

The cultural policy at the Franco-Belgian border.

How local initiatives and Europe are mutually inter-connected?

BRIT XII

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Every cross-border cooperation requires first to define an original perimeter where to operate – it is original since it does not fit an administrative pre-defined area – and secondly to create new rules to decide together – since the legal systems are based on national systems. When the cooperation last and are part of a long term view, it may even tend to develop a new way of governing, since rules issuing from two national systems of governing have to be coordinated. These cross-border kinds of new dynamic policy making have been studied in other contexts¹.

Our specific interest is concerned with the cooperation based on public activities and linking local public authorities together. In this context, this long term evolution may then tend to a specific process of cross-border governance.

Cross border cooperation has been experienced at the Franco-Belgian border through the INTERREG programs. The European Union pushes French and Belgian authorities closed to the border to develop their economy through the cross-bordering area and to implement their capability to govern this new space². This emphasizes the need for other ways to govern and to work including people coming from both the sides of the border; it builds horizontal links in addition to the classical “municipality, region and state” hierarchy. In the case of European programs, local cross-border links may also be related to European level.

Our global question is then whether a specific local cross-border way of governing emerges due to European impulse and if local coordination is interconnected with European level.

¹ E.a. KOLOSSOV V., (2006), Theoretical limology : new analytical approaches in LUNDEN T., (2006), *Crossing the border, Baltic and East European Studies*, pp.15-37

² INTERREG IV, (2012), Le Programme, (page consulted on 2/07/2012), [online], <http://www.interreg-fwvl.eu/fr/index.php>

More precisely, this paper is based on the implementation and the process driven by a set of cultural projects realized in the fourth INTERREG program at the Franco-Belgian border. It is important to notice that culture has been recently included as a European field; the establishment of the Treaty of European Union gave to EU the competence to encourage cultural actions at the national and the regional levels through its article 128 (the current article 167) in 1991³.

The specific hypotheses of our work may then be refined as follows: cross border local public action may create another way of governing at the border, partly initiated by Europeanization, partly based on local outputs.

In order to test this thesis two theoretical backgrounds are used. First, the process of “Europeanization” will be analyzed. It is currently used to demonstrate how the members of the European Union see their way of governing converge according such mechanisms as policy transfers. A phenomenon of inertia, translation or obedience is then asked. Secondly, the new theories of public policies are applied in order to test how local authorities get capabilities to create new ways of governing, how they may create new ways of ruling and innovate. Both these approaches are connected in order to describe the potential inter-connectivity of the process.

In empirical terms, the paper is based on two sets of surveys concerned with cross-border cultural practices at the Northern Franco-Belgian border. These practices are funded by the European INTERREG IV program. Local authorities and cultural operators from both sides of the border have been interviewed in 2010 and 2012. The projects are Franco Walloon or Franco Walloon and Flemish cultural projects. The set gathers 21 different projects and 50 political, administrative or cultural operators as a whole and the data are based on semi-structured interviews. Let’s note that the two-year interval between the two sets of interviews and the impossibility to interview all the responsible operators or public actors for each project limit the results.

Therefore the aim of the paper is to check whether and how, if ever, local cultural practices, funded by the European Union, change the way of governing at the border.

The article is divided into three parts. First some details are given on the process of governance (1.1), on the INTERREG program (1.2) and on the specificities of the cultural policies (1.3). Secondly the theoretical background including the process of Europeanization (2.1) and the “local empowerment”

³ EUROPEAN COMMISSION, (26/01/2012), Article 167, (consulted on 27/07/2012), [online], http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/article-167_en.htm

(2.2) is developed. Finally these components are applied to a set of INTERREG cultural projects located at the Franco-Belgian border (3.1 & 3.2).

I.

Before detailing the theoretical approaches, some preliminary theoretical and empirical details are requested.

First of all, this piece of research is included in a set of studies based on a process of the so-called governance. In order to avoid any confusion with the World Bank “good governance” or other “corporate governance”, some details are given in order to define why and how to describe this “new” process of governing.

Secondly, some words are given on the INTERREG program and thirdly, the specificities of the cultural policies are given: indeed, they used to be nationally anchored; therefore some words on the evolution of such public policies are useful to understand the cross border realities.

1.1. Governance at the border

Public authorities are now faced with new kinds of public problems, new spaces to operate and new sets of diversified rules : the urban development is a typical illustration of such a complexity⁴. As based on the theories of the networking, original horizontal connections among public and private authorities to solve public problems are underlined. This induces some autonomy of such local operators faced to the national authorities⁵.

A process of governance is seen to emerge when a hierarchical public system of government is no longer applicable. Horizontal relations connect deciders issued from the same area. Vertical relations still exist but they are no longer based on a system of center and periphery since higher levels may be directly connected to lower levels and lower levels may interfere with higher levels without taking into account intermediate levels.

In the case of the European decision making, some regions are seen to act as direct partners of the European Union. States become one partner among other ones⁶. New instruments of regulation and new institutions are created: the creation of the official cross-bordering European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation in 2006 highlights such specific and original inter-connections.

