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School of Economics and Management

**Managing Cross-border Partnerships in Transport
Integration: Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis
Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai**

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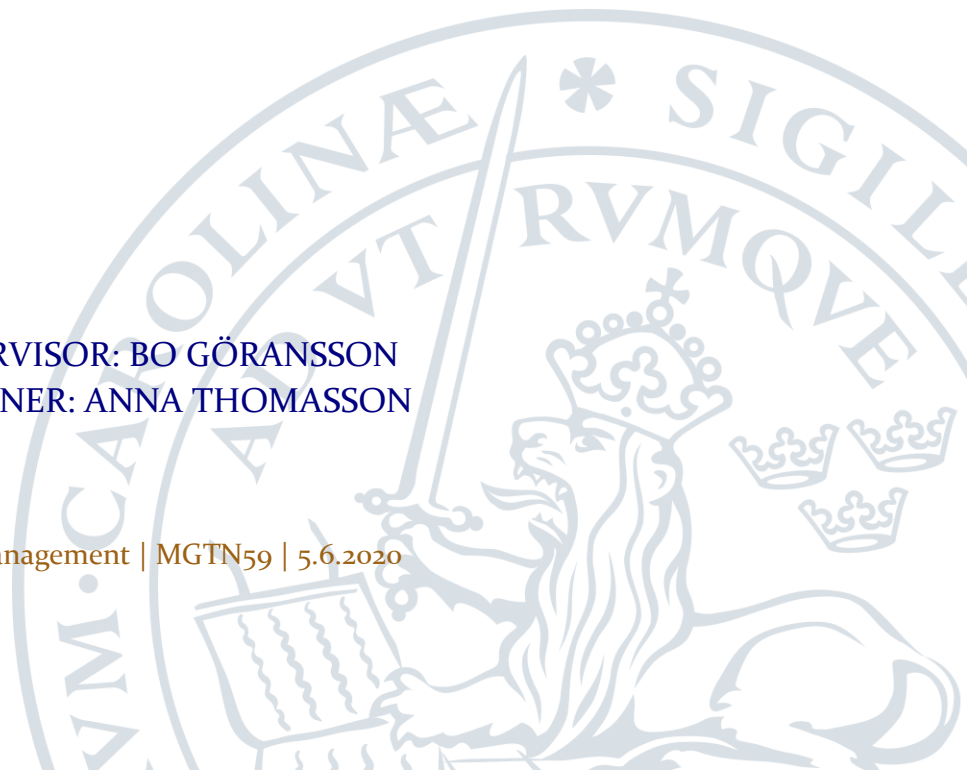
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Declaration

We, Bart Dilling and Luka Xavier Drulovic hereby declare (a) that this Thesis is our original work and that all source material used is acknowledged therein; (b) that it has been specially prepared for a degree of Lund University; and (c) that it does not contain any material that has been or will be submitted to the Examiners of this or any other university, or any material that has been or will be submitted for any other examination.

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Bart Dilling

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Luka Xavier Drulovic

This thesis is 22759 words.

Abstract

This study explores the various aspects of integration in cross-border transportation management. Through investigating two European metropolitan cross-border regions, Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis Lille-Tournai-Kortrijk, the study aims to gain a better understanding of the challenges hindering the successful integration and management of cross-border public transportation networks. The study makes use of the Policy Arrangement Approach, which focuses on identifying the relevant stakeholders in cross-border interaction, determining the nature of their relationships, bringing the rules of cross-border interaction to the surface and looking into the discourses influencing the cross-border processes. The empirically derived data shows several managerial obstacles that are caused by both a more general (i.e. embedded in European discourses) and case-specific (i.e. the consequences of national discourses) nature. By identifying and discussing the public transportation challenges from a broader managerial perspective this study hopes to contribute to cross-border management on both a scholarly level (through contributing to a broader and more generic comprehension of factors generating cross-border challenges) and a professional level (by equipping managers with an enhanced understanding of the managerial problems).

Keywords: Cross-border management, European interregional cooperation, INTERREG, Integration barriers, Public transportation, Mobility

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Introduction

Cross-border mobility is of great importance and is embedded in the lives of many Europeans. This perhaps becomes most evident when its availability is no longer certain. The global outbreak of COVID-19 has forced most European countries to close their borders and consequently become isolated from each other. Struck by a rather cruel sense of irony, INTERREG's (the European organization created to stimulate interregional cross-border cooperation) organised events for celebrating 30 years of European cross-border cooperation were cancelled. The European response to the pandemic demonstrates the opposite of the European Union would have been celebrating. A Europe unconstrained of internal borders has always been a high priority for the European political apparatus (European Movement, 2020).

“European Territorial Cooperation offers a unique opportunity for regions and Member States to divert from the national logic and develop a shared space together, build ties over borders and learn from one another. It is a laboratory of EU integration and EU territorial cohesion. Travelling across Europe, I am constantly impressed by projects that would not exist without it.”

José Palma Andres, quoted in European Union (2011).

However, with countries closing their borders and thereby reducing cross-border transportation to a mere shadow of what it was, European citizens, who were once allowed to freely roam across the European Union, are now being constrained to their houses due to mandatory lockdowns. Moreover, countries who are supposed to be working together are now incoherent with one another (Schmidt, 2020).

Perhaps it is because of the context of the current state of European and global affairs that there is a need to remember why cross-border cooperation is essential in the first place, and how it benefits cross-border regions. Public transportation is a prime example. It brings people together by enabling travel across local, regional and national borders. The latter case requires cooperation on a multi-national level and with most countries shutting themselves off from the exterior and adopting a purely national focus, the current state of cross-border public transportation is impaired. Currently, countries have limited their focus

on transportation to within their national borders. Even then, public transportation is struggling between preventing the spread of the disease and keeping the essential flows of transportation running.

Ever since Europe started to shape its integration policy, integrating public transportation in a European context has been regarded as an essential factor in achieving desired integration (European Commission, 2018). Yet, cross-border managers tasked with setting out the parameters to facilitate this are confronted with several challenges. This study will identify these issues and investigate the nature of them to better understand the factors hindering the successful integration of cross-border public transportation. Furthermore, this study also looks to investigate the current managerial obstacles that complicate the effective execution of these integrated public transportation networks in their current forms. By conducting a case study on the current means of integrated public transportation systems in two INTERREG funded European cross-border regions, Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis Lille-Tournai-Kortrijk (and wider cross-border public transportation when applicable), this study pursues an enhanced understanding of both the daily complications and larger-scale problems. By focusing on two European cross-border regions and comparing these findings with each other, this study will generate new insights that could be used to assist the management of cross-border public transportation systems and cross-border management in general.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify and explain the factors hindering the successful management of integrating national transportation networks in cross-border regions. The study aims to present findings which are generalizable to the extent that scholars in cross-border studies and managers working in cross-border contexts can find a relation to them.

Research Questions

- What do cross-border institution managers perceive to be the main barriers to achieving successful public transport integration?
- Why do these barriers prevent successful public integration?

Background

CROSS BORDER COOPERATION AND TRANSPORTATION

European Cross Border Cooperation

One of the main incentives of European Union (EU) membership is the stimulation of integration between different member states. To realise this, the development of economic, social and territorial cohesion is required as well as an encouragement for solidarity among the EU countries. Additionally, within those countries, the freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the borders of the EU. These ideals became part of the core goals and values that formed the basis of the EU and are also laid out in both the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (European Union, 2020).

To live up to these goals and values, intensive cooperation between the participating countries is required. To gain an understanding of the current state of affairs concerning European cross-border cooperation, it is required to look at its gradual development first. One could argue that the focus on improved cross-border cooperation stemmed from the historical events of the nineteenth century. Not only due to increasing economic expansion, but also from both World Wars, the subsequent cooperative European recovery efforts, and the Cold War. All of these reinforced the idea that in order for Europe to have a sustainable future, unity was needed (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2014). Therefore, it becomes interesting to consider that some of the exact factors that generated more intensive cooperation within Europe are to a large extent influenced by events that focused on strengthening borders, rather than breaking them down. Namely, one of the goals of the European Community (EC) was ensuring that the atrocities of the twentieth century would be prevented in the future.

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) originated from the same motivation (Reitel et al. 2018). Borders became both an opportunity and an obstacle for Europe. An obstacle because Europe's internal borders were built on sensitive memories that were not far in the past. Not without reason, Mozer (1973) argued that borders could be considered to be the scars of history, but that they also presented an opportunity. By uniting Europe and breaking

down internal borders, external borders would be strengthened, forming a powerful and unified power on the global political and economic stage.

Emergent narratives and subsequent initiatives

According to Reitel et al. (2018), the further development of cross-border cooperation is a combined version of two distinct narratives. The first narrative is centred around local public and private players that initiated a process of reconciliation directly after the war. Consequently, cross-border projects, with the function of stimulating the development of the cross-border regions, the people living in these regions, and the governance of emerging cross-border territories, started to evolve (Reitel et al. 2018).

The second narrative should be seen from a more centralised European perspective and is more connected to the broader European project itself. Ever since the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957, one of the main targets of European cooperation was to realise Europe as an integrated area with free movement within its territory. It is important to remember that in the beginning, the focus was predominantly on western Europe, and only later did non-Western European countries gradually become a part of this project. The border regions in Europe logically became a focal point for achieving desired integration. However, as Reitel et al. (2018) state, it was not before 1990 (and the prospect of the Single European Market) that European cross-border integration started to develop with the establishment of INTERREG.

INTERREG is an initiative made to support three types of cooperation: 1. cross-border, 2. interregional and 3. regional transnational cooperation as part of EC's cohesion policy. In 2007, the reform of the European regional policy introduced the concept of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), which integrated the three aforementioned types of cooperation (Wassenberg, 2017). The ETC can be seen as a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different member states (European Commission, 2020). By doing so, the European Union made its direction clear. The focus was going to be on creating a Europe which would be seen as an integrated whole. To succeed, it required traditional ideas of the border, as a means of limitations or restrictions, to be challenged. Moreover, when thinking about crossing these borders, transportation inevitably comes to mind. In a way,

transportation is the traditional transaction between the borders, and for this to work both effectively and efficiently, cooperation is required. However, successful integration goes beyond that, for transportation is not the mere act of transporting humans and goods.

'Cultural logistics', as coined by Löfgren (2008), argues that in cross-border regions it is not just the physical distance that matters, as cultural definitions of proximity and reachability play their role as well. In other words, it is not the mere physical distance that determines the interaction in the cross-border regions. Contextual differences due to different backgrounds can also influence the cross-border interaction of actors. According to Löfgren (2008), the perceptions of these different actors are formed by established routines and preferences, historical traditions, and cultural 'abroadness', essentially being an elusive cultural factor. 'Abroadness' in this case indicates that although the different countries in border regions might be next to each other, there could still be a strong sense of cultural differences which may generate fascination or anxiety towards the differences on the other side of the border. In other words, it is not uncommon for people in cross-border regions to exaggerate the differences between both countries in a way that exceeds the physical differences, and rather focuses on more conceptual differences derived from cultural beliefs that are deeply embedded in their minds. Hence, cross-border challenges already slightly present themselves as a multifaced factor, indicating that for successful integration in mobility-related questions, not just physical distances need to be conquered.

INTERREG

With Europe's path towards cross-border integration being discussed, the focus can be directed towards the specific programs founded to achieve it. To help local and regional actors overcome their borders, INTERREG sets out to support them in the process.

Purpose of INTERREG

INTERREG presents itself as *“helping regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. By creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions, we aim to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place”* (INTERREG, 2020). INTERREG helps by emphasising on *“paving the way for regions to realise their full potential – by helping them to capitalise on their innate strengths while tapping into opportunities that*

offer possibilities for economic, social and environmental progress.” (INTERREG, 2020). INTERREG is an overarching organisation for more specific initiatives like Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis. Therefore, understanding INTERREG becomes a vital part of understanding how these smaller and more regional organisations function.

Foundation of INTERREG

As has been discussed before, most governments did not initially see a need for more intense cooperation in the border regions. Consequently, it was not before 1988 that INTERREG was initiated. One development in particular opened the door for this to happen. The 1987 reform in the European regional policy allowed for it to contribute to the European project due to the new rules from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (Reiter et al. 2018). The European regional policy had been in place from 1975 but only played a limited role before the reform. Additionally, as a result of the lobbying efforts of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the European Commission changed its approach towards the border regions. The European Commission came to the understanding that special attention was needed for these regions to flourish, accepting that they could become either ‘models’ or ‘laboratories’ for European integration (Lambertz, 2010).

The main difference was that the cross-border cooperation projects were now financially supported. As a result, the structural policy could now help both local and regional actors in border regions by removing the obstacles that were hindering free movement within Europe, mainly done by questioning the borders as a barrier or a line of separation (Reitel et al 2018). After a brief testing phase, the European Commission introduced the Community Initiative Program (CIP) in August 1990 that came to be known as INTERREG, to stimulate further cross-border cooperation. Reitel et al (2018) argue how part of the sudden emphasis on cross-border cooperation by the European Commission can be explained through the EC’s realisation that cross-border cooperation is a key factor in realising a single European market. No longer was the sole focus on the general national identity of a country to achieve integration as the value of regional and local factors were now acknowledged as well. Interreg became an important instrument in helping to develop the level of inclusion in the cross-border regions.

After a successful testing period, five periods of INTERREG programmes were launched from 1990. These are INTERREG I (1990-1993), INTERREG II (1994-1999), INTERREG III (2000-2006), INTERREG IV (2007-2013) and INTERREG V (2014-2020). With the next programme, INTERREG VI (2021-2027) starting next year, INTERREG announced that they will continue to support interregional cooperation among regions from all across Europe (INTERREG, 2020). Moreover, from INTERREG III onwards, all INTERREG programs have been divided into three different sub-classifications: INTERREG A for cross-border projects, INTERREG B for transnational projects and INTERREG C for interregional cooperation (Reitel et al. 2015). Furthermore, Reiter et al. (2018) argue how several management principles were also imposed as a result, meaning that it was not only mandatory for the border regions to co-finance the projects, it also became desired to for at least two actors of either side of the national border to be included in the project.

Structure of INTERREG

Looking closer at the organisational structure of INTERREG, some notable observations can be made. For example, INTERREG is not managed by a single body. INTERREG is managed and supported by several different bodies that are responsible for both administrating the programs and assisting the projects, allowing them to have a clear organisational structure that ensures them that the funds are spent in the best possible way (INTERREG 2020). However, it remains to be seen whether these forms of a multi-body structure in practice automatically lead to better results, since managing the different bodies can pose a challenging task that may have been avoided with a simpler structure. Through its emphasis on cross-border cooperation, INTERREG also plays an important role in cross-border transportation and mobility. When discussing the future of European cohesion policy after INTERREG V and the role of INTERREG in this, it is mentioned that the reintroduction of border controls by several Schengen Zone countries is already having a detrimental impact on the cross-border cooperation in those regions (Van Lierop, 2016).

GREATER COPENHAGEN

The INTERREG region “Greater Copenhagen” presents itself as “*the centre of sustainable growth and quality of life offering an agile, collaborative and accessible metropolis where people and business can unleash their potential*” (Greater Copenhagen, 2020). The Greater

Copenhagen and Skåne Committee, as it is also known as, that exists today is the result of a recent merger. January 1st 2016 saw the Öresund Committee and Greater Copenhagen merge due to the cross-border region requiring a rebranding and institutional restructuring to strengthen cross-border processes (Dura et al. 2018). Consisting of 85 municipalities within Eastern Denmark and Southern Sweden, the cross-border region is home to approximately 4.3 million people (Greater Copenhagen, 2020).

