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Governance in cross-border agglomerations in Europe – the examples of Basle and Strasbourg

Bernard Reitel

Introduction

During decades, the border located on the Rhine was considered as a conflictual border between France and Germany (Febvre 1997, p. 195). But it was also one of the first symbols of international cooperation: according to the treaty of Vienna (1815), the Rhine was open to international traffic (Ferro et al. 1981, p. 377).

Outside the periods of war, the border was a line crossed by the international trade but also through bilateral relations (Hau 1987, p. 139). Some entrepreneurs tried to benefit from legal or economic advantages by using the differences created by the border (less restrictive law, better prices or wages, etc.). The region, known as the Upper-Rhine Valley, was one of the first experiences of cross-border cooperation on a regional scale.

The Rhine is not only an international waterway, it is also a corridor of cities, where several major towns of Europe are located (Juillard 1968, p. 43; Brunet 1997, p. 56). With the merging of Nation-states between the 17th and the 19th century, a part of the upstream way became a border. Basle, on the Rhine, and Strasbourg, located 3 kilometres from the river, both became border-cities. Their development was partly related to the border: depending on the periods, it brought mostly advantages or disadvantages. Nowadays, each of those two cities can be considered as metropolis of small size in Western Europe (Rozenblat et al. 2003, p. 51). On each of the opposite sides of the border, the smaller localities became border-towns. A cross-border urban space was growing, with a core grouping the functions of the metropolis and including the largest part of the population, and with suburbs on the opposite side of the border. These cross-border agglomerations are now a disturbing contradiction: a territorial discontinuity separates a building area (morphological continuity) connected by functional links (Reitel et al. 2002, p. 69; Sandtner et al. 2000, p. 18; Waack 2000, p. 189).

Since the 1990's new projects have been worked out in Basle and Strasbourg at the level of the agglomeration and a new cross-border cooperation has been developed, initiated by the European Union.

The purpose of this paper is to understand how the public authorities see the development of their own territory in the projects for the metropolitan cross-border areas. The projects will be analyzed in the two agglomerations of Strasbourg and Basle. Does the merging involved in these projects help to foster the growth of a new kind of governance's system at agglomeration scale? Is the system of governance the result of the confrontation of national political systems or is it a new pattern which is overstepping the borders? Which functions of the border are used in this system?

Stakes of governance in metropolitan areas and in cross-border regions

The concept of governance merges on a time where the State does not appear as the only actor of the public initiative anymore. The number of actors interfering in the process of decision making, has significantly increased in the last decades. The importance of the economic actors, especially the global firms, is largely underlined. But two other types of actors have to be considered. First the actors of the civil society are playing a greater role: associations, network of associations, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO), etc. Second, in the decentralization's process observed in several countries, the central State has transfered a part of its competencies to local and regional public authorities.

Governance seems to give an answer to the complexity of the relations between these many actors: it implies the mergence of new principles of public powers based on cooperation and on negotiation. The partnership between the public authorities and the private actors are often presented as representative of these new relations. But, our focus concerns the interactions between the public actors on the border-territories and on the border-cities.
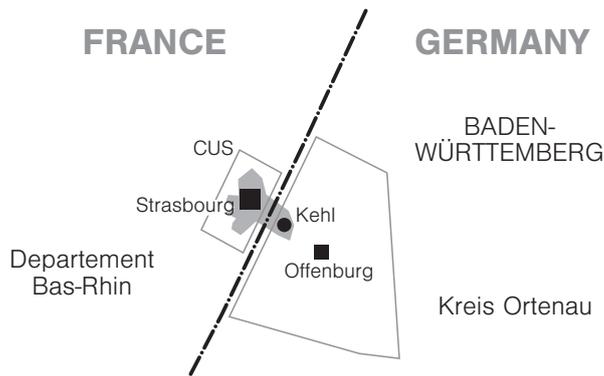
Cities and urban spaces on borders

As peripheries of the State territory, the border areas are under the control of some major State institutions, especially the military power (Foucher 1986, p. 79). In theory, the States do not encourage urbanization on the borders which often appear as areas without major cities. But when border-towns exist, it is mainly due to the will of the States.