⁴ STONE, C., (1989), *Regime Politics, Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

⁵ LE GALES, P., (2006), *Gouvernance*, in BOUSSAGUET, L., JACQUET, S., RAVINET, P., *Dictionnaire des politiques publiques, Presses de Sciences Po*, pp.242-250

⁶ MARCHAND-TONAL X., SIMOULIN V., (2004), *Les Fonds européens régionaux en Midi-Pyrénées : gouvernance polycentrique, locale ou en trompe-l'œil ?*, *Politique Européenne*, n°12, pp.22-41

When implemented, cross-border projects include not only European frames but also national, regional and local rules from two or three countries, the cooperation of two or three foreign local authorities and in several cases the coordination of other operators such as enterprises or cultural ones. When various but permanent relations connect the operators of both sides of the border, when local punctual arrangements tend to be maintained, when some kind of a common cross-border view arises, some habits are taken and become anchored and a process of local governance may be under study.

Therefore, the process of governance does not consist of a punctual arrangement or a specific solution for one public problem; it requires a long term process including various public and private operators, horizontal and vertical interconnections, creating its own set of rules – innovating since it includes rules issued from both sides of the border. A so-called “cross border governance” is seen to connect two systems of government, and draws a new spatial perimeter for the public policies – a new “public” space - frames rules and routines and invents –, at least partly - a new way of governing.

1.2. The INTERREG programs and the cultural policy

The European integration since the European Treaty of Rome in 1957⁷ involves the will to tackle the economic and social inequalities between states. The given solution influenced the creation of a common economic market and encouraged people’s mobility within the Community. Then, these decisions concerned borders between Member States without saying it explicitly⁸.

In 1972, the European Community shaped a financial instrument to implement cross-border operations. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created in order to sustain regional development including cross-border actions at the local level led between States and in order to fund several types of activities in this sense⁹. So, INTERREG program was established in 1990. It is involved in the ERDF funds. It encourages and promotes cross-border activities financially in collaboration with Member States and lower levels of government involved in these actions¹⁰.

⁷ See : EUROPA, (1957), PREMIÈRE PARTIE Les Principes, (page consulted on 26/09/2012), [online pdf], http://eur-lex.europa.eu/fr/treaties/dat/11957E/tif/TRAITES_1957_CEE_1_XM_0018_x222x.pdf

⁸ EUROPA, (1957), DEUXIÈME PARTIE Les Fondements de la Communauté, (page consulted on 26/09/2012), [online pdf], http://eur-lex.europa.eu/fr/treaties/dat/11957E/tif/TRAITES_1957_CEE_1_XM_0024_x333x.pdf

⁹ JOURNAL OFFICIEL DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES, (1975), Règlement (CEE) N°724/75 DU CONSEIL du 18 mars 1975 portant création d’un Fonds européen de développement régional, (page consulted on 26/09/2012), [online pdf],

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1975:073:0001:0007:FR:PDF>

¹⁰ See : EUROPA, (1990), RÉOLUTION sur une initiative communautaire en faveur des régions frontalières (Programme INTERREG), (page consulted on 26/09/2012), [online], <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?val=164320:cs&lang=fr&list=179788:cs,179206:cs,180595:cs,180457:cs,180456:cs,177846:cs,671171:cs,163647:cs,164320:cs,&pos=9&page=15&nbl=149&pgs=10&hwords=INTERREG~>

This sort of program induces change in the local public practices, by providing the opportunity to share same tools, same data, even same rules¹¹. A part of these outputs are described in the Evaluation Report produced by the European Commission after the second INTERREG program (1994-1999)¹².

These European funds encourage local public or private actors to conduct cross-border policies. By that, local authorities are situated in a straight relation with it, crossing the States¹³. The objective is to develop economic, social, ecological and cultural area in a cross-border, cross-national and cross-regional perspective.

INTERREG IV 2007-2013 is now under way. The INTERREG program IV A for France-Wallonia-Flanders is based on a local view and specific local development. Four objectives were selected: to sustain economic development, to develop and to promote the cross border territorial identity through culture and tourism, to reinforce the sense of belonging to a common shared space through cross border services and to support the management of the territory by sustainable practices¹⁴.

In this sense, INTERREG IV A France-Wallonia-Flanders can approve cultural projects if they answer the objectives provided in the program.

Let's note that culture has been included in 1991 in the European competences¹⁵; the European Commission has been encouraging "States, the cultural sector and the European institution to jointly promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation and culture as part of the EU's international relations"¹⁶. The "European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world" (2007) has shaped an increasing cooperation with and among national authorities on cultural matters (through the EU's open method of coordination connected to the Agenda).

¹¹ LELOUP F., MEUNIER F., (2012), How to govern at the border? Local cultural operations at the Franco-Belgian border, [word document], paper presented at Métrolux conference, Luxembourg, September 6 and 7, 2012

¹² COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE, (2000), Initiative communautaire INTERREG II 1994-1999 : Un premier bilan, (page consulted on 26/09/2012), [online pdf], http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/interreg_fr.pdf

¹³ MAURY C., (2006), L'identitaire comme ressource politique transfrontalière. Entre architecture multiniveaux éclatée et « fenêtre d'opportunité » : Perpinyà la catalana, PhD Thesis in Political Science, Supervisor MASSARDIER G., d'Aix-en-Provence IEP

¹⁴ INTERREG IV France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen, (2012), La démarche, (consulted on 10/07/2012), [online], <http://www.interreg.fwvl.eu/fr/page.php?page!d=205>

¹⁵ EUROPEAN COMMISSION, (26/01/2012), Article 167, (page consulted on 27/07/2012), [online], http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/article-167_en.htm

¹⁶ EUROPEAN COMMISSION, (2012), Culture, (page consulted on 31/07/2012), [online], http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

The manner for EU to drive the cultural policy remains at the stage of promotion and coordination. This refers to a process of “soft law” wherein States implement cultural actions and their own vision of the culture and are accountable to the other Member States¹⁷.

