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Swedish Paradiplomacy in Action: The Brussel's Edition

**A Qualitative Study on the Essential Elements of Diplomacy in relation to the
Swedish Regional Representation Offices and their Policy Advocacy in Brussels**

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Abstract

This research seeks to contribute to the current gap between diplomatic theory and practice.

By exploring how applicable the essential elements of diplomacy are to the Swedish regional representation offices and their policy advocacy in Brussels, the research serves a dual purpose. Firstly, to contribute to fill the vast gap between diplomatic theory and practice, and secondly, to in parallel paint an empirical picture of variation in representation and policy advocacy between the Swedish offices. By drawing on the previous literature on the essential elements of diplomacy and through extensive theoretical retrieval, six categories on expected variation are created. These categories are operationalized through qualitative interviews with the nine managing directors/officials of the Swedish regional offices in Brussels. In total, the nine offices represent all 20 Swedish regions. The main findings of the research include that the essential elements of diplomacy are indeed to high extent applicable to the Swedish regional representation offices. The findings further conclude that it is possible to draw the inference that there is a variation between the diplomatic and political realm. The variation is however not as salient as expected but shines through in relation to the category on precision of instructions, where the most salient variation between the diplomatic and political realm lies in the precision of the decision-making chain.

Key words: Swedish Regional Representation Offices, Brussel's Bubble, Paradiplomacy, Representation, Policy Advocacy, Elements of Diplomacy, Comparative Analysis

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1 Introduction

The deepening European integration has created a change in pace and increase of the European Union's institutional role, which has led to an accelerated systemic change in the EU: s decision-making process and in the relationship between traditional governing levels (Gren 2002, 79). The integration has triggered an unprecedented mobilization of stakeholders in Brussels as the innovative elements of the EU are argued to have created a hybrid diplomatic arena (Berkhout 2010; Jönsson & Hall 2005). Scholars argue that traditional diplomatic state actors have gone from being exclusive interests advocates vis-à-vis the EU institutions to become co-participants operating in parallel with more than 200 regional representations (Keating 2000). All with varying territorial interests to advocate for. Swedish regions are no exception to the mobilization in Brussels. They have become sophisticated actors in balancing the interests on the European political arena that operate in parallel and the interstices of national governments (Jönsson & Hall 2005; Jerneck & Gidlund 2001). In the wake of globalization, a shift of power can be witnessed but also a fragmentation. Meaning that the power and influence traditionally reserved to States are decreasing as new actors gain influence over politics (Janse 2014, 20-21). In the light of this political development and diplomatic shift in agency, it is of high relevance to look into the essence of diplomacy and help fill the gap between diplomatic theory and practice as it has been argued that no area of world politics has experience a greater gap between theory and empirics (Steiner 2000).

1.1 Aim and Research Question

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the current gap between diplomatic theory and practice, which is described by scholars in the field of international relations to be in an acute need of a rich empirical research agenda. Diplomacy has traditionally been viewed as a practice exclusively reserved for States, but the past century has had a significant impact on the institution, its scope, means and reservation of practitioners. This holds especially true in the context of the European Union, which has been argued by more contemporary scholars to have established a polyilateral hybrid diplomatic arena in Brussels in the wake of accelerated European integration. The Belgian capital which is the home of European politics and policy advocacy, has in recent years experienced an unprecedented mobilization of stakeholders to which Swedish regions are no exception. In the light of this development, it is of high relevance to explore the essence of diplomacy further by exploring the applicability of the essential elements of diplomacy in relation to the Swedish regional representation offices and their policy advocacy in Brussels. The thesis therefore sets out to answer the following question:

How applicable are the essential elements of diplomacy to the Swedish regional representation offices and their policy advocacy in Brussels?

More specifically, this research has an interest in the variation between the Swedish regional offices and their policy advocacy. This will therefore be explored by turning the essential elements of diplomacy into categories on expected variation. The categories are accordingly attempted to serve a dual purpose of I contributing to fill the gap between diplomatic theory and practice, as well as II painting an empirical picture of variation in representation and policy advocacy between the Swedish regional representation offices in Brussels.

2 Paradiplomacy and Policy Advocacy: A Call for Academic Attention

The role of sub-national entities in the evolving EU system and the emergence of the concept of multi-level governance have constituted subjects of interest within academia since the late 1980s (Marks 1993; Hooghe & Marks 2001). At this level of abstraction, the relationship between the different governance levels of the European Union (EU) has been covered broadly by scholars in the following decades. The question of regional engagement on the EU level has since dominated the debate that has taken place mainly in the context of regionalism and regionalization (Gren 2002; Rowe 2011).

Academia has since gone on to explore European integration and regional mobilization concerning to the notion of “Europe of Regions”, that was pioneering in contributing to the academic exploration of what roles sub-national entities played within the EU system (Hooghe 1995; Hooghe & Marks 1996). Since Sweden became a member of the EU in 1995, there is a notable increase in the number of Swedish regional representation offices that have established themselves in Brussels (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001; Berg & Lindahl 2007). The phenomena have captured the attention of scholars, and there is a growing literature on the subject of regional mobilization in Brussels that has started to focus on mapping out its development (Hooghe & Keating 2007; Lidström 2018).

The scholarly focus has so far mainly been on exploring *why* this regional mobilization is happening and *how* which has resulted in several academic articles and books debating the conducted operations of the regional offices in the light of multi-level governance and democracy within the EU (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001). As more knowledge on the establishment, development and internal functions of the offices has been acquired, there is a notable increase of interest in the area of policy advocacy and what type of channels and means the offices use to do it (Berg & Lindahl 2007; Gren 2002).

In a more contemporary academic setting, the continued work on the topic by Magnus Lindh should be mentioned. Lindh has contributed to widening the scope of regional action in Brussels as he studies perceptions and attitudes in EU-related frameworks among regional actors in the case of Western Sweden. Lindh’s work has laid the foundation for continued in-depth research and has inspired further comparative academic exploration of the topic (Lindh 2017).

Deepening regional integration in Brussels has triggered an unprecedented mobilization of stakeholders conducting policy advocacy (Rowe 2011; Tatham & Thau 2013). The massive establishment of regional representation offices today demonstrate a trend so strong that researchers today talk about their operations and direct links with the supra-national levels of authority as institutionalized (Rowe 2011). This permanent sub-national promotion of territorial interests externally has thus become more frequently debated within academia under the name Paradiplomacy. That is the diplomatic activities carried out by territorial authorities in parallel with the state (Tatham & Thau 2013). Paradiplomacy has rapidly gained institutional and legal recognition by states, international organization, and the EU (Cornago 2018; McCallion 2017).

However, diplomacy, has for a long time been marginalized by political scientists within the field of international relations despite its centrality. Scholars therefore argued that diplomacy is in an acute need of theoretical research, to which the path-breaking contribution of Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall's "Essence of Diplomacy", which explores the essential features of the diplomatic statecraft, is seen as vital. There is, therefore, a call for academic attention and a need for a rich research agenda of empirical studies that explore these essential elements of diplomacy (Jönsson & Hall 2005). As Magnus Jerneck and Janerik Gidlund have argued that it is possible to see traditional foreign policy diplomatic relations and cooperation forms transmit to the sub-national context and Carolyne Rowe has highlighted similarities between traditional embassies and regional representation offices in the way of conducting their work, this research sets out to answer the call for academic attention (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001; Rowe 2011). Placing the research within the political realm of Brussel. The home of European politics, diplomacy and policy advocacy.

3 Diplomatic Agency Today

Diplomacy has always been described as being in a state of evolution, but the past century has had a significant impact on the institution, its scope, means and the type of actors involved (Spies 2006; Jönsson & Hall 2005; Janse 2014; Kuznetsov 2015). A shift of power can be witnessed in the wake of globalization, but also a fragmentation of power. Meaning that the power and influence traditionally reserved for the State is decreasing as other actors emerge. States are now sharing the diplomatic arena with non-traditional actors such as global concerns, non-governmental, institutions and lobbyists that have gained influence over politics (Janse 2014, 20-21). This shift of diplomatic agency has further been emphasized in the field of New Diplomatic History, that seek to add new layers to diplomacy by exploring the unofficial sphere of diplomacy and its actors as valid subjects in their own right. This is done by focusing on the role, motivations, identities, and approaches by those engaged in the diplomatic process, instead of the outcome of the process and the actor's formal relationship to a nation-state. Thereby, concluding that such a re-conceptualization of a diplomat means that it is an individual that plays a diplomatic role, whether this individual represents a formal nation-state or not (Bloemendal 2018, 11). Within this line of thought, Kenneth Weisbrode has provided the following definition of what such a diplomatic role entails "The history of diplomats focuses on people who perform diplomatic roles, which means anyone who imparts to himself or herself the role of intermediary for reasons beyond his or her interests. They need not serve nor represent states, although many do. They must, however, serve a set of interests, a cause or collective unit above and beyond themselves, and which in some way involves the crossing of borders and the inter-relationship of political entities" (Bloemendal 2018, 11).

John Robert Kelley has taken this type of reasoning further in his contribution to the process of unraveling the agent-structure puzzle of today's diplomacy. Kelley does this by moving beyond standard concepts of "old" and "new" diplomacy and illustrates in his work how diplomacy has "gone public". Thereby, arguing that a parallel, yet different, diplomatic system in search of different aims such as problem-solving is emerging as the influence of non-state actors is on the rise (Kelley 2012, 1,9,12). Just like the scholars above, Kelley contends that the 21st century marks an unprecedented moment of change in diplomatic affairs, it marks an institutional upheaval. Kelley further argues that the most pressing challenge comes from within diplomacy, as it in itself is in

the process of democratization beyond state control. Thereby, stretching the impression of what passes for diplomacy in the present-day concerning representation. Thus, further challenging the notion and judgment of diplomatic action as being limited to the accredited diplomats themselves. He challenges it via the introduction of a construct Kelley calls “diplomacy of capabilities”, that stands in contrast with the traditional construct of “diplomacy of status” - concluding, that a diplomatic actor can also be seen as representing transcendent, issue-based interests (Kelley 2014, 1, 24, 27).

Within in a European context, it has been argued by for an example Jörgen Gren that the deepening European integration has created a change in pace and increase of the European Union’s institutional role (2002, 79). This accelerated development is further argued to constitute the background for a substantial systemic change in the decision-making process and relationship between traditional governing levels (Gren 2002, 79). Deepening European integration has also triggered an unprecedented mobilization of vested stakeholders in Brussels, the heart of EU-politics (Berkhout 2010; Jerneck & Gidlund 2001). Within this EU specific realm of development, scholars argue that the Unions innovative elements have created a “hybrid diplomatic arena”. The complexity of the diplomatic relations within the EU is tied to its multi-level governance system, which entails broad participation in the EU policy process. This participation means that there is an ongoing polyilateral dialogue between the different representative actors that range from national, regional, and local level as well as to civil society (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 159).

In summary, this means that member state’s foreign ministries and embassies have gone from being exclusive diplomatic practitioners to become co-participants with for an example regional and local representations where both types of actor’s boundary-spanning capabilities have enabled them to operate in parallel in Brussels (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 159).

3.1 Paradiplomacy: Regional Diplomatic Agency in Brussel

The phenomena of regional mobilization in Brussels, that is how regions increasingly engage beyond the local level, could be approached in several ways. Either by operationalizing the concept of multi-level governance or that of Paradiplomacy, or a combination of both (Dickson 2014, 1). With the contextual factor of globalization, there is a growing literature on agency-based Paradiplomacy (Jackson 2017, 4). The works of Soldatos (1990) and Duchacek (1990) started to look into categorizing the motivations and actions performed by subnational governments. Their frameworks built upon a structural interpretation of Paradiplomacy and created models for how certain “input” created specific “output” and how the parallel diplomacy of regions was a functional and necessary economic reaction (Jackson 2017, 4).

Paradiplomacy shares similar traits with multi-level governance in the interest of autonomy delegated to regions, the bureaucratic system determining it, and the practices and relations between levels of administration. However, Francesca Dickson argues that what sets them apart is that Paradiplomacy focuses on regional governments agency and not the whole governance system. Within the realm of Paradiplomacy and its bottom-up approach to diplomacy, scholars within the field of geopolitics have increasingly been drawing inspiration from practice theories that center around the everyday work, actual doings, sayings and experiences by individuals (Dickson 2014,

692-695). It has further been argued by for an example Jones and Clark that the academic reflection upon everyday practices needs to extend to influential actors “employed to construct, promote and represent the geopolitical productions: that is, the diplomats themselves” (Jackson 2017, 8).