The main goal of this organisation is to develop and promote the region as an integrated international hub, attracting foreign investments and knowledge that will generate and increase sustainable economic growth. The Greater Copenhagen area makes an interesting case as it consists of two urbanized coastal areas that were formerly separated by the Oresund Strait. However, the construction of the Oresund Bridge in 2000 now connects both areas. Both the construction of the bridge and its daily utilization have a greater purpose than just improving transportation and mobility in this region. The bridge also became symbolic for building and improving the connection and integration of this cross-border region. As is argued by Löfgren (2008), it was not only seen as a model for future economic integration but also for cultural integration within the European Union. The Greater Copenhagen region has become an epitome of how European cross-border regions present themselves; by managing to turn physical infrastructures, such as a bridge, into strong symbolic resources (Löfgren 2008). Transportation is also high on the agenda of Greater Copenhagen. As has been discussed before, there is more to transportation than the movement of people or goods to go from point-to-point. The connection between Denmark and Sweden via the Oresund bridge is as much of a symbolic connection than a physical connection between both countries. That the usefulness of the bridge transcends transportation becomes evident by looking at the strong expansion of other cross-border cooperation projects within the region after the bridge had been constructed (Matthiessen, 2004). It is exactly this bridge, or more specifically the project, that demonstrates that cross-border cooperation with transportation is already at work. The bridge was realised as a result of an agreement between Denmark and Sweden that was signed in 1991. When the preparations began, each country established its own limited state-owned company in accordance with the laws of both countries. Together these two companies formed the Öresundsbro Consortium, with an objective to improve road and rail communications

between Denmark and Sweden, thereby creating the environment needed for improved and extended cultural and economic exchange (Matthiesen, 2004).

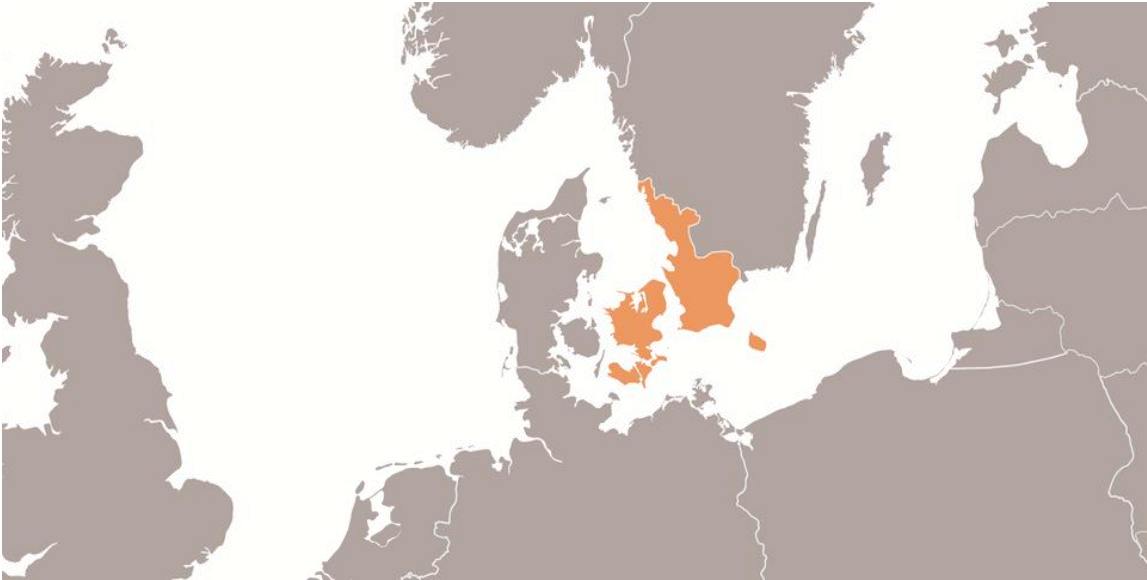


Image 1 - Map outlining Greater Copenhagen Region

EUROMETROPOLIS LILLE-KORTRIJK-TOURNAI

The founding of the Eurometropolis dates back to 2008 and is essentially the cooperation and alignment of three regions in France and Belgium being the Greater Metropolitan area of Lille (France), and the municipalities of Tournai and Kortrijk (Belgium) (Decoville and Durand, 2018). The aim of the Eurometropolis is clear and aligns with those of INTERREG, to “*build an identity for the Eurometropolis and to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the same territory*” (Eurometropolis, 2018). The Eurometropolis agency aims to do this by focusing on six cross-border issues: Tourism, Culture, Citizen Services, Mobility, Land use planning, Economic Development and Energy. Given the focus on cross-border public transportation networks, this study will be predominantly delving into the mobility issue. To improve the mobility of people living within the Eurometropolis, the agency has formed a “*Mobility and Accessibility*” group which looks to develop and promote the joint management of public transportation networks on both sides of the France-Belgium border (Eurometropolis, 2018). Currently, the Eurometropolis has a population of approximately 2.1 million people, with approximately 79,000 of these inhabitants making cross-border journeys daily (LCMU, 2016).

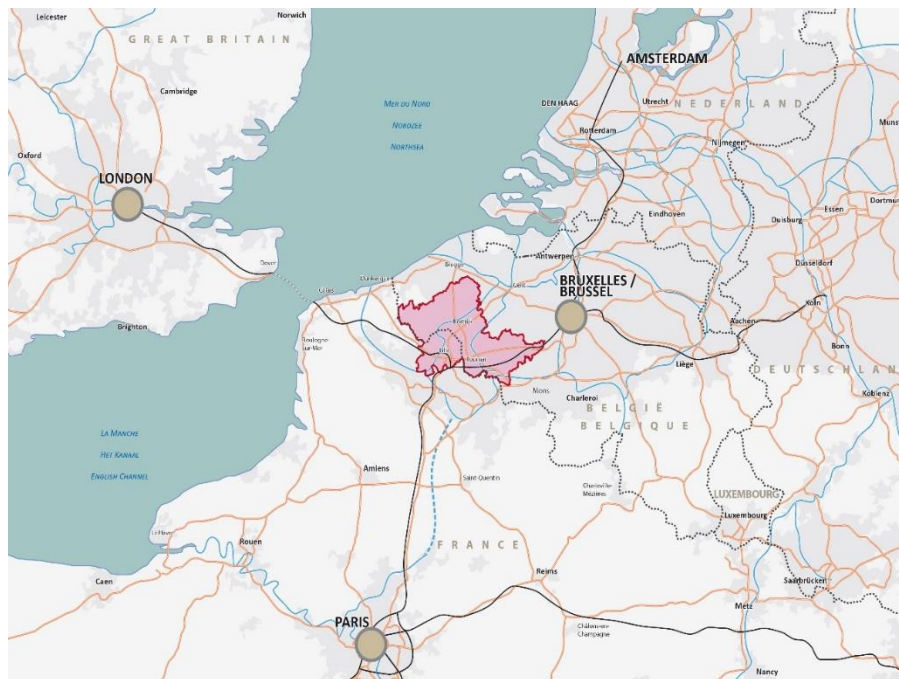


Image 2 - Map outlining Eurometropolis area

Literature Review

The following section will provide a summary of the academic literature relevant to this study. This section will be divided into sub-sections, with each summarizing a respective academic domain in its relation to the purpose of this study.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY ON BORDERS

The relevance of political geography to the study of management may seem questionable at first, however, there are many aspects of the academic field that are of interest to cross-border management studies. As defined by Murphy (2015), political geography is:

“a subdiscipline of geography concerned with the spatial arrangement of political practices and understandings on Earth's surface, and the role of politics in shaping geographical patterns and processes”

How political geography becomes pertinent to this study is the research of borders and boundaries, also known as border studies, a field at the forefront of political geography. Much like the overall objective of the INTERREG initiative, border studies have developed a focus towards ‘erasing the border effect’ and the possibilities of a ‘borderless world’. However, in the context of cross-border management, several questions emerge. What are the natures of these borders? Can they be erased? What managerial considerations need to be made in these processes?

Borders, in their traditional territorial sense, are described as *“a means of control involving the use of bounded geographical space”* (Anderson, O’Dowd & Wilson, 2003). As Jones (2009) puts it, borders are *“a line-on-the-ground political division”*. In this traditional sense, political actors tend to be those exercising this means of control through producing borders. As the name suggests, borders are produced to create order, largely by separating people and goods between spaces (Kolossoff et al., 2012). Herrschel (2011, p.173) further adds to the academic discourse on borders stating that *“borders signify difference”*, that their whole purpose of existing is to demonstrate that those who experience the border are by some criteria, different to those who do not.

Political geographers often discuss the reasoning behind borders. Although admittedly this has much bearing on the work of cross-border managers, such questions are beyond the scope of this study and even proves to be a difficult question for border studies scholars themselves (Newman, 2006; van Houtum, 2005). The question, therefore, becomes what form do these borders appear, and what effect do they have on managers who work in a cross-border capacity? The latter question is one that this paper will attempt to address. However, the former question has been addressed in the border-studies literature. The borders that managers must deal with are both tangible and intangible, ranging from border control checkpoints to differences in language or currency (Newman, 2006). A common reoccurrence, particularly in the context of European border regions is the emergence of new borders or previously covert borders. As described by Medeiros (2018), when physical border checks were removed in Europe, new borders between neighbouring countries became apparent and are still detrimental today. These borders included differences in language, economic development and political will to progress cross-border partnerships, as well as a lack of cross-border public transportation (Medeiros, 2006).

Borders and discourses

The studies within Political Geography on the effect of political and media discourses on borders, particularly open borders, have found them to be profound. Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy (2017) discuss how recent crises, such as mass migration and acts of terrorism, have pushed “western” governments and societies to act irrationally and extremely, normalizing these responses at the same time. These actions have included the “Brexit” vote in the United Kingdom, which was largely seen as a response to a perception of uncontrolled mass-migration from the European Union. The “Brexit” discourse was centred around the phrase “*take back control of our [Britain’s] borders*” (Ross, 2016). It was this political and media discourse which depicted the European Union as a dictatorship which treated the United Kingdom as a colony and forced them to take in uncontrollable amounts of immigrants that fueled the successful “Brexit” campaign (Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy, 2017). Similar discourses were found to be prevalent in France and the Netherlands, especially in the period after the 2015 Paris attacks in the case of France (Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy, 2017).

Lakoff (2010) uses the term “framing” to describe how discourse can be spun to change the perception of a public service or activist movement. In the case of environmental activism and political action, such activity has been negatively framed by conservatives who have progressively built an effective communication system to project their ideas in few words, whereas liberals tend to need paragraphs (Lakoff, 2010). Furthermore, these discourses and the way they have been framed have been found to affect workers in other domains of public service (Walker, Brewer and Gene, 2009).

A borderland typology

The field of political geography does much to describe the characteristics of border regions, also known as “borderlands”. Martinez (1994) provides a typology for the classifications of borderland regions, depending on the level of interaction and dependency from actors on both sides of the border. This classification is described in the table below (adapted from Martinez, 1994).

<i>Borderland Type</i>	<i>Description of borderland</i>
<i>Alienated borderlands</i>	Tension exists between both sides of the border. There is no interaction between either side and people of each county remain and act as strangers to each other. The border is functionally closed.
<i>Co-existent borderlands</i>	Stability within this borderland region fluctuates. The border is slightly open with limited occurrences of cross-border interactions. Whereas people from either country deal with each other in a casual manner, those living close to the border develop closer relations to their cross-border neighbours.
<i>Interdependent borderlands</i>	Borderland region is predominantly stable. Similarities in social and economic practices encourage increased cross-border interactions, leading to an expansion of the cross-border region. People within the borderland region have friendly relationships with each other, characterized by close cooperation.

Integrated borderlands

Strong and permanent stability of the borderland region. The economies of both sides of the border are functionally merged with an unrestricted movement of people and goods across the state boundary. People living within the region do not perceive a boundary, seeing themselves as part of one social system.

Table 1 - Classification of borderlands (adapted from Martinez, 1994)

CROSS-BORDER MANAGEMENT

Five phases of cross-border management

When looking at the mechanics of an integration process between two balanced urban regions, Matthiessen (2000; 2004) argued that five phases can be identified in this process:

Phase 1: Visions and analysis

Phase 2: Large-scale investment decisions and their realisation

Phase 3: General shift in attitude towards the whole integration project from negative to positive (population, politicians, market)

Phase 4: Identification and neutralisation of barriers to integration.
Establishment of organising capacity

Phase 5: Regional integration

Furthermore, Matthiessen (2004) argues how the development of large cross-border infrastructure will ultimately alter the spatial organisation of the territory, activating creative and innovative synergies in procedures, industries, institutions and management as a result. The improved infrastructure itself does not guarantee success but merely provides opportunities, for it is up to local governments and businesses to exploit these opportunities adequately (Matthiessen, 2000).

Managing Cross Border Resources

An important facet of cross-border management is the management of cross-border resources. This often concerns the interaction between two or more actors or stakeholders. According to Guo (2018), there are two distinctive characteristics cross-border resources need to comply with to be considered as such a resource.

1. The cross-border resources must account for either natural systems or meaningful units.
2. The cross-border resources must fall under the jurisdiction of multiple actors and cannot be subject to the sovereignty or control of only one jurisdiction.

Guo (2018) adds by stating that the international laws and treaties provide a normative framework designed to coordinate behaviours, to control conflicts, to facilitate cooperation and to achieve common values amongst the different cross-border actors involved. Furthermore, Noble (2000) argues how regional socio-economic developments can be enhanced by more effective management, generated by the placing the ownership and control of the resources and management functions at a defined geographic location, giving those communities a sense of autonomy from outside influences (i.e. national and international).

Five Doctrines for Establishing Cross Border Management

Guo (2018) also sets out five doctrines that are responsible for the establishment of cross-border management:

- 1) **The Doctrine of Absolute Sovereignty:** Claims that the absolute freedom of a country is to exploit its own natural and environmental resources despite the potential consequences this could have on surrounding riparian states.
- 2) **The Doctrine of Absolute Integrity:** Sets out that a country is not allowed to alter the national state of natural and environmental resources passing through its territory in any way for it to alter the resources in the other countries.
- 3) **The Doctrine of Limited Territorial Sovereignty:** Resolving the majority of international resource disputes through conforming to the general legal obligation of actors to use one's property in ways that do not cause harm to others.

4) **The Doctrine of Communalism of International Resources:** Assumes that there is cross-border communalism of shared interests amongst the concerned actors and treats the total stock of resources as shared by these actors.

5) **The Doctrine of Correlative Rights:** Emphasises the most efficient exploitation and utilisation of joint resources, rather than ownership rights.

Whilst the doctrines were created as a foundation for cross-border cooperation, they do not completely coexist in harmony. The Doctrine of Absolute Sovereignty is no longer seen as a general principle of international law, as over-exploiting waters by one actor can seriously damage the quality of that same resource for another actor through the interconnectivity of the cross-border resource, thus harming the Doctrine of Absolute Integrity (Guo, 2018). According to Guo (2018), the idea of sovereignty forms a major obstacle to the protection of and the sustainable use of international and cross-border resources, and an alternative to this is a more restricted form of sovereignty, which calls for a more 'equitable utilisation' of the cross-border resources.

