Research Article

Inadequacy of Paradiplomacy Theory: The Case of Fukuoka and Thailand[1]

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Abstract

The explanatory framework of paradiplomacy emerged as a new field of research in the 1970s, which has subsequently evolved to explain the involvement of the sub-national constituents' engagement in international affairs. This paper aims to examine whether the theoretical model of paradiplomacy proposed by Alexander Kuznetsov (2015) is sufficient to analyse the Fukuoka Prefectural Government's motives and goals in implementing activities in Thailand. This study employed qualitative approach and was based on secondary data. The findings demonstrate that Kuznetsov's (2015) theoretical framework, which systematised existing paradiplomacy knowledge, is a valuable analytical lens. However, it is inadequate to guide a thorough inquiry of this issue. This paper identifies and bridges the gaps in theoretical development and model-building of paradiplomacy. New theories are still required to thoroughly investigate the rising trend of international relations at the local level.

Keywords: Paradiplomacy, Inadequacy, Fukuoka, Thailand, Motives and Goals

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1. Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

Local governments in several countries throughout the world, including Japan and Thailand, have been involved in international affairs in areas such as economics, international trade, socio-culture, and diplomatic relations in the post-World War II era. Since the 1970s, the explanatory framework of 'paradiplomacy' has emerged as a creative method to explain the engagement of sub-national governments in international affairs. Alexander Kuznetsov (2015) is one of the few academics who systematised existing knowledge on 'paradiplomacy' in a variety of dimensions to serve as a guideline for research and study. He mentioned the driving factors for the rise of paradiplomatic activities, the legal implications, the main motives, institutionalisation, the central governments' attitude toward the paradiplomacy of their constituent entities, and the paradiplomatic activities' consequences for countries' overall development. While Kuznetsov's (2015) paradiplomacy theoretical model can serve as a methodological guide for the research, local governments' participation in international affairs has become increasingly complex and varied across time and among countries. There are meagre studies in the literature that utilise case studies to evaluate the paradiplomacy concept's effectiveness in terms of guiding the explanation. Therefore, it is critical to analyse these theories through case studies.

According to Hak and Dul (2009), theory-testing with cases is the process of determining whether the empirical evidence in a case or in a sample of cases supports or refutes a given theory. Yin (2014) argued that theory testing is a matter of external validity and can be seen as the replication of case studies to identify whether prior findings apply to new cases. Stake (2000) mentioned that when case studies thus become instrumental, meaning that 'the case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else', they offer depth to our understanding of the theory. Brinberg and McGrath (1985) explained that testing theories is beneficial since they allow for the evaluation of theories' explanatory power and their boundaries, as well as their validity by identifying the theories' strengths, weaknesses, boundaries, and other relevant features. This focuses on understanding the underlying explanations with respect to a phenomenon. It enables critical examination of such theories, as well as strengthening and broadening their existing scope of application for future use.

To verify the efficacy of the paradiplomacy theory's usefulness within qualitative limitations, this research is based on a case study of the Fukuoka Prefectural Government of Japan (hereinafter referred to as 'Fukuoka') and its motives and goals for enabling foreign activities in Thailand since 2006, when Fukuoka signed

its first cooperation agreement with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) (International Affairs Office [IAO], BMA, n.d.)

Despite the fact that various Japanese local governments operate in Thailand, Fukuoka was chosen as a case study as it is one of the most active Japanese local administrations implementing activities in Thailand on a continuous basis. Normally, cities collaborate at the same level, however, since Fukuoka has been able to form formal partnerships with Thai organisations at both the national and local levels including Bangkok, the capital city. It played an important role in urging the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Thailand, to establish the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Fukuoka, which opened in 2018 (Fukuoka Prefectural Government, Bangkok Office, n.d.).

In addition, Fukuoka organised several events in Thailand, which further exemplifies Fukuoka's ability to act as an international actor.

Prior to the examination of the theory of Kuznetsov's paradiplomacy (2015), it is necessary to mention Fukuoka's actions, motives, and objectives for operations in Thailand.

