

*Martin CHRISTIE\****BRIDGING CONCEPTS: MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND PARADIPLMACY EXPLAINING TERRITORIAL CHANGES IN EUROPE**

*Abstract.* There are two distant conceptual cousins that analyse the external mobilisation of subnational entities, one being European Studies – Multi-Level Governance and the other International Relations – Paradiplomacy. The article first aims to analyse each concept against the dimensions of the politik to determine the conceptual focus and find more pronounced differences in the policy and politics dimensions. The second aim is to identify the theoretical bedrock underpinning both concepts. This article proposes the analogous theory of Neo-Medievalism, establishing that it has some application here; in this sense, the two concepts may be better at explaining wider territorial reconfiguration underway in Europe.

**Keywords:** Paradiplomacy, Multi-Level Governance, Neo-Medievalism, European Union

**766****Introduction**

Conceptual, empirical and theoretical studies on the international actions of subnational, local and city actors have gathered pace over the last 30 years. On one side, there is paradiplomacy or other synonymous forms: subnational diplomacy, constituent diplomacy, multi-layered diplomacy (Duhacek, 1990; Soldatos, 1990; Kincaid, 1990; Hocking, 1993; Crikemans, 2010; Kuznetsov, 2015; Tavares, 2016). On the other side, framed within the context of European integration there is the concept of Multi-Level Governance (MLG) (Marks, 1993; Marks et al., 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2003). Both concepts belong to different disciplines, paradiplomacy to International Relations and MLG to European Studies. Before delving into the central goals of this article, which are concerned with ascertaining whether these two concepts can be bridged and, in so doing, determining

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whether they can explain the territorial reconfiguration underway in Europe, it is essential to delineate the concepts under analysis.

Paradiplomacy emerged from federalist studies in the 1980s as a means of conceptualising the growing international activity of subnational territorial units, namely: ethno-regions, federal states, local municipalities, or cities. Beginning with analysis of the international engagement of US states, paradiplomacy has since branched out to include European regions, the 'Bilbao School', cities, and even the international action of subnational entities in non-democratic regimes (Kuznetsov, 2015: 36–42). Cornago's (2010: 13) definition of paradiplomacy encapsulates the fundamental basis of subnational entity engagement outside the parameters of the state:

*Sub-state governments' involvement in international relations, 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.* (Cornago, 2010: 13)

Conversely, MLG emerged as part of the governance turn in European Studies (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006). The governance turn brought a shift in scholarly attention away from the grand theories of European integration (the neo-functionalism–intergovernmentalist debate) to focus on how the EU operates. Governance-centric approaches in European Studies arose from the 'deepening' and 'widening' of European integration. Since the 1986 Single European Act, and especially the 1988 reform of the Cohesion Policy and the introduction of the partnership principle, a principle which while allocating funding for regional development required the Commission to involve social partners, thereby creating space for subnational entities on the European level. Even prior to the Single European Act of 1986, the first subnational offices had opened in Brussels in 1984, expanding exponentially from 15 in 1988, 54 in 1993 to 160 in 2002 (Marks et al., 2002: 1). The pace of such developments led scholars like Marks (1993) to conceptualise the evolution of policymaking at the European level, labelling the phenomenon Multi-Level Governance:

*A system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional and local – as a result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional allocation that has pulled some previously centralised functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to regional/local level.* (Marks, 1993: 392)

Going by definitions alone, it would appear that a conceptual overlap exists between paradiplomacy and MLG with respect to two features. The first is actors: subnational territorial units, whether they be regions, cities or local municipalities. The second is space: engagement with external actors outside the parameters of the state. This overlap led authors such as Dickson (2014: 690) to seek to clarify the concepts of paradiplomacy and MLG, describing the relationship between the two concepts as “fuzzy”. One of the central contributions of Dickson’s (2014) research is finding the conclusion that MLG necessitates a more structural orientation, whereas paradiplomacy calls for a more agency-orientated approach (Dickson, 2014: 696). Of particular relevance for this article, Dickson (2014: 698) acknowledges in the conclusion of her article that a shift is needed from descriptive approaches to more theoretical ones.