In several cases, the development of the town is linked to the regulative functions of the State (military places, important customs administration). Some of the border-towns have become trade places on account of their location on a major transport axis. Part of the local economy depends on the exploitation of differences (regulations, costs, representations) between the administrative and tax systems, by using legal or illegal methods. In the major cases, the dependence of the border-towns upon the State is much higher than for other cities either because the State exerts a strong control over its territory (Reitel et al., p. 11).

In the Upper Rhine Valley, Strasbourg and Basle are much more than border-towns: they have both international functions. Despite their small size, both Basle and Strasbourg are regional metropolises in Western Europe which are inserted in international networks. Near Basle and Strasbourg, on the opposite side of the border, small towns began to grow, in the 20th century, and sometimes even earlier (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). On the one hand, they can be considered as genuine border towns (importance of customs, trade, etc.); on the other, on account of the continuity of the building area, as suburban towns. For this reason, we call them suburb border towns. The growth of Kehl depends largely on its being located near Strasbourg but in another territory (Zander 2002, p. 157). In the suburb of Basle, only Lörrach, lo-

Cross-border agglomeration Strasbourg-Kehl
Centralities and political authorities

Figure 1: Centralities and political authorities in the cross-border agglomeration Strasbourg-Kehl
Source: ADEUS

Three-national agglomeration Basle
Centralities and political authorities
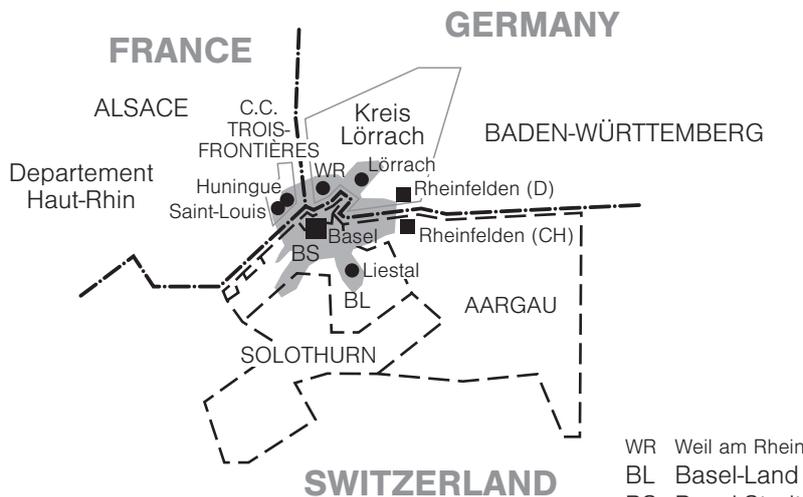
Figure 2: Centralities and political authorities in the three-national agglomeration Basle
Source: ATB-TAB; Conceil general du Haut-Rhin, Land Baden-Würtenberg

cated 10 kilometres north of Basle, was a real town (its autonomy was won in 1681). The development of the other suburb border towns began at the end of the 19th century when Basle was affected by an important wave of industrialization (chemicals, textile) (POLIVKA 1974). The development of the suburb border town associates the advantages of proximity (to a city with a great economic development) and of location in another national State. The urbanization depends on contradictory factors which are not simultaneous in time: it spreads across the State's boundary, and cross-border agglomerations have merged in the 20th century. However, the public management and the urban planning policies are elaborated at national level and are still very different.

One of the aims of the public power, especially the States, is to keep the coherence and the integrity of its territory (ANDERSON 1996, p. 48). The border appears not only as a political line, but also as a separation between systems of signs (language, rules, administrative grid, etc.), ideologies, identity, cultural behaviours and temporalities (RAFFESTIN 1980, p. 107). Otherwise, the border is characterized by 4 main functions that will now be observed: manifestation, regulation, differenciation, relation (RAFFESTIN 1986, p. 17). First, each border manifests the will of the power: the territorial control expressed by the military power or by the importance of the civil power, and a weakening of the power beyond the border. Second, regulation means that the border operates like a commuter which could be turned on or off. As the case may be, it serves either to join and articulate or to separate and take apart. Third, the establishment of the border produces economic, cultural and political differences. Fourth, the contiguity of the territories allows for relations, which can be legal or illegal, consisting in the trading of produce, but also taking the form of confrontation, experiments, circulation, etc. This frame of four functions will be used to analyze the management by the public power. Urban projects are one of the ways used by public authority (municipalities) to mark their territory (ASCHER 1997, p. 49). But, the stakes often concern the whole agglomeration. The urban project does not only express the will of the municipality, but it is inserted in the national frame of urban policy and has to conform to the

national rules concerning urban planning (JOUVE 2003, p. 90).