1.2 The Motives of Fukuoka Prefecture in Implementing Activities in Thailand

Fukuoka, according to Prasirtsuk et al. (2019) and Mesupnikom (2018), has several motives and goals to develop a positive relationship with BMA and other Thai organisations as follows:

First, Fukuoka wishes ***to foster friendship and mutual understanding*** between the two cities in order to bring people together. Following the signing of the 2006 Friendship Agreement between Fukuoka and BMA, the significant activities that occurred in response to this objective are as follows:

Table 1: Activities/Projects to Serve the Motives and Goals of Friendship and Mutual Understanding (Fukuoka-BMA)

Years	Activities/Projects
Since 2006	Exchange of exhibitions to promote Bangkok (Thai Fair) and Fukuoka Prefecture (Japan Fair) (IAO, BMA, n.d.)
Since 2007	Fukuoka's Office of Social, Cultural, and Labor Affairs and BMA signed an MoU on the Visiting Exchange Program. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)
Since 2009	Youth development projects, student exchanges, and language and cultural exchanges, as Japanese and Thai speak different languages and have different cultures. Thai students went on field trips to various places to educate them about Fukuoka and Japan in general. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)
Since 2015	Implementing the Specialized Youth Exchange Program (SYEP) that provides Thai students with the chance to get internships in computer, game development, and animation at well-known firms in Fukuoka. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)

These activities are linked to economic interests. Fukuoka wishes to offer students an impression of Fukuoka and Japan to attract them to visit or study in Fukuoka. (Chartprasert, Interview, 2015 as cited in Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1101; Prasirtsuk et al., 2019, p. 199). These activities can be described as Fukuoka's soft diplomacy approach, which is in response to a number of Fukuoka's policies, including the following details.

- Becoming a cultural hub of Asia and a centre of international exchange (Fukuoka Convention and Visitor Bureau, n.d.)
- Becoming a mecca for the global game industry (Public Relations Office, the Government of Japan, 2016).

Second, Fukuoka wishes ***to assist Thailand with altruism,*** as evidenced by the following details.

Table 2: Activities/Projects on Humanitarian Assistance (Fukuoka-BMA)

Years	Activities/Projects
2012	Fukuoka Prefecture donated around 400,000 Baht to assist flood victims in Bangkok. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)
2014	The Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly (FPA), which established a friendly relationship with the Bangkok Metropolitan Council (BMC) in 2007, donated nine second-hand fire trucks in good conditions to BMC for use in the safety of life and properties of Thai people for using in ensuring the safety of Thai citizens and property (IAO, BMA, n.d.; BMC, 2014)

Third, Fukuoka wishes ***to share knowledge and experience*** with Thai organisations in order to assist them in developing and resolving problems and challenges in a variety of fields where Fukuoka has experience and expertise. Fukuoka have offered Thai agencies the specific knowledge and problem-solving approaches (Fukuoka Model/Method), which include the following details.

- ***Fukuoka-BMA***

Table 3: Activities/Projects on Sharing Knowledge and Experience (Fukuoka-BMA)

Years	Activities/Projects
Since 2012	Fukuoka and BMA inked an agreement on environmental conservation and disaster preparedness. Both parties began implementing this initiative in 2012. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)
2017-2020	Fukuoka and BMA signed an MoU on aging policy and launched the Preventing Long-Term Care (PLC) Promotion Project in Bangkok in 2017. The project had a duration of 3 years. (IAO, BMA, n.d.)

- ***Fukuoka-Pollution Control Department (PCD), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)***

Table 4: Activities/Projects on Sharing Knowledge and Experience (Fukuoka-PCD, MNRE)

Years	Activities/Projects
2016	Fukuoka and PCD inked an agreement to strengthen the capacity of Thai environmental staff to solve pollution problems by encouraging research interchange and advancing the notion of broadening environmental cooperation to encompass all aspects of Thailand's environmental management (PCD, 2018).
2017–2020	To transfer knowledge and assist operations, Fukuoka collaborates with PCD, Japan Environmental Sanitation Centre (JESC), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Kyushu International Centre (KIC) on the Project of Support for the Construction of Appropriate Waste Treatment Processes in Thailand, and to operate and manage the pilot area's semi-aerobic waste dump system in Thailand's Sikhio Municipality, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, as well as to expand the initiative to other locations (PCD, 2018, p. 15).

Activities that are organised as part of the collaboration between Fukuoka and the Thai organisations are meetings, seminars, training, study visits, staff exchanges to share academic expertise, operations of various projects, etc. One may argue that Fukuoka is expanding its role and influence in Thailand through the provision of skills and technologies. Motives and goals in this area are also linked to other motives and goals, as Fukuoka wishes to introduce cutting-edge environmental technologies and elderly care companies through the presentation of knowledge technology system and innovation. If Thailand adopts Fukuoka's models and acquires Fukuoka-based enterprises' technology, Fukuoka's international prestige expands. In addition, it also stimulates economic growth in the prefecture. The increased number of Thai businessmen and officials on study visits to Fukuoka has boosted spending and promoted tourism, which has benefited Fukuoka's economy. (Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1101; Prasirtsuk et al., 2019, p. 199).

