

The Phenomenon of Paradiplomacy in the Czech Republic: Representative Difficulties in the Concept of Paradiplomacy in the Subnational Unit of the Znojmo Region

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Öz

Bu çalışma Orta Avrupa'da bölgesel politikaya ilişkin disiplinlerarası çağdaş eğilimler üzerine edinilen temel bulguları sunmaktadır. Bu bulgular paradiplomasi faaliyetlerinin öncülü durumunda olan Znojmo bölgesindeki bölgesel politika faaliyetleri ile gösterilmektedir. Bu anlaşma günümüzde birleşik Avrupa'da yenilenen ilişkilerin alanını oluşturan eski Doğu Bloku sınırının coğrafi yerleşimleri ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Bu sonuçlar Ivo Ducháček ve Panayotis Soldatos'un paradiplomasi klasik teorisini kullanarak elde edilmiştir. Paradiplomasi üzerine daha geniş bir araştırma tezi Znojmo bölgesi ve paradiplomasi politikaları örnek alınarak vurgulanmıştır. Çalışma takip eden konularda en önemli olguları verecek örnek olay incelemesine dayanmaktadır. Bu devlet altı birimlerin seçilen özelliklerinin analiz edilmesi, araştırılan alanların arasında sadece kültürel ve turizm sektörüyle ilgili faaliyetlerde değil, aynı zamanda ekonomik alanda başarısını göstermektedir. Znojmo belediye yönetimi bölgedeki işsizlik oranını azaltmak için en önemli görevlerden biri olan sınır-ötesi işbirliğine başvurmaktadır. Devlet-altı birimlerin tanımının ve paradiplomasi müzakerelerinin katılımcılarının belirsizliği gibi, paradiplomasi kavramının temel problemlerini ortadan kaldırmak için geçici (ad-hoc) bölgeler yaratarak bölgede müzakereler kolaylaştırılmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bölgesel politikalar, paradiplomasi, Znojmo bölgesi

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**Çek Cumhuriyeti'nde Paradiplomasi Fenomeni:
Znojmo Bölgesi'nin Alt Ulusal Birimi'nde Paradiplomasi Kavramında
Temsiliyet Güçlükleri**

Abstract

This paper presents the main findings which are focusing interdisciplinary on contemporary trends in the regional policy in Central Europe. These findings are illustrated on regional policy activities in Znojmo region which is a pioneer in so called paradiplomacy activities. These deal consequents upon geographical emplacement on the border of the former Eastern Bloc which constitute area of renewed relations in united central Europe nowadays. These results are obtained by using classical theory of paradiplomacy from Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos. Thesis from broader research in paradiplomacy is emphasised on the example of region Znojmo and its paradiplomacy policy. The work is based on case study, which tried to gain the most important facts about followed issues. Through an analysis of selected aspects in these sub-state units is shown its success in researched area which lies not only in a wide range of cultural and tourist industry activities but also in economic area. Management of Znojmo municipality use cross-border co-operation to reduce unemployment rate in region which is one of the key tasks. Negotiation in region is facilitated by creating ad-hoc region to overcome one of the fundamental difficulties of paradiplomacy concept which is the unclear definition of the term sub-state unit and the variety of participants in paradiplomatic negotiation

Key Words: Regional policies, paradiplomacy, Znojmo region

Introduction

Paradiplomacy, that is activities in the scope of international relations with sub-state units as participants, can certainly be called a present-day phenomenon. Within the process of regionalization in the whole Europe¹, paradiplomacy plays an increasingly more significant role primarily in the area of establishing contacts between municipalities. Moreover, in the Czech Republic it is also non-state entities such as cultural institutions that come into play². Their role in paradiplomatic activities is illustrated by the activities in the region of Znojmo and its cross-border co-

¹ Stanislav Balík, **Komunální politika - Obce, aktéři a cíle místní politiky**, Grada, Praha 2009, p. 113-132; L. Cabada, **Evropa regionů**, Vydavatelství a nakladatelství Aleš Čeněk, Plzeň 2009, p. 70-120.