Societal Actors

When analysing European integration, the role of societal actors should not be overlooked. Societal actors can be seen as non-state actors or private actors who represent the interests of social groups found in both national societies and the rising transnational European society (Kaiser and Meyer, 2013). Exactly the role that these societal actors play has been at the centre of academic debate, leading to useful insights regarding their involvement in European integration and the way they co-exist with the representatives of the 'larger' national and sub-national bodies (Hurrelmann, 2011). Verhey (2013) argues how the relationship between politicians and civil servants cannot be seen in isolation since it must be defined through a larger context of developments in the broader society. The structure of the decision-making process, which is complex due to the process being characterised by consultation and negotiations between both actors, is one example of this. (Verhey, 2013). Consequently, civil servants operate in an environment that can lack both political guidance and interest (Verhey, 2013). Bauer and Ege (2013) add to this, stating that in the production of problem solutions and policy programs, civil servants also have to deal with outside political demands, who will cause persistent frustrations. Hence, managing these external

influences is another challenge that arises for managers operating in this political environment.

There are traditionally two literary approaches that investigate the role of these societal actors more thoroughly. First, the policy-centred perspective, which focuses more on the actors active within the fields of European policy, allows for two interesting observations to be made regarding the dynamics within these different European bodies (Hurrelmann, 2011). First of all, although one 'group of actors' consists of societal actors, who are also included in the EU decision-making, in practice this predominantly involves political elites who take part in administrative tasks concerning trans-governmental cooperation. As such, the involvement of societal actors should not be mistaken with grassroots participation, as it only concerns already established societal actors (Hurrelmann, 2011). Secondly, another tendency emphasised in the policy literature is that transnational influence mainly occurs through vertical interactions rather than horizontal interactions, even if relatively stable transnational organisations have been established (e.g. trans-governmental networks and interest groups). Their existence is often reliant on actors from higher European governance levels initiating, supporting and structuring them (Tömmel and Verdun, 2009)

The second approach is the more politics-centred approach in EU academic research. This approach brings the limited involvement of these societal actors to the surface. Namely, the different groups of European actors have yet to learn how to overcome their ambivalences and successfully cooperate within the internal European boundaries (Tarrow, 2001). For example, after studying several media debates in EU-member states, Koopmans (2007) concluded that there is a dominance of executive actors (i.e. national governments and the European Commission) in public discourse while the contribution and impact of interest groups and civil society organisations remains marginal.

Managing and cooperating in cross-border environments

At first, it was believed amongst both scholars and practitioners that management was a universal practice, meaning that one common approach, not limited by cultural differences, could be adopted globally. However, nowadays there is more consensus amongst scholars that the nature of management tends to variate, depending on the culture in which environment it is executed (Adler, 2007; Luthans & Doh, 2018). It is therefore important for

managers to be aware of the potential differences in customs when interacting with different countries or cultures. According to Luthans and Doh (2018), what distinguishes international management from 'simply' management is the utilisation of management concepts in an international environment and adapting them to different economic, political and cultural contexts. To deal with the challenges that are generated in such international settings, communication becomes an important tool for managers as it is often perceived as the factor where the cultural distance between actors is most emphasised (Luthans & Doh, 2018).

Moreover, communication has been emphasised by many scholars as a vital aspect of the managerial practices required for cooperating with different parties and building relationships with them. For example, metaphorical reasoning, in particular, has proven to enhance communication in inter-functional settings, facilitating opportunities for innovation (Moenaert et al, 1994). Furthermore, Nobel and Birkinshaw (1998) suggest how established levels of international communication and cooperation is a desirable goal for cross-border innovation projects and that it can potentially improve its success. Additionally, Lee et al. (2010) argue that improved communication and an ongoing process of sharing can create relational ties. The interaction between the aforementioned factors also works reciprocally, with several scholars stating that strong relational ties enhance communication and the sharing of ideas, leading to an increase in opportunities for more creative outcomes (Lee et al. 2010).

Relational interaction is thus also an important factor in the daily operations of cross-border managers. Perkmann and Sum (2002) pen the term "asymmetric relationships" to describe how the dynamics of cross-border relationships are affected by imbalances in resources, requirements, norms and dependences. For example, in cross-border environments managers can experience differences in status, cultures or rules of the game which consequently changes the dynamics of the cooperation (Luthans & Doh, 2018). Akrou's (2014) study focusing on French actors in cross-border cooperation, concluded that relationship quality in cross-border exchanges improves if prior interaction has taken place, and changes its character as the relationship matures. Akrou (2014) continues by stating that "*cultural sensitivity as an antecedent is time-dependent*" (p. 164). The relationships do

not necessarily have to be authentic, as they are also established for more pragmatic purposes. Organisations are by nature, inadvertently or not, political. This political dimension of organisations pushes managers towards mapping the terrain, scanning for the relevant players in the game and then forming coalitions in order to survive (Bolmen & Deal, 2018). Managers and their organisations are reliant on their environment for resources. This requires developing relationships with external constituent actors in the process, whose expectations and demands must also be met (Bolmen & Deal, 2018). According to Bolmen and Deal (2018), the support of these actors is vital for the survival for organisations, indicating that a significant part of the job of managers revolves around understanding and responding to demands of these actors.

Negotiation is an important part of cross-border interaction. Whilst it is already difficult for the multiple parties involved to negotiate an acceptable solution for all, actors tend to centre their approach around their domestic culture and the interests of their group. This makes it essential to have a solid understanding of their counterparts' cultures (Luthans & Doh, 2018). The importance of negotiations is also highlighted by Bolmen and Deal (2018), who argue that it is a common tool in the competition for power and resources, where power and available resources also influence the bargaining process. Furthermore, the goals of organisations are not always set in stone, rather, they tend to evolve through ongoing negotiation processes (Bolmen & Deal, 2018). Rockmann et al. (2019) explain that negotiations are both an art, as there are numerous different ways to achieve the same desired outcome and practice increases expertise, and a science, as the process of negotiation operates systematically and regularly and can be formalised. Rockmann et al. (2019) also argue how resources are a common tool in negotiations and how resource power, the ability to obtain value over other actors through the control over a desired resource, can enhance the actor positions during negotiations.

In their study on the barriers to cross-border cooperation within Europe (Euroregions), Kurowska-Pysz, Castanho and Naranjo Gómez (2018) find that several barriers have been found to hinder the success cross-border cooperation. These can be divided into “external” barriers, independent from the cross-border actors and relating to the cross-border

environment, and “internal” barriers, the specific and individual circumstances of cross-border actors (Kurowska-Pysz et al., 2018).

Internal Barriers	
	Lack of knowledge about the cross-border cooperation and its benefits
	Lack of mutual trust between actors
	Insufficient knowledge of the partner's language and communication problems
	Differences in individual partners' interests
	Lack of potential and resources for cross-border development
External Barriers	
	Cultural differences and differences in the mentality of partners
	Differences in the legal and administrative conditions (society, economy, environment)
	Poor connectivity and accessibility within the cross-border region (transport)
	Lack of public and private funds for cross border cooperation development
	Competition as well as different interests in economy and entrepreneurship development
	Lack of political commitment and different interests of regions and countries
	Differences in environmental protections and environment management conditions

Figure 1 - Figure depicting various internal and external barriers (Adapted from Kurowska-Pysz et al., 2018).

As found by Walker, Brewer and Gene (2009), unlike with internal barriers, there is little that managers, particularly those within public services, can do to eliminate external barriers. However, the authors of the study recommended practices such as “*prospecting and defending*” to mitigate these external barriers (Walker et al., 2009). Whilst prospecting calls for the continuous pushing of new products and services into current and new markets, defending calls for maintaining current product lines and services in served markets to maintain or increase customer numbers (Lussier, 1996). Although both cannot be done simultaneously, they can be applied individually when suitable.

Policy Arrangement Approach

Cross-border management in a European context has previously been studied in the field of management studies. European cross-border cooperation initiatives have had varying success. An approach used to analyse the extent of cooperation and the challenges facing cross-border cooperation is the Policy Arrangement Approach formulated by Wiering, Verwijmeren, Lulofs and Feld (2010). Their study aimed to “*explain the degree of actual co-operation in river management in cross border settings*” on the Dutch-German border. This framework has three aims (Wiering et al., 2010):

- To describe (the extent of) cross-border co-operation as the ‘variable’ to be explained.
- To describe the regional policy arrangements involved to explain possible relevant differences and similarities
- To combine the two and give a rich explanation of the backgrounds of successful cross-border co-operation.

To do this, the study focused on four dimensions of cross-border integration policy: Involved actors, actor resources, “the rules of the game” in the river management field, and the relevant policy discourses (Wiering et al., 2010). These four dimensions break down into sub-questions, as shown (Wiering et al., 2010).

Policy Actors	How many actors?
	How similar are the mindsets of the actors?
	How involved are all the relevant stakeholders from the beginning of the integration process
Resources	How available are sufficient financial resources to achieve project goals?
	How available is sufficient knowledge to achieve project goals?
	How willing are actors to redistribute resources or to link up resources?
Rules Of The Game	Is there a sufficient mandate to make joint policies?
	Are there currently commitments that are binding, clear, transparent and feasible?
	Can the "rules of the game" be comparable in all countries involved?
	To what extent does the Supra-national (European) legislative frameworks(s) influence the "rules of the game"?
Policy Discourses	Is there an existence of a feeling of urgency to achieve successful corss-border initiatives?
	Is there an existence of a feeling of solidarity between and within actors?
	Are actors focusing on issues that are not politically sensitive?
	How comparable are the discourses in all countries involved?

Figure 2 - Breakdown of the four dimensions of the "Policy Arrangement Approach" (adapted from Wiering et al., 2010)

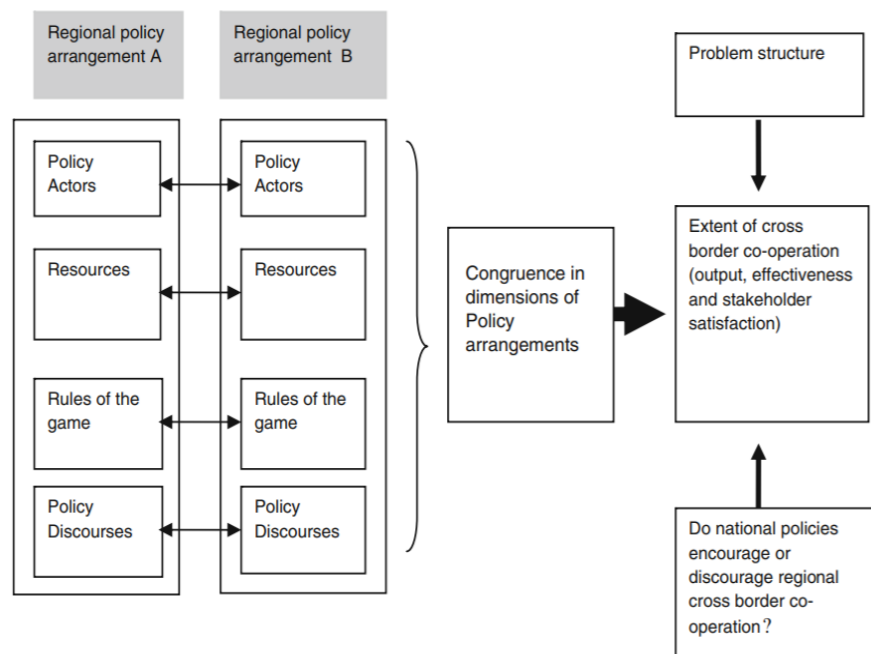


Figure 3 - Visual depiction of Policy Arrangement Approach (Wiering et al., 2010)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

Public transportation plays a considerable role in achieving sustainability and efficient mobility, yet it is not used to its full potential, predominantly because it is often more expensive and time-consuming (Wardman & Waters, 2001). Even though this argument dates nearly twenty years, it remains relevant today. Public transportation problems are often very complex and hard to solve, most works concentrate only one problem at the time, although there exist some attempts to combine multiple problems identified in public transportation planning into one large model (Schmidt, 2014). Dziekan (2008) argues how many disciplines are concerned with mobility and transportation aspects, such as geography, urban planning, architecture, transport planning, sociology and psychology, making transportation in general and public transportation, in particular, a multi-disciplinary field. One important discipline that is overlooked here, as this study will show, is politics.

Operational Optimisation

In the literature about public transportation management, the focus tends to be on the optimisation of the routes and the timetables. Schmidt (2014) explains that is important to understand individual passenger routes in order to find good line concepts, timetables, and disposition timetables (e.g. if many passengers make use of the same route between two stations, a high-speed line between those two stations might be beneficial). According to Schmidt (2014), the literature on transportation management often assumes that finding those passenger routes is a process that is partly formed by the input of the following transportation issues:

Line Planning - Concerned with finding suitable public transport lines, through the available infrastructural data, that specify the paths and frequencies of the to be established train lines with the available infrastructural data.

Timetabling - Concerned with the specification of arrival and departure times of trains in stations in a timetable.

Delay Management - Concerned with deciding whether trains should wait for delayed feeder trains or depart on time and updating the existing timetable to incorporate these changes in the case of delays in daily operations. The updated timetable is hereby called a disposition timetable.

However, according to Schmidt (2014), these approaches academic approaches often neglect to consider the influence that line concepts, timetables or disposition timetables themselves have on determining favourable passenger routes. Consequently, these approaches thus formulate passenger routes without adequately considering the current influences on the transportation system, leading to an increased probability of suboptimal results. By taking the role that the three factors play into account, Schmidt (2014) concludes that integrating passenger routing in the optimisation process indeed leads to a more realistic estimation of passenger behaviour and therefore to better solutions.

However, Schmidt also addresses the other considerations that need to be made to better understand the validity of this conclusion. Namely, the public transportation models used in Schmidt's research are highly simplified compared to real-world situations, disregarding other aspects like the capacity of the tracks and stations or periodicity requirement on timetables. Moreover, in the study, it was assumed that the target of passengers was to minimise their travel time, neglecting to consider other driving factors such as the number of transfers, the costs and the reliability of the route. The main argument being made is that all three issues need to be considered simultaneously rather than singly in order to avoid having suboptimal results.

The future of public-transportation management

Finally, it is important to understand that there are several developments in public transport that will influence the design of the future development of public transportation. There is an increasing preference from passengers for more personalised travel experiences, enabled through the usage of apps, and the emergence of shared transport options indicates a new trend in public transportation (Neslon & Wright, 2019). Furthermore, hindering developments within the public transportation sector such as budget reductions and reforms press for a more urgent need to understand the role public authorities and private

entities have in supplying and managing transportation services, and in supporting infrastructure in both urban and rural environments. (Nelson & Wright, 2019).