Recent years have seen an international explosion activity on the parts of regions and other types of non-state actors, and especially so in Europe. In total, there are now over 200 regional “embassies” in Brussels lobbying the EU-institutions, networking with each other and that are involved in the EU: s policy process (Keating 2000, 3). Regions in a European context are complex and diverse entities that contain a multiplicity of groups that have both shared and sharply divided interests in the EU policies. Even though regions today have a certain role to play on the EU: s diplomatic arena they still operate below, in parallel and the interstices of national governments (Keating 2000,3). Within this framework, the development of networks, cooperation between regional actors, exchange of ideas and mutual learning is seen as vital for influence and impact (Keating 2000, 10). Michael Keating has argued that Paradiplomacy, therefore, has a partial scope and different set of aims and type of operationalization from the traditional state-centered diplomacy. Keating thus argue that this leads regions to pursue and engage in mainly three types of paradiplomatic actions: political, economic, and cultural. These types of actions and factors for regional engagement are closely tied to leadership and the initiative of key individuals in the formation of incentives for cooperation (Keating 2000, 3).

In summary, Paradiplomacy can thus be said to be an “inherently pluralistic economic and social activity, that centers around the ability to involve the right and relevant actors for successful operations” (Keating 2000, 8-9). Swedish regions are no exception to the international mobilization, and they have gradually become more sophisticated actors on the European arena. They have thereby established both a presence and roles for themselves to ply in relation to the ongoing policy-making process of the EU. Anders Lidström amongst others argue that there are good reasons for regions to be involved in the EU-decision-making process as they are directly affected by the laws and regulations it produces and responsible for its local implementation. Another strong incentive that is frequently highlighted for the mobilization in Brussels is that Swedish regions also have the valuable opportunity to be beneficiaries of the structural funds and their financial means targeting regional development and cohesion (Lidström 2010, 170).

There are both direct and indirect ways for Swedish regions to influence the EU. Typically, the region’s strategies are to use several means in parallel to collect information, improve regional capacity, and pursue the interests of the region (Lidström 2010, 163). This strategic mobilization by European and Swedish regions also means that there is a growing non-negligible workforce in place. For the Swedish regions, it is foremost the officials of the offices that manage the contact with other actors and represents the territorial interests. The regional politicians play an essential role in shaping the office’s operation plans, prioritization of focus areas and the official’s political mandate to conduct policy advocacy on their behalf (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001, 102). Here, it is possible to see traditional foreign policy diplomatic relations and cooperation forms being transmitted to the sub-national context (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001, 102).

3.2 The Essential Elements: Representation, Communication and Behaviour

Diplomats act for principals of polities to represent their interests, just as other professionals represent the interest of for an example their clients (Sharp 1997, 65). From the previous analysis of the concept of diplomatic representation, the conclusion can be made that representation is not a static concept but rather a dynamic one. Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall argue that representation is best to be understood as a process of mutual interaction between principal and agent, where diplomatic representation entails varying combinations of imperative and free mandates (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 117). One aspect that distinguishes diplomatic representation from other forms of representation is the dual accountability, in that diplomats interpret their environment to their principal as well as connect their principal to the outside world (Kelley 2014, 24-25).

In the realm of diplomatic representation, the issue of mandate-independence is central, and it revolves around the notion of accountability and authorization about the role and nature of the instruction diplomats receive (Pitkin 1967, 114). What lies at the core of that debate is whether the representative has a free or imperative mandate. This means to what extent the representative is bound by his or hers given mandate or instruction and to what extent he or she is free to act as he or she see fit in pursuit of the principle's interests. An imperative mandate builds upon restriction and accountability, and mandate theorists argue that true representation arises when the representative acts on explicit instructions and any exercise of discretion is held as deviation (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 100-101). The nature of such a mandate implies that when a diplomat disagrees with the policy line, she or he may oppose but, in the end, must loyally defend the given position. Sensitivity as to what constitutes a breach grave enough for diplomatic etiquette rule to dismiss a diplomatic agent has varied throughout time and could potentially lead to her or him being recalled (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 104-105).

A free mandate, on the other hand, builds upon independence and authorization. Independence theorists see representatives as trustees, free agents, or experts who are best left alone to do the work authorized to her or him (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 105). From an authorization perspective on diplomatic representation, disagreement between principal and agent is not as clear-cut as it from an accountability perspective. As a result, the diplomatic field work is many times marked by uncertainty and contractionary instructions, and there are several real-life examples of diplomatic agents that have been too concerned with exceeding their instructions that opportunities are missed and those who have used their independence questionably (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 107).

In the world of diplomacy, the issue regarding the amount of control that accompanies delegation can therefore, in conclusion, be said to revolves around the nature and role of the instruction diplomats receive. The two extremes of the two mandates do rarely appear in real life of fully authorized agents (Zartman & Berman 1987, 223). Some scholars within the field of diplomacy therefore argue as stated above, that diplomatic representation nowadays in the light of technological and communicative advancements should be viewed as an interactive process between agent and principal (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 108).

The new technology and ways of communicating have therefore changed the pace and created a more circumscribed structure, having made possible for even more detailed and frequent instructions from the diplomat's principals (Hamilton & Langhorne 2011, 137). Diplomats today are however often expected to make the best of the instructions they receive, even though there will be times that they are directed to use their judgment and act as they see fit (Leguey-Feilluex 2009, 8). The element of evaluating instructions do, however, always entail the dimension of judgment. Do the instructions leave room for interpretation? If so, how much? Who is best suited to carry out the task and is the right amount of weight assigned? (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 111-112). Diplomatic agents in the field are reporting that the current technological development has made it more feasible than it used to be for a diplomatic agent to be more influential and take part in the policy-formulating process. This is a reminder that the relationship between agents and principals in modern diplomacy rests upon two-way communication and mutual influence attempts (Halstead 1983, 23; Jönsson & Hall 2005, 109).

In summary, the essential elements of diplomacy have been argued Jönsson & Hall to be communication, representation, and reproduction. The latter one refers to "the ways in which diplomacy contributes to the creation and continuation of a particular international society" and the element is further defined by the scholars as to the processes by which polities, or groups of polities maintain themselves as such (2005, 38). However, in line with the reasoning in the previous chapter about the EU as a hybrid diplomatic arena where traditional and more untraditional representative actors such as regions, operate in parallel in Brussels the focus will instead be on the element of behavior (See: 3 Diplomatic Agency Today, 5).

Diplomacy is often categorized into sets of typologies. These typologies typically distinguish the various modes and functions of diplomacy. There is a broad consensus amongst scholars within the field that "representation" is diplomacy primary function. It is closely followed by the function of "information exchange" and "negotiation" (Jönsson 2002, 217; Sharp 1999). Other common typologies refer to the different "techniques" of diplomacy, clarifying various types of good office and rules of protocol, which can be summarized as "behavior" (Sharp 1999). While there are countless "how to" books on the basics of negotiation, few thoroughly address the complexity of real-life negotiation (Watkins 2007, 245). Few advocacy objectives can be reached solely by authority or coercion, some level of diplomacy is thus expected to be carried out by the representative to advance the interests of their principal (Watkins 2007, 245) This is especially relevant with the para-diplomatic role of the regional offices in mind and the contextual setting of the European arena due to its fundamental character of ever on-going negotiations, that values and standards long-term win-win solutions as it is an arena mainly for integrative rather than distributive negotiations (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001, 151).

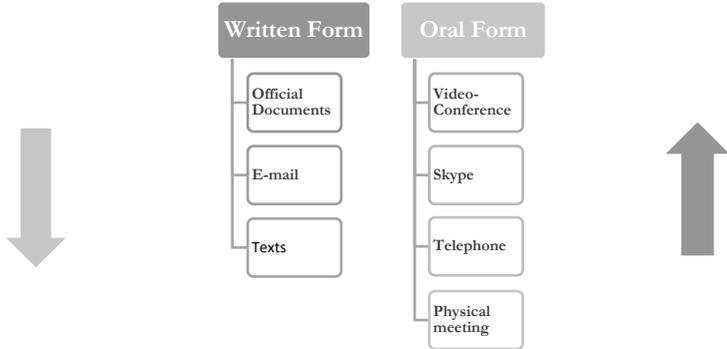
3.3 Turning the Essential Elements into Categories of Variation

Drawing on the previous literature about the essential elements of diplomacy, six categories that highlight expected variation have been created to be able to in parallel show empirical variation amongst the regional office's advocacy work in Brussels. The creation processes started with the essential elements of diplomacy emphasized by Jönsson & Hall (2005,38). These three elements were then as explained further built upon and developed into six categories through extensive

Category 2: Communication of Instructions

Diplomacy is often described as a communication system between actors and polities. The system has in modern times been affected by advancements in communications and transportation. New technology has also changed the pace of communications and made it possible for mandators to convey more precise and frequent instructions to their agents. Communication of instructions can therefore take varying forms such as written communication in the form of for an example official documents or e-mail, or oral communication in the form of Skype and physical meetings.

Diplomacy has been described by Jönsson & Hall as a system of communication between polities, which has been strongly influenced by the development of available means of communication and transport (2003, 206). New technological advances have changed the speed of communication and made it possible for more detailed and frequent instructions between the diplomatic agent and hers or his principal, further facilitating direct contact between parties (Stearns 1996, 75; Eban 1983, 360). Technology has had a noticeable impact upon the nature of diplomatic representation as the communication of instructions has become more continues, leading to better opportunities for the representative’s conduct of instructions to be supervised on more of a daily basis (Hamilton & Langhorne 2011, 137). The development has thus led to communication of instructions being able to be transmitted via written channels such as official documents and e-mail as well as through communication channels such as telephone, skype, video-conference and physical meetings (Hamilton & Langhorne 2011, 232-233). As the way and frequency of communication affect the conduct of representation, it is therefore of interests to explore the potential variation between the representations in order to see whether a certain mode of communicating instructions is dominating, perceived to make an impact and if any mode has increased or decreased over time.



Category 3: Strategies and Preparing the Ground for Policy Advocacy

Information gathering and communication are seen as fundamental aspects of representation within the realm of diplomacy. The two aspects are also seen as important first steps in policy advocacy and the advancement of interests. In relation to this, the literature especially highlights the importance of preporatory work. That is the importance of doing one’s research and analysis of the issue at hands, utilization of contacts and preparing the ground for a policy advocacy mission. A variation in strategic approach and preporatory process is therefore expected.

An agent can be understood as an individual or a collective unit that commits to an act of consequence upon its environment (Kelley 2014, 4). Agency is the capacity of an agent to act in the world. In the social sciences, the agency is generally conceptualized as the opposite of structure, which is seen as a force that organizes the actors in so that their actions fall in a certain order.

Diplomatic agency, whether performed in a group or individually, is constrained by structure which can take both ideational and material form. The structure is manifested through established relations and norms of procedures between representations, administrations and agencies, which in combination with written and unwritten rules guide the diplomatic action and creates its scope of agency (Adler-Nissen 2016, 2-3). The underlying structure creates the shape of operations and it constitutes the formal framework that the representative has to adapt to when acting upon instructions from home to fulfill its set-out objectives (Rowe 2011, 25; Adler-Nissen 2016, 2-3).

Communication and information gathering is one of the most fundamental forms of diplomatic agency, and it is the representative's role to filter and provide tailored intelligence for the home administration (Rowe 2011, 25). Information gathering is essential for effective diplomacy, and it is the first step towards advocacy, advancing interests, and finally trying influence change through persuasion (Adler-Nisse 2016, 2-3; Rowe 2011, 25). In advancing the interests of the home administration, the representative has to do intensive research. That requires effective preparation and analysis to find out as much as possible about the issue at hands. That entails knowing the recent development of the issue, its current status and receiving input regarding which individuals that are involved and necessary to talk to (Salasuce 2013, 198). The leading representative's expertise, contacts and relationships play a crucial part (Salasuce 2013, 136-138). Thus, in addition to the representatives' own skills and knowledge, she or he also need to rely on a series of resources to enhance their advocacy effectiveness (Ibid). As part of the preparation, it is of great importance to secure and organize these resources to one's advantage, which depending on nature of the issue might differ. However, the resources necessary generally take three forms: documentary resources, communication resources and human resources (Salasuce 2013, 201).

Preparing oneself and preparing the ground is thus a vital first step before taking operations to field. The necessary analysis and strategic advances before conducting the actual advocacy is further tied to an important tool for organizational leadership that is as applicable to diplomacy as it is to politics. Namely, strategic mobilization and networks. This entails strategic thinking and preparation in order to identify a) individuals who will support and share your interests b) individuals who might be persuaded to join you and c) individuals that will most likely oppose your interests (Salasuce 2013, 101, 237). This raises questions about the diplomatic actors "feel for the game", knowing what will have an impact and what will be read and acted-upon and the importance of doing one's 'homework' to get the ball rolling (McConnel 2018, 5). In summary, a variation in the strategic approach and preparatory process is expected.



