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For Auld Lang Syne? A study of Scottish paradiplomacy towards the Nordic countries after the Brexit vote

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Signature *Karoline A. Haugvoll* Date: 06.08.2021.....

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Any errors are mine alone.

Abstract

Can Scotland engage in international relations? Following its position as subject to the United Kingdom of Great Britain, as a matter of law the simple answer is no. Nevertheless, Scotland has long engaged internationally with various partners focusing on different issues. Amongst these, the Nordic countries, with whom Scotland shares a long historical background, and claims similarity to. Moreover, in the period after the 2016 Brexit referendum, an intensification in Scotland's engagement with the Nordic countries is observed. This provides a puzzle – how and why is Scotland engaging in international relations in this period? Through studying the observed puzzle as a case of paradiplomacy, a concept applied to the international relations of substate actors, this thesis seeks to answer the questions raised. Observing engagement of both bilateral and multilateral character built on sentiments of similarity, the thesis suggests that the main motivation for Scotland's relations with the Nordic countries can be seen as an attempt at projecting its identity and repositioning itself geopolitically as Nordic.

Keywords: *Scotland; Nordic; Paradiplomacy*

Acronyms and Abbreviations

COP26	UN Climate Change Conference
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
EU	European Union
EUFOGREN	European Forest Genetic Resources Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IGO	International Governmental Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INTERACT	International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic
INTERREG	European Territorial Cooperation
IR	International Relations (scientific discipline)
JMC	Joint Ministerial Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
SHAPE	Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism Adapt Northern Heritage
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations

List of tables and figures

Figure 1: Nordic-related ministerial engagements per month..... p. 33

Figure 2: Nordic-related ministerial engagements per year..... p. 34

Figure 3: Nordic-related ministerial engagements per year (per cent)..... p. 35

Figure 4: Top origins of FDI projects in Scotland, 2018..... p. 48

Table 1: Non-exhaustive list of Nordic/Arctic-related networks, organizations,
etc. where Scotland is a participatory actor meeting the Nordic countries..... p. 37

Table 2: Prioritised policy areas and means of engagement by country..... p. 41

Table 3: Export results per country..... p. 47

Table of contents

- Acknowledgements** iii
- Abstract** iv
- List of tables and figures** vi
- Table of contents** vii
- 1. Introduction**..... 1
- 2. Conceptualising Paradiplomacy** 6
 - 2.1 Introducing subnational international relations* 6
 - 2.2 Conceptualising paradiplomacy* 7
 - 2.3 How do paradiplomatic actors engage with the world?* 11
 - 2.4 Why do paradiplomatic actors engage with the world?*..... 15
- 3. Methodology** 19
- 4. The Case of Scottish-Nordic Diplomatic Links** 25
 - 4.1 Global Scotland* 25
 - 4.2 The Brexit Referendum and changed international context* 27
 - 4.3 “All Points North”: Historical and contemporary Scottish-Nordic relations.* 29
- 5. How does Scotland engage with the Nordic countries?** 32
 - 5.1 Mapping Nordic Engagements*..... 33
 - 5.2 Multilateral engagement* 36
 - 5.3 Bilateral engagement* 39
- 6. Why does Scotland engage with the Nordic countries?** 45
 - 6.1 Securing trade and attracting investments* 46
 - 6.2 Geographical proximity and shared challenges* 48
 - 6.3 Nordic directed paradiplomacy – at attempt at ‘identity bandwagoning’?* 51
- 7. Conclusion** 57
- Bibliography** 61
- Appendix 1: Ministerial engagements**..... 68

1. Introduction

*Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?*

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?*

Robert Burns

[For auld lang syne, 1788]

Following the implementation of devolution in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1998, Scotland enjoys power over a wide range of issues and policy areas. However, following the agreement on devolution (the Scotland Act, 1998), the mandate to develop foreign policy or engage in international relations remain a power reserved for the central British Government in London (Her Majesty's Government, 2020). Nevertheless, it is observed that Scotland does engage internationally on a number of topic areas, engaging in international relations with both nation-state and non-state actors (Kania, 2017). Within this conundrum, Scotland has made use of EU regional structures for substate international relations. Additionally, they have engaged extensively in relations with the Nordic countries – Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland¹ – both bilaterally and multilaterally on various issues. Following the 2016 Brexit referendum, the Scottish government identified that the international context within which it engages would change profoundly as a result of the forthcoming British departure from the European Union (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.1). Despite the changed context, the Scottish Government issued in 2017 that they seek to strengthen relations and engagements with the Nordic countries through an updated policy paper (ibid.). Reflecting upon the changed context, the policy paper puts forth that international engagement will remain important to Scotland, and that “engagement with Nordic [...] partners will [remain] a priority” (ibid., p.1-2).

This provides a two-part puzzle. If Scotland's international affairs and foreign policy, strictly speaking, are to be conducted out of London, how are they engaging with the Nordic countries? And why are they seeking to intensify relations with the Nordic region? Seeking to make sense of this puzzle, this thesis will seek to answer the following research question:

¹ For the purpose of this thesis, the autonomous territories Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland are also included under the Nordic countries.

How and why is Scotland engaging in international relations with the Nordic countries after the 2016 Brexit vote?

This question will be answered by focusing on the concept of paradiplomacy. This concept presents itself as a particularly fruitful starting point for studying the puzzle identified above as it seeks to conceptualise the international relations of substate actors. Deriving from a development towards increased participation in international relations and diplomacy by substate and non-central state actors, the phenomenon is arguably well established in practice and discussed with various approaches in International Relations (IR) scholarship, and beyond. Through the conceptualisation of paradiplomacy, a wide range of actors at political administrative levels below the central government (Kuznetsov, 2015), such as provinces, devolved or autonomous regions, federal states, counties and the more, are included in IR debates in a systemised manner. For example, the concept asks questions such as how the participation of substate governments in international relations play into and affect global ordering, conflictual relations between the central and non-central governments (Cantir, 2020), as well as of the international context within which substate actors engage. Moreover, and of particular relevance to the puzzle identified above, paradiplomacy conceptualises the activities of these actors, leading to an understanding of both the ways in which they engage internationally and the motivations driving their international engagement. Additionally, the concept provides analytical tools for studying how substates engage internationally, their motives for doing so, the factors that enable such activity and what constrains there are. The phenomenon is growing both in terms of substates engaging internationally and in terms of academic attention. Thus, it is a phenomenon which cannot be ignored (Paquin, 2020).

A relatively modest but growing collective of literature have previously studied Scotland's international relations as a case of paradiplomacy. For example, Kania (2017) has provided an account of how Scotland has institutionalised development assistance. Through engaging in development assistance, Scotland established relations with Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Pakistan, "allocating funds in areas such as education, health, sustainable economic development, civic governance and society, food security as well as energy and climate change" (Kania, 2017, p.72). In addition to this, Kania's study shows that Scotland also provides humanitarian assistance in cases of emergency. The main takeaway, however, is that Kania argues that through these activities and developing long-term and ad hoc relations,

Scotland develops agency, and confirms that “they are politically and economically adequately resourced” (ibid., p.72). In relation to Brexit, Hunt and Minto (2017) whose study mainly focuses on Wales, also sheds a light on Scottish paradiplomacy. In their article, they argue that as a result of dissatisfaction with the result of the Brexit vote, and perceptions of not having their opinions and priorities on the matter heard by the central UK Government, Scotland resorted to bypassing the UK Government, seeking to influence Brexit negotiations through paradiplomatic engagement with the EU in Brussels directly. In contrast to Wales, who took the approach as a “good unionist”, Scotland’s paradiplomatic response illustrates conflicting views on foreign policy as well as not being averted by the conflict which will result at home from bypassing the central government and engaging politically internationally in order to advance their standing. Finally, Rioux (forthcoming) has very recently studied Scottish paradiplomatic activities towards the Arctic. In the forthcoming chapter, Rioux maps the challenges and opportunities for Scottish paradiplomacy towards the Arctic region as a whole, giving particular attention to “trade and investment promotion, as well as environmental and scientific collaboration” (Rioux, forthcoming, p.175) as possible future ventures.

Observing a growing interest in academic research seeking to understand Scottish paradiplomacy underlines that there is still much about this actor and its paradiplomatic activity that we still have not made sense of. Moreover, given current developments in British internal affairs and dynamics, where Scotland is becoming more vocal about dissatisfaction with the UK foreign policy (Scottish Government, 2021b), combined with the changed context for international engagement following Brexit, and growing demands for independence, makes Scotland a fascinating and exiting area to study at the present time. Within this context and wider academic attention, it is curious that the Nordic dimension has been given as little attention as it has by scholars of paradiplomacy. Especially observing that the relationship and similarities between Scotland and the Nordic countries have featured debates of Scottish identity politics for a long time. Moreover, Scotland has long looked towards the Nordic countries, and wide similarities and ‘like-mindedness’ have been noted heavily by politicians and commentators alike. In light of this, the thesis welcomes the contribution by Rioux (forthcoming) which, as far as this thesis is aware, is one of the earliest contributions extending knowledge of Scottish paradiplomacy North. Contributing to the ‘northern expansion’ of scholarship, this thesis considers novel empirics in its analysis of how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries. It must be noted that the purpose of this thesis is

not to claim that Scotland's paradiplomatic activity towards the Nordic countries should be interpreted to mean that the Nordics is the only focal point of Scottish international engagement after the Brexit vote. Rather, the thesis aims to investigate an element of Scottish international efforts and analyse what this says about their political priorities in a changing global order. This should not be seen in contrast to, but rather as complimentary to, Scottish attempts to establish relations with the EU post-Brexit. By granting attention to identity politics and the meanings that are created through the relations with the Nordic countries themselves, seen in light of attempts to disassociate with the British international identity, the main argument of this thesis is that Scotland is engaging with the Nordic countries in order to assert a distinct identity, seeking to reposition itself geopolitically, and possibly an attempt at 'identity bandwagoning'.

In order to answer both the questions of how and why Scotland engages with the Nordic countries after the Brexit vote, the chapter will be structured as follows:

First, after this introduction, the chapter 2 will introduce paradiplomacy as a guiding conceptual framework for analysis. As alluded to above, the discussion will pay particular attention to the parts of the conceptual debate concerned with locating paradiplomacy, and the role of the paradiplomatic actor, within the wider international arena, perspectives on how we are to understand *how* paradiplomatic actors engage internationally, and finally *why* paradiplomatic actors engage internationally. Subsequent to this, chapter 3 will present the methods, or rather approach, taken to conduct the study of this thesis. In chapter 4, the thesis introduces Scotland as an international actor, and the Scottish-Nordic relationship. This is done by first establishing the formal restrictions to Scotland's mandate to conduct international relations as well as the space of opportunity which nevertheless makes international relations acceptable domestically. Second, the chapter shows how the Brexit vote led to anticipated changed international context for Scotland's international engagement. Finally, the chapter contextualises Scottish-Nordic relations within a historical narrative which forms narratives of contemporary relations. Following this contextualisation, chapter 5 will address the question of *how* Scotland engages with the Nordic countries through an analysis of strategies and engagements by Scottish ministers, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The analysis will focus on both the quantitative aspect of engagement as well as the qualitative. In chapter 6 the question of *why* Scotland engages with the Nordic countries is discussed. Here, three possible factors are explored. First, the economic dimension, second common issues resulting from geographical proximity, and finally, the formation of an

imagined identity. Finally, chapter 7 will summarise, make general conclusions and present some suggestions for possible future research.

2. Conceptualising Paradiplomacy

The case of Scottish-Nordic international relations will in this thesis be understood as a function of paradiplomacy from the side of Scotland. As such, this chapter will introduce and establish the concept of paradiplomacy as a guiding framework for the analysis and discussion that is to come. This chapter will approach the conceptual debate with particular focus to the actor dimension, providing insight into (a) these actors' place in the wider context of international relations, (b) what kind of international relations they engage in, i.e., what kinds of practices or activities they perform, and (c), what are the drivers or motivations behind paradiplomatic activity. The structure of the chapter will follow these illustrated points.

2.1 Introducing subnational international relations

The presence of non-state, non-central state or substate actors in international relations and global politics is hardly a new phenomenon – neither in International Relations (IR) theories nor in practice. Historically, one can amongst others point to the presence of pirates, insurgent and mercenary groups operating across borders out of self-interest as a type of international actor not tied to one particular state. The latter part of the 20th century has witnessed a remarkable growth of international organisations, both governmental (IGOs) and non-governmental (INGOs) (see, e.g, Marshall and Cole, 2011, p.15), operating both with and alongside nation-states on the international arena. Moreover, as a result of ever-increasing globalisation, or more precisely increased interconnectedness, we can in the same period observe an increase of subnational entities such as cities, regions and devolved administrative bodies seeking to obtain international agency. These political administrative bodies below the state level, substates, are the units that will remain in focus for this analysis and conceptualisation. However, the degree to which these units have been studied in academia and the significance attributed to them varies. Traditional orthodox IR theories, based on assumptions of global order, state rationality, power struggles, and a divide between internal and external matters, have (with various extent) come to regard the sovereign nation-state as the principal actor in IR. Most notably, realist-oriented perspectives argue that nation-states are the ones defining the main power dynamics of the global order (Morgenthau, 1948; Mearsheimer, 1994). Hence, for these theoretical approaches, the nation-state has in large remained in focus analytically, On the other hand, challenging and reducing the dominance of

those theories, pluralist and critical theoretical approaches have moved IR beyond the state asserting a wider approach to the relevant actors and their significance in IR.

Resulting from the observation of substate involvement in international relations, the development of the concept paradiplomacy is one reflection of such pluralism and discussions related to changing international dynamics. As a concept which seeks to study specifically the international relations of substate political entities (Wolff, 2007), paradiplomacy is particularly apt to study the international relations of Scotland and will thus be used as a guiding conceptual framework for this thesis. The attractiveness in paradiplomacy as a concept is nevertheless not merely in the unit studied, but moreover that the debates within the conceptualisation reminds us of the dynamic, evolving nature of international relations and global order more generally. This is done through the exemplification of how substate actors increasingly engage internationally with their own agendas, goals and objectives – sometimes in line with, and sometimes in conflict with, the foreign policy of their central or ‘host’ state (Duchacek, 1990; Soldatos, 1990). The academic contributions concerned with paradiplomacy can be divided into three main characteristics. The first is mainly concerned with contextualising paradiplomacy within a wider international context, and the role of subnational actors vis-à-vis the traditional nation-state. Second, scholars are concerned with debating *how* subnational actors engage internationally and exploit various spaces of opportunity, or opportunity structures, and thereby strengthen their international agency. Finally, the debates are also concerned with *why* paradiplomatic actors engage internationally ranging from internal to external motivations driving paradiplomacy. These debates will be addressed respectively in the subchapters that are to follow. The thesis will follow Kuznetsov’s (2015) definition of paradiplomacy as “*a form of political communication for reaching economic, cultural, political, or any other types of benefits, the core of which consists in self-sustained actions of [substate] governments with foreign governmental and non-governmental actors*” (Kuznetsov, 2015, pp.30-31).

2.2 Conceptualising paradiplomacy

The concept of paradiplomacy emerged from a resurgence of federalism studies in the 1970s reflecting increased involvement of substate units in international affairs. Initially, this scholarship was concentrated on case studies within a North American context providing

descriptive accounts of the international involvement of specific Canadian provinces and US states (Paquin, 2020, p.49; Kuznetsov, 2015, p.43). The studies sparked a debate, and while placing subnational international relations on the agenda of IR research, they have been criticised for their descriptive nature and lack of effort to provide explanatory frameworks for analysis (Kuznetsov, 2015, p.43; Liu and Song, 2020, p.2). The conceptualisation of paradiplomacy progressed beyond this critique with Hans Michelmann and Panayotis Soldatos' (1990) book *Federalism and International Relations: The Role of Subnational Units*. The edited book, which featured chapters by influential authors such as John Kincaid and Ivo Duchacek, has been accredited as the first collective work which presents both empirical accounts of paradiplomatic activity, but further attempts to conceptualise paradiplomacy by also presenting explanatory theoretical patterns to explain the drivers and effects of subnational international involvement (Tremblay, 1991; Brown and Groen, 1994) which remain influential and used today (Kuznetsov, 2015, p.43). These patterns will be addressed and discussed later on in the chapter.