1.3 The cultural policy at the Franco-Belgian border

Culture refers to a specific public policy: indeed the cultural policy has traditionally been defined as a centralized domain managed by national authorities. The “Welfare State” period brought an objective of democratization¹⁸ in addition to the idea of arts and national identity related to the cultural fields. Since the 90’s, culture has been seen to develop economic benefits in terms of tourism, cultural or creative industries and is then connected both with social cohesion and regional planning. In addition, with the regionalization and the decentralization, the cultural policy has been partly transferred to local authorities. For example, in the Belgian case, culture is now a field of the three decentralized Communities.

In the INTERREG IV France-Wallonia-Flanders program, three different jurisdictions co-exist for the cultural public policies: on the first side France with its centralized Minister and its wave of devolution since 1977 through the missions of the DRAC (“*Direction générale aux affaires culturelles*”), on the other side the Flemish and the French-speaking Communities.

According to all of this, our interest is to understand how cross border cultural operations may occur and how they are coordinated and governed.

II. Theoretical context

In order to analyze how to govern at the border, two theoretical dynamics have been selected: the process of what is defined as Europeanization (the emergence of an additional level of government or governance) through the theory of the policy transfer when applied to a local decision-making level and the induced “local empowerment” and other advances in local public policy (in the public action theories).

¹⁷ EUROPEAN COMMISSION, (2012), European Agenda for Culture, (consulted on the 10/07/2012), [online], http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/european-agenda_en.htm

¹⁸ DUBOIS, V., (1999), La politique culturelle. Genèse d’une catégorie d’intervention publique, *Editions Belin*, Paris, p.13

2.1. Europeanization

Saurugger and Surel (2006)¹⁹ explain that Europeanization refers to different dynamics issued from either public or private operators. Europeanization is then related to a process of policy transfer and may be defined as a process of “*construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.*”²⁰

In this sense, Europeanization does not tend to a unique process of decision making; it involves the creation of proper “informal rules” and leads to a process of governance since horizontal and vertical relations and multi-actors’ decision making comes into play. Governance in this sense becomes a component of the process of Europeanization.

As Saurugger and Surel (2006)²¹ have developed, the implementation of a public policy coming from EU is not conceived as a linear process: the realm of possibility of an implementation at the local level is multiple even if a unique supranational institution adopts the rules.

Since related to the process of Europeanization, the policy transfer is delineated by four major possibilities or consequences. Let’s recall that the model developed by Saurugger and Surel (2006) or Radaelli (2003) has been applied to the transfer of the European policy rules at the national level; here we expand this piece of work to local decision making.

The first possibility of policy transfer is the phenomenon of *absorption*– Börzel and Risse (2000)²² explain it through the ability for the domestic authorities to implement the policies, the practices, the institutions, etc. exactly as initially proposed at the European level. It can also be determined as a totally accepted and implemented transfer. Another consequence is defined by Saurugger and Surel (2006)²³ as a process of *translation* which refers to some adjustment from member States as regards the EU policy. Another possibility is concerned with the absence of impact, when States do not want to implement the EU policy. The last phenomenon refers to a kind of *rejection*; it may occur when member States find too difficult to implement the decision taken by the supranational level.

¹⁹ SAURRUGER S., SUREL Y., (2006), L’Européanisation comme processus de transfert de politique publique, *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, Vol. 13, p.184 (pp.179-211)

²⁰ RADAELLI C., (2003), The Europeanization of Public Policy, in FEATHERSTONE K., RADAELLI C., (2003), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.30

²¹ SAURRUGER S., SUREL Y., (2006), L’Européanisation comme processus de transfert de politique publique, *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, Vol. 13, pp.179-211

²² BÖRZEL T., RISSE T., (2000), When Europe hits home : Europeanization and domestic change, *EUI working papers*, n°56, Robert Schuman Centre, 20p., available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.302768>

²³ SAURRUGER S., SUREL Y., (2006), *op cit*, p.189

In our case - based on local cultural operations-, the policy transfer is supposed to create either a total absorption or an incremental process of translation and adjustment. The inertia could not be studied according our case studies. Indeed, this would evolve studying a set of cultural projects occurring at the border but without any European link.

According to Dolowitz and Marsh (2000)²⁴, the mechanisms of policy transfer are following a continuum, beginning with the “lesson-drawing” passing through a voluntary process, until coercion. Either the European Union designs a body of values that public authorities use for their own decision making. In other cases, both local and national public authorities may develop a voluntary capacity to negotiate with European sphere about some policies and their specific implementation. Finally, the coercive mechanism refers to a *top down* transfer, with constraints: this case is closed to a “classical” centralized process. Börzel and Risse (2000) analyze the changes created by European policy as adaptive pressures; they affirm that some kind of convergence may exist in terms of the outcomes of the public policy but divergence is still remarkable especially in the instruments or even the policies by themselves, and so for. The authors are emphasized two conditions in order to create a real transfer: the need of a “misfit” between EU institutions, policies, etc. and domestic ones (which means a difference between domestic institutions or policies and European ones, which implies a sort of pressure on the national level to implement the EU model²⁵) and the existence of facilitating factors such as public actors, institutions, funds, in order to support the implementation and the consecutive adaptation at the domestic level (Saurugger and Surel, 2006)²⁶.

