

**Cross-border governance
within the Eurometropolis
Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (ELKT)
through the example of cross-
border public transportation**

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Cross-border governance within the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (ELKT) through the example of cross-border public transportation

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Abstract

The cross-border governance issue is a crucial stake for understanding the driving forces and the brakes of the territorial integration in Europe. The idea of this paper is to contribute to this debate by focusing the study of cross-border governance in the field of public transportation within the cross-border metropolitan region of Lille. After introducing the political and geographical context that led to the emergence of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, an innovative analysis of the actors was performed using the method of SNA. Three hypotheses were tested to better understand the relationships and positions of the various organizations involved in cross-border cooperation.

Keywords: cross-border governance ; public transportation ; social network analysis ; spatial planning ; Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis

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1. Introduction

Metropolitan regions function as the economic dynamos of national economies (Scott and Storper 2003). In nearly every global region they are responsible for disproportionate shares of national increases in output and employment (Istrate, Berube, and Nadeau 2012). As a result, metropolitan regions have emerged as a central focus of national and regional economic development policies. In the European context urban regions are the anchors of territorial equalization and cohesion goals of the European Union's (EU) Lisbon strategy. The concurrent processes of globalization and European integration have raised the profile of a previously marginalized species of urban area: the cross-border metropolitan region. These spaces have been shifted from the periphery to occupy a more prominent position within European regional policy as places where internal boundaries have weakened, regional markets have prospered and identity barriers are fading (Johnson 2009).

Cross-border metropolitan regions are territorial units made up of contiguous urbanized areas from at least two nation-states (Perkmann and Sum 2002). More specifically, cross-border metropolitan regions are "both political constructions driven by a multitude of political actors from several levels, large urban areas transcending national boundaries, and urban centres engaged in globalized network. These regions can thus be defined as regional political initiatives which consider the existence of national borders as a resource for increasing cross-border interactions at the local level and the embeddedness of the metropolitan centre in global networks" (ESPON 2011, 101).

Cross-border regions are defined by strong socio-economic ties and mobility across the border despite national institutional, cultural and linguistic differences. Understanding how these ties are possible and are governed is central to the promotion of European cohesion agenda and, more generally, to effectively leveraging the natural economic advantages of metropolitan areas on international borders. This has spawned a broad and expanding literature on the emergence and governance of cross-border regions (See for example Perkmann 2003; Scott 2005; Sohn, Reitel, and Walther 2009; Brunet-Jailly 2005; Blatter 2004; Heddebaut 2004; Anderson, O'Dowd, and Wilson 2003) much of which explores the link between cross-border flows, poli-

tical institutional integration and regional identities. For most of this scholarship the frequency and fluidity of cross-border mobility is an important indicator of the cross-border spatial integration and an essential foundation for economic and cultural exchanges. The daily flows of people across the border in effect define the limits of the cross-border region (MOT 2006). If people cannot, or do not, regularly cross the border then metropolitan integration is likely to be weak. As a result, an analysis of cross-border mobility is often the obvious point of departure for studies of cross-border territorial construction and metropolitan region-building.

While the relatively free and frequent flow of traffic across international boundaries is an essential foundation of cross-border regions, cross-border public transit systems are the ultimate symbols of metropolitan integration. The extension of local transit routes into “foreign” territory are the most visible manifestations of cross-border unity and are the most practical links between communities on either side of the boundary. More than that, the extent and form of cross-border transit linkages are also indicative of political coordination within the region. The management of even a simple cross-border transit system is impossible without the coordination of several layers of bureaucracy and the careful delineation of responsibilities. Therefore, the exploration of the governance of this type of cross-border infrastructure offers a fascinating window on the effectiveness of cross-border political relations and institutional evolution. Given the central role of public transit in the cross-border region-building process it is productive to study the reciprocal effect of cross-border institutional linkages and physical transit connections. That is, how do existing cross-border institutions affect the evolution and effectiveness of cross-border public transit systems; and how does the construction of these physical and symbolic links within cross-border communities contribute to the evolution of political institutions?

This article attempts to get at these broader questions by investigating the governance of cross-border public transit in the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (ELKT), a metropolitan region on the border of Northern France and Belgium. This is an interesting case as both governance institutions and cross-border public transit systems are in a period of transition. Existing cross-border transit routes were established as a direct result of cooperative institutions dating from the 1990s. In 2007, the ELKT region further institutionalized cooperation with the adoption of a new le-

gal form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) embodied in the EGTC Agency. This legal form emerged as a response to the challenge of highly fragmented policy environments that characterize cross-border regions and involves the creation of an organization that unites different levels of government to determine cross-border agendas. One of the central goals of this cross-border partnership is the evolution of mobility policy and public transit connections.

The primary purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of the key actors especially the newly created EGTC Agency on the governance of cross-border public transit in the ELKT region. Evaluating their role in evolving cross-border public transit policy enables an assessment of both the effectiveness of this new governance institution and the challenges faced by general-purpose cross-border governance structures in affecting policy areas in which political authority is fragmented.

In order to evaluate the role of the EGTC Agency and the other actors involved in public transit governance in the ELKT region we draw on two methodologies: first, a qualitative analysis of the evolution of cooperation in the region and assessment of the political roles of the various actors in the realm of cross-border public transit. However, an external assessment of governance practices may not accurately capture how policy is actually formulated, and may over- (or under-) state the role of certain actors. In order to compensate we turn to a social network analysis (SNA) of data collected in the region by the MetroNet project¹ from 2010-2012 that tracked information exchanges between policy actors in cross-border public transit. We use this data to test a series of hypotheses (see Box 1) about which actors are central to the cross-border public transit policy network and their roles within it.

The first hypothesis tests the extent to which political competency translates into influence in cross-border networks. The second explores the effect of the international border on information exchanges between political actors. The third hypothesis relates to the role that various actors play within the network and, more specifically, the function of brokerage. This article concludes that the EGTC Agency is one of the

¹ The MetroNet research project aims to compare the relations among actors across four European regions in the area of cross-border cooperation. The cross-border regions that are part of our study are Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg, the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, Luxembourg and the Greater Region, and Centropo (Vienna-Bratislava-Brno-Győr). The main objective of MetroNet is to better understand how policy networks regulate the spatial construction of cross-border metropolitan region in Europe. The methodological framework developed in MetroNet is based on social network analysis (SNA) in order to describe the structural properties of networks and to analyze the relational configurations that are involved in the making of public policies.

most influential actors in the exchange of information in cross-border public transit. However, it is not the only one. Evidence suggests that local and provincial actors are also crucial to cross-border public transit policy networks and highlights the importance of governance institutions such as the EGTC Agency in mediating different, and sometimes contrary, interests and competencies. This analysis has resonance for other cross-border metropolitan regions seeking to develop both collective governance institutions and public transit networks to the extent that it highlights the dynamic policy relationships within these regions and the value of social network analysis in revealing how actors actually work to affect policy.

The article begins with a history of cross-border cooperation in the ELKT region and an analysis of historical patterns of cross-border mobility. It then turns to a description of cross-border public transit policy with a particular emphasis on the roles of different actors and their areas of jurisdiction. This section describes the new governance mechanisms of the EGTC and how it is structured and functions within the ELKT region. The paper then introduces SNA as an analytical tool that can be used to understand the relationships and actual functions of each of the actors in the cross-border public transit policy network. The following sections test our three main hypotheses and discuss the results. The paper concludes with a summary of findings and reflects on their relevance to other cross-border regions and political theory.

BOX 1

***Hypothesis 1:** The actors with the greatest competencies in cross-border public transit policies will occupy the most central position in the social network;*

***Hypothesis 2:** Relationships between actors will be strongest between actors of the same nationality;*

***Hypothesis 3:** The new cross-border structure – the EGTC Agency – has transformed regional governance in the ELKT area and functions as an important intermediary in cross-border political relations.*

2. The emergence of a cross-border metropolis, first cycle of the cross-border cooperation

One politician, Pierre Mauroy, had the vision of building a cross-border metropolitan region centered on the city of Lille and the leadership to make it happen. In the 1980s he decided to unite the informally linked French and Belgian cities around Lille and rebrand it as a metropolitan region that would be internationally recognizable. His ambitions were applauded and supported by the private sector many of whom joined prominent Lille business figure Bruno Bonduelle in the “Grand Lille” group that met to discuss metropolitan projects and strategies. The emergence of this metropolitan dialogue rekindled economic development efforts in the region, which was suffering from the decline of its core coal and textile industries, by reimagining metropolitan possibilities (Paris, 2009). The metropolitan dynamic was consolidated at the local level through significant civic projects including the Euralille development – a complex of modern office, retail and conference space built around the new TGV/Eurostar rail station. However, given the close proximity and strong linkages that existed between Lille and neighboring Belgian regions it was impossible to envision metropolitan development as anything but a cross-border endeavor. Belgian partners were therefore asked to participate in the metropolitan project in order to collectively constitute a polycentric cross-border metropolis designed to leverage the unique character of each of the associated regions to multiply the development potential of the whole.

This cross-border metropolitan narrative found vigorous support within the European Union (EU), which sought to integrate the cross-border theme into its broader regional policy. The EU has progressively carved out a legal niche to enable cross-border cooperation through a series of statutory experiments (such as the Madrid Convention of 1980 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992) and through structural fund support of cross-border projects. The creation of supportive institutions such as the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), established by Pierre Mauroy, whose primary mission is to facilitate cross-border projects at the local level, has also advanced the cross-border agenda in national politics.

A first logical application of the metropolitan idea in the ELKT region was to encourage and facilitate cross-border mobility. This quickly resulted in the creation

of a cross-border structure – the Permanent Intermunicipal Cross-Border Conference (COPIT) – that metropolitan government of Lille (LMCU) and the four communal authorities in the Belgian border regions (IDETA, IEG, WVI and LEIEDAL). Supported by the European Interreg program (rounds I and II) COPIT initiated its first set of inter-city transit projects with the construction of a cross-border bus line between Mouscron and Wattrelos in 1992, and its extension to Roubaix in 1995.

If we accept the concept of cycles of cross-border cooperation (Nelles and Durand, 2012) – the idea that one can identify specific phases in the evolution of cross-border relationships and characterize the limits between complete cycles as distinctive eras – what foundation did the actors in this first period leave for the next generation in the realm of cross-border mobility? There are two distinctive cycles evident in the ELKT region to date²: The first generation of cross-border activity under COPIT (1980-2006) and the next phase structured around the EGTC (2006-present).