A starting point is the different foundations of paradiplomacy and MLG, where the etymology of each term must be considered to fully understand the two concepts. The prefix “para” denotes the word parallel as in parallel diplomacy. Originating in International Relations, diplomacy itself is a specific concept that requires delineation. Scholars like Jönsson and Hall (2005) contend that diplomacy is mediation between universalism and particularism, which gives rise to an international society. Sharp (2009), in contrast, asserts that diplomacy arises from the conditions of separateness between peoples, in which diplomacy finds room to operate as a mediating force. This is one of the cornerstones of diplomacy: the management of affairs and mediation between different societies. However, within diplomacy, there are also several anthropological and symbolic elements that have to be considered to ensure understanding of the concept. The symbolic element is behavioural, with ritualised performances and mutually understood symbols of diplomatic protocol present while conducting relations between international societies (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 42–50). On the other hand, there is Multi-Level Governance whose conceptual core is the concept of governance. Governance is in essence: “the interactive processes through which society and the economy are steered towards collectively negotiated objectives” (Ansell and Torfing, 2016: 4). Governance and diplomacy share an emphasis on interaction and mediation. Yet, in its symbolic and ritualistic elements diplomacy is more fundamental given that it is through this practice that mediation takes place between different societies. In comparison, in governance mediation and negotiation are less concerned with the relations between the actors and more centred on the objective.

Returning to the specific concepts under analysis, paradiplomacy and MLG, despite the different foundations and disciplines that MLG and paradiplomacy stem from there are two features in common which make them suitable for comparative analysis: actors and space. The objectives of this

article thus are two-fold. Noting the featural similarities between MLG and paradiplomacy, we intend to separately analyse the primary contributions of paradiplomacy and MLG against the three dimensions of the *Politik*<sup>1</sup> – Policy, Polity and Politics. Along the way, we determine where the conceptual focus of each concept is chiefly concentrated. We then explore if a more encompassing theoretical bedrock can be located that is able to bridge the gap between the two concepts. It is suggested that the analogous theoretical paradigm of neo-medievalism could be a bridge between MLG and paradiplomacy. If such a bridge can be constructed under the theoretical paradigm of neo-medievalism, this may suggest conceptually that both concepts represent the reconfiguration of the polity and territory currently underway in Europe.

## Analytical Framework

The first goal of this article is to separately analyse the specific conceptual focus of paradiplomacy and MLG. For this, we intend to measure themes emerging from the literature against the three dimensions of the *Politik*: policy, politics and polity (see Table 1).

Table 1: DIMENSIONS OF THE POLITIK

Dimension	Definition
Policy	“The substantial dimension of <i>Politik</i> ; that is, the organization of individual social problem areas through obliging decisions”
Politics	“Politics describes the process-related dimension of <i>Politik</i> , the conflict about decisions between the political players”
Polity	“The formal dimension of <i>Politik</i> . It includes the framework of institutions, that is, the political order in which political action has to take place”

Source: Vowe, 2007: 620–621.

The second goal is to attempt to locate a bridge that underpins both MLG and paradiplomacy. In the introduction, we suggested that neo-medievalism could be useful for connecting the two concepts with each other. Neo-medievalism was first conceived by (Bull, 2002) in his work *The Anarchical Society*. It was originally dismissed after Bull (2002) found little to no evidence of this phenomenon then in the international system. However, in

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article we use the German term ‘Politik’ when collectively referring to the political three dimensions of Policy, Politics and Polity. Whilst there is a wealth of academic literature in English that refers to the three political dimensions, there is no such term in English as there is in German that collectively expresses the three dimensions as one. Though for scholars writing in English language there is an increasing attractiveness to deploy the term ‘Politik’ when collectively referring to all three component political dimensions (Größler, 2010: 386).

the post-Cold War era, scholarly interest in the theory has increased. Two authors Cerny, (1998); Friedrichs, (2004) found elements of Bull's original proposal to have come to fruition. First, it is imperative to define neo-medievalism. Cerny (1998: 46) describes the Medieval period as a "durable disorder":