These activities are consistent with many Fukuoka's policies and missions, such as:

- Being a comfortable city for the elderly, as well as the Asian region's hub to learn how to care for the elderly. Fukuoka previously hosted training sessions and welcomed tourists from a variety of Asian nations (Accenture, 2017).

- Dissemination of Fukuoka's environmental technologies in order to assist other countries that are also confronted with this issue (Fukuoka Prefecture, n.d.).

Fourth, ***economic motive*** has had a significant impact on Fukuoka's role in Thailand, as economic incentives significantly influence Fukuoka's presence in Thailand. Along with the indirect economic advantages outlined above, other collaborative activities reveal that Fukuoka anticipates direct economic gains. Due to domestic issues that have plagued Japan since the late 1990s, most notably the economic recession and an aging population, the national government has had a budget deficit and is incapable of resolving local economic difficulties (Jain, 2005). As is the case with other local governments in Japan, Fukuoka believes that paradiplomacy is the best manner to address local/regional economic demands and develop a thriving local/regional economy. Business exploitation enables Fukuoka to collect more taxes, enhancing its financial capacity and enabling it to run operate efficiently and independently of the national government. Therefore, economic interests are the most important driving force of Fukuoka. Moreover, it is certain that Fukuoka is attempting to capitalise on its proximity to Asia, as it has a long history as a trading hub of Asia since ancient times. (Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1097)

- ***Fukuoka-Department of Industrial Promotion (DIP), Ministry of Industry (MOI) of Thailand***

Table 5: Activities/Projects on Economic Motive (Fukuoka-DIP, MOI)

Years	Activities/Projects
Since 2010	Fukuoka, together with DIP, has performed the Business Networking Program for CEOs of Asia Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) annually by inviting Thai entrepreneurs and Asian countries to visit Fukuoka to promote cooperation between companies in Fukuoka and Thailand.
2015	Fukuoka and DIP have signed an agreement for economic and industrial cooperation. The agreement aims to strengthen ties between Fukuoka's local industries and Thailand through activities, such as organising seminars/ conferences to exchange industry information, business matching between Thai and Japanese SMEs, reciprocal visits, and exhibitions (Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1102; Prasirtsuk et al. 2019, p. 144)

Table 5: Activities/Projects on Economic Motive (Fukuoka-DIP, MOI) (Conts).

Years	Activities/Projects
2015	As Fukuoka has a great economic potential, particularly in advanced industries and technologies, such as processed foods, robotics, environmental technologies, autos, semiconductors, and digital content, which align with Thailand's Thailand 4.0 policy's target industries (MOFA, Thailand 2018). Therefore, Fukuoka aspires to be a market leader in this field.
	Fukuoka also collaborates with other Japanese local governments based in Thailand, and DIP established the Otagai Forum Association to serve as a platform for information sharing between DIP and Japanese local governments, as well as to coordinate economic and industrial activities jointly (Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1102; Prasirtsuk et al. 2019, p. 147)

- ***The establishment of Fukuoka Prefectural Government Office, Bangkok Branch***

Table 6: Activities of Fukuoka Prefectural Government Office, Bangkok Branch

Years	Activities/Projects
2010	In 2010, Fukuoka opened a branch office in Bangkok with the primary goals of assisting Japanese businesses from the prefecture in conducting businesses in Thailand. It serves as a focal point for coordination with a variety of Thai entities, including the government, business sector, associations, and Japanese government agencies. Additionally, Fukuoka has implemented several socio-economic activities, such as promoting local products in Thailand and attracting foreign investment. In this regard, the local business sector's demand for investment and market expansion in Japan is a significant driver of Fukuoka's collaboration with Thailand. With respect to establishing partnerships and networks in Thailand, Fukuoka seeks to strengthen existing relationships and encourage enterprises to increase their investments in other ASEAN countries. Moreover, promotional events for Fukuoka's products and foods are held at department stores and events, as well as tourism promotion activities in a variety of forms to attract Thai visitors to education publicity in Fukuoka and promote Japanese popular culture and the local information technology industries. Furthermore, the Fukuoka Prefectural Government, Bangkok Office runs exchange programs with Hanoi and Delhi. The branch office was chosen in Bangkok owing to its geographical location as the heart of ASEAN and its proximity to India. Since traveling from Fukuoka to Thailand is convenient, Fukuoka intends to use Bangkok as a hub for expanding links between Thailand and other ASEAN nations, including India, to attract foreign investors and businesses. (Mesupnikom, 2018, p. 1104; Prasirtsuk et al. 2019, pp. 203-205)

- ***The establishment of Royal Thai Consulate-General, Fukuoka***

Table 7: Activities of Fukuoka in driving the establishment of Royal Thai Consulate-General, Fukuoka