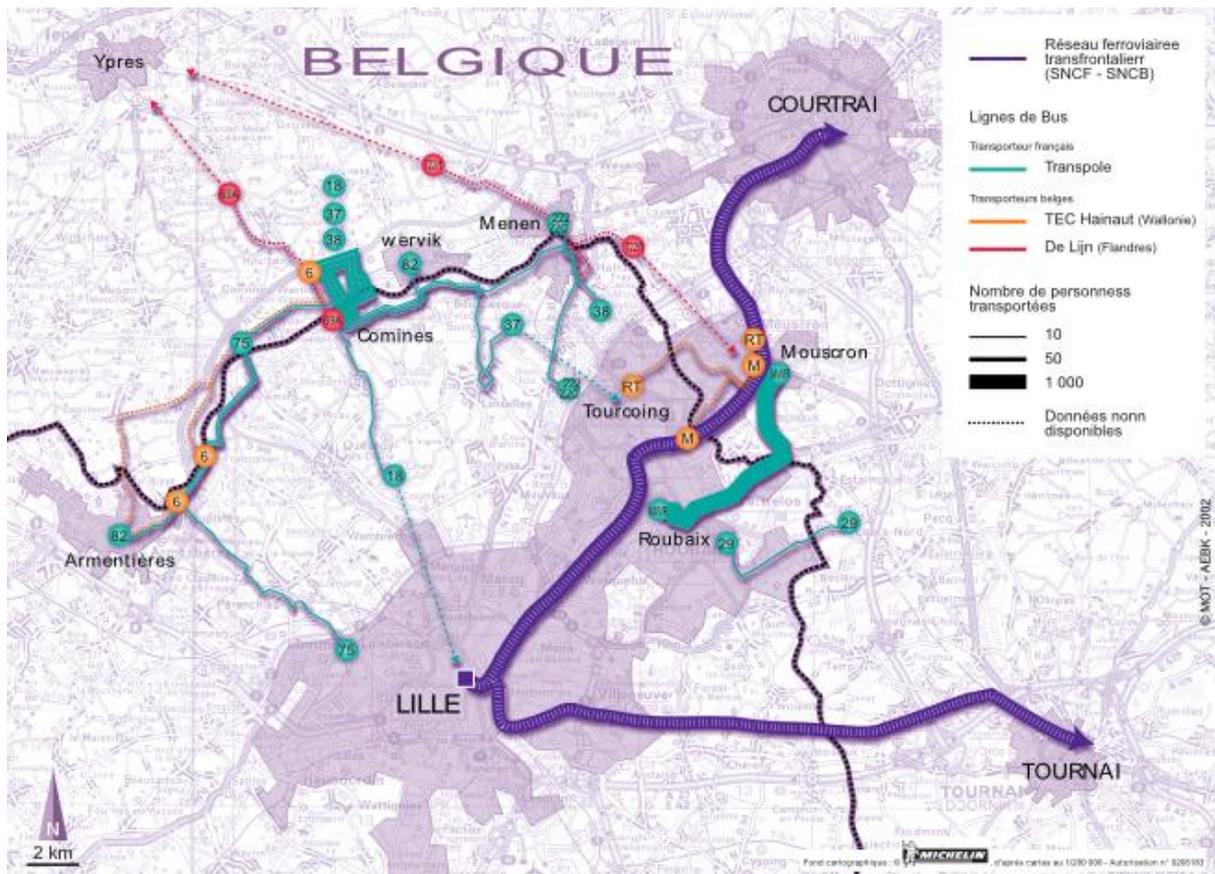
The infrastructural legacy of the first period was the establishment of 13 cross-border inter-city transit lines (see Figure 1). Four of these were operated by the Lille-based company Transpole, three were managed by the Walloon operator Tec Hainaut, while De Lijn, the Flemish bus company operated three including the inaugural Mouscron-Wattrelos-Roubaix (M-W-R) line. Rail links were also established on the Lille-Mouscron-Kortrijk (L-M-T) and Lille-Tournai (L-T) axes. In 2002 service levels on these lines were increased to 16 daily return trips on the first line and 18 on the second (MOT, 2006).

Although the region made impressive progress in organizing a cross-border public transit network where none existed prior to the 1990s the 2002 network only provided a bare minimum of service. In this period the crucial groundwork was laid for the development of an effective cross-border transit system, but much work remains to be done. For instance, it should be noted that the cross-border penetration of some of these lines is quite shallow. Regardless of the type cross-border offerings were, for the most part, simply extensions of existing routes to just inside the border.

² Depending on your point of view, metropolitan Lille has experienced different cycles of cooperation: two with respect to groups of actors (1980-2006 and 2006-present) or three if you consider the evolution of different structures of cooperation (1980-2000; 2000-2008; 2008-present). The difference is due to the fact that the same group of actors can be involved in several different institutional cycles (see table 3 in Nelles and Durand, 2012). In this article we divide cooperative cycles by participation of different groups of actors.

As we discovered from the actors interviewed as part of the MetroNet project (2010-2012) these cross-border transit connections were often described as the “end of the line” indicating that links went to a certain point, but no further. The dominant strategy was to extend existing routes a couple of stops into foreign territory in the expectation that riders would then be able to make connections to the more highly developed regional networks maintained by counterpart operators. Similarly, the Lille train station was the terminus for cross-border rail service operated by the Belgian National Rail Society (SNCB). The M-W-R bus line was the only completely new route created especially to respond to demand for cross-border links. Unlike the other lines that were mere extensions of the services of one of the main operators this line is co-financed and co-managed by two operators (Transpole (FR) and Tec Hainaut (BE)).

Figure 1: Map of cross-border public transit lines in the ELKT region established by 2002



Cross-border public transit cooperation in this period can be summarized as a linkage of disparate networks and operators, and the extension of selected routes into the neighboring country, which tentatively knit the contiguous border spaces. These stitches, however, only secured the margins.

The governance of these nascent cross-border transit links was organized through direct negotiations between the COPIT municipalities and the public transit operators under the supervision of Pierre Mauroy who drew heavily on his political experience and contacts from his tenure as François Mitterrand's prime minister (1981-1984) to support his metropolitan vision. His leadership and political influence led to the decision to run the Paris-London TGV line through Lille in 1993 and to the gradual expansion of high speed rail links to other foreign destinations such as Brussels, Rotterdam/Amsterdam and Aachen/Cologne in 1995.

Despite the successful development of international links the region still lacked a clearly elaborated cross-border public transit strategy. The political climate of this first period was one of voluntary collaboration inspired by an influential leader and supported by a core group of actors. A current challenge is to maintain the momentum of these early initiatives and strengthen coordination and cooperation among stakeholders.

3. Elaborating a (new) strategy: A new generation of political actors takes power, but what's the plan?

The construction of a cross-border metropolis involves the development of a collective strategy regarding internal transit links as well as the promotion of links between the cross-border territory and other metropolitan regions in Europe and abroad. However, before political actors could contemplate such an agreement the potential of the region had to be evaluated to provide a basis for the negotiation of a transit plan suited to the complex cross-border context. This project of information gathering and analysis involved numerous surveys of land use patterns and cross-border flows in order to determine the functional limits of the transit region.

3.1 Inventory of the flows and the infrastructures: information gathering [diagnostic of the cross-border flows]

An accurate survey of actual cross-border flows and estimates of potential demand are important in determining broad public transit priorities and fine-tuning service offerings. Interactions between border regions are often studied in terms of economic interdependence and measured using cross-border commuting patterns (Petraikos and Topaloglou, 2008 ; MOT, 2007).

What kinds of connections exist between the French and Belgian territories in the ELKT? Studies of cross-border commuting flow between the northern France and Belgium indicate that individuals have been crossing the border to work for more than a century. Approximately 100,000 Belgian workers crossed into the north of France in 1929 alone. These numbers dropped by half in the following decade due to the impact of economic crisis but were still substantial at 50,000 documented Belgian commuters in 1936 (INSEE, 2006).

Figure 2: Evolution of commuting flows between France and Belgium

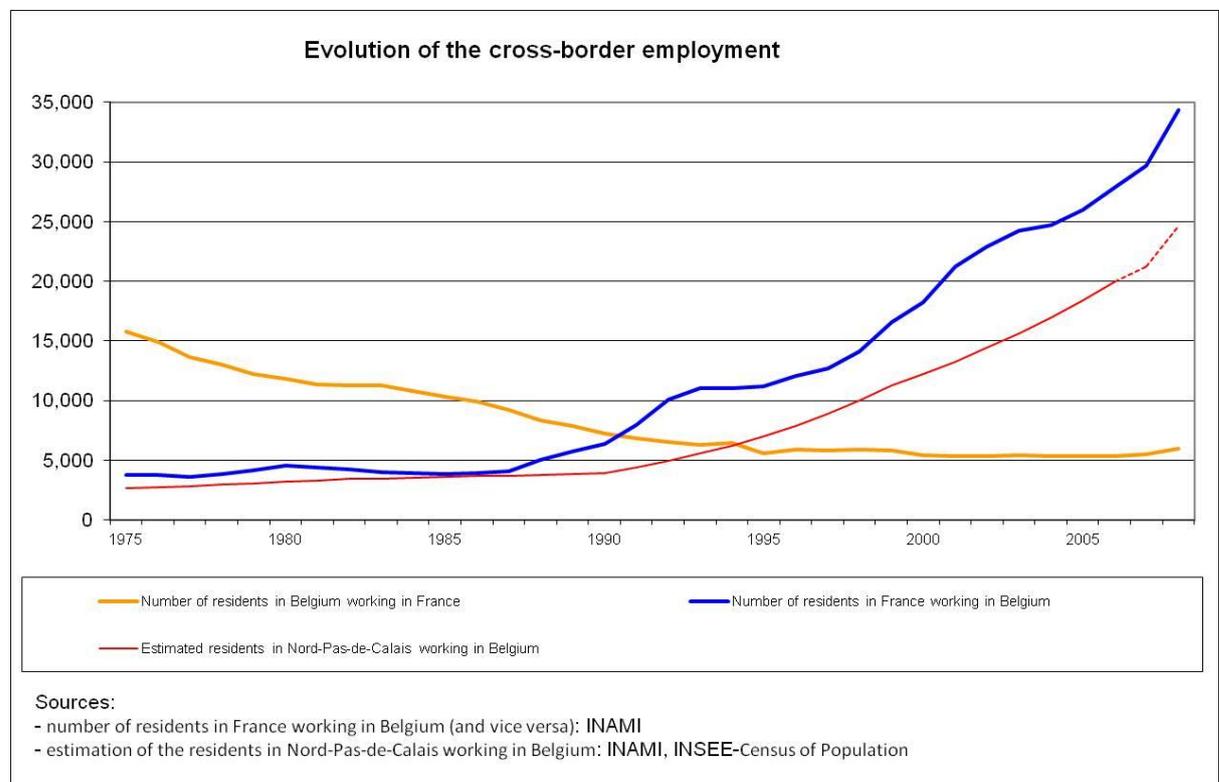


Figure 2 shows the number of French and Belgian residents who worked in the neighboring country between 1974 and 2008. This graphic clearly shows that the

curves have inverted – as one has increased the other has decreased. Where the two curves cross represents a moment of equilibrium between cross-border flows: in 1991 approximately 7,000 workers crossed the border for work in each direction. Since this moment the number of French cross-border workers has exceeded Belgian workers, and this distance continues to increase.