2.2 Local empowerment

The EU policy transfer at a local level may be shown to increase the local autonomy of local public authorities. Börzel and Risse (2000)²⁷ explain that Europeanization produce a new distribution of resources with an new empowerment of the local level: if there is a “misfit” due to these new constraints and opportunities; the local authorities take advantage from them by playing on constraints and resources coming from the multilayer.

²⁴ DOLOWITZ D., MARSH D., (2000), Learning from abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, Vol.13, N°1, pp.5-24

²⁵ BÖRZEL T., RISSE T., (2000), When Europe hits home : Europeanization and domestic change, *EUI Working Papers*, N°56, Robert Schuman Centre, p.5., available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.302768>

²⁶ SAURRUGER S., SUREL Y., (2006), *op cit*, p.188

²⁷ BÖRZEL T., RISSE T., (2000), When Europe hits home : Europeanization and domestic change, *EUI Working Papers*, N°56, Robert Schuman Centre, 20p., available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.302768>

According to that, Boisseaux, Faure, Leresche, Muller and Nahrath (2011)²⁸ explain that local authorities have enough flexibility to apply rules coming from EU. For the authors, this can form a “new local power”²⁹. Not only do local authorities change the spatial limit of their actions but they may also shift their way of governing to a multi-level and multi-actor process. Today, local authorities are seen to be included in horizontal and vertical networks, their actions – and not only their funding - involve various scales of decision and various types of authorities or other actors (Douillet, 2012)³⁰.

When the role of a multi-level and multi-actor participation into the European cross-borders programs³¹ is promoted through INTERREG, a kind of “local governance” is then firmly encouraged.

Our cross border cultural projects do not correspond with a policy transfer in global terms but they define a new space for action, push public authorities to coordinate themselves and thus may introduce a new way to govern.

Therefore this paper is based on two hypothesis. The first hypothesis is based on the process of Europeanization: the objective is to find out whether and if ever which kind of transfer coming from Europe is found through cross border cultural projects. The second hypothesis is based on the potential local empowerment and its induced “other” way of governing induced by the cross-border practices.

III. Franco-Belgian cross border cultural operations

As explained *supra*, the paper tends to check whether and how, if ever, local cultural practices, funded by the European Union, change the way of governing at the border. Our analysis is divided into two parts. After analyzing the impacts of the European funds (3.1), we develop two questions: first, as related to Europeanization, does the INTERREG IV Wallonia-France-Flanders cultural practices illustrate a coercive or a fitting model regarding to the Europeanization theories? (3.2); second, are there specific local rules created or transformed following such cross border practices? (3.3)

The case studies are based on two sets of interviews held in 2010 and 2012, at the Franco-Belgian border. The interviewed people are cultural operators and local authorities working in cross border cultural projects funded by INTERREG IV A. A set of 21 projects have been analyzed; the interviews

²⁸ BOISSEAUX S., FAURE A., LERESCHE J.-P., MULLER P., NAHRATH S., (2011), *Penser la territorialité des changements d'échelles*, Manuscrit auteur, 5^{ème} Congrès International des Associations Francophones de Science Politique, Bruxelles, p.15

²⁹ *Idem*, p.11

³⁰ DOUILLET A.-C., FAURE A., HALPERN C., LERESCHE J.-P., (2012), *L'action publique locale dans tous ses états. Différenciation et standardisation*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

³¹ COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, (21/06/1999), Council Regulation(EC) N° 1260/1999, [online pdf], <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1999:161:0001:0042:EN:PDF>

were concerned with 21 cultural operators and 30 local or regional authorities. A table explaining the projects and the interviewed people is given in annex.

3.1 Cultural operations and the Franco-Belgian border

Firstly, the differences of cultural practices existing between Belgium and France e.g. in terms of cultural programs or of developing specific arts (Lawrence Van Hoorne, Brulais, 2012, p.3, Géraldine Elie, *Le Plôt*, 2012, p.83³²) are important to keep in mind. Furthermore, the various cultural structures – a lot of “civil” associations exist in Belgium in comparison with mainly state-funded organizations in France - create a lot of complex situations for the cross-border work (Anne Nicaise, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.121).

The first idea connected with European projects is related to be funded. On the one hand, very few actors find it not a very good opportunity since the cultural structures have to bring a large amount of money to lead projects (Stijn Lammers, Deulys, 2012, p.14). On the other hand, INTERREG seems mostly the main interesting thing for the two partners implied in a cross-border project because of their capacities to bring amount of money together and to enable the partners to lead the project (Géraldine Elie, *Le Plôt*, 2012, p.84). Moreover, and it is the most important point, European funds lead operators to implement bigger projects than what they could have done without them (Dimitri Kadjanski, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.24, Yves Renaud, *ICI*, 2010, p.41, Hélène Debacker, *Roulez jeunesse*, 2010, p.47, Georges Bonnet, *Terhistoire*, 2010, p.79, Denis Danvoye, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.129, Jean-Paul Deplus, *Espaces Sons Hainaut(s)*, 2012, p.37, Jean-Marc Van Espen, *La Meuse et Vous*, 2012, p.54, Géraldine Elie, *le Plôt*, 2012, p.86).

Some INTERREG projects are only the continuity of earlier developed cross-border actions and give the opportunity to gather those already shared elements in an official way (K. Omari, *Tripod*, 2012, p.199).

