CITY REPRESENTATION OFFICES IN BRUSSELS: WHICH PRACTICES FOR WHICH OBJECTIVES?

A comparative study inside influencing strategies and administrative best practices for cities acting individually at the European level

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IIAS
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Abstract

Urbanization and calls for legitimation are two trends making the connection between cities and the policy-making system at European Union level more important than ever. The implication of cities, which represent most of European population and wealth, is called by all actors: the local players themselves but also the member states and the EU-institutions. Many channels already exist to make this link but none is perfect, making this link rather weak. Institutionalized channels are delegitimized, European-wide networks are cumbersome and individual actions are costly. As the two first ways have been significantly more studied, this research therefore proposes to scrutinize especially actions undertaken by individual cities so to help practitioners to best upload local interests at EU level.

A comparative analysis of three major local players (Barcelona, Rotterdam and Helsinki) outlines the best practices used by local actors willing to get the most out of the multi-level opportunities offered by the EU. The method based on Wolffhardt et al.'s classification of city's attitudes toward the EU and on Schwab et al.'s administrative practices adopted by local sector helps structuring the comparison and detect best practices for various local contexts. This method is necessary since the compatibility between adopted practices and the local context appears to be a key factor of success. The research outcomes form the basis of some administrative practices recommendations for cities willing to invest into their own representation office in Brussels. Although findings show it exists some universally valuable practices, most of these recommendations depend on a plurality of criteria of the local level that is to be represented in Brussels.

Key Words: local representation, European Union, multi-level decision making, administrative practices, influence, EU funds

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List of abbreviations

BPCO – Barcelona Provincial Council Office in Brussels

CEF – Connecting European Facilities

CEMR – Council of European Municipalities and Regions

COCOPS – Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future

CoR – Committee of the Regions

COST – European intergovernmental framework for cooperation in science and technology

Council – Council of the European Union

EC – European Commission

ERDF – European Regional Development Funds

EP – European Parliament

ESF – European Social Funds

EU – European Union

G4-R – Rotterdam Representation within G-4 EU Office

HEO – Helsinki EU Office

IIAS – International Institute of Administrative Sciences

MS – Member states of the European Union

NPM – New Public Management

SNUs – Sub-national units

TEU – Treaty on European Union

UBC - Union of Baltic Cities

Chapter 1:
Introduction

Section I. Demarcation and contextualization: the "Europe of the Cities"?

Many key European policy-makers such as Jacques Delors have got their mind set on "Europe of the Regions" in the late twentieth century. This idea of the European integration, which wanted to give a large role to subnational authorities, is dead upon birth (Hepburn, 2008). Nowadays the idea is coming back under a relatively different form that gives importance not to whole regions encompassing urban and rural areas but rather mostly to cities. Cities are taking a more central place within the European policy-making and democratic practices. "Europe of the Cities" may thus be the next trump card for the European Union (EU) in these trouble times (Dossi, 2012; Boni, 2017). This research's ambitions are to shed a light on some aspects of this broad idea. The basic idea of the project is to analyse the application of the current trend of reforms of the local level in a multilevel governance context. More precisely, the analysis will focus on the consequences of these new administrative practices in the relations between the cities and the supranational level within the context of the European integration.

Around the world and a fortiori in Europe, cities are now the main economic actors gathering most of both world's population and world's wealth. Respectively, cities represent 53.8% and 80% in 2015 (World Bank, 2016). In Europe, the situation is slightly different with cities hosting a higher share of the population (59% of the total European Union) but producing relatively less with 68% of its GDP (European Commission, 2016: 27-57). More strikingly '[s]ince 2000, GDP in EU cities grew 50 percent faster than in other areas and employment in cities increased by 7%, while it did not grow in other areas' (European Commission, 2016: 56). This tendency is neither new nor surprising. These data revealing the importance of urban areas are the consequence of a long-lasting urbanization tendency that started since humankind decided to settle down. The institutional shapes of cities and the functioning of their local government are as varied as it exists countries in the world. For sake of clarity, we define in these first lines of the paper what is understood by cities[1] in this research. Definition is based on three observations. The first one is made by Kroukamp and Lues (2008: 107) who define the concept of 'local government' as the 'part of a central government sphere'. This is a good characteristic that allows excluding for the research cities that are city-states like Singapore and, in the European context, Monaco, Saint-Marin, Andorra, or even Malta and Luxembourg for what EU member states are concerned. This definition as 'part of a central government' does not suffice for the present research though since it may include regional governments. So, secondly, local

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[1] Hereinafter use interchangeably with local authorities, municipalities, local governments, city councils.

governments are hereinafter understood as the *lowest level* of government within a larger and sovereign state. The third observation relates to the fact that even with these two characteristics, cities can still represent a bulk of different actors, notably in terms of size and power. Definition must therefore be lowered down a third time. Regarding the size, we focus here on larger ones that represent a metropolitan centre, meaning that the city is the biggest local administrative unit of the whole surrounding urban area. As an indication, the European Commission (EC) settled the lower limit to 50.000 inhabitants (2016). Regarding the legal capacities, our concept of local government relies on the definition used by the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Art. 3.1) which included only those that have the 'right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population' (Council of Europe, 1985).

Europe is the second term that needs to be defined early on. 'Europe' is a blurred term but can easily be understood as the European Union and its institutions. That is to say, the *sui generis* international organisation itself, as a whole, rather than the mere addition of its member states (MS). The timeframe of the research is in the post-Lisbon era since the Lisbon Treaty is a milestone for the legal consideration of cities by the EU as will be shown in the next paragraph.

The importance of cities is a given recognized by all state actors. All but one: The EU, the supranational layer covering now most of (continental) Europe, has only recently started to pay attention to local actors such as cities. A quick history of EU's relations with cities is necessary for the following of this paper. In the 1950's; aka the very beginning of the formal European integration, no consideration was given to cities by the Treaties of Rome. It is only since the establishment of the ERDF (European Regional Development Funds) in 1975 that the European Community started to develop an 'urban policy'. This was only the case through regular but informal dialogues. Indeed, neither formal nor legal basis existed by that time (Dossi, 2014). The Single European Act of 1986 is a cornerstone as it opened the way to direct impact of European legislation on sub-national governments (Kern, 2007). It was only in the last three years of the twentieth century that the EU recognised a specific 'urban dimension' through the publication of two major policy papers: 'Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union' and 'Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: a Framework for Action' (Dossi, 2014). In 2001, the EC underlined the need to take into account regional and local knowledges and conditions for their policy proposals (Kern, 2010). We see that, until the Lisbon Treaty, distinction between regional and local authorities was still blurred. The Lisbon Treaty explicitly delineates 'initiatives and regulatory devices addressed to the cities' (Dossi, 2014: 31) but also the protection of their 'fundamental structures, political and constitutional' (TEU, Art. 4.2). The Treaty on European Union officialised the argument risen by the EC saying that cities are and must be considered as relevant partners, they must participate and be consulted for the

'preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Operational programmes in accordance with national rules and practices' (European Commission, 2006). Nowadays, the EU's urban policy is a shared competence included under the economic and social cohesion framework and the principle of subsidiarity is seen as a golden rule. To sum up, cities were not considered as relevant actors in the initial European project but they appeared to be of such a great importance that they progressively reach the heart of European institutions. From a bottom-up perspective, the consideration of the European project by cities has also been relatively slow to emerge.

The fact that the EU institutions pay more and more attention to cities is not surprising while looking at the importance they have in the policy-making cycle. After the brief summary of EU-cities relations, it is essential for the sake of the project to show now why cities matter in the EU policy-making cycle and what their roles are. Cities are in the centre of the EU policy cycle, i.e. policy-formulation, policy-decision and policy-implementation (Callanan, 2012). Schultze describes the cooperation between cities and the EU as 'feedback loop' (2003: 124) where sub-national authorities not only implement EU legislations (two thirds of the legislation implemented by local authorities is EU legislation (Kern, 2007)) but also provides feedbacks, pieces of advice and recommendations to the policy-makers at EU level. Sub-national participation is according to Schultze a clear 'two-way process, top-down and bottom-up' (page 124) where sub-national authorities gain increased involvement in policy-making and the EU gains in efficiency. In this relation, cities are still more than mere lobbyists: they have a role in all stages of policy cycle (Schultze, 2003).

Pan (2014) outlines a more precise description of the role of cities in the EU policy-making. While staying in lines with Schultze's description, Pan suggests two different ways for cities to matter at supranational level: they provide 'initial input' and 'reflective input' (page 145). The initial policy input is the set of information, knowledge and expertise that cities gained from ground level experiments and which they can upload to upper level of governments. This mostly happens at the earlier stages of policy cycle. This transfer of knowledge and expertise happens either through 'informative and negotiating process' or 'by tackling neglected issues which are not practical for and observable from the international level' (Pan, 2014: 145). We clearly see here the intrinsic advantages of local governments for this specific type of knowledge. The reflective input takes the shapes of feedbacks upon the outcomes of policy implementation since once again local governments have the best view on the results of EU policies and receive opinions (Pan, 2014).

As for the EU, it is at the turn of the century that cities realised, and took benefit of, the increasing importance of their role, especially in implementing European legislation: Except for some major cities in North Rhine-Westphalia (Guderjan, 2015: 944), it is at the end of the twentieth century that they decided to invest into the supranational policy sphere and exert some influence in Brussels' affairs (Guderjan, 2015).

Although a long way has been covered towards better relations between the EU and its cities, practitioners and scholars agree on the fact that efforts must continue. To illustrate the discrepancies between EU's and cities' vision a few examples were raised in the concluding conference of a COST Action titled "Local Public Sector Reforms: An International Comparison": for Filipe Teles, EU and cities still have diverging opinions about how innovation should be led. The former advocate for a top-down approach where EU institutions help cities to unleash potential, whereas the latter push for a bottom-up dynamic where innovation comes from grass-root experiences (Teles, 2017); for Miecke Vos, director of the Flemish Association of Municipalities, the EU needs to get more involved in trans-border local issues (Vos, 2017). During the same conference, the stumble in the speech of Markku Markkula, President of the Committee of the Regions, is highly significant and summarizing the whole situation described in this introduction: 'Power houses of Europe *are* … eh *will be* the cities'. This finalizes to set the background of this research.

Section II. Research objective and its justification: the importance of cities in policy-making

This introduction was meant to underline the importance to smoothen, strengthen and clarify the links between the supranational and local levels within the EU. This research is embedded into this very broad topic; however, it aims at covering only one small aspect of this relations and uses a specific perspective: the research aims at *determining what are the best practices that local authorities can use in their internal functioning and management to best upload their interests at the EU level and ultimately influence the decision-making processes*. It is crucial to enlighten the modes of operation used in these bottom-up activities as advised by Stoker (1998: 123): 'In a complex society, the crucial act of power is the capacity to provide leadership and a *mode of operation* that enables significant tasks to be done' [emphasis added]. This quote is the very *leitmotiv* of the research: to be able to tie strong links with the European legislators, cities must employ the right methods and approaches. Rather than looking at a specific policy area we focus on a cross-policy issue. It is not about recent regional or local developments (whether green cities, smart cities, circular economy etc.) but on the administrative and management methods. In this sense, the research relies on two disciplinary approaches (public administration in a multilevel governance system) more than on a specific policy field (that could have been urban policies).

The interest of the research is that it can be double justified as it is interesting from both of the points of view, the EU's and the cities'. From the EU's perspective, we can argue that the EU needs more than ever the assistance of the cities. First, as the lowest level of government, local authorities are the closest to the citizens and is seen by them as trustworthy and democratic centres more than

upper levels of government (Denter, 2017). Local governments therefore represent key actors to solve EU's democratic deficit. Second, as cities are one of the main implementers of EU legislation, communication is strongly needed to internalize their objectives and strategies into EU policies. Loyalty and trust are paramount for a successful implementation in multilevel context (Kroukamp & Lues, 2008: 130). Thirdly, very recently EU ministers of urban affairs asked the EU to work in direction of better relations with its cities: Concerned EU Ministers agreed on May the 30th 2016 to launch a new dynamic, named Pact of Amsterdam, to 'fully exploit the potential of cities' (Urbanagenda, 2017). A better coherence between European policies/rules and local practices in cities is advocated. The research would thus contribute to this ambition to find 'better working method, focused on cooperation between Member States, cities, European institutions and other stakeholders' (Urbanagenda, 2016). The Pact has an informal character and therefore does not ask for any further EU legislations nor Treaty changes. Since there is no new legal requirement, the Pact of Amsterdam's ambition is to give 'better regulation, better funding and better knowledge' (Urbanagenda, 2016: 5) to urban policy through a shift in 'models of governance' (Urbanagenda, 2016: 9). This is a broad and blurred wish since the Pact does not concretely propose any models. Many models of governance could potentially satisfy these new needs. To sharpen the research, we need to clarify the terms 'model of governance'. Although in the Pact of Amsterdam the term encompasses top-down/bottom-up relations and formal/informal practices, the thesis will focus on the models used by cities to be active in EU policy-making. The term 'models of governance' is understood in its very narrow way: as formal and informal administrative practices used by cities. The research proposes to identify first what are the currents models of governance in EU-cities relations and then outline the successful ones. Methodology to do so will be presented in Chapter 4.

The societal relevance of the research is also based on the interest that cities can find in this project. Local authorities in this early twenty first century have to face many challenges ranging from austerity measures and budgetary cutbacks (Schwab, Bouckaert & Kuhlmann, 2017) to the increase of the influence of international rules and policies in the daily and local decision making activities (Pan, 2014). City councils must adapt their practices to this changing environment. To face these challenges, collective actions at the European level are an essential pattern of action. This is even more true for cities facing similar difficulties either it be budgetary cutbacks, integration of minorities, renewal of infrastructures and democratic participation or cities wishing to go further on development such as green economy or smart cities features. The EU is an opportunity structure[2] for local governments where they can influence policy-making, in parallel with domestic affairs, to push developments in their own interests (Rooij, 2002). These supranational opportunities are not new and relatively acknowledged by cities, however the method for successful influence is rather tricky.

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[2] Structuralist sociologists emphasize that factors that are external to social movements, such as the group's access to political institutions in our context here, form the functioning of the movement; such factors are called opportunity structures (Wikipedia, 2017).

Indeed, local actors that invested the Brussels' sphere have faced different fortunes: to name a few example, some local undertakings happen to be very influential such as networks like Eurocities whereas other local experiments have failed such as the Romanian province of Teleorman, the Georgian Autonomous Republic of Adjara which do not exist anymore (Huysseune & Jans, 2008). The network-like organisations are not the magic formula neither: for example, the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) has lost some of its main members, the cities of Stockholm and Malmö which have decided to play their card to influence the EU on their own (Herrschel & Newman, 2017). This is why the research aims to present the current mechanisms used by most active cities in Europe nowadays in their objectives, advantages and disadvantages. Best practices will be outlined for the concerns of practitioners.

Beside the interest of the research for practitioners at the city level and at the EU level, the project is also justified by its academic relevance. Academic relevance is twofold. First, the research will present an in-depth review on the current modes of governance used by cities to influence EU policy-making. In other words, this will be a state of the art about their channels of actions. This will enlighten two elements: see where the debate currently stands between experts, and what are the lacunas and elements of knowledge still missing about these specific but very active relations. Secondly, the investigation part of the research proposes to explore one element spotted as a lacuna in the current knowledge: the best practices used by cities' representations based in Brussels to get closer to the EU decision-making seen as one sub-part of a broad model of governance of the relations between EU and cities. It appears that the impact of local reforms on performance is very dependent on context (Schwab et al., 2017), therefore, the method chosen will use a set of case studies that allows a precise contextualization. This method will outline best practices for specific types of cities and according to specific objectives of those cities when investing in a Brussels office. These elements will be further developed in the chapter dedicated to the methodology. The contextualization of the research through case studies is useful to allow generalization to other cities that resemble to the cities studied.

Section III. Research question and the road to answer: the thesis outline

The main research question leading the thesis is the following: *what are the best practices and their determinants of a successful bottom-up relation between the European Union and the cities within its territory?*. Let us clarify this question term by term: The term *determinants* here refers to the different national systems of local government, aka the legal and institutional framework in which cities evolve within their home state. This is a given and cannot change in the short and middle terms. The determinants will also be found in more socio- economic and political features of cities (managerial and democratic traditions, demographic and economic size, legal autonomy and self-

regulation) and also, more surprisingly, its geographical location relatively to Brussels and to other cities within its MS. The expression *bottom-up* is used to describe the studied relations. This expression has the advantage to encompass all types of relations that cities may want to have with the EU from lobbying and bargaining to reporting feedbacks and expertise but also the more passive actions of information seeking. Means to reach the wanted relation, meaning the procedures, practices, strategies etc. will be determined by the research. By *European Union* we refer to all kinds of decision-makers that have an impact on cities' daily activities. This question also pinpoints that only cities within the EU will be studied even though cities from non-member states may have active participation in EU decision-making too. The research objective appears more specific than the research question. The reason is that in order to attain the research objective, and ultimately the recommendations that follow, it will be necessary to answer a series of sub-questions about the relations between cities and the EU. To answer this broad question, we must go through a series of logically arising questions. This introduction has attempted to show the history of these relations, the following of the paper will deeply present the current mechanisms and dynamisms. First, we need to look at the facts by answering questions such as:

- How cities are thus far included into the process of EU integration?
- What are the diverse channels of influence given by EU institutions to them?

The following sub-question will be about objectives:

- Which objectives do cities want to reach while investing the supranational sphere?

Answers to this sub-question will obviously widely vary, the thesis will therefore present a typology of objectives as well as the factors determining them. Logically following, we will question what determines these objectives and if cities are successful:

- Why cities present this set of objectives?
- Are cities successful in pursuing these objectives?

Up to this point, elements of answer can already be found through the current literature. Investigation and ground-level researches will be dedicated to the following sub-questions:

- What are their practices?
- What are the current (best) practices the cities use to deal with the EU?

Finally, and to be able to generalize the findings

- Why are cities using these practices and not others?

The selection of case studies will be specifically designed to answer to those last two questions. Finally, in the conclusion of the investigation we will try to draw recommendations on which practices to use for cities willing to be present in Brussels depending on both their very goal and their domestic environment. In other words, will be wondered:

- What are the most favourable and fertile grounds to implement the designated practices for each types of activities related to EU affairs?

Conclusion of the investigation will also intend to know to what extent those practices are relevant as the 'new model of governance' that the Pact of Amsterdam is advocating for. This justifies the research from the EU's perspective. Since the research will present current trends in administrative practices in EU-cities relations, it will be a useful starting point for other sub-questions such as the possible paths of modernization in terms of relation between cities and the EU. For that reason, we can imagine further researches can take root in this thesis.

The final paragraphs of this introduction outline the following chapters of the thesis. By answering the three first sub-questions (How cities are dealing with the EU integration so far? What are the diverse channels of influence that they use? Which objectives do cities have in mind while investing the supranational sphere?) Chapter 2 presents the current functioning of the bottom-up relationship but also its loopholes. It is fundamental to understand first the current background in which European cities evolve within the supranational level. The focus is on the mechanisms at stake. This chapter proposes to a) show the shortcomings of the institutional framework directly and formally available to cities. Then it will show two different responses to those shortcomings: b) the city networks as coalitions of the smallest, and c) the actions by individual cities and the importance of being present in Brussels. This part has the ambition to show the current state of art and what is known thus far. And consequently, this chapter also presents the lacuna of the academic knowledge and what topics have not been much studied yet.

Chapter 3 is the justification of the approach chosen. It will present the theoretical debate that is on-going in the relevant literature and select one that will be used as a bridge between the knowledge available in the literature and the knowledge the investigation is looking for. Theoretical framework is essential to structure the investigation and to make it proper to generalization. This chapter also presents the key concepts relevant for the local administration's activities and how they can be relevant in the relations with the EU. Operationalization that allows the translation from concepts to concrete indicators will be also presented here. Hypothesis that we will attempt to verify in the investigation are specified in the last paragraph of this chapter.

Chapter 4 is about the methodology used for the investigation and field research. Methodology encompasses a) the choice of the analytical method is justified here, b) the justification of the chosen case studies (Rotterdam, Barcelona and Helsinki), c) the procedure of data collection which is interviews and policy notes analysis in their advantages but also obstacles that one needs to be careful about when using those approaches. This chapter is also to give the reader an auto-criticism of the research before presenting the results. Is the quality of the data to be questioned? This chapter argues on the credibility by showing the systematization of operationalized of the research question. Internal and external validity of the outcomes will also be questioned.