It is significant that these figures were gathered for territories much larger than the boundaries of the ELKT (NUTS 3 level). Consequently, even if it helps to form a general picture of cross-border economic flows the study doesn't describe intercity flows in the ELKT region. More recent studies have attempted to deepen the analysis and focus on the more localized trajectories of cross-border actors. In 2006, and then again in 2010, the LMCU led studies to more accurately pin down flows to and from Lille to other parts of the ELKT region. These studies didn't focus specifically on cross-border flows but captured these in their broader study of flows across LMCU borders. The findings of this study did not contradict the previous work by *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* (INSEE) or *Institut national d'assurance maladie invalidité* (INAMI) upon which the more general numbers in Figure 2 were based.

Table 1: Flow of exchanges

Round-trips	from Lille Métropole to Belgium	from Belgium to Lille Métropole
for shopping and services	13,000	10,000
for working	10,000	10,000
for studying	4,100	1,000
for visiting	2,400	4,100
for accompanying	5,700	3,200
for leisure	2,400	3,500
for other	2,400	200
Total	47,000	32,000

Source: Lille Métropole, 2010.

According to the findings of a recent study (LMCU, 2010) depicted in Table 1 out of a total of 47,000 trips from Lille to Belgium: 10,000 crossed the Flemish border and 26,000 crossed the Walloon border (11,000 had destinations in the rest of the Belgium). Most trips were short distance trips (5 km on both sides of the border). The reasons for travel in both directions are the same regardless of direction: 1/3 for shopping and services and only 1/3 for work and studies, which indicates relatively diffused daytime flows and no clear cross-border “rush” hours. Cars are clearly the

most popular mode (more than 81%), and 100,000 cars cross the border every day (+24% between 1998 and 2007). Only 6,000 passengers take the train everyday (3,000 TGV and 3,000 TER (Transport Express Régional)) and 1,000 passengers use the bus to cross the border (500 on the M-W-R line).

These statistics reveal the importance of cross-border flows and the dominance of automobile trips relative to public transit. This raises some critical issues for the definition of collective transit strategies and for the consolidation of the cross-border metropolis. The European tendency to develop “green” or carbon neutral transportation solutions relies heavily on public transit, but how can this be organized in the cross-border context? Opinions differ depending on the actors. Actors charged with managing the system consider routes and resources to be paramount. Political actors concentrate on how governance can be most effectively arranged and how costs, and benefits, can be shared between participants.

3.2 Spatial planning tools to design and manage the cross-border mobility

The organization of cross-border public transit is complicated by the fact that, for the moment, there are no common management tools. In the cross-border region the actual political competencies are distributed between many actors at different territorial scales where each territory manages its sovereign jurisdiction using its own institutions, rules and conventions (Durand, forthcoming).

In France transportation policy is governed by the interior transportation law (LOTI, 1982), which organizes public transit services nationally and preserves the right to reasonable access, service quality and regulates the costs. This legal framework aims to balance the needs of passengers and operators with other societal values such as equity, minimal environmental impact and public health. LOTI also structures the relationship between the State and sub-national political entities and their respective functions in public transit governance. In the Lille metropolitan area four political authorities operate within the LOTI framework to formulate coherent public transit policies. The State elaborates Service Schemas for public transit at the region-

al scale using the multimodal principles of and as required by the law governing planning and sustainable development (LOADDT, 1999). These schemas outline the “different objectives for transport service delivery to users, implementation methods, and the criteria for the definition of priorities to ensure the long-term coherence of transport networks defined for various modes of transportation and sets the priorities for operating, upgrading, adapting and expanding each of these systems” (LOADDT, 1999).

The Region, according to the framework of the State-Region Planning Contract, governs regional passenger rail transport (TER). Regions are all responsible for managing rail transit within their own jurisdictions. They are also responsible for establishing a Regional Transportation Schema, which primarily concerns the maintenance and renewal of rolling stock and infrastructure improvements. The Department is responsible for developing its own Departmental Passenger Transportation Schema to govern inter-urban public transit. At the metropolitan level the LMCU is responsible for planning and overseeing public transit service and infrastructure within their perimeters of urban transportation (PTU). The current strategy focuses on public transit and is described within the LMCU urban mobility plan (PDU) adopted in April 2011. LMCU administers a metro subway system (VAL) and numerous tram lines (though none of these systems currently extend beyond the border) in addition to administering Transpole, the metropolitan bus system.

In Belgium transportation policies are integrated and elaborated within the federal sustainable development plan. This plan establishes guidelines and objectives for transportation for the entire country but the authority to manage related issues of land use planning, interurban mobility, and infrastructure maintenance and renewal are all vested at the regional level. In Wallonia public transportation policies have been determined in a fairly arbitrary manner by the Walloon Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation, mainly because the region does not have a specific transportation plan. Investments in this area were determined annually depending on demand without reference to previously established priorities (Tritel and Cete, 2001). However, since the creation in 2008 of the Department of Public Service the Operational Directorate General of Mobility and Waterways has defined key strategic challenges in the region with an emphasis on the sustainable development of transportation and has

coordinated with other departments. At the local level Communal Mobility Plans determine priorities in the planning of public works and aim to improve access to transportation, road security and quality of life issues within their jurisdictions. In Flanders transportation policy is determined through conventions negotiated between various levels of public administration with the aim to invest in sustainable transportation through the development of public networks. Each level of administration (region, province and municipality) is responsible for the creation of a planning document (Structuurplan) within the guidelines defined by the Flemish transport plan (Mobiliteitsplan Vlaanderen) in which recent priorities include the promotion of traffic safety and multimodal public transportation. At the local level communal plans oversee and guide the development of transit improvements within the community.

The overarching transportation policies in France and Belgium are rooted in principles of sustainable development, which aim to balance demands in the area of transportation and accessibility with environmental protection. However, the guiding philosophies of different mobility plans vary by territory. In France planning instruments enable the elaboration of operational strategies whereas in Belgium they are less specific on the subject of territorial management. From an organizational perspective, organizing authorities in France are linked by multi-year conventions with transit operators (Transpole for bus lines and the SNCF for rail) and with the managers of transport infrastructure (for rail French Rail Networks, RFF) who deliver contracted services. In Belgium the De Lijn Society in Flanders and the Walloon Regional Society for Transport (SWRT) are both the organizing authorities for public transport, responsible for defining routes, maintaining bus depots and fare schedules, and the operators of the transport services even if they contract out some service delivery.

These organizational differences raise questions about how to effectively coordinate policy between regions in the context of such different institutional structures, levels of competency and political constraints.

3.3 The limits of spatial planning tools in managing cross-border mobility

The challenge of cross-border governance lies in the coordination of policies in the area of public transport. However, planning instruments, like existing transportation plans, seem ill-adapted to the cross-border context. The emergence of cross-border transit services speaks to a certain, if weak, acceptance of the cross-border context in planning documents. In addition to the regulatory challenges of policy coordination across the border in this policy area there are other difficulties that impede transit network integration. For instance, practical issues of different conventions of power distribution, scheduling and security must all be overcome. However, even more intractable are rules regarding the operation of cross-border lines.

European regulation No. 684/92 on international transportation requires that all operators must secure authorization to operate regular international service and that it operate with a license granted by the competent authorities of the member state of establishment. This regulation is enforced along the entire length of the French border (MOT, 2006). Consequently, the development of local cross-border service remains somewhat 'experimental' and, for this reason, has not been considered a political priority.

The local cross-border public transit sector also suffers from a lack of funding. The cross-border routes are typically less profitable than others (to the extent that they are at all), which lowers the incentives for service providers to expend time and resources developing additional routes or increasing the frequency of service on existing ones. At the same time the existing routes in the ELKT are not attractive, accessible or frequent enough for inhabitants to favor public transit over private vehicles for cross-border trips. A general lack of attention to transboundary public transit could have been partially alleviated with support from EU Structural Funds, which have financed various projects (studies, infrastructure, HST Connect) through Inter-reg funding but these have not yielded much effective policy.

After an important period of structuration in the 1990s cross-border public transit has not seen many major developments (apart from a new bus line, #39 between Halluin and Menen). In addition to both institutional and legal impediments

that have hindered the management of cross-border mobility, the implementation of transport policy coordination relies on the development of cross-border dialogue on mobility. The challenge is to promote the exchange of information between actors responsible for transit planning, transit policy, organizers and operators on either side of the border by bringing them together around working groups, through the diffusion of official documents (i.e. planning documents and legislation) but also to build concrete partnerships between key actors at the ELKT scale. To achieve these objectives political actors must play the role of leaders and enablers of policy networks that develop between operators to ensure effective long-term governance. However, to what extent do political actors on either side of the border have the capacity to play this role? How can they be most effectively organized to support cross-border public transit in the ELKT?