The raising of funds pushes operators to join some municipalities, instead of other ones, because they have bigger resources (e.g. Lille in France could give more opportunities than a medium cities like Mons or Tournai in Belgium) (Dimitri Kadjanski, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.30).

By getting European funds, cultural operators have to manage them in common; EU gives 50 percent for each project and the operators the 50 percent left (Sandrine Crepin, *Transdigital*, 2012, p.189). Some operators can even create a kind of economy of scale (e.g. creating common data bases) which can lead to a mutual learning process (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6). In many cases,

³² All the following references refer to whom has been interviewed, the name of the INTERREG project, the year of interview and the page where to find the specific words.

INTERREG projects have proved that operators are willing to share practices, tools, references, competences, methods, cultural programs etc. (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6, Anne Nicaise, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.121).

Cultural operators define that INTERREG projects create an added value in addition to the funds by bringing people officially together and let them knowing each other (Dimitri Kadjanski, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.27).

3.2 Europeanization and practices in terms of public policy : transfer, absorption or coercion?

In order to analyze the process of Europeanization, we first study the kind of changes created by such European programs. After that, we deduce the kind of policy transfer such cross-border programs creates at the Franco-Belgian border.

When public practices are under study, three degrees of “Europeanization” may be defined: a change in terms of ways of doing and of rules, a change in terms of policies or a change in terms of ideologies³³.

In terms of ways of doing or of rules, we have firstly to define the current public practices and rules in the field of culture and secondly to discuss how operators deal with European rules.

As detailed in the interviews, different ways of “doing” for public authorities exist in terms of public practices. For example, some municipalities create more links with the associative (e.g. Péruwelz in Belgium) than others. More importantly, the political practices in terms of culture are seen to differ strongly between France and Belgium (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6): culture is more centralized in France (Jean-Paul Deplus, *Espace(s) Son(s) Hainaut(s)*, 2012, p.38) and is mainly related to “fine arts” and creativity whereas in Belgium and more specifically in its French speaking part, it is more oriented towards social cohesion and continuing education.

The administrative organization is very different in France (Yves Renaud, *Manège, Musique en Sol Mineur*, *Transdigital*, 2012, p.111) as well as the administrative procedures (e.g. stricter in Belgium than in France) (Yves Renaud, *Manèges*, 2012, p.106).

Before the European funds, some municipalities had no chance to see their economy flourishing due to cultural or touristic development because of their relatively impoverished area (Jean-Paul Deplus, *Manèges*, p.118).

³³ The aim of this analysis is to define if public practices, policies and ideology related to the cultural policy differ from one to the other side of the border and, if ever, whether an evolution or some kind of cross-border convergence are created by a possible policy transfer.

Once INTERREG projects are accepted, public actors have to cope with different rules coming from EU and from the domestic levels (national rules through operational programs in France³⁴ or regional rules priorities in Wallonia³⁵) and they have to manage all these rules and implement them at the local level.

French and Belgian cultural and public operators usually agree that they differ and find it important to adapt to each other in their ways of doing even if administrative structures and the way of governing are not similar; the INTERREG projects are seen to be a good chance to go through those differences (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6).

As we refer to the theory and as C. Radaelli (2003) explains, Europeanization can change formal and informal rules and ways of doing. Indeed, interviews have proved that public actors are willing to implement rules coming from EU once they have decided to get involved in INTERREG projects. Firstly, they write a common file according to a specific European frame (Jean-Paul Deplus, *Transdigital*, 2012, p.181). Through INTERREG projects public authorities have to meet regularly and change then their perception about what happens on the other side of the border (Yves Renaud, *ICI*, 2010, p.42). Public authorities explain also that the EU funds push them to get a “brand image” coming from the interesting position they can have and increase their confidence in their region or their municipality, which creates a positive effect on investments (Jean-Paul Deplus, *Manèges*, p.118).

Some public authorities are seen to be deeply involved in the cultural INTERREG projects: they take part of the writing of the project and of its implementation (André Ceuterick, *Musique en Sol Mineur*, 2012, p.123) but others feel as more “external” and prefer only supporting the project without being really involved in it (Yves De Greef, *Roulez jeunesse*, 2012, p.59).

We can notice that a kind of coercion may exist due to the accuracy of the European rules; public authorities seem to accept the imposed “steering committees” (Roger Vanderstraeten, *Terhistoire*, 2010, p.75, Jean-Jacques Thomas, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.138) even if they find the European rules to be too strict (Yves Renaud, *Manèges* and *Musique en Sol mineur*, 2012, p.107). This leads authorities to gradually set and use informal rules to implement the projects and make a sort of efficient cross-border policy, integrating common cultural practices and even new governance practices. Indeed, both cultural operators and public authorities assert that European program impels a lot of rules and seem to accept and implement them relatively well. Once involved in an INTERREG project, operators have to meet regularly with a determined pace, and have to give specific and

³⁴ EUROPA, (2007), France, Politique de cohésion 2007-2013, (page consulted on 30/10/2012), [online pdf], http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche/fr_fr.pdf

³⁵ EUROPE WALLONIE, (2012), Présentation, (page consulted on 28/08/2012), [online], <http://europe.wallonie.be/?q=node/8>

detailed feedbacks (for activities and financing) to steering committees (Stijn Lammers, Deulys, 2012, p.11 and p.15).