² Zdenka Mansfeldová (ed.), **Participace a zájmové organizace v České republice**, Sociologické nakladatelství SLON, Praha 2006, p. 41-51.

operation in the local unemployed policy. It is here where a lot of the activities are crucial to the development of the region and are successfully carried out thanks to the paradiplomatic activities, mainly from the area of education, the non-profit sector and cultural life. The article presents the main findings that view the current trends of regional politics interdisciplinary, and illustrates them by an example of activities in the selected region. This very region is the national pioneer in the sphere of paradiplomacy activities regarding culture and tourism industry growth. It makes use of its potential resulting from its geographical location on the border with Austria.

Aims and methodology

The contribution is in the form of a case study that opens the issue of establishing paradiplomatic relations. The fundamental aspects of the phenomenon will be illustrated by the example of this Moravian region. Furthermore, dominant trends as well as the difficulties in defining paradiplomacy will be demonstrated through an analysis of selected aspects of the paradiplomatic activities in this sub-state unit. This analysis can serve as a topic for further discussion both among the experts and the municipality representatives who can use it as a valuable source of inspiration.

The paper analyzes the paradiplomatic activities in the sphere of economic development with an emphasis on unemployment issues. The form of the presented contribution has been chosen accordingly with the fact that case studies are frequently used in researching paradiplomacy as they are a convenient source of knowledge within the defined research area. It is determined primarily by its methodical suitability when researching a region and its specific conditions as well as the opportunities for establishing the distinctive relations resulting from them.

Furthermore it is necessary to add that the article does not make methodical distinctions between the two main types of such cooperation: that is, cooperation on a formal as well as informal basis, which mingles inseparably. The text handles the term of cooperation as undifferentiated. The phenomenon of paradiplomacy then proceeds not only from grasping the so called formal cooperation³, namely the contacts of office workers

³ Petr Drulák, et al., *Jak si stojí česká paradiplomacie?* 2004, <http://ustavmezinarodnichvztahu.cz/list/8/policy-papers>, p. 3.

and regional politicians that are constituted by official meetings and foreign visits, but also the informal contacts and friendly relations are taken into account as they form an integral and substantial part of the relations among the individual participants.

Sayfa/Page | 162

İGÜSBD
Cilt: 1 Sayı: 1
Haziran /
June 2014

The article illustrates the general connections of this concept by the example of the selected region and its paradiplomatic activities and also draws attention to the pitfalls as well as benefits of this concept for contemporary researchers. The aim of the paper will be to evaluate the individual elements of the paradiplomatic activities in the region and analyze their current state as based on the above mentioned concept.

The Current Approach to the Concept of Paradiplomacy

A definition of paradiplomacy

Paradiplomacy is the foreign policy of sub-state units. It can be called a current phenomenon primarily in today's central Europe. The process, which is an integral part of regionalization, is no longer restricted solely to the federal or decentralized western European countries. These activities have been noticeable on the subnational level of the developed European countries since the 1960s and nowadays they are playing an increasingly more significant role. Paradiplomatic activities can thus be viewed as an outcome of a growing role of cities and regions, which has been apparent on the economic or political as well as social and cultural levels⁴.

The first definition of paradiplomacy was produced by Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos. They concurred in that "paradiplomacy is a concept that refers to international activity by sub-national actors (federated units, regions, urban communities, cities). This concept supports, complements, corrects, duplicates or challenges the nation states⁵". Later the security issue was added to the definition of paradiplomacy. Noé Cornago⁶, a professor at the University of the Basque Country, talks about "sub-state governments' involvement in international

⁴ Jaroslav Čmejrek, **Obce a regiony jako politický prostor**, Alfa Nakladatelství, Praha 2008, p. 45-70.

⁵ Renata Aristides Orozco Pereira, How can local governments foster peace through paradiplomacy, 2006, <http://innomics.files.wordpress.com/2007/11/unu-term-paper2.pdf>, p. 6-14.