The planning of the territory of the municipality follows different patterns, but the centre and periphery pattern seems to be applied more or less everywhere. In border cities, there is a real originality because the border is considered as a specific limit. The foreign municipalities or populations, even if they are contiguous, are not acknowledged under the national rules and have in theory no capacity to influence a project. For this reason, the border was often considered as an area of relegation for the location of facilities that create nuisances (big industrial estates, incineration factory, harbour near the Rhine in Strasbourg; psychiatric hospital, prison in Basel). The urban planning is quite similar on both sides of the border, even if the great cities, on account of their size, have thus located many more facilities than the suburban border towns. Nevertheless, the leisure aspects are also taken into consideration, especially on the Rhine, with parks, private gardens (“*Schrebergarten*”), pedestrian lanes laid out in several sections of the border, but with few connections across the border. On agglomeration level, even if there is a continuity in the building, the area close to the border appears to be one of significant discontinuity.

On the other hand, despite their small size, the suburban border towns are genuine central places and enjoy amenities which would probably not be there without the existence of the border. Kehl, Lörrach, Saint-Louis have hospitals, and commercial centres. Kehl has its own harbour facing Strasbourg. Weil am Rhein and Huningue each have a harbour on the Rhine, one kilometre distant from the harbour of Basel. But the zone of influence of the public facilities is limited to the border and their existence often reinforces the boundary (DEGE 1979).

The border is also a line which underlines some sharp differences. This is particularly clear on the urban transport network. For example, some charge breakings are still remaining, especially in the collective transport networks (REITEL 2001, p. 261). In Basel the end stations of several tramway lines are located near the border. During a long time, there was no single tariff area at the level of the agglomeration but only at the national level. Otherwise, many agglomerations located on a major transport axis try to divert the international road traffic to bypass roads. For cross-border agglomerations, this means that a section of the bypass road must be located in the neighbouring country. In that case, the condition is that the two countries must have the same vision of the organization of their network and of the necessity of connecting. But it is also required that they should be mutually informed of the projects, in order to be able to negotiate, to intervene in the debate and to take part in the decision. As opposed to many agglomeration of similar size, Basle and Strasbourg have only sections of bypass roads.

There are few instances of the function of regulation: the best-known of them is the realization of the Airport Basle-Mulhouse (Euroairport). A convention signed between France and Switzerland in 1949 authorized the construction of the airport on French territory, five kilometres from the centre of Basle, and it was connected to Switzerland by a custom-free road. The airport administration is managed by a council where French and Swiss authorities are represented on equal terms. It is considered as an exemplary cross-border cooperation which enabled the authorities of the two countries to meet regularly and to confront their practice (WALKER 1995, p. 2).

But the border also plays a role of connection: the policy of the border-city can be influenced by the planning conceptions of the neighbouring country. For example, when the “Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg” (CUS) decided to elaborate a new circulation plan in 1990, the council looked first towards the German cities of Freiburg and Karlsruhe, 80 kilometres away. The council imported some of their ideas (the impulse given to the bicycle network, the organization of the public transport with restrictions against cars, the development of the public space, etc.) and applied them on its own territory. In this case, the proximity of a foreign country appears as an opportunity to observe different experiences and transfer them to one’s own territory.

In fact, Basle and Strasbourg did not face the same stakes with the border. In both cases, it appears that the border separates different cultures in management and urban policies, and that each power tries to assert and to mark its territory. Between Strasbourg and Kehl, the Rhine and the neighbouring areas manifest a large discontinuity at agglomeration level.

The border introduces a perturbation in the organization of the agglomeration which turns out to be made up of separate parts. Local authorities do not have the same power and the same rules in each country, so that the settlement of problems on the border or nearby always takes a long time (MARCOU et al. 1997, p. 13). The cities are under the supervision of the central State and for this reason, the management are clearly separated. No local authority is empowered to make plans for the whole agglomeration. However, in Western Europe, boundaries have faced several major changes for the last decades.