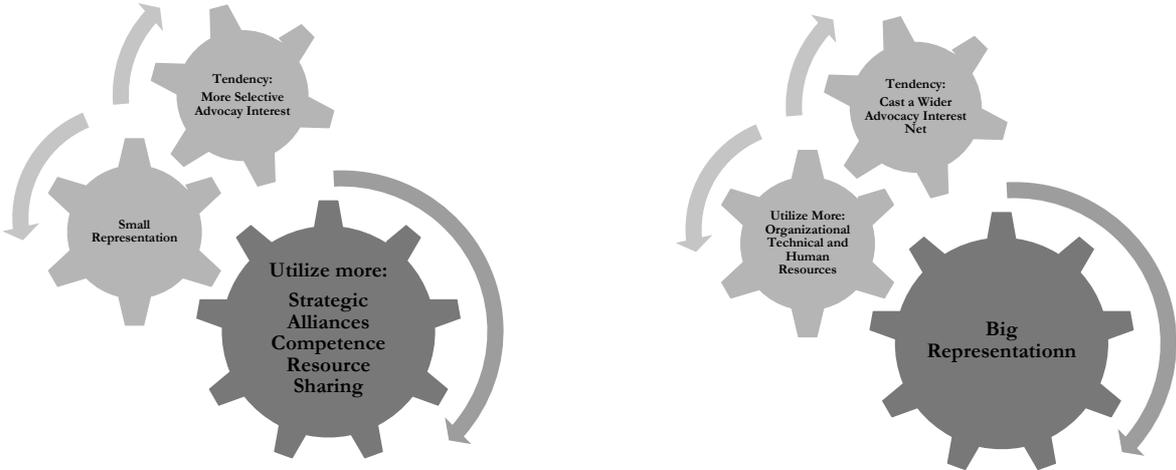
Category 4: Resource Allocation and Policy Advocacy

Diplomatic literature on representation, negotiation and advocacy all have two important aspects in common that they highlight as aspects of variation. Namely, resource allocation and management. In short, what the literature lifts is whether the resources exist to achieve the desired advocacy goals and if not, how to find the best solution in order to still reach the desired goal.

Just like “traditional” embassies, the regional representation offices are the embodiment of the home administration in Brussels (Rowe 2011, 25). Although, the majority of the work conducted by a “traditional” embassy falls outside the scope of a regional representation office area wise there are still similarities when it comes to the type and form of activity carried out (Rowe 2011, 24). Information gathering, and communication are fundamental diplomatic tools which allows the representative to become “the eyes and ears” of the home administration (Rowe 2011, 24). Drawing inspiration from the Swedish Foreign Ministry and its administrative development and operationalization is fruitful in exploring representation in the field of operation. Technological advances and well-established communication and information society of today offers opportunities to make for a more effective Swedish presence abroad, however it has not replaced the need for diplomatic presence (SOU 2011: 21, 56). With the Swedish membership of the EU, the demarcation between domestic politics and foreign policy has become more blurred. As Sweden now constitutes a well-integrated entity in the EU: s multi-level governance system, all actors need to participate and be active to make sure that their interests are met. The EU: s regional policy with its partner principle in the structural funds is a prime example of this blurred line between traditional domestic and foreign politics, which requires proactive regional actors. This development of required intensified regional activism has led to increased opportunities for the Swedish regional actors and representation offices, but also challenges. This as the activism require both advanced skills, expertise and above all resources. To operate strategically and successfully, the regional representation offices need a strong political mandate from home declaring its visions and priorities (McCallion 2017, 138).

It is also of importance to be able to identify strategic partnerships on EU level and national level. Furthermore, knowing which channels and whom to address is also a matter related to regional and financial resources (Salasuce 2013, 146; McCallion 2017, 139-140). Just as the Swedish foreign representations must function efficiently and efficiently and adopt to the special nature of the EU, so must the regional representation offices (SOU 2011: 21, 52, 63). To make good decisions and set priorities for the operations, it is importance with a well-functioning two-way communication and integrated function for coordinating analysis, policy-formulation and planning. This is closely tied to management and resource allocation, as the lead representative at the offices needs to ask her- or himself whether she or he has the needed resources to obtain the desired advocacy objectives. If not, how can the problem best be solved (SOU 2011:21, 53; Salasuce 2013, 311). Social sciences have identified six important bases for influencing other people’s behaviour: ability to promise rewards, ability to coerce, information and expertise, credibility, relationships and coalitions and networks. These make out the traditional diplomatic negotiator’s resources (Salasuce 2013, 311).

Within this realm of diplomatic representation, variation due to specific interests and size of the home administration is expected. Drawing from diplomatic negotiation theory, what one can presume to differ depending on the home administration’s size and resources is therefore the selected advocacy approach and working method. Smaller representations and diplomatic actors are expected to rely more on making strategic alliances in order to share resources, using the means they have to advocate the best they can and to influence smart and wisely. Thus, being more selective in their advocacy and scope as well as being more reliant upon individual competence (Salasuce 2013, 62-77; Berg & Lindahl 2007, 6-7). Bigger representations and diplomatic actors with more administrative muscle might also be selective in their advocacy and scope due to strategic deliberation in relation to managing more interests, relationships and constituents. They are however presumed to have a higher capacity and to casts a wider interest net, being more prone to utilize more of their organizational, technical and human resources in their operations and to have a more advanced ability to mobilize information (Salasuce 2013, 63-65, 89). In summary, the functional scope of the representations or constituents that diplomats represent or negotiate on behalf of can be presumed to be quite similar. Meaning that the resource allocation in relation to the conducted advocacy is generally presumed to be strongly attached to individual expertise, skills and knowledge. However, quite a salient variation in relation size, home administration and available resources is expected. In addition, these factors are also presumed to shape the representations or diplomatic actor’s advocacy in terms of methodological work approach in order to reach the desired interest objectives.



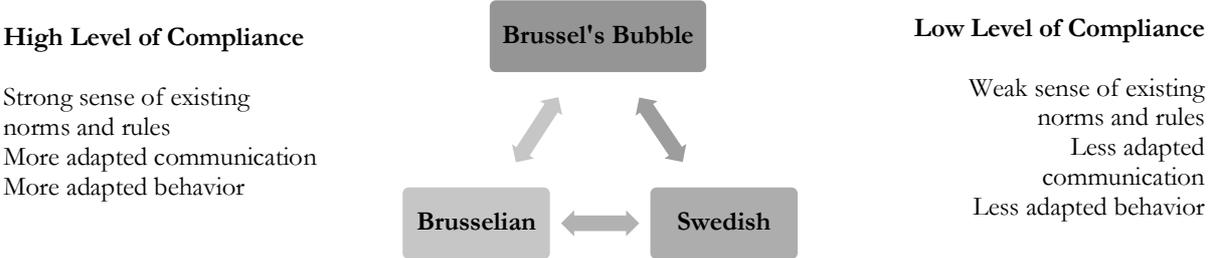
Category 5: Adaptive Behaviour to Context and Situation

Both in the literature as well as in everyday speech, Brussels is often described as a “bubble”. In the sense that it is its own little political universe with its own way of doing things and its own social codes. More classical literature on diplomacy view this social game and decorum, that is how one communicate and represent, as essential for diplomats. In relation to this, the literature highlights a varying degree of adapted behaviour to the specific environment and also the environments impact on sent out diplomats and ambassadors.

In the actual operationalization of the operations and advocacy, whether based upon long-term or short-term strategies, the question arises as to what is perceived as appropriate in the field. Appropriateness has been defined within the context of diplomacy as referring to “A match of behaviour to situation.

The match may be based on experience, expert knowledge, or intuition, in which case it is often called ‘recognition’ to emphasize the cognitive process of pairing problem-solving correctly to a problem-situation. [...] The match may also carry with it connotation of essence, so that appropriate attitudes, behaviors, feelings, or preferences for a citizen, official or farmer – essential not in the instrumental sense of being necessary to perform a task or socially expected, nor in the sense of being an arbitrary definitional convention, but in the sense of that without which one cannot claim to be a proper citizen, official or farmer” (Bátora 2008, 35). In many situations, diplomatic efforts have been described as requiring a certain level of decorum, that is an appropriate degree of restraint and adherence to practice. Striking the right tone at the right moment is thus an art in itself (Van der Wusten 2015, 324). This constitutes an interplay of tension between individuals, structures and environment that is called diplomatic decorum (McConnel 2018, 1).

The rules and conventions of modern diplomacy have been established through Western-initiated institutionalization and protocol that are underpinned by specific sets of values and practices that favors a social context of controlled, careful and cautious behavior (Oglesby 2016, 243). Diplomatic decorum captures the essence of good diplomatic behavior related to the diplomat’s skills and tacit knowledge, learned from experience and interactions within a certain environment that shapes the materialization of social boundaries (McConnel 2018, 366). This is closely tied to representation and can manifest itself in certain ritualization, a shared language and shared codes of interpretation in diplomatic communication (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 43-45). The working environment for representatives and officials is often referred to as the “Brussels bubble”, as the representatives spend most of their time surrounded by a community of professionals in the European quarter where the EU institutions are located. The “Brussels bubble” has been described by Oliver Baisnée as a microcosm with its own ways of doing things and social rules, which imposes certain habits and procedures on the representatives and officials working there (Cornia 2010, 372-373). Although subjective in its nature, diplomatic literature understates that professionals do adapt certain behavior to fit in. Variation with compliance with the “Brussels bubble” is thus relevant to explore, as one could assume that representatives either adapt and become more “Brusselian” or stick to a more “Swedish” work approach.



Category 6: To Span the Boundaries or stay within the Boundaries?

Diplomacy is often described in the literature as boundary spanning, and so is often times also the role of the modern diplomat and hers or his place of work. Perhaps even more so if that place of work is the EU, that according to the literature constitutes a unique hybrid arena that intertwines politics and diplomacy and builds upon long-term cooperation, networking and integrative negotiations that seek out “win-win” situations for all involved parties. The literature also highlights the complexity and challenges that arise in relation to these types of arenas that bring together a broad representation of actors and varying interests which suggest a variation in representation and advocacy.

The innovative elements of the EU have created a “hybrid diplomatic arena”. The complexity of the diplomatic relations within the EU is tied to its multi-level governance system, which entails broad participation in EU policy process. This means that there is an ongoing polyilateral dialogue between the different representative actors that range from national, regional and local level as well as to civil society (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 159). In summary, this means that member state’s foreign ministries and embassies have gone from being exclusive diplomatic practitioners to become co-participants with for an example regional and local representations, where both type of actor’s boundary-spanning capabilities have enabled them to operate in parallel in Brussels. Set in the context of representation in Brussels, the diplomatic notion of boundary spanning becomes especially interesting as diplomacy itself often is described as boundary spanning but it is argued that so can the individual actors (Kelley 2015, 24-25; Jönsson & Hall 2005, 112, 117-118). Diplomatic representatives are intermediaries between their own organization and its environment, they are boundary-role occupants, thereby representing the organization to the environment they are located in and the environment to their home administration (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 112).

Boundary-spanners are defined by Paul Williams as a “valuable and distinctive class of actors, operating within intra- and intersectoral collaborator environments, including partnerships, alliances, networks, consortia and forms of integration (Williams 2011, 27). Within the boundary-spanning arena that is the EU, that builds upon long-term cooperation and networking that within the realm of advocacy that builds upon diffused reciprocity it thus interesting to look into potential scenarios of tensions and ambiguity that might arise and that the representatives need to face in their everyday working life (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 28-30; Williams 2011, 26). The question then arises, if the representatives in their boundary-spanning roles at times perceive it necessary to push the boundaries of the institutionalized game in order to achieve a successful advocacy outcome and perhaps more short-term gain, in contrast to what seems to be the diplomatic norm and rule (Jönsson & Hall 2005, 28-29; Jerneck & Gidlund 2001, 150-152). Collaborative arenas are complex and at times challenging environments. This as they bring together a diverse set of representatives from different sectoral and organizational background, under the umbrella of a higher common EU purpose (Williams 2011, 30). This therefore often mask different views and opinions on fundamental issues such as problem definition and solution as well as working methods stemming from for an example opposing forces of organizational self-interests and collaboration (Williams 2011, 30; Salasuce 2013, 24,70-71). Representing and defending interests is one of the most fundamental functions of diplomacy and negotiation, and it is thus feasible to make the inference that there ought to exist at least at times in certain contexts a slight variation in advocacy operations in relation to the Brussel’s norm of behaviour described above. Where representations due to perhaps specific interests, instructions and objectives decide to “span the boundaries” rather than staying within them.



4 How to study Paradiplomacy and Policy Advocacy in Action?

This section of the thesis presents the methodological approach and material used to carry out the research. It builds upon a qualitative approach that uses material collected from secondary sources in the form of diplomatic literature and its presented variation on the selected categories on the essential elements of diplomacy. These textual sources are used as a foundation to better understand the phenomena of Paradiplomacy in relation to policy advocacy from a dialectical approach to the relation between structure and agency, which is the sum of the six chosen categories, before conducting the interviews that makes out the primary sources of the thesis.