4. Governance dynamics in cross-border public transportation in the Eurometropolis

The governance of cross-border metropolitan areas is a complicated proposition at the best of times. However, the realm of cross-border public transportation can be more confounding than most other policy areas. This is due to the sheer number and variety of actors that must work together to make international transit links possible at the metropolitan scale. In this the Eurometropolis is no exception. The broad area of cross-border public transit requires the involvement of actors from within the entire mille-feuille of French public administration from the Region on down to the local level. A similar panoply of Belgian actors completes the political participants with the added twist of the two quarrelsome Flemish and Walloon regions. This policy landscape is further complicated by the wide range of transit operators and infrastructure agencies from the national to local levels that must be contracted with and convinced to effectively provide what are typically highly unprofitable cross-border services. Under these circumstances it is surprising that there are any cross-border public transit linkages at all, and not at all surprising that what does exist has been plagued with difficulties since inception. Yet is a testament to the power of the idea of the Eurometropolis and the tenacity of its leaders that these services endure and

may yet become more effective as governance in this region evolves. This section outlines the range of actors involved in the governance of cross-border public transit in the Eurometropolis and highlights the challenges of coordination that have played an important role in limiting the potential of an integrated system. It then considers the potential for new governance tools, such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) structure, to revitalize cross-border cooperation on the public transit file.

4.1 Who is involved in cross-border transportation governance?

Although the field of actors involved in all aspects of cross-border public transit is crowded the number of participants in policy making and service implementation can vary by type of cross-border link. The Eurometropolis primarily relies on two types of cross-border services to support regional transit: bus and rail. Of the two types cross-border rail necessitates a much broader field of policy actors than the more localized bus services. This is because commuter rail links between stations on either side of the border run on infrastructure owned and maintained by and are operated by the national rail services in France and Belgium. The inclusion of the nationally-oriented National Corporation of French Railways (SNCF) and National Corporation of Belgian Railways (SNCB), their subsidiaries and the government commissions responsible for their oversight, all with slightly different incentives to participate in cross-border governance at once multiplies the number of actors at the table and introduces a different set of policy challenges. In contrast, the governance of metropolitan bus services across the border requires the coordination of fewer and more localized actors, though in many ways the policy challenges are equally complex. Consequently, despite a considerable overlap in actors between the two spheres of cross-border public transit it is productive to consider them, and to analyze their unique governance challenges, separately.

Figure 3: Organization of the transport within the Eurometropolis

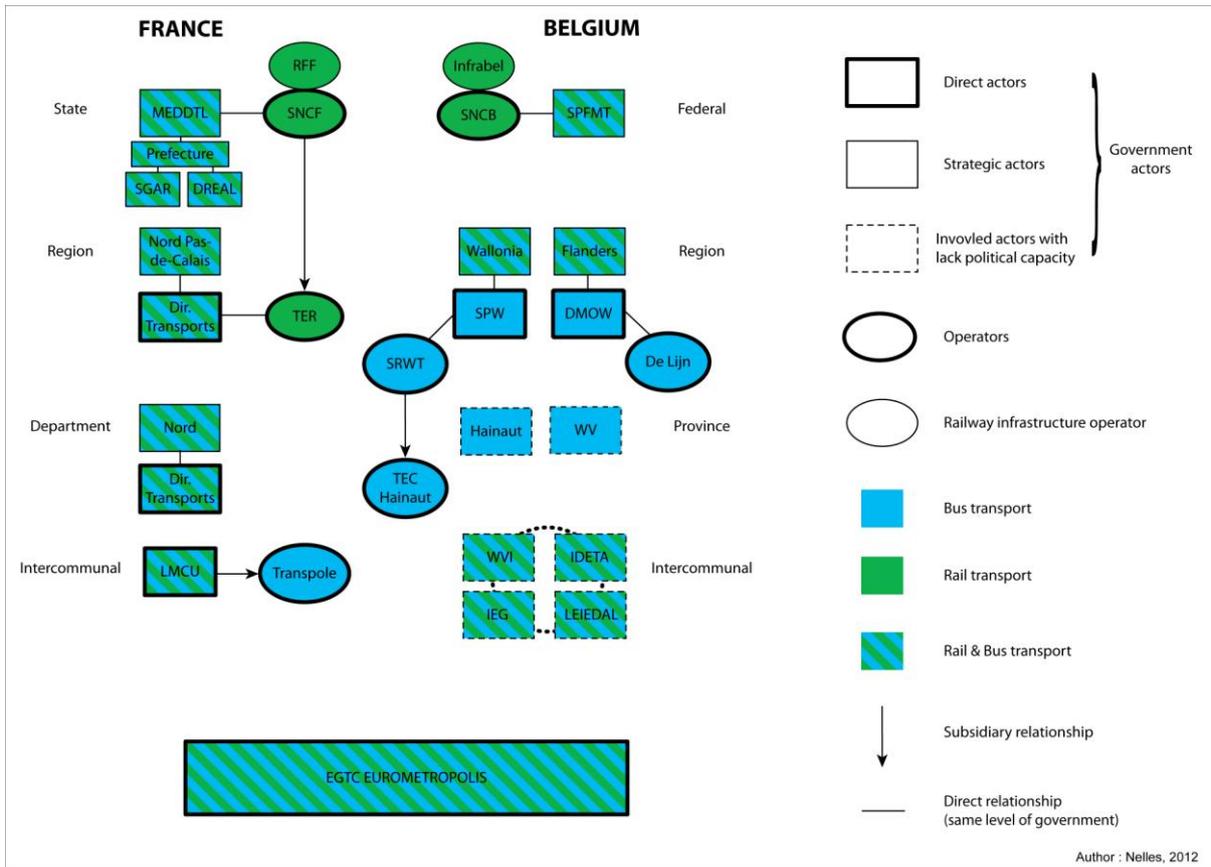


Figure 3 depicts the key actors in both areas of public transit in the Eurometropolis. Those involved in rail transit are shaded in blue while those involved in bus transit are shaded in green. Some actors are involved in both and are hashed in both colors. There is also a difference between strategic political actors, who are responsible for oversight and setting general policies and direct actors, who are directly involved in decision making in the cross-border region, and operators. Strategic actors are depicted in boxes with thin lines, direct actors have thicker boxes and operators are in ovals. Dashed outlines, whatever the shape, indicates a strong policy interest in the color coded area(s) but a lack of formal competencies. This figure depicts many of the actors discussed in the previous section. The presence of transit operators, such as the SNCF and SNCB and their power over policy implementation cannot be overstated. Finally, a relatively new actor in the cross-border transit policy field is the core governing structure of the Eurometropolis: the EGTC structure. This structure, and its effect on the development of cross-border transit links, is discussed below.

4.2 A new structure: The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

A common problem to the coordination of both bus and rail links is the proliferation of actors involved in cross-border public transit. Even more significant is the wide variety of different masters that each one of those actors must serve - from local constituencies to national agendas - before the cross-border region. It is therefore not surprising that policy making in this area is challenging. Part of the problem is that it has been difficult to bring the relevant actors together, much less get them to work together. In the past structures like COPIT united the localities and bus service providers. But this arrangement failed to include the panoply of players necessary to get things done in the cross-border policy space. In answer to this challenge the Eurometropolis adopted the form of an EGTC in an effort to unite actors at every relevant level of government and their political competencies behind the cross-border idea. This governance evolution has the potential to be a game changer for cross-border regional transit but its effectiveness has not yet been proved.

Adopted by the European Commission in 2006 under the recommendation of the French-Belgian Parliamentary Working Group, convened in 2005 to explore institutional options for cross-border governance, Regulation 1082/2006 permits the creation of a cross-border organization with members in at least two Member States. This regulation was a departure from existing statutes in that the resulting organization has a legal personality under Community law and, depending on the context, may be given a legal personality under public or private national law. The Eurometropolis region was the genesis of these recommendations and was also the first to adopt the new governance mechanisms in 2007. This structure, the Eurometropolis EGTC, represents a new step in the cross-border governance of the region and includes a political assembly; a cross-border technical agency; and a cross-border forum that includes civil society. It builds on the previous governance structure, COPIT, by ensuring the participation of a wider set of government actors from all levels who possess both the authority and political capacity to implement cross-border policies once strategic decisions are made. It is hoped that implicating these actors from the outset will accelerate the implementation of the cross-border agenda and decrease

the chances that collective projects will fail due to lack of funding or intergovernmental inertia.

The governance of the EGTC is composed of political, technical and civil society organs. The political level consists of the Assembly, Board and the Chairmanship are the primary decision making bodies for the region and are composed of political actors from the 14 partners of the EGTC. They form six thematic working groups which explore the major themes to prepare collective agendas. The conference of the mayors informs local and intercommunal executives of the projects of the Eurometropolis and coordinates their implementation at the local level. Technical aspects of the partnership are coordinated by the cross-border EGTC Agency, which is an administrative tool and provides technical support to the assembly. Finally, the effective integration of civil society is an important element of the cross-border cooperation process. The Cross-border Forum of the Eurometropolis was created using the model of the Development council of Lille Métropole (LMCU). This forum guarantees that the interests of the residents of the Eurometropolis are formally incorporated into the political process. Ultimately, this structure was designed to ensure that the cross-border region is developed with the input of a wide variety of actors and, by including representatives from senior levels of government, has the political capacity to execute its collectively constructed vision. The structure of the EGTC has existed since 2007; however, it has only been operational for a short time due to difficulties finding a suitable director to manage these new processes.

Cross-border mobility is one of the six policy areas delegated to the EGTC structure. The presence of the relevant political actors at the negotiating table increases the potential for momentum in this policy area. While it is still early days there have been some important successes, including the 2009 compact between the Eurometropolis, SNCF and SNCB on cross-border rail lines. However, beyond this there has been little significant progress. One of the criticisms of the structure in the realm of public transit is that the transit operators are not formal members of the governance coalition. The 2009 agreement³ demonstrates the degree to which the EGTC is regarded as a legitimate negotiating partner by outside actors. Still, the participants of the cross-border mobility working group have discovered that bringing people to-

³ This agreement was never ratified by the Region.

gether in a forum is only the first step. Despite the access to political authority and capacity in this area there is no guarantee that these governments will cooperate. Ultimately, the cross-border public transit agenda continues to be hampered by the competing interests and incompatible constituencies of its members. Presently, one observer noted, the working group is overly preoccupied with road transportation at the expense of intermodal public transit (confidential interview, 2010).