Years	Activities/Projects
2018	Fukuoka has taken a proactive role in driving Thailand's MOFA to establish a consulate in Fukuoka in 2018. Fukuoka anticipates the Royal Thai Consulate-General's assistance in boosting cooperation between Thailand and Fukuoka on a variety of dimensions, most notably the exchange of trade and investment information, as well as collaboration on SMEs' and start-ups' growth and between Fukuoka and the Thai side. The Thai government wishes to attract further domestic investors to Thailand, particularly in the key industries throughout the EEC region, as well as bilateral tourism (MOFA, Thailand, 2018; Public Relations Office, BMA, 2018). One may argue that Fukuoka's role is to contribute to the ongoing building of national relations.

- Fukuoka wishes to be known internationally as an Asian Business Hub (Fukuoka Prefecture, 2021).
- Since 2012, Fukuoka has a policy that supports the growth of entrepreneurship become a business gateway to Asia (Japan External Trade Organisation [JETRO], n.d.)
- Fukuoka was designated a National Strategic Special Zone by the Government of Japan in 2014 to foster a favourable business climate for domestic and foreign start-ups and to boost job creation and provision. Hence, Fukuoka is adopting a policy of attracting foreign investment to the city in order to reinvigorate the local economy and the country as a whole (Fukuoka City, n.d., p. 32).

Fifth, Jain (2005) analyses that possessing a positive image as an institution capable of playing an international role is a political benefit of Japanese local governments that are able to build coalitions outside of Japan. It may be used to strengthen ties with the Government of Japan, by granting them domestic political profiles as a capable and independent international actor, including more authority and autonomy in domestic politics.

Similarly, this may be a motive of Fukuoka to build relationships with Thai organisations.

Fukuoka Prefecture described above, based on the reasons and objectives of Fukuoka in carrying out the aforementioned operations. Fukuoka acts strategically by initiating and carrying out those activities in Thailand based on its capabilities and available resources. Local governments in Japan are capable of conducting international operations without intervention from the Government of Japan. They have authority and independence as a result of the support provided by the Japanese constitution. In addition, the Government of Japan has policies of assisting Japanese local governments since their international role serves the national interests.

2. Objectives:

The following are the specific goals of this paper.

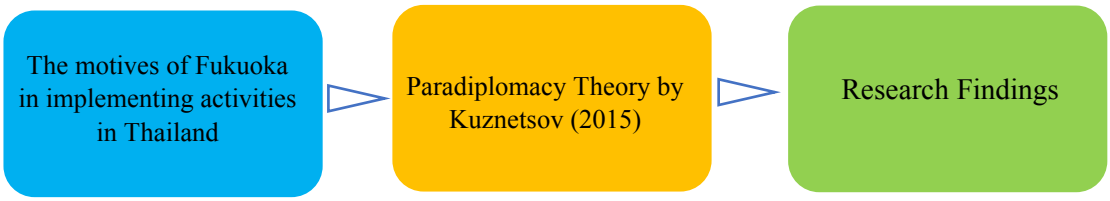
2.1) To test the applicability of Kuznetsov's explanatory paradiplomacy paradigm through an examination of the motives for paradiplomacy in Thailand by Fukuoka Prefecture.

2.2) To serve as a springboard for future researches aimed at increasing the efficiency of paradiplomacy frameworks and starting the development of a holistic paradigm capable of responding to dynamic changes and transitions that generate many variables.

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study included qualitative research and descriptive analysis, which further included documentary research that involved the examination of conceptual, theoretical, and literary texts from research reports, academic journal articles, websites, books, and other sources. The case study was compared to the 'paradiplomacy theory' for the data analysis, i.e., the theory test, and then the observed findings of the comparison were discovered. Thus, testing theory serves as both an input and an output to the study.

Figure 1:
Research Conceptual Framework



4. Literature Review

The three major types of significant literature are as follows:

- ***Theoretical framework***

To gain a better understanding of why local governments choose to engage in international relations, Kuznetsov (2015) identified four primary sets of paradiplomatic incentives for local governments to engage in international relationship development from a local level.

First, especially for cities with their own languages and distinct cultural or religious characteristics, cultural or linguistic factors play an important role as these areas are interested in forming partnerships with international players who have similar cultural and linguistic identities.

Second, local governments desire to address common cross-border issues, such as the environment, transportation, disaster management, and migration. These large-scale challenges have an impact on local communities and the potential to have negative implications beyond international borders.

Third, engaging with foreign organisations is purely economical in order to maximise the benefits from the world's liberal market environment. This motive is characterised by two key variables: geographic and functional determinants. Economically driven paradiplomacy is defined as the presence of a shared boundary between two local governments. The functional factor is the fact that the two cities have economic characteristics that are consistent or complementary to each other.