4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

In line with the overall aim of the thesis, the selected methodological approach is based upon semi-structured interviews with nine officials from the Swedish regional offices located in Brussels. Qualitative interviews were considered to make out the most feasible approach as they according to for an example Esaiasson et al constitute a helpful tool in capturing the everyday experience of people in the light of a certain phenomenon and anchor theory to real life. This is an important aspect as research otherwise often can be criticized for being too detached from empirics and too abstract in its construction (Esaiasson 2012, 253-255). In this specific research the interviews and the material they provide play an essential part in providing the needed information as it cannot solely be found in textual sources and has not been extensively enough or at all covered by academia (Esaiasson 2012, 254-255). The interviewees therefore act as informants as they provide the needed information and are the only ones that can make the aspects of the perceived reality salient and give insights on how it is constructed and shaped (Esaiasson et al 2012, 252). The research as a whole is shaped by a dialectical approach to the relationship between structure and agency, which means that they are both seen as interactive and iterative as the diplomatic framework and six categories exemplifies and accentuate (Marsh 2018, 206-208). This strengthens the need for interviews further, as the only way of getting insights into the agent's perception of that strategic context and their reflections on their agency is to simply ask them.

The interviews can be said to be of a semi-structured nature as the interview guide that was created for conducting them was used precisely as just that: a guide that intentionally asked open-ended questions (Trost 2010, 40-42). The way the questions were posed also deliberately allowed for a high level of interpretation and relation to personal experience for the interviewee, even though the interview guide first gave a small contextual overview of the literature and its stated variation. The interviews semi-structured nature can also be made visible by the fact that it was the interviewee that, with hers or his interpretation of the asked question, in the end guided the direction of the interview (Trost 2010, 54-55). On the other hand, the interviews can also be said to be more structured in the sense that the interview guide and questions posed were created in alignment to the overall framework of the research and in alignment with its stated aim. (Trost 2010, 42, 51). It is of importance to note that the interview guide and questions posed also were highly structured in the sense that they were the same for all the interviewees, except for when follow-up questions were needed to for an example attempt to get a more thorough answer.

Consistency and the use of the same questions were of great importance as the research has a comparative ambition. To make the comparison clearer, interviewees were strategically asked to assess their perception in relation to each category in either percentage or on a scale, when feasible. The process of contacting the interviewees, constructing the interview guide, preparing for the interviews and conducting the interviews was done after careful consideration of the suggestions and tips given by Irwing Seidman in his book “Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A guide for researchers in Education & Social Sciences” (2013).

4.2 Interview Material and Selection

Swedish regions, municipalities and cities are represented in Brussels via their own offices. The Swedish offices gather information and conduct policy advocacy in order to defend their regional interest's vis-à-vis the EU institutions (SKL 2019). As the thesis has a strict focus on the Swedish regional representation offices the following city and municipality offices have been excluded from its scope: City of Malmö EU Office, City of Gothenburg European Office and the Skåne Association of Local Authorities (SKL 2019). The interview selection was based on the ambition to interview all of the Swedish regional representation offices that are located in Brussels in order to get a full representation to draw inferences from with less skewed findings and results. A full representation also provides a more accurate comparative foundation to make inferences from that further highlights and enables reflections upon the strategic and import aspect of all Swedish regions work and interests in EU-related issues, as the selected nine offices collectively represent all twenty Swedish regions (See: Appendix 2). As the Swedish offices share a regional representative function one can make the inferences that they are indeed functionally equivalent, although they might differ in their organizational framework, geographical interests, size and resource allocation (Landman 2008, 36). These aspects are tied into the six diplomatic categories on expected variation and have previously been discussed in the work of Linda Berg and Rutger Lindahl, whose work review the establishment and used channels for regional advocacy in Brussels in relation to just organizational structure, resources and the Swedish regions geographical variation on a north-south spectrum (Jerneck & Gidlund 2001, 98; Berg & Lindahl 2007, 17-18).

When it comes to the selection of the interviewees per se it was early on decided to reach out to the managing directors of the Swedish regional representation offices. This as the managing directors of the offices in that capacity are the ones holding the outmost responsibility for the office operations and strategic steps to be taken when it comes to conducting policy advocacy in Brussels. However, do to managing directors being humans like the rest of us life at time's comes in between. For the interview selections this meant that there had to be a compromise done in three of the nine cases where either the acting head of the office, a trusted colleague and official or the official mainly in charge of everyday operations in Brussels when the managing director is mainly based in the home region (For list of interviewees see: References, 40). The nine out nine regional representation offices are the following: Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office, Stockholm Region EU Office, Småland-Blekinge-Halland South, Skåne European Office, Region Östergötland EU Office, Region Värmland European Office, North Sweden European Office, Mid Sweden European Office and Central Sweden European Office (SKL Regions, 2019).

4.3 The Interplay between Theory and Empirics: A Diplomatic Research Strategy

Categories	Expected Variation	How to measure it	What to Look for	
Precision of Instructions	Precision and Type of Instructions	Interviewees: Perception of similarity: Yes/No Estimation: Precise – Unprecise Place on a scale 1-4	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
Communication of Instructions	Communication forms and Frequency of Instructions	Interviewee: Perception of dominant communication form and frequency Estimation: Dominating Form (%) Increase Over Time	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
Preparing the Ground for Advocacy	Strategies for Preparing Policy Advocacy Missions	Interviewee: Perception of strategy for preparing advocacy mission Estimation: Estimated Work Time (%) Fixed Strategy Time in Office	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
Resource Allocation	Resources Effects on Policy Advocacy	Interviewee: Perception of Resource Allocation and its Effect Estimation: In Comparison with other Offices: Resources/ Organisation	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
Appropriate Behaviour to Context and Situation	Compliance with The Brussel's Bubble	Interviewee: Perception of Adapted Behaviour and Compliance with "The Brussels Bubble" Estimation: Change over Time More Swedish Brusselian	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
Boundary Spanning	Compliance with Norms of Brussel's Policy Advocacy Game	Interviewee: Perception of whether there have been missions requiring different advocacy than the stated norm of cooperation Estimation: Cooperation Form vs. More Independent Form (%)	General Trend in Category	Variation amongst Offices
All Categories	Step 1	Step 2		
	Theoretical Reflections in relation to Empirics	Conclusion, Contribution and Call for Academic Attention		

5 Paradiplomacy and Policy Advocacy in Action

4.4 Category 1: Precision and Type of Instructions

The literature on diplomacy highlights representation as an essential aspect of diplomacy itself. In relation to representation, academia also acknowledges the importance of the ambassador's or diplomat's instructions. Namely, their description and precision, which direct the daily representative work with for an example policy advocacy. Furthermore, the literature also notes that diplomats and ambassadors today seldom represent mandators with fixed interests and that they therefore need to interpret their given instructions, which can take on very varying degrees of precision.

Question 1: Would you say that it feels about the same for you?

When asked whether this held true also for the interviewees within their political realm of regional representation and policy advocacy work in Brussels, it was clearly stated by five out of nine interviewees that they thought so. Within this group, the interpretation and sense of recognition in relation to precision of instructions demonstrated a general trend amongst these offices of their instructions, irrespectively of their form, being more imprecise and general in their formulation. The instructions for these offices can be summarized to tend to describe the office operations regarding policy advocacy in broad brush strokes and there was a majority of the interviewees that emphasized the importance of dialogue and close cooperation with the home organization whilst formulating and creating them. Another smaller trend amongst these offices that became visible to the aforementioned close dialogue with the home organization regarding the instructions was that the room for interpretation of them thereby also was secured so that the mandate for the interviewees and officials was made as clear, and when doable precise, as possible.

Amongst the four interviewees that did not express their sense of recognition as clearly, there is a visible general trend to emphasize the fact that the offices they represent are somewhat different types of organizations that work differently and that they seldom or never work on instruction per se. The trend amongst these interviewees is to highlight the co-creation process and dialogue with the home region or the office as being the initiator when it comes to policy advocacy acting on the basis of more general steering documents that they have the politicians trust to interpret and act as thought accordingly to. In addition, there are two smaller visible trends of either highlighting the political governance and structural framework per se as providing relatively clear instructions, or guidelines on how to proceed on the desired issue, or to highlight non-existing precise instructions and management by broader objectives in combination with portraying a more active Brussel's office that operates based on knowledge of the region's interests, the officials experience and trust.

Varying precision of a diplomat's instructions is measured in some literature in relation to how clearly communicated their 1. Goals are and how measurable they are 2. Their conveying of expectations and how clear they are, and 3. Whether they include a specific time frame for the mission that is to be carried out.

Question 2: With this in mind, where would you place your instructions in relation to their precision on a scale of 1-4, where 1 is precise instructions, two semi-precise, three semi-unprecise and 4 unprecise instructions?

As the table below demonstrates there is a strong trend amongst all the interviewees to place their instructions on the lower half of the scale. Placement on the second grade that represents semi-precise instructions dominates, followed by placement on the third grade of “semi-precise”.

Placement on Scale	Regional Office
1	Skåne European Office
2	Stockholm Region EU Office, Mid Sweden European Office, Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden, Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office
In between 2 and 3	Central Sweden European Office, Region Östergötland EU Office
3	North Sweden European Office, Region Värmland European Office
4	None

Five out the nine interviewees highlighted management by objectives and that a lot of the conducted policy advocacy is steered by EU-initiatives and deadlines set out by the EU:s institutions, which due to the overall political system that makes out the foundation for their functioning are based on very long-term and strategic processes. Another visible trend related to the placement on the scale amongst these interviewees is the emphasize of rather broad and non-measurable objectives that still highlight that some type of underlying management by objectives exists. That type of management is then directly mentioned in relation to the home organization and that it is a process based upon dialogue and feedback. Another visible smaller trend in relation to interviewees placement on the scale was the emphasize of instructions, although being placed as semi-unprecise, still are perceived as quite precise to them due to the frequently leading role of the Brussel's office in locating the issue of interest to conduct policy advocacy in relation to.

4.4.1 Variation in Category 1

From the discussed trends above it is possible to draw the inference that there is a variation in how precise the interviewees perceive their instructions, which the placement on the scale also demonstrates. However, although the placement in general regarding the precision of instructions is on the lower scale some of the interviewees still underlined the fact that they were indeed still for them due to reasons such as clear delimitations, active part in the creation process and close dialogue with the home administration per se perceived as more precise. This can be demonstrated with the three statements from interviewees below:

[...] We have the regional strategies as the foundation that everything rests upon and our bylaws that make out the base for ours and the organizations work. But then we also have the yearly decided orders from each member and they can vary a lot in their precision, but we try to work with the members as they are produced and have a dialogue with the contact persons responsible for each political area so that we secure that we get an as precise order as possible. So that it is clear for us what our mandate is and what our mission is [...] *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*¹

[...] So, our instructions are precise in the sense that we then know that there is a delamination, but that the room for interpretation for which directives we ought to work with for an example is big for us here at the Brussel's office [...] *Stockholm Region EU Office, Sofia Mohlin, EU Policy Manager.*

¹ NOTE: All quotes are translated by the author from Swedish into English and when explicitly desired by the interviewee checked.

[...] So, it can go two ways, but we are always co-producers so then it always a lot easier as we have been part of the entire process and identification of the issue as well as bringing forward our position and what we ought to think. So that instruction becomes precise because we have been with since the beginning. *Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office, Melissa Frödin, Acting Managing Director.*

The variation also manifests itself through the interviewees who did place their instructions on the lower end of the scale whilst also directly stating that they do not have a system for instructions or more subtly stating that their instructions, despite their form, were indeed not perceived as precise. This can be demonstrated by the statements below:

[...] Essentially, you cannot say that we have a system for instructions here. If you compare with what exists on the state level with community-control, with instruction that all departments have a common position on within a quite strict framework. Here it is much more based upon a selection of general regulatory documents, a sort of anecdotal knowledge about the region's interests [...] It becomes more piecewise and ad-hoc. You say that now I am going to this meeting, do we have anything we would like to say, have said anything before, have said anything in any documents that we can use. *Skåne European Office, Carl-Albert Hjelmborn, Managing Director.*

Yes. We do have priorities but not fixed interests, it is relatively ad-hoc. That is the short answer. *Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden, Sven Kastö, managing Director.*

[...] No, they are not, it is a mission with an implied wish to achieve an objective of for an example getting a certain lettering included in a proposal [...] There are no exact instructions on how that is supposed to be achieved. Absolutely not. *Region Värmland European Office, Kajsa Sundström Van Zeveren, Managing Director.*

Furthermore, the statements above emphasize the variation in the perceived precision of instructions as being either precise or not precise, but the statements do also demonstrate a variation in not only owner structure and political governance but also in the type of instructions that the officials receive. This variation can be further emphasized by including the statement below which then make for a total representation of the variation of instructions used by all the offices. Namely, priorities (above) orders (above) and positions (below).