4.3 The complexity of cross-border transit governance

The structure of policy actors involved in transit policy (see Figure 3) highlights some important challenges of governing cross-border public transit in the Eurometropolis. The first is clearly the presence of many actors spread across many different levels of government. However, more importantly the level of government and territorial scale of relevant decision makers in both areas of cross-border transit differs significantly in each country. In both countries the national rail corporations are responsible for cross-border trains but in France these services must be contracted with the TER at the regional level where no such regional scale exists in Belgium. Similarly, decisions on cross-border bus lines can be taken at the level of the LMCU on the French side of the border. In Belgium these bus lines are regional and cross-border service is a tiny fraction of their broader mandate. The Belgian intercommunal authorities have a strong interest in developing both types of cross-border transit yet lack the competencies that the LMCU has to implement policies. This incongruence of scales creates complications for policy coordination, even in the context of the EGTC structure. The challenge is not so much the difficulty of communicating between different scales as the problem of convincing those actors to seriously consider the cross-border space.

This is precisely the challenge that policy makers face in their interactions with transit operators. Although they are state-owned enterprises they still face the pressures and profit motivation of private corporations. Ultimately, they want to develop lines where there is adequate demand and the potential to reap a return on their investments. Frequently, cross-border services can offer neither and often involve the additional transaction costs of sorting out the bureaucracy and logistics. From a pure-

ly business standpoint these lines do and should rank quite low on the corporate list of priorities. This is evidenced by the fact that the SNCB chose to jettison cross-border links first in its recent service rollback. Even if this were not a core challenge it is difficult to focus the attention of transit operators on the cross-border space due to the breadth of their service areas. The national rail lines serve national markets and only a small fraction of their dealings serve cross-border populations. Similarly, the Belgian bus lines are oriented towards specific regional markets. These scales of operation very significantly affect the incentives and interests of operators towards cross-border service. As figure 3 demonstrates, it is no surprise that the Eurometropolis ranks low relative to other services.

Given these challenges it is surprising that cross-border transit has emerged at all. However, the distribution of policy influence in each area of transit – bus and rail – suggests that the cross-border agenda may be easier to pursue in developing bus connections. In this area, at least, the French intercommunal authority (LMCU) has control over Transpole offerings. While its homologues on the Belgian side do not have similar influence the main service providers (TEC Hainaut and De Lijn) operate at a smaller scale, respectively, than regional rail providers. It is therefore reasonable to expect that intercommunal and cross-border actors may be able to exert greater influence on these policy processes than on the nationally-oriented rail lines. Surprisingly, bus linkages are afforded a lower priority in EGTC working group discussions that have recently been focused on improving rail connections. This may partly be due to the desire of the group to build on the traction of the 2009 agreement. However, it may also be related to problems of demand for cross-border lines that have made it difficult to justify the costs of service expansion in a tough economic climate.

Mapping out the hierarchical relationship of different actors in cross-border public transit to one another is a useful exercise. It can help establish where formal political power lies in each country and visually highlights the challenges that the Eurometropolis faces in advancing its agenda for cross-border public transit. However, this kind of visualization does not adequately represent the actual relationships between policy actors nor the amount of coordination and strategizing that occurs between localized actors on either side of the border within and outside of these hierar-

chical structures. In the following section we turn to social network analysis to examine these relationships and determine what opportunities (or challenges) existing cross-border networks contribute to the agenda of public transit in the Eurometropolis.

5. Assessment of the cross-border policy in the public transportation domain

The primary objective of the MetroNet project was to study cross-border metropolitan governance by mapping and analyzing cross-border social networks. The project consisted of a structural analysis of cross-border public transit networks in the ELKT region in the same vein as previous work by Knoke et al. (1996) and John (1998). We were specifically interested in determining the relationship between public transit actors and organizations on the basis of information exchanges on the subject of cross-border public transportation.

Our central purpose in this section is to employ social network analysis (SNA) to provide a more detailed and accurate picture of the governance relationships that have developed in this policy area in the ELKT region. SNA is useful to the extent that it describes the network of relationships that make up the policy space in the realm of cross-border public transit. Most significantly, SNA allows us to study the structure of the network of relationships, identify key actors in cross-border governance and, to a certain extent, evaluate the role of each of the actors in the network to better understand how cross-border cooperation is structured.

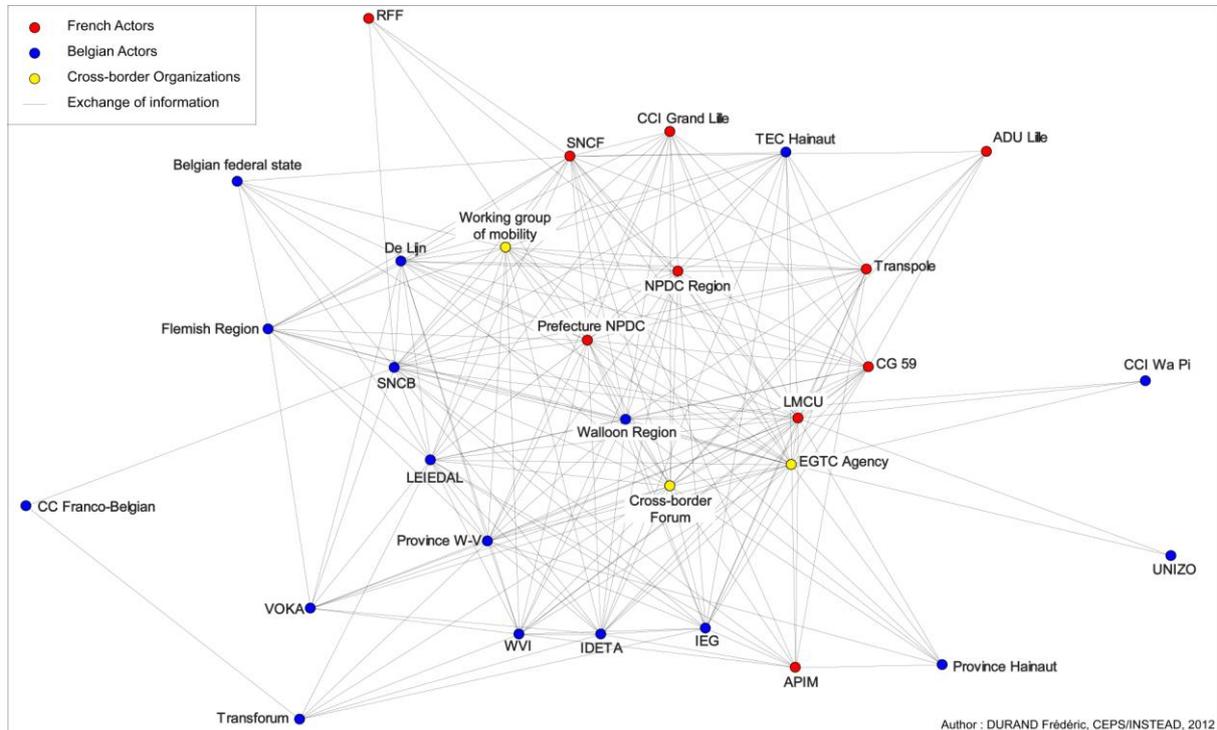
This section begins with an elaboration the methodology of the MetroNet project from which the data was collected and the analytical tools we use to explore our core hypotheses. Using these tools we then establish the boundaries of the network and describe its core characteristics. We then use social network analysis to explore the validity of our three central hypotheses about (1) the characteristics of central actors; (2) the effect of the international border on information exchanges and national group homophily; and (3) the brokerage roles of central actors in the network.

5.1 Network composition and characteristics

Data on the social network was collected in interviews with actors involved in public transportation policy. This data collection phase occurred in two waves: in the first wave we contacted actors that had been identified as central to transit policy by the research team. The second wave consisted of interviews with actors identified by those interviewed in the first wave. In total we spoke with 33 individuals and asked them about the frequency and nature of information exchanged⁴ over the past two years between their organizations and others in the realm of cross-border public transit policy. From this data we constructed a matrix – omitting the pendants, that is to say the values returned by players that were only cited once – that defined the limits of the regional social network. Using this matrix we first performed a symmetrization of links and identification of reciprocal exchanges followed by a series of calculations using UCINET social network analysis software –version 6.258 - developed by Borgatti, Everett and Freeman (2002). The representations of the social network were constructed using Netdraw (see Figure 4).

⁴ Information exchanges were defined as personal interactions, telephone conversations, electronic communications, social media exchanges and the circulation of documents addressed to individuals or departments within a specific organization. This does not include group e-mails or the public dissemination of information but rather refers only to communications that specifically targeted organizations or individuals within them.

Figure 4: Visualization of the social network of exchanges in the domain of cross-border public transportation in the ELKT region, 2008-2010



The resulting depiction of the social network is a simplified representation of reality but it does reveal certain interesting patterns in how cross-border governance and information exchanges are structured in the ELKT region. First of all, the number of relevant organizations involved in this policy area is limited (only 30 are involved) but the connections between them are quite dense (416 links or a density of 47.82%). Although it's not surprising the distribution of organizations by nationality shows that there are more Belgian organizations (17) than French (10). This is because two Belgian territories – Flemish and Walloon – are involved in transportation policy within the federal country. In order to more thoroughly explore the mechanisms of cross-border public transit governance in the ELKT region we analyze the key nodes in the network with emphasis on the actors that have the most prominent roles.

5.2 Who are the key players?

Hypothesis 1: The actors with the most political competency in the area of public transportation are those that will be most central to cross-border social networks.

There are several ways to identify the most central players in a social network. In this article we use two: the first based on the degree of centrality of actors within the network and a second based on the results of our inquiries of who the actors in the network thought were most prominent in this field.