*The medieval era, taken as a whole, was one of increasing social, economic and political development as economic efficiency and an uneven quasi-stability led to growing surpluses, the spread of knowledge and innovation, and the emergence of more centralised bureaucratic hierarchies – although underlying tensions in its economic and political sub-structures eventually evolved into contradictions and crises in its political order. (Cerny, 1998: 46)*

According to Cerny (1998: 54–55), the emergent polity structure which has developed in Europe has come to resemble that of the Medieval period:

*However, what is most interesting about these regions is not their institutional coherence or supra-state-like structural form; indeed, the European Union is the only region with that sort of quasi-state coherence. What is most interesting is that they are themselves multilevel, asymmetric entities, with criss-crossing internal fault lines – sub-regions, cross-border regions, local regions, not merely 'nested' but often conflicting, with national, transnational and subnational rivalries poorly integrated – based mainly on the density of transactions which also reflect the complexity and circularity of wider globalisation processes. (Cerny, 1998: 54–5)*

Perhaps one of the best and most streamlined definitions of medievalism comes from Friedrichs (2004: 133–4): "a system of overlapping authorities and multiple loyalties, held together by a duality of competing universalistic claims". More importantly as concerns theoretical input is that he describes neo-medievalism as an analogous conceptual synthesis (Friedrichs, 2004: 126); one which attempts to find a solution to the triple dilemma in International Relations, namely: Globalisation, Fragmentation, in a world of Nation States (Friedrichs, 2004: 130). This is perhaps the most theoretically useful component of neo-medievalism, that it can account for the simultaneously contradictory processes of globalisation and fragmentation occurring in the international system today. There are similarities with some theses concerning glocalisation, but debates on this concept continue as to whether globalisation and glocalisation are in fact analytically autonomous (Roudometof, 2016). Further, glocalisation is more of a sociological

phenomenon and does not have much to say about the emerging system of governance, nor its effects on politics or the international system. In contrast, with neo-medievalism there is no debate regarding whether mobilisation on the local level and within the international system are analytically distinct. For neo-medievalists, these processes are connected and form part of the much wider geopolitical reconfiguration taking place, one which resembles the distant pre-Westphalian past.

As noted above, the concept of neo-medievalism is analogous, yet even scholars who suggest that developments in the international system are increasingly resembling the Medieval period remain cautious, suggesting that states continue to remain important actors in the international system (Friedrichs, 2004: 142-143). At this point, it should be stated that modest expectations should be in place while attempting to use neo-medievalism as a theoretical bedrock to underpin MLG and paradiplomacy. Whilst the two concepts may indicate evidence to support the theory, this does not mean prophesying an immediate end to the Westphalian system. Instead, and returning to the initial point, this article is exploratory and suggests that neo-medievalism is a possible theory that may bridge the conceptual gap between the two mentioned seemingly distant conceptual cousins. We now move onto the first step of the analysis of analysing the conceptual background and reviewing both the Multi-Level Governance and the paradiplomacy literature, measuring the conceptual focus of each against the dimensions of the *Politik*.

## Politics

The politics dimension of the *Politik* refers to the conflictual element among political actors. The concept of MLG arose from new regionalism at the same time as the 'Europe of the Regions' discourse was emerging in European studies, which saw subnational actors mobilising to obtain better representation in European institutions for the creation of a 'third-level' of decision-making (Loughlin, 1996; Keating, 2008). The mobilisation of subnational entities in the 'Europe of the regions' discourse was problematic and posed a conceptual challenge to MLG since the mentioned discourse stresses political contestation and takes the form of political pluralism (Hooghe, 1995: 179). Instead, and reiterating a core tenet of the original definition of MLG, it is a concept that points to a "system of continuous negotiation" (Marks, 1993: 392). This emphasis on negotiation in turn results in a lack of spatial capacity for subnational entities to contest for power in European institutions (Jeffery, 2000: 8). As contended by Keating (2002: 164), the absence of political contestation in MLG has led to an inability to fully grasp the normative aspects of European integration; namely, the