It is very seldom that we receive instructions on how we are to act on a specific issue, but we do on the other hand work with positions and we often need to be a part in producing them. *Region Östergötland EU Office, Thomas Högman, Acting Managing Director.*

In relation to this first category it is also visible to see a trend and variation when it comes to management by objectives which can be demonstrated by the statements below:

[...] We do not have measurable objectives in the sense that we shall achieve exactly this or that, or how many that should be employed here, instead they are rather broad objectives. But we do try to give feedback and say that now we achieved this. So, in that sense there is a sort of management by objectives, even if we do it ourselves, but there is still input from our owners that they do think that we have captured the issue well [...] *North Sweden European Office, Mikael Jansson, Managing Director.*

[...] When it comes to clear objectives it is something that we have discussed quite a lot. Then again it is difficult to a certain extent to have clear objectives when it comes to policy advocacy, at least yearly ones, as the political processes are very long and strategic which then makes it difficult to get the extremely clear short-term objectives [...] But for an example, in relation to the work with the Bothnian Corridor and the enlargement of ScanMed, it could be said that it is a major objective that is achieved but with a work that has been ongoing for several years [...] *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*

It has to be placed quite low. It is probably on the 1 level, but that is perhaps partially due to us as well as there is no expressed objective from Region Skåne to advocate any particular program negotiation in any way [...] *Skåne European Office, Carl-Albert Hjelmborn, Managing Director.*

4.5 Category 2: Communication of Instructions

Diplomacy is often described as a communication system between actors and politics. The system has in modern times been affected by advancements in communications and transportation. New technology has also changed the pace of communications and made it possible for mandators to convey more precise and frequent instructions to their agents. Communication of instructions can therefore take varying forms such as written communication in the form of for an example official documents or e-mail, or oral communication in the form of Skype and physical meetings.

Question 1: Which Communication forms are used to send you instructions for a policy advocacy mission?

When asked which communication forms that are used to forward the official's instructions regarding policy advocacy, there is a visible trend of all mentioned forms being used. Furthermore, there is a strong visible trend that it is the written communication forms that are dominating. In most cases this has to do with the fact that the general guidelines for the office operations are written and politically anchored in the general regulatory documents which set out the more long-term strategic objectives to be achieved, which falls within the more formal process. The other visible trend is that the formal process that is dominated by written communication then is followed up by a more unofficial process dominated by the use of e-mail and above all oral communication once the advocacy issue has been pin-pointed in order to make sure what the next step of action ought to be. This manifest itself in a majority of the interviewees emphasized the importance of close dialogue with the home region through telephone calls, Skype-meetings and physical meetings and conferences where issues are discussed further and more in detail and used as a mean to make sure that the office proceeds in a direction desired also by the home organization. It is with others words a process strongly based on mutual trust and two-way communication. Another visible trend is that the home organization picks up on issues of interests that are highlighted by the Brussel's offices shared information that is published on their respective websites, forwarded through newsletters or other types of information dispatches. An additional smaller trend is that some of the offices once the issues of advocacy are located create smaller working- and dialogue groups in cooperation with the experts on the issue in the home organization to discuss the strategic advances further.

Question 2: If you were to roughly in percentage estimate, how would you estimate that written versus oral communication forms are used?

The overall trend discussed above can be highlighted by the interviewees estimation when answering the second question which is demonstrated by the table below:

Regional Office	Written Communication I Oral Communication	
Stockholm Region EU Office	Dominating	
Central Sweden European Office	Dominating	
Region Östergötland EU Office		Dominating
Mid Sweden European Office	50 %	50 %
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	30–40 %	70–60 %
Skåne European Office	50 %	50 %
North Sweden European Office	66 %	33%
Region Värmland European Office	60 %	40 %
Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office		Dominating

Question 3: Would you say that you receive instructions more frequently now in comparison to when you started?

The interviewee's perception regarding the increased frequency of instructions during their time in the office does not demonstrate a larger trend amongst any of the offices per se. As depicted in the table below the division between the offices is 50/50, including one office that places itself in the middle.

Regional Office	More Frequent Instructions during time in Office
Stockholm Region EU Office	No
Central Sweden European Office	Yes
Region Östergötland EU Office	Yes
Mid Sweden European Office	No
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	No
Skåne European Office	Yes
North Sweden European Office	No
Region Värmland European Office	Yes
Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office	Yes/No

4.5.1 Variation in Category 2

The general trend of written communication being the dominant form used to send instructions regarding policy advocacy holds true for the majority of the offices as their general guidelines for operations are based on their regulatory documents and strategies. A clear example of which communication forms that are generally used and how the processes as a whole are reflected upon can be exemplified with the quote below when asked about the use of communication forms.

All. It is a flow. What we try to do with our regulatory documents is to set a rather broad framework. What it comes down to as well is that lobbying in my experience, although some may create very detailed lobbying plans, is knowing where you are and why you want something as well as knowing where you want to go. It might not be certain that where you want to go is exactly where you should end up in the end to achieve what you truly want. On the way there it is about 'jumping on tufts' and see what emerges and is moving, so you cannot limit yourself too much by saying we should do this and that, because then you will end up spending too much time on that instead of actually working [...] *North Sweden European Office, Mikael Jansson, Managing Director.*

Despite the general trend of written communication being perceived as dominating, three offices that deviate or in one case slightly deviates from the trend. These offices state that although a lot of their policy advocacy instructions derives from their regulatory documents it is still oral communication that makes out the dominating form as the instructions and discussions regarding how they are to specifically act is done through continuous dialogue and discussions.

[...]The written information flow is enormously bigger, although when it regards these kind of important issues that I think that you are interested in, when in regards how we are to act in relation to a specific issue and how we ought to express ourselves, in the process of formulating that the oral communication is a lot more dominant. When it is about making sure that what the organization really wants, then the written communication is established orally through counter-questions, telephone calls and Skype-meetings [...] When regards precisely policy advocacy, then we always establish a working group for the issue where the politics sits in together with the concerned officials and the directors of the concerned officials. Within that group there are physical meetings and Skype-meetings to make sure that we are completely sure on how to act *Region Östergötland EU Office, Thomas Högman, Acting Managing Director.*

No, it is probably orally and that follows from me suggesting something and they then say go for it [...] There still exists documents where you have established priorities. So that then means that when I suggest something, I have already had a finger in the ground, so I would not suggest them anything that they do not want to work with, unless it is really important *Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden, Sven Kastö, Managing Director.*

Orally. The decision in itself is written. It is put on paper but then there are a lot of drawings for the boards and for the politics at home and then there are a lot of discussions *Region Västra Götaland's Brussel's Office, Melissa Frödin, Acting Managing Director.*

When asked whether the frequency of instructions had increased during their time in office there was no salient trend amongst the offices, they rather divided themselves fifty-fifty in relation to the question. Thus, the answers demonstrate a clear variation amongst the offices. In line with the perception of instructions being seen as more frequent now in comparison to when they started the following quotes are of interest to highlight as they are explanatory.

Perhaps somewhat more frequent. We have been working pretty consciously with trying to strengthen the ties with the home organization in order to get clearer expectations and requests so that we can understand their requests better, although they do not come with direct demands. We recently did an entire tour with the office to visit all the units in the department for regional development, plus other units such as the cultural administration with which we have sat almost half a day each to discuss what we do, what service we offer and what their needs are. So, in that sense we probably have strengthened that communication and I believe we do get more requests now, but it is still more frequently us that send home to a broader group than previously and say that here is a possibility to leave an opinion or here is a meeting about this, are you interested. So, you could almost say that we order for ourselves *Skåne European Office, Carl-Albert Hjelmborn, Managing director.*

Whereas in line with the perception of those that thought their instructions had not become more frequent during their time in office the interviewees rather just stated "no they had not" or highlighted other aspects such as written priorities having become sharper or that as stated below:

No. They have not, rather the opposite and there is a reasonable explanation for it as we have had pretty big changes at home. Both at the official organizational level and the political level where Stockholm city now has a new governance and new officials, which are the ones we continuously see. They constitute the entryway into the politicians. There is also the fact that Stockholm County Council now has become a region and taken over many of the work tasks, and we are now at the beginning of April and they are still adapting to their new roles [...] So I do understand why it has become less frequent *Stockholm Region EU Office, Sofia Mohlin, EU Policy Manager.*

[...] It comes in waves, up and down, a bit depending on what is on the EU agenda and how that correlates with what is going on at home [...] *Region Västtra Götaland's Brussels Office, Melissa Frödin, Acting Managing Director.*

4.6 Category 3: Strategies and Preparing the Ground for Policy Advocacy

Information gathering and communication are seen as fundamental aspects of representation within the realm of diplomacy. The two aspects are also seen as important first steps in policy advocacy and the advancement of interests. In relation to this, the literature especially highlights the importance of preparatory work. That is the importance of doing one's research and analysis of the issue at hand, utilization of contacts and preparing the ground for a policy advocacy mission, A variation in strategic approach and preparatory process is therefore expected.

Question 1: How would you describe your work with preparing a policy advocacy mission?

There is a strong overall trend amongst the interviewees to clearly state that the theoretic description of the fundamental aspects and strategic preparatory process related to diplomacy and negotiation also holds true for them. All interviewees emphasize the importance of information gathering and communication so that they truly know the issue at hand and what the actual interest at home is followed by the importance of having built up long-term relations with key actors in combination with active participation in relevant networks. The continuous information gathering that makes out the daily work of all the offices is considered by all interviewees to be the essence and condition for being able to in the first-place conduct policy advocacy. Another smaller visible strategic trend lifted by two of interviewees is to stress the aspect of doing one's background research of the underlying interest conflict in relation to the actors and governing levels involved, in combination with knowing their political standpoint and that of potential allies. In addition, there is a trend to highlight strategic communication in relation to mobilization at home as the political processes on the EU-level and national level are going on in parallel. Here, interviewees stressed the importance of the home administrations mobilization and participation in networks at home in order to reach out and convey the regional interests and standpoints to all governance levels and stakeholders involved.

Another visible trend is the order in which the interviewees talk about the identification of an issue in relation to the preparatory stage, where the office in their role as information gatherers in Brussel's generally are seen as the initiators of a policy advocacy mission as they are the ones on-site with the political antennas permanently out.

Question 2: Would you say that you have a fixed strategy and work procedure and trick for effective preparation?

In relation to the above-stated question, the trend of stating not have a fixed strategy and work procedure is clearly dominant amongst the interviewees. In analyzing all the interviewees responses,

a strong inference between the trend of not having a fixed strategy and the underlying factor for it can be drawn to the enormous information flow that follows in the wake of the EU: s political ecosystem. In relation to this, there is a smaller trend amongst a set of interviewees to lift that this political phenomena per se creates an intrinsic need for flexibility and an ad-hoc culture and system. Due to this, it is stated by a few and can be read in between the lines of all responses that the offices many times actually by correspondence, although they try to work proactively and strategically, hear about an issue of interests that are beginning to attract stakeholders through their networks and colleagues.

Question 3: How much of your work time would you estimate that you lay on preparation?

There is a general trend amongst the interviewees to state that the division between what constitutes preparation and active policy advocacy is difficult to pin-point, as the preparatory process is so intertwined with the actual advocacy work. Many of the interviewees do also emphasize that all of the work that they do at the office to a certain extent can be seen to be part of their preparatory work as it rests upon their daily office tasks. That is the information gathering and communication, which results in the competence they build over time through their EU monitoring and participation in networks that makes out the preconditions for influencing and advocate vis-à-vis the EU-institutions and the policy process. However, there is a division between the offices due to their reasoning that will be discussed further in the category’s variation section.

Regional Office	Estimated Time Dedicated to Preparing the Ground
Stockholm Region EU Office	30 % or more of Working Time
Central Sweden European Office	60 % or more of Working Time
Region Östergötland EU Office	9 – 40 % or more of Working Time
Mid Sweden European Office	50 % or more of Working Time
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	20 % of Working Time
Skåne European Office	10-20 % of Working Time
North Sweden European Office	10 – 15 % of Working Time
Region Värmland European Office	15-30 % of Working Time
Region Västra Götaland’s Brussels Office	30 % of Working Time

Question 4: How long have you been in your current work position and how long have you worked in Brussels?

The table below demonstrates the years in office and time spent working in Brussels of the interviewees. This factor is considered to be essential in relation to all categories discussed in the thesis. This as it is strongly associated with affecting the official’s perception, which derives from the idea of agents being sent out on missions abroad are shaped by their environment and the entire structure behind to that way of working which is seen to shape their agency and vice versa.

Regional Office	Time in Office	Time in Brussels
Stockholm Region EU Office	1 year, 7 months	14 years, 7 months
Central Sweden European Office	3 years, 3 months	14 years this fall
Region Östergötland EU Office	3 years, 6 months	3 years, 6 months
Mid Sweden European Office	3 years	3 years, 3 months
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	9 years	20 years
Skåne European Office	5 years	9 years
North Sweden European Office	8 years	8 years
Region Värmland European Office	4 years, 6 months	29 years
Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office	2 years, 7 months	5 years, 6 months

4.6.1 Variation in Category 3

Within category three are not any major variations in the way that the interviewees describe their work with strategically preparing the ground for policy advocacy, despite the fact that they have held their position for quite varying periods. Their working methods do still bare a lot of resemblances and as previously discussed follow the logic of the presented diplomatic theory which highlights the importance of information gathering, communication and doing one's research thoroughly in combination with strategic use of one's contacts. There is however an interesting trend once you factor in the estimated percentage of time perceived to be dedicated to the preparatory stage of policy advocacy where two of the offices states quite a significantly higher percentage rate of 60 % and 50 % in comparison to the one's with lowest estimation of 10-15 %. Here the following statements highlight a very interesting contrast from two of the officials that have worked in Brussels for a longer and almost equivalent period of time.