A convergence is given through cross-border committees. These are composed of representatives coming from the Regions in Belgium and in France where advices, ideas and opinion coming from the local level are exchanged with European representatives (André Ceuterick, *Musique en Sol Mineur*, 2012, p.125).

INTERREG projects are regularly checked by some European “steering committees” ; these follow the operators and actors involved in projects (every 6 months) (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6). During these meetings, operators and public authorities have to explain the financial statements, the managed activities and so on. But those committees are also a sort of forum where local operators express themselves about the way to implement the policy, discuss about their difficulties, problems and even their discontentment faced with some European administrative procedures (Yves Renaud, *Manèges*, 2012, p.107).

After defining how ways of doing, rules and ideas may be changed by local operators, we analyze whether ideological innovation may be deduced from such local projects. Indeed, beyond European rules and the public policy, ideologies are also an important frame given by EU to the lower levels of power.

At first, municipalities have their own vision of culture. For example, some public actors define culture as a prevention and a way of steering society (Thierry Lesplingart, *Le Plôt*, 2012, p.74), a sort of human development enabling social integration (Catherine Cullen, *Le Plôt*, 2012, p.99), other ones assume that culture has to reach all the audience and population issued from different generations (Jean-Paul Deplus, *La grande guerre - Corps et armes de paix*, 2012, p.44) whereas other public operators see culture as an elitist practice restricted to an “upper class” of the population (Jean-Marc Van Espen, *La Meuse et Vous*, 2012, p.53).

In addition, municipalities and local authorities differ from each other according to the financial budgets dedicated to cultural fields (e.g. Lille in France spends larger amounts for exhibitions than Tournai in Belgium) and the political choices are seen to be different (for instance the French city, Lille, is more oriented to cultural “events” and in Tournai, the Belgian neighbouring city, the accent is given to sustainable projects) (Yves De Greef, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, pp.18-19). And when French, Walloon and Flemish practices are compared, different priorities in terms of culture are also found. However, they build some kind of consensus when they write a European project and have to agree on the way of making cultural policies at the local level (e.g. by creating a common cultural

program between Chimay – Belgium - and Hirson – France and by giving in their cultural program a social value) (Anne Nicaise, Transfrontalières, 2010, p.121).

We may note that a common trend is found in most of these projects: how culture and economy may be related to each other. As developed in the European public policies, culture as a way to push economic development is more and more integrated by local public actors (Yves De Greef, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.17). INTERREG projects lead public operators to fit their style of cultural policy (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6) and therefore their ways of governing and managing cultural policies in the municipalities.

Related to this degree of innovation, it is important to note different practices driven by public authorities in order to manage the sustainability after the INTERREG project. For example, it is concerned with employment: some specific jobs have been created to implement and manage the projects and are expected to remain even after the INTERREG term (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6, Laurence Muller and Nathalie Cimino, *ICI*, 2010, p.36, Véronique Stortoni, Pierre Fagnart, Pierre Mainil, *Terhistoire*, 2010, p.63, Nicolas Villard, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.104, Sandrine Crepin, *Transdigital*, 2012, p.195). Some projects do not create new jobs (Yves De Greef, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.19) and when projects create jobs, they cannot fund them indefinitely because of the limited period of time for INTERREG (Dimitri Kadjanski, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.27). This short term view can dampen cultural, administrative or public operators (André Ceuterick, *Musique en Sol Mineur*, 2012, p.123). In order to deal with it, some municipal authorities may be proven to care about lasting the term of these jobs.

In terms of ideology, we may also note that the INTERREG projects provide an ideological mean of building integration and borderless territories. Some actors are seen to be involved in INTERREG projects (such as Yves De Greef, a political actor) in order to implement European values in his way of behaving: in this sense, he describes the INTERREG projects as part of the reinforcement of the “Europe of Regions” (Yves De Greef, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.17). The idea of belonging to a same territory – even if it is divided by a State border – as a first step to belonging to Europe seems to be integrated by public authorities (Yves De Greef, *Transactua*, 2010, p.103) and by cultural operators (Hélène Debacker, *Roulez jeunesse*, 2010, p.51 and p.53). According to C. Mazza, the Rudy Demotte Belgian Minister’s political counselor, EU gives a frame of reference to the local level but, at the same time, local public authorities have their own priorities, their own ideal and finally do what they prefer at the local stage.

In terms of transfer, the policy transfer we notice in our studied cases may be called a kind of “bricolage” or “do-it-yourself” mechanism (Christophe Mazza, *Projet Tran’art*, 2012, pp.167-168).

The policy transfer may be seen to be a kind of absorption in terms of the implementation of the public policy: operators seem to be conscious of the constraints and the opportunities the European objectives and rules provide. All of them also agree to entering the European and the INTERREG frames and constraints. At the same time, public authorities deal easily with the local priorities and want to make their own public policy, related to the specific political and cultural features. Even if changes are coming at the local level, dependence to national or regional and local habits continue.

We may see that the public authorities' behaviors may be defined as a mix between a process of absorption and a process of translation, including some arrangements coming from the local level³⁶, according to what Saurugger and Surel (2006) explain about translation. This leads to prove that the European policies are implemented in a process of lesson-drawing (according to Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000) and that public authorities get accustomed with strict European administrative procedures (Yves Renaud, Manèges, *Musique en Sol Mineur*, Transdigital, p.107) even if those are sometimes difficult to implement.