contestation surrounding the territorial mobilisations of subnational entities. Paradiplomacy differs significantly from MLG in the politics dimension. In the theory of paradiplomacy, significant room for political contestation is allocated and given broad scholarly attention. Particularly in Europe, the case-study approaches generally found in paradiplomacy tend to focus on historical nationalities with strong identities. Since the end of the Second World War there has been a considerable shift towards decentralisation in a number of European states in an effort to satisfy historical nationalities demands for independence by granting greater autonomy (Keating, 1997; Keating, 2002). The spatial opening created by the European integration process has meant that subnational entities with particular historical ethno-territorial claims are no longer confined to state boundaries (Keating, 1997; Lecours and Moreno, 2001). In this sense, nationalism and the ‘projection’ of nationalism outside the territorial boundaries of a state is a key motivation for subnational entities, especially for historical nationalities to engage in paradiplomacy (Lecours and Moreno, 2001: 3). Although subnational entities differ with respect to constitutional competences to conduct relations outside of the state, the bedrock of many paradiplomacy strategies is the aim to promote the culture and distinctive identity of the territory through external relations (Crikemans, 2010: 39–44; Paquin, 2018). There are marked differences between paradiplomacy and MLG. The core of MLG builds on negotiation and deliberation, in opposition to pluralistic mobilisations by political actors. Paradiplomacy is different in that much of the field relates to self-promotion of subnational entities’ distinctiveness by the entities themselves, and thus is more likely to give rise to political pluralism.

A point which can reveal the sharp distinction between paradiplomacy and MLG is the representation of subnational entities within European institutions. One of the most cited forms of representation in MLG is the Committee of the Regions, described by scholars as a form of “institutional activism” where subnational entities can articulate their views on a number of policy areas (Schönlau, 2020: 198). The Committee of the Regions has attracted various criticism, but perhaps one of the more glaring claims is the lack of agency for subnational actors in the institution. This is due to the Committee’s structure, along the lines of Europarties, and the different levels of decentralisation among the Member States (Christiansen, 1996). Moreover, MLG does account for the role of subnational offices in Brussels. In evaluating the role of subnational entities in Brussels, Marks et al. (2002) found the main task of such offices was to gather information about European legislation which might affect domestic legislation. In terms of representation, paradiplomacy stands in contrast; for one, the focus of many case studies of paradiplomacy tends to be on historical nationalities. In these instances, the representation of such subnational entities tends to be more

pronounced, quasi-embassies promoting a distinct image of the subnational entity, whilst mimicking the features of the state's diplomatic protocol and representation (Duran, 2016: 19–36). As discussed in the introduction, diplomacy is more than the management of affairs and contains several symbolic and ritualistic components of diplomatic protocol (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 42–50). Hence, in terms of representation, this points to a contrast not just between the concepts of paradiplomacy and MLG, but more fundamentally between the disciplines of diplomacy and governance.

In the previous decade there has been an increasing number of normative mobilisations by subnational entities in Europe, with examples including: Wallonia holding up the EU–Canada free-trade agreement (FTA). This act saw the European Commission bilaterally negotiate with a subnational government over an area of high politics for the first time (Tatham, 2018: 62). In paradiplomacy, the room allocated for the secessionist orientations of subnational entities is termed protodiplomacy, a sub-concept of paradiplomacy where a subnational entity adopts secessionism as the central component of its external relations platform (Duhacek, 1990: 27; Cornago, 2018; Criekemans, 2020). In protodiplomacy, secessionist subnational entities can use two strategies: compellence, where a territory is de facto independent and seeks to be recognised by the international community; or normative appeal, whereby secessionist subnational entities posit themselves as credible candidates for statehood using soft power tools for the promotion of secession (Griffiths, 2019: 142–143). The case of Catalonia is the most striking in this regard, and represented a major challenge to the EU's territorial integrity, where Catalan leaders used compellence strategies to lobby EU institutions to mediate between themselves and the Spanish government over the right to secede (Bourne, 2021; Garcia Agustin, 2021). These actions did not prove fruitful and the EU instead took the position of the Member State involved, refusing to become entangled in the constitutional questions of a Member State. Conceptually, MLG's normative deficiency sees it struggling to account for such mobilisations by subnational entities because the emphasis is on negotiation, not political contestation. Such mobilisations by subnational entities are accordingly far better explained by paradiplomacy and protodiplomacy, which are both focused on the agency of the subnational entities, and territorial contestations by subnational entities in the EU.