Essentially, not a lot of time, you do not have the time. It spins around so much, so you have to trust the experts at home. So, for our part it is about capturing what we see as a problem a try to get a feeling from the ones working with it at home whether this becomes dangerous or not if you simply it a bit [...] It is at times difficult to draw a line, as you often participate in different processes, between what is an isolated issue or part of a chain. That is when you need to read up on it. Preparation, 10-15 % at the most. The rest is then to act [...] *North Sweden European Office, Mikael Jansson, Managing Director.*

[...] Preparation is a bit tricky as it most often is part of the actual work. A very large part of my daily work is related policy advocacy, so I would say that at least 60 % of my work is in one way or another related to that [...] But then again it might depend on where you are in the process, so it could be 60 % preparation but that it then slides into you doing the actual work. *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*

The trends discussed in relation to the second question regarding having a fixed strategy for conducting policy advocacy demonstrate no salient variation amongst the offices, it rather demonstrates a strong negative correlation as discussed above due to the vast information flow that requires flexibility and an ad-hoc approach to policy advocacy. This can be exemplified by the two following statements that capture the essence of the answers provided in total.

No. It is essential to keep up when the Commission comes with their proposals and to be a bit on your toes. You cannot capture everything, but you can draw the attention to something starting to happen and that it is of importance to us. Then you have to read up on the issue and it is our role to read this a bit diagonally as the material is so vast [...] It comes down to having a political sensitive approach that this is important to us, bioeconomy is discussed a lot, that is related to energy, mass, fuels etc. and that is related to things we want to do in our regions [...] EU works a bit in the way that unless you forward your own interests no one else is going to do it for you, so it comes down to having system for signaling and trying to think about where we need to listen in and then you can decide where to aim your focus within these myriads texts [...] *North Sweden European Office, Mikael Jansson, Managing Director.*

No. I would definitely not say that it is fixed. It has to do with experience and the 20 years that I have worked with these issues [...] That you realize that you do actually know people that work with the issue at hand, it is just that we have not worked with them. It is also very often that you go through your colleagues. So no, you do often approach it in the same way but that is related to experience and knowing that it works [...] *Region Värmland European Office, Kajsa Sundström Van Zeveren, Managing Director.*

It is, however, possible to see a slight variation in reasoning from one of the interviewees that subtly indicate more of a perceived tendency towards a more fixed approach regarding preparing the ground for policy advocacy which can be demonstrated with the statement below:

It has to do a lot with networking in my opinion. That you know that you have the right contacts and that you anchor it well at home. Information and analysis as a foundation and that it is good if you get a politically adopted document and that it happens in parallel with us starting to talk to key persons at the EU-level in combination with an active relationship building, where we talk to the persons and give them a clear picture of who we are and what organization we represent [...] It is also important to follow up and keep the members informed and keep the contacts with the key persons alive [...] So there is in that sense some sort of more or less fixed approach. Then it is important to participate in conferences and events where the important persons are and to perhaps get a political representative that presents a certain standpoint at that event. That can also be a way of lifting an issue higher up on the agenda. *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*

4.7 Category 4: Resource Allocation and Policy Advocacy

Diplomatic literature on representation, negotiation and advocacy all have two important aspects in common that they highlight and lift as varying factors. Namely, resource allocation and management. In short, what the literature lifts is whether the resources exist to achieve the desired advocacy goals and if not, how to find the best solution in order to still reach the desired goal.

Question 1: How would you describe your policy advocacy and resource allocation?

There is a clear general trend amongst the interviewees to emphasize that policy advocacy in relation to resource allocation is dependent on having a clear mandate and vision as well as good communication, dissemination of information, strategic cooperation and continuous dialogue within the organization. This as the organization as whole in its operation is seen to be highly reliant on individuals and their competence. There is also a visible trend to emphasize the need of finding a feasible balance between the two political realms that the Brussel's office and the home administration work within, as they are indeed thought to be marked by quite different working structures and especially tempos that affect the policy advocacy which many times require quicker mobilization.

The salient trend in relation to finding this balance is that interviewees highlight the importance of attempting to work more proactively and with long-term strategic prioritization of policy advocacy issues of interest for the region so that the necessary resources can be allocated when things start moving at the EU-level. A smaller visible trend is again the emphasize of the importance of communication and dissemination of information but this time as a mean towards making sure that the ones who ought to advocate understand that they ought to do it.

Question 2: In comparison with the other Swedish regional offices, would you describe your office as relatively big or small with the home region/organization and available resources in mind?

The table below demonstrates the interviewee’s estimation of their office’s size in relation to resources in comparison with the other Swedish regional offices. The general trend amongst the interviewees when answering this question was to view their resources in terms of employees, their competence and allocation of time. In terms of size, the interviewees tended to think in more organizational representative terms where resources were talked about in relation to owner structure and in two cases also geography and population.

Regional Office	Estimated Office Size (Organisation/Resources)
Stockholm Region EU Office	Relatively big
Central Sweden European Office	Relatively mid-sized to small
Region Östergötland EU Office	Relatively small
Mid Sweden European Office	Relatively small
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	Relatively mid-sized
Skåne European Office	Relatively big
North Sweden European Office	Relatively mid-sized
Region Värmland European Office	Relatively small
Region Västra Götaland’s Brussels Office	Relatively mid-sized to big

Question 3: Would you say that your available resources (human as well as material) affect your policy advocacy working methods, and if so, in which way?

There is clear trend amongst five out the nine interviewees to openly state that yes, their available resources do affect their policy advocacy working methods. Within this group there is a noticeable trend for the smaller to mid-sized office representatives (see above) to emphasize the importance of the employees, time management and being able to work in a flexible way with the resources and competence that you have available in combination with working together with other actors when possible and sharing resources. The two representatives for the offices estimated as big within this group demonstrate a tendency to instead talk about resources effect on their policy advocacy working methods from a strategic organizational aspect. Meaning that they have more of an emphasize on advancement and obtaining an even higher capacity if they had more human resources, which then would allow for an even more extensive policy area coverage. In addition, there is a smaller recurring trend to emphasize that resources are linked to the Brussel’s offices owner structure and internal organization which then affect the working methods available and used which lay the foundation for different approaches.

4.7.1 Variation in Category 4

In conclusion, the overall trends highlighted throughout this category mainly demonstrates a variation to question two and three. The interviewees reasoning about the second question implies a variation in the perception of not only size in relation to resources but also resources per se, which can be demonstrated through the statements below from two of the offices perceived by the representatives to constitute one of the smallest, mid-sized and respectively biggest.

Small. We are the regional office that, if you do not include the municipal offices, that represent the second smallest population after Värmland. So, we have a small home organization and we are two persons at the office. *Mid Sweden European Office, Martin Bror Karlsson, Policy Advisor.*

If you look at it strictly in terms of resources, with two officials and one managing director, then we can be placed somewhere in the middle of the scale in relation to number of persons. Then you can make it a bit more complex by looking at the number of owners that you represent, where we have three, Region Värmland two permanently employed that work for one region [...] VGR is also relatively big too and Skåne as well. So, from that perspective we are not that big. *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*

Big when it comes to, not representation, but our owners [...] The organizations at home are big, Stockholm city is a really big organization and the region is equally big. So, there are a lot of individuals at home that have competence and resources to help us in our work. So, big. *Stockholm Region EU Office, Sofia Mohlin, EU Policy Manager.*

In addition, the following quote further demonstrates a line of thought that underlines variation in terms of organizational structure and resources between two of the offices perceived as big:

[...] Regarding our resources I do believe that it depends slightly on how the representations down here are shaped. We are a company. The non-profit organization Stockholm Region Association for European Affairs for an example work a lot with positioning and position papers because that is important for that organization internally to agree on certain formal point of view on the EU-level and have placed orders saying that on this we shall have a point of view. We do not have that at all, so in that sense we do not have that type of resources. On the other hand, I would say that the opportunities we have had to actively enter into networks with a rather free capacity down here to assess what constitutes good networks and contacts for Skåne. So, we have worked very closely with the Commission and to a certain extent the Parliament and shaped policies on an EU-level [...]. *Skåne European Office, Carl-Albert Hjelmborn, Managing Director.*

The interviewees answers on question three demonstrated two trends in relation to their size that also provide for a variation in how resources are perceived to affect their policy advocacy.

It does. We have to be very broad and be able to cover each other so we cannot be fixed on our thematic areas, it requires flexibility and that we know a bit about each other's portfolios. We both have quite long experience of Brussels in terms of procedure and the way of working [...] Although we are few, I would not say that it makes us very sensitive resources wise. *Region Värmland European Office, Kajsa Sundström Van Zeveren, Managing Director.*

Yes, of course it does [...] It comes down to, and then we are back at the order, that we have a clear mission and know what is prioritized by our members and what is of the highest priority so that we can put all our resources into that while perhaps letting the other things rest for a bit. But you could definitely get a higher impact on more areas if you had even more resources. That I do believe. *Central Sweden European Office, Eva Björk, Managing Director.*

Yes of course. We do for an example work with a series of prioritized issues: Cohesion policy, Climate, Transport, Digitalization, and Research and Innovation. If we were to have more posts at the office, we could work with a lot more issues than we do now and have the capacity for. However, this is the decided prioritization and that changes from mandate period to mandate period and from political decision to political decision. *Region Västra Götaland's EU Office, Melissa Frödin, Acting Managing Director.*

4.8 Category 5: Adaptive Behaviour to Context and Situation

Both in the literature as well as in everyday speech, Brussels is often described as a "bubble". In the sense that it is its own little political universe with its own way of doing things and its own social codes. More classical literature on diplomacy view this social game and decorum, that is how one communicate and represent, as essential for diplomats. In relation to this, the literature highlights a varying degree of adapted behaviour to the specific environment and also the environments impact on sent out diplomats and ambassadors.

Question 1: From your perspective, would you say that different policy advocacy missions require different working methods and social adaption depending on whether it targets for an example an institution or individual?

There is a general visible trend amongst the interviewees to highlight that the information gathering and the dissemination of it in combination with active participation constitute the foundation for good policy advocacy independently of whom or which institution that is targeted. There is another trend amongst the interviewees to emphasize the importance of adapting one's message to context and having knowledge about the process that lies behind a certain decision and who it is that truly sits on the pen and ought to be contacted. This as the receiver of the message has different needs depending on whether it is another region, representation or one of the EU-institutions, which in its turn sets the tone for the relation and also approach. For an example, the Commission and Parliament is described by some to be part of a relationship based upon information sharing and explanation of challenges at home, the help needed and why the matter is of importance whereas for an example other regions require more of a seeking consensus and least common denominator approach in order to get allies and more of an impact.

There is thus a clear consensus on the fact that an adaption in behaviour to a certain extent is at least fruitful and smart in order to better convey one's message and reach a higher level of impact. In addition, there is another visible trend in the interviewees answers to mention the strategic use of political representatives and maintaining a close dialogue with the home administration in relation to certain type of policy advocacy, where the hierarchical aspect of the Brussel bubble is utilized. This as the political representative then can act as an entry way and most likely will be match by the same political level from the EU-institutions which value politicians highly. There is another noticeable trend to emphasize a difference in approach whether the actor or stakeholder targeted is a new acquaintance or trusted ally, which is crucial for the selected approach and conveying of the message and information shared as it affects how familiar the actor is with the region's work and interests. Furthermore, there is an interesting element of lifting formal and informal processes in relation to policy advocacy where the informal aspect is seen to play an especially important part in relation to networking and information exchange.

Question 2: Would you say that your way of conducting policy advocacy has changed since you started working in Brussels?

There is a strong trend amongst the interviewees to state that their way of conducting policy advocacy has changed since they started working in Brussels. What is lifted mainly is that with time comes more experience and knowledge about the general process. As you become more comfortable in your role you also become more effective, as you then better know when to raise an issue in the ongoing process and have improved your ability to read in between the lines and to better read the communication, or lack of communication, from the actors and governance levels involved. Another trend that shines through is the increased access to information through relations and contacts, in relation which the competence to build alliances and finding new partners and knowledge to lift certain components with the different stakeholders in order to convey the message in the best way in relation to which many highlight the difference in working life in Brussels with for an example Stockholm. The Brussel's work style is generally perceived to build more upon a higher level of social interaction where networking and attending events is seen as a crucial part of the representative work that then leads to a higher policy advocacy impact.