⁶ Noé Cornago, "Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in the Redefinition of International Security: Dimensions of Conflict and Co-operation", Michael Keating, ed., **Paradiplomacy in Action**, Frank Cass, London 1999, p. 40-58.

relationships, through the establishment of formal and informal contacts, either permanent or ad hoc, with foreign public or private entities, with the aim to promote socio-economic, cultural or political issues, as well as any other foreign dimension of their own constitutional competences"⁷.

This article deals with the concept of paradiplomacy as a variety of international activities of the given sub-state unit⁸. At this moment we need to address the first of the discussed aspects of paradiplomacy that is the specification of a sub-state unit in itself, which all definitions of paradiplomacy build on. For the purpose of my paper, I chose to use a definition of the region as being a territorial unit with a great deal of political, economic and social competences⁹ and thus I will concern myself with the sub-state unit that can be delineated by the territory of the entire administrative district of the town of Znojmo. I will focus on the unit delineated by the administrative district of Znojmo which is part of the county of Znojmo. After adjusting the borders on 1/1/2007, the county of Znojmo is administratively divided into 144 municipalities, 5 of which have the status of a city¹⁰.

The underlying pitfall of the concept: a definition of the term sub-state unit

The unifying classification of the individual administrative districts is not always satisfactory. Especially in our case the statistical determination of a unit within the public administration system is not completely convenient. We can easily illustrate one of the main problems of the paradiplomacy concept itself by grasping the term region on the example of Znojmo¹¹. The term sub-state unit is applied here, which can, however, be quite inconsistent especially in our country. It would be probably easiest to conduct the analysis of paradiplomatic activities of accurately delineated regions as for instance the NUTS units of the European Union classification.

⁷ Pereira, How can local governments foster peace through paradiplomacy," p. 14-16.

⁸ Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj, Strukturální fondy, 2009, <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz/cs/Informace-a-dokumenty/Glosar/N/NUTS>

⁹ Ivan Jáč, **Jedinečnost obce v regionu**, Professional Publishing, Praha, 2010, p. 14-16.

¹⁰ Český statistický úřad (Database of demographic data for municipalities in CR), 2013, <http://www.czso.cz>

¹¹ J. Kern et al., **Learning Regions in Theory and Practice**, VŠB - Technical University of Ostrava, Ostrava 2007, p. 155-180.

The NUTS¹² subdivision by the Statistical Office of the European Communities makes an effort to unify the individual territorial districts within the respective EU member states. For our view of the paradiplomacy concept, however, there remains the problematic fact of the existence of the level of cohesion regions in the NUTS subdivision of administrative districts, which can be regarded not only as simplifying, but also too general a point of view for our purposes. It would be feasible to unify the definition of paradiplomacy using units that the Statistical Office of the European Communities calls LAU¹³. These specify the territorial units on the level of districts and municipalities. Nevertheless, even in this case we would not achieve suitable conformity of region delineation for the whole concept of paradiplomacy.

Fig. 1: Territorial statistical subdivision

Level	Name	Units
NUTS I	State	1
NUTS II	Cohesion Regions	8
NUTS III	Regions	14
LAU I	Districts	77
LAU II	Municipalities	6249

Source: www.strukturalni-fondy.cz

When researching the concept of paradiplomacy within the present-day international relations, it is in my opinion best to regard the regions ad hoc while taking into consideration that the sub-state unit or region is defined by suitable determining criteria. A relevant perspective of a region is offered by Jáč and his team in their extensive treatise "The uniqueness of a municipality in a region". According to them, a region is "delineated as a part of a territory characterized by a set of natural and socioeconomic elements and relations, whose specific nature, position, structure and integration degree form the structure of the environment with its internal

¹² The abbreviation NUTS is a unifying acronym within the European Union and it stands for the French expression La Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques.

¹³ Territorial units' acronym LAU stands for Local Administrative Units.

relations that differentiate this territory from the surrounding territorial units"¹⁴.