## Policy

The focus of the policy dimension of the *Politik* is the process-related dimension of tackling individual and collective problems through decision-making. The basis of the MLG concept was used as a means to describe the new forms of policymaking in the EU emerging in the 1990s. In policymaking,



Marks et al. (1996) evaluated the input of various actors at different stages of the policy cycle, asserting that states no longer held a monopoly on policymaking in the EU. In summary, Marks et al. (1996: 372) suggested that the pattern of policymaking is increasingly “characterized by mutual dependence, complementary functions and overlapping competencies”. Paradiplomacy was formed to conceptualise the international actions of subnational entities, among which policy is but one aspect, and there are and remain several reasons explaining why subnational entities engage in paradiplomacy. As discussed in the previous section, projecting ethno-cultural distinctiveness is a significant motivation in paradiplomacy. In MLG, scholars have tended to highlight the problem-solving capacity, which appears to evolve naturally from MLG and other governance approaches like Network Governance (Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999), where both analyse policymaking patterns in the EU. Early on in MLG, Scharpf (1997) identified how a number of policy areas in the EU had changed from a bargaining process to a deliberative process between jurisdictional levels. Although policy formulation does exist in paradiplomacy, it is by and large dependent on the functional levels of coordination between jurisdictional levels. Scholars like Hocking (1993) state that diplomacy is not necessarily a segmented process as actors on both subnational and state levels within the same jurisdiction will find it essential to cooperate on matters of foreign policy to achieve the best possible outcomes. One can find empirical examples of such an arrangement. For instance, Belgium with the governing principle of *in foro interno, in foro externo*<sup>2</sup> (Kerremans and Beyers, 1996; Bursens and Deforche, 2010). Providing subnational entities with space to represent themselves based on domestically-held competences in international affairs can lead to more harmonious relations and more functionally beneficial policy outcomes for both subnational and state levels. Comparatively, in the MLG and governance approaches the very nature of the system lends itself to a focus on beneficial policy outcomes and problem-solving. In comparison, in paradiplomacy problem-solving capacity and beneficial policy outcomes are strongly determined by the level of integration and involvement a subnational entity has in state-level foreign policy.

Empirically, MLG has become an established practice in EU policymaking across several policy areas, moving from its original ‘home ground’ of Cohesion Policy. This is demonstrated in Piattoni’s (2010: 83–151) case study where she selected three policy areas: cohesion policy, environmental policy and higher education policy. Her findings reveal that in the areas of cohesion policy; and environmental policy, policymaking resembled a

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<sup>2</sup> The principle *in foro interno, in foro externo* arose from the 1993 Belgian Constitutional reform referring to competences of Belgium regions. Under the principle, areas of internal competence are also considered to be areas where the regions can represent themselves externally.

system which could be characterised as classic MLG. In contrast, higher education, a policy area with a different policymaking mode and one with considerably less involvement and oversight from the European Commission, state, subnational and social actors have organised themselves into a form of policymaking that corresponds to what may be characterised as MLG (Piattoni, 2010: 83–151). Given the different modes of policymaking for different policy areas, Piattoni (2010: 256–257) expects MLG to have permeated into other policy areas such as agriculture and transportation. The expansion of MLG into other policy areas beyond cohesion policy is testament to MLG's problem-solving capacity and its ability to achieve beneficial policy outcomes. Unlike MLG, paradiplomacy did not arise as a means to analyse policymaking. However, in recent years paradiplomacy has begun to cover a number of policy areas, particularly environmental policy and migration. Regarding environmental policy, environmental policies and initiatives have for several years been driven by subnational entities (regions, cities or municipalities). Research by Happaerts et al. (2010) examines the case of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4sd) that was originally formed as an *ad hoc* coalition. This grouping of subnational entities has now morphed to become a full-fledged organisation with 31 members (Happaerts et al., 2010: 31–33). Further, in the post-Paris Climate Accord era there has been a number of experimental initiatives by subnational entities, especially cities. Although there has been increased networking between city and local actors, and the scaling-out between the cities of the initiatives established is reducing emissions at a local level, problems remain in scaling-up these initiatives to a national or multilateral level (Smeds and Acuto, 2018). In addition, migration is another policy area which has seen stronger engagement by subnational entities in recent years. As state-level migration policies become more restrictive, the outcome has been the concept of sanctuary cities whereby cities use soft power tools, accommodating, and providing services for migrants (Manfredi Sanchez, 2020). The goal is to circumvent state-level policies via the development of new practical tools aimed at providing a softer, more cosmopolitan approach to migration. Still, unlike in environmental policy where networking has been established regarding this policy area, there is little networking let alone institutionalisation of practices between cities on migration policy (Manfredi Sanchez, 2020: 8–9). In the practical application of policy, the MLG and governance approaches suggest there is better coordination between different jurisdictional levels, where the best practices in one policy area have led to a similar practice in another policy area. Yet, in paradiplomacy, despite there being rising cooperation in one policy area, namely environmental policy, there is a problem with scaling these actions up to different far-reaching jurisdictional levels. Furthermore, and