Chapter 5 is the longest and most central chapter. Chapter 5 is sub-divided according to the results of the research. It aims at showing the results of the investigation in the following way: practices used by the studied cities will be categorized depending on their objectives (following the categorisation by Wolffhardt et al. (2005) dividing between euro-player, city experimenter and client city); and on their national system of local government (Napoleonic, Nordic and Germanic) as explained in chapter 3. In each section, both the inputs found in the literature and the inputs brought by the empirical research are presented. Ultimately, we seek to present information in the form of recommendations.

Unsurprisingly the conclusion will summarize elements of answers to the main and sub-questions. Secondly it will wonder if the outcomes of the investigation fit with the theory outlined in chapter 3. And thirdly it will assess how both the literature and the empirical investigation helped the research. Implications of the findings are the most important elements to be included in the conclusion. One wants to know how the research can help practitioners through recommendations etc. If other findings outside the main core of the research have been found they will also be included in the conclusion.

Chapter 2:
Channels of Representation for Local Governments

The present chapter is a dynamic description of the institutional frameworks that currently exist within the EU sphere and that enable cities to weight on the policy-making procedures. The description is dynamic in the sense that its presents channels and their shortcomings that push cities to find new options. Formal but also informal developments are considered to show the wholeness of the bottom-up relationship. To present the current background in which European cities evolve within the supranational level, this chapter is subdivided into three sections: a) it shows the shortcomings of the institutional framework in EU polity that are directly and formally available to cities. Then, it shows two different responses that cities have imagined overcoming those shortcomings. Those solutions are b) the city networks which are the coalitions of the smallest, and c) since it appeared to cities that networks have many shortcomings too they undertook actions individually by being present every day in Brussels to represent their own interests. This part has the ambition to show the current state of art and what is known so far. Consequently, this chapter's fourth section concludes with the lacunas of the academic knowledge and with the related topics that have not been much studied yet.

Section I. European institutional frameworks available to cities and their shortcomings

At first sight and if compared with other large polities such as the United States of America, local authorities in the EU are given a real institutional place where they can participate through discussions in policy-making (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 185). Platforms such as the Committee of the Regions of the EU (CoR) and the EC seem indeed to allow cities to perform independent (from their central state) actions within policy discussions at EU level. However, doubts are often raised by scholars and practitioners on the difficulty to identify local actors in EU institutions (Kuhlmann, 2017). This section is about the institutional channels through which cities can make their voice heard independently from their central state activities. We will see that critics are numerous.

The most obvious platform for cities to get heard seems to be the CoR whose official subtitle is 'The EU's Assembly of Regional and Local Representatives'. Disregarding its political legitimacy based on its role to represent all cities and regional governments in the EU, its impact is rather weak. Although it is compulsory for the Commission and the Council of the European Union (the Council) to consult the CoR for every new piece of legislation concerning local and regional actors, its opinions

and decisions are not binding. Furthermore, internal functioning is also ill-designed. Poth-Mögele[3] (2014: 12) lists five main shortcomings present in CoR's institutional design that enable it to perform its representative functions. First, it does not have an imperative mandate, meaning it is not forced to enact policies that transcribed explicit orders transmitted by its stakeholders (Lane, 2007). But only a representative one. Therefore, doubts are always present whether the CoR really reflects and expresses the views of the regions and local authorities. Second, the CoR, as most institutionalized organizations, is subject to internal 'trade-offs and intra-institutional balances' (Poth-Mögele, 2014: 12). This characteristic impeaches the CoR to sanely represent its constituents' interests. This is supported by the fact that since recent rules have increased the role of the European political groups within this assembly. The third shortcoming for Poth-Mögele is that the CoR tends to set a stage for political divisions rather than local and regional expressions. Fourth, the CoR lacks capacities to acknowledge from its members what consequences EU legislations have on their territories. The CoR is ill-suited to provide evidence of malfunctions of EU legislations nor can it ask directly the local and regional governments concerned. The fifth and final shortcoming is related. The CoR lacks experts and expertise to understand and apprehend all consequences of EU legislations. For these reasons, scholars undermine the importance of the CoR in the policy cycle (Pan, 2014; Kern, 2007). This weakness is also recognized by actors that the CoR is supposed to represent: for Huysseune and Jans (2008: 7), 'regional offices are often sceptical about the impact that the CoR, as a consultative body, has on policies'. In other words, to them, regional and local offices doubt about the real impact of CoR on the basis that it only has a consultative role. This element is even more fragilizing the CoR institution's foundations, since its constituents are getting less involved and tend to choose different channels of representations. A vicious cycle may already be in place here as less participations leads to less legitimacy, less impacts and therefore less interest to participate in CoR activities. For Greenwood (2011), the CoR is no direct link between the local representations and the EU since the members of the CoR are first appointed by national leaders and, second, act as expert in field of regional development rather than as representative of their own land.

After drawing an analogous picture of the CoR's weaknesses, Heinelt and Niederhafner (2005) and Kluber and Piliutyte (2007) argue that from all possible entry points the Commission is the most effective platform for cities to get heard and play a more influential role. In a few words and among other characteristics, the Commission has the monopole on legislative initiative. It has the role to initiate legislation (under the constraints and direction given by the European Council). This gives the Commission a central role in the legislative process. This strong legislative power, aside with its

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[3] Words from Dr. Poth-Mögele reported here are part of a report she wrote as staff of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Because this organisation can be considered as in competition with the CoR to represent local governments, and with all respect and consideration for Dr. Poth-Mögele, we may consider biased assessment of the CoR in this policy paper.

executive powers, requires capacities that overpass from far the current Commission's bureaucratic apparatus (Kluber & Piliutyte, 2007: 369). To address this issue, the Commission often requires some external inputs before drafting most of legislative initiative. External experts are called for advises, feedbacks and knowledge that are after used by the Commission to draft legislative proposals. Cities can here play the role of the external expertise in 'providing the Commission with information, expertise and strategies' (Heinelt & Niederhafner, 2005: 77). Information and knowledge is informally designated as 'the 'currency of influence' in Brussels' (Callanan, 2012: 771). This process is rather formal since 2003 and the establishment of the 'systematic dialogue' between the Commission and the organizations of local and regional authorities. 'Systematic dialogues' are 'processes to ensure that local and regional authority input can be secured throughout the policy development process' (European Commission, 2003). It is a channel available exclusively for the local and regional government organizations (e.g. CEMR, Eurocities). Since 2009, the Lisbon Treaty (Protocol No 2 on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality) obliges the Commission to 'consult widely' the local and regional level before launching a legislation so to consider the opinion of the lowest level and to assess 'any burden, whether financial or administrative, falling upon the Union, national governments, regional or local authorities, economic operators and citizens' (Art. 5, Protocol No 2, TEU).

The need for the Commission to get the cities involve through their ground-level expertise is clear and acknowledged by practitioners, Treaties and scholars (Callanan, 2012), however the channels formally established to assure this dialogue is highly criticised by concerned practitioners. Poth-Mögele (2014) stands against the Commission for not taking any measure that can allow the Protocol No2 to be put into practice, according to her, no formalized nor structured mechanism of discussion exists. She also stands against the lack of transparency with which the assessment required by article 5 above-mentioned is dealt with. The rules through which the Commission contract out the assessment and evaluation of EU legislation impact on local affairs is also very blurred: divisions into sub-impact assessments, contracts with narrow terms of reference both in the person interviewed and level of scrutiny (Poth-Mögele, 2014). This makes it very difficult for cities and their organizations to get heard by the Commission. Poth-Mögele also criticised when the procedure of assessment carried out by the Commission staff itself. For her, the questionnaires are too narrowly formatted to represent properly local views and more importantly questionnaires start from the Commission's assumptions (2014: 15). Alongside Systematic Dialogues, other formally and 'on paper' procedures exist to involve local governments such as Commission working groups or the Territorial Pact for Europe 2020, the observation made in 2014 by Poth-Mögele is still valid in 2015 for Guderjan for who 'until today local actors are only marginally represented within the EU's polity.' (Guderjan, 2015: 945).

Both the CoR and the Commission present formal procedures to get cities involved but none of them is perfect and practitioners seem to be very critical. To conclude on this assessment of the institutional settings available to cities to get their voice heard at EU level we can easily say that the following quote from Kern (2007: 4) is still very true and relevant ten years later:

> Although they are in charge of implementing European legislation, they do not have direct access to EU decision-making. Thus, from this point of view, local authorities are considered as affected objects rather than active subjects (Rechlin 2004; Münch 2006; Niederhafner 2007). (Kern, 2007:4).

Section II. City networks as coalitions of the smallest, and their shortcomings

In front of these difficulties to reach the heart of EU decisions' platforms, the European cities have, since 1986 and Eurocities organizations, established transnational networks with seats in Brussels. As we saw above, the EU is a great opportunity structure (i.e. 'structures that cities can exploit to promote and develop their various interests by drawing on multiple ways of interactions, bother with other cities and with upper tiers of governments', Dossi, 2012: 160) that strongly attracts cities to Brussels (Kern, 2010). These networks have various forms and objectives. First, characteristics and assets provided by this type of collective actions to cities, then their own shortcomings, will be developed in the following paragraphs.

City networks are organizations that have mushroomed in Brussels during the nineties (Kluber & Piliutyte, 2007). Their shapes can be extremely diverse. I included here networks that have cities as members but which are not necessarily exclusively dedicated to cities. Each organization seems to have a unique institutional setting and they can be designated as 'associations', or 'union', or 'council' etc. Their lowest common determinant is that they are multi-lateral agreements tying 'multilateral links voluntarily established by local governments with other local governments' (Salomon, 2009:5). Beside this point, cities can get involved into networks along many lines since they can be built either according to their territorial belongings: regional (e.g. Antenne de la collectivité territoriale de Corse.), national (e.g. the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities), interregional (e.g. North West European Cooperation Group) or international (e.g. Metropolis). Or, they can also be built on actor type (i.e. urban/non-urban, city/city-region/metropolis/region) or topic (e.g. the Transition Regions Network, European Cities Marketing, European Regions Research and Innovation Network etc.) (Herrschel & Newman, A. 2017: 160). For Wolffhardt, Bartik, Meegan, Dangschat and Hamedinger (2005:0433), this very wide diversity in urban interest representations at the EU level is not surprising since these organizations are formed

by cities with a single similar concern at a particular time. Therefore, they form 'particular, ad hoc alliances with like-minded actors' (Wolffhardt, Bartik, Meegan, Dangschat & Hamedinger, 2005: 433).

According to their territorial belonging, the actor type or the topic, city networks do have different substantive goals such as the development of green agriculture for example, but their objectives as organization is always the same: build bridges between cities and EU institutions (Kluber & Piliutyte, 2007: 367). To do so and whatever is the network's substantial goal, city networks have five complementary activities to handle once in Brussels. Their first set of activities is to exchange information and knowledge regarding their own substantial topic but also about recent developments in EU affairs (e.g. upcoming legislative proposals, opinions of different actors on the subject they are concerned about etc.). Second, they facilitate the exchange of material aids between cities (loans, experts, infrastructures etc.). Third, they lobby both central governments and the EU institutions. Fourth and fifth, once information and capacities are all gathered up they can defend their local interest and even be proactive in proposing new common urban policies at EU level (Salomon, 2009). For Herrschel and Newman (2017: 83), these five objectives are summarized into two: 'the representation of their interests in EU institutions, and the exchange of experience and transnational learning'. To sum up, there is no single pattern of organization for cities to gather up at EU level. For this reason, city networks are complex to establish for individual cities, they are cumbersome organisations. As any collective organization, they require at their launch a large display of energy but once established they present many assets for their members.

City networks provide cities with both quantitative and qualitative assets. Regarding the quantitative argument, Heinelt and Neiderhafner (2008) observe that even though one can imagine that cities are individually capable of providing the Commission with expertise (see page Chapter 2, Section I) it is looking for, it is certain that organizations of local authorities can provide much more information and therefore get more attention from the EU decision-makers. As for the qualitative argument, it is also pointed out by Heinelt and Neiderhafner but in 2005 – but without using the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy. For them, city networks allow more easily the completion of the three conditions for a successful lobbying[4] at EU level: the formulation of an interest position with a European scope is easier for city networks since they are organization that can either find out what is common for all cities they are representing or draft a synthesis of relatively similar interests. The EU institutions, and especially the Commission is much more open to information with EU wide relevance. The second key is the ability to speak with one voice to the Commission. This is obviously much easier for a central organization than for a myriad of cities, even though these cities share a strong common interest (Callanan, 2012). The third key is the establishment of a permanent office in Brussel. Many networks have for that reasons moved their headquarter to Brussels such as for

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[4] The term lobbying is here controversial. It is used by Kluber and Piliutyte (2007: 369) when reporting Heinelt and Niederhafner's finding.

example the European Cities and Regions Network for New Transport Solutions and the European Regions Research and Innovation Network. Some organizations that are still located outside Brussels are facing difficulties to perform continuous lobbying activities and getting EU funds etc. (e.g. Union of Baltic Cities) (Kern, 2007). Getting together in network-like organization is also a means for cities to bypass the problem of 'overcrowding' (Callanan, 2012), indeed there have been a sharp increase in the number of offices representing local level: from 15 in 1988 to 160 in 2002 (Marks, Haesly, & Mbaye, 2002) and to 258 in 2010 (Baumgartner, Wonka, Mahoney & Berkhout, 2010). In a nutshell, aggregation and representation are the two assets of networks.

This expansion of the number of offices representing *individual* local or regional government (mostly regional offices) is actually the sign of the new relevance of these individual Brussels offices. Before turning to the third section on the importance of establishing such an office for cities, I will outline a first clue for this importance: the shortcomings of city network organizations. Unlike the situation described by an interview of the West Midlands Local Government Association in 2002, the 'need to build national and cross-national alliances' (Marshall, 2005: 681) is not as relevant fifteen years later. Here is why.

The theoretical advantages described in the above paragraph are often highly diminished once we look at the practices. The Commission apparently does *not* listen differently to adjunctions made by, on the one side, a large city network such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) embracing about one hundred thousand local entities of the EU and, on the other side, by individual cities (Poth-Mögele, 2014). This criticized practice goes against all theoretical and legal elements seen above: the Commission, by considering equally a network and an individual city, does not show respect for the ethos according to which European-wide solutions are preferable. The inherent issue faced by all city networks is the challenge to synthesize the different interests of all its members. A perfect congruence of all interests is obviously a myth.

The capacity for an organization to be influential in Brussels depends on its capacity to aggregate all together the interests of a maximum of local entities. However, the difficulty of this task is inversely proportional to the number of interests aggregated since every new member increases the variety of sizes, socioeconomic positions, locations in rural or metropolitan area present in the coalition (Kern, 2007). Every new member in the coalition brings a new element to integrate to a coherent project to present to the Commission. This coherence is threatened by every new member. To tackle this inherent issue, the two main city networks (i.e. Eurocities and CEMR) have developed two opposite logics (Heinelt & Neiderhafner, 2008): the logic of influence/coordination is the logic chosen by Eurocities and the logic of membership/cooperation chosen by the CEMR. The former accepts that the interests defended by its members are different but has established some 'coherence mechanisms' so that every member can *coordinate* its action and expect to gain

something from the Eurocities' umbrella. On the contrary, the CEMR organizes *cooperation*. That is, members agree on one common interest that the CEMR is to defend. This interest is most often the lowest common denominator of all members. These methods are far from perfect. The logic of cooperation by CEMR face a dilemma between the weight of the voice (proportional to the number of members involved) and the relevance of the project defended (inversely proportional to the number of members involved). Eurocities face a high degree of uncertainty and requires trust between members.

Thirdly, a city network can be victim of its own success. Indeed, if one network appears influential it faces the risk to be 'instrumentalized' that is to say 'manipulated by some regions to promote their own agenda' (Tatham, 2008: 509). This raises the question of the equality of members within these associations of cities. Some members may 'be more equal than others', and promote their own interest through the organization and at the expense of other members. Tatham (2008) assures that interviews with practitioners demonstrated this reality. This internal balance of power may give two ways to explain the will that cities now have to establish their own office of representation: the 'big' players realize they do not have to bother with the heavy administrative structure of a network and the 'small' players realize they are overturned by bigger entities within networks.

Section III. Lobbying by individual cities, on the importance of Brussels Offices

Although the main European-wide network organizations are still relevant, many smaller ones are losing members in a phenomenon of 'internationalization efforts by individual cities' (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 90). In this section I present the reasons why many cities want to be physically present in Brussels through their own individual office[5]. This is the last and necessary step before reaching the core of the research: the strategies and best practices within this type of office representation. Benefits from being in Brussels are manifold for cities, they can be clustered around key words: *information, promotion, networking, coherence, para-diplomacy, 'small size for maximum gains'*, and last but not least *flexibility*. The following presentation of these benefits ambitions to be exhaustive and hierarchically ranked from the most to the least common stated objectives.

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[5] Hereinafter, these offices representing the interest of individual European cities with a seat in Brussels, Belgium, will be called alternatively Brussels office, city representation,

A. Publicly stated cities' objectives

Information is the first element to start with as it is the most commonly objective cited by city representations on their public website (See Appendix. 1)[6]. Information is also an element very often emphasised by the Commission (see Chapter 2, Section I). This category of objective can be divided into two distinct activities that named here: top-down information-gathering and bottom-up information-provision. The tasks of top-down information consist in gathering knowledge about upcoming developments of the EU activities and present them to very diverse types of stakeholders. The information sought can be of a formal nature if the office forwards information on 'EU decisions and policies' (e.g. for representations of Paris, Berlin, Bremen; see Appendix.1) or on 'opportunities of funding' and 'programmes' (e.g. for representations of Hamburg, Barcelona, Malmö, Birmingham, London; see Appendix.1). The information sought can also be informal. This actually is the comparative advantage of being present in Brussels since most formal information is already available online (Huysseune & Jans, 2008; Verdonk, 2017). Informal information is here about 'draft regulations' and 'initiatives' (representation of Brussels and Gothenburg) and preparation/developments of legislation in general (Helsinki EU Office, G-4 EU Office of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht). Information about 'networking opportunities' (Helsinki EU Office) can also be qualified as informal. Behind these information-gathering activities, city representations emphasise the need to *monitor* EU activities. This task of monitoring is recurrent in the task descriptions in official city websites (see Appendix. 1) but can be included under the information activities since monitoring ultimately is to gather information. Monitoring is also emphasised by scholars (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 6; Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 88). Along with an easier access to informal information (Huysseune & Jans, 2008), being present in Brussels is also key to report information as early as possible. The city representations of Paris, Hamburg, Berlin, Bremen and Birmingham explicitly evoke this imperative of earliness. Finally, gathered information is alternatively dedicated to local government, and/or citizens and/or economic actors. The second type of activity relative to information is the bottom-up information provision. This element seems much less important: only three cities out of twenty-one expressed this task (fifteen did so for top-down information, see Appendix 1)[6]. Out of the three, only Prague is more specific about this: Prague office talks about providing the EU with feedbacks. The assumption of bottom-up information provision based on the need for information that the EC has expressed is barely justified in practices. However, a derived activity performed by city representations is compensating: the promotion of the city.

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[6] All references to objectives stated by city representations is based on a table published by Herrschel and Newman (2017: 167-169). The designation of this selection of offices as representation of *cities* rather than regions is their own work and decision (justified page 160-161). The original table is composed of only the two first columns of the Appendix 1. The last column and its seven subdivisions, on which are based the typology of objectives, is my very personal work.

From the analysis of the stated objectives of the city representations (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 162-164), the *Promotion* task can also be divided into two sections: the internal promotion and the external promotion. The former is the fact that city representations defend and value the interests of its constituents directly to the EU decision-makers. The latter is the promotion of these same interests targeting not the EU institutions but private investors. Unlike the tasks related to information, these two segments are of equal size: twelve cities out of the twenty-one scrutinized reveal the need to promote interests to external actors, and fifteen to EU institutions. It is difficult to describe further this task. Indeed, although most of the cities underline this objective, no reference on this promotion task is made in the literature on the subject. City representations are also very vague on it: most of them say they want to 'promote' or 'represent' the interest of their constituents. Others pledge to 'defend' (Paris) or 'lobby' (Łódź). Only Helsinki slightly specifies it saying it wants to promote its stakeholders' 'visibility' to the EU. We can however assume that this promotion is a form of provision of information to the EU institutions. It is, in fact, a *subjective* bottom-up information-provision. The second type of promotion is the promotion toward actors external to strictly the EU institutional sphere. Those external actors can have five different forms: Prague targets 'other relevant organizations', Varna looks at 'investments destinations' but also at 'visitors', Łódź and Berlin makes sure their city is represented at 'public events' and Nijmegen aims to 'find partners for projects' (see Appendix 1). Destination of external promotions can therefore be: private investors, potential individual visitors, other local or international authorities.