If we proceed from the broader definition of the paradiplomacy concept, it is best to regard the region as a specific, culturally distinctive unit that cultivates its partnership with foreign regions most notably on the basis of a number of specific characteristics. Therefore it is appropriate to speak of a sub-state unit formed by the microregion Znojemsko and Podyjí (area on both sides of the river Dyje) which is distinguished by substantial territorial integrity and which is in my opinion the most suitable type of a sub-state unit to help us understand our view of paradiplomacy.

The variety of participants in paradiplomatic negotiations

An inseparable part of the view of the current approach to the paradiplomacy concept is also a reflection of the paradiplomatic activities of the regions within the European Union where sub-state entities' activities take place on a European level. This layer of studying the issue may be viewed from many different perspectives. It is in particular the opportunities of the so-called Europe of regions, where the regions play the part of the leading participant as opposed to the nation states, or the regions being seen as a "third layer" of Europe where they are considered a legitimate partner in negotiating while they still remain an integral constituent of the nation states.

The analysis contained in this article would not, however, be complete if I did not include in it another dimension of the paradiplomatic relations, that is, the role of non-governmental participants. Regions are, in fact, not the only participants that emerged on the international scene along with the nation states. In the region of Znojmo, these specific participants are treated equally when it comes to establishing the relations that are subject to our research. It concerns non-profit organizations, various social movements, clubs or interest associations. A typical example for the particular region is the cooperation of wine-making associations inside the extensive wine-growing region stretching along the Czech-Austrian border on both sides. Even here some of the crucial pitfalls of the paradiplomacy concept became evident: sub-state units do not have such a strong negotiating position since the international relations field is still rather conservative.

¹⁴ Jáč, **Jedinečnost obce v regionu**, p. 14-16.

Selected pitfalls of the paradiplomacy concept: paradiplomacy policy in region Znojmo

Region Znojmo was for forty years the border zone between the East and the West. Border region of Austria was hermetically closed and communication and co-operation was inadmissible. For centuries it was natural region on the both sides of the river Dyje but in this Cold war era were natural relations severed¹⁵. Communication in the region has been restored after 1989 and it is still developing. Now we could speak about one cross-border region Podyjí – Weinviertel. We can call examined region as a pioneer in the so called paradiplomacy policy. After more than twenty years there is now a good developed network of relationships. If we quote Michal Keating and his fundamental thesis about paradiplomacy¹⁶, we have to say that region Znojmo is a suitable area for research in paradiplomacy. The region can also demonstrate the basic concept pitfalls and conceptual research problems in paradiplomacy as a uniform definition of research region or the variety of participants in paradiplomatic negotiations as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Picture num.1: Map of Czech Republic



Source: www.mapaonline.cz, data given on the date of 26. 5. 2014.

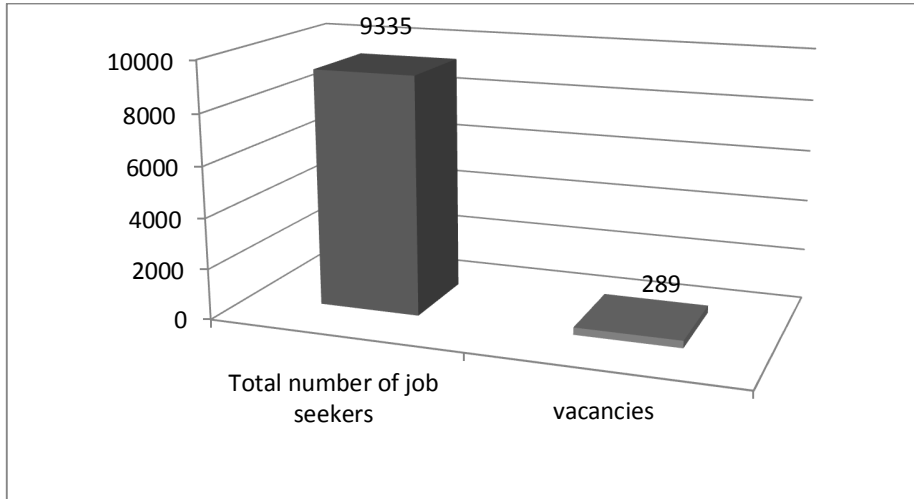
¹⁵ Vít Dočkal, **Přeshraniční spolupráce na východních hranicích České republiky- Růžový obléček a hrana reality**, Masarykova univerzita, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, Brno 2005, p. 29- 35.