Degree of centrality identifies the most important actors in a network on the assumption that the most important ones will be those with the most links within the network. According to these results the list of actors that are most integrated within this network (see Table 2) appear to be equally balanced between French and Belgian territories. However, although all the administrative levels in both countries are involved there is some regional variation. In Wallonia, for example, only the region is a central actor whereas in Flanders the local (LEIEDAL) and provincial (Province W-V) actors are most prominent. This pattern of participation makes sense given the distribution of competencies within those territories (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Network of exchanges - Degree of centrality

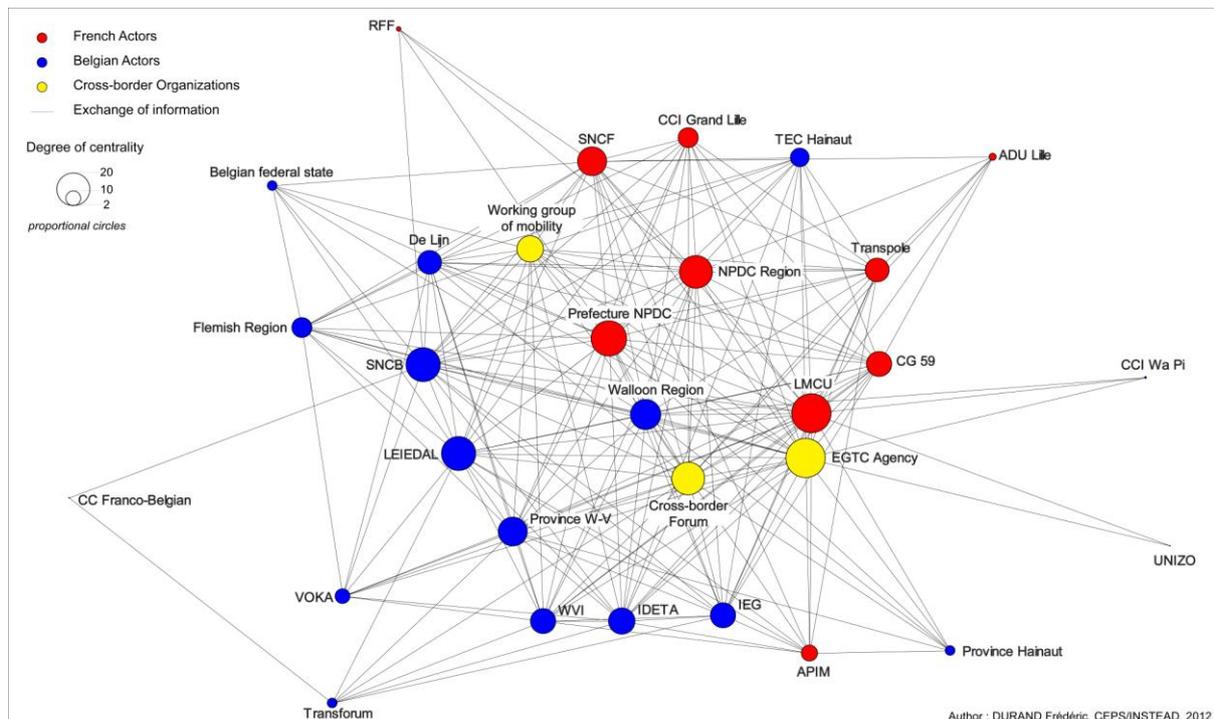


Table 2: Degree of centrality of organizations based on information exchanges between actors interviewed

Organizations	Degree of centrality
LMCU	24
EGTC Agency	24
Prefecture NPDC	22
SNCB	21
LEIEDAL	21
NPDC Region	20
Cross-border Forum	20
Walloon Region	19
Province W-V	18
SNCF	18
Mobility Working Group	17
IDETA	17
IEG	16
CG 59	16
WVI	16
De Lijn	15
Transpole	15
Flemich Region	13
CCI Grand Lille	13
TEC Hainaut	12
APIM	11
VOKA	10
Federal agency of mobility	7
Province Hainaut	7
Transforum	7
ADU Lille	6
RFF	4
CCI WaPi	3
CC Franco-Belgian	2
UNIZO	2

French actors
Cross-border organizations
Belgian actors

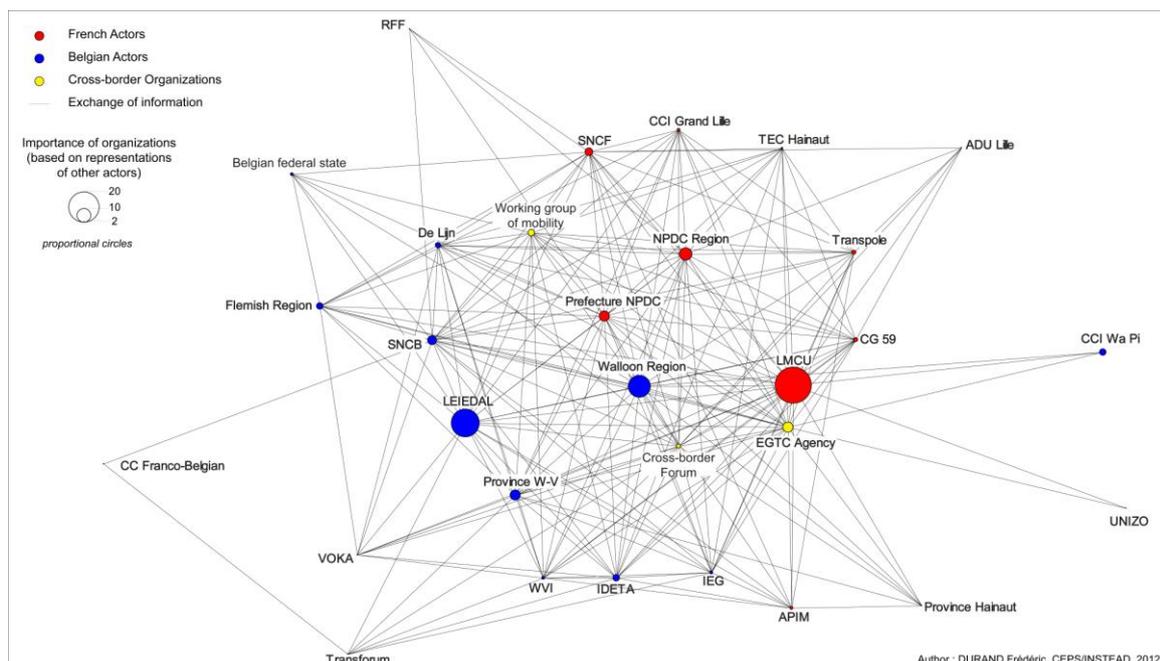
The second method to determine the importance of actors in the network focuses on the perception of other actors in the network as expressed in face-to-face interviews. These responses are depicted in Figure 6 and Table 3.

Table 3: Importance of organizations classified by the responses of other actors

Organizations	VIP
LMCU	35
LEIEDAL	27
Walloon Region	21
NPDC Region	12
Prefecture of NPDC	9
Province W-V	9
EGTC Agency	9
SNCB	8
SNCF	7
IDETA	6
Flemish Region	6
Mobility Working Group	6
CCI WaPi	6
De Lijn	5
Transpole	4
Cross-border Forum	4
CG 59	3
IEG	2
WVI	2
Federal agency of mobility	2
CCI Grand Lille	2
APIM	2
TEC Hainaut	1
Province Hainaut	0
VOKA	0
ADU Lille	0
RFF	0
Transforum	0
CC Franco-Belgian	0
UNIZO	0

French actors
Cross-border organizations
Belgian actors

Figure 6: Network of the VIP Organizations



Three organizations stand out from the others: LMCU, the Walloon Region and LEIEDAL, which are interestingly the organizations of the three major political figures at the heart of the ELKT (Martine Aubry, Stephen De Clerk and Rudy Demotte). The LMCU appears to be the anchor organization of cross-border governance. Several factors explain this dominance. Lille is the heart of the metropolitan region and the city initiated efforts to build a cross-border metropolis and to develop stronger cross-border ties. Furthermore, Lille benefits from the increased development of cross-border transit linkages (2,000 people come to work in the LMCU area). After the first three actors the list of centrality is very similar to the results of the previous methods: the NPDC Region, the Prefecture of NPDC, the EGTC Agency and the SNCB follow in quick succession. Surprisingly the EGTC Agency is in seventh position by this measure even though in the other measures of centrality it was valued as a much more central actor. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that it's a relatively new organization; the agency was only created in 2008 and it didn't have a director until 2010. The province of West-Vlaanderen occupies sixth place due to the prominence of its governor, Paul Breyen, who is deeply engaged in cross-border cooperation. Breyen emerges as the fourth most important personality after the three presidents of the EGCT listed above.

These results show that the governance of cross-border public transit is not uniquely the domain of regional and central governments. In the ELKT cross-border metropolitan region public transit between poles is inter-urban, which is primarily the jurisdiction of local actors (LEIEDAL and LMCU) that, therefore, are the principal participants in developing this agenda. Other than the SNCB public transport operators have not played a central role in the governance of cross-border transit and have tended to limit their participation to the fulfillment of their service role. Consequently, the different levels of government on either side of the border are the most implicated in governance activities in the area of cross-border public transit.

Having established the importance of different levels of government in the governance of cross-border transit it is reasonable to ask whether they do, and are able to, communicate effectively with one another across the French-Belgian border. In other words, to what degree does the border itself impede collaboration between actors of different nationalities?

5.3 Are there border effects in cross-border governance?

Hypothesis 2: The border functions as a barrier to information exchanges between actors involved in the governance of cross-border public transit.

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that it is easier to exchange information with other actors within the same country than it is to do the same across an international boundary. We therefore expect that information exchanges on the issue of cross-border public transit will be more frequent between French actors than between French and Belgian actors (and vice versa). Belonging to the same group/country facilitates information exchanges while geographical proximity is not synonymous with relational proximity.

In this section we investigate whether spatial effects affect information exchanges within this network. In order to do this we analyze the frequency of information exchanges between actors based on nationality of organizations: French, Belgian and cross-border.