A common feature of the conceptual debate is the emergence of an abundance of terms aimed at most accurately describing the phenomenon of subnational international relations. These terms include, but are not limited to, “multilayered diplomacy” (Holmes, 2020; Chen, Junbo, and Diyu, 2010), “regional diplomacy” (Duran, 2019), “sub-state diplomacy” (Cornago, 2010; Segura, 2017; Crikemans, 2010; Royles, 2017), “constituent diplomacy” (Kincaid, 2002; Jenkins, 2003), and “secondary foreign policy” (Klatt and Wassenberg, 2017). While accepting the plethora of available terms, this thesis follows the argument by Kuznetsov that paradiplomacy has become a dominant conceptual term which can be seen as an umbrella encompassing also alternative neologies (Kuznetsov, 2015, p.30). The plethora of terminology is interesting in that it exemplifies and reflects that the concept paradiplomacy is not perfect, but nevertheless that the conceptualisation of the phenomenon is one undergoing extensive debate. Terminology aside, this debate reflects and informs our understanding of how the world substate international relations take place in can be understood. Thus, it is crucial for our understanding of the phenomenon.

While Michelmann and Soldatos' (1990) book is often accredited with conceptualising paradiplomacy, the contention of terminology is present already here with various chapter authors employing different terms. Duchacek, who previously had conceptualised substate international relations as ‘microdiplomacy’ (1984), turns to accept and defend the term

paradiplomacy holding that “‘para’ expresses accurately what it is about: activities parallel to, often co-coordinated with, complimentary to, and sometimes in conflict with the centre-to-centre macrodiplomacy” (Duchacek, 1990, p.32). By following this conceptualisation, one arrives at an understanding of ‘para’ in its etymological meaning of being parallel or next to. This informs the understanding of paradiplomacy in several ways. First, this could indicate that substate and state actors *can* engage in similar activities on similar arenas side by side and that their parallel standing could encourage relation building between state and substate entities. Moreover, in cases of co-coordination and complementarity, this could also point to potential for intrastate ‘burden sharing’ where the central state and substate double their capacity working towards a common goal. Most essentially, however, the understanding of ‘para’ as parallel opens an understanding of international relations as opening up for various types of actors co-existing and sharing a common international arena.

This conceptualisation was, however, early contested with critics stating that ‘para’ may also indicate a derogative status of both the diplomatic activities and the actors performing them. According to Hocking (1993; 1995), the term paradiplomacy is problematic in that it, in his view, indicates a “second-order level” of diplomacy which reinforces a divide between central states and non-central governments fostering potential conflict. Further, he argues that this second-ordering reinforces both a distinction between local governments and the central state as well as the notion that diplomacy is something preserved for national governments (Hocking, 1993; 1995). Preferring the analogy ‘multi-layered diplomacy’ (1995), Hocking emphasises that diplomacy is a system in which different levels are engaged and vary based on interest and capability of various issues – or as he describes it, a “densely textured web” (Hocking, 1993, p.3; Paquin, 2020, p.50). Similar to Hocking, Krämer (1999) sees the term paradiplomacy as upholding state-centrism and state preference in terms of diplomacy, and that the term degrades acts undertaken by non-central governments. “The term ‘para’ has the flavour of ‘second-hand’ politics, while ‘diplomacy’ seems primarily focused on ‘high politics’, and implicitly the emulation of the ‘diplomatic’ activities of the central state” (Krämer, 1999, pp.237). Krämer’s argument is problematic in that it is not effective in arguing for the relevance of international activities by substates, but rather derogates soft power diplomacy in general – regardless of who the actor is. Through his conceptualisation and description of the diplomatic system as a ‘densely textured web’, Hocking paints a fine illustration of the complex dynamics of contemporary international relations reflecting a world in which actors engage at multiple layers or scales at the same time. This description or

reflection does, however, not necessarily exclude the conceptualisation of paradiplomacy. Rather, understanding ‘para’ as parallel to rather than secondary to too can arguably indicate a multi-layered understanding of the world where various actors engage parallel to each other. Thus, Hocking contributes to the conceptualisation by providing a precise picture of the world and dynamics, but the proposed alternative term might be seen as superfluous.

In more recent literature, Klatt and Wassenberg (2017) too find the connotations to sub orientation or a second level in the phrasing ‘para’ problematic. In their work, Klatt and Wassenberg present an argument in which they balance acceptance of current central state vs. non-central government structures, where one is subject to the other, with a critique of the balance of power in the global order between the two. In describing paradiplomacy as “international activities of state institutions below the national level and outside the foreign services” (Klatt and Wassenberg, 2017, p.205) whilst proposing the alternative term secondary foreign policy, and simultaneously recognising the state-centric norm in international relations (2017), Klatt and Wassenberg insinuate that they do not seek to alter sovereignty structures. Rather, in criticising the term paradiplomacy for being declined “with regards to different types and objectives of the international activities concerned” (ibid., p.206), the authors argue for recognising the international activities of non-central governments as not inferior to those of the central state, but rather that international activity should be recognised next to those of the central state. Moreover, they find that replacing paradiplomacy with ‘secondary foreign policy’ reflects better the “diversity and complexity of international relations beyond primary foreign policy of nation states and supranational organizations” (ibid., p.207), and as such widens the field for the inclusion of both governmental, political and civil society (ibid.). In other words, one may suggest that Klatt and Wassenberg’s argument insinuates a development in the global order where non-central governments are subject to the central government, but that they nevertheless can operate within the same playing field. This is seconded by Hunt and Minto (2017) who point out that the international scene has become more hospitable to local governments, their entities and activities. This despite the long-established primacy of the central state in the realm of foreign policy following the fact that the structures associated with international politics and law were created by and for central states.

Collectively, these scholarly contributions allude to a development in which a focus on domination and subordination in the relationship between the state and substate actors. This

development frequents the work of several authors writing within the field of paradiplomacy, noting that the prominence of non-central governments in international relations is increasing (Mendes and Figueira, 2017, p.2), arguing that the more forceful assertion on the international scene (Hunt and Minto, 2017, p.647) lead to them acquiring a more influential role (Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2014, p.20). Drawing on Cornago (2010), Mocca (2020) argues that in pursuing international goals, local governments broaden their agency and carve out increased room for manoeuvre “outside the control of the central state” (Mocca, 2020. p.303; *ibid.* p.314). However, one should be cautious in overestimating the enthusiasm towards non-central governments’ international activities and suggested increased autonomy on the international arena. Kania (2019) describes the larger picture as “ambiguous at best” (Kania, 2019, p. 62-63). The norm remains that foreign policy is, in most cases, reserved for the central state, that non-central governments are subject to the central state, and thus that their actions are expected to follow this subjection (*ibid.*; Mingus, 2006, p.580-581). Kania’s point is an important one as it reflects a contestation of position of power and dominance. While the conceptualisation of paradiplomacy and observation of increased international relations of substates point to a development in international relations where actors exploit different opportunities for manoeuvring the international arena, it does not implicitly entail the demise or replacement of the state.

2.3 How do paradiplomatic actors engage with the world?

Paradiplomacy is a concept which encompasses a great variety of actors of various forms and sizes. The character of these actors includes devolved or autonomous regions, federal states, provinces, counties, other various forms of municipalities, and sometimes large cities. A commonality that can be drawn from the many various actors included in the paradiplomacy literature is that they refer to political administrative territorial units below the nation-state level (Dittmer et.al.,2020; see also Jackson, 2018). This is reflected in Kuznetsov’s (2015) and Cantir’s (2020) conceptualisations of paradiplomatic actors as non-central governments. In Kuznetsov’s book *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy*, the unit of analysis is delimited to the layer of government immediately below the central government (2015, p.22). While the unit of analysis in this thesis, Scotland, is an example of that level, the thesis holds the concept of paradiplomacy to be applicable also to levels below this, reflecting the variations of multi-level governance present globally.

Given the differing characteristics of paradiplomatic actors, it comes as no surprise that how these various actors engage internationally and the drivers behind their activities varies greatly based on issues, interests, and their ability to act within the international environment (Paquin, 2020, p.50). Given the prevalence of actor-focused, case driven studies within the paradiplomacy scholarship, the breadth of activities are well documented ranging from involvement in regional forums and networks to establishing both bilateral and multilateral ad hoc and long-standing relations with both nation-state and nonstate actors. Essentially, one can argue that paradiplomacy is in large a relational activity. Together, the activities actors engage in, and thus develop competence on, become a part of the actor's 'toolbox' or repertoire (Haugevik and Sending, 2020) for international engagement. Paquin (2020) argues that the tools available for paradiplomatic actors to build their repertoire is of nearly as great range as for nation-states. However, Keating (1999) notes that opposed to traditional nation-state diplomatic practices, paradiplomacy tends to be "more functionally specific and targeted, often opportunistic and experimental" (Keating, 1999, p.11). Further underlining the individual differences of paradiplomatic actors as well as the distinction between paradiplomacy and 'regular' nation-state diplomacy, one does not escape the fact that substate actors hold asymmetrical powers in international relations, most notably in comparison to nation-states as their non-sovereign status does not grant them recognition under international law (Paquin, 2020). This status as not being recognised limits their legal capacity to enter into treaties and other legal-binding agreements as well as access to certain international organisations such as the UN. According to Lecours (2002), this lack of formal legal capacity becomes a hinderance to their external legitimacy as many of the formal structures in international relations are created by and for sovereign nation-states. However, as Paquin points out, this hinderance "does not take away their entire ability to act" (Paquin, 2020, p.56). Through engaging internationally, the repertoire actors build further form their identity (Haugevik and Sending, 2020) and roles. Reviewing existing literature gives evidence to the different role paradiplomatic actors acquire through their relations. For instance, Kania (2019) shows how Scotland demonstrates international agency through institutionalisation of international development assistance. Klatt and Wassenberg (2017) have studied how non-central state actors can play a role in processes of cooperation, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Morin and Poliquin (2016) inquire into the role of Quebec in cross-border security governance in North America and point to how Quebec promotes distinctness through its long-standing, close partnership with France. In short, paradiplomatic actors

approach international engagement through different means, seeking to fill various roles and build different relations.

Given the argument that paradiplomacy is conducted by actors within a context and milieu which was not created for them, one could say that paradiplomatic actors are manoeuvring this context by making use of, or exploiting, various spaces of opportunity. Building on the early contributions of the conceptualisation of paradiplomacy, Lecours (2002) and Royles (2017) identify that these spaces, or sources of paradiplomacy, can be located in both domestic and global politics, and argue that these can be studied through “a multi-level analytical framework where regional political systems, national structures, continental regimes and the global system each contain opportunity structures that condition the international agency of regional governments” (Lecours, 2002, p. 101). Preferring the analogy spaces of opportunity, or opportunity spaces, to opportunity structures, this thesis finds studying how substate actors engage internationally through identifying how they manoeuvre these spaces favourable. First, the framework is analytical rather than descriptive, but moreover, it is widely applicable. Further, by analysing spaces of opportunity, both those available, unavailable, and their strengths and weaknesses, we gain valuable insight into both the questions of why and how non-central governments engage internationally. How in the sense that the various spaces of opportunity give access to various tools for engagement, and why in the sense that we can read into and interpret motivations from the spaces used.

First, both authors highlight that the party system and governing party in a given case as being of high relevance. Especially, paradiplomatic activity is more likely in cases with strong presence of, or governance by, nationalist, regionalist and/or successionist parties, as is the case with the chosen case study of this thesis. Further, institutional development and formal powers of the non-central government are highlighted. High levels of power and strong institutions position and enables non-central governments better in their international endeavours (see also Kania, 2019²). Thus, it is useful to study both the aspirations of the leading political party as well as whether paradiplomacy has been institutionalised. Within the latter Kuznetsov (2015) highlights the presence of a ministry or department responsible for international affairs, overseas representation offices, official overseas visits, participation in

² Kania argues that institutionalising activities provides non-central governments with greater agency.

international forums etc., participation in multilateral networks and foreign-organised events (Kuznetsov, 2015, pp.111-112).

At the national level of analysis, Lecours (2002) highlights the constitutional framework (or other legal acts) which dictates the formal competences non-central governments have over international affairs (p.102; Kuznetsov, 2015, p.108). Moreover, intragovernmental relations, cooperation between central and non-central government, and representation of the non-central government in the central government is of importance. Lecours argues that in cases where non-central governments do not have structures for influencing policies, they may opt to form their own (Lecours, 2002, p.102). However, as will be demonstrated in chapter four regarding the UK, weak intergovernmental structures may also lead to attempts at influencing policies by means of reaching out internationally without forming an independent policy on the issue (Hunt and Minto, 2017). A strategy which by Keck and Sikkink (1998) has been referred to as a 'boomerang effect'. Finally, the central government's foreign policy is important. According to Lecours (2002), a central foreign policy which focuses more on 'low politics' (such as culture, economy and environment amongst others) creates greater opportunities for involvement of non-central governments than one highly focused on high politics (ibid., pp.102-103). On this issue, Kuznetsov (2015) holds that insufficient effectiveness or weaknesses in managing specific policy issues by the central government can induce paradiplomacy. Empirically, this is particularly seen in relation to the global issue of climate change, where local authorities and in particular cities seek to take on a leading role (see, e.g., Dekker, 2020; Rosenzweig, et.al., 2010).

Turning to the international, continental regimes are crucial in conditioning paradiplomacy. Supranational structures both create means for bypassing the central government resulting from transformation of power from the central to the supranational level and can provide special institutional niches for non-central governments as seen in the EU's Conference of the Regions (CoR) (Lecours, 2002, p.103) and INTERREG (Kuznetsov, 2015, p.107). Finally, Lecours (2002) emphasise the global system, hereunder international organizations accepting non-central government members (see also Royles, 2017); the state system and states actively seeking relations with non-central states; the regional governments themselves, supporting each other and together developing their international agency (some would also argue the creation of a 'international regional system'); and finally the global economy, in which liberalisation has expanded the agency of non-state actors (Lecours, 2002, pp.103-104).

Just like for traditional nation-states, there are a large number of varying activities available for substate actors to engage in international relations. Nevertheless, their status as not recognised under international law provides some limitations to their international agency, most prominently through not having the power to enter into legally binding treaties (and similar) with other actors, and restrictions to membership of for a where state-recognition is a requirement. As such, we can understand the activities of subnational actors as a process of manoeuvring spaces of opportunities available to them. These spaces, and restrictions or limitations, are found at multiple layers, ranging from internal domestic conditions, to continental regimes to the global system. By investigating the kind of activities substate actors engage in within these spaces of opportunity, and the relations made through these activities, we can arrive at an explanation of the repertoire, or toolbox, substate actors create for themselves through international engagement. Through this, we can make assumptions of the type of actor they project themselves as through the activities – arguably a dynamic process. This forms a basis for understanding and analysing why substate actors engage internationally.

2.4 Why do paradiplomatic actors engage with the world?

As has been mentioned previously, the line between what constitutes domestic and foreign policy are becoming more blurred or overlapping (Chambers, 2012). Consequently, authors (Kilde) have argued that globalisation of the domestic (and by extension the local) has led to a need for local governments to engage internationally in order to attract investments, tourism and competence on for example technology. The economic aspects of and motives for pursuing international trade and inbound foreign investments have long dominated the field of paradiplomacy and has come to “serve as an explanation” for the desire or need of local governments to move beyond borders and seek international partners (Kania, 2017, p.62; Dickson, 2017, p.129). This is, however, being challenged. While recognising the opportunities for paradiplomacy in global economy, authors such as Kania (2017) are concerned with moving beyond the economic agenda, noting that opportunities and

motivations for conducting paradiplomacy are also rooted in culture³ and not least political factors. As Dickson (2017) humorously notes “‘It’s [not always] the Economy, stupid’” (p.129). This could be an indication of two developments. First, that researchers have become more aware of the multifaceted motivations of paradiplomatic activity, or second, that the ambitions of paradiplomatic actors are gradually changing, and that they seek to achieve more or different goals from their international relations. Although the three factors identified, i.e. economic, cultural and political factors, can be separated, they must also be seen in relation to one another. For example, the international promotion of culture does not only lead to culture export. In many cases it is also a means for attracting tourism, and as such plays also into the economic aspect of going abroad. Simultaneously, when promoting a distinct culture, one also promotes a certain identity. For paradiplomatic actors, this identity is most commonly being promoted as distinct from their central state. Hence, it also plays into the political sphere, opening doors and widening spaces for promoting nationalistic claims should they exist. In addition to being intertwined, the three are arguably mutually reinforcing and fostering strengthened presence and agency.