Cross-Border cooperation: The End of the Limits of Sovereignty?

In a globalized world, flows are on the increase and interactions between places and States multiply (FOUCHER 2000, p. 81). On the other hand, the process of European construction transfers some powers from the national States to the European Union, resulting in a system of shared sovereignty (HOOGHE et al. 2001, p. 5). The EU has initiated different programmes to increase integration on several levels. Cross-border cooperation is a way to manage the changes in the functions of the borders in areas which are contiguous but belong to different countries (O’ DOWD 2002, p. 111). It consists in a partnership between actors on regional or on local levels. It is a way to structure and to regulate the necessary overcoming of the border.

The principles of cross-border cooperation were formulated by the Council of Europe (O’ DOWD, P. 117). But the first real initiatives came from actors of the civil society or from public authorities on a regional level in the core of Western Europe, the highly urbanized areas close to the Rhine valley, after the creation of the Economic European Community. One of the first experience, the Regio Basiliensis, took place between Germany, France and Switzerland in an optimistic period of European construction (RAFFESTIN et al. 1974, p. 196). The aim was to build new relations across the border considered as a barrier preventing contacts by people who shared a common view of the future. For those reasons, new visions of a cross-border area were elaborated. The creation of the cross-border regions was a kind of paradox. It was supported by the States which wanted to control the process: they founded several organiza-

tions under their management. But, the creation of cross-border regions was also considered as an alternative to the Europe of the States and a way to build another frame for Europe. Another stage was reached with the creation of the Single Market (1993). One function of the national border was abolished, and the Interreg program was conducted with the aim to facilitate the emergence of cross-border new projects and to transform those borders from lines of division to links.

Despite the general orientations provided by the European Union, each State defines its own cross-border policy, according to its political culture and history. In Switzerland, a cross-border cooperation was initiated by the Cantons of Geneva and Basle (Leimgruber 1989, p. 53). The Confederation participates in the transnational commissions, but in practice devolves the real power to the Cantons. The Interreg program (1990) was enforced in the border regions of Switzerland and the Confederation has made a special effort to follow the EU orientations (Lezzi 2000, p. 17). The action of the Confederation is an attempt to harmonize the cross-border connections on the whole territory and to obtain a share of the subsidies of the EU (Saez et al. 1997, p. 35).

In the former Republic of Germany, the territory was surrounded by two types of borders: the "iron curtain" dividing it from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, and the boundaries with the western countries (Lengereau 1990, p. 69). The unification of Germany introduced new considerations: the eastern borders, like all the eastern territories, received great attention from the Federal State (Lepesant 1998, p. 15). On the other borders, the Länder remain the main political authority involved in partnership. The degree of cooperation varies, since all the Länder do not have the same size or pay the same attention to their international borders.

In France, cross-border cooperation was controlled by the central State. The intergovernmental commissions were for a long time the only cross-border cooperation institutions allowed by the French government (Saez et al. 1997, p. 32). But the new powers won through the law of decentralization (1982) by the regional and the local authorities opened new perspectives, even if the legal possibilities were still restricted un-