Then, the INTERREG projects give actors the chance to experience the European administrative procedures (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6) and to integrate gradually European values in a soft process. The steering committees check how rules are met but let public authorities and operators free to express their difficulties. Some interviewees have pointed out that EU may decide to cut its funds (Yves Renaud, Manèges and *Musique en Sol Mineur*, 2012, p.107) if the rules are not met. The implementation of the INTERREG public policy is then a process of lesson-drawing at first because of the will to enter INTERREG, but may become quite coercive once the actors go in.

3.3 "Local empowerment", European projects and cross-border local practices

After analyzing the mechanisms of European transfer to the local level and the process of implementation of the INTERREG policies, the second component of our study is taken into account, that is the potential local empowerment. The question is: "does a new way of governing at the local level emerge?".

Since the cross-border projects are implemented by local authorities, the question of the potential local empowerment and its possible evolution towards a local cross-border way of governing arises. As well as Börzel and Risse (2000) explain it about the new distribution of resources and the new empowerment of the local level, some INTERREG programs have given a better visibility to cultural centers but also to political authorities (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Effronteries*, 2010, p.6). Since projects are funded, municipalities become better-known as well as its authorities, which increases the fame

³⁶ Saurugger and Surel explain the principles of the policy transfer at the national level, not at the local scale.

and the visibility (Stanislas Herrier, Transactua, 2010, p.85). This process of recognition is even bigger when the local areas have been afraid of becoming “forgotten” for instance due to a centre-periphery process (it is what has been experimented in Bernissart, Belgium) (Roger Vanderstraeten, Terhistoire, 2010, p.68).

As Douillet (2012) explains about the horizontal and vertical networks (including various scales and various actors), local empowerment may be based on networks and the induced resources. INTERREG has not been the unique and first opportunity for some actors to meet each other (in a lot of cases, cross-border projects were already led before the INTERREG opportunity, such as for the cross-border television Transactua : Yves De Greef, Transactua, 2010, p.94 and pp.98-99, Yves Renaud, Projet Manèges, Musique en Sol Mineur, Transdigital, 2012, p.111). But, in a few cases, authorities or operators have met their counterparts for the first time thanks to INTERREG projects (Nicolas Villard, Transfrontalières, 2010, p.104).

INTERREG has also pushed various public authorities, operators and artists to relate them into networks (a typical example is the case of the digital technology “valley” gathering together scientists, firms and artists) (Sandrine Crepin, Transdigital, 2012, pp.188-189). Furthermore, those networks have built strong partnerships between public authorities (Roos Desmet, Traffic, 2010, p.143) and cultural operators (Jean-Louis Langlais, Effronteries, 2010, p.6, Colette Bourdon, Effronteries, 2010, p.10) which induce new networks, new projects in a cumulative process.

According to the question of the local empowerment and the potential bigger “new power” (Boisseaux, Faure, Leresche, Muller and Narath, 2011), local authorities are found to be provided more and more capabilities due to European funds such as the INTERREG supports. This support creates a process of diffusion at the other side of the border (e.g. Lille in France with its neighboring Belgian municipalities) but also at an international level (cultural projects take profit of an external audience coming from areas far such as Köln, Paris or Amsterdam (Catherine Cullen, Le Plôt, 2012, p.99). This international view has been noticed at Lille (France), Mons (Belgium) (Stéphane Maucci, projet Tripod, p.204) and Kortrijk (Belgium) (Roos Desmet, Traffic, 2010, p.145).

The implementation of cross-border European projects drive some municipalities to take profit of the radiation of contiguous areas (e.g. Lille in France) (Dimitri Kadjanski, Frontières invisibles, 2010, p.29, Christophe Mazza, Trans’art, 2012, p.166).

As developed supra, the European projects have enabled the local authorities to implement projects characterized by more ambitious actions, better elaborated and with a higher level of attraction due to the funds provided (Sandrine Crepin, projet Transdigital, p.189).

All those statements show how such INTERREG programs push the local public authorities to grasp chance to “go further”, to be more innovating. The local level is seen to deal with multilayer process: not only do local authorities and cultural operators get the positive impacts of such INTERREG projects including equipment, networking or money but they are also led to increase the range of opportunities and the level of possible investments and innovations.

However, even if the domestic level may find some new opportunities or new resources to intervene, regional and national constraints remain important. Indeed, for INTERREG IV, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation defines its priorities according to the European standards³⁷; the French ministry and the North region³⁸ and the Flemish community behave in the same way. That proves that the local authorities may innovate partly but has also to fit both the European frame and the national or regional authorities.

This confirms Douillet’s results (2012). Indeed, in the studied cases, public authorities and other operators can get involved in networks for same projects and can create webs in a vertical and in a horizontal ways with different levels of power and spaces: it favors then local empowerment. The European Union provided a sort of cross-border added value and additional opportunities for local operators: the available funds enable operators to manage bigger operations, some people behave in another way (cross-border projects bring people to cross the border more easily because the border is no longer a limit but has become an opportunity) (Jean-Louis Langlais, *Efronteries*, 2010, p.6, Anne Nicaise, *Transfrontalières*, 2010, p.108, Sandrine Crepin, *Transdigital*, 2012, p.190). Such cross-border programs amplify the visibility and the international recognition of the local activities and projects. However, opportunities coming from EU bring their own constraints in terms of funds, budget, reports or other administrative rules which are still important and constrain public authorities in their cross-border public policies.