Networking is the third most often stated objective by Brussels offices (nine out of twenty-one, see Appendix 1). It is also found in the literature that it is very important to make and enhance contacts with policy-makers of all EU institutions (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 88, 168). The literature extensively emphasises the need for the city's officials to 'establish close ties with EU officials and policy actors' as almost as important as gather information (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 6). These ties are also very useful for other stakeholders. This is why 'the offices also act as contact points in Brussels for administrators, interest groups, and even private citizens' (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 6). The added-value of Brussels offices here is that they appear closer to citizens: stakeholders seem more comfortable in contacting and using this type of very local representation rather than national's or EU wide organizations. They 'appear more constituency-oriented and 'user-friendly' than many other institutions in Brussels' (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 6). Regarding objectives stated by Brussels offices, although nine explicitly talks about networking, none of them give details on procedure or specific goals. Networking is shown as an objective both by scholars and by practitioners, but in my mind and in the absence of specification, I would rather assume that networking is not an objective but a means made possible by the presence in Brussels to better perform the two tasks above: information and promotion.

The Fourth distinguishable element in the objectives stated by city representations and the literature is the *Coherence* that these offices can enhance. Once again, both domestic and European coherence is sought by and through Brussels offices. Domestic coherence is about the need for cities to lobby the EU institutions in a way that is compatible with the broader policy influence exercised by their national government and other national local authorities. The city of Liverpool expressed the need to established good relationships with the UK government's representation to the EU' (Liverpool City Region Brussels Office 2016; Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 168). This is important for the development of large projects because they must be handled in cooperation with the national department (e.g. large infrastructures). In practice, this assumption is translated in the stated objectives of five city representations into two forms: either they seek to coordinate the implementation of rather complex EU legislation with domestic actors (Brussels, Malmö) since their level of expertise and understanding of EU legislations is higher, or they cooperate with domestic actors to enhance the coherence of the lobbying strategies. Dubrovnik does so with the other regional representation whereas London cooperates rather with practitioners and private associations (see Appendix 1.). Regarding outward looking cooperation, cities seek to cooperate to 'create synergies' with European policies (Brussels) or support projects of non-national partners that are relevant for their own long term interest (Gothenburg). We see here that city representation offices cooperate a lot with peers to keep coherence in their common actions.

Three additional goals sought by these offices (para-diplomacy, 'small size for maximum gains', flexibility) can be detected by deductive reflexions and based on the literature. They are shown only by the literature. Before turning to these unstated objectives, figure 1 summarizes the stated objectives in a new typology.

Figure 1 Stated Objectives of city representation offices in Brussels, a new typology
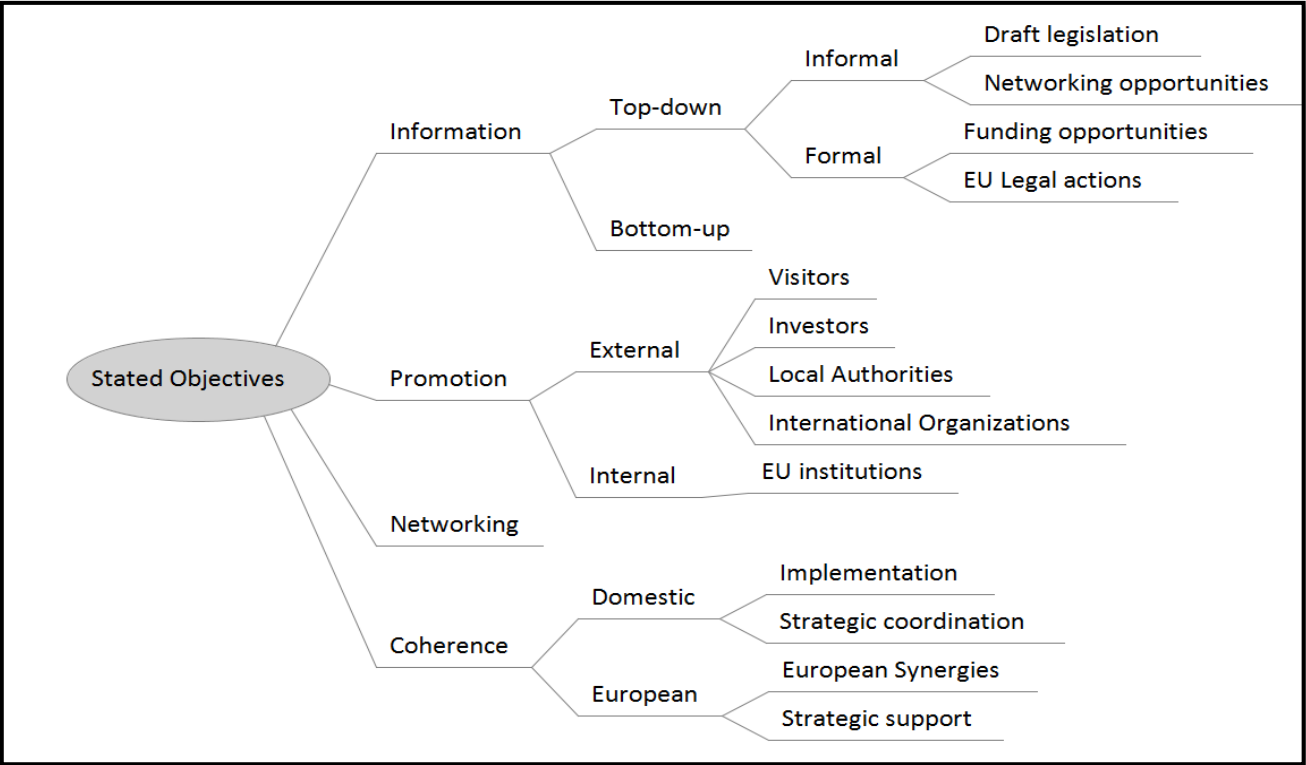
B. Other objectives as found in the literature

Besides these four practical objectives that are clear in city representations' minds, three transversal benefits can be found in the literature: *para-diplomacy, 'small size for maximum gains'*, and *flexibility*. Although these objectives could not be found in the empirical analysis above, we assume literature where they are found have done this empirical researches.

Since a decade, there has been a tendency in lower levels of government attitudes to be actors of their own faith at the international level. They more and more tend to bypass their central state. This *Para-diplomacy* has been extensively studied regarding the regional government in general (Tatham, 2010) and regarding their regional offices in Brussels specifically (Tatham, 2013). This phenomena is however also now used by the cities – the lower level of government – themselves. Multilevel strategies enable cities to change the domestic situation without the concour of their national central state. This is the main asset of the opportunity structure of the EU for cities. By representing their interest independently, cities assume to be closer to their specific situation. Kern (2010: 14) uses the term of para-diplomacy to qualify this very idea:

> [Cities] may even use the detour via Brussels to change the situation in Berlin, Dublin, or Helsinki. This development can be regarded as expression of para-diplomacy, meaning that cities represent their interests independently of the national governments.

This phenomenon has been around for more than twenty years – officially since the establishment of the first Spanish autonomies representation in Brussels in 1996 (Tatham, 2013) but it is relevant to cities for only a few years. As such, the term *para-diplomacy* includes both the use of network structure to be present in Brussels and the Brussels offices established by individual cities. The former form of para-diplomacy is qualified as multilateral. Multilateral para-diplomacy is on the other hand understood as such activities of cities, where they act as collective actors. We saw in the previous section however the shortcomings of using only this method. It exists therefore a second type of para-diplomacy used by cities: with bilateral activities, we observe cities directly contacting EU Commission (for example using the permanent representation of the city in Brussels)[7]. Beside the assumption made by cities that they would better defend their very specific interests armed with their own office, Herrschel and Newman (2017) defends a more *constructivist* view: for them it is important for cities to appear as more than a mere subordinate part of their respective regions. This view is supported by Kluber and Piliutyte (2007: 366) for whom cities like London, Paris or Madrid see themselves first and foremost as global cities. These capitals put less effort into their Brussels

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[7] I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Havlík for this distinction between multi-lateral and bilateral para-diplomacy.

representation because they do not feel the need to affirm their identity against their respective region. Furthermore, they are mostly seeking to influence beyond Europe. Finally, this new trend of decentralization of the local representation at the EU level can also be explained by the more and more detailed and prescriptive nature of EU legislations (Poth-Mögele, 2014). Indeed, quite often frustrations arise at the ground level if the EU legislation is not well adapted to the local circumstances (Poth-Mögele, 2014). Therefore, we can hypothesize a correlation between the prescriptiveness of EU legislation and the presence of ever more local representations in Brussels. This is a means to make sure specific local circumstances are taken into account. To sum up, para-diplomacy is the strategy and the capacity to influence the policy-making of the supranational level but also the policy-making of its own domestic situation using channels other than the national government. It encompasses broader elements than just interests promotion as described above in paragraph A.. Para-diplomacy is about *bypassing* the central state to appear, symbolically, as an independent actor. This capacity is enhanced by Brussels offices.

A city representation can bring one purely theoretical benefit: based on basic knowledge on collective action problem, one may assume that the benefits acquired by the representation must be dispatched among all its constituents. Therefore, the smaller size of the population represented, the higher the gains distributed to each constituent. Hence the motto that could be added to all city representations in comparison to regional representations or EU wide networks: *small size for maximum gain*. In other words, all forms of information about EU matters is first more specific to constituents and second it is less subjected to competition between local actors (e.g. for EU funded programs). In a nutshell, the service provided by local representations is *individualized*. This knowledge is also more easily dispersed and targeted if the sample of constituents is smaller. This makes thus the impact of the activity of the office higher (Wolffhardt et al., 2005).

The seventh explanatory element (after information, promotion, networking, coherence, para-diplomacy and 'small size for maximum gain) enlightening why cities tend to prefer individual representations to regional or networks is for the *Flexibility* of these offices. Their activity is not constant over the years but 'come and go as EU policies fit' their interests and development needs (Wolffhardt et al., 2005: 433). This is the very conclusion of the book written by Wolffhardt et al. *Cities in Europe – Europe in Cities*. The degree of pull and push factors attracting cities to Brussels differs in time. Cities can decide to allocate resources elsewhere when their interest in lobbying the EU diminishes. The degree of involvement varies but also the substance of the interests defended. They can vary strategies and administrative managements according to these very variable elements. Chapter 5 is more extensive on this point.

To conclude this third section, we can say that the Brussels offices represent a growing group and number and in influence, they are now considered as 'a significant group of players in the 'Brussels-

based supranational policy community'' (Huysseune & Jans 2008: 1). Their shape varies in time and space but also depends on their objectives. Although, these objectives have four practical forms (information, promotion, networking and coherence) and three assumed advantages (para-diplomacy, small size for maximum gains, and flexibility), they all go toward a single central principle that leads their actions: strengthening the link between the EU level and its constituents. This principle is explicated and clearly summarized by the Merseyside Brussels Office/Liverpool City Region which pledges to 'provides vital link between local public, business, voluntary organisation, EU institutions and other European regions' (See Appendix 1).

So far, this chapter has presented a description of the situation in which cities evolve in the European context and the strategies they handle to face the challenges and opportunities of the multi-level context. This description claims to be the first part of the literature review of this paper. This part is dedicated to the appreciation of the current situation. The second part of the literature review in Chapter 4 is dedicated to the theoretical debate around the local-supranational relations. This part of the literature review has been presented in a *dynamic* way: from lacuna of the institutional setting to the individual actions. This was necessary because to understand the 'integrative logic of local–supranational relations, research needs to focus on the dynamism of the living-constitution.' (Guderjan, 2015: 950).

Section IV. Lacuna of the academic knowledge

To complete this chapter relative to the channels of influence available to cities, we will outline the lacuna of the literature on the subject. Whereas the first section of this chapter describes what is already known, the second is focused on what is missing both in terms of contents and in terms of methods. It is important to underline the gaps in the literature in the specific context of cities-EU relations since the rest of the research will aim at filling part of them.

In this regard, the first criticism in the literature has already been tackled in Section III. Indeed, Callanan and Tatham (2014) regrets that most of the existing literature is content with a mere description of the growing involvement of subnational governments into EU affaires. They point at the low attention given to outline the reasons why cities want to mobilize at EU level. The analysis of the stated objectives is a first key to enlighten this point. However, this point was not the core of the research. It was a purely descriptive analysis. This section is organized as such: the first paragraph points at the lacuna in terms of content, meaning what are the substantial issues not yet tackled. The second paragraph is about the methodological approach that have been used or not thus far by previous scholars.

The literature on local governments and especially in their relations with the supranational level has either underestimated and forgot the role of the municipalities or analysed it in a whole, confusing local *and* regional governments. The absence of the local level is pointed by Kern (2007) with regards to Europeanization studies, and by Pan (2014) with regards to multi-level governance studies. Pan explicitly criticises the tendency to 'hide [local authorities] in the shadow of regional actors' (2014: 84). In general, the little attention by scholars given to cities as 'distinctive subset of regional entities' in the EU context was a criticism by Schultze made in 2003 (page 121). This criticism still seemed valid thirteen years later in Kuhlmann and Bouckaert's minds for whom 'the analysis of the local level has been conspicuously neglected' (2016:2). This long-term confusion between local and regional entities is barely justified by authors using it (Marks et al. 2002; Tatham, 2008; Greenwood, 2011; Callanan, 2012). On the other side, some scholars underline the differences and the necessity to isolate cities from larger regional entities. Based on its urban characteristics, its high level of opportunities, its independence *vis-à-vis* the central government and its capacity to be a key level for the Commission to change the local and regional situations, Marshall (2005: 670) affirms that there is a 'unique nature of urban governance' that must be isolated from sub-national Europeanization studies. This isolation is also supported by some very practical issues. For example, the new Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) on the Transparency Register of the EU obliges local governments to register as lobbyists. This is forcing cities to have the same legal status when talking to EU officials than private and commercial lobbyists whereas regions are considered as public authorities (Poth-Mögele, 2014). This is a fundamental difference between cities and regional authorities when dealing with the relation with the EU.

Other lacuna can be outlined: there is an extensive knowledge about networks of cities such as Eurocities and CEMR (Keating, 2001; Kubler & Piliutyte, 2007; Heinelt & Neiderhafner, 2008; Callanan, 2012) but not much about cities themselves, acting individually (Dossi, 2012). There is also an imbalance between the studies of the top-down Europeanization of cities (i.e. how cities' functioning and policies are shaped by the EU integration[8]) whose anthological book by Featherstone and Radaelli (2003) has been quoted 1328 times and the bottom-up Europeanization whose main book by Börzel (2003) has been quoted 175 times. This indicates that the latter is relatively less studied than the former. A third additional lacuna is that studies relative to the improvement of local governments is mostly focused on developing countries subnational entities (De Vries & Haque, 2016) or does not deal with the multi-level context (Schwab, Bouckaert & Kuhlmann, 2017). Finally, there is also a lack of concern about the administrative issues raised by local-supranational relations. Only Oikonomou (2016) questions the administrative practices at stake in this relation. However, his study is Greece-centric and therefore it is difficult to generalize his findings. The lack of comparative

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[8] For more information see Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C. (eds) (2003)

analysis is actually the main methodological lacuna in this specific field of research (Schwab et al., 2017).

Before going on into this research, one must keep in mind two lessons drawn from this independent criticism of the current state of art. First it is essential to separate the development of regional and local/rural entities to fully understand the relation of the former with the EU. And second, this relation is still obscure when it comes to administrative habits and practical, daily operations of the local entities – the nature of these interactions has been 'assumed rather than investigated' (Callanan & Tatham, 2014: 193). In a nutshell, we know the intensity, means, and channels of cities' involvement and the reasons of their involvement (through the analysis of the stated objectives) but not the practicalities of this involvement neither the best practices to influence the EU. This will be the very final outcome of the research.

Chapter 3:
Theoretical debates and Operationalization

This third chapter aims at outlining some of the main theories regarding the bottom-up relations between the EU and the cities. From all theoretical frameworks that will be presented in this chapter, the second section will select one of them and justify. This selected theory will be used to enlighten the best practices used by cities in these relations according to two criteria: their national institutional systems and their objectives. In the third and final section of this chapter is shown how this chosen theory can be operationalized and can validate the hypothesises or not; in other words, how this theory will be used. These hypotheses are also specified in this third section.

Section I. Six Theoretical Frameworks to understand the EU-Cities relations

A. A chronological development of classifications of cities' involvement at EU level

The relations between cities and the EU are multidimensional. They are composed of both policy-specific questions (e.g. transportation) and meta-questions about the organization of the polity (e.g. multi-level decision-making). They raise very different questions that are successively answered by scholars. The way cities try to face the process of Europeanization and use the opportunity structure offered by the EU can therefore be studied with a wide array of very different perspectives. Since all scholars take a different perspective, I propose here a brief *chronological* presentation of the main developments of the debate. Each perspective reveals different factors of mobilisation, different rationales and behaviours.

One of the first attempts[9] to draw a typology of the different attitudes of cities in front of European developments (Europeanization and opportunity structure) and still relevant today is the work of Goldsmith and Klausen in 1997. They start their work on a double observation: although local (and regional in this research) authorities have all invested in the European sphere to defend their interests, the scope and nature of the involvement varies widely. According to Goldsmith and Klausen, local authorities' reactions can be classified into four broad groups mirroring four main attitudes. The first one is the 'counteractive' attitude. Local authorities that are counteractive toward EU integration are those that are suspicious or even sceptical towards it. They do not want to spend time nor money on European matters neither they want to influence them nor to integrate them into their local structures. Those are the inward-looking cities. The second attitude, 'passive', consists in acknowledging and respecting European influence over local matters. These cities legislate on what is

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[9] For earlier attempts, see John P. (1994), The Europeanisation of British Local Government: New Management Strategies, Luton, Local Government Management Board

necessary and made compulsory by EU integration but no more effort is made to influence EU policies. The third attitude is 'reactive'. Reactive cities are aware of the opportunity structure offered by the EU but act more as followers than as leaders. Although they understand the opportunity to internationalize their strategy, they remain uncertain on how to do so. The fourth group is the group leading European local and regional policies. This 'proactive' group gathers cities that are in the heart of European networks and organizations and that promote their interests at EU level through them. This thesis is focused on this group. Indeed, one tool they use to 'lead the process of integrating local government into Europe from below' (Goldsmith & Klausen, 1997) is their offices in Brussels (Wolffhardt et al. 2005).

This typology is at first sight satisfying and complete since it can include all European cities disregarding the intensity of their involvement. However, researches on this topic have continued due to one main criticism: these attitudes can be set on a one-dimensional line. For that reason, it cannot show the multiple dimensions of the EU-cities relations. To use Wolffhardt et al.'s terms

> [W]hat is needed instead is an analytical framework which allows for the considerable multitude of motives, origins, goals, actual implementation patterns and available instruments/resources, in short: dissimilar development paths, of EU-related activities across various policy fields. (2005: 409).

This is what the following researches have been trying to do.

Schultze in 2003 regrets the lack of attention given to cities *as particular and specific actors* as such, whereas regional governments were widely studied. To fill part of this gap, he tries to answer the question: 'are cities policy-makers or policy-takers at the European level?' by looking at the model of governance of the European Union regarding the participation or not of cities in its decision-making procedures. Saying that cities are policy-makers means affirming that they are active actors and are able to promote their view at EU level. On the contrary, describing cities as policy-takers is seeing cities are mere *objects* undergoing all EU integration developments, whether they are positive or negative. He hypothesizes that if the model of governance of the EU is 'hierarchical' or 'consultative', then cities are policy-takers, on the contrary if the model is 'participatory' cities are policy-makers[10]. He concludes that the model of governance of the EU has slowly shifted from the more oppressing for cities (hierarchical model) before the 1988 Structural funds reforms to a softer one (consultative model) before that Maastricht Treaty pushed for more participation of local actors. For him, in 2003, we were evolving in a participatory model based on institutions like the CoR, the

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[10] For more details on the description of hierarchical, consultative and participatory modes of governances, see Schultze (2003) page 126 and 127.

European Networks, and the local presence in Brussels. We saw above the several shortcomings of these institutions in the last few years.

Although this study brought a new perspective and typology about how the EU considers the participation of cities. It was not satisfying in answering the question on how cities actively react to EU integration. Indeed, for him it looks like the relation depends not on the cities, their interests, and their capacities, but on the institutional structure of the EU polity. This may be true but does not constitute a whole picture since cities are manifestly different behaviours regarding the EU.