til the middle of the 1990's. France then adapted the Madrid's Convention (1980) and signed several agreements with all the neighbouring States permittting the creation of new cross-border authorities to which municipalities or regional authorities could transfer some of their responsibilities.
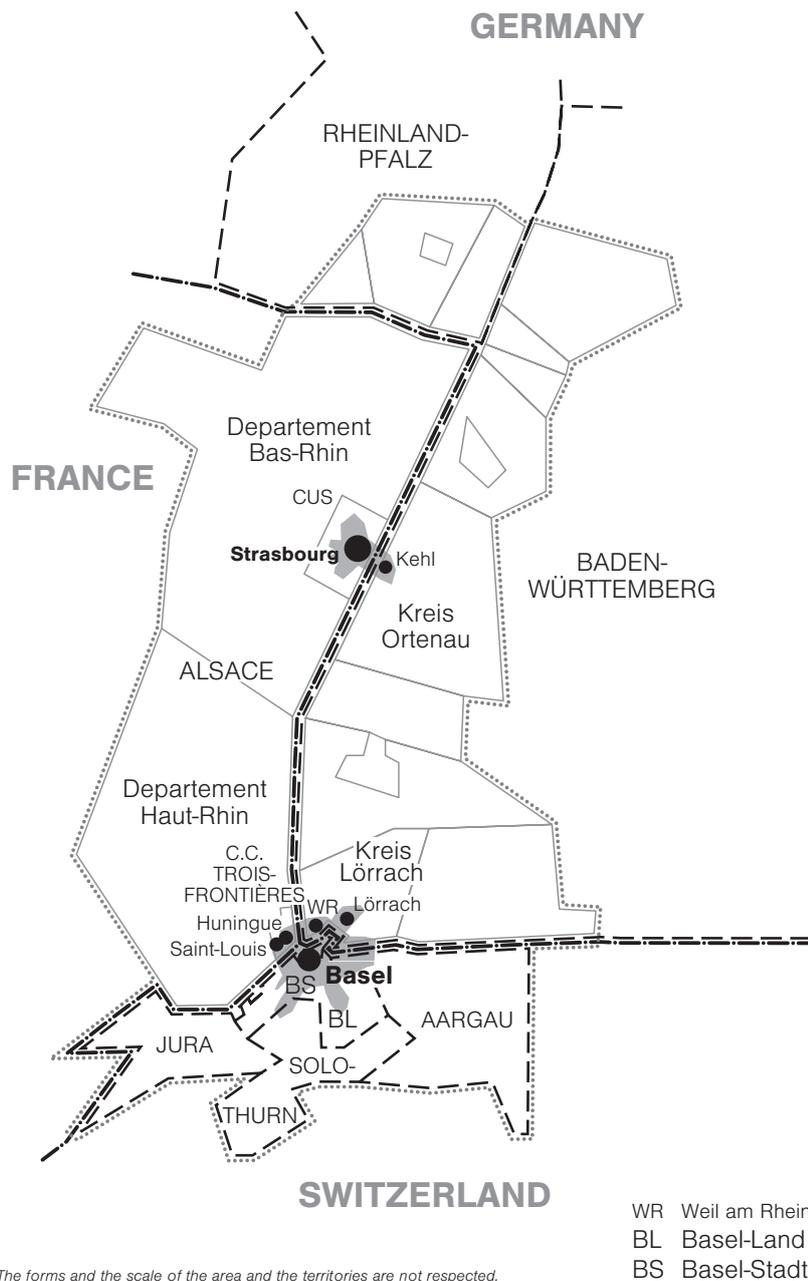
In the Upper Rhine valley, cross-border cooperation began early compared to other European regions. After the creation of the Regio Basiliensis in 1963, initiated by people from the civil society from Basle (entrepreneurs, research workers in social and economic sciences), a intergovernmental commission was established in 1975 by the three States, covering a larger area, and was given the name of "Upper Rhine Conference" (Conference 1999, p. 159). Working committees were created in several fields: country planning, transport, environment, etc. (Fig. 3). The French regional authorities (Conseil Régional, Conseil Général) were associated to the Conference, but they also tried to develop direct partnership with the neighbouring territories: the Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin signed a chart of cross-border cooperation with the neighboured Länder (Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz). After 1990, the Interreg programs and the new legal opportunities adopted by the European Parliament gave a new impetus. Strasbourg and Basle initiated great projects in the second period (Interreg II). The historical process, however, was different in the two cities.

In 1996, the authorities of the three countries met symbolically on a boat on the Rhine and decided to launch a project called Trinational Agglomeration Basle (TAB). The aim of the project was to give an overall vision of urban planning for the agglomeration as if it had no borders. A think tank was created, composed of elected representatives, urban and spatial planning experts coming from local and regional authorities in France and Germany and the cantonal authorities of Basle-City and Basel-Land. After several thematic studies, a development concept was published in 2001: it gave the main strategic orientations and presented 27 key-projects in 3 major fields (transport, green areas and urban planning) (TAB 2002, p. 26). From the beginning, an original system of governance had to be invented: it was based on dialogue and consensus (aiming to find a general point of view acceptable to all the territories

involved). A new step was made in 2001 with the creation of an association TAB where every public authority is represented and which functions as a political council, namely by defining the main orientations for the agglomeration. An urban planning office was also created and is in charge of the coordination and the realization of the projects.