Fourth, local governments wish to increase their political authority and autonomy to operate more independently of central governments.

- ***The motives behind Fukuoka's international role***

Im and Furutani (2015) explored tourism collaboration between Fukuoka and Busan, Korea, as part of the Busan-Fukuoka Gateway Asia 2011 program. Both cities desired to develop tourism exchanges between Fukuoka and Busan to establish these cities as prominent tourist destinations in their respective countries. This indicates their commitment to the economic well-being of their cities.

There is a scarcity of literature regarding Fukuoka's role in international activities. Consequently, it is critical to investigate the motives of other Japanese local governments in cooperating with foreign nations.

- ***Other Japanese local governments' motives for taking on international roles***

Jain (2005) analysed the international activities of Japanese local governments in overview. He explained how Japanese local

governments began exploring outside of Japan for economic prospects that would benefit their communities without relying on the Government of Japan. Such possibilities are explored to maximise their financial capacity in managing their administration successfully and to sustain a strong economic basis that generates economic development, jobs, and prosperity for the benefit of residents.

Sister-city contacts between Japanese local governments have grown in importance since the late 1990s, responding to both internal and international challenges and serving as a springboard for better economic links and other grassroots initiatives. Moreover, political objectives are equally significant, if less visible. Local governments in Japan participate in international cooperation initiatives to raise their status as internationalised, capable, and self-sufficient actors in the country's foreign affairs. This opens new possibilities for forming alliances both within and outside of Japan. Such international positions give local governments more autonomy from the central government while simultaneously giving them more power while dealing with the Government of Japan. In addition, Japanese local governments believe it to be their responsibility in aiding governments in other nations. From the mid-1980s, Japanese local governments have expanded their sister-city relationships and other international programs, signalling a new cooperative and supportive role both through their own resources and involvement in facilitating national Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. As a result, the goals of Japanese municipal governments range from altruism and idealism to enlightened self-interest.

Prasirtsuk et al. (2019) highlighted that Japanese local governments have the following motives while carrying out international activities in ***Thailand:*** (1) to establish friendship and mutual understanding through activities; (2) to assist the Thai side by sharing knowledge and expertise; (3) to seek economic benefits and opportunities; (4) to promote their prefectures to Thailand; (5) to familiarise their people with internationalisation; (6) to urge individuals in the prefectures to devote themselves to the global society; and (7) to increase their role/influence in Thailand.

China, according to Jain (2004), is an appealing destination for Japanese local governments to create partnerships in a variety of ways. While China's cheap labour complements Japan's industrial demands, Japan is relatively rich in both the economic and technological capabilities required by Chinese businesses. As a result, multiple offices representing Japanese local governments were built in China to promote Japanese local enterprises, in addition to their existing satellite offices in various Asian nations, following the decision that potential reciprocal advantages from trade and investment were considerable.

Jain (2004) analysed that establishing overseas offices for Japanese local governments in China is a constructive way to promote their commercial interests in the country. The second motivation is to collaborate with overseas colleagues on mutual learning and problem-solving. Local governments in Japan, for example, support Chinese local governments to address local issues, such as pollution caused by industrial development, garbage management, and urban development. Local administrations in Japan take pride in assisting Chinese government. Third, local governments in Japan wish to re-establish historical relationships with China that were strained during the Cold War, as well as forge new cultural and geographic identities for their communities.

In terms of Japan's relationship with ***Australia,*** Jain (1992) claims that the Japanese local governments have leveraged sister-city partnerships with Australian local governments to foster not only cultural interchange, but also bilateral commerce and economic benefits. Takao (2010) investigated the sister-city relationship between Hyogo Prefecture and the Western Australian Government. According to the findings, Hyogo Prefecture was eager to create ties with the Government of Western Australia to share information and experience, learn about each other's cultures, and build trust and connections that would allow mutual learning and problem-solving.

By studying case studies of three sister-city pairings: Seattle and Kobe, Buffalo and Kanazawa, and Elberton and Mure, Ogawa (2012) investigated the interaction between local governments in Japan and ***the United States*** *(US).* These cities were driven to form sister-city relationships by a desire to learn about the philosophy of cultural heritage protection and management in communities that approached such issues differently than their own.

According to Nakamura et al. (2011), there are four patterns of Japanese local governments' motivation to collaborate internationally in the domain of ***the environment:*** (1) a desire to contribute based on local environmental experience and skills; (2) development of international environmental enterprises; (3) response to transboundary pollution challenges; and (4) natural resource conservation.