In 2005, Wolffhardt et al. attempted to systematise the EU engagement of cities and key characteristics of the European engagement. To answer to the criticisms that they give to Goldsmith and Klausen (see p.30 above), they establish a double theory. First, they draw a system of pull and push factors to understand the *intensity* of the involvement of a city at the EU level. For them the EU engagement of a city depends on its awareness of three 'pull' factors and two 'push' factors (2005: 458). The pull factors are elements that *attract* cities to go out and become involved on EU's stage: they are a) the financial gains from EU programs ('Europe as stage'), b) the opportunity to shape identity of the city ('locational profiling') and c) the chance to bypass national frameworks ('Europe as an alternative'). On the contrary, the push factors are elements that *force* cities to get involve although they would rather escape if they could. Push factors are factors repealing from being passive. There are two push factors: a) 'the need to fend off inconvenient EU norms' and b) the 'subjugation to a wide array of EU laws'. The intensity of these push and pull factors determines the intensity of the city investment in EU's sphere.

Second, they present three *attitudes* that a city can take regarding EU integration. Unlike the fourfold but criticised typology of Goldsmith and Klausen, these attitudes are not a matter of intensity. This is the strength of their theory. They distinguish three types of EU engagements disregarding the intensity (provided that the city has at least a 'European ambition' (2005: 417)). The first type is 'Euro-player'. A city is a 'Euro-player' if it is both active in European networks and on its own in Brussels. Being 'active' consists here in developing a sustained and long-run strategy at EU level. This includes proposing innovative measures but also showing explicit opposition. A 'Euro-player' is able to have this attitude without relying on the EU funds nor needing to change its organizational structure. This assures its some independence. This is the main difference with 'Client cities'. A Client city also has a strong presence in Brussels and a long-term strategy but is mostly focused on EU funding opportunities. Client cities make everything possible to show that their economic and social structure allows them to receive EU funds. The third type is 'Policy experimenter'. A city is called 'Policy experimenter' if it takes EU as a source of innovation and modernization. Concretely, a 'Policy experimenter' is motivated and willing to fit EU requirements for funds if they are a trigger for innovative practices. A 'Policy experimenter' invests in the EU sphere to

enjoy as much as possible the learning opportunities. These cities are at first small actors (they are rather medium size and single-topic focused cities. E.g. Tampere, Finland, and green policies) but can quickly appear as specialists and experts – a very comfortable position in the 'corridors of Brussels' (2005: 419). To sum up, we can say that in opposition to Goldsmith and Klausen who underlined the interests and the capacities of a city, and to Schultze who highlighted the importance of the EU institutions, Wolffhardt et al. see the nature of the local circumstances (economic and social context, institutional organization etc.) as the main determinants of the way cities get involved at EU level.

Contrary to those three first perspectives, Greenwood (2011), takes a fourth one. He suggests that what matters is the *autonomy* of local authorities. This autonomy is determined by the national laws and institutions. In this perspective, there is one major line of division separating cities into only two groups: they are either 'delegates' with a specific mandate received by upper level of governments or by their constituents, or they are 'agents' with more possibilities of discretion regarding tasks to carry at EU level. In other words:

> An outpost of a specific public territorial administration (ed. City representation in Brussels) where staff works towards highly directed goals will create entirely different working agendas to one where agents are left with the ability to develop their own activities. (2011: 448).

Dossi (2012) introduces a fifth perspective to understand how cities get involved at EU level. To him, cities choose their forms of involvement according to two dimensions: first whether their preferences are *exogenous*, meaning they result from a process of learning and socialization, or *endogenous*, meaning they are decided by actors individually. In the former the possibilities of bargaining are lower than in the latter. The second dimension is relative to the policy field. Cities will behave differently if they believe the developments in a specific policy field at stake present zero-sum game characteristics, or alternatively, if it is a win-win situation[11]. Without entering the details of this rather complex two-dimensional analysis, we can still say that these two dimensions, once crossed, produce four different attitudes. If a city thinks its preferences can change with socialization but further integration would lead to a zero-sum game outcome, it will favour simple and mere learning opportunities. But if it believes its preferences can change and the integration be benefit for all, it will push for EU regulation. The third option is when the city thinks its preferences are deeply rooted and cannot change and that integration is zero-sum game, it will strongly bargain for its cause at EU level. Finally, if preferences cannot change but EU regulation seems overall beneficial, the city will rather try to push for a model of coordination like Open Method of Coordination. To clarify this typology, Dossi proposes the following table (2012: 166):

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[11] Dossi (2012) rather uses the concept of Pareto optimality.

		Outcome of EU development at stake	
		Zero-sum games	Pareto optimality
Origin of city's preferences	Exogenous	Think learning	Regulation
	Endogenous	Bargaining	Coordination

Figure 2 The space of modes of Europeanization according to Dossi (2012) [simplified]

The sixth and last proposition of theorization of cities involvement at EU level that is necessary to present here is the work by Tatham and Callanan in 2014. Along with Greenwood (2011), Tatham and Callanan (2014) divided cities into two main groups but on a different baseline: those investing the EU sphere because they are driven by the opportunities of financial transfers and project funding possibilities ('financial mobilization') and those motivated by the possibility to influence EU decision and regulations ('regulatory mobilization'). This two-side typology gets close to Wolffhardt et al.'s division between Euro-players and Client cities (2005). It has the advantage of the clarity but seem to forget the third rationale of Policy experimenter.

This section on theoretical debates was necessary to show the wide array of possibilities when it comes to classify cities into groups depending on the rationales and modes of involvement at EU level. This review is also useful for the rest of the research: from all the classifications, we need to select at least one that enables us to determine the best administrative practices. Wolffhardt et al.'s division between Euro-player, Client city and Policy experimenter seems the most adequate. Indeed, it has the merit to encompass all cities disregarding the intensity of their involvement and their national system. Therefore, if one can identify best practices for each of these three attitudes, generalization of the findings can be optimal. The next section presents the method used to determine best practices for each of these three attitudes.

B. Justification of theoretical framework: on the importance of contextualization for future generalization

From all perspectives presented above, Wolffhardt et al.'s (2005) is used. Their division in three different groups allows a better contextualization and therefore a better reliability of the future generalization of the outcomes of the research. It is extremely important to focus on the context. The local context needs to be highly scrutinized due to the multi-level EU polity. It must also be scrutinized to ensure a goodness of fit of future recommendations of certain administrative practices.

Wolffhardt et al.'s classification is the one of the above that considers the most the local context. As a reminder, they conclude that cities act differently at EU level depending on their local economic and social circumstances[12] on which their interests are based. Local context is important for two reasons. On the one hand, the high complexity of urban policies, especially in a multi-level context, requires a clear identification of actors within the policy-making cycle (Kotzeboe, 2016). When coming to urban policy developments it is essential to know the nature of the actors at stake since they are the final implementers of these policies often decided at upper levels. The complexity due to the diversity of the circumstances on the ground makes the contextualization of policy-decisions paramount.

On the other hand, when it comes to recommend some political and administrative practices – the final objective of the thesis – it is essential that the process that generates to these recommendations considered the most suitable context for each of them. As of example, Drechsler (2009) concludes that public administrative practices such as New Public Management (NPM) can only be successfully implemented at local level when the *ground* is favourable. NPM, to Drechsler, is a positive practice that can enhance the communication between cities and the EU under two conditions: first that the local authority at stake already has previous experiences and clear tradition of dealing with supranational entities and/or transnational projects, and second that this authority has deeply established democratic roots. We see here an example of local conditions which must be present to take full benefits from a specific model of governance/set of administrative practices. Similarly, looking at local conditions may avoid perverse effect (Drechsler, 2009). In 2011, Pollitt and Sorin, while working for the Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future (COCOPS), generalized Drechsler's finding. For them, benefits of a certain set of administrative practices (i.e. here again they talk about NPM) highly depends on the context. Rules of causality between the implementation of an administrative practice and its negative or positive effects seem only to be found in specific contextual environment (Pollitt & Sorin, 2011). The COCOPS advises that 'the findings about contexts are crucial. It is by carefully sifting those that more particular and conditional (and local) sets of relationships may be identified' (2016: 33). This is the method chosen for this research. Importance of the context is also highlighted more recently by Schwab et al. (2017) to determine the success or failure of possible administrative practices and reforms specifically at the local level.

In addition to categorizing my case studies as Euro-players, Policy-implementers or Client cities, according to their behaviour at EU level, their institutional local context is also specified. The European Union is composed of 28 Member states in 2017. Each of the MS offers a very different

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[12] While surely oversimplifying, I assume that wealthy and organized cities will be Euro-players, middle-sized and specialized cities would rather be Policy-experimenters and cities with capacities but with a transitory economy are more prone to be Client cities.

legal and institutional system for the functioning and ruling of their subnational authorities, and more specifically for their cities. Consequently, case studies are considered as actors involving within a specific domestic framework. Given that this research explores the role of local governments in influencing European policy activities, variations such as the constitutional competences of local governments and their capacity of discretion are of great importance when setting the research method (Pan, 2014). Each of the case study will represent a model of national system of local governance. This way, conclusions taken for each case study will thus be more easily generalizable in other Member states which have a similar national system of local governance.

Many typologies of national systems of local governance can be found in the literature (Page & Goldsmith, 1987; Hesse & Sharpe, 1991; Heinelt & Hlepas, 2006[13]; Kuhlmann & Bouckaert, 2016) but the selected one for this investigation is Loughlin's (2003; 2010). With for variables including 'the constitution position of local governments, state-society relations, the basis of policy style, the form of decentralisation, and the dominant approach to discipline of public administration' (Loughlin 2003: 5), he outlines four groups of national systems of local governance. Without entering details here, it suffices to say that the EU can be divided between the Germanic, the Scandinavian, the Franco and the Anglo-Saxon model[14]. Later on, Pan (2014: 54) includes a fifth category gathering eastern Member states. Regarding the time and resource constraints of the research, we select only three case studies, and consequently dropping the analysis of an Anglo-Saxon city as well as of an Eastern European city. This choice is not arbitrary and can quickly be explained as follow: the soon-coming end of the British membership of the European Union may have already changed attitudes and goals of British cities already settled in Brussels, it also jeopardizes future generalization since the findings may be outdated after the formal "Brexit" happens. The exclusion of Eastern cities is based on my assumption that the relatively recent accession has not yet given enough time for cities to stabilize and find their habits in terms of EU-Cities relations and practices. It is not relevant to present here the characteristics of all these systems. These systems differ and best practices *may* be different for each of them when dealing with the EU is to underline.

This section presented the state of the theoretical debate and selected one of the theorization of cities' attitude toward the EU. In the second part, this choice is justified. The following table (fig. 3.) summarizes this section by showing that case studies will be considered in a double context: their attitudes toward the EU (in columns) and their national system of local governance (in lines). Double lines signify that the division is strict between Germanic, Franco's and Scandinavian models – since one city obviously cannot have different national systems. On the contrary, dotted lines show that

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[13] These three works are summarized in Pan (2014: 55)

[14] the Anglo-Saxon model: United Kingdom, Ireland; the Germanic model of Central Europe: Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria; the Scandinavian States: Denmark, Finland, Sweden; the Franco model of Southern European States: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Malta

the three attitudes are *ideal types*[15]. In practice, attitudes are much more blurred: cities can behave alternatively and successively as one or the other model.

	Euro-player	Policy-Experimenter	Client city
Germanic			
Franco's			
Scandinavian			

Figure 3 Double contextualization of case studies

Section II. Hypothesises and Operationalization: testing current local practices on Brussels offices

The selected theoretical framework (the double contextualization presented above) allows two hypothesises: *the model of governance of Brussels city representation offices differs according to a) the attitudes of the offices towards EU regulations, EU learning processes and EU funding opportunities (i.e. Wolffhardt et al.'s classification) and according to b) the national system of local governance*. Answers to these hypothesises will not only be negative or positive (e.g. yes, practices vary with local systems but no Euro-players and Client cities use the same administrative practices). Instead, they will also be *substantial*: the investigation method is designed to spot best practices used in Brussels offices according to these two threefold division. The method that will be used to go from this theoretical framework to the designation of best practices is described in this section.

There are currently six trends in local public sector reforms (Schwab et al., 2017: 12). They will be tested to know if they fit or not the activities of Brussels offices. These six trends are summarized in the table below (fig. 4.).

We see that these six tendencies consist in three diverging pairs (second column) (Schwab et al., 2017: 12); these pairs represent opposite alternatives to choose from. Each of the pairs is about a basic field of reforms (first column). Each tendency can be easily recognized by spotting, within the activities of the studied institution/organizations some key elements (third column). The first field, 'managerial organization', refers to the internal organization of public administration. Tendencies in this field are either inspired by the will to transform the organization into a consumer-friendly 'enterprise' with notably the use of performance-oriented tools (to set the level of wages for example) or they stand in reaction to the NPM paradigm. In this second case, services are re-centralized and are put away from competition between one-another. The second field, 'territorial

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[15] Ideal types here is understood in the Weberian sense. They are parsimonious model representing the main characteristics of a phenomena which in reality is not perfect (Johnson, 2000)

and functional organization', is relative to the external organization of local sector. Two visions are here again in opposition: some scholars (Kuhlmann, 2017; Ladner, 2017) and practitioners (Vos, 2017) advocate for larger subnational unit (SNU) organizations representing a greater number of constituents to achieve economies of scales (Schwab et al., 2017: 13) whereas other promote small local organizations that can be closer to their citizens and unsure more participation (Schwab et al., 2017: 13; Denters, 2017). The third trend is about democratic reforms in local public sector. These reforms can take two diverging trajectories: either they form a renewal of old democratic practices such as consultations and recalls, or they innovate in new practices, notably using new technologies of communication (e-democracy etc.)[16]. The original research on which this table is based (meaning Schwab et al. 2017) was not explicitly dealing with city representation offices in Brussels, however it surely represents a convenient key of analysis. It provides a wide array of current relevant practices that are being used in Europe nowadays.

Basic field of reforms	Tendencies	Elements	Questions
Managerial organization	Performance-oriented manners	Short term management	3 – 5
		Internal reorganization	7 – 10
		New budgeting	8 – 15
		New accounting system	18
		Performance-oriented tools	8 – 9
		Sectorialisation	7 – 12 – 17
		Outsourcing	16
		Performance-oriented pay	8 – 9
	Correcting NPM	Joint-up government	11 – 17 – 18
		Strategic planning	1 – 2 – 3
Territorial and functional organization	'Bigger is better'	Centralization	1 – 17 – 18
		Amalgamation	16 - 17
	'Small is beautiful'	Trans-scaling	18
		Cooperation	18
		Reallocation of tasks between levels of government	2 – 11
Democratic practices	Old practices	Consultation	2
		Interactive policy-making	2
		Participation of civil society	2
		Petitions	2
		Recalls	2
		Local referenda	2
		Local initiatives	2
	New practices	forum	2
		e-democracy	2

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[16] For more details on each of these concrete elements of administrative practices, see Schwab et al. (2017)

| | | Youth councils | 2 |
| | | Neighbourhood councils | 2 |

Figure 4 Tendencies in local public sector reforms and their distinctive elements (Schwab et al. 2017: 12)

Armed with this key table, the investigation will consist in spotting the existence or the absence of each of the elements of administrative practices in the activities of successful offices. Each of these elements have been translated into a concrete question. Indeed, practitioners are not always aware of these conceptual aspects of administrative practices even when they are using them daily. Numbers in the fourth column of figure 4. refer to the questions of the questionnaires submitted to practitioners (Appendix. 2.). In addition, a fourth field of activities can be tested to figure out if city representation offices in Brussels are closer in their daily activities to corporate lobbying or official representation to the EU of member state (called Permanent representations). Figure 5. uses the same model as figure 4. to operationalize this fourth aspect.

Basic field of reforms	Tendencies	Elements
Daily activities	Corporate lobbying activities	Producing position papers
		Establish issue-coalitions and networks
		Participate in the wide array of consultation formats
		Registration in the Transparency Register of the EU
	Permanent representation activities[17]	Working parties
		Networking with institutional alter-ego
		Reporting to home-state institution

Figure 5 Comparison of practices of Permanent Representations and Private Corporations (Huysseune & Jans, 2008; Greenwood, 2011: 438)

This chapter was meant to set-up a bridge between the research question and the investigation process. This bridge has been built with the cement of a selected theorization of bottom-up EU-cities relations and with the stones of a list of current local authorities' practices. To sum up it suffices to clarify that in this research, the dependent variables are the practices in Brussels' offices whereas the two independent variables are both the objectives of the representations and the national system of local governance. The next chapter is the continuity of the present one in the sense that it presents the practical methodology of the research.

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[17] Based on informal discussions with Permanent representations staff

Chapter 4:
Presentation and justification of the method of data collection

This chapter is devoted to explaining to the readers the choice of the methodology used for the research. It is divided into three sections, each of which justifying a facet of the methodology. First to be justified is the choice to use case studies – and subsequently the choice of the case studies which are the cities of Rotterdam, Barcelona, and Helsinki. Second to be justified is the process of data collection: an analysis of semi-structured interviews and literature. The third section concludes by justifying the credibility of the research.

Section I. Case study: A selection of successful and comparable cities

Chapter 2 and 3 showed that cities invest in EU sphere in general, and in Brussels in particular, for a multitude of reasons and with a multitude of manners. We therefore hypothesised that they invest in Brussels differently according to their goal and their national system of local governance. These hypotheses will now be empirically tested on three cities which are particularly relevant here. Indeed, Rotterdam, Barcelona, and Helsinki have many common points which allows for a comparison between them. The similarities between these cities provide the research with two advantages: first their differences can be tested and second, as these cities are relatively successful in their relation to the EU, the analysis of their activities will result in a set of best practices.

The preference for a qualitative research based on a few case studies instead of a quantitative research based on similar data from all city representations in Brussels is threefold. For some very practical reasons it appeared difficult to gather a large amount of data about these offices (lack of updated data on websites, low responsiveness of practitioners to information requests etc.). Additionally, even if the response turnout was satisfying, the low number of offices specifically defending a city – about 24 according to Herrschel and Newman (2017: 162-163-164), does not allow quantitative analysis. Qualitative case study method is also a positive choice: it allows to get a close and precise idea of what are the best practices for a certain, and given, set of local circumstances. Indeed, we do not compare here good and bad players at EU level but rather three successful players with different characteristics to see if their practices are affected by local circumstances.

A. Comparability of case studies

Barcelona, Rotterdam, and Helsinki are comparable in their nature but also in their successfulness. As the idea of successfulness at EU level is rather complex, I start here by underlining the other five practical similarities. The selection of these three cities resulted from the application of

these selection criteria on the shortcut lists of cities acting individually in Brussels as drawn by Herrschel and Newman (2017). First and most obviously, these cities are by definition urban areas. Although obvious, this statement is not neutral. Schultze (2003: 128) notices that the first line of division is between rural and urban areas. Urban and rural areas have very diverging interests to promote. They are in a competitive, not to say conflictual, relation notably concerning EU structural funds. It was thus important to choose case studies that are genuinely urban cities.

Much more than being urban areas, these three cities have strong economic and spatial similarities. Dossi (2016: 25) specifies the need to focus on one policy area when studying the game of influence between cities and the EU. There is a variation by sector in terms of relation between EU and cities. These variations need to be *neutralized* for a correct comparison. It was therefore important to select cities with similar policy interests. Being 'global port-cities' (Merk & Notteboom, 2013 for Rotterdam; Merk, Hilmola & Dubarle, 2012 for Helsinki), we assume they have similar interests in dealing with the EU. For example, regarding EU policies and EU funds, such port-cities can be focused on and interested in maritime trade regulations, hinterland transportation network infrastructures, fishery policy etc.

Thirdly, these three cities also have similarities in their geographical areas. As being the metropolitan centre of their geographical area[18], Guderjan affirms (2015) they do not *need* the regional medium, for Herrschel and Newman (2017) they do not *want* to use the regional medium. Guderjan (2015) underlines the strong importance of the regional medium for small and peripheral SNUs, hence the will of Rotterdam, Barcelona, and Helsinki to bypass it. The second geographical similarities of these cities are the connection with the neighbour Member state of the EU (being Germany for Rotterdam, France for Barcelona and Baltic states for Helsinki). Looking at the example of hinterland transportation network, the importance of these criteria gets very clear. In 2011, The Commission launched a massive investment plan named Connecting European Facilities (CEF). This project, doted of about thirty billion euros, is dedicated to a 'small number of projects where real EU added value can be realized' (Merk & Notteboom, 2013: 85). Port-cities with hinterland connecting another MS are places implicitly pointed at by this program.