If paradiplomacy is to be understood as a relational practice, as argued above, then the question of why substates engage in international relations must also be understood in light of the relations that are being made, which again forms identity (Sharafutdinova, 2003, p. 615). Therefore, one could argue that examining the objective motives of paradiplomacy – such as procurement of investments or cultural export – only provides a piece of the puzzle. There is much to be learned from why substates engage internationally by reflecting on where these actors direct their attention, or by who they target. For Duchacek (1986) (see also Kuznetsov, 2015, p.27-28), there are three categories of targeting: transborder regional paradiplomacy, which describes relations with actors with whom one shares a border; transregional paradiplomacy, which are relations with actors which one shares geographical proximity but not borders; and global paradiplomacy, which are relations with the rest of the world. While these terms are useful, this thesis will suggest omitting ‘regional’ from the first category as this might suggest that the category encompasses paradiplomacy between two subnational units who share a border but are located within different nation-states. Through such understanding, it would follow that either paradiplomacy occurs only between subnational

³ ‘Culture’ can here be understood in two meanings. First, it can be understood as the dissemination of the arts, and second as an expression of identity. While dissemination of the arts is a part of national export, the main focus in this thesis will be on culture as an expression of identity.

units and not between a subnational actor and a nation-state actor, which we know is not the case, or that relations with a nation-state would fall into the third category, which would also seem strange as that produces vagueness. Naturally, it can, however, also be the case that the ‘regional’ in transborder regional is used to emphasise actors, regardless of statehood, who belong to the same geographically defined region *and* share a border, which would seem a superfluous clarification. In any event, by omitting ‘regional’ from the first category, one achieves a categorisation in which the first category refers to neighbouring actors who share a border, the second refers to actors within the same socially constructed geographic region (for example Europe), and the third to all remaining actors. This seems more inclusive, reflecting contemporary paradiplomatic practice. According to Kuznetsov (2015), the closer geographical ties a region has to a target region or nation-state, the more likely it is that it will seek to engage in paradiplomacy with this unit. From this one can assume that for these authors, geographical proximity produces both convenience but also greater probability of common or similar issues one wishes to cooperate on.

This explanation does, however, not take identity much into account. As will be argued with the case of Scotland’s relations with the Nordic countries in chapter four, paradiplomatic actors use the power in the relations that are formed through international engagement to strengthen a desired – often distinct – international image and identity (see, e.g., Lecours, 2002; or Sharafutdinova, 2003). If one is to accept that paradiplomacy is more likely to occur when a substate is governed by a strong nationalistic party or leadership (as has been argued by Lecours (2002) amongst others), one can assume that paradiplomatic actors choose their relations and activities carefully and strategically to reflect an identity which they are keen to promote. This reflects the political nature of paradiplomacy. Deriving from this, Jackson and Jeffrey argue that as paradiplomatic activities connecting paradiplomatic (and state) actors are “projected to an external audience” (Jackson and Jeffrey, 2019, p.7), apparent kinship is produced, which again produces perceptions of the resources available to the substate actor (*ibid.*). Thereby, by promoting certain partnerships, or relations, paradiplomatic actors articulate “new geopolitical configurations” (Jackson and Jeffrey, 2019, p.1), and reshape geopolitical imaginaries (*ibid.*, p.7). This aspect is particularly interesting and should be kept in mind when considering Scotland’s desire to promote its ‘like-mindedness’ and similarity to the Nordic countries after the 2016 Brexit vote.

Following the definition of paradiplomacy as “*a form of political communication for reaching economic, cultural, political, or any other types of benefits, the core of which consists in self-sustained actions of [substate] governments with foreign governmental and non-governmental actors*” (Kuznetsov, 2015, pp.30-31), this chapter has sought to explore certain debates within the conceptualisation of paradiplomacy, establishing a conceptual framework which will guide the analysis of how and why Scotland engages with the Nordic countries. This discussion has led to an understanding of paradiplomacy and paradiplomatic actors as a phenomenon in which actors, who (in most cases) do not have formal mandate to engage in international relations, and who do not enjoy recognition as actors in international relations under international law nevertheless engage in international relations. It has been observed that through manoeuvring spaces of opportunity, these actors assert themselves at the international stage, performing activities similar to those of traditional nation-states. Motivated by factors such as economic gain, promoting political values, and asserting and promoting distinct cultures and identities, these actors challenge the primacy and relative power and position of the nation-state in international politics. As such, the phenomenon can be understood as one example of pluralism in international relations and IR, contributing to our understanding of the contemporary, multileveled nature of international politics.

3. Methodology

“It is sheer craziness to dare to understand world affairs...yet dare, we must”.

(Rosenau, 1996, cited in Dickson, 2017, p.76)

The puzzle and research question of this thesis developed from an empirical observation of Scottish interest in, and relations with, the Nordic countries despite lacking formal mandate to engage in international relations. As such, the thesis seeks to analyse and explain details of the particular case and empirics guided by the conceptual framework set out in chapter 3 by conducting a (mainly) qualitative desk study of the case with an interpretive approach. This has implications for the approach taken to the study as well as the material studied. Hence, it is the purpose of this chapter to explain the method, approach, and choices made to conduct the research. Just as the approach paradiplomatic actors take when engaging internationally tends to be experimental, as do the approaches taken by those studying these activities. Indeed, observing that there is no one methodological framework to apply to the study of paradiplomacy, Dickson (2017) has described methodological approaches as “messy”. For this thesis as well, this leads to a degree of eclecticism in approaches, identifying various ways of studying the phenomenon by drawing on the contributions to the conceptual framework set out in chapter 2. The chapter will follow the following structure:

First, the chapter will briefly address aspects of the case as a mode of studying paradiplomacy, and the interpretive approach. Second, the chapter will consider how to study the ‘how’ dimension of the research question. Guided by understandings from the conceptual framework and suggestions by other scholars of paradiplomacy (Kuznetsov, 2015, specifically), the section will explain how the question will be studied, what empirical material is identified, and how this material is employed / studied in the analysis. Third, a similar section considering the ‘why’ dimension of the research question follows. Finally some limitations will be discussed – focusing on implications of the ‘experimental’ approach taken, the largely governmental-focused empirical material, as well as my role as a researcher and biases.

The case study, understood as an “in-depth, multifaceted investigation (...) of a single social phenomenon” (Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg, 1991, p.2) is a natural approach to studying

paradiplomacy. As illustrated by the many directions the conceptual debate and scholarship focusing on the phenomenon of paradiplomacy have taken, the phenomenon is complex. This complexity is further emphasised considering the varying characteristics, competences and agency of paradiplomatic actors. By studying a particular actor or their activities through the case study, one is enabled to study the complex nature in detail. Moreover, “the case study is usually seen as an instance of a broader phenomenon, as part of a larger set of parallel instances” (ibid.). The case study can also be accurately understood in the words of Creswell: “A case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a “case” or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.” (Creswell, 2002, quoted in VanWynsberghe and Khan, 2007, p.81) By studying paradiplomacy through case studies, one is able to explore the wide array of details surrounding the international relations of substate entities, and place them within the broader phenomenon, which again forms the understanding of the phenomenon itself. Thereby, the case study is a useful tool, not only for this thesis where the puzzle itself is within a specific case, but for paradiplomacy as a phenomenon more widely. In this thesis, the case presented is studied through interpretation. The interpretive approach is useful within the social sciences as it allows analysis not only of the visible, but also of the meanings created by what one can objectively observe. As Rosenthal has identified, “social scientists investigate an interpreted world” (2018, p.35). Relating to the research question of this thesis, how and why Scotland engages with the Nordic countries, one must bear in mind that this takes place within a context of how Scotland interprets and evaluates the situation and relation. Thus, in order to answer the research question, one must also understand Scotland’s interpretation of the situation. By understanding *how* paradiplomatic actors engage internationally as a process of manoeuvring various spaces of opportunity, this can best be studied by interpreting how the actor itself understands these spaces. As Rosenthal puts it, “social reality is constituted by interactive processes which depend on how actors interpret a situation, and how they contribute to its interpretation” (2018, p.35.).

Deriving from the conceptual framework set out in chapter 2, paradiplomatic actors engage in international relations by manoeuvring various spaces of opportunity, engaging in a large variety of specific activities. Thus, it is suggested to study these activities through studying how a given actor exploits various spaces for opportunity at both the national and international level. Concretely, Kuznetsov (2015, pp.111-112) suggests doing this by asking a series of questions. A few of the suggestions by Kuznetsov have been selected and adjusted to

fit the particular case studied in this thesis. First, is there established a ‘regional ministry of foreign affairs?’, which should be studied by looking into subnational governmental structures. Second, do they engage in official visits to other countries, and participate in international forums, exhibitions etc? Here, I would like to elaborate on Kuznetsov’s question to also ask, do they meet with foreign representatives at ‘home’? This is suggested studied by looking at concrete practices paying particular attention to the quantitative as well as the qualitative information. What is the frequency of these points of contact? At what level does contact occur (i.e., civil society, organisational, subnational, national – and within the latter, at what level of competence)? And again I will add to Kuznetsov by also including what topics are the objective for these meetings? Third, do they participate in transborder, multilateral networks focusing on specific problems? This is studied by collecting information on affiliation, membership and participation.

Based on this, two main sources of empirical data have been identified: official data describing all engagements by Scottish Ministers and strategic objectives set out in the Scottish Governments Nordic Baltic Policy (Scottish Government, 2017b), their Arctic Policy (Scottish Government, 2019) and their International Framework (Scottish Government, 2017a). The Government Publications mentioned have been purposely sampled due to their specific international and Nordic focus. These empirical sources will be seen as both complementing and contrasting each other, contributing to mapping both bilateral and multilateral activities. In order to map paradiplomatic practices, and points of contact between Scottish government officials and the Nordic countries, a dataset containing all Nordic-related ministerial engagements between May 2016 and October 2020 has been developed. The choice of focusing on Ministerial engagements derives from how international relations have been institutionalised within the Scottish Government apparatus as well as the Government itself identifying Ministers as “the voice of Scotland” in relations with the Nordic countries (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.6).

The dataset has been created in Microsoft Excell by following several steps. First, data concerning *all* ministerial engagements in the given time period was collected from the Scottish Government. Due to aspirations of transparency, these data are available to the public through the Scottish Government website (Scottish Government, 2021). The data is originally made available through a series of month-by-month documents. Therefore, the first step of the creation of the data set was to compile all data to one file sorted by year and month. Second,

all engagement strictly related to domestic affairs were eliminated, leaving all international engagements. Here it is important to make a note on the elimination process and interpretation of what constitutes international engagements. For most engagements, it is quite clear whether engagements are of international or national character. However, this is more complicated in cases of businesses, where it for a large part remains unclear whether meetings have been with foreign or national divisions. In order to avoid reporting of domestic meetings as international, all cases where it is unclear whether the meeting occurred with a national or international division of a company were eliminated. However, meetings with businesses where it is clear that it is a foreign business have been kept in the international data. This produces some margin of error in the dataset, and makes counting points of contact with foreign businesses in the dataset unreliable. Therefore, this is not a category that has been counted explicitly. Additionally, meetings with UK government representatives (mainly applicable to UK diplomatic staff) during overseas visits have also been eliminated. Subsequent to this elimination process, a similar process of elimination was conducted, discarding all international engagements that were not (a) directly with the Nordic countries or on Nordic issues, or (b) located in either Nordic country. Again, it was ensured that bilateral meetings with countries other than the Nordic or multilateral meetings not including the Nordic countries, were eliminated, even when these meetings took place in either Nordic country. Finally, once the data contained only Nordic-related engagements, whom the ministers met with was operationalised to reflect country, organisation or summit, the position or level of the meeting partner, and topic of the meeting. This process has resulted in the dataset presented in Appendix 1: Ministerial Nordic Engagements May 2016 – October 2020 – hereafter referred to as Ministerial engagements and referenced in-text as ‘appendix 1’.

The conceptual framework has identified various motivations for paradiplomatic actors to go abroad. Unlike the question of how substate actors engage in international relations, Kuznetsov (2015) does not provide a set of questions for analysing the predominant motives, nor do other authors. The analysis will thus study the motivational factors outlined in chapter 2.4, economy, geography, and identity creation, through looking at what Scotland gains from engagement on the various topics, and crucially, what meaning that is produced through the engagements. While it, according to Kuznetsov (2015, pp.110-111) is possible to identify and distinguish the differing motivational factors, it must be born in mind that “subnational governments pursue a few aims in their international activities simultaneously” (ibid., p.110). Therefore, it is expected to find motives within all categories of motivation. Empirically, the

question of why Scotland engages with the Nordic countries will be analysed through the same policy papers and strategies identified above, which remain sampled for the same reason. While the discussion will be informed by the motivations stated by the Scottish Government in the documents identified, following the interpretive tradition, it will pay greater attention to the meanings and representations created by the relations themselves. This also supports the sentiment from chapter 2, that understanding paradiplomacy as a relational practice, means that in order to study the motivations of paradiplomacy, we must also look at the relation itself and the meanings produced by it. The interpretive approach is particularly useful for studying the motivations of a given paradiplomatic actor. Given the potential conflicts between substate and central state arising from paradiplomatic activity (especially if the activity is politically motivated, not coordinated), there is reason to assume that not all motivations will be stated. For the case of Scotland, who has been vocal about disagreements with the foreign policy of the central government (Scottish Government, 2021b), this assumption seems reasonable. Thus, in order to uncover their motivations for engaging with the Nordic countries one must interpret the meanings created by the relation in addition to the outspoken motives. Importantly, this will revolve around what representation of Scotland to the wider international community do these relations produce? In order to uncover this, the analysis will pay attention to the representations of the Nordic countries in the empirics comparing these with the international image Scotland pursues for itself.

Although grounded in elements identified in the conceptual debate, suggestions of concrete thinking tools, specific aspects of international engagement, and ways of studying these suggested by scholars of paradiplomacy, there are imperfections to the approach taken in this study – just as there are imperfections to other methodological approaches of studying paradiplomacy. The approach is, as Dickson identified, experimental. And while there are limitations to such experimental approach, namely that by practicing eclecticism one arrives at a framework and approach which fits this study in particular and can have limited transferrable value to other cases. However, this is also the strength of the approach. By practicing this eclecticism, it is possible to tailor an approach which first studies exactly what one is seeking to understand, and second fits the context of the case that one has before her. A further potential limitation is found in the focus on both practice and motivations of the Scottish Government. This leads to the thesis having a governmental focus, and as such the thesis really answers how the Scottish Nationalist Party-led Government has engaged with the Nordic countries, and what the motivations of the nationalist Government for engaging with

the Nordic countries have been in the period studied. As this Government has been re-elected during the final stages of this thesis, there is reason to assume that the attitudes presented will remain steadfast during the coming governmental session. However, based on the empirical data applied to this thesis, there is uncertainty regarding transferability to the future should a massive change of governmental power occur. Thereby, the findings of this thesis must be understood as a functioning of the conditions present in the period studied – that is from the Brexit vote in 2016, up until the UK formally left the European Union in 2020.

Moreover, the focus on one very specific case, and studying it through a tailored approach has implications for the external validity of the thesis. However, as this seeks to study one very specific puzzle, and not a phenomenon as a whole, it does not seek to produce significant external validity. Rather, it is meant to serve the purpose of providing a specific empiric to the field.

Finally, regarding limitations to the study, my role as a researcher and potential bias must be briefly addressed. First, I lived in Edinburgh, studying international relations in the period prior to, and the first part of the period studied here. As such, I am bound to be influenced by my own every-day experiences and assumptions of Scottish dynamics and political life. Moreover, due to student engagements, I have been present at certain engagements found in appendix 1. This means that I have knowledge of the tone of *some (arguably very few)* of the engagements where Scottish Ministers meet the Nordic countries. Perceptions derived from this will colour my interpretations of similar events. However, simply being aware of this, will limit personal bias.

4. The Case of Scottish-Nordic Diplomatic Links

*We two have run about the hills,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.*

*Robert Burns
[For auld lang syne, 1788]*

As a preliminary to discussing how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries and why they do so in chapters 5 and 6 respectively, this chapter will set out the basics for Scottish international relations with the Nordic countries. First, the chapter will address Scotland's status as subject to the British central Government, the formal restrictions to international relations mandate that follows from this, and how Scotland nevertheless is permitted to engage internationally. Second, the chapter will outline how the Brexit vote in 2016 changed the international context Scotland operates in. Here, it will be illustrated how the Scottish Government reacted to this changed context and their concerns following the change, but moreover how they reacted to the changed context by seeking to intensify relations with the Nordic countries. Finally, the chapter will explore the historical and contemporary context of Scottish-Nordic relations.

