the same time however, their actions are harmonized and do not contradict national foreign affairs
	Parallel-disharmony pattern. In this case regional authorities' external actions oppose national government policy. The central government has no administrative power mechanism to control subnational entities' performances in the international arena and in its essence paradiplomacy <i>de facto</i> shifts to diplomacy

Source: author's own preparation on the basis of Kuznetsov (2015).

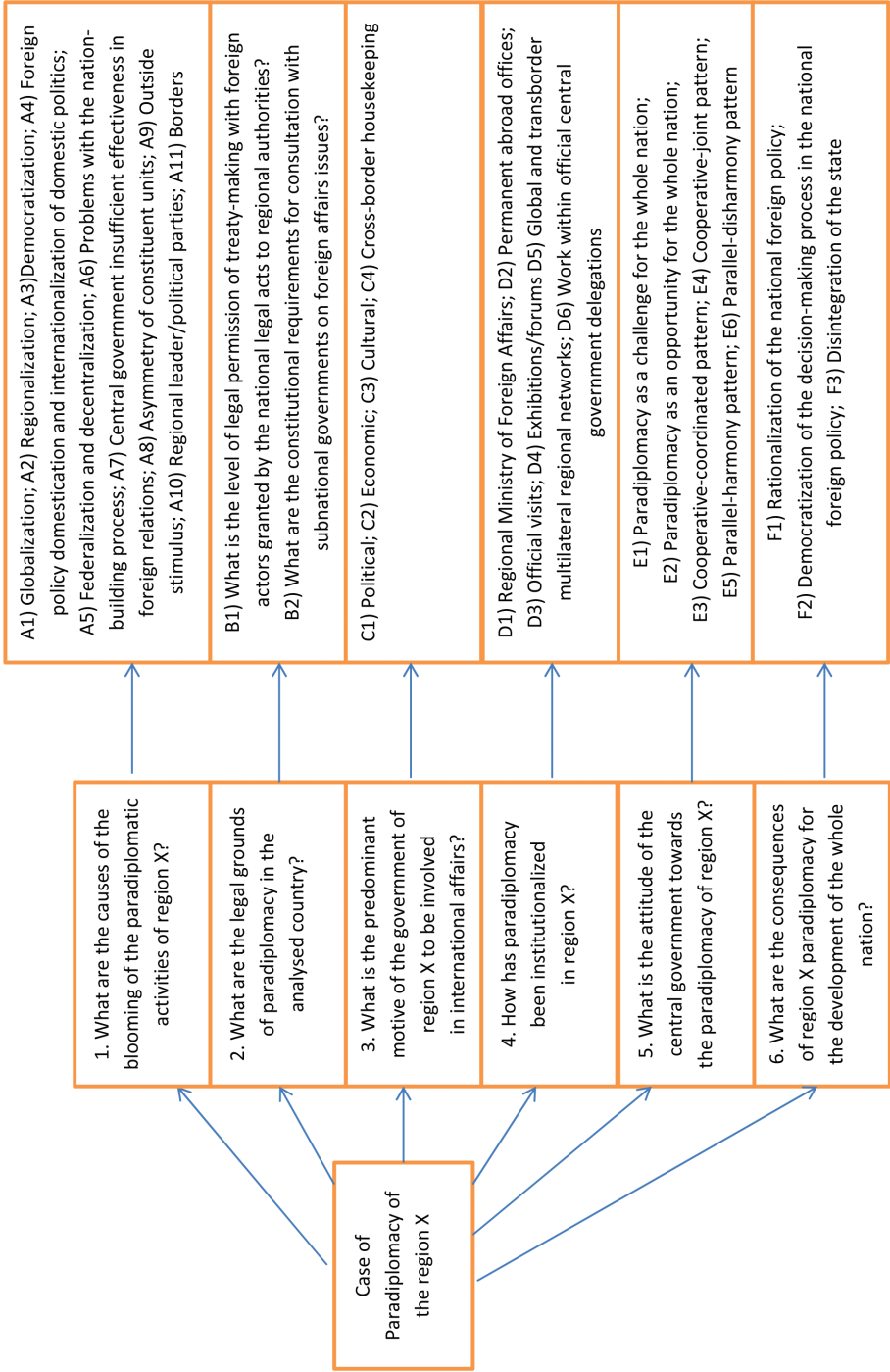


Figure 1.1. The Kuznetsov's explanatory framework



The final step in our research is to make a comparative analysis of the three selected states. In this final stage we are going to find answers for the main research questions, presented above. Our findings contribute to at least two fields: political science (most notably international relations) and economics (developmental economics). In particular, our results help to better understand paradiplomacy as a policy tool used by national states in an era of globalization. Moreover, we realize and highlight the similarities and differences between mechanisms of regional governments' engagement in international relations in China, India, and Russia. As far as economics is concerned, we contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of decentralization and its consequences.

## 1.6. Conclusions

The discourse analyses provided in this chapter have proved that paradiplomacy as a field of research in social science is still at the early stage of development. Moreover, the majority of research was very much Western-oriented with little attention paid by non-Western countries. In both the theoretical foundations and empirical research one can find a lot of gaps or topics that have not been examined yet. For instance, there were little studies that aimed to answer the question about the determinants of paradiplomacy in non-Western regions. Also the comparative studies of non-Western countries are underdeveloped. The comparative approach to studies on external activities of Asian regions has most likely never been applied before, which underlines the value of our contribution.

In theoretical field our work will be one of the first attempts to apply the Kuznetsov analytical framework practically as a part of research methodology. It looks very promising as a research tool, though it has to be proved to be workable and effective. Kuznetsov (2015) himself admitted that some elements of the explanatory framework can be pointed as vulnerable and it should be updated and improved in accordance with new theoretical and practical discoveries. The following chapters of this book will contribute to the development of studies on paradiplomacy, not just from the theoretical point of view but also as a practical application of this very fresh research instrument.



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