Based on the preceding literature assessment, Japan's municipal governments' conduct of foreign relations has attracted scholarly attention. Some works of literature were found to study the motives of Japanese local governments in Japan's overall international activities, their incentives for international activities in the environment as well as their motives for international activities with cities in overview, Thailand, China, Australia, the US, and in the dimension of environment. Many pieces of the literature discussed the motives of the Japanese local

government, including economic and political interests and the need for assistance and sharing knowledge and experience along with cultural exchange to create friendship and mutual understanding. However, there is literature on Fukuoka's engagement in international activities, which is focused on Fukuoka's economic motive for tourism collaboration with Busan. Moreover, they do not employ case studies to test the paradiplomacy theory. As a result, this paper bridges this gap by employing the case study of Fukuoka's motives in its partnership with Thailand's organisations to assess the explanatory potential of paradiplomacy theory and facilitating further comprehension of this phenomenon in today's dynamic environment.

5. Research Findings

The result of testing the paradiplomacy theory reveals that Kuznetsov's (2015) theoretical framework provides a helpful lens through which Fukuoka's motives for international activities in Thailand are analysed. It explicitly provides analytical guidelines to collect and organise data, as well as examine the primary variables behind such motives. However, in certain aspects, the theory remains inadequate to guide a thorough investigation.

5.1) In terms of language and culture, the paradiplomacy theory states that local governments seek foreign partners that share similar cultural and linguistic identities as significant motivators for collaboration. This explanation, however, is irrelevant in the situation of Fukuoka and Thailand. Japan and Thailand speak different languages and have distinct cultures, and therefore, both sides foster friendship and mutual understanding through youth development initiatives and exhibition exchanges.

5.2) For Fukuoka's motives and goals of sharing knowledge and experience in their field of expertise to assist Thai organisations in resolving problems, particularly in the fields of environmental management and elder care, the paradiplomacy theory states that local governments engage in international activities in order to resolve cross-border issues affecting their locality. However, since Thailand and Japan do not share borders, environmental issues and the aging society in Thailand do not impact Fukuoka. Although the paradiplomacy theory helps explain Fukuoka's motive for initiating the problem-solving program, it is insufficient in this case.

5.3) For economic benefits, the paradiplomacy theory is able to guide consideration factors that distinguish the relations between Fukuoka and Thailand determined by 'functional', and 'geographical' factors. In terms of functionality, Fukuoka possesses capabilities and resources that fulfil Thailand's requirements. To ensure mutual economic gains from Japanese trade and investment in Thailand, processes, organisations, and agreements have been developed to

strengthen Japan-Thailand economic cooperation. In this regard, the paradiplomacy hypothesis can be quite useful in guiding the analysis. In terms of geographic factor, the paradiplomacy theory explains that economic incentives occur due to the similar geographical location of cities. However, in the case of Thailand and Japan, the two countries do not share borders. In addition, Fukuoka engages with Bangkok as a gateway to other countries. These aspects are not included in Kuznetsov's paradiplomacy theory. Moreover, the paradiplomacy theory does not provide detailed clarification on whether local governments pursue economic opportunities abroad in order to increase financial independence from the Government of Japan.

5.4) Regarding political goals, the paradiplomacy theory can describe Fukuoka's case by explaining that sub-national governments engage in international activities to achieve greater autonomy, however, it does not adequately explain this motive in terms of enhancing the sub-national government's domestic political profile and image as a capable independent international actor. Therefore, as Fukuoka aspires to establish political contacts with Thai organisations at both the state and local levels, the paradiplomacy theory does not provide adequate guidance for further analysis of this aspect.