When determining what to focus on for the future of public transportation, Nelson and Wright (2019) emphasise the importance of traditional success factors (i.e. good service design, ability to be aware of and respond to customer needs, usage of technology for further development, etc.), as well as the importance of addressing the implications of the external factors influencing the future of public values and interests (i.e. the emergence of a sharing economy and new mobility modes, changing finance regimes, etc.). In their research on the influence of regulatory environments on public transportation provisions, White (2019) concludes that the managerial practices of governments, public agencies and transport operators need to take into consideration that valuable information can be derived from the data, the experience of regulatory change, and industry practices. Once taken into consideration, services can improve through better frequency as a result of coordinated timetabling, good quality passenger information and comprehensive ticketing. White (2019) adds that their research indicates that academic knowledge should consider all relevant contextual factors, instead of merely focusing on simplistic assumptions such as 'cause and effect', as service level changes may occur from factors different to regulatory changes (e.g. better awareness of cost-structures within transport operators) and demand factors may also be steered by other factors. The changes in the regulatory environment and managerial policy for the provision of public transport service has generated the development of new types of services that have increased the supply of public transportation. However, the increased levels of supply are not always met with a corresponding growth in demand, which can further complicate the efficient usage of road space, for example (White, 2019). As shown, the future of public transportation comes with a new set of developments and corresponding challenges for the actors involved.

Another important factor which impacts the general quality of mobility is security. In the context of public transport, security is important because it influences every stage of the journey, from the planning of the trip, the actual trip, to the evaluation of the trip (Beecroft, 2019). Therefore, it is important for any policies made on the subject to secure a sense of safety for the customers when making use of public transportation, without limiting the

fluidity of the process. According to Beecroft (2019), public transport in its current form has several security challenges to face (e.g. enhancing security without significant impacts on convenience and privacy, equipping the transport sector with skills to mitigate the risks of a dynamic, complex and increasingly connected operating environment, etc.). Future developments will come with new security challenges (e.g. ensuring security for users and service providers in a future data-driven mobility system, a need for a better understanding people's behaviour, needs and attitudes concerning travel, technology and security, etc). Consequently, Beecroft (2019) concludes that developing a more proactive and anticipatory approach is required in facing these challenges. This can only be realised if the managerial practice improves the communication between the public transport stakeholders in the fields of public transport, technology and security, to better understand the interfaces between the three fields (Beecroft, 2019).

Methodology

The following section will lay out the research and analytical methods undertaken in this study.

INITIAL EXPLANATORY INTERVIEWS

To form the research questions for this study, two separate informal explanatory interviews were conducted with managers from the Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis organisations. These two cross-border institutions were selected as they both provide interesting examples of cases where two European countries are deeply connected culturally and linguistically. The former interview was conducted in person in the Greater Copenhagen offices in Copenhagen, whereas the latter was conducted via Skype. Both researchers were present and active in their questioning. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an insight into the challenges these managers are facing in achieving their institutional goals, before refining our research focus and questions. From these interviews, we found that integrating cross-border transportation networks was a common goal, and both organisations had developed initiatives in trying to achieve these goals, with each achieving some forms of success and facing unique challenges. Having identified cross-border transportation network integration as an objective currently facing challenges for both INTERREG organisations, and the European Union on a wider level, the researchers of this study decided to investigate that specific topic.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

The primary data collection for this study was predominantly conducted through semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders operating in three main groups: INTERREG; Politicians; Public Transportation. Some participants preferred not to be interviewed but accepted to participate in the study via questionnaires. In these cases, participants were sent out open question questionnaires with the same questions that would have been posed had a live interview taken place. Follow up questions were also permitted by the participants if the researchers required them. Potential interviewees were identified through snowballing, starting by asking our initial explanatory interviewees if they had any recommendations for future interviewees from any of our targeting

stakeholder groups. Interview guidelines were formulated prior to the interviews, as suggested by Witzel and Reitel (2000). These interview guidelines and questions (see appendix 1) were devised using the previously outlined breakdown questions of the “policy arrangement approach” (see page 29) with adaptations made to suit the interviewee (Wiering et al., 2010). The primary data collection period spanned between April to May 2020 and comprised of 10 live interviews and 2 questionnaires with 13 participants. The duration of the interviews were approximately between 30 to 60 minutes.

PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

In total, 11 interviews with 10 interviewees were conducted as part of the study. The primary data collection was focused on stakeholders from 4 stakeholder groups: INTERREG; Civil Servants; Politicians; Public Transportation. Stakeholder interviewees were selected on the basis that they have interest, influence and decision-making abilities over cross-border public transportation integration.

INTERVIEWEE NUMBER	STAKEHOLDER GROUP	POSITION	LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW
1*	INTERREG	Director of Agency	English
2**	INTERREG	Manager in Agency	English
3**	Civil Servants	Mobility Advisor	English
4	Civil Servants	Mobility Advisor	Dutch
5	Public Transportation	Train Operator Manager	French
6	Politicians	Municipal Officer	Dutch
7	Public Transportation	Train Operator Manager	French
8	Politicians	City Mayor	Dutch
9	Civil Servants	Regional Development Committee Member	English
10	Public Transportation	Senior Advisor	English
11*	Civil Servants	Mobility Advisor	Dutch
12	Public Transportation	Project and Development Manager	English
13	Civil Servants	Mobility Advisor	English

Table 2 - Profile of participants. * - Questionnaire ** - Interview conducted together

DATA ANALYSIS AND ANALYTICAL FRAME

Following the primary data collection, interview recordings were transcribed into English from French and Dutch by the researchers where required. After transcription and translation, the transcripts underwent a thematic analysis. As outlined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the transcripts went through a coding process where segments of the transcripts were given code words relating to their content. For example, a transcript section relating to financial issues in funding projects could be coded “lack of funding”. Once all codes were allocated, codes were grouped into overarching themes and then incorporated into the analytical frame. An example of this could be a case where there were many codes of the nature “lack of funding”, “lack of specialist knowledge”, “staffing shortages”. A given theme would be “Insufficient Resources”. The study made use of the aforementioned ‘Policy Arrangement Approach’ by designating codes in relation to the four dimensions of cross-border integration policy: Involved actors, actor resources, “the rules of the game”, and the relevant policy discourses (Wiering et al., 2010). The ‘Policy Arrangement Approach’ was found to be suitable and an interesting framework for this study due to the parallels this study has to that of Wiering et al. (2020). Whereas Wiering et al. (2020) use this framework for the analysis of cross-border cooperation in river management, this study uses it for a different type of flow, a man-made flow of machinery, people and goods.

SECONDARY DATA RESEARCH

Secondary data research was predominantly qualitative and based on academic literature and European Union material relating to the INTERREG initiative, all sourced online. This research was used for the background and summary of relevant literature. Academic material focused primarily on four academic fields: Political Geography, Management (focusing on organisations), Transport Planning, Cross-Border Studies. Relevant material was found using academic search engines and databases such as Google Scholar and Science Direct. Initially, keywords including “cross-border”, “management”, and “public transportation” in various combinations. Through the relevant academic studies that were identified, the researchers used cited works to identify other relevant academic texts for this study.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability are important aspects of any academic study. The researchers sought to ensure the validity of the data through the triangulation of data, with the same questions being used for all interviewees, with some adjustments depending on role (Kvale, 2007; Tracy, 2010). Data obtained from interviews was confirmed with other interviewees as part of the triangulation process.

A risk with coding is the potential for detrimental effects on reliability and validity due to the generalisation of interview data. To reduce the possibility of generalisation, the researcher applied codes minimally when segmenting data. Codes would only be applied if certain key phrases and words were found to be frequent and recurrent in the interview transcripts.

RESEARCH ETHICS AND DISCLOSURES

This study followed the research ethics as put forward by Tracy (2010). To ensure procedural ethical conduct, the two researchers comprehensively informed the interview participants of the nature of the research and how the data collected would be used before the interview took place. Interviewees gave verbal consent before every recording of the interviews, along with the transcription and potential use of interview data. The recorded data was then kept in secure files and not shared beyond the two researchers. Furthermore, all interviewees were kept anonymous with limited identifying data being disclosed.

LIMITATIONS

A major extenuating circumstance which impacted this study was the COVID-19 global pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the border between Sweden and Denmark was closed, making cross-border travel unviable for the researchers, therefore not permitting any physical face-to-face interviews. Additionally, many suitable interviewees for the study were either unavailable or requested to complete the interview in a written form instead. This again was due to the COVID-19 pandemic which had taken the much of the time available of the stakeholders required to be interviewed for the study. To mitigate the limitations experienced from the COVID-19 pandemic, interviewees were offered the possibility of an

online interview, or as a final resort, a transcript of questions to which they could give written responses to.

Other limitations concerning semi-structured interviews are data overload and progressive tiring (King, 2004). Progressive tiring occurs during extended periods of interviewing and has the potential to negatively impact the future productivity of the researchers due to its time-consuming nature. To mitigate this limitation, the researchers allocated a month for data collection, with interviews being conducted jointly so that interviews would be spread out over time rather than all at once. The other limitation associated with semi-structured interviews was data-overload, which occurs when there is an oversaturation of irrelevant data in a dataset, making relevant data difficult to identify and analyse. The researchers avoided this by following the pre-made interview guideline which ensured that the data collected remained relevant to the research aims.

A final limitation is a lack of data from French actors. Despite contacting actors from all stakeholder groups in France, the researchers could not get a response from any of them. As a result, this study cannot directly account for the perspectives of French actors. The researchers attempted to mitigate this by taking the opinions of what Belgian actors have said in interviews in relation to what they have experienced with their French counterparts.

Results and Analysis

The following section presents the results and analysis of the study. Statements derived, and quotations made, from the interviews are followed by the corresponding interviewee number in superscript.

GREATER COPENHAGEN

In this section cross-border co-operation is assessed in the view of the integration of public transport networks within the Greater Copenhagen territory.

Problem Structure

The objective is to achieve a well-functioning, robust and sustainable transport system that will help to strengthen mobility, boost economic growth and welfare and further integrate the metropolitan area. This is done by breaking down the boundaries between the municipalities, regions and countries (Greater Copenhagen, 2016). This revolves around the assumption that the improved infrastructure will attract foreign investors and decrease travel time, which in turn enhances the international perception of the region's sustainability and competitiveness. The challenge is in bringing all of the relevant stakeholders together and create a strategy that is favourable for all those involved. Greater Copenhagen needs to realise good mobility and shorter travel times and to do so, the importance of thinking transnationally cannot be overlooked. A competitive and attractive European metropolitan area is characterised by its well-functioning and integrated public transportation system. Therefore, the region should overcome current factors limiting this and create a coherent public transport system that offers to be in either Malmö or Copenhagen by train within an hour maximum from any place within the Greater Copenhagen region. However, in the long-term, decisions on a governmental level are needed to determine how to resolve these expected issues, indicating that the current organisational structure of the regional set of actors lacks the legislative power to act themselves. Regardless of the heavy investments in railway transportation within the region, it is expected that road transport will remain the dominant mode of transport.

Extent of Cooperation

The Greater Copenhagen organisation consists of the Greater Copenhagen collaboration and the Greater Copenhagen Committee. The Greater Copenhagen Collaboration is a political platform with the purpose of promoting regional collaboration and economic growth. The collaboration is led by the regional and city authorities of Eastern Denmark and Southern Sweden. In collaboration with businesses and other local key players, this association pursues launching strategic initiatives to create both jobs and economic growth (Greater Copenhagen, 2020). Furthermore, three main bodies can be identified within the Committee: a political board; an administrative steering committee and; a coordination group that consists of members that are either from the municipal or regional level. As part of the third group, Greater Copenhagen works with several focus groups that tackle more specific issues. The “Traffic Charter Group” is one example of such a group and focuses on enhancing mobility. The Committee's work is also being assisted by a small joint administrative secretariat (Dura et al. 2018).

Together the actors are looking at possibilities to create a master plan for an integrated railway system, to improve the public transport system in the Oresund region (e.g. common pricing, common transport information, etc.) and investigating new possibilities to enhance future public transport (e.g. shared mobility solutions such as car or bike sharing). Moreover, it is also expected that improved mobility will increase the job possibilities for those living in the more peripheral parts of the Greater Copenhagen^[13].

Policy Arrangements Framework

Actors and Coalitions

Many actors can be seen to be involved in some capacity within public transportation in the Greater Copenhagen region. From the research, a list of relevant actors was generated and has been provided below:

Actors:

- Greater Copenhagen (Mediator);
- Skånetrafiken (Public transport operator in Sweden);
- Oresundstag (Regional passenger train network in the transnational Oresund region);

- DSB (Train operator in Denmark)
- Transdev (Global mobility operator, operating in Sweden)
- Danish politicians and civil servants (National, regional and local government agencies/authorities);
- Swedish politicians and civil servants (National, regional and local government agencies/authorities);

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

The Greater Copenhagen region more brings two regions together: the island of Zealand on the Danish side and the county of Skåne on the Swedish side. In general, both countries were found to be structured in a rather comparable fashion, with some exceptions that will later be discussed. Amongst the involved actors, ‘success’ in public transportation was seen as enhancing public transport for the people and companies within the borders of the Greater Copenhagen region^[2]. The cooperation between Danish and Swedish actors was perceived to be adequate on most occasions, though levels of commitment and involvement tended to vary slightly more, largely being project dependent. A cultural difference was identified in the mindsets of the actors, where Swedes were perceived to be more reluctant to make decisions until a joint understanding is reached, whereas Danes are quicker to make decisions.

“I would say we [Swedes] are a little bit afraid of our Danish counterparts because the Danes are very good businessmen. You know, if you’re generalising, Sweden has been a nation of engineers and the Danes are a nation of people doing business. As soon as you’re discussing money with the Danes, they will probably make the better deal repeatedly”^[9]

The study found a shared desire for more sustainable means of transport amongst the cross-border actors, for example, by reducing the number of cars in favour of increased usage of trains. However, the interest of actors was experienced to be very much project dependent and focused on their agendas. For example, during one of the meetings, it became apparent that *the Danish civil servants didn’t care a single minute*

“I don’t think we had more than two or three meetings before we realised, okay, our goal is not totally common here. So relatively soon in the process we realised that we have may a common framework, but to have a common goal was more difficult. The Danish civil servants didn’t care a single minute for Swedish travellers and vice versa. They don’t see their role as to provide European transport, they view it as to protect Danish interests, whatever that may be.. ”^[13]

Furthermore, there were also some noteworthy differences experienced with the interaction between different actors from the same country, complicating the cross-border cooperation as a result. For example, cross-border integration initiatives were only supported in Sweden by the national government when it was proven to have value for the whole country.

“We have also raised the issue of how dependent we are on the Oresund bridge because that is our only physical to the rest of Europe. If something should happen to the Oresund bridge, we will be very bad off”^[9]

Moving towards the Greater Copenhagen organisation itself, there is a particular interest in creating, developing and maintaining a cross-border labour market. One of the interviewees commented on how it is part of the European context to consider cross-border cooperation.

“To have an enlarged and more common cross-border labour market, when we achieve in that, that will be the main success, I think. That’s why we’re looking into various numbers of cross-border activities in our region”^[13]

The integrated labour market was seen as the more general aim of the cross-border Greater Copenhagen initiative, and whilst differences in levels of commitment were experienced amongst the involved actors, the overall core goal was seemingly supported by the all the involved actors. To achieve the cross-border labour market, integrated public transportation was deemed to be of great importance. The amount of time that it takes a commuter to travel between home and work is considered to be an indicator for a competitive edge in metropolitan areas.

“Compared to other metropolitans or big cities, in Europe, in America or wherever, our public transport system works quite well. The commuters are going way quicker than in many other cities”^[12]

The Traffic Charter Group was found to meet approximately eight times a year on both the Danish and the Swedish side to discuss various cross-border transport-related issues. Moreover, these civil servants operate on a mandate that has been set out by politicians, disabling them from doing anything without the approval of the politicians.