Question 3: In relation to level of compliance with the Brussels-bubble, would you describe your way of working as more Swedish or more "Brusselian"?

There are three noteworthy smaller trends amongst the interviewees when asked this question, which places almost all of them into groups of two. The first one does not really recognize themselves in the "Brussel's bubble" per se and do not necessarily highlight any perceived differences in norms or in their way of working in Brussels in comparison with for an example Stockholm. The second group highlights the perception of becoming a bit of a mix of both with time and that many in Brussels would perhaps perceive them as more Swedish but that it leaches out over time as you in order to become more effective in the system and bubble partially adapt to it. The third group does perceive themselves as more Swedish in their way of working and lift the close cooperation with the home organization, other Swedes and regional offices in Brussels as a contributing factor. The fourth group do not perceive themselves as particularly Swedish in their way of working and to perhaps be even more "Brusselian" than "Swedish" in their work approach do the political context and environment that is thought to shape the office operations that are perceived to be marked by somewhat more informal procedures and especially quicker decision-making processes. There is no significant overweighing trend of perception in relation to the years spent working in Brussels, there is however a smaller visible trend amongst those who have worked in Brussels the longest to emphasize the importance of social competence, the ability to listen as well as knowing and getting a real sense of the political arena and its actors.

4.8.1 Variation in Category 5

In summary, there is a broad consensus amongst the interviewees when answering the questions posed in relation to the overall category to acknowledge the importance of social competence and adapting one's message after the receiver, whether it be one of the institutions, another region or for an example member of parliament working with the issue at hands. The variation in perception and reasoning is the clearest in relation to the second and third question, which can be demonstrated through the analytical reflections and examples below.

In relation to question two, there is a visible trend of interviewees, mainly stating that yes, their way of working with policy advocacy has changed since they started working in Brussels. There is a slight variation in reasoning as to why that seems to be dependent mainly on their previous work experience and preunderstanding of the “Brussels game” in combination with increased learning and confidence in their professional role with time.

Yes, absolutely because I had not worked with this before [...] I quite frequently look at how the national representations work with policy advocacy, in an up-stream manner before things have been established, and it is very interesting to see how the more heavy weight divisions of the industry interests work purely methodically [...] *Region Östergötland EU Office, Thomas Högman, Acting Managing Director.*

No, it is rather that the image I have presented now has become reinforced. I was pretty skeptical, there is a lot of talk about advocacy down here, but I felt directly from the start that I did not think it was reasonable to work with policy advocacy in the way you do at national level. Where you were one out 28 member states, and a very small one, that is to compete about the space with all the interest organizations, trade unions and all 300 city and regional offices down here. It does not feel reasonable to think that one region alone can get ahead in that world and influence legislation [...] If so, I think that you have to that together with others, unless you have something very unique that no other region has the experience of [...] *Skåne European Office, Carl-Albert Hjelmborn, Managing Director.*

I had quite a lot of experience before I came here, but you learn things all the time. I have developed good competence to build alliances here and find new partners, which is something that was not required of me before. At the Swedish Permanent Representation to the EU everyone wants to talk to you [...] With that said you learn things all the time, the value of cooperation in different constellations and on different issues and that you lift certain components with certain actors to get an impact [...] *Stockholm Region EU Office, Sofia Mohlin, EU Policy Manager.*

In relation to the third question about the “Brussels bubble”, the interviewees answers could be placed into groups of two that stressed a relatively distinct variation in perception and reasoning regarding whether they saw their way of working as more “Swedish” or “Brusselian”. This variation does relate to time spent in Brussels but also on the perception of agency and whether the political environment and associated institutional structure have an impact on it.

You probably become a bit of a mix of both, because if you ask my colleagues at home in Gothenburg they would probably think that we at the office work a bit more “Brusselian” whereas if I talk to the EU-institutions or other organizations here it is very clear to them that I am Swedish in my way of working and in terms of how things are structured. How we forward positions or if we are to participate in an initiative that requires us to back it up politically then we have to first bring it home and get it signed while other organizations work in a completely different way. So, I think we are a mix of both, because it always comes down to being the mediator that translates the relations between the region and the EU-institutions. *Region Västra Götaland's EU Office, Melissa Frödin, Acting Managing Director.*

[...] The Brussels bubble, it exists, and it is a thing [...] I do not perceive my way of working in Brussels to be that different in comparison with how other Swedes work [...] On the other hand I have come to understand that it is quite different from how you work in Stockholm. It is a completely different work life here with us attending so many events and through that encounter so many people and network, and that is a crucial part of the job down here and especially for the policy advocacy work in order for it to have an impact [...] *Stockholm Region EU Office, Sofia Mohlin, EU Policy Manager.*

It is difficult to say, because after 20 years down here I am of course affected. I am no longer just Swedish, but still to a pretty high extent. We work a lot with other Swedish regional offices [...] *Småland-Blekinge-Halland-South Sweden, Sven Kastö, Managing Director.*

4.9 Category 6: To Span the Boundaries or Stay within the Boundaries?

Diplomacy is often described in the literature as boundary spanning, and so is often times also the role of the modern diplomat and hers or his place of work. Perhaps even more so if that place of work is the EU, that according to the literature constitutes a unique hybrid arena that intertwines politics and diplomacy and builds upon long-term cooperation, networking and integrative negotiations that seek out “win-win” situations for all involved parties. The literature also highlights the complexity and challenges that arise in relation to these types of arenas that bring together a broad representation of actors and varying interests which suggest a variation in representation and advocacy.

Question 1: Would you say that there have been times where your instructions for a policy advocacy mission and its stated goals have “required” that you act/work in a way that does not follow the norm for regional offices in Brussels?

There is broad trend to state that cooperation in relation to regional policy advocacy is essential for effectiveness and that being able to speak with one voice is key. This is applicable on two levels. On an individual level in the sense that there is clarity and full engagement within the organization as whole both in Sweden and Brussels so that there is a clear mandate and definition of interest. On a more collective European regional level in order to find allies and gain muscle and thereby more influence in the EU policy making process. A smaller trend that shines through in the reasoning of the interviewees is that they, although having different regional interests, often find common ground in pushing a unified political line vis-à-vis the Swedish national level. This happens when differences in prioritizations and interests emerge or there is a lack of national opinion on a certain issue of regional relevance. As expressed by one interviewee, perhaps it is regions that push individual stakeholders towards following in line with the “Brussels heard”.

Question 2: If you were to roughly estimate in percentage how often the office has worked more on an independent basis than on a cooperative basis, what would that division look like?

All interviewees emphasized that cooperation is essential on the European arena and a majority stated that more independent policy advocacy is not a feasible approach given their size and resources, which require resource sharing and therefore building and maintaining close alliances. The percentage estimated as more independent work forms were mentioned in relation as to standard procedures such as answering a consultation from the national level or very narrow regional specific interests that were perhaps pushed a bit harder politically.

Regional Office	More Cooperative Form	More Independent Form
Stockholm Region EU Office	60 %	40%
Central Sweden European Office	80 %	20 %
Region Östergötland EU Office	90-95 %	10-5 %
Mid Sweden European Office	100 %	0 %
Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden	90 %	10 %
Skåne European Office	70 %	30 %
North Sweden European Office	80 %	20 %
Region Värmland European Office	95 %	5 %
Region Västra Götaland’s Brussels Office	90 %	10 %

4.9.1 Variation in Category 6

In relation to the first and second question there are some noteworthy more subtle trends on variation where the interviewees clearly state that cooperation is essential but where they also lift that smaller aspects of their policy advocacy in some cases take somewhat differentiating characteristics due to region-specific interests and objectives.

It should however be noted that this variation is marginal in the larger context. The consensus is strong amongst interviewees on the fact that cooperation is essential on EU-level as the outmost purpose for being an active regional actor there in the first place is to create partnerships, projects or a certain policy development together with others as they do then become a stronger voice.

My initial response is that I cannot think about an occasion where we have had a separate interest that is so big and important for us that we have had to push it through although others push for something else. One issue within the Swedish context where we differentiate ourselves from the other Swedish offices is regional politics, but that does not necessarily mean that we are alone. We are three bigger cities and that is usually respected by all the others and we respect their interests [...] To create consensus is super difficult, but you can at least find a few common denominators and priorities to agree upon [...] So, as I do work in this international context with other metropolitan regions and we have to essentially agree upon what can [...] *Stockholm Region EU Office, Moblin, EU Policy Manager.*

Intrinsically, within all issues you do cooperate on everything. What it comes down to is rather whether you in addition to that put a bit of extra pressure on certain aspects of issues concerning what is related to our interests. Nobody wins by working against each other, taking short cuts or by not playing with open cards. Everyone is an open card; people know what interests people have. We do work in a quite elaborate way with policy advocacy within our areas, whereas the other offices perhaps do that to a somewhat lower extent. I do although have to say that there is a movement in the direction of working more in that way amongst all offices [...] *North Sweden European Office, Mikael Jansson, Managing Director.*

Spontaneously no. [...] The office holds its essential strategic networks very high and would not act in a manner that puts those networks and the trust it has within those at any kind of risk. That is essential. At times we do see that you act separately because you cannot agree on a common political line and that is fine, but then you do not act in any opposing way [...] *Mid Sweden European Office, Martin Bror Karlsson, Policy Advisor.*

Despite the room for interpretation, and this differentiating trend in variation being marginal in the overall context and highlighted mainly in relation to very narrow regional interest specific issues, it is still an important nuance of variation to include. In relation to this, some interviewees way of reasoning about this lifted the aspect of the varying Swedish regional context, which makes for different regional interests and consequently somewhat differentiating collaborative patterns.

Here the North Sweden European Office distinguishes itself from the others due to its geographically linked circumstances and possibilities in relation to for an example northern Sweden's sparse population. Whereas the Stockholm Region EU office, as demonstrated above, differentiates itself due to its special status of being a metropolitan region.

As the table above demonstrates, there is a smaller visible trend in variation as to how the interviewees perceive and roughly estimate the office's policy advocacy tendencies in percentage. Although subjective in nature, the answers and reasoning do demonstrate a relation with the answers in Category 4. Where the smaller offices to some extent emphasize a higher percentage rate of cooperation and some of the bigger ones a lower. However, this inference will need more elaborate and in-depth research to reach a higher level of validity.

6 Conclusion

The analysis has strategically worked its way through the essential elements of diplomacy and has by doing so also continuously highlighted the most salient variation between the regional offices per category. From the interviewee's answers, reasoning, and overall perception, it is possible to draw the inference that there is a variation between theory and empirics. The variation between the diplomatic and more political realm is, however, not at all as salient as expected. With this said, the variation rather shines through the most in relation to the first category on expected variation in relation to precision and type of instructions. Within this category, the highest salience lies in the precision of the decision-making chain, which is considerably less precise for the officials working at the regional representation offices due to their own structure and organizational framework.

The advocacy operations carried out by the representatives, therefore, rests more upon a circular system of instruction. A system that emphasize a co-creation process and continuous dialogue on the desired advocacy objectives, which stem from general steering documents containing the general interests and objectives that the representatives are trusted to interpret and act upon as seen most desirable.

The ownership structure and formal framework, therefore, seem to create a foundation for a strongly confidence-based type of representation that falls within the expected theoretical line of what constitutes a free mandate. A reasoning that stems from the regional representative's strong emphasize throughout the analysis of the need for a trust-based relationship between them and the home administration, whose interests they daily administer in their representative capacity.

As demonstrated throughout the analysis of the six categories based on the essential elements of diplomacy, that also operationalize expected variation, it can clearly be argued that the essential elements of diplomacy do indeed to a high extent hold true. This argument rest upon the interviewees collected answers and reasoning in relation to the categories, which demonstrate that the elements of the category-bound diplomacy are applicable also to the political realm of regional representation and the representatives work with policy advocacy.

In conclusion, the operationalization of the diplomatic categories on expected variation and the analysis has been able to serve a dual purpose. Not only have the two components allowed for an in-depth contribution to help fill the diplomatic gap between theory and empirics, but they have also been able to in parallel paint an empirical picture of how the Swedish regional representation offices vary in their representation and policy advocacy in Brussels. In addition, the research has through the tactical selection of the nine interview objectives also been able to reflect upon and give a insight into strategic and important aspects of all the Swedish regions work and EU-related interests.

7 A Further Call for Academic Attention

As this research comes to an end, two future academic pathways that would be of relevance and interests to embark upon become visible. The first one being to go even more in-depth into the research at hand and continue the academic exploration of the visible trends in variation in between the Swedish regional offices in relation to for an example as previously mentioned the relation to size, resources and geography. The in-depth study should be done in combination with extending the comparative diplomatic scope to also include the national representative level, by interviewing officials at for an example the Permanent Swedish Representation to the EU to get an even higher level of contrast.