4.1 Global Scotland

Scotland is one of four nations which together make up the sovereign nation-state the United Kingdom (UK). This status as a nation but not a sovereign nation-state probes one important question: Can Scotland 'do' foreign policy? The simple answer to this – as a matter of law – is no. The UK is governed through devolved rule. This means that each of the devolved administrations – Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – have competency over certain policy areas (devolved matters), while other areas of policy remain reserved for the central UK Government (reserved matters). Under the Scotland Act (1998; 2016), the Scottish Parliament and Government enjoy power over an extensive array of domestic matters such as agriculture and fishing, education, environment, health and social services, housing, justice and policing, local government, and some aspects of tax and social security (Scottish Parliament 2021a). International relations, defence, and national security (amongst others), however, are reserved matters, and power over these hence remain a prerogative of the central

government in London (the Scotland Act 1998, Schedule 5. Section 7; Her Majesty's Government, 2020a). In other words, there are certain formal restrictions to what Scotland can and cannot do – with international relations or foreign affairs *de jure* falling into the latter category.

In the wake of the establishment of devolved rule in 1997, Robbins (1998) asked important questions about the potential implications devolution could have for foreign policy. Notably, Robbins developed an argument that one must consider the extent to which international relations in fact would remain a reserved competence, or whether “*de facto* if not *de jure*, the Scottish parliament will begin to evolve something akin to a ‘Scottish’ foreign policy” (Robbins, 1998, p.114). While these speculations came early, Robbins’ analysis of the political climate and potential for Scottish-British tensions on matters of international relations have proven highly relevant. The contrast between the *de jure* restrictions to competency over international relations and the desire of Scotland to engage internationally is mirrored in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on devolution and its supplementary agreements between the central government and the devolved administrations (United Kingdom Government et al., 2013). The agreement, which is binding in honour rather than in law (*ibid.*), stipulates both how intergovernmental relations, coordination, and negotiation should be managed through a system of various Joint Ministerial Committees (JMC), and that international affairs, policy and promotion of international interests remain the responsibility of the UK Government, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs⁴ (*ibid.*, p.44). Nevertheless, it further recognises that Scotland will have an interest in developing international policy “in relation to devolved matters” (*ibid.*). In other words, Scotland is in a position where it does not have constitutional rights to engage in international relations, but nevertheless is endorsed to act beyond its constitutional limitations (though only on devolved matters) through a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’. Thus, the MoU provides Scotland with a space of opportunity, and the capacity to, engage in international relations as long as it pertains to matters already under Scottish rule and, arguably so, grants important paradiplomatic autonomy (Rioux, forthcoming, p.177).

⁴ Previously (and in referenced document) Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

Seizing this space of opportunity, Scotland has not only chosen to engage in international relations but has institutionalised their international work in a structural manner that resembles not only that of the UK government, but also that of other sovereign nation-states. Their international relations are managed through set committees on international relations⁵ in the Scottish Parliament, a Scottish Governmental External Affairs Directorate headed by a Cabinet Secretary (the Scottish equivalent to Secretary of State) and a Minister, and topic- and area-specific international policies and strategies. Through the governmental and parliamentary apparatus in general, and the mentioned bodies in particular, Scotland has established and maintained relations with third party state and non-state actors across the world (Kania, 2019). These relations and international activities range from *longue durée* development assistance programs, to partners in international trade, participation in multilateral regional and national forums, and bi- or multilateral meetings purposed at tackling concrete challenges, experience sharing or policy exchange. Moreover, it has also been successful in moving Scottish international activity from being occupied with what Tom Nairn (1977) called the ‘tartan monster’ (in Keating, 2016, p.n.a) to “projecting Scotland as a modern, dynamic society” (Keating, 2016, p.n.a). While there is a global dimension of Scotland’s international work, a substantial part is located within the EU and the Nordic region (Rioux, forthcoming) engaging with state and regional partners through participation in several initiatives and programs and bilateral relations. Through these broad reaching and consistent relations, Scotland demonstrate that they have the ability and capacity to conduct “independent external activities” (Kania, 2019, p.66). Observing how Scotland has taken advantage of the space of opportunity available through the MoU, one can answer Robbins’ (1998) question by concluding that Scotland seeks to at least asserted itself as a competent *de facto* actor in international relations.

4.2 The Brexit Referendum and changed international context

Little has occupied and shaped British and European politics and relations as much the past five years (pandemic aside) as the decision by the British people on June 23rd, 2016, to leave the European Union – Brexit. For Scotland, where 62 per cent of the electorate voted to

⁵ Committee on Europe (1999 – 2002); Committee on European and External Relations (2003-2016); and Committee on Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs (2017-current (under the name Culture, Tourism, Europe and External relations until September 2016)).

remain in the Union, the referendum and result has been crucial in shaping relations and tensions both abroad and at home in the time that has followed. With regards to Scotland's international relations, Brexit entails a changed international context for Scotland to manoeuvre. The Scottish Government observes this development with concern. In the 2017 Nordic Baltic Policy Statement and the International Framework the Scottish Government note that "(...) the context in which we operate has changed profoundly" (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.1), and that "the UK EU referendum outcome and the consequential decision to leave the EU is likely to have a significant impact on the context of our internationalisation activities" (Scottish Government, 2017a, p.3). The concern about this changed context is reflected in the Arctic Policy which issues that "The UK's exit from the EU poses a serious risk to Scotland's domestic and international interests" (Scottish Government, 2019, p.7).

While UK's departure from the EU for Scotland arguably has greatest effect on relations with the EU, it also has implications for Scotland's relations with the Nordic countries. Many of the arenas where Scotland and the Nordics meet are through EU-bodies or forums and EU-funded programs. Programmes which the Scottish Government highlight as having "made a strongly positive difference to our communities and has provided vital funding for local development" (Scottish Government, 2019, p.6). Losing access to these points of contact by consequence of Brexit could mean disruption to diplomatic relations with the Nordics (as well as other European countries). As mentioned above, such anticipated disruption was also a concern from the Scottish Government following the triggering of Article 50 (Rioux, 2021, p.187-189). As a response, arguably out of concern of disruptions, the Scottish Government chose in 2017 to update the Nordic Baltic policy statement to "take account of the changed international context we are now operating within" (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.2). Thus, Rioux argues that not only the updated policy statement, but Scotland's paradiplomatic endeavours towards the Nordic countries, must be seen in light of, and one might add as a result of, Brexit (Rioux, 2021, p.188).

Despite concerns of possible disruptions, Brexit does not entail complete rupture in access to the spaces of opportunity for paradiplomatic activity, neither towards the EU nor the Nordics. In fact, many of the initiatives Scotland has been involved with – and meet the Nordic countries through – accept participation by non-EU actors (Rioux, 2021, p.189). Moreover, Scotland meets the Nordics on arenas separate from the EU – notably by engagement with the

Nordic Council and the ‘Arctic Circle’ forum. As non-EU forums these are not affected by Brexit in the same direct manner. However, Rioux (2021) observes in policies and statements by the Scottish Government a desire to provide reassurance and strengthen cooperation with the Nordic countries in the period after the 2016 vote. As will be seen in chapter 5, this desire is reflected in realisation of increased engagements with Nordic partners by Scottish Ministers since mid-2016.

4.3 “All Points North”: Historical and contemporary Scottish-Nordic relations.

*We two have run about the hills,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we’ve wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.*

*Robert Burns
[For auld lang syne, 1788]*

At this point it is necessary to note that contemporary relations between Scotland and the Nordic countries are part of a longer historical relationship. Rioux (forthcoming) highlights in his analysis that “formal collaborations between Scotland [...] and Nordic countries ... [go] back at least to the early 1990s” (p.173). However, relations of formal and less formal character predate this by centuries. Through historical sources we can trace Norse expansion directed at the Scottish isles as well as trade dating back to the Viking Age (Helle, 1990). Moreover, royal blood ties date back to accession of the Scottish throne by Scotland’s first Queen Regent in 1286, Margaret the Maid of Norway, daughter of Scottish Princess Margaret and King Erik of Norway (Reid, 1982, pp.75-79). Traces of these ancient bonds of sang kinship (Haugevik and Neuman, 2019) and linguistic and cultural Nordic heritage remain evident in Scotland (particularly in the northern isles) today (Rioux, 2021, p.174). Although not as detailed as the historical references above, the Scottish Government frequently draw on and refer to the long-standing common history and culture in communications with and about the Nordics specifically and in turn shape how Scotland sees its international position in general. For instance, publications by the Scottish Government hold that:

“Scotland enjoys a long history of economic, social, cultural and political engagement with the Nordic and Baltic regions.” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.2)

and,

“Our northernmost archipelagos were part of the Norwegian-Danish Kingdom until the end of the fifteenth century. Shetlandic and Orcadian dialects are still replete with Norse words [...]. The origin of many town names in the Highlands and Islands can still be tracked back to Nordic Roots.” (Scottish Government, 2019, p.5).

Moreover, at the opening of the Arctic Circle Forum in Edinburgh 2017, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (2017) emphasised that: *“We, of course, share ties of history, friendship, and culture, which in many cases, go back centuries. [...] these ties of friendship and culture are strong, and should be celebrated.”*

The historical context of the relationship between Scotland and the Nordics is important to recognise in the broad picture, and, as will be argued, can serve as a ‘door opener’ to contemporary diplomatic relations. Nevertheless, as Sturgeon (2017) further highlighted in both the speech and documents referenced above, contemporary Scottish-Nordic diplomatic relations are in large part circled around the future and shared priorities and values. Scotland’s paradiplomatic activity towards the Nordics is extended to a wide number of topic areas across both the economic, cultural and political spheres. It has already been highlighted above how Scotland draws on common cultural heritage and as such promotes a distinct cultural identity which at times seems to be argued to be closer to the Nordic than the rest of the UK, as argued by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon by issuing that the northernmost part of Scotland “is closer to the arctic than it is to London” (Sturgeon, 2017). Further, the economic or political-economic dimension is important in that the Nordic countries make up a substantial proportion of Scotland’s trade and appropriation of foreign investments. Perhaps most notably within aquaculture, fisheries and energy. Nevertheless, what appears to be the main priority for the Scottish Government, judging from the Nordic Baltic Policy Statement (Scottish Government, 2017b) is experience sharing and policy transfers, as well as cooperation on common global issues such as climate change and good global governance. As such, one might suggest that although extensive, Scotland’s paradiplomatic towards the Nordic countries is mostly politically motivated – a suggestion which will be elaborated on in greater detail in chapter 6.

To summarise, although restricted by formal, constitutional factors, Scotland as a nation is effective in observing and making use of spaces of opportunity, both within the national and international spheres, to develop international strategies and engage in international relations,

and to observe and rapidly seek to adapt to changing international contexts. This includes efforts to connect with the Nordic countries. Seen together, the Scottish-Nordic connection is one characterised by long historical links and shared heritage but also by wide reaching contemporary cultural, economic, social and political engagement. This characterisation remains important when we progress to discuss first *how* Scotland directs paradiplomatic engagement towards the Nordic countries on the topics identified above, and *why* they direct paradiplomatic engagement towards the Nordics in the following chapters.

5. How does Scotland engage with the Nordic countries?

Scotland works strategically to develop their relationships with the Nordic countries in various ways. In line with the ambitions set by the Scottish Government (2017a) in their 2017 Nordic Baltic policy paper (appropriately titled “all points North”), the activities undertaken to enhance these relationships have grown in the period studied. This chapter will explore how Scotland has identified and taken advantage of various opportunity spaces to cultivate its Nordic relationships. This will be done both with reference to bilateral and multilateral engagement. Further, the chapter will analyse how claims of like-mindedness serve as a way of engagement by seeking to widen the spaces of opportunity. In other words, it will look into concrete practices of engagement as well as more rhetorical engagement.

Drawing on the data collection of Nordic-related engagements by Scottish Ministers described in chapter 3⁶, the first part of the chapter will map physical engagement between Scottish political leadership and Nordic partners. The aim of this part of the chapter is to illustrate how often Scottish Ministers participate in Nordic-related engagements, the continuity of these activities, and what proportion they make up of Scotland’s total international engagements. Additionally, it will also be illustrated that Nordic-related ministerial engagements have increased – indeed doubled – since mid-2016. Following this, the chapter will address how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries through multilateral and bilateral relations respectively. For the part of multilateral engagement, key questions will be addressing through what kind of organisations, forums etc. Scotland and the Nordics meet, and what topics remain the predominant focus for these multilateral places of meeting. A similar analysis has been done recently by Rioux (forthcoming) concerning Scotland’s paradiplomatic activities towards the Arctic. Given that the Nordic countries make up a substantial part of Scotland’s Arctic engagement, the empirics presented by Rioux will be an important and valuable contribution to the discussion. Turning focus to the bilateral points of contact between Scotland and the Nordic countries, the chapter looks at the qualitative information in the data collected about ministerial engagements (appendix 1). *Who* are Scottish ministers engaging with? Or more precisely, what are the levels of engagement? Here too, the chapter will look into what topics are the stated focus for these engagements? Together, this will result in an analysis of which tools, or the repertoire, for international

⁶ Also found in appendix 1 - hereinafter be referenced as appendix 1.

engagement Scotland utilises and develops through its engagement with the Nordics. Finally, the chapter will investigate the meaning produced by these activities. What international identity is being created by these relations, and what identity is Scotland creating by further seeking deeper engagement?

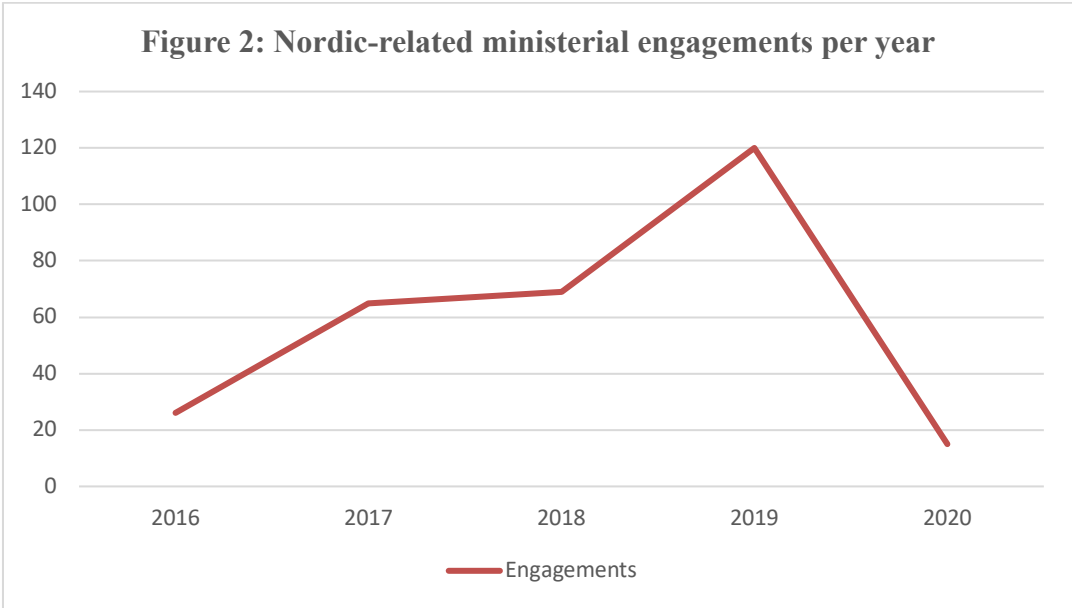
5.1 Mapping Nordic Engagements

After the 2016 Brexit vote, the Scottish Government issued that “it remains more important than ever for us to continue to develop forward looking relationships with countries in the European Union and beyond” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.1), and that “engagement with our Nordic and Baltic partners will [...] continue to be a priority” (ibid.). Moreover, the statement further laid out that “Ministers will continue to act as the voice of Scotland during their engagements with the Nordic (...) countries” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.6) to ensure benefiting from the opportunities available. As such, we can read that in the context following the 2016 Brexit vote, international activity remains a key interest for the Scottish Government, that the Nordic region is a priority for these activities, and that Ministers will have an important role in Scottish international relations. By looking into all engagements by Scottish ministers since mid 2016, we discover that they have worked diligently to translate the ambitions of strengthening relations with the Nordics into action.