particularly as concerns migration policy within paradiplomacy, although this is a relatively new policy area of focus there is a problem with the networking and coordination of policy between actors. Still, perhaps the most crucial element is that the example of migration policy in the paradiplomacy literature shows that this represents a challenge to state-level policies, and exists to circumvent rather than coordinate policy between subnational and state levels.

## Polity

A central premise of the MLG and governance approaches is the need to move away from the grand theories of European integration like intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, as well as the pluralistic 'Europe of the Regions' discourse. Early on, Marks et al. (1996) sought to distinguish how MLG differed from both the grand theories of European integration and the 'Europe of Regions' discourse. In MLG, states no longer held a monopoly over policymaking within the EU; described as Europe *with* rather than *of* the regions (Marks et al., 1996). The emphasis of the original conceptualisations of MLG (Marks, 1993; Marks et al., 1996) was not necessarily on the emerging Euro-polity, but on the pattern of policymaking and interaction between jurisdictional levels within the EU. However, the subsequent development of more theoretical knowledge concerning MLG (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Zielonka, 2013) led to the attempt to label the emergent Euro-polity as being distinct from any other. Delineating distinct polities within MLG, Hooghe and Marks (2003) differentiate Type I and Type II MLG. Type I MLG resembles a federal polity such as the USA, whereas Type II MLG with its "task-specific jurisdictions; intersecting memberships; unlimited number of jurisdictional levels; and flexible design" (Hooghe and Marks, 2003: 235–236) represents the emergent polity within the EU. The representation of criteria in the typology like *intersecting memberships* and an *unlimited number of jurisdictional levels* gives rise to characterising the EU as a polycentric polity with non-hierarchical levels (Zielonka, 2013). Within the EU, there is no geographical centre of authority, with EU institutions and authority of governance being dispersed across the continent in multiple power centres: Brussels, Frankfurt, Luxembourg Strasbourg etc. (Zielonka, 2013: 5). MLG thus details a distinctive polity structure with cross-cutting jurisdictional boundaries and geographically dispersed institutional centres of authority.

As already noted in this article, paradiplomacy emerges from the discipline of International Relations. Like MLG, paradiplomacy details significant changes in territorial management on the domestic level, with moves towards decentralisation, and crucially on the supranational level with the