The second pathway would be to enlarge the research as a whole, making its foundation more connected to a mixed-method research design by extending its comparative scope so that it then could be moved even further upon the level of abstraction. This research design could then be applied in relation to for an example a Nordic, or perhaps even an all-encompassing European perspective that includes all the hundreds of regional offices.

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Interviewees

Björk, Eva, Managing Director, Central Sweden European Office, April 4, 2019

Frödin, Melissa, Act. Managing Director, Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office, April 1, 2019

Hjelmborn, Carl Albert, Managing Director, Skåne European Office, April 2, 2019

Högman, Thomas, Act. Managing Director, Östergötland EU Office, April 3, 2019

Jansson, Mikael, Managing Director, North Sweden European Office, April 3, 2019

Karlsson, Bror Martin, Policy Advisor (M.D. on holiday) Mid Sweden European Office, April 15, 2019

Kastö, Sven, Managing Director, Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden, April 5, 2019

Mohlin, Sofia, EU Policy Manager (M.D. mainly based in Sweden) Stockholm Region EU Office, April 4, 2019

Sundström, Van Zeveren, Kajsa, Managing Director, Region Värmland European Office, April 2, 2019

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Introduktion

Intervjuerna kommer att utgöra en viktig del i analysen av min masteruppsats som söker undersöka hur *representation* och *påverkansarbete* i förhållande till *givna instruktioner* varierar i genomförande och arbetssätt mellan de svenska representationskontoren i Bryssel. På grund av likheterna mellan representationskontorens arbetssätt med de mer ”traditionella” svenska utrikesrepresentationerna, hämtar uppsatsens inspiration ifrån litteratur om diplomati och diplomaters/ambassadörers roll. Detta då det är regionkontorens chefers/ställföreträdares uppfattning som står i fokus.

Anonymitet

Då uppsatsen har en tydlig ambition om att belysa just *variationen* i representation, påverkansarbete och givna instruktioner mellan de svenska representationskontoren, kommer era uttalanden *inte att vara anonyma*. Jag ber er därför vänligast att helt enkelt tänka efter och sedan stå fäst på vad ni säger.

Uppföljning

Jag skulle även vilja passa på och fråga om eventuell möjlighet till uppföljning efter avslutad intervju. Där eventuella frågor skulle kunna kompletteras över ex. telefon, Skype, alternativt mail.

Intervjufrågor

Fråga ett: Instruktionernas tydlighet

Inom litteraturen för diplomati ses diplomatisk representation som en grundläggande aspekt. Relaterat till just representation nämns vikten av diplomatens eller ambassadörens instruktioner. Det vill säga dess utformning och precision, vilket styr det dagliga representativa arbetet med exempelvis påverkansarbete. Diplomater representerar sällan huvudmän med fasta intressen och behöver därför tolka de givna instruktionerna som kan vara utav mycket varierande precision.

1. Skulle du säga att det känns ungefär likadant för dig?
2. Om ja, varför? Om nej, varför inte? Utveckla.

Varierande tydlighet av en diplomats instruktioner beräknas i viss litteratur i förhållande till hur utförligt kommunicerat 1. dess *mål* är och hur *mätbara* dem är, 2. dess förmedling av *föväntade prestationer* och hur tydliga dem är, samt 3. huruvida det finns angivna *tidsramar* för uppdraget.

1. Med detta i åtanke, var skulle du placera dina instruktioner i mån av tydlighet på en skala 1–4 där ett är otydliga instruktioner, två semi-otydliga, tre semi-tydliga, och fyra tydliga instruktioner?

Fråga två: Hur instruktioner kommuniceras och mottas

Diplomati beskrivs ofta som ett kommunikationssystem mellan aktörer och enheter. I modern tid har systemet påverkats av utveckling av kommunikations- och även transportmedel. Ny teknologi har även snabbat på kommunikationen och gjort det möjligt att förmedla allt tydligare och frekventare instruktioner till utförarna av uppdraget. Där instruktioner kan förmedlas i varierande form, såväl skriftligt (dokument, e-mail etc.) som muntligt (Skype, videokonferens, möte i person).

1. Vilka förmedlingsformer (via dokument, e-mail, telefon, Skype, möten i person) används för att sända dig instruktioner för ett påverkansuppdrag?
2. Om du skulle uppskatta grovt i procent, hur skulle du uppskatta att skriftlig kontra muntlig förmedlingsform används? *Ex: 50 % / 50%, dominerande telefon/e-mail exempelvis.*
3. Skulle du säga att du får instruktioner mer frekvent nu jämfört med tidigare?

Ex: Frekvent innebär att du får instruktioner och under uppdragets gång kommer kompletterande delar.

Fråga tre: Att sondera terrängen och förbereda ett påverkansuppdrag

Inom diplomatin ses informationsinsamling och kommunikation som fundamentala aspekter av representationsarbetet. Aspekterna ses även som viktiga första steg i att bedriva påverkansarbete och föra fram intressen. Här lyfter litteraturen särskilt vikten av *förberedelsearbetet*. Det vill säga *analys och forskning av saksfrågan, nyttjande av kontakter* och *sondering av terrängen* inför ett påverkansuppdrag.

1. Hur skulle du beskriva ditt arbete med att förbereda ett påverkansuppdrag?
Ex: Hur nyttjar du informationsresurser, kontakter, nätverk etc.
2. Skulle du säga att du har ett fast tillvägagångssätt och knep för effektiva förberedelser?
3. Hur mycket tid skulle du uppskattningsvist säga att du lägger på förberedelser?
4. Hur länge har du haft din nuvarande tjänst och hur länge har du arbetat i Bryssel?

Fråga fyra: aktivt påverkansarbete och resurser

Litteraturen om diplomatisk representation, förhandlingar och påverkansarbete, lyfter vikten av god ledning och resurssättning. Kort och gott handlar det om huruvida de resurser som krävs för att uppnå de givna påverkansmålen finns tillgängliga och om inte, hur det i sådana fall bäst löses för att uppnå målen.

1. Hur skulle du beskriva ert påverkansarbete och nyttjande av tillgängliga resurser?
Ex: Under ett uppdrag, vilka resurser använder ni, nätverk, kompetens, teknologi, antal anställda.
2. I jämförelse med de andra svenska regionkontoren, skulle du beskriva det här kontoret som relativt stort eller litet med hem-regionen/erna och tillgängliga resurser i åtanke?
3. Skulle du säga att era resurser (mänskliga som materiella) påverkar ert arbetssätt, och isåfall på vilket sätt?

Fråga fem: representation, normer och anpassning av beteende

Bryssel beskrivs ju ofta som du säkert väl känner till som en ”bubbla”, ett eget litet politiskt universum med sitt eget sätt att göra saker och ting på samt sina egna sociala regler. Inom den klassiska diplomatin anses just det sociala spelet, de underliggande normerna och reglerna samt hur man kommunicerar och därmed representerar som essentiellt. Litteraturen lyfter även att det finns stor varierande grad av anpassning och påverkan av olika miljöer på diplomater/ambassadörer.

1. Utifrån ditt perspektiv, skulle du säga att olika påverkansinsatser kräver olika arbetsmetoder och social anpassning beroende på exempelvis institution eller individ?
Ex: anpassning av kommunikation, följa vissa sätt att göra saker på/ regler/ normer för kontakt etc.
2. Skulle du säga att ditt påverkansarbete och sätt att göra saker har förändrats sedan du började arbeta i Bryssel? – *För du något nu ej gjorde tidigare?*
3. I relation till nivå av anpassning till Bryssel-bubblan, skulle du beskriva ditt arbetssätt som mer ”svenskt” eller mer ”brysselianskt”?
Ex: på plats en kvart innan, följer system/ struktur till pricka.

Fråga sex: att följa flocken eller gå sin egen väg

Diplomati beskrivs ofta inom litteraturen som gränsöverskridande, och så beskrivs många gånger även den moderna diplomatens roll och arbetsplats. Speciellt om den utgörs av EU, som enligt litteraturen har ett eget politiskt spel och utgör en diplomatisk arena som bygger på långsiktigt samarbete, nätverkande, utbyte och integrativa förhandlingar s.k. ”win-win” situationer. Men, litteraturen lyfter även komplexiteten och utmaningen med denna typ av arenor, som samlar en bred representation och variation av aktörer och intressen.

1. Skulle du säga att det funnits gånger som dina instruktioner för ett påverkansuppdrag och dess utsatta mål ”krävt” att du handlat/arbetat på ett sätt som inte följer normen för regionkontor i Bryssel?

Ex: Under ett specifikt påverkansuppdrag där kontorets intresse skiljer sig markant ifrån majoritet, krävt mer självständig/ alternativ lösning, hårdare förhandlings-metoder och mer av en kortsiktig egenvinst.

2. Om du skulle uppskatta grovt i procent hur ofta kontoret arbetar mer ”självständigt” (dvs. inte så konsensus-sökande, mer för egna vinster än gemensamma, kompromisslöst) än ”samarbetsbaserat” (dvs. konsensus, nätverk, gemensamma mål, kompromisser), hur skulle den fördelningen se ut?

Ex: Gemensamma vinster och konsensus-sökande samarbetsdominerat arbete 60 % av tiden, 40 % av tiden under visst uppdrag arbetar vi mer självständigt/ isolerat ifrån de andra kontoren/ ej i nätverk för egna viktiga vinster.

Appendix 2: Swedish Regional Representation Offices - An Overview

Region Västra Götaland's Brussels Office “represents and promotes the region through dialogue with the EU institutions, collaboration activities and representing the regional interests in Brussels. The regional office is active in the following areas: sustainable transport and infrastructure, environment, enterprise and industry, cohesion policy and research and innovation”.

Regions included: Västra Götaland.

Read more: <https://www.vgregion.se/en/external-relations/external-relations22/vastra-gotaland-in-eu/om-oss/brussels-office/>

Stockholm Region EU Office “brings together local and regional governments in one of Europe’s most attractive, innovative and competitive metropolitan region. We contribute to the development of and formation of EU policy for smart sustainable growth in support of the Stockholm region. Our priorities are: research and innovation, digitalization, energy, climate and environment and regional policy”.

Regions included: Stockholm, Gotland, Sörmland, Uppsala och Västermanland.

Read more: <https://stockholmregion.org>

Småland-Blekinge-Halland South Sweden “with a strong and distinctive profile as a sustainable region we work towards making Smaland-Blekinge-Halland an active, attractive and successful part of Europe.” The regional office is active in the following areas: cohesion policy, research and innovation, transport, health, bioeconomy/green development and smart societies, labor market, food and water.

Regions included: Småland, Blekinge, Halland, Kronoberg, Jönköping and Kalmar.

Read more: <http://sbhss.eu>

Skåne European Office “represents Region Skåne in Brussels. We facilitate collaboration with other European organizations, promote participation in EU projects and monitor policy development. We focus on health care, industry and business, research and innovation, infrastructure, environment and culture”.

Regions included: Skåne.

Read more: <https://skane.eu/en/>

Region Östergötland EU Office “functions as a bridge between Östergötland and the EU, covering issues from the region's perspective. The staff regularly attends conferences and network meetings, representing Östergötland in various important issues. The office has a primary focus on four broad areas of coverage: health and care, culture and nature, business and labour market and community planning”.

Regions included: Östergötland

Read more: <https://www.regionostergotland.se/Regional-utveckling/Internationell-samverkan/EU-kontoret/In-English/>

Region Värmland European Office “is responsible for regional development, growth issues, culture, public transport and adult education. The Brussels-based Region Värmland European Office aims to promote the region and its interest as well as to provide project development support to its members. Our focus areas are smart specialization, bioeconomy, research and innovation, Cohesion Policy, Infrastructure and Transport”.

Regions included: Värmland.

Read more: <https://regionvarmland.se/utveckling-tillvaxt/internationellt/region-varmland-european-office/about-european-office/>

North Sweden European Office “We are the EU-office for the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, the two northernmost counties of Sweden. The main purpose of the office is to contribute and encourage Northern Sweden to become an active and competent region at a European Level. Our focus areas are regional policy, cross-border cooperation, transport policy, SME’s, entrepreneurship and industry, research and development, environment, energy and climate”.

Regions included: Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

Read more: <http://www.northsweden.eu/english.aspx>

Mid Sweden European Office “represents Region Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland County in the EU. The vision is that Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland shall be an attractive, active and successful region in Europe.” The main priority areas are Cohesion policy, Transport infrastructure and Bioeconomy.

Regions included: Västernorrland and Jämtland Härjedalen.

Read more: <https://www.rvn.se/en/Sarprofil-delplatser/mid-sweden-european-office/>

Central Sweden European Office “is a non-profit organization based in Brussels serving as the bridge between the European Union and the Swedish regions of Dalarna, Gävleborg and Örebro. The purpose and goal of Central Sweden European Office is to contribute to achieving the members’ regional development strategies from an EU perspective”. The main priority areas are energy and sustainability, research and innovation and transport/infrastructure.

Regions included: Dalarna, Gävleborg and Örebro.

Read more: <https://www.centraweden.se/english/>