(appendix 1)

Using a three-month moving average, graph 1 illustrates the total number of monthly ministerial engagements related to the Nordic countries. Although the numbers do not establish a consistency in number of engagements, we can identify that there are points of contact almost monthly. Moreover, reading qualitatively into the data, one is able to find explanations for both spikes and dips in engagements, with dips typically occurring around holidays and spikes typically occurring in conjunction with conferences, forums etc, such as for example the Arctic Circle Assembly (normally organised in October), where number of engagements naturally are higher. Therefore, despite the numbers not allowing to establish perfect consistency in Nordic-related engagements, one can, based on the numbers, establish that there is *continuity* in the work directed towards the Nordics. The monthly numbers also hint at a growth in activities, which becomes more evident when presented per annum in graph 2:

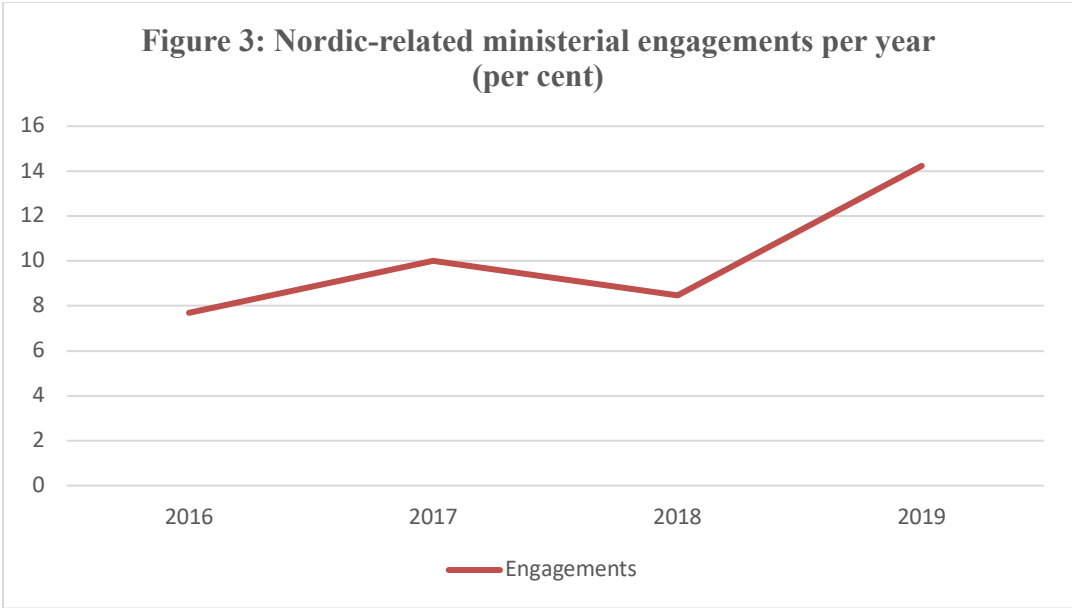


(Appendix 1)

Taking into account that the 2016 numbers do not include months January through March, viewing the number of Nordic-related ministerial engagements per year reveal that activity has in fact doubled from around 50 - 60 per year to approximately 140 at the most. These numbers indicate that the strategic work pursued to strengthen connections have born results. That is up until March 2020. With the Covid-19 pandemic, nearly all international activity ceased – including that directed towards the Nordics. Scholars and observers of diplomacy have noted that the pandemic caused disruption, or at least change, if only temporary, to

diplomatic activity in general (see, e.g. Bramsen and Hagemann, 2021; The Economist, 2021; Robertson, 2020). The evidence from Scotland, thus, shows that paradiplomacy, like traditional nation-state diplomacy is vulnerable to such global events.

In sum, the number of Nordic-related ministerial engagements illustrated through graphs 1 and 2 indicate that there has been an increase in points of contact, and that there, in general, is continuity in the work. As such, one can establish that the relationship with the Nordics can be characterized as ‘day-to-day’ paradiplomatic activity. This suggests that the activity follows the importance articulated in the Scottish Government’s Nordic Baltic Policy Statement. This importance is, however, better reflected when seeing the engagements with the Nordics in relation to the wider international relations of Scotland. This is of particular relevance observing that the increase in international activity is not limited to the Nordic region exclusively.



(appendix 1)

In graph 3, the yearly number of Nordic-related engagements are converted to per cent of the total number of international engagements. Witnessing a growth from around seven per cent in 2016 to nearly 17 per cent in 2019, it is established that Nordic-related engagements make up a greater proportion of the total international engagements at the end of the period compared to the beginning. In other words, one can argue that the Nordic relations are gradually occupying a growing extent of Scottish international relations. Nevertheless, while

17 per cent of all international engagements directed towards one region is substantial and indicates a prioritisation of this region, it is not nearly substantial enough to establish that the Nordic region predominates Scottish international relations.

Moreover, the graphs show the activity undertaken by Scottish ministers exclusively, and thus are not representative for the entire Scottish governmental and parliamentary apparatus. Therefore, one must look beyond these in order to gain a full picture of how Scotland engages with the Nordics. In the following sections focus will be turned to multilateral work and bilateral work respectively.

5.2 Multilateral engagement

Substate actors often turn to multilateral platforms when engaging in paradiplomacy. Forums, organisations, networks, coalitions and the more have been found to be effective means of paradiplomacy as they gather actors on common issues. Another aspect of the multilateral platform as a means for paradiplomatic activity is that they are often created to achieve a specific purpose and are left (or dissolves) once the purpose has been fulfilled, or the interest in the issue fades. Thereby, such initiatives tell a great deal about priorities and interests. Scotland engages multilaterally with the Nordic countries through narrower Nordic-specific platforms, wider Arctic- and European- related platforms, as well as global multilateral platforms such as conferences. Examples of networks, initiatives, forums, and organisations where Scotland meets the Nordic countries multilaterally is listed in the non-exhaustive list in table 1:

Table 1: Non-exhaustive list of Nordic/Arctic-related networks, organizations, etc. where Scotland is a participatory actor meeting the Nordic countries.

<i>Autonomous (non-EU-related)</i>	<i>Autonomous (EU-related) (INTERREG Programmes)</i>	<i>Through UK membership</i>
Arctic Circle	Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme	Arctic Council Barents Euro-Arctic Council
University of the Arctic		
Changing Arctic Ocean Program	Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism Adapt Northern Heritage (SHAPE)	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR)
Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) – Islands & North Sea Commissions	North Sea Region Programme NorthSEE Project	European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic (INTERACT)
High North Atlantic Business Alliance		Aurora Forum
North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)		
Nordic Horizons		
Arctic Frontiers		
Atlantic Rim Collaboratory		

(Rioux, 2021, p.177, with supplements)

These organisations, networks and forums vary greatly both in membership form and topics covered. For membership form they range from regional (such as the INTERREG programmes) to mainly consisting of businesses, academic institution or civil society members (such as University of the Arctic) to nation or state members (such as the Aurora Forum). Together they cover a broad range of topics including education and research (University of the Arctic; Atlantic Rim Collaboratory), aquaculture (NASCO), maritime issues (CPMR), Accessibility and connectivity (CPMR), businesses (High North Atlantic Business Alliance), and even security issues (Aurora Forum). However, the majority of platforms listed cover environmental issues, including climate change, sustainability, marine protection, energy and climate change (Changing Arctic Ocean Programme; CPMR; Nordic

Horizons; Arctic Frontiers; Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme; SHAPE; North Sea Region Programme; NorthSEE; Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation; OSPAR; EUFOGREN). Besides being topics highlighted as being of interest for cooperation with the Nordic countries in the Nordic Baltic policy statement (Scottish Government, 2017b), these are, with the exception of security, topics considered as devolved matters, and as such policy areas Scotland are permitted to engage internationally with under the MoU. As such, engaging with the Nordic countries through these platforms also supports the strategic outlook of Scotland's International Framework of "embed[ding] internationalisation across our areas of responsibility" (Scottish Government, 2017a, p.12). Thus far, it appears that Scotland's paradiplomatic activity through formal affiliation with multilateral platforms is relatively problematic, and provides little potential for conflict with the central UK Government.

The above are examples of multilateral relations where Scotland engages with the Nordic countries through formal membership and affiliation to a specific platform. However, multilateral engagement also occurs ad hoc. This is evident through the planned cooperation between Scotland and the Nordic Council during the climate summit COP26 (Nordic Council, 2021) which is due to take place in Glasgow during the fall of 2021. This cooperation is interesting in that Scotland would gain access to a global summit in Scotland hosted by the central UK Government. Scotland has made it clear that they expect to be part of the British delegation to the conference, as has been practice at previous summits (Scottish Parliament, 2021b), but that the central government remains responsible for all international negotiations during the summit. Commentators have however approached the degree to which the central government will include Scotland with more scepticism, arguing that they will likely prefer as little room for Scotland to promote itself as possible in order to present a unified British front (Cooper, 2021). If this is the case, it can be interpreted as an indication that the British Government are well aware of Scottish paradiplomacy, and could seek to limit Scotland's international outreach (ibid.). By also seeking to enter an agreement of cooperation with the Nordic Council during the conference, Scotland demonstrates not only that they make use of various channels for seeking international influence simultaneously, but also that they are prepared to potentially 'bypass', and as such challenge (Mocca, 2020, p.307) the central British Government in order to advance their standings to an international audience. As such, this is an example of a form of activity which could bare potential for some conflict with the central government.

Finally, through assessing the qualitative aspect of the data on ministerial engagements (Scottish Government, 2021), it is identified that that Scottish ministers participate at several international conferences, forums, assemblies etc, which cannot be directly linked to the Nordic countries. While it, based on the information available in the data, is challenging, or not possible, to establish that Scottish ministers use these opportunities to connect with representatives from their northern neighbours through *informal* meetings, there is good reason to assume, or at least speculate, that such connection may very well be the case – especially so at occasions regarding topics Scotland perceive to be of mutual interest with the Nordic countries.

5.3 Bilateral engagement

The spaces of opportunity available through multilateralism is widely taken advantage of by paradiplomatic actors. These are spaces where they meet like-minded, often other paradiplomatic actors, focusing on specific common issues. As the previous subchapter has demonstrated, Scotland too makes good use of the opportunities present through multilateral spaces. However, Scotland has also moved beyond utilising the multilateral opportunity spaces seeking to also develop valuable bilateral relationships with the Nordic countries. The choice to strategically work to parallel multilateral relations with bilateral, which is reflected both in the Scottish Government’s Nordic policy (Scottish Government, 2017a) and their International Framework (Scottish Government, 2017b) is interesting in that it might be suggested that Scotland seeks to develop these relations to establish something special. Well-maintained bilateral relationships can develop into close or special relationships, which again forms not only identity, but following the argument of Haugevik (2014), also fosters further collective ventures as the assertion of special relationships “are likely to (...) encourage certain bilateral interaction processes” (Haugevik, 2014, p.3). By analysing both the strategies for bilateral engagements set forth in the various policies and other papers by the Scottish Government as well as reading qualitatively into the ministerial engagement data (appendix 1), this sub-chapter will arrive at an explanation of how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries bilaterally, setting a focus on both prevalent topic areas and level of engagement.

In the 2017 Nordic Baltic Policy Statement, the Scottish Government laid out detailed descriptions of their strategies for engagement with each of the Nordic countries. The policy

topic areas and number of issues they wish to engage on varies greatly from country to country and are listed in table 2 below. From the topic areas and means for engagement articulated in the policy one can gather that the Scottish government seeks to promote bilateral relations with the Nordic countries by a focus on region, and subsequent common challenges, specific topics such as marine, aquaculture, and climate issues, but largely through focus on social welfare policies. The choice of these policy areas also contributes to achieving the objectives in the Arctic Policy of cooperation on policies and practices promoting sustainable tourism (Scottish Government, 2019, p.10) and of sharing “experience, values and expertise in areas such as adaption, transport and decarbonisation, renewable energy and environmental protection” (ibid., p.29) in order to combat climate change. This in turn contributes to the broader goal of the Scottish Government to promote Scotland’s image as a ‘good global citizen’ contributing to address global challenges (Scottish Government, 2017a, p.10). Moreover, the focus on social welfare policies reflects the perception the Scottish Government has of the Nordic welfare policies as world leading (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.2), and arguably an ambition of developing their own welfare policies to a similar standard.

Table 2: Prioritised policy areas and means of engagement by country.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Policy area / Topic</i>	<i>Means (if applicable)</i>
Norway	Fisheries control matters, sustainable fishing	Cooperation via Marine Scotland, participation in international fisheries negotiations
	Person Centred Care	Counterparts, and Norwegian Institute for Public Health
	Arctic weather and climate understanding	Participation in initiatives via Marine Scotland
	Aquaculture	NA
	Sustainable management of salmon farming sector	Support information sharing and collaboration
	Carbon Capture and Storage	Learn from Norwegian experiences
Sweden	Disability Benefits / Social security	Engagement with counterparts
	Healthcare, quality and safety	Forum participation
	Shared parenting	Information sharing
	Bottle Return Scheme (Recycling)	Information sharing
Finland	Universal Basic Income	Experience learning
	Closing socio-economic gaps in education	Learning
Denmark	District heating	Information sharing
	Disability benefits	Engagement with counterparts
	Social issues, e.g. gender recognition laws	Explore current practices
	Creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation	Participation in regional network
Iceland	Arctic issues	Arctic Circle Secretariat, ministerial participation at Arctic Circle Assembly, hosting Arctic Circle Forum (2017)
	Tourism	NA
	Child witnesses	NA
	Spatial Planning – including renewable energy sector	Learning from Barnahus models Experience sharing

(Scottish Government, 2017b, pp.6-7)

It is the ambition of the Scottish Government that to strengthen engagement with the Nordic countries on these policy areas will lead to promotion of, and further creation of spaces for,

“greater collaboration, cooperation, investment and policy transfers” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.2) between the countries. This derives from experience from the time prior to 2017 where it is argued that “facilitating inward and outward visits, policy research and evaluations, and utilising formal and informal networks” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.5) have led to results. This exemplified by several case studies such as the adaption of a Baby Box initiative from Finland (ibid, p.3) and architectural connections with Denmark (ibid., p.5). Reflecting on how engagement with the Nordic countries prior to 2017 mainly resulted in valuable inward policy exchange, the Scottish Government iterated that an ambition for the period 2017 onwards would be to additionally be “proactive in promoting successful Scottish policies overseas” (ibid., p.6). In other words, while there until 2017 was a focus on Nordic influence in Scotland, there is a desire from the Scottish Government to produce also Scottish influence in the Nordics. Achieving such reciprocal, or two-way, influence would arguably contribute to creating tighter bonds, and, if popularised with civil society (as Scotland perhaps seeks to do) even the “we-feeling” which is described as instrumental for building the tightest alliances. However, judging from the means illustrated in table 2, it appears that a large proportion of the activities envisioned are still focused on information sharing and learning from Nordic experiences. While the Scottish Government undoubtedly seeks to influence Nordic policies through experience- and information sharing activities, the concrete strategy of learning combined with the activities taking place within areas Scotland sees the Nordics as leading in, it can appear that Scotland still seeks to engage with the Nordics in order to become more Nordic rather than the Nordics becoming more Scottish.

From observing the topics of bilateral meetings (appendix 1), one observes that the topics identified in the strategy for engagement are reflected in topics for bilateral meetings between Scottish ministers and Nordic counterparts and partners. However, the most prominent listed topic for meetings is simply bilateral relations (ibid.). Again, this leaves room for speculation. While one can assume that the topic of these ‘relation-maintaining’ meetings are guided by the topics set out in the strategy for engagement, one can, based on the data available, not be completely sure of this, and it may very well be that also other topics are discussed. However, the fact that the relation in itself is described as the objective for the meeting can suggest that sometimes maintaining and deepening the relation itself, rather than the topic discussed, could be the main priority for the Scottish Government. Moreover, from observing the participants at the bilateral meetings, it is observed that the majority of bilateral engagements with the Nordic countries are by representation of either the Scottish First Minister, or the Cabinet

Secretary or Minister in the External Affairs Directorate (appendix 1). Thus, underlining that the directorate remains of high importance for the institutionalisation of Nordic relations. Furthermore, by investigating whom the Scottish representatives meet, one uncovers a varying level of engagement spanning from civil society to head of state (ibid.). Most prominently, however, are engagements with Nordic Ministers or representatives of the civil service. This proves to show that when Scottish Ministers engage bilaterally with the Nordic countries, it is more by means of engagement at the central state level than local government. Finally, the data shows discrepancy of level of engagement within the differing Nordic countries. For example, while Scottish Ministers have met several times with the Icelandic Prime Minister, and has had meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs from both Iceland and Finland, the level of engagement tends to be at 'lower' ministerial, State Secretary, or diplomatic representative levels with the other Nordic countries (ibid.). This is an indication that while the Scottish Government seeks high-level engagement, this is, for the most part, not a priority within most of the Nordic countries, and as such that there are also limitations to the spaces of opportunity available for Scottish engagement.