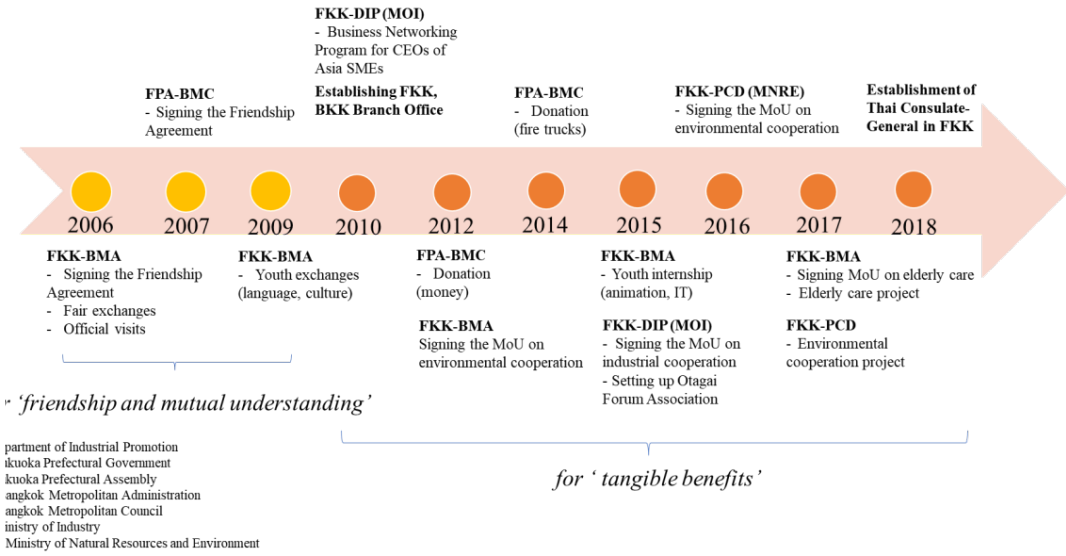
5.5) The paradiplomacy theory describes the motives on the macro scale, referring to large-scale social phenomena such as economic and political trends. However, the explanation at the micro level, that is, the interactions between individuals on a small scale, is not identified. For instance, youth exchange programs foster interpersonal connections. Fukuoka opted to create links with Thailand in this area since the majority of Japanese people enjoy Thai cultures, food, and tourism in Thailand. The theory does not account for the Japanese behaviors and perception toward Thailand.

5.6) The Kuznetsov's paradiplomacy theory ignores these issues:

5.6.1) Incentive for humanitarian assistance as appeared in the Fukuoka-BMA case.

5.6.2) The paradiplomacy theory does not provide direction on the ways to analyse the transitional and dynamic changes in motives from one point in time to the next, as demonstrated by this case study and detailed below:

Figure 2: Timelines of Fukuoka's Motives and Activities in Thailand



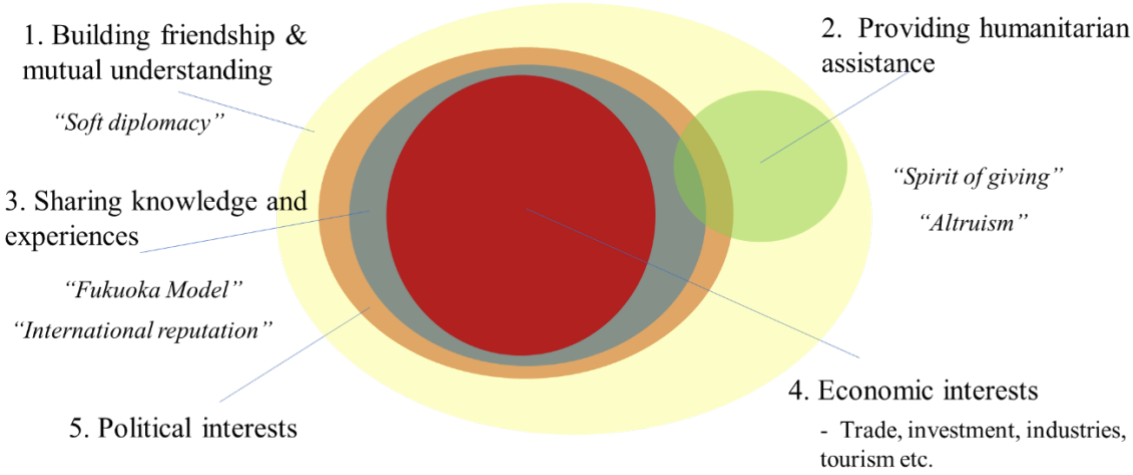
Source: The author's compilation and summarization of documents from a variety of sources

As seen in the figure above, Fukuoka's motive vary with time in a transitional and dynamic manner. Fukuoka began engaging with Thai organisations by first establishing friendship relations with BMA in 2006. The collaboration with BMA began with formal visits and the organisation of exhibitions aimed at promoting friendship and mutual understanding in 2010, when Fukuoka opened an office in Thailand. Subsequently, the events began to place a greater emphasis on tangible benefits. Youth development activities with BMA are not limited to linguistic and cultural activities, but also an internship program in information technologies. Additionally, programs devoted to environmental protection and elderly care also exist. Moreover, MoUs on Economic and Industrial Development Cooperation were inked with DIP (MOI), and PCD (MNRE) on industrial promotion, and environmental management. It may be claimed that Fukuoka employs friendship and trust-building activities to connect to other concrete benefit activities, including the opening of a Thai branch office. It is a creative way to facilitate Fukuoka's operations. In other words, Fukuoka and Thailand have a relationship between 'friendship-based' and 'interest-oriented' with the ultimate objective of advancing the local people's interests. The paradiplomacy theory captures only a particular moment. Thus, the theory is

incapable of guiding examination of Fukuoka's intentions, but does not adequatelydepict causal relationships between the variables underlying these motives during transitionaland dynamic transitions. In addition, the paradiplomacy hypothesis may not accountfor all reasons. It must be recognised that the paradiplomacy theory cannot be generalised to encompass all instances of Thailand-Japan ties at the local level.