Public Transport Operators

Between the transport operators, an established platform of cooperation was identified. *Oresundstag*, a joint cross-border venture between several Swedish regional public transport operators and the Danish Ministry of Transport, is responsible for supplying the train transportation passing through the Oresund bridge and further in both countries. *Oresundstag* as an organisation is completely owned by the Swedish stakeholders but also cooperates with Danish partners. The cooperation revolves around the timetables, tickets, taxes, rules for travelling, the extent of travelling and rolling stock. Furthermore, whilst cooperation between the stakeholders benefits everyone involved, and is therefore established in almost all occasions, the extent to which the stakeholders would actively engage with the project was influenced by the interest they had in a given project.

“The needs of the stakeholders are different. On the Swedish side, we talk a lot about things like functioning toilets. You don’t have this problem in Denmark because from home in Helsingor to your office in Copenhagen, you have 45 minutes, 30 minutes, you don’t go, you don’t use the toilet on board. But if you go for two and a half hours [in Sweden] then you have another need and that kind of puts another pressure on the maintenance where from Swedish side we speak a lot about toilets and on Danish side they say that it’s not an issue”^[12]

One significant difference that was identified between the transport operators on the Danish and the Swedish side was the way that the two public transport operators on each side of the Oresund strait were managed. Skånetrafiken operates much more from a private

business perspective, having the target of expanding its market share in transportation, even beyond its boundaries in Denmark and Germany.

“They [Skånetrafiken] are doing everything they can to expand and then succeed with the political goal of having successful public transport”^[3]

This was perceived to be different on the Danish side, where the private business perspective was modest in comparison.

Resources

INTERREG, Civil Servants and Politicians

The money provided by INTERREG proved to be an important source of funding for both Greater Copenhagen and regional actors (e.g. Region Skåne). However, it is up to the actors themselves to *“try and seek to request for EU funding by the EU INTERREG program”^[3]*. Actors are required to come up with project proposals that are then either accepted by INTERREG and provided with financial means or not. It was not only the funding from INTERREG that was found to be important but also the status of being an EU-funded program^[9]. However, the contribution of INTERREG does not always satisfy financial needs, as actors were also reliant on fiduciary courtesies from their own national governments. This was occasionally experienced to be an obstacle, with Region Skåne, for example, needing to convince the national authorities in Stockholm of the value of its suggested projects on a national level rather than just a regional level.

The ownership of rolling stock was also found to be different amongst the involved actors. As a consequence, some potential hardships in terms of a more advanced integration of public transport in the future came to the surface. The probability and desirability of a potential single transport operator in Greater Copenhagen was also discussed, and whilst several actors showed a positive attitude towards such an initiative, it was not deemed realistic. To paraphrase one interviewee, *“given the differences in responsibility on a national, regional and local level”*, it was considered to be *“a utopia to create one common organisation who will manage the cross-border transport”^[3]*.

When it comes to the sharing of knowledge and information, interviewees within this category stated that the availability of these resources was not considered an issue in the

Greater Copenhagen region^{[2][9]}. In particular, the sharing of information between the civil servants and politicians was considered to be important.

“We [politicians] are of course very much relying on our public officials that they give us sufficient information, that they put forward proposals of which they think are in the line of what we are looking for”^[9]

The relationship and levels of interaction between politicians and civil servants were found to be difficult to manage from time to time, as a result of different levels of commitment and varying senses of responsibility. On a general note, the availability of resources within actors of this group was mostly dependent on the nature of the project. Actors were proven to be more cooperative in aligning their resources when they were more committed and interested in the project.

Public Transport Operators

Financial resources were found to be readily available within the Greater Copenhagen region, though the division of those resources was based on the interest and potential benefit stakeholders had in certain investments. For example, one of the interviewees stated that the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link that will be built between Denmark and Germany is mostly financed by Denmark as Germany has significantly less interest in this bridge^[10]. The same dynamic is applicable when it comes to financing cross-border projects between Denmark and Sweden, though the urgency for improved transportation between these two countries is higher with the latter.

“I think the Swedes hope that the Danes will pay half the costs every time some investments have to be done. But the willingness to pay half of the money from a Danish point of view is not as big as it is from a Swedish point of view”^[10]

Furthermore, the operation and maintenance costs made by *Oresundstag* trains are divided between both the Danish partners and the Swedish stakeholders, depending on the kilometres they travel. Moreover, although the trains pass the actual borders and continue further inwards in both Denmark and Sweden, the involved actors only pay for the kilometres travelled within their national borders^[12].

When it comes to the ownership of the rolling stock, a difference between the countries was also identified. In Sweden, the operators have ownership over the rolling stock, whereas in Denmark these resources are directly owned by the national government itself. The *Oresundstag* trains are managed by DSB in Denmark (34 in total) and Transdev in Sweden (77 in total). Whilst this joint corporation has mostly enhanced the integration of transport between Denmark and Sweden, there have been occasions that this organisation has been challenged by both its binational nature and the imbalance between resources.

“About 70% of the operation is in Sweden, but when it comes to this inequality, we [Swedish actors] feel often that because of the maintenance is performed by the same organisation as the traffic in Denmark, it’s a state-owned company and the ministry is the owner of this company, that we don’t have the same insight and the same possibility of putting pressure or having just the ordinary conversation because we are from the outside”^[12]

Cross-border issues were also found with the actual maintenance of the trains. For example, there have been issues concerning different senses of responsibility *“in keeping the trains fresh”^[9]*. Until recently, there has only been a service station on the Danish side, and as a consequence, the trains occasionally entered Sweden uncleaned. Due to this, the service station has moved to Sweden.

With regards to the sharing of information, the research showed that whilst information is generally widely communicated amongst the stakeholders, there have been some issues in the past in aligning resources between the railway operators. The following example illustrates how a cross-border setting can influence the alignment of resources, more specifically with regards to communicating about aligning timetables. As was stated by an interview, the Danes initially blamed the Swedish side for delays in the incoming trains from Sweden, presumably due to roadkills. However, the actual reason turned out to be the result of the two operator’s timetables being tightly squeezed together. As explained by the interviewee, *“even a small little delay in a very squeezed timetable seems to multiply in the system and then you end up in a situation where you can’t keep the train in the system”^[9]*.

Regarding the cooperation in aligning resources between the operators in both countries, it was found to be not so much about the difference in what goals to reach than it was about how to reach those goals.

“You should always keep in mind that Swedes and Danes are small but very proud countries, and they think that their own models or how they have managed things is the best one and then they reach somebody who has the same attitude. We don’t really realise that we need to take the advantages from both sides of the Oresund strait a little bit more”^[9]

Rules of the Game

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

The Greater Copenhagen organisation was found to operate in an environment that enables them to initiate policies but also limits their ability to execute these policies. For Greater Copenhagen, the process of developing cross-border projects was found to consist of three steps: 1. Exchange information and gain an improved understanding of the situation across the border; 2. Formulate common proposals and; 3. Have the responsible authority approve the proposals. Furthermore, within the Greater Copenhagen organisation, three main structural layers were identified. The top layer consists of the politicians, followed by the directors and then that of the civil servants^[2]. Most of the operational work is done by the civil servants who need to have approval on any proposed policy by the two other structural layers above. The cooperation within civil servant structural level was experienced as rather effective, and the mutual understanding better.

“From civil servant to civil servant, I think it is quite easy to collaborate with each other and to share knowledge with one another”^[2]

To align all the relevant stakeholders, Greater Copenhagen attempts to organise an annual conference in Copenhagen for those involved actors where their goals and project ideas can be shared. For Greater Copenhagen to have a significant impact, a certain process needs to be set in motion. This process needs to function like lobbying, creating political interest and encouraging voices that call for the further development of cross-border transportation.

Only when all of the relevant stakeholders are rallied and aligned can political impact on a national level can be executed.

“We have created a stakeholder community with the representatives from the scientists in the society, business corporations like Copenhagen Airport and unions and so on. Given that we will have a common voice and argument for a metro line, for instance, that will over time have some kind of impact on the national level. But it’s a process.”^[3]

The relationships with the relevant politicians were perceived as less constructive, with attempts in aligning the national focus with regional development interests not always successful. The civil servants have to balance the interests of politicians, the source of their mandate, with the interests of the non-political actors they serve. The role that civil servants play in the political game was perceived to be different in both countries. In Sweden, there is a clearer distinction where the work of the civil servant stops and where that of the politician begins, whereas in Denmark this separation was less obvious, with civil servants being found to be more sensitive to the demands of the national politicians.

“Usually, national politicians tend to look only towards the border, the national border, saying; “this is our geography that we are working in and we have to manage this area because this is where we are elected. Our citizens have elected us to manage this area and that’s our mandate”. So, going beyond the border is something extra and will, I think, in 99% of the time come as a second priority.”^[3]

From a politician’s point of view, the relationship with civil servants in terms of decision-making power was considered a debatable topic as well. For example, in Sweden, many of the decisions regarding the regional development were taken on a professional level, by the officials working in the public systems, rather than on a political level. This relationship was sometimes perceived as being “too dependent”^[9] on the professionals working in public authorities. It was also established that maintaining good relationships with the other actors contributed to successful cooperation and strengthened their position within the political game^[9].

Finally, the European Union is also a player engaged in setting out the rules for cross-border transportation. Whilst they were not directly involved, a lot of the day-to-day activities executed by the actors can be traced back to EU legislation. Although the EU is involved through the INTERREG funding, their involvement is not limited to just accepting projects and then granting the money, as they also set out certain requirements to which the cross-border plans need to abide by to be deemed feasible.

“To work in different EU programs is a very difficult process where you really have to adjust to what European politics actually have for an idea on how to have interregional cooperation.”^[9]

Even though the funding was appreciated by the actors, it was sometimes perceived as “perhaps a little bit too much work for too little money and a little bit over-bureaucratic in some aspects”^[9]. In addition to that, the programs were required to run for seven years. Whilst the actors might be enthusiastic in the initial phases, the entire seven years need to be managed, and even after, as the EU expects an output that can survive after that period. Moreover, if all of the money is not spent, the EU requires the funding recipients to repay the funding. This was found to have occurred once in the Greater Copenhagen cooperation, harming the collaboration between Sweden and Denmark as a result.

Public Transport Operators

With the absence of a common strategy between the public transport operators, the task of forming one is currently carried out by the national governments. The cooperation between public transport operators was experienced to be satisfactory, which has resulted in effective cross-border cooperation with the trains passing frequently crossing the Oresund bridge without major issues. An example of this effective cooperation was found with the current timetabling process. The timetabling is done in Denmark by DSB, with the timetabling service being partially financed for by Swedish actors, leading to only minor complications due to differences in preferences for planning^[10].

However, the aforementioned variations in the ownership of rolling stock amongst the involved actors influence the rules of the game. This becomes evident from an example

given by one of the interviewees in regards to working with Swedish counterparts to devise with joint strategies.

“They [Skåne] think we should quite easily do this and this and this, while we [Greater Copenhagen] can’t do much because it’s a different kind of ownership. So of course, they sometimes think it’s a bit frustrating working with us since we can’t do much on the ownership side”^[12]

Furthermore, there were also differences found in the way that public transport organisations are managed. In the experience of the interviewees, this complicated the process of finding alignment between the two railway systems, being referred to as *“like night and day”^[13]* in Sweden and Denmark. This was especially found in the way both countries issue contracts for supplying public transport and its maintenance. In Denmark, contracts are signed with DSB, which as mentioned before, is owned by the Danish Ministry of Transport, thus allowing them to keep the money in the system like a *“merry-go-round”^[13]*. In Sweden, the contracts for public transport are sold to tenders and are therefore executed on normal commercial terms, resulting in *Skånetrafiken* being managed on a regional level. In the experience of the local Swedish actors, this complicated the possibilities of getting in contact with the relevant Danish counterparts.

“On the Swedish side, we do that with authorities on a regional level, but we actually needed to reach the Danish minister. And I know that during the world championship in handball, back in 2014/15 or something, we actually reached one of these ministers at the game in Malmö just to be able to speak to him”^[9]

Moreover, the different levels of authorities amongst the countries were found to limit the policy and decision making between the involved actors, due to differences in status and power of the actors.

“As a minister, a head of the department, you can go in and adjust things. In Sweden, politicians never blend in such work, it’s up to civil servants to do it. Sometimes a minister or a politician doesn’t want to talk to a civil servant. So it’s not a symmetrical setup which is giving us a lot of challenges sometimes”^[12]

Finally, while the overarching European legislative framework is supposed to “*harmonise*” national governmental approaches, it was experienced that this did not always happen in “*real life*”^[12]. Normally when authorisation for certain train installations (e.g. changing seats and configurations) is granted in one European country, it applies to all other countries as well. However, Danish authorities were found to not “*accept what the Swedish authorities have accepted*”^[12], forcing the Swedish actors to also have to apply for separate authorisation in Denmark too.

Discourses

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

During the research, participants within these groups demonstrated varying levels of urgency in further developing and integrating cross-border public transportation networks between Sweden and Denmark. Two ongoing events were found to have had a profound impact on this. The refugee crisis which has seen waves of migration into Sweden and Denmark from 2015. This resulted in several countries, with Sweden amongst them, to reintroduce border controls upon entering the country by train from Denmark, going against the vision of an integrated cross-border area and public transport network. Consequently, numerous commuters from Malmo were affected by the delays daily and quit their jobs in Copenhagen to look for alternatives in Sweden as their “*everyday life didn't work anymore*”^[12].

“We all recognise the refugee crisis from Syria some years ago, which led to many refugees fleeing towards Europe and its northern parts. That has led to several countries trying to close the borders and forcing border controls. That's what we have to deal with today.”^[3]

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to the immediate lack of urgency from both sides in furthering the integration of public transportation networks. The political discourse and action from the two sides have been contradictory of one another, with Denmark opting to close their borders and Sweden keeping them open. Due to the closed border, transport integration plans have been put on hold as the political agenda deems it to be of low importance and contradictory to what the country needs. Moreover, the forced usage of digitalised communication platforms was experienced by an

actor to be less satisfactory than the usual in-person meetings^[13]. According to the actors, the pandemic has also exposed that much of the legislative framework is based on already outdated practices that are no longer fitting to integrate cross-border areas. Such differences between national law and commuters crossing the borders were found not contribute to the overall goal of cross-border integration and additionally, were found to be financially challenging.

“Right now, the border between Denmark and Sweden is closed due to the coronavirus, and that’s a big issue for a lot of workers. If you are a Swedish citizen and work in Denmark, you will have to work in Denmark and be in Denmark in 75% of your working time and if you’re not based 75% in Denmark while you’re working you can’t have job security in Sweden”^[2]

Aside from the recent events that have stifled progress on cross-border transportation, it was found that actors on both sides of the border had a positive view of the solidarity and urgency in cross-border endeavours. Interestingly, interviewees from both sides alluded to their cross-border counterparts demonstrating more engagedness than some of their domestic partners, with domestic discourse playing a large role. From a Swedish interviewee’s perspective, the Greater Copenhagen initiative was driven by the intense competition the city was facing from competing Nordic cities.