From mapping ministerial Nordic-related engagements, both in terms of frequency, numbers, topics and level of engagement (Appendix 1), analysing the strategic objectives for engagement with the Nordic countries in selected policy papers and frameworks (Scottish Government, 2017a; 2017b; 2019), and looking into multilateral platforms where Scotland meets with the Nordic countries, this chapter has sought to set out how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries. From the data consulted in this chapter, one arrives at a conclusion that Scotland is diligent in using spaces of opportunity to engage both bilaterally and multilaterally with each of the Nordic countries. This includes activities such as meetings, common projects and initiatives aimed both at achieving certain policy objectives and building and maintaining relations more generally. Moreover, it is interesting to note that by focusing on certain topics, here most prominently identified as related to climate issues and social welfare (Scottish Government, 2017b; appendix 1), Scotland builds a certain repertoire of capacity and capabilities within these topics. Moreover, by strengthening capabilities on these topics, which again are promoted outwards, Scotland builds an image as an international actor which is concerned with global issues. This is especially the case for engagement on issues such as climate change and sustainability, where Scotland seeks to assume a leading role (KILDE). This fits well with the outspoken Scottish ambition to obtain an image as a 'good global citizen' (Scottish Government, 2017a). However, the chapter also suggests that the activities

outlined could have more potential of resulting in inward influence rather than Scottish influence in the Nordics, despite the latter being an outspoken desire. Seen in relation to the rhetorical approaches of similarity and shared history and identity traits partially described in chapter 4, it could be suggested that in short, one could say that Scotland is engaging with the Nordics by moving closer, and seeking further similarity to the Nordics. Nevertheless, by developing proficiency in international engagement on these topics, as well as by demonstrating ability to not only maintain, but also intensify relations with the Nordic countries – as exemplified here by ambition of further developing relations resulting in an increase of activities – the example of how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries supports the argument by Kania (2017) that Scotland is asserting itself as a capable actor equipped to take a meaningful role in international relations.

6. Why does Scotland engage with the Nordic countries?

Thus far, the thesis has outlined how Scotland, as a substate actor, can engage in international relations despite the formal restrictions to international engagement following its status as a substate actor. As an international actor, Scotland has sought intensively to develop and maintain relations with the Nordic countries. In the previous chapter, it was further illustrated how Scotland engages with the Nordic countries by rhetorically placing itself close to the Nordics and through bilateral and multilateral engagement on various topics, developing a certain repertoire or 'toolbox' for engaging internationally. As it has been briefly alluded to in the above, the choice of topics for cooperation provides some insight into why Scotland chooses to engage with the Nordic countries. For example, based on engagement on social welfare, Scotland wishes to advance their own policies on the topic, or, as is mentioned in the concluding section of chapter 5, relations are sought to promote a status as a capable international actor. This chapter will further on this and analyse the underlying motivations for pursuing relations with the Nordic countries.

In order to uncover the underlying motivations, the chapter will draw on contributions regarding why substate units engage in paradiplomacy presented in the conceptual framework. First, it will discuss the economic, or political-economic, dimension of the motivations of Scotland for engaging with the Nordics looking specifically at inwards investments and the Nordic markets as potential sites for export. Second, the chapter will consider geographical positioning. Finally, the chapter will argue that Scotland seeks to engage with the Nordic countries as a means of projecting a certain identity to the wider international community. While scholars of paradiplomacy previously have argued that substate actors do this to advance their own distinct identity, it will be argued that rather than seeking to solely advance their *own* identity, Scotland engages with the Nordics to reposition their identity as Nordic. In light of this, it will be argued that Scottish engagement with the Nordics is rooted in an attempt at what this thesis labels 'identity bandwagoning' and geopolitical repositioning.

6.1 Securing trade and attracting investments

In chapter two it was argued that the political-economic dimension long served as an ‘explanation’ for the emergence of substate actors on the international arena, and for their desire to engage in paradiplomacy. While this thesis agrees with those contributions to the conceptual debate which argues that the motivations for paradiplomacy cannot be found in this dimension alone, let alone that it might no longer serve as the *primary* motivating factor, one does not escape that the liberalisation of the global economy provides spaces of opportunity for strengthening local economies. This is also the case Scotland with reference to the Nordic countries. For the Scottish Government, one of the objectives for international engagement in general is to enable businesses to “maximise and take advantage of export and trade opportunities” (Scottish Government, 2017a, p.6). With reference to the changed context, the Scottish Government has also issued that “Instead of turning inwards as a result of the EU referendum result, we will press on with delivering against the aims of our Economic Strategy and our International Framework which promote smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth for Scotland and help us to influence the world around us” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.1). Further, the Nordic Baltic Policy statement enhances that engagement with the Nordics supports the objective of increasing trade and investment by building the Scottish reputation and attractiveness (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.4). Table 3, below, shows how Scotland strengthens their economy by means of export to the Nordic countries. For the last year where figures are available, exports to the Nordic region as a whole amounted for 7,7 per cent of Scotland’s total international exports, placing the region combined as the fourth largest international export market in relation to other countries. However, it is not nearly the most significant market, with values of exports to the USA amounting to nearly the double amount (Scottish Government, 2020). Moreover, exports to the rest of the UK exceeds that to the international market as a whole by nearly 50 per cent, making the Nordic export market marginal in the larger picture.

**Table 3: Export results per country.
(Numbers in million £)**

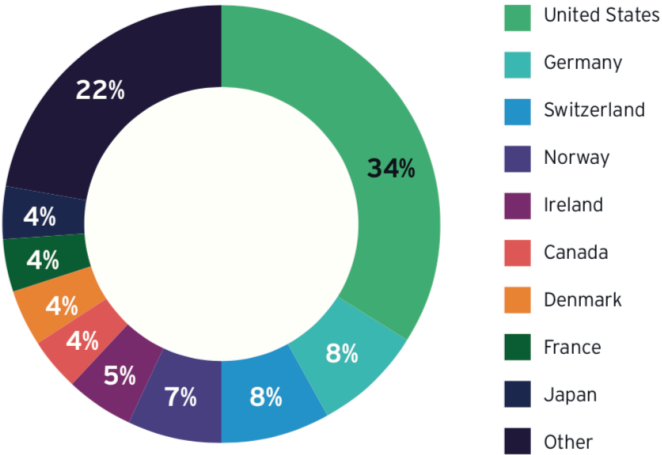
<i>Country</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Norway	1 275	995	1 165
Denmark	980	885	700
Sweden	505	590	680
Finland	80	115	90
Iceland ⁷	NA	NA	NA
Total	2 840	2 585	2 635
Per cent of total international exports.	9,1	7,9	7,7

(Scottish Government, 2020)

While facilitating for international trade is an outspoken objective of the Scottish Government for their engagement with the Nordic countries, and remains an opportunity space for international engagement (KILDE), scholars of paradiplomacy who pay attention to the economic dimension are more concerned with how subnational actors use paradiplomacy as a means for attracting foreign investments (KILDE). Like with promoting the potential for the export market, Scotland promotes itself to the Nordic countries as a destination for investments by strengthening their reputation and attractiveness. Figure 4, below, shows that in 2018, both Norway and Denmark fell within the top 10 origin countries of foreign direct investments (FDI) in Scotland, collectively making up 11 per cent of FDI projects. Crucially, Scotland has succeeded in attracting more FDI projects from the Scandinavian countries than anywhere else in the UK (EY, 2019; Scottish Government, 2020), indicating that Scottish paradiplomatic activity towards the Nordics is successful in promoting Scotland as an attractive place for business (at least in comparison to the rest of the UK).

⁷ Total export to Iceland does not exceed £50 million. Numbers are therefore excluded in the statistics by the Scottish Government.

Figure 4: Top origins of FDI projects in Scotland, 2018



(EY, 2019, p.10)

Inward investments create great value in Scotland. In a Government publication it is issued that while only three per cent of businesses in Scotland are foreign owned, they contribute 46 per cent of the gross value added to the nation, as well as 34 per cent of employment (Scottish Government, 2020b, p.10). As such, attracting investments remains important for the Scottish economy, and thus, arguably is one motivational factor in engagement with the Nordic countries. However, as illustrated in chapter 5, the focus for engagements with the Nordic countries outlined in the Nordic Baltic Policy statement does not substantially include the economic sector, but is rather more welfare and climate oriented. Seeing this in relation to the results in figure 4 and table 3 above, one can come to the conclusion that although strengthening the Scottish economy is but one factor explaining why Scotland engages with the Nordic countries, it cannot be argued to be the most important factor.

6.2 Geographical proximity and shared challenges

The argument that Scotland’s paradiplomatic activity towards the Nordic countries could be motivated by geography is rooted in the notion by Duchacek (1986) which differentiates between transborder regional paradiplomacy, transregional paradiplomacy and global paradiplomacy, arguing that paradiplomacy is more likely to occur between actors within the first category than the second, and more likely the second than the third. By this one can explore two different approaches. Is the motivation in the practicality of the proximity or

rooted in the common challenges and interests that are a result or product of the geographical conditions? For Scotland it would appear that the latter is the case. This supports the original reading of Duchacek (1986) as well as Kincaid (2003) (see also Kuznetsov, 2015) with the latter phrasing these issues as matters of ‘house-keeping’.

The geographical contingent ‘house-keeping’ dimension is visible both in Scotland’s policy for Nordic engagement and as topics for engagements by the Scottish Ministers (Appendix 1). For instance, in the Nordic Baltic Policy paper, under the section which explains why Scotland seeks to engage with the Nordic (and Baltic) countries, it is stated that:

“Our countries enjoy parallels in many respects, based on the Northern periphery of Europe with similar topographies, a mixture of urban and rural communities and many similar socio-economic traits.” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.2).

Here, it becomes clear that for Scotland, the common issues do not only concern issues that must be solved cooperatively, but also internal issues resulting from similarities. In other words, being geographically similar, as the Scottish Government here argues Scotland and the Nordic countries to be, leads to a desire for cooperation in terms of learning and policy exchange to better handle domestic challenges (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.10). This is further specified as the policy paper states about the wider Arctic region that:

“The nature of Scotland’s remote geography in some places means that we are often confronted by policy changes similar to those within the Arctic region. This is particularly relevant in relation to issues such as managing our natural resources and ensuring the sustainability of rural and coastal communities” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.10).

Moreover, the Scottish Government is committed to working to combat climate change and promote sustainable solutions across policy areas. As a nation close to the Arctic areas, Scotland is particularly concerned about the effects of climate change in this region. This is an issue Scotland arguably sees as shared with the Nordic countries, and perhaps most so its most immediate Arctic neighbours Norway and Iceland, whom Scotland borders to in the North Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean respectively. Arguing that this is a shared issue due to geography, this would foster motivation to cooperate with these countries to combat the challenge. While the data analysed for uncovering concrete practices in this thesis (appendix 1) shows that climate change has been a topic for bilateral engagements, it does not specify that this relates to *Arctic* climate change, and resulting challenges, in particular, thus it is difficult, based on the data used, to conclude that common issues resulting from arctic climate

change is on the agenda for these meetings. While it thus can be suggested that it is more accurate to interpret these meetings to be concerned with the global challenge of combating climate change more generally, one can certainly speculate that common geographical challenges resulting from the issue too are brought up. However, the fact that this category of shared geographical issues serves as a motivation for Scottish engagement is more evident observing multilateral engagement, with several of the multilateral platforms focusing on climate change in the North, such as the Arctic Circle, Changing Arctic Ocean Programme, Nordic Horizons, Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, SHAPE, North Sea Region Programme, and the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation. As such, one can argue that Scotland perceives climate change, and resulting challenges, as an extended regional problem, or at least that there is great potential in cooperation on this issue due to geographical conditions.

Despite climate change being an issue of interest to Scotland, the notion of common issues resulting from geographical proximity is more clearly defined and exemplified observing that Scotland seeks to engage with Norway in particular on issues pertaining to fisheries, maritime conservation and energy, and the Nordic region more broadly on issues of rural matters and connectivity. With the latter, engagement with Denmark on district heating, and Iceland on spatial planning are examples worth noting. This is reflected both in policy papers (Scottish Government, 2017b) and through ministerial engagements (appendix 1). Again, these are examples of common domestic issues resulting from similar domestic geography where sharing experience, knowledge and policies motivate engagements.

Moreover, through the case of Scotland's paradiplomatic activity, one can observe geography being stretched to also cover social geography. Holding that similar geographical conditions and demography produce similar issues, Scotland seeks to engage with the Nordic countries on issues pertaining to rural communities and connectivity, as well as social welfare (Scottish Government, 2017b). (Although the latter balances on the fine line of being categorised as political rather than deriving from shared challenges resulting from geography.) As such, one can observe a development in which it must be discussed whether the scholarly discussion should also include social geography under the geography umbrella. This, however, necessitates a wider comparative analysis, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

These are but some examples of areas that highlight that geography can be seen as driving motivation for engagement with the Nordic countries. Importantly, this serves to show that the

similarities often referred to introductory in policy papers, speeches and in the public debate do not only serve to paint a picture of Scottish ‘Nordicness’, and rhetorical means to move closer to a Nordic identity – as these easily can be interpreted as. That is not to say that these statements do not *also* serve that purpose, but they are also an expression, more concretely, of why engagement, or paradiplomacy, is a priority, with the concrete reason being that the actors do in fact share similar challenges from which there is great potential for learning and sharing experiences.

6.3 Nordic directed paradiplomacy – at attempt at ‘identity bandwagoning’?

Thus far, the motives considered for directing paradiplomacy towards the Nordic countries are rather unproblematic. Neither promoting Scotland as an attractive destination for business, i.e., attracting foreign investments, nor facilitating for international trade is at accord with the devolution agreement (The Scotland Act 1998) or MoU (United Kingdom Government, et.al., 2013). Similarly, engaging with foreign nations to exchange knowledge on policy areas such as district heating, health, education, recycling, aquaculture, or social welfare – some of which result from common issues as a result of shared geography – is understood as acceptable under the conditions of the MoU as these are all areas Scotland enjoy power over. However, recalling Hunt and Minto’s (2017) findings presented in the introduction of this thesis, Scotland is not averse to engage internationally to promote interests differing from those of the UK Government. As such, a political dimension to Scotland’s motives for paradiplomacy has previously come to show. In this subchapter, the political motive in the Nordic dimension of Scotland’s paradiplomacy will be examined through paying attention to the identity that is being created through the relations and promoted through Scotland asserting the Nordic countries as similar.

Stephanie Paquin (2020) has argued that Scotland is engaged in what she refers to as ‘identity paradiplomacy’. For Paquin, identity paradiplomacy entails promoting exports and attracting investments (as has been examined above), but moreover, they engage in nation-building processes in the form of trying “to gain recognition as an actor in the global arena” (Paquin, 2020, p.51). Following this, there is a strong identity dimension in Scotland’s International Framework as it states that Scotland “*will continue to make distinctive contributions in addressing global challenges*” and an ambition of “*provid[ing] ethical leadership and a*

positive voice in the world on global issues such as solidarity, tolerance, human rights and climate change” (Scottish Government, 2017a, p.10). This supports Scotland’s goal of building an image and identity as a ‘good global citizen’. In practice, the driving motivation of establishing recognition as an international actor has also been empirically identified by Kania (2019) as mentioned previously in this thesis. Moreover, it has been argued previously in this thesis that the same agency is produced through relations with the Nordic countries. Following the notion that paradiplomatic actors seek to promote a distinct identity, and that identity is produced and reflected from the relations that are formed, it is necessary to address which identity the relations with the Nordic countries produces.

Through Scotland’s international framework (Scottish Government, 2017a) it becomes apparent that the identity Scotland seeks to project is one of a nation which is outward-looking with strong multilateral and bilateral relations (ibid., p.7) with people and businesses who are aware of, and grasps, the international opportunities available to them (ibid., pp.5-6). Scotland also seeks to project itself as an attractive nation, both for tourism, investments and partnerships. More crucially, however, Scotland seeks to take the role and obtain a reputation of a nation which is characterised as a ‘good global citizen’. The latter involves being marked as making “distinctive contributions in addressing global challenges” (ibid., p.10) and providing “ethical leadership and a positive voice in the world on global issues such as solidarity, tolerance, human rights and climate change” (ibid.). Writing about Scotland’s role in the world and its ambition of being a global good citizen, Keating (2016) notes that this is a position often sought by small nations – independent or not. For Keating this result from that small nations are not restricted by lobbies and geo-political interests in the same way that larger states often are, thus, smaller states are more able to lead the way. This is reflected in the discussion in the conceptual framework in chapter 2, with reference to how cities often assume a leading role in combating climate change. Keating (2016) continues to exemplify this by how Norway has developed a particular role in promotion of peace initiatives, as such arguing that Norway enjoys the position as a global good. Arguably, this image extends to the Nordic region as a whole. Indeed, this perception of the Nordic countries’ position is one Scotland shares, stating in its Nordic policy that “Globally, the Nordic (...) countries are established leaders across many areas, such as human rights” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.1). As reflected above, this is a leadership Scotland seeks to take part in. Deriving from the positive image the Nordic countries already enjoy, one can argue that seeking closer ties, that are projected to the world, and as such being associated with their identity, benefits Scotland’s

campaign for being seen as a good global citizen. Thus, this can be identified as a motivating factor for seeking relations with these countries specifically.