In addition to increase local empowerment, some specific institutional innovations have been built at the Franco-Belgian border. The first one is known such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. This consists of a specific implementation, including cultural policy within an integrated territorial project. The so-called Eurométropole connects Tournai, Kortrijk and Lille (Dimitri Kadjanski, *Frontières invisibles*, 2010, p.23, Roos Desmet, *Traffic*, 2010, p.144, Thierry Lesplingart, *Le Plôt*, 2012). Another kind of institutional innovation is created specifically to deal with cross border cultural projects: Le Manège is such an institution created to make lasting cross-border cooperations

³⁷ EUROPE WALLONIE, (2012), Présentation, (page consulted on 28/08/2012), [online], <http://europe.wallonie.be/?q=node/8>

³⁸ EUROPE EN FRANCE, (2012), Mode d’emploi, (page consulted on 28/08/2012), [online], <http://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/Mode-d-emploi/%28language%29/fre-FR>

IV. Some concluding comments

Our paper aims at questioning the cross-border local way of governing as a consequence of the INTERREG IV A program in France-Wallonia-Flanders. INTERREG is a program in which cultural operators and public authorities are free to participate. Therefore, the interviews driven in 2010 and 2012 about projects *de facto* were based on local public authorities and operators ready to accept European rules and apt to encourage this kind of cooperation.

Our first question was: are local cultural practices, funded by the EU, changing the way of governing at the border and if ever, how do they change policy making? The answer is to be divided into two parts, the first is based on the process of Europeanization, the second one on the creation of local “opportunities”.

To answer the first part of our question, we have found that there is relative change because of the European impact through INTERREG program: more funds, new capabilities, change of some visions for culture ... arise. However, these changes remain partial since regional and national rules still remain important. New opportunities come but with their set of constraints; local operators are proved to arrange some European rules but European limits and constraints are maintained.

New or fitted ways of doing, some “bricolage”, exist. Local authorities seem to be in a learning process, partly in a lesson-drawing process and partly in a coercive process once they entered an INTERREG program. The mechanisms of transfer are then partly a process of absorption and partly a phenomenon of translation. We have also found some bottom-up effect (through “steering committees” which are some forums for local actors to express their difficulties and lightly interfere with constraints).

Therefore, the cross-border cooperation leads to more convergence and less differences between public authorities, especially in their way of doing cultural policy at the border.

In terms of local empowerment, we have concluded that INTERREG programs increase the resources, push local authorities to innovate and provide new opportunities for local authorities (bigger visibility, increased networking, foreign impacts, etc.). By doing that, they increase the local empowerment and push local authorities towards some convergence in terms of rules and administration.

Europe finances cooperation; by doing that, new practices are funded. In addition to that, ways of doing, rules and even ideas are seen to evolve and to converge. A new way of governing emerges not only at the two sides of the border but crossing the border.

This part leads to conclude interconnections between local level and European level exist through steering committees; they bring public actors coming from different levels of power and make them coordinating. Also, the interconnection can be highlighted between different actors – public and

private ones, such as cultural operators – from two countries – more precisely, two Communities in Belgium and France – which proves them being in a governance context.

Annex

Projects	Aim of the projects	Year of interview	Interviewed public actors	Interviewed operators
Brulais	Circus	2012	Antoine Deguine	Lawrence Van Hoorne
Deulys	14-18 War	2012	Michel Franceus	Stijn Lammers
Espace(s) Son(s) Hainaut(s)	Musical creation	2012	Jean-Paul Deplus	
Frontières invisibles	Cultural network	2010	Yves De Greef	Dimitri Kadjanski
ICI	Heritage	2010	Yves Renaud	-Laurence Muller -Nathalie Cimino
La Grande guerre – Corps et armes de paix	14-18 War	2012	Jean-Paul Deplus	Michel Vasko
La Meuse et Vous	Tourism	2012	-Bernard Dekens -Jean-Marc Van Espen	Emilie Pierret
Le Plôt	Circus	2012	-Thierry Lesplingart -Catherine Cullen	Géraldine Elie
LKT Tourisme	Tourism	2012	Stefaan Declerck	
Les Effronteries	Cultural working group based on the territory	2010	Colette Bourdon	Jean-Louis Langlais
Les Transfrontalières	Cultural network	2010	-Jean-Jacques Thomas -Denis Danvoeye	-Anne Nicaise -Nicolas Villard
Manèges	Theatre	2012	-Jean-Paul Deplus -Yves Renaud	
Musique en Sol Mineur	Musical creation	2012	-André Ceuterick -Yves Renaud	
Nomade	Cultural network	2012	-Yves Renaud	

			-Jean-Paul Deplus	
Roulez jeunesse	Cultural network	2010	Yves De Greef	-Hélène Debacker -Philippe Deman
Terhistoire	Heritage	2010	-Roger Vanderstraeten -Daniel Bois -Georges Bonnet & Alexandre Raszka	Véronique Stortoni, Pierre Fagnart, Pierre Mainil
Traffic	Theatre	2010	-Michel Franceus	Roos Desmet
Transactua	News program	2010	Yves De Greef	Stanislas Herrier
Transpuls/Trans'art	News program	2012	Christophe Mazza	Chantal Notté
Transdigital	Technological network	2012	-Yves Renaud -Jean-Paul Deplus	Sandrine Crépin
Tripod	Design in entreprises	2012	-Stéphane Maucci	-Kadhija Omari -Ruffin Mukenge -Guy Tiers

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