The history began also in Strasbourg in the 1990's. A new strategic planning document took into account of the dismantling of the French-German border and suggested to intensify the relations with the neighbouring German city of Kehl (CUS 1990, p. 108). At the same time, the CUS was considering a plan to retrieve old harbour and estate fallows between the Rhine and the city centre (ADEUS 2004). An international urban planning contest was organized by the two urban authorities with the objective to devise a masterplan for an area, 4 kilometres long and 400 metres broad, between the two city centres. The first realization was to start from each extremity and especially on the eastern side, and the project of a garden located on the two banks of the Rhine and connected by a new pedestrian and cycling bridge was developed (Krieger 2004, p. 24). The public relations between the two cities were increasing. In 2000, due to a new French law on urban and spatial planning, the CUS started to put into effect a legal document on spatial planning covering the whole urban region. The "Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT)" must take the principles of sustainable growth into account (Sohn 2004, p. 157). A cross-border analysis which was partly financed by Interreg subsidies was commissioned. Published in 2001, it was the first analysis at that level in this area. After the change of the municipality council and its metropolitan authority in 2001, new orientations were given to the SCOT (Sohn 2004, p. 166). The local authorities on both sides completed new studies in order to elaborate projects in the cross-border area (ADEUS 2004, p. 9). In 2003, the French and the German governments decided that the new concept of European collectivities should be experimented between Strasbourg and Kehl because of its symbolic importance (French-German reconciliation, the seat of the European parliament). A new institution (Eurodistrict) was created in 2005 on the basis of the

Cross-border agglomerations of Strasbourg and Basle
Institutional environment

GERMANY

RHEINLAND-PFALZ

FRANCE

Departement Bas-Rhin

CUS

Strasbourg · Kehl

BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

Kreis Ortenau

ALSACE

Departement Haut-Rhin

C.C. TROIS-FRONTIÈRES

Kreis Lörrach

WR · Lörrach

Huningue
Saint-Louis

BS **Basel**

BL · AARGAU

JURA

SOLO-

THURN

SWITZERLAND

WR Weil am Rhein
BL Basel-Land
BS Basel-Stadt

Note: The forms and the scale of the area and the territories are not respected.

Political system

—·— international border
— — federated state
—— local or regional authority
(D: Kreis; F: Région, Département, Structure intercommunale)
········ Upper Rhine Valley Area

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Spatial organization
Agglomeration and main centrality

cross-border agglomeration
● Metropolis city
● suburb border town

Figure 3: Institutional environment in the cross-border agglomeration of Strasbourg and Basel
Source: Conférence Franco-Germano-Suisse d'aménagement du territoire

new legal structure promoted by the European Union[1], through the convention associating the CUS, the German *Kreis* of Ortenau and the main cities of the *Kreis* (Fig. 2). The aim of the Euro-district is mainly to conceive the future of the cooperation and to plan new spatial projects.

During a long time, the central State has considered the border as a line of insecurity: a policy of strong control was developed on the border's areas. For these reasons, there were few relations allowed between local authorities through the borders. The interests of the State and of the local authorities were not always the same, and this has become sources of conflicts sometimes. In the European integration's process, the boundaries are not uncertain anymore. It appeared to be easier than ever before to overpass the borders and to develop cooperation.

Metropolitan areas and governance

In Western Europe, the process of urbanization overcomes all territorial limits and especially the limits between local authorities (LERESCHE et al. 1995, p. 27). The major agglomerations have been divided, sometimes for decades, into several municipalities. So, one rarely finds a single political authority in charge of a whole agglomeration. In other respects, however, a new step towards urbanization has been made: in the process of metropolization, the populations and the major activities (especially management, research, etc.) are concentrating in large urban areas throughout the world (LERESCHE et al. 1995, p. 28).