“I think the problems for the Danes was that when they were looking at development figures between metropolitan areas in Northern Europe, the Copenhagen area was standing out and performing very badly compared to the Stockholm area and Helsinki. So, I think the Danes really needed to be able to do something. So, therefore, they constructed a new organization, very focused on really achieving regional growth... I think it was perhaps a little bit more necessary to do it [create the Greater Copenhagen organisation] on the Danish side. I think the Danes also see that that the Swedish side is important for their own development.”^[9]

This interviewee further indicated that the discourse of national politicians in Sweden was not always in the best interest of Skåne, stating that “it is a problem that that power is

actually sitting in Stockholm”^[9], as the view is Stockholm-centric and decisions are made in the best interest of the capital. To mitigate this, regional authorities in Skåne have been advocating for the increased development of other regions in Sweden, rather than their own, in order to develop a sense of solidarity between them. The focus on the mobility system within the domestic borders was perceived as challenging for the actors, as often cross-border cooperation needs to be approached more from an inter-regional and international perspective^[3].

The habit of focusing on powers that are located outside the cross-border regions was not only seen in Sweden. Looking at a broader European perspective, in the experience of the actors, political interest was occasionally channelled too much to Central Europe.

“Typically, there is a tendency in Europe, across all of Europe, to look towards the central part of Europe: Brussels, Germany, France and so on. That applies to us as well, we are in Sweden, Norway and Denmark all looking south towards Brussels, Germany and France and that implies that the interest and engagement from the politicians is also directed that way, in a broad context”^[3]

On the other hand, Danish interviewees stated that they found more interest and urgency towards the Greater Copenhagen region and cross-border transportation developments from Sweden rather than Denmark. As Copenhagen is a geographically closer capital to Skåne than Stockholm is, regional authorities in Skåne were perceived to be far more engaged in further developing cross-border transportation links. Overall, the involved actors on both sides of the Oresund strait agreed that more government interest is needed and that the desires amongst those actors should be better aligned to overcome the current barriers limiting the integration of the cross-border region’s mobility.

Public Transport Operators

Both countries were found to have rather different mindsets in terms of urgency for facilitating enhanced cross-border transportation. In general, interviewees in this group saw the need for cross-border transportation higher on the Swedish side. This particularly becomes evident from comparing statements made by both a Danish interviewee:

“I think, well I’m pretty sure, that cross-border transport on the Oresund bridge is more important from the Swedish point of view than the Danish point of view. They would like to go to Copenhagen, the big town in the area, and Copenhagen Airport is the biggest airport in the area. They push in that direction.”^[10]

And a Swedish interviewee:

“The Swedish side is dependent on Copenhagen Airport, so there is a flow of our customers going to Denmark and we are eager to have a good connection. There are also a lot of people going from Malmo commuting into Copenhagen every morning. In the other direction, this is definitely not that strong. So, Danes don’t have the same urgency of making it work.”^[12]

The interviewed actors all discussed that in the future, the current fixed link between Denmark and Sweden would no longer be adequate to facilitate an inevitable increase in demand for cross-border public transportation, with both Copenhagen Central Station and Copenhagen Airport are already seen as bottlenecks. Reasons for the increase were attributed to both an expected further integration of the region, and a European tendency to promote a modal shift from cars to trains, due to the environmental sustainability benefits that it provides. Consequently, this will force the regional actors to seek solutions to facilitate the increased capacity in public transportation. Even when potential solutions are identified, the operators are reliant on national governmental actors to accept and fund these initiatives, which can lead to difficult negotiations. For example, Skåne needs to ensure that an additional link would not be financed by the average Swedish taxpayer, but rather by the customers making use of it.

“We have actually shown from the Oresund bridge that we can make this system work. If we finance the solution where the commuters pay by road tolls, we could actually make this happen. But we need to have a national guarantee of course, but in the long run, it will not cost more money for Swedish or Danish taxpayers”^[9]

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the division of costs between the actors is determined more through their interest in the project than an equal division in

financial contributions. The unwillingness from the Danish side to invest in developing cross-border transportation infrastructure was mentioned as a major obstacle for its future enhancement ^[10].

EUROMETROPOLIS LILLE–KORTRIJK–TOURNAI

In this section, cross border co-operation is assessed in the view of the integration of public transport networks within the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai territory.

Problem Structure

To achieve successful integration within the Eurometropolis region, a coherent public transportation system is required. Currently, several independent operators supply transportation in the region. For example, there is no single bus operator in the region, with *Ilevia* offering services in and around Lille, *De Lijn* offering services in the region of Kortrijk and *TEC* covering the area of Tournai. To further complicate matters, *TEC* consists of a group of five regional public transport directorates. Furthermore, in France, the regional government is also involved in the management of public transportation, whereas in Belgium this falls under the sole responsibility of the operators. Another issue is that the stakeholders involved tend to focus more on their agenda, rather than compromising, thereby limiting successful integration. The abundance of actors involved can complicate communication and policy and decision-making. Identifying and aligning the various involved actors that operate in this cross-border region is thus a challenging, yet key, undertaking for the Eurometropolis agency, whose role as a mediator requires to facilitate cross-border cooperation and integration within the region.

Extent of Cooperation

Channels for cooperation have been set up by the Eurometropolis agency. In 2017 the agency created a “Mobility Action Group” bringing together elected politicians, citizens, transport operators, and technicians from other Eurometropolis member organisations, as well as other stakeholders. The purpose of this group was to identify which high priority actions could be carried out in cooperation with one another. From 2019 the “Mobility Action Group” redirected their focus to give a broad and precise opinion on the “Master Plan for Public Transport Infrastructures to 2035” for the European Metropolis of Lille. The master

plan envisages a tramway extension from Lille (France) to Mouscron (Belgium), which is the densest populated border area in the Eurometropolis. During this time, the agency has also facilitated the meeting of the motorway managers of the three regions of the Eurometropolis. They had never met prior to that meeting and were not exchanging direct information with each other.

Between 2019 and 2020 the agency engaged in a new strategy looking to “*organise the conditions for the organisation of cross-border mobility governance*” followed by the “*organisation of the governance framework*”. This first began with exchanges with transport operators and organisations with mobility expertise separately. Following this, meetings between key political players were conducted to consolidate future exchanges and priorities. This strategy aims to start with individual stakeholders and then build up towards multi-stakeholder collaboration once information and motivations have been consolidated.

Policy Arrangements Framework

Actors and Coalitions

The list below provides an overview of the relevant actors in the Eurometropolis region as found from the research:

- Eurometropolis (Mediator);
- Hauts-de-France (Regional governance in France);
- Région Wallone (Walloon government)
- Vlaamse Gewest (Flemish government)
- Belgian politicians and civil servants (National, regional and local government agencies/authorities);
- French politicians and civil servants (National, regional and local government agencies/authorities);
- De Lijn (Bus operator in the region of Kortrijk);
- Ilevia (Public transport operator in the region of Lille);
- TEC (Bus operator in the region Tournai);
- SNCB (Train operator in Belgium);
- SNFB (Train operator in France);
- Motorway managers (Found in all of the three regions)

Whilst these actors demonstrate regard for cross-border mobility, the levels of interest and source of motivation differ.

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

The political structure in the Eurometropolis is characterised by three distinct regions: The *Hauts-de-France* (French regional government), *Het Vlaamse Gewest* (Flemish regional government) and *La Région Wallone* (Walloon regional government). Within these three different regions, significant differences can be identified in the way that their political systems are composed. For example, regarding public transportation in Flanders, the transportation networks are designed on a local level, making use of the municipalities that bring together several mobility representatives of that region, who can then negotiate with the responsible bus operator to design transportation networks. In contrast, in Wallonia, this is arranged on a broader regional level (through *La Région Wallone*), and in France, the national government is involved in designing local and regional public transportation systems. These structural differences were found to complicate cross-border communications as the actors had to deal with varying levels of authority.

The different regions within the Eurometropolis region were also seen to struggle in aligning their goals. Different priorities resulted in different levels of involvement in the process of integrating cross-border public transportation. It was found to be difficult for common ground to be found between cross-border actors on a municipal level when these actors could not envision the benefits of proposed cross-border projects for their regions.

“They might not be able to see beyond the end of their nose and thus might be missing the bigger picture, but this is indeed more difficult”^[8]

Furthermore, the Eurometropolis can be seen as an organisation, consisting of civil servants, that creates a cross-border platform for all the involved actors to interact and stimulate integration. However, Eurometropolis is reliant on the support of the national and regional politicians in the three regions. Despite successful cross-border mobility projects, the differences within the regions of the Eurometropolis area are still very evident, and the inhabitants tend to limit their daily operations to those regions. This is emphasised by one of the interviewed actors when discussing Eurometropolis’ incentive of a borderless region:

“It is obviously a meritorious attempt from Eurometropolis, and I support it. But of course, it is what the French call ‘Bassin de vie’, the reservoir in which you live,

and very often this is limited to the borders or even within the borders. Someone from Kortrijk doesn't go shopping or to the hospital in Waregem, which is a city quite close. People tend to focus on a specific region or area to do everything”^[6]

People were, therefore, said to plan their daily activities on the facilities provided within their regions. This was perceived to be a limiting factor by city officials and “*exactly the thing [those borders] that we try to break down*”^[6].

Public Transport Operators

In the case of the train operators, the mindset was found to be different. Whereas the SNCF was said to be “*more oriented towards high-speed long-distance rail*”^[5] within France, the SNCB was “*more oriented towards short-distance public-service trains*”^[5] both domestically and internationally. One interviewee attributed this to the geography of the two countries stating “*we are more in need of international transport because a small country like us, we travel 100km and we are in another country. International travel is thus very important. It is a public service*”^[7]. However, both organisations were said to give precedence towards domestic travel over international travel. The responsibilities were also somewhat different. Although both the SNCF and the SNCB are both providers and operators of cross-border rail services, they have different responsibilities in contract negotiations. Whilst contracts are negotiated by a state department on behalf of the SNCB, the regional SNCF branch negotiates contracts in conjunction with regional authorities. In this case, it is SNCF Hauts-de-France negotiating alongside the Haut-de-France regional authority.

Three main bus operators supply the public transport in Eurometropolis: *Ilevia*, *De Lijn* and *TEC*. The bus operators seemingly focus predominantly on their regions and only have a very limited interaction as there is currently only one fixed cross-border bus link between Mouscron and Roubaix which is managed by *Ilevia* and *TEC* (Eurometropole, 2020). *TEC* buses, therefore, pass through parts of Flanders but do not stop there, although a future stop in Flanders “*would be interesting*” according to one interviewee^[11].

Resources

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

The financial resources available to the Eurometropolis agency was stated to be from EU INTERREG funding, subject to approval. Although the budget is steady, it remains limited and has hindered the enrolment of potential public transportation projects. The looming presence of budget restrictions has often taken precedence over the agency's overarching aims of cross-border "coherence and mutualisation". Furthermore, financial funds for the regional actors were made available through the regional governments, Flanders and Wallonia, in Belgium and the national government in France. Whilst these budgets are set, municipalities can allocate whatever part of their budget to mobility services. This means that future public transportation plans need to be made based on current budget figures as the budgets will not increase^[6].

Moreover, it was mentioned that resources are not aligned on a regional level, leading to complications in terms of available resources for regional infrastructure. For example, within Flanders, there are differences between the frequency and volt capacity of the train tracks^[4]. Without a common alignment on the specifications of physical infrastructure within the Eurometropolis (e.g. voltage capacities and train track frequencies), the actors cannot fully utilise their resources within their regions and face challenges in expanding operations into neighbouring regions. Additionally, smaller and more rural municipalities within the Eurometropolis region were found to have access to fewer resources for facilitating public transportation than larger municipalities.

"This is a completely different challenge in terms of public transportation because you have to deal with larger areas and smaller towns, who lie farther away from each other and have less resources available. This is a very well-known duality in our region which also brings challenges"^[6]

Resources concerning available information were found to be lacking. The Eurometropolis agency was still looking to investigate whether local private sector companies organised the mobility of employees, particularly those living across the border, and how they did this. There are also significant knowledge gaps regarding mobility and transportation flows between Flanders, Wallonia and Lille. For example, when Kortrijk maps out its plans for

new public transportation networks, it uses the mobility flow profile of Flanders. In this process there is only *“limited space for insights of transportation flows that cross-language borders and very limited insights of transportation flows that go to France, so consequently, it is very difficult to take this into account”*^[4]. Furthermore, there were seemingly more exchanges of information if the involved actors had an established and working relationship.

The local private sector plays an important part in the agencies work as they are major drivers of the cross-border regional economy. A lack of understanding of organised mobility of companies’ employees is problematic and signals a struggle to understand the intended impact group. The ability to *“update the mobility diagnosis”*^[1], in other words, to understand the root causes of public mobility issues within the Eurometropolis, is an ongoing process and is constantly being reassessed. Emphasis was put on learning from the public containment period following COVID-19, which could shape cross-border mobility within the cross-border region. Although there are gaps in knowledge on public mobility, there remains the capacity within the agency to research these mobility issues and to devise actionable plans to lobby to other relevant stakeholders.

Public Transport Operators

The availability of financial resources was not found to be an issue for the SNCB. As international rail contracts are drawn up by the state, financial matters are negotiated, resolved and agreed upon by the state who remains up to date with the capabilities of the SNCB. This means that no financial burdens can be passed down to the SNCB. This, however, does not prevent disputes between the SNCF and the SNCB on financial matters. Financial contributions towards the maintenance and running of material is calculated via an algorithm using track distance which serves each country, with an undisclosed coefficient. Although it was stated that there was *“not much leeway”* ^[5] in changing this coefficient, given that the algorithm is contractually agreed upon, the SNCB is in favour of renegotiating it due to changing circumstances.

“We want to change the coefficient because we feel as though it is adapted to operational conditions. The conditions have now changed so we need to adapt to it. The new coefficient would require less from us, which the SNCF doesn’t want.”

So there are different interpretations of the contract. We know that we'll have to come to an agreement, but we will need to discuss it first"^[7]

The tension behind the allocation sharing of resources was found to be dependent on the product, structure and the availability of rolling stock that each train operator had. Whereas the local train service did not experience any financial and information sharing issues, the TGV line did. This could be attributed to the fact that unlike with the local train service, the SNCB did not possess any TGV rolling stock. As a result, this has caused an imbalanced power dynamic.

"Whoever has the material has the greater weight behind them. In this case, it is the SNCF... We have no power in the relationship. We can't put out a train." ^[7]

The imbalance of power in this relationship has had negative implications on information sharing between the two train operators. As the TGV is operated by the SNCF, they hold all information relevant to the service, including passenger numbers and carriage occupancy numbers. These figures, which are important to the marketing and vending of the service, were said to be difficult to attain, with the SNCB having to wait 10 days for the figures for the previous month, with no possibility of receiving them sooner.

"The SNCB is blinded on so many things. We do the maximum we can as we can't close the door on this relationship" ^[7]

Although the balance of power was more equal for the local train service, the exchange of information was still not seamless. Internal politics in France was said to have had an impact of the responsiveness of actors within the SNCF. In particular, the recent process of reforms of the SNCF has left the SNCB "*paralysed*"^[5], being unable to communicate at times and organise matters with their counterparts in France. However, despite complications in sharing information, the SNCB does have the freedom to conduct research to gain insights into marketing and product potential to present to their partners. But this was said to be an uncommon practice as projects are usually initiated by the state. The bus operators were found to readily share resources in the regions they operate in. However, in cross-border settings, there was limited or no cooperation. Whilst both *De Lijn* and *TEC* cross the border, there are no shared commercial offers from the two bus operators^[6].