¹⁶ Michael Keating, **Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking**, 2000, <http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/ForRelCU01/924-FRCU0105-eu-keating.pdf>, p. 5-8.

Cooperation in the region has taken on new dimensions in the field of employment policy. This area can be considered as a major success of paradiplomacy negotiations in the region. The attached table illustrates current statistical data of the unemployment rate in region. It is clear that the decrease in the unemployment rate for the region Znojmo is one of the key tasks. One of the main problems that affect region is seasonal unemployment too. It is a phenomenon that has been repeated by each year. But from the month of March, there slowly begins an increase in the number of vacant job particularly in agriculture construction.

As shown in the attached chart, the numbers of applicants to one free vacancy are more than alarming. One offered position for 32 people.

Chart num. 1: Unemployment rate in region Znojmo



Source: www.mpsv.cz, data given on the date of 31.3.2014.

Paradiplomacy negotiation helps to find job in both sides of the border. In winter the city management and other non state actors offer a wide range of retraining. All this is under the auspices of paradiplomacy project called Columbus. Cross-border project Columbus has been started one year ago. Project is focusing on the main problems that affect Znojmo region. It is primarily aimed at the local unemployment.

Under the cooperation with City management in Znojmo and Town Hall district in Retz in Austria is Columbus trying to reduce mentioned problem through paradiplomacy negotiation, cooperation and subsequent solutions. In this process play an essential role also some non-state actors

as a companies and the local Chamber of Commerce. Paradiplomacy policy helps to offer wide range of job offer and further education on the both sides of border. There are no statistical data about project how it helps to reduce unemployment in region. Preliminary calculations show a perceptible success.

Sayfa/Page | 168

İGÜSBD
Cilt: 1 Sayı: 1
Haziran /
June 2014

City management has found the solution in region to overcome one of the main problems of the concept of paradiplomacy. As is shown in the example of the project Columbus, there were overcome some selected obstacle: a definition of the term sub-state unit as an area for negotiation. Project Columbus is a good example how can work paradiplomacy policy its own way. Cooperation has been established in the framework of integrated cross-border region which is geographically, historically and politically linked.

Conclusions

Thesis in the previous chapters illustrated some selected pitfalls of the paradiplomacy concept in central Europe. The paper is using case study to exemplify the area of research in selected region Znojmo. In the discussion should be mentioned the pitfalls which face researchers of regional political science, primarily in the field of researching paradiplomacy policy. As it turns out, the most prominent difficulty in grasping the concept is the definition of the sub-state unit itself. On these definition is based the whole research of the paradiplomacy phenomenon.

The paper analysed deficiencies in these area of research and present some solutions. The crucial question is the specification of a sub-state unit in itself, which all definitions of paradiplomacy build on. For the purpose of my paper, I chose to use a definition of the region as being a territorial unit with a great deal of political, economic and social competences and thus I will concern myself with the sub-state unit that can be delineated by the territory of the entire administrative district of the town of Znojmo.

Another related problem is shown in fragmented concept of paradiplomacy negotiation. Who is going to negotiate with whom when there is not clear definition of region on both sides of the border? City management of Znojmo region found their way: negotiations are conducted with Town Hall district in Retz in Austria as a comparable regional partner for paradiplomacy negotiation. As mentioned above one of the most

important partners is a non-state Austrian local Chamber of Commerce and other public authorities.