The fourth and fifth criteria are the economic and democratic size of the city. The positive impact of the size of the city when trying to influence EU affairs is affirmed by many scholars (Rooij, 2002: 462; Wolffhardt, 2005: 417; Kern, 2007: 15). For that matter, Rotterdam, Barcelona, and Helsinki are comparable (see fig 5.) whereas other cities in line with other criteria (being an urban port-city with connection with another MS) are either too big (e.g. Hamburg is much more powerful economically) or two small (e.g. Tallinn), or with no trans-border linkage (e.g. Gdansk). Malmö is seen as a model of influential city at EU level (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 88) but its economic and demographic power

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[18] Concerning Rotterdam, it is the metropolitan centre regarding its economic field of activities. The metropolitan centre of Randstad obviously being Amsterdam.

is too low compared to other influential cities that it may be an exceptional case, making possible finding using this case hardly generalizable.

Selection of Variables (2012)	Rotterdam	Helsinki	Barcelona	Malmö	Hamburg	Tallinn	Gdansk
Average population size of local government	41 573	67 121	50 123	47 626	9 729	18 951	45 768
Population of the city area (persons)	882 169	1 028 376	2 858 446	391 851	1 718 809	398 432	702 758
GDP (millions of US$)	66 510	75 981	135 803	24 757	158 074	19 514	30 060
GDP per capita (US$)	44 440	51 454	36 125	37 130	52 748	36 775	27 366

Figure 6 Selection of European port-cities comparison (Knoema, 2017)

This set of criteria that helped the selection of cities allow a comparison between elements that have on the one hand a common interest in investing the EU sphere, and on the other hand similar material capacities (financial capital, human capital, infrastructures etc.) to do so. The objective of the research also being to provide examples of best practices, it is also essential that the selected cities are also successfully investing in Brussels. Theorising an index showing the degree of successfulness of a city in its relation to the EU would be a whole different, but related, research. The time and resource constraints of this research do not allow this project to be seriously tackled. Therefore, I will here only pin-point elements demonstrating that these three cities are leaders, and seen as such, in their geographical and economic area when it comes to influence the EU. The fact that they are port-cities is first a good *indication*. Port-cities are 'traditionally more outward-oriented cities' (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 135). This is an indication but not a conclusion. Let's now review elements for these three cities that allow me to qualify their relations with the EU as successful.

Rotterdam may be one of the most successfully Europeanized cities, all categories combined. This observation is made by scholars: 'Rotterdam is an example for a city which has the capacities to influence decisions made in Brussels directly' (Kern, 2007: 13), as well as by the EU itself which constantly 'consider[s] the important role that such a cross border region could play for the whole of Europe' (Merk & Notteboom, 2013: 82) and by the Rotterdam city council itself for which 'Rotterdam has a long history of contacts with the EU: from acquiring subsidies for urban projects to networking and influencing European decision-making' (City of Rotterdam, 2009: 35). These observations are based on many factors. They consider both the high capacity of Rotterdam in attracting European funds and in pushing the EU integration towards its own interest: among the eight Dutch cities studied by Rooij, only 'Rotterdam has succeeded in obtaining substantial amounts of money in this way.' (2002: 455). Regarding the CEF funds, Rotterdam managed to get 62,242,170 euros for two projects (Innovation and Networks Executive Agency, 2015) which is more than any other Dutch city. Rotterdam's 'good reputation' (City of Rotterdam, 2009: 39) has even pushed the EU to ask the city

to 'serve as Management Authority for the Operational programme 'Opportunities for West (Randstad)'' (Rotterdam City, 2009: 39).

Helsinki is also recognized as a significant actor at EU level by scholars as well as by practitioners. During the conference of the COST Action on Local Reforms (see page 11 of this thesis), scholars such as Prof. Bouckaert ("Finland is the closest country to Brussels") and practitioners such as President Markkula ("Helsinki is a model of EU cities for innovative, integrative and research sector all working together") were full of praise toward Helsinki. This status of a European leader to Helsinki is firmly assumed by its mayor Jussi Pajunen. For instance, in 2016, Mayor Pajunen "urge[d] all European cities to join" an initiative to wave the European flag on city halls as "a great positive way of showing European team spirit." (Helsinki kaupunki, 2016). More than words, this status is confirmed in the facts. In 2014, 47% of items on the Helsinki city council's agenda were related to EU integration (Gustafsson, 2014: 11); Helsinki seems active in agenda setting at EU level on some specific subjects such as refugees integration (Jezequel, 2015). Regarding the CEF funding program, the case of Helsinki is striking. Even though Finland is connected to only one other EU MS, which is moreover located very far away from its capital (we measure 740km between Helsinki and the closest Swedish border!), Helsinki manages to acquire the funding for three projects, for an amount that goes up to 36,316,805 euros (Innovation and Networks Executive Agency, 2015). Another massive infrastructure project, *Rail Baltica*, connecting Helsinki with the rest of the Baltic regions has only been possible with the 'active role of cities and regional actors in the Helsinki metropolitan area', the environment-friendly characteristic of the project was one of the main reason why Helsinki pushed for it (Merk et al., 2012: 31). Indeed, The Port of Helsinki aims to be a pioneer in environmental issues (Merk et al., 2012: 31). We clearly see here how influential Helsinki can be if it is interested in a project.

Except with Zapata-Barero for who Barcelona has strong 'connections with the EU and diverse European cities networks' (2015: 2), it is more difficult to find praise in the literature about Barcelona's success at EU level than for Rotterdam and Helsinki. However, Barcelona is presented by its peers (United Cities and Local Governments, 2017) as a 'decentralized cooperation player'[19] which promotes 'good local governance' through a dense network of city-to-city cooperation model. Keeping in mind Wolffhardt et al's (2005) wordings, the term *player* is not neutral. Barcelona City itself value its international relation strategy as influencing notably the international and European aid strategy and key to exchange and technical cooperation with partners (Barcelona City Council, 2009). Finally, figures speak for themselves: within the CEF program which we already used as a means of comparison above, Barcelona has managed to finance with EU funds six projects for a total amount of 168,810,190 euros[20] (Innovation and Networks Executive Agency, 2015).

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[19] The term "player" here is far from neutral when keeping in mind Wolffhardt et al.'s classification.
[20] Amount partially shared with Valencia and other coastal cities for a motorway construction, the project "Mediterranean corridor. Section Valencia-Tarragona-Barcelona. Implementation of UIC gauge (phase 1)"

B. Differences to be tested

The very point in a comparative research is to find out if the diverging characteristics (independent variables) of mostly similar cases can explain differences on the studied elements (dependent variables). In the paragraph above (A), the similarities that allow the comparison were shown. This paragraph (B) now presents the diverging features, those that will be tested in the empirical research.

This selection of case studies will permit an answer to the first hypothesis (i.e. *the model of governance of Brussels city representation offices differs according to the objectives of the office whether it be the influence of EU regulations, the attraction of EU funds or the opportunities of knowledge sharing)*. Indeed, even though Wolffhardt et al.'s classification (2005) is blurred (one city can alternatively be acting as Euro-player and as Policy-experimenter for example) we can still classify, from the previous description of Rotterdam's, Barcelona's, and Helsinki's successfulness at EU level, the three cities into the three categories (fig. 6.).

Attitudes[21]	Significant elements[22]	Rotterdam	Barcelona	Helsinki
Euro-player	Active in Networks	x	x	x
	Strong presence in Brussels	x	x	x
	Innovative practices regarding EU affairs	x		
	No need of EU funds to perform activities at EU level	x		
	Sustained interest strategy (including opposition to EU policy-decisions)	x	x	
Client City	Meet economic and social criteria for ESF		x	
	Willing to grab funding opportunities	x	x	x
	Look for long term secure funding		x	
	Presence in Brussels focused on EU funds		x	
Policy-experimenter	Source of innovation and modernity			x
	Policy learning potential	x	x	x
	Agree to fill EU funds criteria if they push for innovative practices			x
	Small size or thematic interest			x

Figure 7 Elements of categorization of cities as Euro-player, Client City or Policy-experimenter (Wolffhardt et al., 2005: 417-418-419)

We see that most predominantly Rotterdam is closer to Euro-player's characteristics, Barcelona to Client city's, and Helsinki to Policy experimenter's. It is however very difficult to draw such a

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[21] Wolffhardt et al., 2005: 417-418-419
[22] Wolffhardt et al., 2005: 417-418-419 with my own wordings

classification, figure 6 is only an indication. Therefore, during interviews one or more questions will be asked for each practice to determine the category of attitude to which the practice in question relates to (e.g. "with this method X, what is the office mostly looking for? Information about funding opportunities or about the best way to implement a policy Y?").

The second hypothesis (i.e. the model of governance of Brussels city representation offices differ according to the national system of local governance) can also be tested through this set of case studies. Unlike Wolffhardt et al.'s classification, classifying the case studies into Loughlin's (2003, 2010) is rather simple and straightforward. Rotterdam evolves in a Germanic model, Barcelona in a Franco model, and Helsinki in a Scandinavian model because one city is by definition settled down and cannot shift form one constitutional environment to another. For Tatham and Callanan (2014) there are two kinds of SNUs regarding their relations to the EU: strong SNUs with legislative power and weak SNUs without legislative power. With this perspective, Spanish regions are strong, and Finnish are weak. Dutch subnational entities seem to stand in the middle.

Section II. The process of semi-direct interviews: advantages and drawbacks

Among all possible empirical investigation strategies (documentary observation, direct observation in situation, non-structured interviews, questionnaires, group interviews etc. (Navarro, 2013)), the semi-structured interviews strategy seems the most appropriate here even though it presents some inconveniences.

Semi-structured interviews seek obtain relatively homogeneous and therefore comparable outcomes and in which all crucial elements are tackled. Semi-structured interviews help to explore thoughts of the interviewees, getting closer to what practitioners perceive of the situation at stake, but also tick predefined questions. A list of questions is predefined and necessarily used during the interview (Appendix 2). However, interviewees are free to answer the question with their own interpretation and with their own nuances so that he or she gives his/her own idea of his/her activity. The openness of the question leading to the room of manoeuvre in interviewees' answers is necessary also not to bias the question toward an answer that the researcher expects to hear. For these reasons, semi-structured interviews seem the best method for this research, as Navarro summarizes: "semi-structured interview is a good strategy to understand systems of practices, to analyse behaviours, to comprehend actions and to put these elements in relation with the motivations of the actors" (2013, my translation from French).

Navarro (2013) evokes another asset of semi-direct interviews that can be relevant in this thesis: they allow to work on and with elites. Indeed, elites (such as EU representatives of major cities in the present case) are usually quite reticent to answer mere questionnaires. Moreover, elite professionals

are neither impressed nor intimidated by the researcher and therefore can answer more accurately without being biased by the researcher's presence. Prosaically, it is in fact the similarities between semi-direct interviews and journalistic interviews that make the elite comfortable. A non-structured interview would be destabilizing for this type of actors (Navarro, 2013).

Interviews, in contrast to questionnaires and documentary researches, allow investigations on rather informal activities. As it has been criticised in chapter 2, cities have very little institutionalized access to the policy-making process at EU level, they therefore use informal networking activities to influence on this process (Guderjan, 2015: 947). One cannot hope to get a complete idea of what lobbying for a city is about and how to best administrate it since:

> [I]nterest representation *does not leave much of a mark and is difficult to trace*. It is done mostly through phone calls, email correspondence and sometimes formal but mostly informal meetings (…) Given that these behind-the-scenes exchanges—corridor discussions, informal bilateral meetings and so forth—are of greater importance than visible official activities, interviews with the participants in these activities provide the best information on the nature and scope of these intangible processes." (Tatham, 2008: 495) [My emphasis]

Unfortunately, none of the investigation strategies is perfect. Intellectual honesty forces me to present the drawbacks of the chosen process of interviews. Due to the low number of interviews (one for each case study), there was a need, during the interviews with practitioners to steer the interview to what was needed to be understood rather than letting him or her develop extensively what he or she thought as relevant. Fortunately, the interview process did continue with interviewees via emails so to obtain further information. Another difficulty was to draft questions that do not influence the answers in anyway. For example, to know if the Brussels office spends time and money on learning opportunities one should not ask "Is part of your activities related to acquire knowledge from other cities' experiences?" because the practitioner may, after having considered the question, find some related activities that he or she would not have thought relevant enough to evoke if the question would have simply been "What are the main objectives of the office?". Another problem to overcome with interview process is the very nature of the information that respondents may be willing to yield (Tatham, 2008: 495). EU representatives may be willing to show themselves and their organizations as highly influential, or at least to over-estimate its influence. Another possibility of biased answer is if the respondent deliberately wants to hide certain practices for diverse reasons (ethical issues, secrecy, unwillingness to share best practices with competitors etc.). Ideally, a way to counter these effects is to multiply interviews with actors with different objectives and backgrounds. Unfortunately, it is difficult to realize such an array of interviews for this thesis. That is why literature, other statistics, official websites and a questionnaire have also been

scrutinized. Acknowledging these drawbacks, it is legitimate to question the credibility of the research. That is why the next section defends the reasons why this research is scientifically credible.

Section III. Credibility of the research

The scientific credibility of a research is based on both its internal and external validity (Navarro, 2013). The former express the necessity for a research not to confound too many independent variables (Indiana.edu, n.d.) and the latter depends on how well the findings of the research apply to different environments – 'does the same thing happen in other settings?' (Indiana.edu, n.d.). This last section explicates the external and internal validity of the research.

Internal validity is assured in this research by the systematization of the operationalization of the research question. As we saw in figure 4. each key element of current local sector practices has been operationalized and transcribed into non-abstract sense (meaning without using academic terms such as NPM) so that interviewed practitioners that may be unaware of models of governance they may be using can still answer. The systematisation of the questions is also shown in figure 4: each element is transcribed into a question and it is the same question that is asked to interviewees. The internal validity is also backed by the analytical model used here. The analytical model must provide wide categories to help structuring the comparison. These wide categories have been explicated several times thus far: they are the three categories drawn by Wolffhardt et al. in 2005 (Euro-player, Client city and Policy-experimenter). This categorization and this systematic link made between the questions and the categories aim at ensuring that the answers provided by interviewees depend on the objectives of the office. If some other independent variables appear along the investigation process (e.g. political leadership) these will be underlined.

The other categorisation used in this research, Loughlin's (Germanic, Franco and Scandinavian system) is meant to back the external validity. This focus on the different tradition of national systems of local governance is key: it allows generalization within the same system. To be precise, this generalization will only be restricted to these systems' division if the second hypothesis is confirmed. In contrary, if it is found that the local legal context does not influence practices in Brussels, generalization can be even more widely spread. This is also true for the first hypothesis: if we happen to discover (which will be the case) that best practices are relatively similar whether the Brussels office wants to influence on EU policies (Euro-player), get large amount of EU funds (Client city), or use Europeanization as a means to acquire knowledge (Policy-experimenter), generalization can be wider. This side of the research is however to be taken with care. Indeed, a case study, as a research strategy, makes compulsory a certain variation in the result when adapted to some different local economic and social circumstances. This obstacle is due to my will to consider the studied entities (Brussels offices) as a whole and as acting as unitary actors in a coherent but unique

system. Indeed, each case study evolves within a combination of the national system of local governance and of the city's economic and social background. Consequently, the degree of care to be taken when generalizing findings about potential best practices depends on if the hypotheses are confirmed or not. If they are denied, generalization of findings seems easier[23].

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[23] For an analytic method to transfer administrative best practices from one local/national context to another local context or to an upper level such as the supranational level, please see Andrews, C. (2008) "Best Practices in Local Government" In: M. De Vries and S. Haque, ed., *Improving Local Government*, 1st ed. Palgrave Macmillan, pp.107-192.

Chapter 5:
Presentation of Results

The investigation process was two sided: on the one side investigation has been conducted by way of interviews of either the Head of Office (Helsinki, Barcelona) or the EU representative (Rotterdam) of the Brussels office of each of the case study[24]; on the other side, research also used information available on the Internet (official websites of these offices and their partners, Transparency Register of the EU, other official documents displayed by cities etc.). This chapter outlines the results of this investigation using the lens of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 and the methodological care presented in Chapter 4. Section I. describes the functioning of the three offices, underline their particularities and their administrative tendencies (see fig. 4 page 37 above). In the end of this first section, figure 8. summarizes the practices of the selected offices. In section II, lessons from these case studies are drawn first for practitioners and second for the research itself. This second section answers the two hypotheses. In section III, other determinants of the three cases' particular practices are explored.

Section I. The different administrative practices of the three case studies

The three case studies have very different administrative practices. We will successively outline relevant practices of each of them. Special emphasis will be added on their objectives vis-à-vis Wolffhardt et al.'s (2005) classification and on influence of the national system of local governance when relevant. The coherence of each system will be evaluated. Unfortunately, the very wide disparities between these three offices in terms of organization push for presenting them successively instead of along more thematic lines. It is therefore not possible to present results along thematic lines such as their practices during the different policy-cycle steps (formulation/decision/implementation), their attitudes as Euro-players, Client cities or Policy experimenters, their good and bad practices, or their reasons why to invest in the EU sphere.

A. G4-Office/Rotterdam: A one-man translation office?[25]

As seen in Chapter 4, Rotterdam seems to be the closest city to Brussels. Restitution of the outcomes of the investigation will thus start with its administrative practices. Along with The Hague,

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[24] I sincerely thank Mr Hans Verdonk (EU Representative – G-4 EU Office and City of Rotterdam), Mrs. Krista Taipale (Head of International Affairs – Helsinki EU Office), and Mrs. Blanca Soler Tobella (Head of Office – Barcelona Provincial Council Office in Brussels) for their precious inputs.
[25] In this sub-section, all sentences surrounded by *double* quotation marks are *verbatim* of Verdonk during the interview

Utrecht, and Amsterdam, Rotterdam is one of the four members of the joint G-4 EU Office. This office is 'an integrated part of the national political and technical co-operation of the four cities aiming to promote their interests' (G-4.eu, 2017). Each one of the four cities defends its own interest but in a joint office so to benefit from political and material "synergies". Activities are shared between staff and by the staff of the G-4 EU Office. Decision to tackle issues either together or separately are based on informally and internal discussions within the G-4 EU Office. Nevertheless, each one of the staff (one EU representative per city) is independent and works on its behalf because they are only responsible to their own city council. For Rotterdam, the city council sets the priorities of its EU representative and decides the budget dedicated to its part of the G-4 EU Office[26]. The interview confirmed the assumption made above of a strong ability of Rotterdam to evolve in the EU context. Hans Verdonk talks about the "highly successful rate for the city". Even if this observation regards the selection of EU funded projects, other objectives of the Rotterdam Representation within G-4 Office (hereinafter G4-R) seem fulfilled.

Investigation revealed three broad objectives. Officially, the 'main objective is to monitor EU policy and legislative developments' (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 166). To do so, G4-R uses a rather long term perspective to see what will be the EU priorities and objectives for the next decade. For example, a lot of energy is spent to know what will be the priorities of the next pluriannual (2020 – 2027) EU funds framework so to be ready and take the most of it. Typically, the point is to "make sure the money will find a project". Observation about what will be important in the next budgetary framework must be as wide as possible since the next priorities of Rotterdam in the next decade are not known either. In that sense, the foresight activities monitoring EU policy and legislative developments is essential to any 'Client-city' to "make sure there is no clash of legislation between EU and national law". This foresight activity is not only about EU funds but also about legislations: Although it is easy to understand EU funded projects are city specific, some legislative pieces coming from Brussels are too. In fact, this is the very reason why Rotterdam decided to invest in a representation in Brussels on its own (alongside membership in EU-wide networks such as Eurocities): "not all cities are the same" says Verdonk, therefore, in some specific areas where it is very important for Rotterdam to be present, the G4-R enters into action. It has to ensure that the new legislation fits with local circumstances. In Rotterdam for example, special circumstances with the port had to be put forward to make sure the legislation on air quality is still possible to enforce without jeopardising port's own objectives. Actions and activities depend on what is being proposed at EU level and its relevance with local circumstances, this is the first benefit of being present in Brussels. In a nutshell, G4-R 'provides opportunities to influence policy proposals at an early stage and improve the implementation of EU policies at local level' (Transparency Register, 2017, A).