Rules of the Game

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

Decisions are made by all of the fourteen members of the Eurometropolis agency, consisting of four different layers of governance (i.e. states, regions, provinces and inter-municipalities). Whilst these political bodies have been given the authority to bring together political and non-political actors to stimulate sustainable cross-border mobility, there is no mandate for legislative political action. In other words, the political actors and the non-political actors still need to agree on conditions. Furthermore, whilst the current policy commitments are clear, transparent and feasible, they are not binding, relying on goodwill and collective intelligence to have opportunities to further progress the cross-border cooperation.

“Everybody has their own autonomy and possibility to arrange things separate from each other and while autonomy is good, structural consultation can ensure that at an early stage mutual challenges can be solved and mutual interests can be explored”^[11]

Additionally, the bureaucracy in which the Eurometropolis agency operates in was found to be lacking political support. One of the interviewees remembered attending a meeting where there was no alignment, and rather than sharing the responsibility between the involved actors, it was passed off to other actors. The politicians seemed to simply lack the required level of involvement to get involved in the integration goals^[8].

The absence of sufficient political support base was experienced to be a limiting factor for the output of cross-border projects initiated by Eurometropolis. This was perceived to be an obstacle as several interviewees believed that the work done by Eurometropolis is needed and that progress has been made in integrating cross-border public transportation^[6].

On a more local level, the rules of the game were noticed to be different between the involved actors. For example, regional differences in legislation initially prevented the tram bus between Flanders and Brussels to be legally operational. Moreover, municipalities with larger populations were seen as more powerful players, whereas the smaller municipalities were more prone to being dependent on more powerful players to get the required support for decisions and actions.

“They [Lille] have a different dynamic than we [Kortrijk], it’s a bit like David and Goliath, but this makes sense of course because it’s also the story of a metropolis and a provincial city”^[6]

Certain projects that are desired by the smaller municipalities need to have enough support from bigger players to be placed on the agenda. The problem is that cooperation is currently limited by faltering communication and contacts between the three main regions. The Mayor from one of the municipalities believed that Eurometropolis could be an adequate partner in facilitating this^[8].

Public Transport Operators

As both the SNCF and SNCB are nationalised rail operators, they both have the mandate to make joint policy decisions. In the case of the SNCB, international contracts are negotiated by a state department, which carries a strong political mandate. Moreover, the SNCB does not participate in the discussion of mobility plans of the local municipalities^[4]. When looking at the commitments which have been made, there are currently three which are currently ongoing: The regional train service serving the Hauts-de-France region, Tournai and Kortrijk; the TGV line (Paris-Lille-Brussels); and the Thalys line (Paris-Brussels). Only the latter commitment has no bearing on the Eurometropolis cross-border region.

The structures of both organisations are different from each other, both internally and externally. As stated by an interviewee, *“the SNCF is a vast and complex structure, and we [SNCB] have a small structure”^[7]*, this, however, was not found to complicate interactions as a strong understanding exists between the two. It was, however, the tenure of personnel working at the SNCF which seemed to cause more complications.

“What we see with the SNCF is a constant rotation of people. People stay between 3 to 5 years in their role. I will continue to stay here for all my life. So we see a big difference on the SNCF side and depending on who is working on the role, we see a different approach and development”^[7].

Additionally, whereas the SNCB has a centralised structure, the SNCF is decentralised on a regional level. As a result, this affected how negotiation tables appeared.

“We have different models between France and Belgium. In Belgium, it is the federal-state which negotiates a contract, they understand the transport specifications we have here, and it is up to the SNCB to fulfil that contract and to organise trains towards Lille. In France, it is the regions which negotiate the contract, but in reality, it is the SNCF”^[5]

As seen in the quote above, there are two bodies which work on regional mobility in France, the regional SNCF branch, and the regional authority itself. In the case of the Eurometropolis, this was both SNCF Hauts-de-France and the region of Hauts-de-France which has a mobility department. One interviewee described the complex structure as such:

“We have a third partner [Haut-de-France region] at the table. From their side, the region must be involved. It is a political power. Therefore, there is a duplication of each function. Someone who follows the operations from both SNCF Haut-de-France and the Haut-de-France regional authority. So, as a result, there are two parties who speak to us directly”^[5]

This, however, was not said to be a cause for issue when the SNCB had to communicate with the SNCF. The researchers were unable to find if this caused issues between the SNCF and the region.

The interviewees expressed the view that the 2011 European White paper legislation has greatly affected the relationship that train operators have with each other. The liberalisation of long-distance rail, a result of the 2011 legislation, created more competition between train operators, producing an uneven playing field as a consequence. As a result, smaller companies such as the SNCB were made unable to compete against larger companies like the SNCF.

“What has changed a lot is that there is more of a notion of competition between countries, which didn’t exist before. I don’t see what it [the 2011 European White Paper] has done well, or what it has improved.”^[7]

Regarding public bus travel, in the cross-border regions where overlaps between the bus operators occur, a reciprocal service is expected between the bus operators involved. For

example, if *De Lijn* covers a part of Wallonia, without receiving any form of allowance, *TEC* is expected to offer a similar service in a different town^[4]. The mandate of the bus operators varies in the three main regions due to differences in the political landscape. For example, in Flanders, there is more local interaction between *De Lijn* and local authority representatives, who are organised through a council for that specific region. In France, the bus transportation is arranged on a more national level. However, even though *De Lijn* is engaged in local cooperation, it still has a relatively strong mandate, as one of the interviewees mentioned that limited budgets of local authorities negatively impact the bargaining power they can bring to the table with the bus operator^[6]. After an agreement between the parties is reached, the actual transportation is then carried out by private partners who have to follow the lines set out by *De Lijn* completely.

Discourses

INTERREG, Politicians and Civil Servants

The evergrowing prominence of nationalist and anti-immigration discourse across Europe has had a negative effect on the Eurometropolis agency, with its work on cross-border transportation and for its *raison etre* in general. The discourse on cross-border mobility during the COVID-19 global pandemic also had a mixed impact. Whereas COVID-19 has caused most European borders to be closed and has been used as an opportunity to further anti-integration discourse in Europe, the agency believes that the spread of the virus highlights the interaction and interdependence of cross-border people and businesses. There is a belief from the agency that whereas European and national politics are heading away from European integration, the majority Eurometropolis citizens have a desire for increased freedom and cross-border flow. However, without the cooperation of politicians, who are increasingly wary of encouraging cross-border mobility, the success of public transport integration is limited. As a result, the Eurometropolis agency feels as though they have to double its efforts in promoting and developing these cross-border flows.

Furthermore, whilst all involved actors saw the importance of integrating public transport within the Eurometropolis region, relevant stakeholders that can contribute to this were identified either too late or not at all^[11]. However, the shared sense of urgency does not automatically reflect the views of the public transportation users system. Many commuters from France that work in Kortrijk were found to prefer carpooling over public

transportation. Possible explanations given for this are the simple preference for carpooling, which is a rapidly growing trend in France, and the absence of efficient complimentary public transportation from the city centre to peripheral business parks^[4]. Public transportation, especially bus transportation, was also found to be struggling with a bad image as it is mostly used by either students or financially-constrained people who cannot afford other alternatives.

“This is an image that is vivid amongst the community and it can also be observed when looking at the actual users of the bus. Take away these groups [students and low-income families] and you take away 90% its users”^[4]

The idea of a fully integrated ‘borderless’ Eurometropolis is still being challenged by several regulations that are out of the direct responsibility of those actors advocating this ideal. This becomes evident when one of the interviewees shared an example of a special train ticket offer:

“The SNCB has weekend tickets directed at people that want to shop in a different city. These tickets are fairly cheaply priced, and the only condition is that you need to do the return trip within the same weekend. This is however not possible for Lille. I can go to Ghent or I can go to Bruges, but not to Lille and this is disappointing and not really fitting”^[6]

Public Transport Operators

Overall, there was no apparent urgency by the train providers to further develop and integrate cross-border train networks, although they were not disregarding it as it still held some importance to their organisational purpose. For the SNCB it was said that *“the SNCB is focused on Belgium... the focus has always been on the national”^[5]*. Likewise, it was perceived in interviews that the SNCF was also primarily focused on domestic travel, with extensions of lines across national borders being subjacent in priority.

The Europe-wide discourse on closed borders, which has been particularly been promoted by the European far-right parties in objection to immigration, European integration and terrorism, was found to affect cross-border rail services. It is especially the latter example which has caused the most strain on cross-border integration between France and Belgium.

After the terror attacks on Paris in November 2015, it was explained that interest in furthering development in cross-border transportation between France and Belgium was drastically reduced due to “plummeted”^[7] demand in such services. Furthermore, after the service had eventually resumed normality in its passenger numbers, additional security had been put in place for specific lines between France and Belgium, which were not in place for other international routes. Psychological trauma has remained from the attack which has created adverse associations for Belgium-France routes. This association does much to harm any further attempts to integrate transportation networks between the two countries.

“The security since 2016. We haven’t moved on from that. There are still controls at Brussels where we close all platforms after use. There’s now only one entrance. There are police controls checking baggages. There is a sentiment of security that has remained for international travel and especially for TGV. For the Brussels to Amsterdam line, it is a lot less, and we don’t know why. It’s psychological.”^[7]

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the national discourses surrounding travel and closing borders were found to have had profound implications on both domestic and international travel rail travel, with volumes of both being depleted and operations being made “hard to organise”^[5]. As a result, there is no sense of urgency to continue to develop cross-border initiatives. What has seemingly developed from the COVID-19 pandemic is a lack of solidarity between the SNCF and SNCB, with the SNCF putting their interests ahead of their partners.

“With the deconfinement in France, there is a desire to start rolling out services again. But we don’t want that as we are not deconfined in Belgium and have no passengers to service. But the SNCF needs to come to Brussels because we have a maintenance depot. So we are going to have to put out trains and it’s going to cost us because we don’t have any customers”^[7]

The lack of solidarity between the two train operators predates the ongoing pandemic. It has already been stated that there are issues in information sharing. However, the nature of the relationship between the SNCF and SNCB in cross-border services, especially for the TGV line, diminishes solidarity on monetary matters, with particular regards to tariffs.

“We have commercial differences. The SNCF markets itself to companies with special tariffs. We are partners when it comes to providing transport, but we are competitors when it comes to selling tickets. Whoever sells the ticket gets the commission. So what do the SNCF do? They come and sell in Belgium. They produce formulas and offer tariffs that we cannot do. Only they can sell them.”

This issue of different tariffs is one that has also been highlighted by the Eurometropolis agency^[1] and stems from the different interests of the two operators. As previously stated, whereas the SNCB is primarily public service-oriented, the SNCF is commercially oriented, especially on their international TGV routes. The lack of solidarity in this TGV partnership goes as far as warnings of withdrawal in the upcoming contract renegotiations if contract terms do not fall in their favour financially for tariffs and maintenance fees. This was made worse by the 2010 European White Paper with an interviewee stating that as a result of it:

“The SNCF has told us that at the termination of this contract, at the renegotiation of the contract, they will go at this alone with their own train license, that they no longer need us. They will decide the transport plan. They will become the sole transporter from A to Z and we can just be providers in Belgium”^[7]

Discussion

The following discussion will aim to build on the results, focusing on the conditions that lead to co-operation formation, co-operation effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction, and linking them to previous studies. The discussion will start by outlining similarities and differences between the two studied cases in a case comparison.

CASE COMPARISON

<i>Dimensions/Cases</i>	<i>Greater Copenhagen</i>	<i>Eurometropolis Lille-Tournai-Kortrijk</i>
<i>General Cross-Border Dependencies</i>	Denmark: Moderate Sweden: Moderate	France: Low Belgium: High
<i>Actors and Coalitions</i>	Similar political structure. Public transport organised nationally in Denmark whilst organised regionally in Sweden. All actors within the cross-border region are involved with a clear structure	Different political and public transport structures. Belgium is politically divided into Walloon and Flanders. Public transport in France is decentralised and organised by regional authorities and regional transportation branch. Public transport in Belgium is structured differently in the two regions.
<i>Resources</i>	The availability and sharing of knowledge were seen as widely available and easy. Rolling stock was more complicated due to different levels of ownership between Skånetrafiken and DSB. The willingness to align financial resources was very project dependent.	Actors were not unwilling to share information, but the status of their relationship proved to be of importance. Moreover, relevant actors were not always easily identified. Unequal resources between SNCB and SNCF in rolling stock. Financial resources were shared either very limited or not, depending on the project.
<i>Rules of the game</i>	Greater Copenhagen is reliant on both national and European politicians as they cannot come up with policies themselves, their job is arguably more as a facilitator. Even though the concept of European integration was seen as an indirect factor, the origin of several policies could be traced back to it.	Same applies to Eurometropolis who operates on the same mandate. Furthermore, rules of the game were strongly influenced by the authority of and the relationships with various actors on regional levels. The influence of the concept of European integration was found seemingly less present in policy-making (actors were positive, but are

<i>Discourses</i>	Both the refugee crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the discourse regarding open borders due to the reintroduction of border controls as a consequence. Whereas the national strategy was regarded to be in favour of cross-border cooperation, it did not always translate to what was perceived to be the best for cross-border cooperation by regional actors. Public transport operators see an urgency in further enhancing cross-border mobility	limited by the focus of their authorities on its areas). Both anti-immigration tendencies and the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on open border policies. However, COVID-19 also emphasised the importance of well-established cross-border relationships. National and regional authorities showed a strong focus on their regions. Lack of urgency for more engaged cross-border cooperation by public transport operators an impediment for further development.
<i>National policies stimulating?</i>	While national policies were found to be in favour of stimulating regional development, it was required to be of national interest as well. Especially in Skåne, the misalignment between national and regional interests was seen as an obstacle for cross-border integration.	National policies were found to be very much focused on their distinct regions or countries, limiting the possibilities for actors willing to stimulate cross-border activities.
<i>General picture of cross-border cooperation</i>	The cooperation can be seen as well-established and resilient. Despite some inevitable obstacles, the actors have already managed several past problems and (almost) all see the benefit of even further development in cross-border cooperation	The cooperation shows great potential but is currently limited by national/regional interests and lack of communication. Actors are eager to engage in cross-border projects but are not always backed with the required mandate.

Table 3 - Case comparison outlining the similarities and differences between the two case studies (adapted from Wiering et al., 2010)

THE PERSISTENT BORDERS IN CROSS-BORDER MANAGEMENT

The cross-border interactions seen in both case studies demonstrate characteristics seen in Martinez's (1994) borderland typology, with both being reminiscent to interdependent borderlands to varying degrees. The case of Greater Copenhagen shows more indications that it is closer to an integrated borderland, with people living in Greater Copenhagen, predominantly on the Swedish side, having deeper and wider interactions (social and economic interactions) with each other than those of the Eurometropolis citizens and organisations. The integration and coordination of structures and interests, both in a societal and organizational context, has gone further within Greater Copenhagen. In fact, the three stages the organisation uses to initiate projects is rather similar to Matthiessen's (2000; 2004) five phases of cross-border management, with only a higher emphasis on a

narrower alignment of interests with the latter. However, there are persisting borders which have prevented a fully integrated cross-border region with regards to its public transportation network.