5.6.3) The connection, overlapping and coexistence of each motive and goal, as illustrated below.

Figure 3: Fukuoka's Motives and Goals in Implementing Activities in Thailand



Source: Author's analysis

As seen in the figure above, Fukuoka is pursuing a strategy of tying together socio-cultural, economic, and political interests. This research finds that these interests are related, overlapped, and coexisted. Economic gains are the most important as Fukuoka has invested in a variety of economic activities. Furthermore, there are activities that are not directly related to economic gains, since almost all activities have indirect economic consequences. Fukuoka, on the other hand, has not neglected activities aimed at building friendships and understanding. This study finds that building friendships and understanding between the two parties is a critical component of all activities. Soft diplomacy based on cultural exchange and problem-solving with a compassionate attitude, as well as activities that provide humanitarian assistance in a spirit of giving and sincerity, serve as a basis for promoting trade, investment, and industry ties, all of which contribute to the long-term

sustainability of the Fukuoka-Thailand relationship. Given Fukuoka's status as a capable international actor, it might be utilised as a bargaining tool to increase its political strength and influence domestically.

5.6.4) The paradiplomacy idea does not account for interactions between cities that exhibit a wide variety of traits. Fukuoka is the largest city located on Kyūshū Island. It has a land size of 4,987 square kilometres. As of 2021, Fukuoka had a population of 5.1 million residents. (International Affairs Office [IAO], BMA, n.d.) By comparison, Bangkok is Thailand's capital and its most populated city with a population of 10.7 million as of 2021 (Statista Research Department, 2021). It has a land area of 1,569 square kilometres placing it 73rd in the globe (Strategy and Evaluation Department, BMA, 2018). Bangkok is known as the economic, political, and social hub of Thailand. Additionally, it is regarded as the world's second-best city for tourism in Euromonitor International's newly released Top 100 City Destinations 2018 study (Thai PBS World, 2015).

Fukuoka, a regional city, is assisting Bangkok and Thai national authorities. While the paradiplomacy theory may be used to analyse the motives of sub-national governments for international involvement, it is insufficient to conduct an in-depth examination of the relationships between cities with varying rankings or characteristics. Primarily, the criteria for establishing contacts should be comparable rankings or characteristics; a capital city would naturally engage with another capital city. Sister-city ties, conceptually, would often contain shared characteristics such as historical roots and existing mutual relations, as well as the possibility for future collaboration. Moreover, it is understandable why smaller cities would seek to establish a relationship with the capital city in pursuit of many benefits, however, the reason of the capital city and central government agencies to engage with regional cities is less clear. For example, Bangkok, Thailand's capital, has also collaborated with other Japanese prefectures, Aichi, and other smaller cities in foreign countries. Kuznetsov's paradiplomacy theory makes no mention of this unequal and asymmetric bilateral relationships.

In the Social Sciences, principally, theories must be generalizable, valid, relevance, and applicable to case studies. A common criterion for evaluating theories is the extent to which results can be generalised to various cases, unbounded by the timeframe or context. In addition, it should address all relevant variables in practice, as each case would involve a variety of factors. The theory of paradiplomacy is still in the initial stage of development; therefore, testing new theories through case studies is often the most appropriate method of analysis.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper aims to test the paradiplomacy theory using a case study to ascertain whether the empirical evidence supports or contradicts the paradiplomacy theory systemised by Alexander Kuznetsov. This paper also seeks to fill a gap in the literature, further facilitating the understanding of this unique strategy and to establish it as a legitimate research topic. The study found that utilising paradiplomacy theory has both strengths and limitations. The major advantage of the theory is that it can illuminate the relevant variables in socio-cultural, economic, and political motives. Nevertheless, it is inadequate to explain such variables in detail. Moreover, it does not provide advice on the ways in which the dynamic process of change and development may be analysed, as was the case of Fukuoka. Therefore, the paradiplomacy theory requires modification and supplementation. In order to engage in the formulation of paradiplomacy epistemology and to establish the particulars and boundaries of the theory's application, I encourage more researchers to apply the paradiplomacy theory to various case studies. Additionally, other social science theories, such as dynamic systems and development, should be tested in combination with the paradiplomacy theory to help address the current limitations.

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