At the same time, local governments and municipalities in charge of the core of the metropolitan areas have integrated the component of the globalization process (ASCHER 1995, p. 204). Two contradictory trends characterize the interactions between cities: cooperation and competition (BRUNET 1997, p. 70). The cities need to improve their image and to make it known at the global level. Cooperation and the rise of interdependence seem to be an answer to the increase of the complexity of management and to the gap between functional areas and political territories (JOUVE et al. 1999, p. 14). New conceptions in public management are resorted to in order to reach that aim (JOUVE et al. 1999, p. 23). Governance consists in building new relations with private firms and other municipalities

[1] www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org

and in looking for experiences in management in other cities of the world. It also consists in the emergence of a new political level or the articulation of existing authorities with the aim to plan the present and the future organization of the whole urban area. EU has defined a polycentric and well-balanced spatial development which leans on "dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urban areas" (COMMISSION EUROPEENNE 1999, p. 23). This concerns especially the "gate-cities" which concentrate the major economic, cultural and scientific facilities and which connect Europe with other regions of the world. But the general orientations of urban policy are elaborated at national level. Two questions will be discussed here. First, how and since when is the metropolitan process integrated in the national urban policy? Second, are institutional answers given to the political fragmentation of the metropolitan and agglomeration areas?

In Germany, since the 19th century, in accordance with a Prussian law *(Städteordnung)*, the political limits of the city have been set further back as the urbanization expanded (JOUVE et al. 1999, p. 226). The new urbanized areas were incorporated into one political institution *(Eingemeindung)*. The aim of the administrative reform ordered by the FRG in the 1960s was to have municipalities that were in a better position to plan and organize their future extension (REITEL 1980, p. 86). The incorporation of smaller municipalities permitted to increase widely the territory and the size of the cities and to rationalize the public management. The reform concerned all the territory of the FRG, though it was applied differently in each Land. But the urbanization's process has not stopped at the new limits of the cities. After 1974, the Federation applied a specific policy in several fields (accessibility, environment, housing, etc.) in 45 great urbanized areas *(Verdichtungsraum)*. In 1993, 14 metropolitan urban areas, which were considered as the main competitive economic poles of Germany, were identified by the ministry for housing and planning (BUNDESMINISTERIUM 1993). It was suggested to reinforce their political autonomy by developing cooperation and partnership at the level of the whole urban region. Several cities such as Stuttgart, Hannover, Frankfurt used the new political frames (JOUVE et al. 1999, p. 229). The new authority sometimes covers large

Cross-border Agglomeration a)	Basle		Strasbourg	
	Population (2000)	Percentage (%)	Population (2000)	Percentage (%)
Total	**604,600**	**100.00**	**460,700**	**100.00**
Core (city)	166,600	27.54	264,100	57.33
German suburb	90,800	15.02	33,500	7.27
Main border-town				
Lörrach	45,700	7.27	Kehl	
Weil am Rhein	28,900	4.78		
French suburb b)	34,500	5.71	163,100	35.40
Main border-town		1.01 3.31	-	
Huningue	6,100	1.01		
Saint-Louis	20,000	3.31		
Swiss suburb	312,700	51.73	-	-
Cross-border area	TAB-ATB 592,900		Strasbourg-Ortenau 859,400	
"Metropolitan authority"	**Canton of Basel 188,100**		**Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg 451,300**	

Tab. 1: Basle and Strasbourg: population of the agglomerations and of the cross-border area
Sources: Trinationale Agglomeration Basel, Bundesamt für Statistik (CH), Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg (D), INSEE (F)
a) The population of the agglomeration is the addition of the definition of agglomeration in each country according to national criteria.
b) For France 1999

areas (75 municipalities and 9 Kreise for Frankfurt), but it does not always enjoy fiscal autonomy. The authorities have not all assumed the same responsibilities because those operations are often initiated by the Land. Otherwise, the major city of the area attempt to control the future development and to divide the burden of the major expenses for the central amenities. For the first time, these frames include new considerations of governance: large representation of the actors, communication policy, development of a metropolitan consciousness, etc. Flexibility and mediation replace hierarchy and subsidiarity.