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[26] Publicised budget (111,945 € in 2016) in the Transparency Register (2017, A) confuses the four cities

The second objective is related to the first. G4-R is a key element of Rotterdam's strategy to make EU legislations reflect the interest of the city and its citizens (Transparency Register, 2017, A). This 'Euro-player's' attitude requires a two-way street process. On the one hand, a process from the G4-R to EU institutions is to promote Rotterdam's needs. To do so, G4-R focuses on strengthening its network and intensifying effective relationships with Europe's political representatives, administrators etc. (Herrschel & Newman, 2017: 166). And on the other hand, there are also strong relations with civil society back in Rotterdam: although there is no direct relation between G4-R and Rotterdam's civil society, the city council is making an effective link between the two. To set priorities, the city leads discussions yearly with people and professionals in the city to know what they expect and want. Based on this dialogue, the city council sets priority interests for G4-R to promote and priority fields of legislation to monitor. This process of discussion with the ground-level is essential.

The third objective is to inform practitioners back in Rotterdam. Although G4-R is not focused exclusively on subsidies, this activity mostly regards EU funding opportunities. Informing on this topic is crucial because practitioners working on the field don't know what the process at EU level is. G4-R's role is to "link the ground and the EU level" and to "take [practitioners] by the hand through the process" of EU funding. Very practically, it organizes an "*EU G-4 Training course*" to help practitioners see how the "game is being played". It is about getting them "involved and knowledgeable".

Although objectives and activities of the G4-R are rather similar to what is expected for a local representation, its great success incites to look at its internal administrative practices. In 2002, Rooij already underlined the exceptional practices of the city of Rotterdam itself. Without focussing on the G4-R, he emphasised the importance of a) the city council 'separate 'EU filter' which receives a lot of EU information, which is subsequently passed on to the relevant sections' (2002: 455), b) the effectiveness of a separate office which coordinates tendering, c) the good use of a 'broad network', and d) the presence of an 'EU section' officially lobbying daily. All these tools gave Rotterdam 'confidence in its ability to influence EU regulation' (2002, 456). In this paragraph, the point d), 'EU section', which is part of this magic formula as described by Rooij (2002) is detailed.

The G4-R appears at first sight as a one-man-job. The EU representative of Rotterdam is the only person of the Rotterdam city council's staff to be permanently based in Brussels. His or her daily activity is to take benefit from being present in Brussels by tying relationships, knowing what is going on, search for partners with similar interests or connect for "knowledge with cities with expertise", gathering informal information, and put "forward documents at the right time at the right place". The links he creates are thus long-lasting and seek long-term perspective. For example, G4-R has been working closely with the French local authority of Pas-de-Calais on the long-termed process of

the third industrial transition[27]. This long-term vision does not allow for performance-oriented budgeting and other NPM features which traditionally look for short term benefit and rigorous positive budgeting every year. To illustrate this observation, Verdonk uses the following Dutch saying "De kost gaat voor de baat uit"[28]. The investment is usually worth spending, especially regarding the minimal cost of the G4-R for Rotterdam city. Indeed, besides the rent of an office in the centre of the European quarter of Brussels, this "lobby game" is almost cost-free. An additional reason why G4-R appears first as a one-man job is the independence of the EU representative. Besides the low performance monitoring, the annual report to the mayor is rather informal and could be seen as a "list of achievements and priorities for next years".

Looking closer at the functioning of the G4-R and besides its large room of manoeuvre, the G4-R is only the tip of the iceberg of Rotterdam's representation strategy. The EU representative based in Brussels is the "translation office from local dialect to Brussels talks and vice-versa". He serves a large team back in Rotterdam: EU Representative works with a close team of two European lobbying experts and two national ones. This lifts the total number of people lobbying full time for the city up to five. These four people compose the first circle with which the G4-R works with, other concentric circles exist around it: a second circle composed of many civil servants in diverse departments of Rotterdam city have EU affairs knowledge, and a third circle composed of national experts is to deal with the content of legislations and projects particularly relevant for Rotterdam. A final circle is composed of Rotterdam politicians who may come to Brussels for lobbying purpose when advised to do so by the G4-R. This structure with a EU representative supporting and supported by experts back home is only possible thanks to the *geographical proximity* of Rotterdam from Brussels. Indeed, for the Rotterdam-based expert team, coming to Brussels is easy, quick, and cheap. Proximity makes it materially more convenient (less time-consuming, cheaper and more flexible).

To conclude on the G4-R, it is difficult to classify its functioning into one of the local public sector attitudes as described by Schwab et al. (2017: 12). The sectorialisation of the team into diverse experts, meaning the different circles around the G4-R, may refer to the NPM paradigm but the relative detachments of the city council from monetary return definitely puts assimilation with NPM away. G4-R is closer to traditional public sector service that had to face budgetary restrain lately (Kuhlmann, Laffin & Wayenberg, 2016). Budget cuts and austerity shrank the team from three full-time EU affairs experts to only two. For many scholars, local EU representation is a luxury that can only be offered by large resources or thoughtful spending of money. EU representation is an investment strategy that can be transcribed in many ways and the one way chosen by G4-R is a low-

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[27] For more details on the third industrial revolution, see Rifkin, J. (2011). *The third industrial revolution*. 1st ed. Palgrave Macmillan.
[28] As translated by Verdonk: "first the cost, then the income", or alternatively "no pain, no gain". It can be traced back to 17th Century (VOC times) "de cost gaet voor de baet uyt".

cost representation integrated as much as possible in the local administration while being in Brussels and serving a solid team back in Rotterdam. Besides the low accountability of the G4-R towards its city council, it can be related to more traditional national representation with a long-term strategic networking and strong relations with home state institutions. Representing the city towards the Brussels institution is the objective raised first by Verdonk.

B. The Helsinki EU Office: A private-like antenna?[29]

The Helsinki EU Office (HEO) differs very much from G-4, from the many other European local offices but also from the other Finnish ones. This difference is due to the high number and the wide diversity of its stakeholders. Although HEO is legally a part of the Regional council of Helsinki-Uusimaa, it represents all the following members: City of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Natural Resources Center, Häme, Kymenlaakso Association, Päijät-Häme, Aalto University, the University of Helsinki, Hanken School of Economics, Laurea University of Applied Sciences and the Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Transparency Register, 2017, B). Thus, there are diverse interests to represent from local authorities to regional ones and some universities. Although diverse, this grouping is far from a random association. The rationale backing this heteroclite grouping is not the strict Helsinki metropolitan area but rather all areas from where Finnish workers commute daily toward Helsinki city centre. This necessary organization is caused by the very broad and disparate geographical settings of Finland. For twenty years of existence of the HEO, there has been a movement toward gathering up organizations within HEO. This tendency seems far from running dry: additional organizations apply every year. As said, although HEO is legally a sub-part of the regional council of Helsinki-Uusimaa, all stakeholders are equal and considered proportionally to their financial inputs; in other words the higher is the membership fee paid the more the institutions can expect from HEO's services, this is the only criteria. The regional council is considered as a stakeholder like the other ones, disregarding its legal control on HEO. During the interview, Krista Taipale, the head of office, emphasised on stakeholders as the central players: they define objectives, contribute to the whole budget[30] (Transparency Register, 2017, B), and their number determines the repartition of the work of the HEO. For these reasons, the functioning of the HEO is totally based on stakeholders' numbers and wills. Before entering this functioning into details, we must describe HEO's objectives and activities.

Although objectives may change from one year to the another to prioritise one sector over another, daily activities of the staff are constant: a) identifying the changes in EU policies and EU

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[29] In this sub-section, all sentences surrounded by *double* quotation marks are *verbatim* of Taipale during the interview
[30] 390,000€ in 2016 (Transparency Register, 2017, B)

environment ("foresight activities"); b) reporting information and analysing it with other experts back home, and c) discussing what is important for the experts working on the ground back in Finland. In a nutshell, stakeholders need HEO's help in analysing information on upcoming changes in the EU sphere. These activities are linked and part of "a joint work". To sum up, the HEO's task is to be the "first antenna" for all topics defined by its stakeholders.

The "foresight activity" seems to be first on the agenda (Helsinki Region Infoshare, 2017), EU fundings appear second: HEO is not directly linked with seeking EU funds. It does not write projects but instead helps practitioners who want to be EU funded. It does so notably with *informative workshops* held in Helsinki for the benefits of practitioners of member organizations. Regarding EU funding, most of the information can be found on the Internet from anywhere in Europe with no need to be present in Brussels. Therefore, help regarding EU funding is about "increasing the knowledge about the EU level among their stakeholders". HEO may give comments on proposed projects (e.g. about their European dimension), or may discuss them informally with EU officials before submissions of the project so to get useful feedbacks (Helsinki EU Office, 2017). This practical help and knowledge can only be gained from being present in Brussel. The activities relative to EU funding is therefore less about finding opportunities for stakeholders than providing them with information about the quality of their projects (with a European point of view) and organization so that practitioners are better equipped to take benefit of the EU opportunities. This is more an information/training service than monetary/financing one.

Finally, there is an important external cooperation strategy. In some cases, there can be competitive attitudes vis-à-vis other local representation offices but most of the time cooperation prevails – such as for agenda-setting on refugees' integration (Jezequel, 2015) or education and research (Helsinki EU Office, 2017). Competitive situations only appear between Finnish entities when stakeholders apply for the same EU funding whereas cooperation is daily business: HEO cooperates on common lobbying strategies with other local representations bilaterally and through networks. The HEO still faces competition from private consultancy corporations.

The whole organization of the HEO is based on the following principle: just like a private company with its clients, HEO is accountable to all its stakeholders but none of them is indispensable. Indeed, a stakeholder may consider not renewing its membership if not satisfied by the services provided by the HEO. In that case, HEO risks losing a member. This is the only, but severe, sanction that the HEO can undergo. However, HEO is currently backed by a very positive dynamic as membership applications are numerous every year. Considering this growth and strong attractiveness, it is clear that HEO is successful. HEO presents itself as the leading Finnish organization. A first possible set of best practices can thus be dragged from HEO's practices. For Taipale, this success is clearly due to the internal management of the office. Hence the importance to

closely look into it. Internal management is based on three pillars: a) quality and time measurement, b) a bottom-up selection of objectives, and c) a coherent and complementary staff.

Taipale first emphases the importance to monitor the level of performance. Since she arrived about a year and a half ago, she installed a whole and complete system of quality monitoring. Measures of HEO's performances are kept updated at any time. The HEO monitors exactly the time and energy it offers to answer the needs of each of its stakeholders. It also monitors the advantages these stakeholders have gained from membership. The fundraising system of the HEO makes this measuring time activity indispensable: if a stakeholder has requested the HEO's services relatively more than its participates on its budget, the HEO will rise the membership fees for this stakeholder or, alternatively, diminish its services for this stakeholder. Taipale confirms her point of view on this: for her "it is always good, whatever the number of stakeholders, to monitor time spent for each of them. This is what needs to be done in public administration in general." For her, this is on what the HEO bases its effectiveness.

The second pathway to success is the method used to set priorities. Before the arrival of Taipale, objectives were defined in a top-down fashion: priorities were mostly decided by the head of office who proposed varying topics to stakeholders. This process changed for a rather bottom-up one. A workshop is held once a year in Helsinki to discuss with stakeholders about their interests. These general meetings enable members to find out common and complementary objectives to promote together: for her, "getting stakeholders all together in the same place is essential to discuss and identify joined EU interests". Conflicts of interests or simply diverging interests are "extremely rare situations" but if it happens, HEO would abstain totally.

The third pillar is the composition of HEO (i.e. four experts and two trainees). Staff members, alike stakeholders, are selected so that they all have knowledge that supports each other. Although they all have sectoral responsibilities, they work as a team as much as possible: staff members look at their stakeholders' requests collectively to see what the best way to tackle them is. For example, in a 'circular economy' project looking for EU funds, funds can be asked from different perspectives (smart cities, green policies, transportation etc.), in such a case, each member of the staff can provide his or her own expert view to increase the quality of HEO's answer.

Regarding the HEO, the NPM paradigm has a strong influence. The whole organization is structured around the fact that if the performances decrease, the HEO may lose stakeholders and, ultimately, lose funding. Taipale underlined the importance "to provide good services and show stakeholders they get added value for their money", otherwise "they would leave and that would be the worst" that can happen.

As said above, local EU representation is a luxury that cost large resources or thoughtful spending of money. EU representation is an investment strategy that can be transcribed in many

ways and the one way chosen by HEO is a "representation based on a customer relation": stakeholders are clearly and explicitly considered as clients and the HEO is structured in accordance. All relations and activities are rationalized (all activities of HEO "must be justified by its presence in Brussels") as it would be in a private company. Finally, the yearly definition of objectives and priorities and evaluation of the activities by stakeholders tend to rather push for a short-term perspective and quick profitability to present benefit of membership to stakeholders. For Guderjan (2015: 946), the sharp cut in local budgets is jeopardising the sane relation between the EU and cities, HEO shows here that some NPM attitudes can be a way to tackle this recurrent budgetary issue. To conclude, one can list performance-oriented manners (see fig. 4) that are all strong similarities with the management of private companies: performance-oriented monitoring; strict time management; formations; rational selection and sectoralization of the staff; short-term perspective/rapid profitability; new accounting system based on customers/stakeholders' satisfaction; and internal reorganization.

C. Barcelona Provincial Council Office in Brussels: Barcelona first lobby?[31]

The third case study, the Barcelona Provincial Council Office in Brussels (hereinafter BPCO), helps to complete the set of circumstances to be tested. BPCO represents a city area in country with a Franco's tradition of subnational governance and which appears to act as a Client-city. When analysing the functioning of BPCO, a third very different form of city/local representation appears alongside the methods used by G4-R and HEO. Nevertheless, the interview and scanning process of available online information confirm that BPCO is also, with its own particularities, a successful office. The Province of Barcelona, through BPCO, is indeed one of the most active locality in Europe, it 'is an enterprising and outward-looking territory, and these attributes make of this territory a local benchmark on an international level' (Transpency Register, 2017, C). It is, for example, the third most attracting city for foreign investment. Administrative practices of BPCO can therefore be analysed as good practices for its specific situation.

As for G4-R and HEO first to be presented is BPCO's objectives regarding European affairs and how they are set. For the two first cases, this determines the functioning of the office. Objectives of BPCO are twofold: on the one hand to promote strategic local projects thanks to both EU subsidies and practical information gained through partnerships and multilateral networks, and, on the other hand, to place the Province of Barcelona in the heart of EU decision-making system for questions relevant to its local governments (diba.cat, 2017). The interview revealed that these objectives, and the working priorities that logically follow, are defined in a top-down manner. The city council and

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[31] In this sub-section, all sentences surrounded by *double* quotation marks are *verbatim* of Soler Tobella. This interview has been conducted with the help of Andrea Rodriguez Santos who spoke on behalf of Soler Tobella, the Head of Office. Upon decision of BPCO, the interview has been conducted through emails.

the Brussels office itself set priorities. It appears that no other actors can have a say, except local NGOs occasionally. Citizens can get involved if they are pro-active. Citizens mostly have to speak up by themselves through regular petitions, recalls and local initiatives. Intrusion of civil society is thus only occasional. Within BPCO, the working priorities are defined by the head of office with the collective input of her team. Even though these objectives can vary according to circumstances, political tendencies and economic conjuncture back in Barcelona, they are rather constant in time. That is to say, objectives regard broad areas of EU legislations (e.g. urban policies; BPCO is part of the EP Urban Intergroup (Transparency Register, 2017, C)) rather than on a couple of specific policies (e.g. smart cities, clear transportation etc.). Therefore, BPCO adopts a long-term perspective with some possible conjuncture-driven variations. These objectives are either local or supranational (i.e. EU wide or global). More occasionally BPCO may represent purely regional interests. National interests however seem to be totally absent from BPCO's agenda. Objectives are presented as local or supranational causes to external actors (EU officials etc.), except when a national composite is needed, then BPCO might very pragmatically present projects as national to gain weight and influence. From this objectives' analysis, it appears that BPCO defends concentrated and local interests that are sometimes in confrontation with regional and national ones; these interests are not defined by local actors but by the city council and BPCO itself.

The interview suggested that the rationale of BPCO is the necessity to exist in the policy-making system alongside the powerful regional authority of Catalonia – unlike Spanish municipalities, Spanish regions are formally involved in the decision-making of the Council of Ministers as well as in the designation of national priorities to be defended at EU level (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 7; Ladner, 2014: 51). Blanca Soler Tobella affirmed that Barcelona city and its suburban area have decided to create their own office not because EU wide networks are ineffective but because Barcelona has very specific interests which differ to those of the rest of Catalonia region. Additionally, getting its own Brussels office was seen by Barcelona as a way to affirm its local autonomy and identity. Literature may provide reasons for this attitude. To Herrschel and Newman (2017: 171), the EU engagement of local and regional authorities – when it is about 'securing a slice of the pie' of EU subsidies, requires a high level of 'flexibility and awareness' about local specificities to prepare relevant and ground-level-friendly strategies. This level of awareness and flexibility can be reached more easily through mobilization of a more locally concentrated level. Another explanation from the literature is to be found in Huysseune and Jans (2008). As said above, Spanish local authorities do not enjoy the same level of institutional access to EU decision-making than Spanish regions. In this situation, local authorities tend 'to resort to more persuasion based lobby tactics' (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 7). The detailed description of these lobby-like activities by Huysseune and Jans on the same page reflects, to large extents, the description by Soler Tobella of activities performed by her staff. While the firsts talk about 'producing position papers', 'establish issue-coalitions', and 'participate in the wide array

of consultation formats', she *respectively* evokes "report[ing] writings and development strategies for lobby actions", the cooperation with other local representations in Brussels (Coordinating the Secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean network Arco Latino) and with back home local institutions (Coordination and promotion of a network of municipal experts and elected officials from the Province, to work on European issues) (Tranparency Register, 2017, C). The participation of BPCO in the EP intergroup on Urban policies enters this dynamic. Here, the national system of sub-national authorities' governance clearly affects the action of cities at EU level. The 311 local authorities of Barcelona metropolitan area had to team up against the institutionally powerful Catalonia region. In the Transparency Register of the EU (2017, C), BPCO explicates this will to coordinate local strategies of 'lobbying to defends local governments' interest with regard to community policy and legislation'.

Talking about internal working habits and practices, BPCO chose very flexible and informal working method to reach these objectives. Regarding the internal administrative practices, tasks of employees (2.5 full-time equivalent) are quite broadly defined in contracts, rather, they are prescribed by the head of office depending on the needs of BPCO. Following these two sets of instructions (the contract and the hierarchical direction) staff members have a large room of manoeuvre to find the best way to reach objectives. Whatever specific conjectural objectives are, staff members daily "follow up on EU news, meetings, committees at EP, CoR and EC events etc., report writings and development strategies for lobby actions, inform back homes on EU news". Public information and communication regarding the EU is performed through the management of the Europe Direct Barcelona Information Centre. Alike G4-R and HEO, BPCO also provides training activities for elected officials and municipal experts but on *ad-hoc* basis whenever they are asked to. Contrary to G4-R, this organization appear quite costly[32]. The budget of BPCO is decided by the international relation division of the Provincial council back in Barcelona[32]. The amount allocated to BPCO is not based on its performance. Although an evaluation of the staff and activities is proceeded both by the head of office and by the Provincial council of Barcelona – BPCO is indeed a service-provision body for the city's department of international relation and therefore depends on this department, this evaluation procedure is only occasional and does not impact on wages whatsoever. According to Soler Tobella, BPCO clearly requires more funds and staff for its current activities. Notably, the staff needs experience on EU law and on some specific and technical expertise. BPCO is only accountable to the local city councils and therefore cooperate daily with them. This is due to the fact that it represents only a group of cities *geographically close and with common economic interests*. Contrary to G4-R and HEO, BPCO tends to outsource some of its activities to some private entities (preparation of studies, internationalization plans, sustainable energy action plans etc.) but

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[32] Data on budget in the transparency register of the EU only shows the total budget of the Province of Barcelona, which is of 627,378,975€ among which 268,896,025€ sub-national sources (2017, C). From interview with Mrs Tobella Soler, budget is of about 200,000€ per year.

not to other Spanish public authorities to which BPCO is in competition. BPCO works in cooperation with other local representations in Brussels (e.g. coordination of the Secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean network Arco Latino) and with back home local institutions (coordination and promotion of a network of municipal experts and elected officials from the Province, to work on European issues). It has barely no relation, neither cooperation nor competition, with the regional and national representation since tasks are clearly defined.