Table 4: Classification of actors by nationality

Nationality of actors	Frequency	Members
French	10	LMCU, CG 59, Region of NPDC, Prefecture of NPDC, SNCF, Transpole, ADU Lille, CCI Grand, Lille APIM, RFF
Cross-border organizations	3	EGTC Agency, Cross-border Forum, Mobility Working Group
Belgian	17	IDETA, IEG, Province of Hainaut, LEIEDAL, WVI, Province of W-V, SNCB, TEC Hainaut, De Lijn, Flemish Region, Walloon Region, VOKA, Federal mobility service, Transforum, CC Franco-Belge, CCI WaPi, UNIZO

Table 5: Homophily of the three national groupings

Organizations	% homophily
CC Franco-Belgian	100
Transforum	85.7
ADU Lille	83.3
RFF	75
VOKA	70
Federal agency of mobility	57.1
Province W-V	55.6
Flemish Region	53.8
IDETA	52.9
Walloon Region	52.6
LEIEDAL	52.4
IEG	50
WVI	50
SNCB	47.6
Transpole	46.7
De Lijn	46.7
CCI Grand Lille	46.2
SNCF	44.4
NPDC Region	40
LMCU	33.3
TEC Hainaut	33.3
CCI WaPi	33.3
Prefecture NPDC	31.8
CG 59	31.3
Province Hainaut	28.6
APIM	27.3
Mobility Working Group	11.8
Cross-border Forum	10
EGTC Agency	8.3
UNIZO	0

French actors
Cross-border organizations
Belgian actors

Table 6: Homophily by group

Group	% homophily
France	45.93
Belgium	51.15
Cross-border	10.03
Total	45.30

Methodological remarks: The percentage of homophily is the percentage of links that the actor has with other actors in the same group.

Generally, Belgian actors display a higher degree of homophily (>51% of all information exchanges are with other Belgian actors). For French actors this degree is slightly less at 45%. Out of the seventeen Belgian organizations within the network eleven have the majority of their exchanges with other Belgian organizations. Only

two French organizations achieve this degree of exchange with compatriot organizations.

This indicates that the border effect is not a factor for French actors whereas it appears to play a minor role for Belgian organizations. The concentration of French organizations within the boundaries of the LMCU may explain this differential. Belgian actors are distributed between two regions and several core cities and may need to communicate with one another more frequently to share information that is “in the air” in the Lille metropolitan region. Similarly, due to their proximity French organizations may need fewer exchanges to effectively disseminate the same information.

While the border effect is not terribly pronounced between nationalities we did find that borders may be functioning as a barrier in a part of the ELKT region: between Flanders and Wallonia. The regional homophily results (see Tables 8 and 9, below) indicate that the exchanges between Walloon and Flemish actors (15) fall far below the number of links between Flemish and French (29) and Walloon and French (28), respectively. These findings suggest that the border effect does not manifest at national borders as much as it does on the linguistic/identity/administrative border between Flemish and Walloon territories.

Table 7: Homophily by regions

Value	Frequency	Members
1	10	LMCU, CG 59, NPDC Region, Prefecture NPDC, SNCF, Transpole, ADU Lille, CCI Grand Lille, APIM, RFF
2	3	EGTC Agency, Cross-border Forum, Mobility Working Group
3	3	SNCB, Belgian federal state, CC Franco-Belgian
4	6	IDETA, IEG, Province Hainaut, TEC Hainaut, Walloon Region, CCI WaPi
5	8	LEIEDAL, WVI, Province W-V, De Lijn, Flemish Region, VOKA, Transforum, UNIZO

Table 8: Sum of tie strengths within and between groups

	1	2	3	4	5
1	60	22	10	29	28
2	22	6	4	11	18
3	10	4	4	5	7
4	29	11	5	14	15
5	28	18	7	15	34

So far this study of the structure of the cross-border network in the ELKT has illuminated certain differences between the actors involved in cross-border public transit governance – specifically, it has identified the most central actors and differ-

ences between French and Belgian interaction patterns. The following section probes deeper in order to determine the specific roles of these different actors within the networks in order to identify key brokers.

5.4 Roles of actors in cross-border cooperation

Hypothesis 3: Certain actors have specific and central roles in cross-border governance. The new structure of cross-border governance, the EGTC Agency, functions as an important intermediary within the network.

In SNA a measure of betweenness identifies specific nodes within a network as key intermediaries in a network. Betweenness is determined by the degree to which an individual node is linked to other actors in the network and the extent to which that node is directly linked to others that are not necessarily connected to one another. Intermediary positions such as this can have important effects on the network as key gatekeepers through which other actors may have to pass in order to make contact with members of the network to whom they are not themselves directly connected.

Three actors stand out in this analysis as intermediary actors in the cross-border network (see table 9 and figure 7): the LMCU, the EGTC Agency and the SNCB. Although betweenness can indicate key choke points within a social network it cannot determine the precise role played by those actors.

Figure 7: Network of exchanges – Betweenness indicator

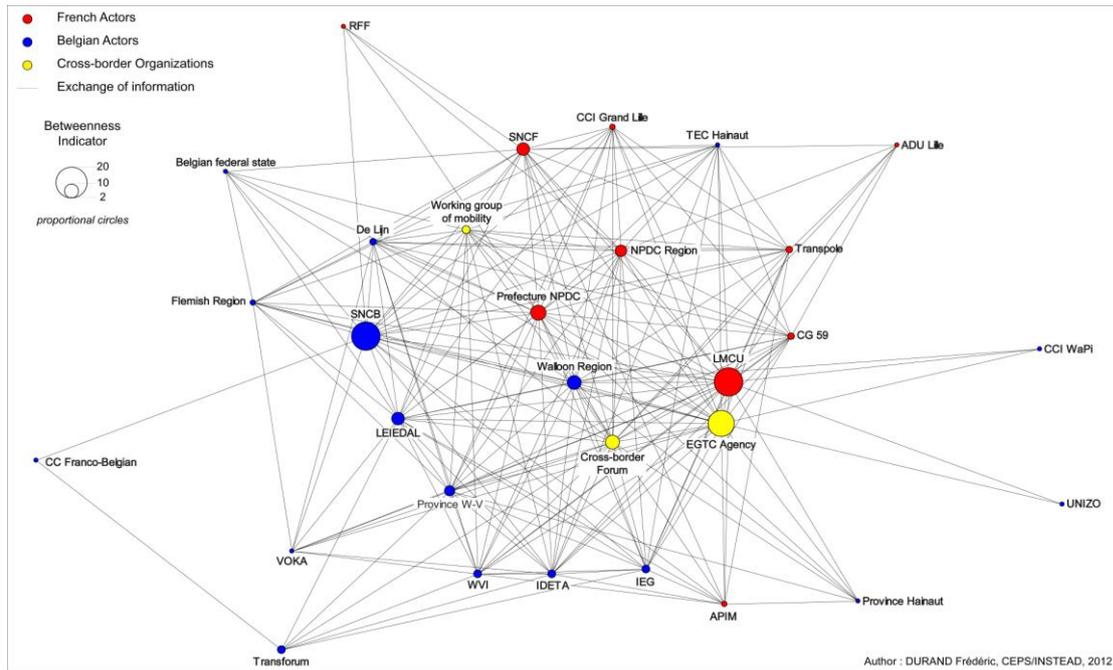


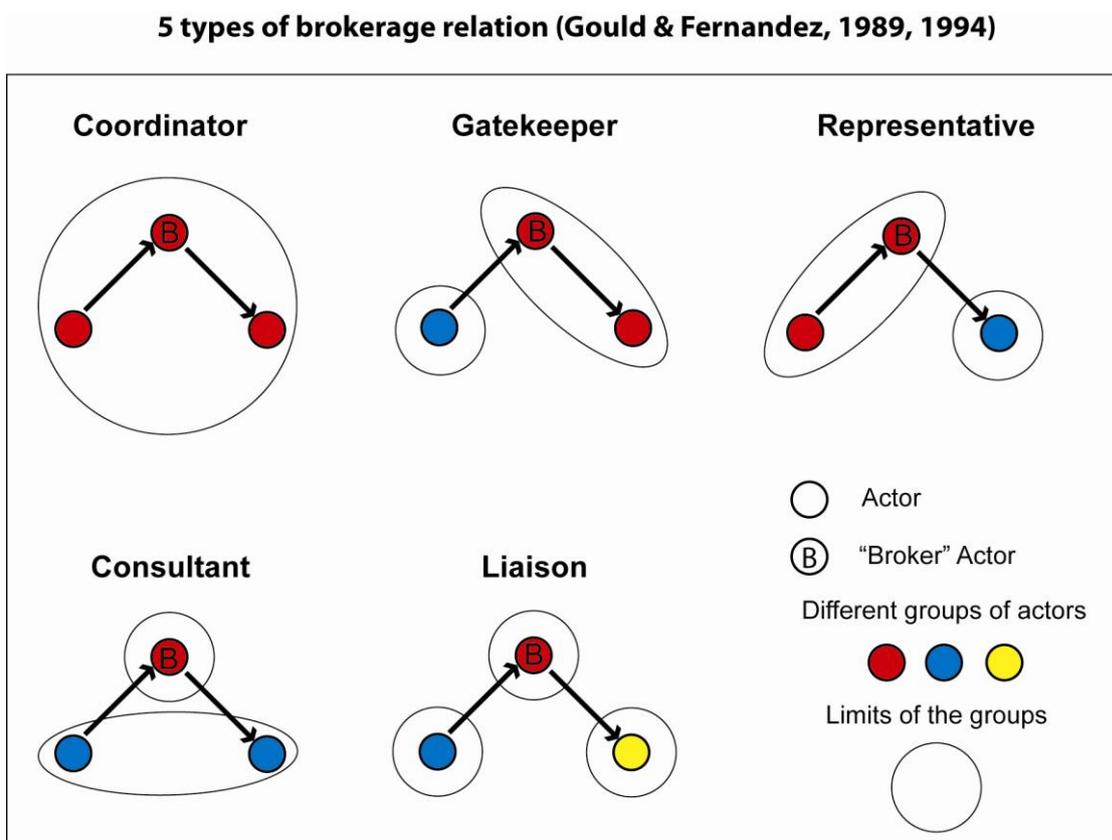
Table 9: Betweenness centrality

Organizations	Betweenness
SNCB	35.775
LMCU	35.61
EGTC Agency	32.032
Prefecture NPDC	16.799
Walloon Region	14.653
Cross-border Forum	14.162
SNCF	12.684
LEIEDAL	12.648
NPDC Region	11.595
Province W-V	8.124
IDETA	5.806
IEG	5.031
Transformum	4.732
Mobility Working Group	4.722
WVI	4.684
Transpole	4.163
CG 59	4.061
De Lijn	2.946
Flemish Region	2.472
APIM	1.823
CCI Grand Lille	1.106
TEC Hainaut	0.887
VOKA	0.611
Province Hainaut	0.383
CC Franco-Belgian	0.253
ADU Lille	0.167
Belgian federal state	0.071
RFF	0
CCI Wa Pi	0
UNIZO	0

French actors
Cross-border organizations
Belgian actors

Gould and Fernandez (1994) developed a typology of five network intermediaries (Figure 8): coordinator, gatekeeper, representative, consultant and liaison. In this section we explore what kind of intermediaries play the most prominent roles within the ELKT cross-border public transit network and whether groups of actors can also function as intermediaries.