growth of continental integration, which has created a space for subnational territorial units to operate outside the parameters of the state (Keating, 1999: 6–10). The contemporary international environment features a number of actors, both state and non-state. The increasing complexity and diversity of actors, particularly the rising prominence of subnational entities, thus represents a challenge to the Westphalian territorial model as well as the centralised administration of state diplomacy that emerged after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (Cornago, 2018: 3). The result is that a more complex and fragmented international environment has emerged in which subnational entities have become more important, an environment where the international actions of subnational entities have become normalised over the past 30 years (Cornago, 2010), along with a form of political agonism increasingly tolerated by state actors (Duran, 2016). The diversity of actors on the international scene is one facet, while another is the new centres of authority in the form of the macro-regional integration taking place globally, with examples including the EU, MERCOSUR and ASEAN. Macro-regionalisation processes are directly linked to micro-regionalisation processes in as much as there is space for subnational entities to go beyond the state in their local neighbourhood (Keating, 1997: 386; Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000: 465–467). In Europe, greater decentralisation within states has simultaneously coincided with continental integration (Bartolini, 2007: 278). The outcome has been a distinct form of territorial management where the subnational and supranational are ever more connected, and the parameters of what is considered to be internal and external is becoming less clear. An empirical example of this may be found in Germany with regard to the relationship of the Länder to the European Union. The 1993 adaptation of Article 23 of Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany created a notion of “European domestic policy”, whereby EU policy is no longer considered to lie in the realms of foreign policy given the European legislation’s encroachment on subnational competences (Jeffery, 2007: 19). In this respect, European integration has altered the territorial arrangements of European states, and brought the subnational closer to the supranational. Yet, this can occasionally be to the detriment of state territorial integrity, like in the case of the Catalan crisis in 2017 (Bourne, 2021; Garcia Agustin, 2021). The unintended consequence of such continental integration is that it has made the prospect of a secessionist “exit option” seem more plausible for subnational entities looking to secede (Fasone, 2017: 59–60). In paradiplomacy, and by extension protodiplomacy, the growth of the European polity has in several ways emboldened the forces of disintegration within the European integration process. Hence, according to Friedrichs (2004: 130) paradiplomacy and protodiplomacy go some way to accounting for the triple dilemma the neo-medieval paradigm seeks to answer: globalisation, fragmentation, in a world of nation states.

Both MLG and paradiplomacy contain elements that point to changes in territorial management that are in line with the neo-medieval paradigm. The two concepts do not point to post-sovereigntist or federalist developments in European integration, which themselves indicate the absence of state authority. MLG and paradiplomacy instead posit that states remain and will remain important actors in European integration, but not the sole ones. In MLG, Hooghe and Marks, (2001: 45–47) even claim that the “post-state order” (as they term) it resembles the Feudal period: in the type of constituent units, the principle governing integration, and the locus of decision-making. In paradiplomacy, Duran (2019: 8–10) describes the non-formalised ad hoc “Network diplomacy” that arose in the Medieval period as one of the cornerstones of paradiplomacy within the EU. Subnational governments (whether regions, cities, local municipalities) establish contacts with each other, seek access to European institutions for funding in a manner that cannot be explained by a diplomatic approach, which is centred only on states being the sole authority to conduct diplomatic relations. This holds a profound effect on territorial management and has become a challenge to the Westphalian territorial model. However, that is not to say that both concepts envisage the Westphalian territorial model meeting its end any time soon, but they suggest the beginning of a shift regarding the territorial reconfiguration occurring over a longer period of time. While both concepts point to changes in territorial management in the EU, paradiplomacy and by extension protodiplomacy fit better with the neo-medieval paradigm due to its emphasis on political contestation, where such contestation would be expected to be the driver of any further territorial reconfiguration.

## Conclusion

In the politics dimension of the *politik*, MLG is conceptually ill-equipped to grasp the normative aspects of territorial management in comparison to paradiplomacy. Possible reasons for this deficiency are not merely a result of the conceptual origins of MLG itself as being a means to analyse patterns of policymaking in the EU, or that MLG is concerned more with structure than agency. In fact, a more fundamental explanation lurks in the difference between diplomacy and governance. Governance is centred on negotiation between actors with respect to a certain objective, whereas diplomacy is centred on mediation between actors themselves and contains several symbolic and ritualistic elements that facilitate the mediation (Jönsson and Hall, 2005: 42–50). The implications of this are that recent cases of subnational mobilisation as part of a contest for power in the EU cannot be fully understood with the MLG approach. Wallonia vis-à-vis the EU–Canada FTA and the Catalan crisis of 2017 are good examples of the normative challenges

created by subnational governments in recent years. Paradiplomacy, and by extension protodiplomacy, with their focus on the agency of subnational territorial units and particular emphasis on ethno-cultural and identitarian factors, ensure better coverage of the politics dimension of the *Politik*.