There are often more to borders than the lines of demarcation seen on political maps. In the cases studied, physical enactments of these political borders were found, both in the form of border passport checks. Such controls go against the visions of the European Union, the Schengen Agreement and INTERREG to continue to integrate European cross-border regions. Although the act of presenting a passport at Hyllie Station in Malmo, or being checked separately at Brussels-Midi station may bare little to the conscious of European travellers, it is the normalisation of such an act that undermines the efforts of cross-border managers (Economist, 2017; Schacht, 2019). This subversion is further highlighted when considering the words of Herrschel (2011, p.173) who states, *“borders signify difference... in a European context, borders have taken a central role both in daily realities ‘on the ground’ and as more symbolic signifiers of either division or integration... Borders are thus magnifying glasses as well as indicators and instruments of identifying and developing difference, identities and senses of belonging across all scales”*. The border checks between France and Belgium, and Sweden and Denmark, regardless of the rationale, are an overt reminder that there is a difference between these neighbouring countries and people have to be ordered as a result. For the cross-border managers interviewed in this study, they must manage these borders that undermine the purpose of their work. Following the proclamation of Walker and Brewer (2009), these managers can not eliminate these external hindering forces, but they can manage to mitigate the detrimental effect of the external environment through case-appropriate management techniques and strategies, such as “prospecting and defending” (Lussier, 1996, p.140).

As well as physical border enactments, borders can also be intangible and invisible to the immediate eye (Newman, 2006). The act of removing physical borders within Europe has often coincided with the emergence or prominence of new intangibles ones (Medeiros, 2018). Considering the “bordering process”, the process of ordering people and things, and the forces that encourage them, many intangible borders could be seen in this study. For example, the possession of resources was found to be a bordering process in both cases. The

stakeholders that possessed rolling stock held power over the stakeholders who did not. In this ordering of “haves” and “have-nots”, the power of the “haves” transcended into other aspects such as the control of information, thus exacerbating the inequality in cross-border relationships.

MANAGING “ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONS”

Perkmann and Sum (2002) introduce the term “asymmetrical relations” in cross-border partnerships, signifying the inequality between partners in aspects such as resources, power, dependence and even labour flows. When it comes to managing asymmetrical relations, two main factors were identified in this research that was at the basis of these relationships. Firstly, there is the issue of varying levels of resources available to the actors, inarguably influencing the balance of the relationships between them. Whilst international law is generally accepted as binding in international relationships, to facilitate a framework for stable and organised cross-border cooperation, it does not always work because much of the existing laws are consent-based, with countries not always being obliged to abide by them (Guo, 2018). As a consequence, managers can thus find themselves in a situation where the amount of available resources (i.e fiduciary, rolling stock and knowledge) determines the equity of the relationship. Having access to resources is of tremendous importance, for example, having information on transportation flows is vital in optimising future mobility plans (Schmidt, 2014). Hence, the accessibility to resources proved to be an important factor for the managers when negotiating. This became evident from the leverage that the SNCF has over the SNCB during negotiations, due to the latter’s lack of highspeed rolling stock, and the dependence that Flemish public transport councils have on the size of their budgets with regards to their bargaining power when attempting to come to an agreement with *De Lijn* over future bus lines.

The importance of resources is also highlighted in cross-border relations, where a smaller country like Belgium, with access to fewer resources, was more dependent on France, with access to significantly more resources. This perception is also mirrored by Rockmann et al. (2019), who argue that the actor that has control over the resource that another actor needs can grant the actor in possession of the resource considerable power. Moreover, Bolmen and Deal (2018) argue how goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiating amongst

the competing involved actors jockeying for their own interests. Therefore, managers need to map out the political environment. Namely, coalitions form because stakeholders need each other, due to overlapping interests, to survive and this becomes especially apparent in challenging times with limited access to resources (e.g. the current COVID-19 pandemic). In such contexts, power, the ability to make things happen, becomes a vital mechanism and an inevitable product of political interaction between the involved actors, making it important for managers to learn to understand and manage political processes (Bolmen & Deal, 2018). Once aware of this, cross-border managers can enhance their positions in relationships.

Furthermore, another important realisation for managers operating in cross-border environments to have is the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with other actors, and the role that communication and knowledge play in this process. From the research, a strong correlation between the availability of knowledge and the levels of interaction between the stakeholders was identified. This can be seen, for example, with the interviewed mayor, who experienced better information sharing and communication with the municipalities with whom contacts were well-established. The dynamic of this liaison is mutually inclusive, namely, better relationships allow for better communication, and improved communication accounts for stronger relationships. Open communication can boost the creation and sharing of innovative ideas and close relational bonding can enable information sharing which can consequently contribute to the development of innovative initiatives (Lee, Chen, et al. 2008; Moenaert et al. 1994; Nobel & Birkinshaw, 1998). This is especially important for cross-border managers as combining the expertise of the actors on both sides of the border can lead to more innovative actions for integration. Communication can also be seen as a useful tool for establishing relationships in cross-border exchanges, as it can enhance mutual understanding between actors and plays a significant role in facilitating open and easy exchanges. In turn, this can stimulate a sense of affiliation, enhancing a sense of belonging, reducing mistrust and promoting aligned values and expectations between partners in different cultural contexts (Akrouf, 2014).

The second factor that disturbs the balance between the relationships of the involved actors is political power, especially amongst the civil servants working in the Greater Copenhagen

and Eurometropolis organisations. Both a lack of political interest and support and a narrow focus on national or central European politics has proven to limit the successful exploitation of the cross-border integration opportunities. This observation fits along the lines of the argument made by Verhey (2013), who argues that the tension between civil servants and politicians seems to have grown in the past years. According to Verhey (2013), it is important that the roles of these two actors are clearly defined and adds that the politicisation of the civil service, if proportionate and well-embedded within the daily operations of the civil servant, can have a beneficial effect on the democratic process. This view is supported by Bauer and Ege (2013, p. 193), who state that “*we thus see an ever less politicised civil service, in an ever more politicised organisational context*”. Furthermore, Kaiser and Meyer (2013) discuss how recent developments in Europe led to a new strengthened national focus by the member states. As discussed, this national focus was also experienced by the cross-border managers, who as a consequence were not always seeing eye-to-eye with their national authorities in regards to views on cross-border integration. Better integrating these managers through institutionalising joint management can improve cross-border management, as it stimulates flexibility, multiple accountability and strategic planning at local and regional scales (Guo, 2018; Noble, 2000).

DISCOURSES AND MINDSETS AS A CHALLENGE TO CROSS-BORDER MANAGEMENT

Discourse, both internally and externally, was found to have a great influence on the management of cross-border public integration initiatives. This study found that the national discourses surrounding open borders had a big impact on the demand and interest in cross-border networks and their further development in both cases. In both cases, two ongoing events have fueled discourses with reservations towards open-border policies, the 2015 refugee crisis and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, in the case of the Eurometropolis, the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris also led to the heightening of border restrictions. Van Houtum and Bueno Lacy (2017) assert that recent events such as terror attacks and large flows of immigration have led to the rise of a “*political extreme as the new normal*” with countries acting irrationally by imposing travel restrictions, exiting stable political unions and declaring states of emergencies. It is fair to assert that political extremes concerning foreign policy have major implications on cross-border public services. An

aspect that makes these matters worse is the increasingly horizontal national media focus on EU issues such as open border policies across the continent, where such topics have become subject to intense media debate within countries (Wessler et al., 2008).

Different priorities in the agendas of the involved actors were proven to be especially challenging for cross-border management. For example, in the Greater Copenhagen region, the Danish side is centred around the nation's capital, whereas on the Swedish side, the national government is situated much farther away. Consequently, proposals on the Danish side were found to more aligned with the national interests, whereas Skåne had a harder time finding the required national support. Consequently, whereas there was initially a shared sense of urgency in enhancing cross-border transportation, the urgency from the Danish side has decreased over time whilst transportation has remained high on the Swedish agenda. This could potentially be explained through the Danes achieving their initial goal of catching up with other competing European metropolises, and the Swedes becoming increasingly reliant on that region, seeing a shift in the initial balance. Hence, cross-border managers need to realise that different national or cultural perceptions influence the mindsets of actors (Luthans & Doh, 2018). In addition to that, as the cross-border managers are operating within a mandate set out to them by politicians, it is important to map the political terrain first and identify the important players to get a better understanding of the rules of the (cross-border) game (Bolmen and Deal, 2018).

The challenges that national political discourses pose on public services and ideals are not a new phenomenon. One can compare periods in the United Kingdom under Margret Thatcher in the 1980s and Tony Blair in the late 1990s and 2000s. Under Thatcher's government, public services became depleted and increasingly privatized and fragmented, the ideals of public provision and responsibility as she proclaimed that there was "*no such thing as society*" (Holland, 2013, p.6). In contrast, Blair's election in 1997 saw the return of these ideals, encouraging collaborative management and relationships between previously fragmented public service units through a collaborative discourse emphasising the importance of trusting and mutually beneficial relationships (Clarence and Painter, 1998). A key aspect here was how public services were being framed in political and media discourses. As highlighted by Lakoff (2010), who used the example of the environment, how

public goods and rights are framed affects what those working within those sectors can do to optimise and improve the ongoing situation. In the case of environmental action, conservative political and media discourse towards has developed an effective framing mechanism to stagnate measures to combat pollution and global warming (Lakoff, 2010).

The national framing of open-borders concerning migration, terrorism and the COVID-19 pandemic has diverted the attention away from increased public transportation integration. Such negative framing, typically coming from more conservative political voices, can be seen as an “external barrier”, a force which has been previously studied in cross-border cooperation studies. However, discursal “internal barriers” were also perpetrated by the cross-border actors themselves, as found with the Skåne regional authority shifting attention towards developing neighbouring regions rather than their own, for example. The effect of barriers such as these on cross-border cooperation and management has been documented by Kurowska-Pysz, Castanho and Naranjo Gómez (2018) and has parallels to those of this study. Whereas internal barriers have the most impact on the social tasks such as negotiation, planning and information sharing, external barriers have a greater impact on economic factors such as funding and revenue (Kurowska-Pysz et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This study sought out to identify and explain the factors hindering the successful management of integrating national transportation networks in cross-border regions. Following an investigation and comparative analysis of two INTERREG funded cross-border initiatives, Greater Copenhagen and Eurometropolis Lille-Tournai-Kortrijk, the researchers were able to identify several hindering factors.

Where physical borders have largely been removed between the countries in question, new intangible borders have emerged. These borders were found in all of the four fields (actor relations, actor resources, rules of the game and discourses) that were investigated. Being more abstract of nature, they challenge managers in different ways, needing to be identified first before they can be broken down. Especially in cross-border environments, these borders can easily arise without managers even being aware of it. Moreover, countries reinstating forms of border checks, the ideal and work towards integrated border regions with conjoint transportation networks has been undermined. Although some of these intangible borders are systematic and cultural, stemming from the norms in place on both sides of the border, other borders, including recent physical border checks, have emerged from national discourses. In particular, the political and media discourses surrounding open-borders in Europe, especially in wake of recent events surrounding immigration, terrorism and COVID-19, have had major implications on the urgency and interest in further developing cross-border transportation networks in these two case studies.

Asymmetric relations between cross-border partners were also found to hinder the successful management of cross-border transportation networks. Inequalities in resources, particularly rolling stock, was the greatest barrier in an egalitarian and mutually constructive relationship between cross-border partners. These inequalities, usually caused by other factors such as organisational and public sector structures, were found to be key in perpetuating power dynamics and were worsened by recent European legislation liberalising long-distance rail transportation. Consequently, the overarching European goal of more integrated border regions, although has experienced much success in its realisation, is being kept from reaching greater heights.

Furthermore, the apparent preference of actors to focus on their own agendas first has had a negative impact on the potential of cross-border integration. By focusing too much on their regions, actors are prone to overlook the bigger picture of what enhanced cooperation with neighbouring cross-border regions can provide them. In all countries that were researched, a strong focus was found on domestic interests, limiting further implementations of European cross-border integration. Even if the cross-border managers that have an international mindset, they still need to have a clear understanding of the national discourses in both their own and their neighbouring countries to gain an adequate understanding of the political processes. Namely, since these managers are predominantly civil servants, the freedom in which they can operate will always be restrained, to various extents, by the parameters set out by national politicians.

Whilst this study has aimed to pave out new ways of understanding cross-border cooperation, there is still much more research to be done. Although this study has a narrow focus on public transportation management, the generalisability of this study can allow the findings to be related to other cross-border sectors. Transportation and mobility can be seen as the early phases of the integration process of cross-border regions as they establish the 'physical link' between them. Consequently, it often generates high levels of urgency amongst the actors involved. However, future research is needed to determine to what extent the barriers identified in this study can be used to assist managers in ensuring even further cross-border integration in other domains (e.g. health care services). Finally, this study identified significant similarities between the experienced challenges from the 2015 refugee crisis and the current COVID-19 pandemic. By highlighting these similarities, it may be easier for future research to pick up on these trends and provide solutions for better mitigation and crisis challenges.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GENERAL FORMAT

Interview Questions for <involved actor>, <occupation>

1. What for you is “success” with regards integrating public transportation networks between country x and country y?
 - Do you think this view is aligned with other stakeholders?
 - Where do you believe you have been successful? Examples?
 - Where do you believe you have been unsuccessful? Examples?
2. Could you describe to us the process of getting stakeholders together on joint initiatives with regards to public transport? (**Involved Actors**)
 - Who needs to be involved?
 - How do you meet?
 - How are decisions made?
 - What is the role of <INTERREG organisation> in this?
 - Any examples of such an initiative?
3. With involved actors, how would you describe the level of involvement from each of them in achieving public transportation goals? (**Involved Actors**)
 - How willing are actors to redistribute resources or to link up resources to achieve goals?
 - Is there an existence of a feeling of solidarity between and within actors? / What is the relationship like between actors?
4. Do you experience any issues with the various levels of authority across involved actors? (**Involved Actors**)
 - If so, how do you manage this?
 - When and why do you compromise?
5. How available are the sufficient financial resources and knowledge to achieve project goals? (**Actor Resources**)
 - How are these resources distributed between actors?
 - Does the distribution of resources affect influence over the project?
 - Are the resources given to you sufficient in order to manage projects in the best possible way?

6. Do you think you have a sufficient mandate to make joint policies with your involved actors? **(Rules of the game)**
7. Are there currently commitments that are binding, clear, transparent and feasible?
(Rules of the game)
8. To what extent does the Supra-national (European) legislative framework(s) influence what can be achieved with cross-border public transportation? **(Rules of the game)**
9. Are there any structural and/or juridical differences between <country x> and <country y> complicating successful project cooperation and implementation?
(Rules of the game)
10. Is there an existence of a feeling of urgency to achieve successful cross-border initiatives? **(Discourse)**
 - What determines the level of urgency for the actors/ how does it relate to their involvement?
11. Does the local and national discourse regarding open borders affect your work?
(Discourse)
 - Is integrating cross-border transportation networks a politically sensitive topic in either <country x> and <country y>?
 - If yes, how do you manage this?
 - Are the discourses similar between <country x> and <country y>?
 - To what extent is it <INTERREG organisation> goal/responsibility to solve any potential issues that are a result of these local and national discourses?
12. What do you think are the biggest barriers to achieving <INTERREG organisation>' goals in successfully integrating public transport networks between <country x> and <country y>?