Basic field of reforms	Tendencies	Elements	G4-R	HEO	BPCO
Managerial organization	Performance-oriented manners (NPM)	Short-term management	- -	+	-
		Internal reorganization	-	+ +	NA
		New budgeting	-	+	-
		New accounting system	-	+ +	-
		Performance-oriented tools and wages	-	+ +	-
		Sectoralization	+ +	+	+ +
		Outsourcing	-	-	+
		Performance-oriented pay	-	+	-
	Correcting NPM	Joint-up government	+	+	- -
		Strategic planning	+	-	+
Territorial and functional organization	'Bigger is better'	Centralization	- -	+ +	-
		Amalgamation	-	+	-
	'Small is beautiful'	Trans-scaling	+ +	-	+
		Cooperation	+	+	+
		Reallocation of tasks between levels of government	-	-	+ +
Democratic practices	Old practices	Consultation	+	+	-
		Interactive policy-making	+	+	-
		Intrusion of civil society	+	+ +	-
		Petitions and Recalls	-	-	+
		Local referenda	-	-	-
		Local initiatives	-	+	+
	New practices	forum	-	+	-
		e-democracy	-	-	+
		Stakeholders councils	+	+ +	+
Daily activities	Private lobbying activities	Producing position papers	-	-	+
		Establish issue-coalitions and networks	+ +	+	+ +
		Participate in a wide array of consultation formats	-	-	+ +
		Registration in the Transparency Register of the EU	+	+	+
	Permanent representation activities	Working parties	+	-	-
		Networking with institutional alter-ego	+ +	-	+
		Accountability toward home-state institution	+	-	-
		Reporting to home-state institution	+	-	+

To summarize, the rationale backing BPCO is similar to a private lobbying firm (in that sense it is close to HEO) but which defends the very specific objectives of some very locally concentrated cities around Barcelona itself (in that sense it is close to G4-R). In line with this observation, BPCO chose some NPM practices such as outsourcing and decentralization (vis-à-vis the regional authorities) but ignore some major NPM bases such as performance-oriented tools and monitoring. It is clear however, that BPCO decided to represent a very concentrated level bringing the advantage to defend clear and specifically local interests but with the risk of being short on budget.

Figure 8 summarizes analytically the practices of each of the case studies along the line described in Chapter 3 (page 36, 37 and 38). As already explicated above, the following trends clearly appear in the table: NPM tendencies of HEO, the lobbying activities and decentralization preferences of BPCO and the similarities of G4-R with national representation.

Section II. Conclusion from empirical investigation for the research and for practitioners

This case study approach had two objectives: the first was to test the two hypotheses which regard the impact of the objectives on the one hand and the impact of the national system of local governance on the other; the second was to determine some best practices used by these three offices which appear as models in their own geographic area.

A. Answer to hypothesis 1: a blurred categorization

The first hypothesis (*the model of governance of Brussels city representation offices differs according to the attitudes of the office as Euro-player, Client-city or Policy-experimenter*) cannot be confirmed by the empirical investigation. Nevertheless, the investigation does not conclude on saying that Euro-player, Client-city, and Policy-experimenter attitudes do not influence the model of governance nor that they have similar model of governance but rather concludes that each one of these attitudes exists within each of the case studies. HEO, G4-R, and BPCO do present alternatively characteristics of each of the profile defined above which makes the distinction of practices very difficult. We see that daily activities of the studied offices are participating to the three objectives as defined by Wolffhardt's et al (2005). For example, tying bilateral links with other local representations aims, at the same time, at sharing best practices (Policy-experimenter objectives) but also to establish joint strategies to influence EU legislation (as would do a Euro-player).

One should not forget that ultimately the objective of the research is to give practitioners willing to invest the EU sphere a set of best practices relative to their own local circumstances. A list of best practices can be drafted for that purpose. This list gathers all practices handled by all three studied offices. Therefore, and while keeping in mind the above-mentioned interconnection between practices, some specific practices can be carefully linked with each of the three attitudes. The following lists are dedicated to city managers willing to invest in a Brussels office following the examples of Rotterdam, Helsinki, and Barcelona. Depending on the objectives that such a city manager has in mind, the empirical investigation recommends adopting the following practices:

Adopted attitudes [33]	Recommended practices
Practices for Euro-player	• Get to know precisely his or her city's interests and intentions for the following years. To do so, we recommend either to organize regular meetings with office's stakeholders and/or city's constituents (once a year) or to work in close link with local practitioners and experts. This allows focusing on very local interests not to dilute effectiveness. • Adopt a particularly long-term perspective when looking at future EU legislation developments. • Be as available as possible for relevant events happening in Brussels either by composing a large team presents daily in Brussels or by making the transfer of experts to Brussels convenient.
Practices for Policy-experimenter	• Integrate Brussels' sphere through long-term relations and partnerships. (Idea already raised by Oikonomou (2016: 89)) • Tying issue-specific coalitions with local authorities with similar interests. • Flexibility between acting alone and in formal (networks) or informal coordination with similar representations
Practices for Client-city	• Adopt a long-term and broad vision on next EU priorities in order to adapt strategy and prepare the local and national legislations to receive potential EU Funds. Mismatch between EU and national legislation may jeopardise EU funds allocations. • EU training course to familiarized local level practitioners with EU functioning on allocation of EU funds. • Provide feedbacks relative to EU criteria on potential projects before sub-

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[33] (see page 32 above for more details)

| | missions either by staff's expertise or by informal relation with EU officials. |

Figure 9 Recommended practices relatedly to different objectives

This non-exhaustive list of nine best practices responds to the observation made by Oikonomou (2016: 90) for who the low capacity to influence EU legislation is due to 'insufficient financial and human resources; fragmented, inconsistent and short-term perspectives instead of long-term strategy for lobbying; informal tactics; political preferences for fast and tangible results, existence of territorial competition and lack of collaboration.' These nine best practices seem to be some keys to counter reasons raised by Oikonomou to enhance cities' influence.

B. Answer to hypothesis 2: partial influence of national system

Just as a reminder, the second hypothesis was that *the national system of local governance influences the chosen model of governance of city representation offices in Brussels*. The conclusion of the empirical investigation as presented above in figure 8 gives at first a wrongful idea on how to answer this hypothesis. One may at first sight assume that the clear differences between the three studied offices is due to their national system of local governance, since it is not due to their profile as Euro-player, Client-city or Policy-experimenter as seen in the previous paragraph. It is nevertheless wrong to conclude that NPM fits best for Finnish organizations, that concentration around a core area and private lobbying practices are the most suitable for Spanish local representation, and that classic national representation at very local level is best for Dutch circumstances. A deeper look at both the interviews and the literature suggests that the national systems of local governance only play a partial role in the determination of administrative practices chosen by local representation in Brussels. Whereas this sub-section argues on the reasons why this second hypothesis is only partially justifying, the next section will present all other factors determining administrative practices for Brussels offices. These additional factors have been revealed by the research with serendipity.

Some characteristics of the institutional setting of MS with regards to the autonomy (either fiscal, political, and legal) of local authorities do influence the way cities behave at EU level. In countries with strong regional authorities such as Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Spain (Huysseune & Jans, 2008; Ladner, Keuffer & Baldersheim, 2015), cities have little institutionalized access to EU decision-making given by national channels. This is because the national level in this type of country listens in priority to the regional level rather than the local one. Therefore, cities in these regions tend to prefer private-like practices such as sectoralization of its internal activities, outsourcing to specialized companies, tying issue-coalitions and participate in a lot of consultations at EU level. BPCO verified once again this finding. The interview with HEO head of office however supposes that the administrative practices chosen by Taipale do not depend on Finnish institutional settings because she, from the beginning of her interview, announced the differences between HEO's

functioning and other Finnish local representations. If the national system of local governance was that influential, there could not be such wide differences between two local representations of a same MS. Whereas the Barcelona case clearly confirms the hypothesis and the Helsinki one clearly not, the case of G4-R is more blurred. Indeed, the four cities of the G-4 EU Office have similar practices with different fortunes. If the accuracy of the compatibility between the office's practices and the national system of local governance was the only determinant, there would not be many differences between the four cities of G-4 EU Office. These conclusions suggest that other factors determine the successfulness of a city at EU level than the compatibility between its own system and its national model of local governance. The next section proposes a set of determining factors based on the research.

Section III. Different practices due to different systems

The final section of this chapter dedicated to the results of the research presents other factors that do appear relevant when looking back at the empirical investigation. In lines with Schultze (2003: 122) for who these factors are several and multiple:

> There is clearly a difference with regard to how individual cities react to the EU (Goldsmith and Klausen, 1997). And this difference relates to a number of factors such as size, economic importance, attitude of local political elites towards external activities of the city, existence of a project to increase the international recognition of a city or of an explicit international strategy and a political commitment to implement this strategy underpinned by sufficient resources.

The other factors that this research thesis shows as determining the practices of Brussels offices but which were at first not expected are the followings: a) the geographic settings of the home state; b) the objectives, the nature and the number of stakeholders; c) the level and means of funding; d) the importance of leadership; and e) some long-standing traditions present at the city or country level.

Surprisingly, the *geographic settings* of home state are a highly relevant factor for each of the three cases. The term 'Geographic settings' means here the position the city relatedly to Brussels, the disposition of urban entities within the MS etc. Verdonk from G4-R emphasised the material ease made possible by the easy and cheap connection between Rotterdam and Brussels. This geographical proximity allows Rotterdam to "deploy" only one representative in Brussels which can be joined, whenever necessary and for a relatively low cost, by local experts. For the same reason, the radically different situation of Helsinki explains why HEO is much more staffed than G4-R, as observed by Verdonk during the interview. The geographic settings of Catalonia, meaning a strong core of municipalities with similar interests around Barcelona, allows all 311 local authorities of Barcelona

metropolitan area to team up in Brussels to counter-weight the strength of Catalonia representation whose interests often differ at EU level. This observation upon the importance of national geography was already touched upon in the literature. Tatham (2008: 504) observed that the EC may play with 'Member state territorial heterogeneity of preferences' to favour its own positions. Territorial heterogeneity also impacts, to Tatham (2008), the access to the EC, institutionalized, highly democratic, and concentrated authorities being favoured.

The second factor determining best practices for Brussels offices as revealed by the research with serendipity is relative to the stakeholders of the representation offices. The term stakeholder is defined here as the entities whose interests are officially defended and represented by the Brussels office. Each of the case studies presented a very different structure of stakeholders. The nature, the objectives, and the number of stakeholders represented by the office appear paramount in the design of the offices' functioning. The HEO's case is clear on this point. The wide disparities in nature of its stakeholder (which can be public – City of Helsinki, semi-public – Hanken School of Economics, and private – limited company of Laurea University of Applied Sciences) and their relatively high number (i.e. 12) makes the definition of objectives a challenge. To counter this difficulty the HEO is using such an advanced method of time and performance management. With its methodology, close to NPM, HEO can assist, help, represent and defend its stakeholders proportionally to their financial inputs to the office's budget. Beside this *rationalization of representation*, HEO also favours discussion between its stakeholders to find common interests and synergies. This method allows HEO to keep a system of bottom-up definition of objectives. This opposes BPCO which, to counter the issue of the number of stakeholder (311 local authorities) decided to define its objectives in a top-down way. BPCO's stakeholders are, as said above, only pubic local authorities with very similar (economic, politic etc.) interests to defend. Although it is counter-intuitive to someone who would only look at the number of stakeholders, the similarities between stakeholders of BPCO allows the office to go ahead without constant and costly discussion with them. G4-R presents a third type of office-stakeholders relationship. G4-R is only accountable toward one single entity: the Rotterdam City Council. However, the Rotterdam City Council is in close relation with a wide diversity of local actors (from the port organization to NGOs) with which it meets regularly to define the city's interests to defend at EU level. This wide but indirect diversity of stakeholders pushes on the one hand G4-R to monitor very broadly EU changes and activities, and on the other hand the indirect relation with its constituents allows G4-R to act as a national representation. Indeed, from the perspective of G4-R its single interlocutor at Rotterdam level seems unitary, in other words, G4-R does not really needs to know how decisions are taken at Rotterdam level and the city council speaks with a single voice.

The third factor to care about is the level and funding methods. This inevitably relates to the stakeholders' factor but not only. Callanan (2012: 759) affirms that 'associations with extensive

financial, staffing and informational resources were more likely to be active in attempting to influence the complex multilevel EU decision-making system at both EU and national levels'. In other words, the available resources matter on the level of influence of an SNU in the EU decision-making. Empirical evidence from this research posits another additional observation: the analysis above shows that the differences of funding do not only have an impact on the level of influence as assumed by Callanan (2012: 759) (this has not been tested here) but also on the functioning of the office. The functioning of offices (staffs, etc.) is determined by the budget. This observation, which may seem obvious, is however to be carefully handled since it is not universally true. Indeed, although it is clear from interview with Mrs Tobella Soler that the budgetary crisis that hit Barcelona and Spain in general over the last decade decrease the capacity, especially in terms of human resources, interview with Verdonk from G4-R revealed that the office cut some of its cost because of some re-organizing (newsletter, staff etc.) and not the other way around. In other words, the change re-organization was not due to budget changes.

The fourth factor is the political leadership present or not at the local level. This observation mainly comes from literature. Just as local innovation cannot emerge without political leadership (Andrew, 2008: 181), there cannot be any sustainable local representation in Brussels if the political leadership at the local level is either changing after each election or opposes such an office. Oikonomou (2016: 89) raises the lack of political leadership for hiring permanent staff in Brussels as a reason of the absence of strong Greek local representation. Examples of the importance of the political leadership are several: Marshall (2005:680) evokes 'the fact that the leader of the City Council is also President of the Committee of the Regions', helped Birmingham's civic leaders to develop a wide array of channels to 'upload' their views and interest to the supranational level. Regarding the present research, the pro-European Mayor Jussi Pajunen (Helsingin kaupunki, 2016) from Helsinki is not neutral in the strong involvement of its city into Brussels. Just alike Birmingham's case, as exposed by Marshall (2005), Mayor Opstelten from Rotterdam pushed for stronger communication between EU and the local level as well as for local autonomy by taking benefits from his seat at the CoR to (City of Rotterdam, 2009). Although one cannot generalize from on specific case, it also seems that leadership at the Brussel office matters a lot at least as regards the HEO approach illustrates[34].

The political leadership matters especially when the tradition of the city at stake goes against investing into a Brussels office. For example, unlike the motto evoked by Verdonk ("De kost gaat voor de baat uit") some areas (e.g. Greece) may have 'preferences for tangible results' (Oikonomou, 2016: 89) and thus may be hostile to the large financial investments that a Brussels office triggers. On the contrary, some countries (e.g. United Kingdom) have a rather 'lobbying-oriented political culture' (Huysseune & Jans, 2008: 2). It is easy to factually spot these different traditions: five British cities

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[34] I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Senden for this useful comment.

have a Brussels office (London, the City of London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham) but not a single Greek city is individually represented (Appendix 1.). Other long-term traditions can determine the presence or not of a Brussels office: Andrews (2008:181) says that local government should first have a tradition in dealing with other cities, horizontally, before 'mobbing up to other government levels'.

Consideration of best practices in the light of the findings should end this chapter presenting the results, however we saw that such a classification of best practices can only be clearly outlined through the distinction of the objectives and attitudes (Euro-player, Client city, Policy experimenter) and therefore has already been proposed in Section II. A. table 9.

Chapter 6:
Concluding remarks

Chapter 6 first reminds the reader about the aim of the present research. After outlining the way, the research has developed and has been led, it presents a brief answer to the research question. Based on a summary of the research, discussions are raised about the relevance of the thesis and the methods it used and its implications for future researches and especially for practitioners. Some tracks for future researches on related subjects will be raised.

Section I. Research question, researched answers: the telescope and the magnifying glass

This research aimed at determining what the best practices that local authorities can use are in their internal functioning and management to best upload their interests at the EU level and ultimately influence the decision-making processes, from the policy initiative to the policy-decision and implementation. The research question thus was, analytically: *what are the determinants of a successful bottom-up relation between the European Union and the cities within its territory?* To answer this broad question, the thesis went through a series of logically flowing questions. Here are elements of answers to all the sub-questions as detailed in the introduction (see page 11 and 12).

We first analysed the reality that cities face at EU level by answering the questions: how cities are dealing with the EU integration so far? What are the diverse channels of influence that they use? From national representations to EU institutions, cities have a bunch of formal channels to be heard at EU level (Chapter 2, Section I), but none of them allow a seamless representation of their own interests as local actors. They are often melted-in in the same group as regional authorities and/or private interests. To compensate these institutional lacunas, most of major cities joined forces into European networks (Chapter 2, Section II). For a wide variety of objectives that have been reviewed, the most advanced cities – some would say most *Europeanized*, invested a third way: individual representation offices in Brussels (Chapter 2, Section III). As the academic knowledge on this specific part of EU-cities relations has many lacunas (Chapter 2, Section II), the thesis focused on this special attitude. Logically following, the successfulness of cities that are *going solo*[35] in Brussels was questioned. This sub-question – are cities successful in pursuing these objectives? – could unfortunately not be answered analytically in the thesis. To do so, it would have required a whole other research project to design an index of successfulness and apply it to a broad number of city representation offices. Failing to do so for time and material reasons, the thesis has been narrowed

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[35] In reference to one of the first article on this topic: Tatham, M. (2008) *Going Solo: Direct Regional Representation in the European Union*, Regional & Federal Studies, 18:5, 493-515.

down to the best practices of *apparently* successful cities. To classify the practices that have been spotted during the investigation, two theoretical frameworks have been used (Chapter 3, Section I, B) out of many other theories of EU-cities bottom up relations that were only briefly outlined (Chapter 3, Section I, A). Three cities were selected as successful on *ad-hoc* criteria such as their level of EU subsidies and benefits from EU market policies (Chapter 4).

Up to this point, elements of answer could already be found through scrutinizing the current literature. Investigation and ground-level researches were therefore dedicated to practical findings (Chapter 4 details investigation methods). Investigation showed what are the current practices that all successful cities at EU level seem to have adopted (see fig. 9 in Chapter 5, Section II, A) but unfortunately failed to give a clear answer to the two hypotheses that were: 'Do practices in this relation depend on national systems of local governance?' and 'do practices in this relation depend on the role that cities want to play and their objectives?'. Indeed, national systems of local governance did appear as determining for some case studies (BPCO) but for not others (HEO) (Chapter 5, Section II, B). Regarding the second hypothesis, practices do depend on the attitudes of the Brussels office as Euro-player, Policy-experimenter, and Client-city; but the factual reality showed that Brussels offices encompass at the same time all three attitudes, thus making the distinction between practices performed for objectives confusing (Chapter 5, Section II).

The empirical investigation as exposed in this Chapter 5 does not give a clear answer to the hypotheses (see pages 58-59-60). It was indeed hard to generalize findings due to the widely diverging practices adopted by the three case studies (see pages 47 to 57). This diversity unfortunately did not allow a presentation of the results along the lines chosen in the theoretical framework (practices for Euro-player, Policy-experimenter and Client-city), as it is traditionally required. This diversity however is useful when it comes to determine best practices and recommendations. Indeed, practices shared and valued by all three offices, despite their differences in functioning and rationale, must be universally valuable (see fig. 9 for a summary of these practices). Additionally, empirical investigation revealed other factors and characteristics of the local or national level which do determine practices that should or should not be adopted. Newcomers or reformers willing to invest into a Brussels office must take these characteristics into account when designing the functioning of their offices.

To cover the research question '*what are the determinants of a successful bottom-up relation between the European Union and the cities within its territory?',* the development of the thesis, as summarized in the previous paragraphs, generates the following answer. In order to best upload its interests to the EU decision-making, *the research suggests local authorities to observe EU changing environment with a telescope and observe local circumstances with a magnifying glass*.

The telescope gives a broad vision of current issues but is also necessary to see what will be coming in the next EU developments. Broad vision and long term perspective are key determinants of some successful bottom-up relations with the EU. This way, the telescope gives local authorities in Brussels the necessary anticipation power to be *flexible* and *pragmatic.* Local authorities, when it comes to tie-up partnerships and define objectives, must be flexible and pragmatic: Coalitions may for some matters be the right road to choose, for other policies it may be preferable to 'go solo'. Coalitions can be multilateral or bilateral. Here again, there is no outstanding recommendation but to adapt the mode to the subject at stake.