Figure 8: The Gould and Fernandez (1989, 1994) typology of network intermediaries



The results displayed in Table 10 indicate that the LMCU is the strongest intermediary in the network. It plays the role of gatekeeper, representative and consultant depending on the grouping of actors. This multimodal role in the network highlights its importance as an agent of the cross-border governance of public transit.

Table 10: Brokerage measures (organized by nationality)

Organizations	Coordinator	Gatekeeper	Representative	Consultant	Liaison	Total
LMCU	18	63	63	86	22	252
Prefecture NPDC	12	43	43	56	16	170
SNCF	22	35	35	12	12	116
NPDC Region	18	38	38	18	8	120
Transpole	12	17	17	6	8	60
CG 59	4	17	17	14	8	60
CCI Grand Lille	4	7	7	2	4	24
ADU Lille	4	0	0	0	0	4
APIM	0	8	8	12	0	28
RFF	0	0	0	0	0	0
EGTC Agency	0	14	14	110	96	234
Cross-border Forum	0	8	8	40	84	140
Mobility Working Group	0	4	4	32	32	72
SNCB	50	53	53	14	12	182
LEIEDAL	44	42	42	10	6	144
IDETA	26	19	19	6	4	74
WVI	16	18	18	6	4	62
Province W-V	40	27	27	0	2	96
IEG	18	16	16	8	2	60
Flemish Region	12	11	11	0	2	36
Province Hainaut	0	2	2	2	2	8
Walloon Region	50	36	36	12	0	134
De Lijn	16	17	17	4	0	54
VOKA	10	2	2	0	0	14
Transforum	10	1	1	0	0	12
TEC Hainaut	4	6	6	4	0	20
CC Franco-Belgian	2	0	0	0	0	2
Belgian federal state	0	1	1	0	0	2
CCI WaPi	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNIZO	0	0	0	0	0	0

The EGTC Agency also occupies a central brokerage role in the network. To date it has functioned most frequently as a consultant or liaison, which aligns closely with its formal role within the region. In terms of information exchanges the EGTC Agency perfectly fulfills its role as a forum in which to meet partners and exchange information and as an intermediary between policy-making actors. As a key facilitator of cross-border exchanges it ensures the participation of the relevant governments and organizations involved in cross-border public transit policy making.

The organizations that received higher scores as coordinators are all Belgian (SNCB, Walloon Region, LEIEDAL, Province W-V, IDETA). This corroborates the results of the analysis of homophily. Belgian actors interact more with each other on border issues. This may be a consequence of the federal system and of distribution of responsibilities for public transit policy between different levels of government.

Both French and Belgian actors play gatekeeper and representative roles within the network⁵. Organizations that fall into these categories include LMCU, SNCB, Prefecture NPC, LEIEDAL, NPC Region, Walloon Region, and the SNCF. This distribution suggests that these actors are central to the network and play an important intermediary role with respect to foreign neighboring actors.

The consultant category includes all of the cross-border organizations – such as the EGTC Agency, the Cross-border Forum and the Mobility Working Group – and French actors. This is partly due to the fact that Flemish and Walloon actors are combined within the same national category (Belgian actors) even though these two territories have different competencies in public transit governance and different planning practices.

Finally, the liaison role is played by cross-border organizations. These unsurprising results stem from the political position of these organizations who were specifically structured to be cross-border brokers. Consequently, these findings confirm that these organizations are fulfilling their expected function in the cross-border policy space.

6. Conclusion

There are few more concrete signs of cross-border metropolitan regions than an integrated cross-border transit system. The existence of such a system indicates a relatively elevated degree of political coordination across the border and functions as an important symbol of regional unity. However, establishing a cross-border public transit system can be a difficult proposition fraught with legal, political, logistical and cultural challenges. As such, exploring how a cross-border region navigated the difficulties in establishing a linked transit system, and that system's successes and failures, can lend important insight to the broader process of cross-border governance.

⁵ Methodological remarks: since the relations between actors are reciprocal, the results for the types of "gatekeeper" and "representative" are identical.

This paper investigates the influence of key actors involved in the cross-border public transit policy arena in the ELKT region. It begins from the assumption that a simple analysis of the stated roles of policy actors in the region may not accurately depict how partners are connected and policies are made. It is possible that gaps in the policy network may be causing blockages in the policy process and explain slow progress on cross-border transit development since the 1990s. We were particularly interested in the role of the newly created EGTC Agency. This agency was created in response to difficulties experienced in the previous period of cross-border governance that resulted from the excessive dispersal of responsibilities among actors on both sides of the border and at different levels of government. The EGTC Agency unites all of the relevant political actors around one table to facilitate cross-border governance.

In order to explore the current role of the EGTC Agency, and other actors in the cross-border transit policy sphere, we turned to SNA. This method permitted us to track information exchanges between actors in the region and to evaluate the extent of the network, the importance of the actors, the role of each of the actors, and to determine the degree to which the international border affected policy relationships within the region.

The social network analysis confirmed our original hypothesis that the actors with the most political competency in the area of public transportation were also those that were most central to cross-border networks. However, the results also revealed that the most important actors in the eyes of the organizations in the network were not always those with the most political competency. In fact, organizations that were identified as central by other actors in the network stood out because of the importance of their leaders (i.e. individuals that have been politically important in cross-border governance) as well as due to their levels of connectivity with other actors.

The second important finding concerns the role of the border as a barrier to cross-border communication between organizations involved in public transit. The results suggest that Belgian actors do not initiate communication with French actors as often as French do with Belgian organizations, or as frequently as organizations from the same national grouping communicate with one another. From this we can

conclude that the border represents only a slight barrier to communication between actors on either side of the border in this policy area. One surprising pattern revealed by this analysis is the lower degree of information exchange between Flemish and Walloon organizations within Belgium. This finding indicates that this internal linguistic/identity/administrative border between Belgian regions is more of a factor in the ELKT region than the international border.

Finally, in the analysis of the role of individual actors within the network we found that the strongest intermediary organizations tended to be French or cross-border organizations. The brokerage, liaison and consultant role of the EGTC Agency is particularly important as it indicates that the organization is functioning as it was expected to – as a key facilitator of cross-border exchanges and as an organization that brings together all the relevant actors in this policy field.

In any governance scenario the role that actors are expected to play – due to their competencies or interests in the area – and the roles that they actually play are not always aligned. This has been the focus of an emerging set of literature that questions the degree to which local actors, and cross-border partnerships, have become empowered and effective in cross-border governance. Frequently, the emergence of cross-border governance institutions has served to reinforce traditional intergovernmental relationships rather than creating new actors in multilevel governance or resulting in political rescaling (see Harguindeguy and Bray 2008, Nelles and Durand 2012, Perkmann 2007, Popescu 2008). It is therefore important to get behind cross-border governance structures in an effort to understand how relationships between actors are actually structured. It is also important to note that this can vary significantly by policy area. Therefore, the structure of political relationships and sources of political initiative (and inertia) may not be the same in the area of cross-border public transit as in other policy fields.

The use of social network analysis in this study largely confirmed expectations of policy roles based on the qualitative analysis of existing governance structures. However, for each hypothesis there were interesting findings that contributed to constructing a better understanding of network relations in the ELKT region. Most significantly, it appears that the EGTC Agency is emerging as a genuinely effective forum for bringing actors together and facilitating information exchanges between

them. That said, the agency and the other cross-border organizations have yet to play a significant leadership role, which suggests that they are destined to function more as meeting places and brokers than agents in policy making. The lack of recent progress on the cross-border public transit agenda can be partly explained by the relative newness of these cross-border structures. However, it may also be the case that it is also due to the fact that there are no cross-border organizations that are strongly championing this policy area. This supports the arguments of the detractors of cross-border governance as evidence of territorial rescaling as these new institutions have resulted in new spaces of policy deliberation but not in new policy actors.

These findings have broad resonance beyond the boundaries of the ELKT region. First, it illuminates the role of general purpose cross-border governance organizations within a specific policy. It suggests that these new types of governance institutions – such as the EGTC form – can positively link actors within a policy network. However, it also shows that the existence of a centralized governance organization in a cross-border region is not enough, by itself, to drive meaningful cross-border policy. Future research will seek to confirm this finding in other cross-border policy areas in the region. Finally, this paper demonstrates the value of SNA as an analytical tool to better understand governance relationships, particularly within cross-border metropolitan regions.

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Acronym (FR/EN or NE/EN)

COPIT : Conférence Permanente Intercommunale Transfrontalière → Permanent Intermunicipal Cross-border Conference

GECT/EGTC : Groupement Européen de Coopération Territoriale → European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

TGV : Train à Grande Vitesse → high-speed train

ELKT : Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai

RFF : Réseau Ferré Français → French Rail Network

SNCF : Société National des Chemins de fer Français → National Corporation of French Railways

TER : Transport Express Régional

MEDDTL : Ministère français de l'Ecologie, du Développement durable, des Transports et du Logement → French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing

SGAR : Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires Régionales

DREAL : Direction Régionale de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement

SNCB : Société National des Chemins de fer Belge → National Corporation of Belgian Railways

SPFMT : Service public fédéral belge Mobilité et Transports → Belgian Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport

SPW : Service public de Wallonie → Public Service of Wallonia

DMOW : Departement Mobiliteit en Openbare Werken → Public Governance Flanders

SRWT : Société régionale wallonne du transport → Walloon Regional Transport Company

WV : West-Vlaanderen → West Flanders

LMCU : Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine → Urban Community of Lille Métropole

WVI : West- Vlaamse Intercommunale → West Flanders Intermunicipal Association

IEG : Intercommunale d'Etude et de Gestion → Intercommunal association

LEIEDAL : Intercommunale → Intercommunal association

IDETA : Agence Intercommunale de Développement → Intercommunale Development Agency



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