However, reflecting on the largely policy-oriented focus of engagements identified in chapter 5 and the topics identified both in said chapter and earlier in this chapter, Scotland does not only build a repertoire within topics serving a global good through its engagements with the Nordic countries. Repeating the argument by Haugevik and Sending (2020) supported previously in this thesis, the repertoires an actor makes also forms its outward perception and thus image. Recalling from the activities described in the previous chapter, as well as motivations stated above, much of the activity between Scotland and the Nordics pertain to social welfare. The Nordics in general and the ‘Nordic model’ more specifically has been a regular subject in the Scottish political discourse for a long time (Hilson and Newby, 2015, p.211), and especially after the Scottish National Party came to power in 2007 and in the time before the 2014 independence referendum, where notions of Scotland’s potential of joining what former First Minister Alex Salmond called the ‘Arc of Prosperity’. This often follows claims of similarities. However, studying the relationship between Norway and Scotland specifically in a historical perspective, Brandal and Bratberg (2015) take note of that Norway and Scotland have diverged widely, despite original seemingly similar positions. Thus, they a complication of any contemporary claims of familiarity.

On the other hand, current (and arguably also so past) attempts at policy adoption, or at least formation of similar policies to both the welfare model and other policies can be seen as an attempt at moving closer to the Nordic countries and as such narrowing the differences and making claims of familiarity more credible. The particular focus on welfare model here derives from the argument by Lagerspetz (2003) that the social model is one of the hallmarks of Nordic identity, and that “it is important to recognise it as a central element of their common identity” (Lagerspetz, 2003, pp.55-57). Amongst the remaining defining characteristics of the Nordic identity, Lagerspetz identifies geographic location and long-standing historical ties between countries and people (ibid., pp.55-56), which it has already been argued that Scotland uses as arguments of similarity. Additionally, Lagerspetz argues participation in “cooperative organs such as the Nordic Council” (ibid.) as a defining characteristic. While Scotland is not represented in the Nordic Council, it seeks cooperation and conversation with the council, as made evident by their anticipated cooperation during COP26. Deriving from the historical connections and claims of long-standing and

contemporary similarities, especially in light of observing attempts at further strengthening these similarities, it can be argued that Scotland, through its relations with the Nordic countries is seeking to consolidate a Scottish nationality in the present and for the future that is distinctively non-British, but rather ‘Nordic’. This is reflected in the argument of Rioux (forthcoming) who argues that “Scotland certainly now sees itself as a Nordic nation” (forthcoming, p.174).

By moving closer to the Nordic identity, Scotland also redefines its geo-political position. According to Lagerspetz, “how a country is defined has consequences for its geopolitical reality” (2003, p.50). This is seconded, with particular reference to paradiplomatic actors, by Jackson and Jeffery (2019) as they argue that geopolitical imaginaries are reshaped by the promotion of certain relations or partnerships. However, this is not merely something that happens to Scotland through relations but can arguably also be seen as a strategic move by the Scots. This is illustrated through the Nordic Baltic Policy paper where Scotland claims to have “key interests in developments in the High North” (Scottish Government, 2017b, p.10), and in the Arctic Policy where Scotland argues that through increasing conversations with Arctic countries, “Scotland is reshaping the map. Rather than geographically peripheral at the north-west corner of Europe, Scotland is strategically positioned – and has the capability – to serve as a link between the Arctic region and the wider world” (Scottish Government, 2019, p.9). Importantly, the Arctic areas and the High North are areas with large potential for geopolitical tensions, and Scotland sees its assumed role in these areas as a bridge builder, who, in capacity of its persona as a good global citizen, will encourage “a peaceful and well-governed future for the region” (ibid., p.5). By assuming a separate role from the UK in this work, Scotland insinuates that it is they, and not the UK as a whole, who possesses the position to assume this role, and as such assumes a distinct move away from the rest of the UK.

If one is to claim, or suggest, that Scotland is actively seeking to geopolitically reposition itself, this must be seen in relation with what it is seeking to reposition itself from. For the period after the Brexit vote, the perhaps most obvious would be Scotland’s disagreement with the departure, and their more positive attitude to Europe than the rest of the UK and the British Government in particular. Moreover, the changed international context following the UK’s departure entails the British Government’s ambition of a strengthened global role and reaffirm its role within security- and defence policy as a significant actor. This ambition is,

amongst others exemplified through the UK Government's recent commitment to increase its defence budget with £16,5 billion over the next four years – the largest investment in UK defence since the end of the Cold War (Prime Minister's Office, 2020). According to the UK Government, this would make the UK “the largest defence spender in Europe, and second largest in NATO” (ibid). This is an ambition which is not shared by Scotland. The Scottish Government has been vocal in asserting its differing opinion of security and defence policy, especially concerning UK's nuclear capacities (Scottish Government, 2021b). Moreover, a study by Valeriano and Craig (2014), one of few, if not the only, study which compares the attitudes of the public to foreign policy across the British nations, shows that the views of the Scottish Government are supported by the public. Compared to its southern fellow UK nationals, the Scottish people do not wish to assume a role as a great power (Valeriano and Craig, 2014). As such, moving closer to the Nordic countries and adhering to a positive image as a nation which works for the global good suits the desired international identity of both the Scottish people and Government better than the global role the UK government is seeking to approach. As such, deriving from Lagerspetz' (2003), creating an image more similar to the ‘peaceful’, ‘global good’ Nordic countries “serves foreign policy needs of creating an image, a brand, that would serve the [nation] by disassociating it” (Lagerspetz, 2003, p.56) from the UK.

Deriving from the differing opinions of the current and future role of the UK as a global actor, and Scotland's desire to rather be perceived as a good global citizen working to address global issues and promote stability in the global order, peace and sustainability, it is beneficial for Scotland to approach the Nordic identity. The argument that Scotland seeks relations with the Nordic countries in order to advance this distinct identity is underlined by seeing how Scotland refers to this identity, whilst simultaneously presenting ambitions of assuming a similar identity and role. As such, it is argued that the pursuit of asserting a distinct identity is a strong feature of the motives of Scotland for engagements with the Nordic countries. However, deriving from an observation that much of the engagements between Scotland and the Nordic countries lead to the adoption of Nordic policies in Scotland, this section will be left with a question. Is the identity Scotland seeks to assume through Nordic engagement really distinct Scottish, or is it rather pure Nordic? And if so, could one suggest, or raise questions, that the identity aspect and motive of Scottish paradiplomacy towards the Nordic is an image of “identity bandwagoning”? While it is tempting to argue that this *could* be the

case, this is difficult to conclude based on the data analysed for this thesis, thus, it will be left as a question for further investigation.

7. Conclusion

*And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
For auld lang syne.*

*For auld lang syne, my dear
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

*Robert Burns
[For auld lang syne, 1788]*

This thesis has researched the following research question:

How and why does Scotland engage with the Nordic countries after the 2016 Brexit referendum?

The research question is contextualised within a puzzle where it is observed that the Scottish Government, after the Brexit referendum, sought to intensify its relations with the Nordic countries – all the while they do not have formal mandate to form foreign policy or international relations. In order to make sense of this observation, and the research question, the thesis has employed *paradiplomacy* as a guiding analytical concept.

As a concept, *paradiplomacy* serves as a reflection of pluralist approaches in IR theory, and discussions pertaining to international dynamics and how we are to understand international politics and the actors involved. More specifically, scholars of *paradiplomacy* study the substate actor in international relations, their place, actions and motives. Three aspects of the conceptual debate have been given particular attention in chapter 2. First, through questions of domination and subordination, it is established that *paradiplomacy* represents a dynamic in which substate actors take on influential international roles and acquire international agency, but that they nevertheless are (partially) constrained by an international context in which they are ultimately subject to central states, where foreign policy (for the most part) is regarded as reserved for the nation-state, and where certain structures for international relations are created by and for nation-states (Kania, 2019; Mingus, 2006). Second, deriving from said context, this thesis has arrived at an understanding of *how* substate actors engage in *paradiplomacy* should be seen as how they manoeuvre the international context through

taking advantage of various domestic and international spaces of opportunity. In sum, one can understand the way substate actors engage internationally as a relational exercise in which actors, through manoeuvring spaces of opportunity develop their repertoire of activities, which again forms both their international agency and perceived identity (Haugevik and Sending, 2020). Finally, in order to understand *why* substate actors engage in paradiplomacy, or the motives behind substate international engagement, the conceptual framework has arrived at three factors – economic, cultural (here particularly understood as an expression of identity), and political. Whereas seeking economic advancement long served as a primary explanation for paradiplomatic actors’ motivations to engage in international relations, authors are increasingly paying attention to promoting a distinct identity and political elements as motivational factors. Moreover, it has also been noted that geography can play a part in choosing whom to engage with, with the argument being that with closer geographical proximity comes more common issues, resulting in motivations for paradiplomacy.

Through analysing data describing Nordic-related engagements by Scottish Ministers in the period since the Brexit referendum, and contrasting these with critically studying policy documents regarding both Nordic relations and International aspirations in general, the thesis has found that Scotland did intensify – indeed double – their engagements with the Nordic countries in the period studied (appendix 1). This is seen both in the sheer number of engagements, but more interestingly, also in the proportion Nordic-related engagements make up of the total number of international engagements (ibid). Moreover, the thesis has found that Scotland engages with the Nordics on a regular basis through various activities of both bilateral and multilateral character, including, but not limited to, bilateral policy exchange and information and experience sharing, and participation in various multilateral forums, organisations and initiatives (Appendix 1; Scottish Government, 2017a; 2017b; Rioux, forthcoming). Moreover, the findings of this research show that Scotland and the Nordic countries meet on a great variation of topics, amongst others marine conservation and management, aquaculture, climate issues, issues of rurality and connectivity, and commonly welfare policies. In sum, one could say that these activities bear some resemblance to those of traditional nation-states (with certain exceptions, of course). These findings illustrate how Scotland works to develop (a) international agency by showing competence in relations, (b) a specific repertoire of activities and topics, resulting in an image of the international role Scotland can assume, but also (c) how Scotland, through focusing engagement on issues they have domestic competence over, circumvent the formal restrictions to their international

mandate in national legislation by using the opportunities available through UK recognition in an MoU that Scotland would want to engage internationally on devolved matters. This shows a sophisticated understanding of how it can manoeuvre both the national and international to advance international aspirations.

Further, the thesis has studied the same data material and interpreted how the developed repertoire also forms an identity, to understand *why* Scotland engages with the Nordic countries. Based on the data analysed, three motives have been identified. First, there is an economic dimension to the motives for Scottish engagement with the Nordic countries as Scotland seeks to secure both foreign direct investments and exports to the Nordic market. Further, as reflected by the topics of engagement, the engagement with the Nordics is driven by common issues resulting from geographical proximity, more so than the economic dimension. But even more so, the thesis argues that the identity forming aspect, and using these relations to promote a distinct imagined identity to the wider world could be the primary underlying motive for engagement with the Nordic countries. This is rooted in the observation that Scotland sees the great power aspirations of the UK as little desirable, and rather seeks to establish itself as a 'good global citizen'. By referring to the Nordic countries as world leading on global issues (including human rights and climate issues) and simultaneously seeking to obtain such position for itself, it is beneficial the Scottish identity to be associated with the Nordics. The argument is further substantiated by taking account of how much of the rhetoric regarding the Scottish-Nordic relationship is rooted in narratives of long-standing bonds and contemporary similarities which are extended from the Viking ages through today. By establishing this narrative, and solidifying the argument of contemporary similarities by concrete action and policy adoption, it is argued that Scotland engages with the Nordic countries, both through rhetoric and concrete activities in order to consolidate a specific identity, separate from the UK, for today and the future.

In short, this thesis concludes that the Nordic endeavour and dimension of Scottish paradiplomacy is a sophisticated demonstration of Scotland's ability to understand and take advantage of spaces of opportunity at various levels, promoting, and constructing an image of a capable international actor. Moreover, it has been noted that motives for the Nordic relations can be found in domestic advancement, such as economy and finding best solutions to domestic policy issues. More prominently however, based on the material studied here, it would appear that Scotland engages with the Nordic countries in order to consolidate an

identity of a small nation in a large world that is both distinct from the UK and close to the 'Nordic'.

Through the thesis, there are some questions that have been left unanswered, and that this author welcomes further research on. First, and most crucially, the thesis has suggested that by policy adaptation and identity promotion, it could be the case that Scotland is constructing an identity which is more Nordic than distinctly Scottish. Furthering on the findings of this thesis, this aspect of the Scottish identity formation would be of particular interest for further research. Moreover, the thesis has discussed Scottish-Nordic solely from a Scottish perspective. It appears, from the data describing frequency and level of engagements, that the various Nordic countries differ in acceptance of Scottish engagement. Hence, a further endeavour suggested is to study the opinions and perceptions the Nordic countries have of Scottish approaches, and whether this reflects Scotland specifically or their general attitude to substate cooperation. Attention has, in this study, primarily been given to the Scottish Government. A further study comparing this to the opposition would be of interest. Finally, and to the side of the findings and arguments of this thesis, it must be mentioned that Scottish politics is entering an exciting time where demands of a new independence referendum is not completely unthinkable. Therefore, the thesis welcomes, and encourages, further studies on Scottish international relations – and is perhaps especially excited to see the scholarly development if it comes to new demands of Scottish independence.

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Appendix 1: Scottish Ministerial Engagements 2016-2020

	SG Representative	Met with (Country/organisation/summit)	Position of meeting partner	Topic of engagement
Jun. 2016	Minister for International	Norway	Local government,	NA
Aug. 2016	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Denmark	Ambassador	NA
Aug. 2016	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Finland	Ambassador	NA
Sep. 2016	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	ARC Summit	Summit session	Education
Sep. 2016	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	ARC Summit	Summit dinner	Education
Sep. 2016	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	ARC Summit	Summit session	Education
Sep. 2016	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Iceland	Prime Minister	Education
Sep. 2016	Minister for International Development and Europe	Sweden	Ambassador	EU referendum
Sep. 2016	Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy	Norway	Parliamentary committee	Energy
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Arctic Circle	Head of summit (?) Olafur Ragnar Grimsson	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Finland	Foreign Minister	Scottish-Finnish Relations

Oct. 2016	First Minister	Arctic Circle Assembly	NA	Climate Change
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Iceland	Prime Minister	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Iceland	Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Ossur (Icelandic company)	CEO	Business in Scotland
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Prospect North Exhibition	NA	Architecture
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Trade and Industry (Iceland)	Business Leaders	Reception
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Iceland	Foreign Minister	Reception
Oct. 2016	First Minister	Faroe Islands	Pariamentary	Scottish-Faroese Relations
Oct. 2016	Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe	Faroe Islands	Pariamentary	Introductory Meeting
Oct. 2016	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Nordics Conference	NA	Brexit
Nov. 2016	First Minister	Sweden	Ambassador	Scottish-Swedish Relations
Nov. 2016	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Denmark	Ambassador	EU referendum
Nov. 2016	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Sweden	Ambassador	EU referendum
Nov. 2016	Minister for International Development and Europe	Iceland	Ambassador	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Nov. 2016	Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy	Iceland	Ambassador	Energy
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	State Secretary Foreign Ministry	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Parliamentary committee	Scottish-Norwegian Relations

Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Civil Society	British Politics
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Media	Brexit
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Media	Brexit
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Industry (Norway)	NA	Dinner
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Parliamentary committee	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Culture	Nobel Peace Centre
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	iSurvey (Norwegian business)	NA	NA
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Director NORAD	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Research	NA
Feb. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Director Resistance Museum	Commemoration of historic relations
Mar. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Sweden	Minister	Education
Mar. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Denmark	Minister	Education
Mar. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Local Government, Oslo and Akershus	Brexit; Scottish economy; Financial services industry
Mar. 2017	Minister for Transport and the Islands	Faroe Islands	Representatives	Transport
Apr. 2017	First Minister	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Assembly