The magnifying glass is also necessary to adapt administrative practices of the Brussels office to the national and local circumstances. Factors to consider are multiple (economic conjuncture, geographical settings, legal and democratic traditions, diversity of interests to represent etc.) (See Chapter 5, Section III). In a nutshell, and beside factors in the hands of the EU and its MS (i.e. the openness of the EC towards local calls, and the difficult legitimacy of the CoR) local authorities must be able to anticipate what will be the future EU priorities as well as priorities of its partners and potential partners, and they must have a strong link with the ground and the constituencies at local level. As seen above in the research, there is no universal magic formula. Finally, administrative practices must be *co-supporting*. In other words, practices must support more than one specific objective.

Section II. Looking back at expectations, theories and reality: some criticisms

Whereas the first section of the conclusion focused on the development of the thesis step by step, the second section looks back at the research as a whole to give a critical assessment of it. To do so, we underline the valuable points supporting the research before counterbalancing them with the difficulties and challenges that were faced for to reach them. For each of these dual assessments (i.e. valuable points v. challenges) we will see how the research tried to overcome the difficulties.

The thesis started from a recent event particularly important for the future of EU-cities relations, meaning the informal meeting of relevant EU ministers which generated the Pact of Amsterdam. The Pact of Amsterdam may be seen, in the future, as a cornerstone of EU-cities relations. However, studying its implication required an excessively broad, and therefore unprecise, vision of the EU-cities relations. Indeed, its call for a 'new model of governance' (Urbanagenda, 2016: 9) is unclear and can refer to many models of governance relative to a wide variety of different fields. To counter this lack of clarity, the thesis progressively narrowed down to a very specific aspect of it: the individual city representation offices based in Brussels. This process of narrowing down has not been

arbitrary but based on a rational evaluation of the current situation in terms of societal relevant and current academic knowledge.

The thesis aimed at highlighting the application of the *local* level in the EU sphere, in opposition to the *regional* level because it is (or *was*) thus far relatively less studied. Here, the thesis has faced heigh obstacles. The distinctions between these two levels are less clear-cut than first thought. Beside the institutional confusion in some countries (e.g. Denmark), cities and regional authorities often confuse due to either the pre-eminence of the metropolitan centre into the region (e.g. Dubrovnik office supposedly represent the whole region) or the pre-eminence of the regions over strong cities due to institutional settings (e.g. strong *Länder* in Germany). To face this unexpected confusion, the research relied on constituency. It kept relying on the distinction made between strict city representations and other types of offices as drawn by Herrschel and Newman (2017: 166) (Appendix 1). In this distinction, broad regional areas are opposed to coherent metropolitan areas with continuous, homogeneous interests.

As already mentioned, the choice of case studies was thoughtful (chapter 4 Section I is totally dedicated to this) but still imperfect since no clear analytical tool has been used to elaborate a level of successfulness of cities at EU level. This problem has been offset through the interview process. During interview, success of the representations has been determined, though not with direct and explicit questions whose answers could have been biased by the position of the interview as head of office.

The thesis tried to be systematic and analytical using two theoretical frameworks: a first theoretical framework was to categorise objectives of cities in three coherent city profiles. However, when confronted to reality, these city profiles happened to be 'ideal types'[36] that hardly mirror reality. The thesis therefore did not stick to the idea of presenting best practices for each city profile but rather administrative practices that are present in all three types and that are useful for more than on single objective. The second theoretical framework was used to systematise administrative practices of the local level and its representation offices. Two criticisms can be raised here: first these fields of reforms (fig. 4) were only reform tendencies concerning the local authorities. Although most of Brussels offices are legally subparts of the city council/international department, it is questionable whether they can be considered as local authorities. Second, and more importantly, there was no systemic evaluation of the presence of each of the elements of the three fields of reforms. Only positive or negative assessments (fig. 8) were done through the presence or not of each element in interviews and other relative documents. To offset this issue, the research did not draw result strictly sticking on this classification and a fourth tendency has been added to apprehend the supranational character of Brussels office (fig. 5).

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[36] See note 15 page 34

Section III. Social and academic implication of the research

The research suggests implication into two spheres: the broad social sphere including policies and institutional reforms and the sphere of academic researches. Academically, the research raises a few questions. The first question is relative to the relevance of the current theoretical framework that has thus far presented the relations between cities and the EU. It appears that the reality is now more blurred than it was about ten to twenty years ago when first analyses were performed. A new classification could be a useful tool for next researches. Secondly and to better understand these relations, a clarification on the definition between the sub-national levels of government is needed. It is not clear thus far if there is only a difference of degree (size, territory, demography etc.) between regional and local authorities or a true difference in nature (autonomy, responsibility, structure etc.). Some other research projects could have been use for the completion of this thesis, especially, as already mentioned, an index of successfulness of a city in its relations with the EU. Finally, some projects can use this thesis as a starting point to answer questions upon the role of local authorities in the democratization and legitimation of the EU decision-making; the *ad-hoc* and innovative strategies of cities evolving in a multi-level context; the transformation of cities' functioning after accession of their home state to the EU etc.

Regarding social relevance, all levels present in the multi-level polity of the EU can find interests into this research. At the local level, practitioners may find interesting practices if willing to invest the EU sphere, either through the broadly outlined description of channels of influence available to cities at EU level or with the more precise administrative practices determined as best practices to adopt when running an office in Brussels representing a single local entity. For those who have already taken the plunge of the Brussels office, they may benefit from sharing best practices, identify new opportunities, and position their objectives relatively to *alter-egos* thank to the classification in Chapter 2 Section I for example.

The national level, MS can trigger some lessons. One should not forget that the Pact of Amsterdam originated not from a supranational push but by the will of the MS's ministers themselves. This is why, MS can get interested into the specific link between the EU and their cities that have been studied here. The role of the Brussels offices is indeed one part of the large puzzle that the 'new model of governance' wished by the Pact of Amsterdam represents. MS may be willing to promote this channel of representation if willing to get cities deeply involved. The research also showed some ill-functioning relations between MS and their cities, notably a lack of communication between the two types of actors on EU matters due to overwhelming regional authorities in some states. This sometimes leads to diverging strategies within a single MS.

Finally, the EU level is obviously concerned too. The criticisms of the institutional channels of representation for cities outlined in Chapter 2 are a first hint. The lack of legitimacy of the CoR, the fact that city representations considered as private lobbyists etc. are a few lessons to keep in mind. The new model of governance wished by the Pact of Amsterdam can be a way to re-legitimize a Union pointed at for its democratic deficit. Indeed, local authorities are by definitions the closest governmental entities to the citizens, finding new modes to get their voice heard at EU level is key to upload people's interests and will, to form a direct link between citizens and the EU institutions and for these reason head toward democratic renewal. Once again, Brussel offices are part of this broad puzzle.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: States Objectives of City Representation Offices in Brussels

City/City-Region	Stated Objectives/Purpose	Networking	Top-down Info	Bottom-up Info	Ext. Promotion	Int. Promotion	Paradiplomacy	Coherence
Délégation de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (B)	- represents the Region at the European institutions					X		
	- provides information on EU daft regulation programmes to the Region		X					
	- coordinates local implementation of EU directives in Brussels							X
	- creates synergy between European policies and the international relations of the Region						X	X
	- develops relations with the other regional representations in Brussels (www. http://be.brussels/about-the-region/international-brussels)						X	
EU office of Varna (BG)	"The EU office positions Varna at European level and promotes it as visitors and investments [sic] destination." (https://www.facebook.com/Varna-EU-Office), no web-address				X			
Representation of the city of Kyustendil (BG)	No info found							
Dubrovnik Neretva County Office (HR)	- has been actively engaged in the county's promotion at the centre of the European Union,				X	X		
	- develops contacts with the EU's institutions in Brussels	X						
	- cooperates with other European regions.						X	
	- enhances collaboration within the County through joint office (www.dubrovnik-neretva.eu/about-us)							X
Delegation of Prague to the EU (CZ)	- increase awareness of Prague and its interests amongst the European institutions and other relevant organisations				X	X		
	- provide feedback on Prague's interests and activities back to Prague,			X				
	- communicate European issues and the possibilities offered by the EU for other Prague institutions, associations and citizens (www.praha.eu)		X					
Kalundborg EU Office (DK)	No separate website, office space in 'House of the Cities', R de Luxem. 3 "Kalundborg Municipality is planning to develop an international strategy" (www. http://www.kl.dk)						X	
Tallin European Office	No separate website, office space in 'House of the Cities', Rue de Luxembourg 3							
Helsinki EU Office (FIN)	- supervises its stakeholders' interests and promotes their visibility at EU				X	X		
	provides information on the preparation of EU legislation EU funding programmes, events, co-operation and networking opportunities. (http://euoffice.it.helsinki.fi)	X	X					
Ile-de-France Europe (F)	- strategically monitors EU current affairs, especially European policies and programmes of interest to Ile-de-France Region.		X					
	- early informs local and regional decision-makers and stakeholders to enable them to have their say in European decisions.		X					
	- defends the interests of the Region on key topics						X	
	- networking is paramount (www.iledefrance-europe.eu)	X						

City/City-Region	Stated Objectives/Purpose	Networking	Top-down Info	Bottom-up Info	Ext. Promotion	Int. Promotion	Paradiplomacy	Coherence
Büro des Landes Berlin (City of Berlin Office (D)	- 'early warning system' on EU policies for Berlin govt		X					
	- feed Berlin's interests into EU decision-making and opinions					X		
	- represent Berlin's interests at public events				X			
	- support co-operation projects and network participation (www.berlin.de)	X					X	
Hanse-Office, Hamburg (D)	- 'early warning' on EU policies, funding, etc		X	X				
	- inform Hamburg citizens on EU processes		X					
	- networking with other policy makers & interests (www.hanse-office.de)	X						
Vertretung Bremen (Representation of Bremen) D	- represents Land Bremen at at European and int'l organisations in Brussels, Straßburg und Luxemburg.					X		
	- main task: early warning on major EU decisions & policies		X	X				
Representation of Budapest to the EU (HU)	Facebook site empty, no other info							
Arnhem Nijmegen City Region (NL)	- promotes Arnhem Nijmegen City Region and find partners for European projects (mainly in economic development)				X		X	
	- showcases how to collaborate within a triple helix structure and bring our stakeholders to Brussels (and vice-versa)	X						X
G-4 EU Office (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht) (NL)	- The EU Office is an integrated part of the national political and technical co-operation of the four cities aiming to promote their interests				X	X		X
	The main objective is to monitor EU policy and legislative developments		X					
	focus on strengthening our network and intensifying relationships with Europe's political representatives, administrators etc	X						
Representation of the City of Lódz in Brussels (PL)	- represent the City of Lodz by liaising with the EU institutions					X		
	- promote the City by participating in exhibitions and public events				X			
	- monitor EU legislation relating to urban policy, and competition		X					
	- lobby for support of projects submitted by Lodz government/ institutions (http://en.uml.lodz.pl/)					X		
Diputacio de Barcelona (E)	- provide for local govt info on funding, best pract, networks, EU partners		X					
	.- represent municipalities and Province of Barcelona in EU legislatio processes with impact on local matters					X		
City of Gothenburg EU Office (S)	- representing Gothenburg and its key stakeholders in Brussels.				X	X		
	- monitoring the legislative initiative of the EU,		X					
	- promoting Gothenburg and its actors at the European level,				X	X		
	- supporting the development of strategic and long term EU projects.							X
City of Malmö EU Office (S)	- main tasks: monitor EU programmes and funds,		X					
	- make and develop contacts, engage in lobbying	X				X		
	- assist with project applications & project concepts with city depts.							X
City of London Office (GB)	- promotes and reinforces competitiveness of the Square Mile and in particular UK-based international financial services				X	X		
	- works closely with practitioners, trade associations and other stakeholders to shape the future direction of financial services policy							X
	- focuses on issues created by EU and international regulative, fiscal and regulatory developments likely to impact on the City's operation.		X					

City/City-Region	Stated Objectives/Purpose	Networking	Top-down Info	Bottom-up Info	Ext. Promotion	Int. Promotion	Paradiplomacy	Coherence
Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Office (GB)	- profile raising, promote Birmingham interests				X	X		
	- gathering early intelligence on transnational European funding opps.		X					
	- sustaining and enhancing relationships with key European stakeholders (http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/eia)	X				X		
Greater Manchester Brussels Office (GB)	No longer on web, link greater-manchester.eu no longer working							
London's European Office (GB)	- monitors and influences EU policy		X			X		
	- identifies opportunities for London to obtain EU funding.		X					
	- informs the GLA Group about relevant EU policies, legislation, funding		X					
	- promotes the vision and work of the Mayor in Brussels to the EU					X		
	- represents London's interests in the development of EU policies (https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/mayor-london/public-affairs/londons-european-office)					X		
Merseyside Brussels Office (GB)	- represents Liverpool City Region (LCR) at the heart of EU					X		
	- provides vital link between local public, business, voluntary orgs, EU institutions and other European regions. (www.lcrbrussels.eu)				X	X	X	

Interview protocol form

Project:

City Representation Offices in Brussels: which practices for which uses?

Date:
Time:
Location:

Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Interviewee contact details:

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research and in helping grow all of our professional practice.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes. "*There are four major questions for four theme (objectives, internal management, staff/skills, and external relation). Questions are voluntarily broad not to influence your answers but I might ask more precise questions during the interview.*"

Purpose of the Research:

"*In this research, we are trying to find out best practices used by individual cities which successfully invested the EU sphere to defend their interest. This research is therefore to deepen academic knowledge on this topic but also to help future practitioners.*"

Methods of disseminating results:

Non-published Master Thesis

Can you tell me about the objectives of the office?

1. Why did your city decided to defend its interest on its own?

2. How are tasks and objectives of the office defined? (Is there any input from citizens or civil society for example?)

3. Are objective specific, general or variable?

4. Are these objectives relative to influence strategies, funding opportunities or knowledge sharing?

5. How would you define the vision of the office? (i.e. long or short term)

6. Would you say the office is successful?

Response from Interviewee: …

Reflection of the Interviewer: …

Can you tell me about the way the office is internally managed?

7. How hierarchical is the office organization? (strong/flexible, formal/informal)
8. How is the budget determined? (by who, based on what, for how long etc.)
9. How are wages determined? (Is there a system of evaluation of the activities of the staff?)
10. How are your daily task defined? How many hours do you work per week?
11. What is the legal status of the office?

Response from Interviewee: …
Reflection by Interviewer:

What are the office requirement?

12. Which staff does the office need?
13. Which skills does this staff need?
14. Do you think the office is understaffed? Or other skill/field of expertise?
15. Which budget would be optimal for the office?

Response from Interviewee: …

Reflection by Interviewer: …

Can you tell me about the relation of the office regarding external activities and Institutions?

16. Is the office performing all activities needed on its own? (for its activities or are there any outsourcing?
17. What is the relation of the office with other institutions? (Is the office working in cooperation or competition with similar representations? And with home state institutions?)
18. To who is the office accountable to? (E.g. organisation/institution, etc.)

Response from Interviewee: …

Reflection by Interviewer: …

Closure

Thank you to interviewee
Reassure confidentiality, ask for possibility to display his/her name and position
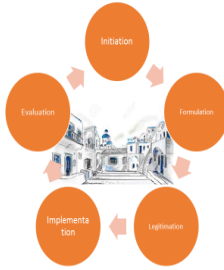Ask permission to follow-up   ___

Slide 1

CITY REPRESENTATION OFFICES IN BRUSSELS: WHICH PRACTICES FOR WHICH OBJECTIVES?

A comparative study inside local influencing strategy and administrative best practices for cities acting individually in the European policy-making system

5/24/2017 — Théo Fievet - Public Defence — 1

Slide 2

The importance of cities in the EU policy cycle

Initiation — Formulation — Legitimation — Implementation — Evaluation

- Determining what are the **best practices** that local authorities can use in their internal functioning and management to best **upload their interests** at the EU level and ultimately **influence the decision-making** processes.

Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

5/24/2017 — Théo Fievet - Public Defence — 2

Slide 3

Shortcomings of the institutional channels

The Committee of the Regions
- Compulsory consultation
- No imperative mandate
- Intra-institutional balances
- Lack of expertise

The European Commission
- Receive expertise from local actors
- Systematic dialogues
- Lack of transparency
- Ill-designed evaluations

Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

5/24/2017 — Théo Fievet - Public Defence — 3

Slide 4

Mushrooming of networks of local actors

Regional | National | Transregional | International
Rural | Mixte | Urban | Metropolitan
Transitional | Marketing | Research | Energy

Slide 5

Power of size vs. Power of coherence

No distinction from the Commission

Risk of instrumentalization
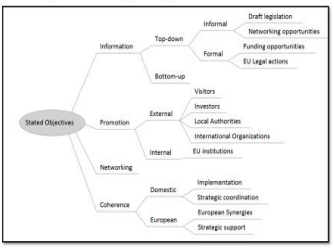
Shortcomings of the European-wide networks

Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

5/24/2017 — Théo Fievet - Public Defence — 5

Slide 6

Stated Objectives of city representation offices in Brussels, a new typology

Stated Objectives — Information — Top-down — Informal — Draft legislation / Networking opportunities; Formal — Funding opportunities / EU Legal actions; Bottom-up

Promotion — External — Visitors / Investors / Local Authorities / International Organizations / EU institutions; Internal

Networking

Coherence — Domestic — Implementation / Strategic coordination; European — European Synergies / Strategic support

Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

5/24/2017 — Théo Fievet - Public Defence — 6

Slide 7: Lacuna of academic knowledge

Knowledge about
- Regional entities
- City networks
- Involvement of cities in terms of quantity

Lacuna about
- Distinction between local and regional entities
- Activities by individual cities
- Reasons why cities involve and how they do so

Sidebar: Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

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Slide 8: Methodology: a double contextualization

Basic field of reforms	Tendencies	Elements
Managerial organization	Performance-oriented manners	Short term management
		Internal reorganization
		New budgeting
		New accounting system
		Performance-oriented tools
		Sectorialisation
		Outsourcing
		Performance-oriented pay
	Correcting NPM	Joint-up government
		Strategic planning
Territorial and functional organization	'Bigger is better'	Centralization
		Amalgamation
		Trans-scaling
	'Small is beautiful'	Cooperation
		Reallocation of tasks between levels of government
Democratic practices	Old practices	Consultation
		Interactive policy-making
		Intrusion of civil society
		Petitions
		Recalls
		Local referenda
		Local initiatives
	New practices	forum
		e-democracy
		Youth councils
		Neighbourhood councils

National system of local governance \ Attitudes	Euro-player	Policy-Experimenter	Client city
Germanic			
Franco's			
Scandinavian			

Sidebar: Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

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Slide 9: Three different methods…

Rotterdam
- A joint-office
- A one-man-job
- A complete local-based team

Helsinki
- A diverse group
- A bottom-up goal setting
- A performance oriented and rationalized management

Barcelona
- A fragmented but unified group
- A top-down goal setting
- A southern tradition of public administration

Sidebar: Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

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Slide 10: Best practices: a first guide

Adopted attitudes	Recommended practices
Practices for Euro-player	Get to know precisely the city's interests and intentions for the following years • regular meeting with office's stakeholders • work in close link with local practitioners and experts. Adopt a particularly long-perspective when looking at future EU legislation developments. Be as available as possible for relevant events happening in Brussels • by composing a large team present daily in Brussels • by making the transfer of experts to Brussels convenient.
Practices for Policy-experimenter	Integrate Brussels' sphere through long-term relations and partnerships Tying issue-specific coalitions with local authorities with similar interests. Flexibility between • acting alone • and in formal (networks) • or informal coordination with similar representations
Practices for Client-city	Adopt a long term and broad vision on next EU priorities • to adapt strategy and prepare the local and national legislations to receive potential EU Funds. Mismatch between EU and national legislation may jeopardise EU funds allocations. EU training course to familiarized local level practitioners with EU functioning on allocation of EU funds. Provide feedbacks relative to EU criteria on potential projects before sub-missions either by staff's expertise or by informal relation with EU officials.

Sidebar: Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

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Slide 11: … not related only to expected factors

- Influence of expected factors
  - Attitudes too blurred to tell
  - Strength of regional authorities
  - Traditions
- Other (more) determining factors
  - Geographical settings at local level
  - Nature, objectives and amount of stakeholders
  - Level and methods of fundings
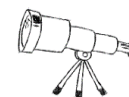 - Political and managerial leadership

Sidebar: Initial issue → Institutional channels → Coalitions → Individual actions → Literature Lacuna → Investigation method and process → Investigation results → Recommendation

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Slide 12: Conclusion: the telescope and the magnifying glass

- Partial affirmation of hypothesis

- Other findings
  - A typology of city's objectives in Brussels
  - Some universal good practices to invest Brussels according to one's objectives