There are a lot of subjects for discussion because paradiplomacy is quite a new topic in political science research in central Europe. Essential summary of the paper is the statement of fact that suggested approach to the sub-state unit as a unit with a number of political, economic and social competences is crucial to grasp the concept of paradiplomacy. This contribution puts forward a proposal to discuss a sub-state unit within international negotiations as a unit that is delineated ad hoc as concerns both its territory and the scope of activity. Also as a part of the public administration system on various sub-national levels and could be a non-state participant too.

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Sayfa/Page | 170

İGÜSBD
Cilt: 1 Sayı: 1
Haziran /
June 2014

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Özet

Bu çalışma Ivo Ducháček, Panayotis Soldatos ve Michael Keating tarafından ortaya atılan ve geliştirilen paradiplomasi teorisinin uygulandığı bir vaka analizidir. Paradiplomasi, resmi diplomatik faaliyetlerin yanı sıra devlet-altı birimler arasındaki ekonomik ve kültürel faaliyetlere de ışık tutarak her ikisinin de birbirinden beslendiğini ortaya koyan bir çalışma alanıdır. 1960'lı yıllardan beri federal ya da desentralize Batı Avrupa ülkelerinde devlet-altı seviyesinde gözlenmekte olan paradiplomatik etkinlikler, günümüzde Orta Avrupa'da da kapsam ve yoğunluğu giderek artan bir görünürlük kazanmıştır. Bu durum, Avrupa'nın bölgesel politikalar üzerine yapılandırılmış olmasından kaynaklanan bir kolaylıktan türemiştir.

"Üçüncü katman" olarak da tanımlanan bölgeler, ulus devletin şaşmaz birer parçası olmakla birlikte, öncül katılımcılar olarak devlete yardımcı olan meşru aktörlerdir. Bu çerçevede, sınır komşuları olan Çek Cumhuriyeti'ne ait Znojmo ilçesi ile Avusturya'ya ait Retz kasabası arasındaki ilişkiler, klasik belediyelerarası ilişkilerden daha fazlasına işaret etmektedir. Şirketler ve kültürel kurumlar gibi devlet-altı birimlerin etkileşimi, her iki bölgede de hem turizmi hem de ticareti canlandırmaktadır.

Bu makale, her iki bölgeyi de kapsayan bir sınırlararası bir proje olan Columbus üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Geçen sene hayata geçirilen Columbus, her iki bölgede de iş ve eğitim ile ilgili problemlere çözüm üretmek amacıyla tasarlanmış olup, kısa zaman zarfında istatistiklerle de desteklenen bir başarıya ulaşmıştır. Uzun vadeli başarısı henüz ölçülememekle birlikte, işsizliğin giderilmesi veya azaltılması ile eğitimin imkanlarının genişletilmesi ve çeşitlendirilmesi hususlarında projenin katkıları ortadadır. Ancak Siyaset Bilimi'nin yeni çalışma alanlarından olan paradiplomasi kavramı, aynı zamanda sorunsuz olmaktan da uzaktır. Devlet-altı birimlerin tanımının ve paradiplomasi müzakerelerinin katılımcılarının belirsizliği gibi problemler bunlardan bazılarıdır.

Makale, bu sorunları ortadan kaldırmak amacıyla bir öneri getirmektedir. Bu bağlamda bölge, büyük siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal yetkinliklere sahip bir teritoryal birim olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Uluslararası müzakerelere konu olan aktörlerden devlet-altı birimler ise, hem teritoryal hem de gerçekleştirdikleri etkinlikler açısından özel/geçici (ad-hoc) olarak belirlenmiş alanlar olarak ifade edilmektedir. Znojmo örneğine

Markéta Sanalla

uyarlandığında, müzakereleri kolaylaştırıcı ve ihtilafları çözücü aktörler olarak Avusturya yerel Ticaret Odası ve diğer kamu otoriteleri aracılık yapmaktadır.

Sayfa/Page | 172

İGÜSBD
Cilt: 1 Sayı: 1
Haziran /
June 2014