In terms of the policy dimension, it is clear that MLG's origins and a large part of its conceptual focus are based on analysing patterns of policymaking in the EU. Originally, MLG focussed on cohesion policy, but as Piattoni (2009: 83–151) detailed, as an outcome of efficient deliberative policymaking MLG has crossed over into a number of other policy areas. Still, paradiplomacy did not originate as a means to evaluate policymaking, even though there is growing literature on the importance of subnational entities as actors in policymaking to combat climate change (Happaerts et al., 2010; Smeds and Acuto, 2018), and increasingly on migration (Manfredi Sanchez, 2020). While policymaking in paradiplomacy can yield mutually beneficial policy outcomes for both the subnational and state levels, this depends on the level of integration into state foreign policy and coordination between both levels. As noted, the case in Belgium is such a system that offers a high degree of formalised coordination between subnational–state levels on foreign policy (Kerremans and Beyers, 1996; Bursens and Deforche, 2010), yet examples of such systems are an exception to the rule within paradiplomacy. Case studies in paradiplomacy that focus on specific policies generally tend to focus on controversial practices of paradiplomacy that give rise to conflict between the subnational and state levels. Examples such as Manfredi Sanchez's (2020) analysis of city migration policies show how cities have attempted to both mitigate and even circumvent the effects of state-level migration policies. Accordingly, when paradiplomacy literature focuses on specific policies it tends to emphasise the political controversies emanating as a result of controversial policy choices. Growing interest can nonetheless be seen in policy-centric cases of the paradiplomacy literature, particularly in the environmental policies of subnational entities. Therefore, based on analysis of the first two dimensions of the *politik* one could argue that the deficiency of the MLG theory with respect to explaining political mobilisation is quite fundamental, and far greater than the policy deficiency in the paradiplomacy literature.

The final dimension of the *politik* – polity – is where some symmetry between MLG and paradiplomacy was expected to be found. MLG and paradiplomacy present a view of the EU polity as containing geographically dispersed centres of power, overlapping jurisdictions, and multiple loyalties similar to what was described by the neo-medieval scholars Cerny (1998) and Friedrichs (2004). Nevertheless, reiterating a central point of the neo-medieval paradigm stressed by Friedrichs (2004: 130), neo-medievalism seeks to answer the triple dilemma in international relations of globalisation and fragmentation in a world of nation states. This is where the MLG

and governance approaches fall short in that MLG points to several facets of the neo-medieval paradigm. MLG has a politics deficit, which sees it struggling to account for fragmentation since it largely focuses on the deliberations surrounding EU policymaking. The spotlight that paradiplomacy places on more political, identarian and normative factors as contributing to the emergent polity helps significantly while answering this dilemma. In some cases, subnational entities in Europe have a dual or even greater sense of loyalty to the supranational level than the national one as it is seen as a means of subverting state authority. The influence of politics on the polity dimension in paradiplomacy reflects a key facet of neo-medievalism; namely, the notion of cooperative antagonism which was an ever-present feature of the Medieval period, in which each realm had to fend off, yet also maintain cooperation with its rivals (Friedrichs, 2004: 143). The two concepts hence point to certain key tenets of the neo-medieval paradigm, and to the reconfiguration of territorial management in the EU. However, MLG lacks the core tenet of fragmentation because it fails to address normative mobilisations effecting the polity and is generally concerned with analysing policymaking in the EU.

Paradiplomacy and MLG contain features that indicate changes in territorial management in European nation states and as a result of European integration. As it stands, states are still important actors, and the Westphalian territorial model has far from disappeared. Although concepts like MLG and paradiplomacy help show that some form of change is occurring and has already occurred, such change may come to resemble the distant past as the one presented in neo-medievalism. Moreover, paradiplomacy and MLG contain a number of shared features relating to the actors, subnational territorial units, space, and engagement with external actors outside the state. The analysis presented in this article reveals there are deficiencies in certain dimensions of the *politik* for each concept. For MLG that is politics, and for paradiplomacy that is policy. It is now up to scholars in each of these two disciplines to seek to address the deficiencies found at the heart of each concept.

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