Apr. 2017	First Minister	Finland / Academia	Academia	Brexit
Apr. 2017	First Minister	Denmark	Parliamentary group	Brexit; Scotlands position; Scottish-Danish Relations
May. 2017	First Minister	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
May. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Finnish Scottish Society	NA	Brexit
May. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations; Scotland@s place in Europe
May. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	NA	Constitution day celebrations
May. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	NA	Constitution day reception - Speech
Jun. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Royal Family; Civil Society	St. Magnus Festival
Jun. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	NA	St. Magnus Festival reception
Jun. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Culture	St. Magnus Festival
Jun. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	NA	St. Magnus Festival Dinner
Aug. 2017	Minister for Local Government and Housing	Sweden	Association of Local Authorities and Regions	Local Government
Sep. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Atlantic Rim Summit	NA	Education
Sep. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Atlantic Rim Summit	NA	Education

Sep. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Atlantic Rim Summit	NA	Education
Sep. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Sweden	Local Government, Västerbotten	Scotland's parliamentary system; Scottish Government
Sep. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Riga Conference	NA	Nordic Baltic Agenda
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Svartsengi Geothermal Power Plant (Finland)	NA	Renewable energy
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Finland	Minister for Nordic Cooperation	Scottish-Finnish Relations
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Finland	Minister for Nordic Cooperation	Scottish-Arctic Relations Dinner
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Arctic Circle	NA	Climate change
Oct. 2017	First Minister	International Renewable energy agency	Director General	Renewable energy
Oct. 2017	First Minister	WOW Air (Iceland)	NA	Air Travel
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Iceland	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Iceland	Prresident	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2017	First Minister	Arctic Circle	NA	Reception
Oct. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Sweden	Ambassador	Brexit
Nov. 2017	First Minister	Norway	Minister for Climate and Environment	Climate change
Nov. 2017	First Minister	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Scottish-Arctic Relations
Nov. 2017	First Minister	Finland	State Secreary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Scottish-Finnish Relations
Nov. 2017	First Minister	Faroe Islands	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Scottish-Faroise Relations

Nov. 2017	First Minister	Iceland	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Nov. 2017	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Arctic. Forum	NA	Education and Skills
Nov. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Scottish-Arctic Relations
Nov. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle	NA	Scottish-Arctic Relations Dinner, promote policy exchange and cooperation
Nov. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Scottish-Arctic Relations
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Opening Forum
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Authors, Hon. Consul General	Scottish-Norwegian Relations dinner
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Cooperation in the New North – A Scottish perspective
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Finland	State Secretary	Arctic Circle Forum
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Faroe Islands	Foreign Minister	Arctic Circle Forum
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Hon. Consul General	Christmas
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Reception
Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	Dinner

Nov. 2017	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle Forum	NA	and relationship with the Arctic
Nov. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	NA	NA	Climate Change in the Arctic
Dec. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Finland	NA	100 years Independence celebration
Dec. 2017	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Actic Indigenous	Leaders	Climate Change
Jan. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Norway	Ambassador to the EU	Brexit
Jan. 2018	Lord Advocate	Norway	Justice and Home Affairs Counsellor at Norway's Mission to the EU	Justice
Feb. 2018	First Minister	Iceland	Ambassador	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	State Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Leader Brexit Group	Brexit; Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Ambassador for Arctic and Antarctic Affairs	Arctic Strategy
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	State Secretary to minister for international development	International Development Policy
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Fuglesang AS (Norwegian business)	Chairman	Business

Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Academia	Professor	Scotland's Place in Europe and raising awareness of our position amongst Norwegian academic community.
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	Parliamentary	Brexit
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Statoil (Norwegian business)	NA	Business growth
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Media, Norway	NA	Scotland's place in Europe
Feb. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Norway	NA	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Mar. 2018	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Sweden	Minister (Upper Secondary Wschool and Adult Education and Training	Education
Mar. 2018	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Norway	State Secretary	Education
Mar. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Media (Denmark)	Media	Brexit
Mar. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway	Minister (Fisheries)	Marine Environmental issues
Mar. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity	Norway	Minister (Fisheries)	Marine Environmental issues
Apr. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity	Grieg Seafood (Norwegian business)	Business	Aquaculture

May. 2018	Minister for Childcare and Early Years	Finland	Minister (education)	Higher Education
May. 2018	Minister for Childcare and Early Years	Norway	Minister (Research and Higher Education)	Higher Education
May. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Faroese Subsea Tunnels	NA	Tunnel Infrastructure
May. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Arctic Circle
May. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Faroe Islands	Minister	Scottish-Faroese Relations Dinner
May. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Iceland	Parliamentary Committee	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
May. 2018	Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy	Denmark	NA	Lunch
Jun. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Nordic Council of Ministers	Secretary General	Scottish-Danish Relations
Jun. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Denmark	Parliamentary European Affairs Committee	Brexit; Migration
Jun. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Denmark	State Secretary (Foreign Policy)	Brexit
Jun. 2018	Minister for International Development and Europe	Denmark	Civil Society (culture)	Architecture
Aug. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norway	Parliamentary Committee (Local Government and Public Administration)	Brexit; Migration
Aug. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Iceland	Ambassador	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Aug. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway (Business)	NA	Deposit return (recycling)

Aug. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway	Minister (Fisheries)	Fisheries
Aug. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway	Minister (Transport)	Introductory meeting
Aug. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Marine Harvest (Norwegian business)	NA	Fish Farming
Aug. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Institute of Marine Research	NA	Oceans and Marine Plastics
Aug. 2018	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Denmark	Parliamentary Committee (Rural Affairs and Islands)	Sustainable growth on islands and remote communities.
Sep. 2018	First Minister	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Scottish-Arctic Relations
Sep. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norwegian Seamen Church	NA	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Sep. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Arctic Circle	Chairman	The Arctic Strategy
Sep. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norwegian Investor	NA	Scotland's relationship with Norway and International Development / in malawi?
Sep. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Climate Change
Sep. 2018	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme Annual Conference	NA	NA
Sep. 2018	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Introductory meeting

Sep. 2018	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Connectivity
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland Air Group	NA	Scottish-Icelandic Relations Reception
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	NA	Scottish-Icelandic Relations Reception (Hosted by UK Ambassador)
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle Assembly	NA	Arctic Circle
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	Minister (Tourism, Industry & Innovation)	Scotland's Place in Europe; Tourism
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle	NA	Workshop: Importance of Scotland's growing relationship with Arctic
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Faroese Islands	Minister (Foreign Affairs)	Arctic Circle
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	Minister (Foreign Affairs)	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Finland	State Secretary; Ambassador for Northern Affairs	Scottish-Finnish Relations
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle	NA	Arctic Strategy
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Green Energy	NA	Scottish-Icelandic Relations Lunch

Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	West Nordic Council	NA	Scottish-Nordic Relations
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	NA	Literature and Art	Scottish-Arctic Relations
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Denmark / Media	Media	Brexit
Oct. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Faroe Islands	Minister (Fisheries and Deputy Prime Minister)	Scottish-Faroese Relations
Nov. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Aurora Forum	NA	Nordic Baltic Relations Dinner
Nov. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Aurora Forum	NA	Nordic Baltic Relations
Nov. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norway	NA	Scottish-Nordic Relations Christmas Tree Lighting
Nov. 2018	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Aurora Forum	NA	Brexit
Nov. 2018	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Transport, Connectivity, Energy Policy
Nov. 2018	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	North Sea Conference	NA	Offshore Energy
Dec. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Sweden	Ambassador	Scottish-Swedish Relations

Dec. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Dec. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway	State Secretary (Climate and Environment)	COP
Dec. 2018	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Sweden	Minister (Environment)	COP
Jan. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Denmark	Ambassador	Scottish-Danish Relations
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	Arctic Economic Council	Chair	Arctic Policy
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	NA	NA	Arctic Policy Reception
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	Hurtigruten	NA	Renewables
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	International Council for the Exploration of the Seas	NA	Arctic Policy
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	Arctic Frontiers	NA	Seafood and Food Security
Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	Norway	State Secretary (Fisheries)	Fisheries

Jan. 2019	Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment	Arctic Frontiers	Director	Arctic Policy
Feb. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations	Norway	Ambassador	Brexit
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Finland	Civil Society	Teacher Training School Visit (International Summit on the Teaching Profession)
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	Finland	Director-General, Finnish Agency for Education	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	HundrED Org.	Founder and CEO	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	NA	Ministers	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	Leading Together Session
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	International Summit on the Teaching Profession

Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	Summit Dinner
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	Sustainable Schools
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	Country delegations	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Mar. 2019	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills	International Summit on the Teaching Profession	NA	Top Priorities and Closing Remarks
Mar. 2019	Minister for Children and Young People	Sweden	Politicians	Getting it Right for Every Child
Mar. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Day	NA	Arctic Policy
Mar. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Norway	Minister (Culture and Equality); Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Mar. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Norway	NA	Scottish-Norwegian Relations Reception
Mar. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland; Denmark; Sweden	Diplomatic Staff	Scottish-Nordic Relations
Mar. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland	Ambassador, Honorary Consul	Scottish-Finnish Relations
Mar. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Denmark	Local Government	Climate Change (and other various subjects)

Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Sweden; Denmark; Finland	Diplomatic Staff	Trade and Investment
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Ernst and Young	NA	Trade mission, Breakfast
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Oil and Gass investors	NA	Trade Mission
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Equinor	NA	Trade Mission
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Innovation Norway	NA	Trade Mission
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Aquaculture Investors	NA	Trade Mission, Dinner
Mar. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	NA	NA	Nordic Markets Briefing
Apr. 2019	First Minister	Iceland	Prime Minister	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Apr. 2019	First Minister	Iceland	Prime Minister	Scottish-Icelandic Relations Reception
Apr. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	Prime Minister; Ambassador	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Apr. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	Prime Minister	Celebration og PM first official visit to Scotland Dinner
Apr. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Iceland	Prime Minister	Cross Government Issues
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Edrington	Managing Director of Nordics	Trade Mission
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Sweden	Federation of Enterprises	Trade Mission

Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Vattenfall	CEO	Trade Mission
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Corporate Health	NA	Trade Mission
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Global Scots	NA	Trade Mission, Lunch
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Denmark	NA	Trade Mission, Local Infrastructure
Apr. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	UN City; UNDP	NA	Trade Mission
May. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Norway	NA	Constitution Day Celebrations, Reception
May. 2019	Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy	Denmark	Ambassador	Digital
Jun. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Sweden	Ambassador	Trade and Investment
Jun. 2019	Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation	Sweden	NA	National Day Celebration; Trade and Investment
Jul. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Denmark	Ambassador	Aurora Forum
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Nordics	NA	Creative Industries
Aug. 2019	Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills	Kraftværket, Captum	NA	Denmark Visit; Visit and tour
Aug. 2019	Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills	Danish Employers Federation	NA	Denmark Visit
Aug. 2019	Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills	Denmark	Minister (Employment)	Denmark Visit

Aug. 2019	Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills	Denmark	Key Officials	Employment for Disabled People
Aug. 2019	Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills	Disabled People's Organisation	NA	Denmark Visit
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Sweden	Ambassador at Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Swedish Police; Sweden	Detective Superintendent; Rapporteur on Trafficking	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Swedish Police	Detective Inspector	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Talita (NGO)	NA	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Sweden	Prosecution Authority	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Mika Reception Centre	NA	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Minister for Community Safety	Sweden	Former Chancellor of Justice	Prostitution Policy
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Aqua Nor	NA	Aquaculture
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Aqua Nor	NA	Aquaculture, Exhibition
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Aqua Nor	NA	Aquaculture, Seminar
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Aqua Nor	NA	Aquaculture, Gaelforce Dinner
Aug. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Norway	Minister (Fisheries)	Fisheries / Aquaculture
Sep. 2019	Minister for Children and Young People	Nordic Council of Ministers	NA	European Engagement

Sep. 2019	Minister for Children and Young People	Iceland	Government	Looked after Children
Sep. 2019	Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning	Iceland	Minister	Housing
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Nordic Ministers	Ministerial	Arctic Connections
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle	NA	Arctic Connections, Reception
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Arctic Circle	NA	Arctic Connections, Launch
Sep. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland	Minister (Foreign Affairs)	Scottish-Finnish Relations; Circular Economy
Sep. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland	NA	Scottish-Finnish Relations; EU Presidency, Reception
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Iceland	Prime Minister; Minister (Finance and Economics)	Iceland Visit, Dinner
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Inclusive Growth and Wellbeing Symposium	NA	Iceland Visit
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Iceland	Prime Minister, Minister	Iceland Visit
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Iceland	Director of Economics	Iceland Visit

Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Iceland	Minister (Finance)	Iceland Visit
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Central Bank of Iceland	NA	Iceland Visit
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work	Ble Lagoon	NA	Iceland Visit
Sep. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity	Iceland	Minister (transport)	Transport
Oct. 2019	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Aurora Forum	NA	Scottish-Nordic Baltic Relations
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Norway	Politicians	Renewables; Cross-border cooperation
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle	NA	Islands / Local communities
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Bloomberg Media	Media	Arctic Circle / Government Business
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Limes Media	Media	Arctic Circle
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	High North News	Media	Arctic Circle
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle Assembly	NA	Arctic Circle, Reception
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle Assembly	NA	Arctic Circle / Government Business
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle	NA	Climate Change; Climate Justice

Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Arctic Circle	Chairman	Arctic Circle; Arctic Policy Framework (feedback)
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Iceland	President	Arctic Circle; Arctic interest; Cultural Relations; Future cooperation
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Iceland	Minister (Foreign Affairs)	External Affairs; Icelandic Presidency Nordic Council Priorities
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Iceland	Minister (Environment and Natural Resources)	Energy; Climate Change
Oct. 2019	Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands	Inuit Circumpolar Council	NA	External Affairs; Inuin Night Reception
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Norway	State Secretary (Culture)	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Qulturum, Centre for Development of Improvement Knowledge & Innovation in Healthcare	NA	Healthcare, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Self-Dialysis Centre	Civil Society	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Family Care Centre	Civil Society	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Children's House	Civil Society	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Rigshospitalet	NA	Primary Care, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	NA	NA	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Denmark	Minister (Health and Senior Citizens)	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit

Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport	Denmark	Health Leaders	Health and Social Care, Denmark Visit, Dinner
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Norway	Beurocrats (Trade, Indusrty and Fisheries)	Aquaculture, Norwegian Policy Management
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Norwegian Food Safety Authority	NA	Food and Drink, Norwegian Policy Management
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Norway	Minister (Trade, Industry and Fisheries)	Aquaculture - Aquaculture, Policy and Expertise exchange
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	STIM	Chief Operation Officer	Aquaculture
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Cargill Aqua Nutrition	Managing Director UK & Europe	Aquaculture
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	LEROY Seafood Group	Chief Operating Officer Farming	Food and Drink, Aquaculture
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	NCE Seafood Cluster	Research and Development Manager	Food and Drink, Aquaculture
Nov. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy	Mowi	CEO	Food and Drink, Aquaculture
Nov. 2019	Minister for Older People and Equalities	Women Leaders Global Forum (Iceland)	NA	Equalities
Nov. 2019	Solicitor General	Norway	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice	Crime Picture Similarities
Dec. 2019	Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform	Norway	State Secretary (Climate)	Climate Change
Jan. 2020	First Minister	NHO Annual Conference	NA	Export Growth Plan
Jan. 2020	First Minister	Norwegian Businesses	NA	Business and Trading
Jan. 2020	First Minister	Norway	Prime Minister	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Jan. 2020	First Minister	NHO	President and Director	Scottish-Norwegian Relations

Jan. 2020	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government	Arctic Frontiers	NA	Communities
Jan. 2020	Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs	Iceland	Diplomatic Staff	Scottish-Icelandic Relations
Jan. 2020	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland	State Secretary (Social Affairs and Health)	Brussels Visit
Jan. 2020	Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development	Finland	NA	Speech at event, Brussels Visit
Feb. 2020	First Minister	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Feb. 2020	Minister for Europe and International Development	Norway	Ambassador	Scottish-Norwegian Relations
Jun. 2020	Minister for Europe and International Development	Denmark	Ambassador, Perm.rep. To EU	Brexit
Jun. 2020	Lord Advocate	Denmark	Supreme Court Lawyer (multilateral)	Covid-19 and back to normal
Sep. 2020	Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs	Sweden	Ambassador	Covid-19
Oct. 2020	Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture	Scotland-Arctic Webinar	NA	Population
Oct. 2020	Minister for Europe and International Development	Norway	State Secretary (International Development)	International Development



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