In France, the metropolitan facts have been taken into consideration by the government since 1963 (policy of the "Métropole d'équilibre"[2]) (DEYON et al. 2000, p. 40). The aim was to control the urban growth of the agglomeration of Paris by supporting 8 important agglomerations fairly distributed over the

national territory. The stake was the organization of "regional metropolitan areas" which had to be equipped with facilities of a high level for the firms and the population. Two orientations were given: the creation of planning offices (OREAM) [3] in large urban areas, which were meant for the elaboration of the future projects; the creation of a political authority in charge of the whole agglomeration, the "Communauté Urbaine". 8 were created by the government: in the institutional frame of France, those new institutions had a great political and fiscal autonomy, and their power covered large fields. The Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg (CUS) was one of the metropolitan authority which was created in 1968 and now covers 28 municipalities (Tab. 1). But, these experiences remained short-lived. The central State transferred new powers to all the other public territories in 1982, especially the municipalities (the decentralization process). It revealed the fragmentation of local power in France and obliged the State to elaborate new rules to promote

[2] The purpose was to control the urban growth of Paris by supporting 8 great agglomerations: Lille, Nantes, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Aix-Marseille, Lyon, Metz-Nancy, Strasbourg. The State brought them financial contributions to develop their accessibility, their facilities, etc.

[3] Organisme d'Etudes des Aires Métropolitaines.

cooperation between the 36,000 municipalities. Two laws were adopted (one in 1992, the other in 1999) which oblige every municipality to belong to a new authority having fiscal autonomy and to transfer several of their powers (Bernard-Gelabert 2001, p. 7). In the large agglomerations, that authority does not yet cover the whole of the urban area: several suburban municipalities try to resist and to build their own local authority, especially when the main city is known to have economic difficulties. Since 2004, the government has initiated a new policy of "metropolitan projects" to foster the development of new metropolitan functions and to increase cooperation at regional level. Strasbourg is one of the 17 areas selected.

In the decentralization's process, even if the sharing of the responsibilities of each local authority seems to be clear, for all the main fields (transport, development, environment, housing, etc.), the authorities have to coordinate their actions. They were prepared to have new power, but not to have relations with other collectivities. In theory, the central State is the regulator of the system, but in fact, it is not able to face the dispersion of the responsibilities and to persuade the collectivities to coordinate their action. The national governance system is made of cooperation and opposition and depends on the good will and the strength of the collectivities.

In Switzerland, the organization of the State includes three levels: confederation, canton, municipality. The political power of the cities has long been underrated (Gerosa 1988, p. 121) in comparison with the communes of the mountains and of the rural areas. The policy of the cities is often dependent of the will of the Cantons. The Confederation noticed that Switzerland is involved in the process of metropolization (Leresche et al. 1995, p. 168). But the local public power is fragmented into 26 Cantons and 2900 municipalities. Researchers of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne observe the great functional interconnections between 5 metropolitan areas largely open to the world and suggest to strengthen this polycentric urban area called "Swiss Metropolis" (Walter et al. 1999, p. 23). The Confederation abandoned the policy of concentrated decentralisation (which promoted the towns of small and middle size) and initiated a new policy of agglomerations

in 2001 (Gerheuser 1988, p. 243). The aim of this policy is to help the development of projects at the agglomeration level and to improve the cooperation between cities, municipalities and Cantons. A three-party Conference on agglomeration was created and associated the Confederation, the municipalities and the Cantons (Conseil Federal 2001, p. 97). The Confederation also created new financial equalization systems to help the financing of great projects. No introduction of political authority is envisaged for the moment. The governance pattern is an attempt to promote cooperation between all public powers and concerns the small agglomerations as well as the biggest ones. The Canton of Basel-city, the smallest of Switzerland (37 km^2), is composed of 3 municipalities one of them being the city of Basel where all the main political institutions are located. It has 2 international borders, (one with France, the other with Germany) and an "internal border" with the Canton of Basel-Land, which has its own government and policy. Basel is not only a three-national agglomeration, but in Switzerland a "four-cantonal agglomeration": the process of urbanization crossed the boundaries of the two Cantons (Fig. 1). Contrary to what happens in Strasbourg, the public authority of the agglomeration seems to be very fragmented, but the four Cantons belong to the association "Nordwestschweiz", where they discuss problems on a regional level.

In the three States, the governments try to correct the distortion between political and functional areas. Those corrections do not necessarily result in the creation of a new political territory. In all cases, we find them experimenting new systems of governance. Outside France, flexibility is considered as a major means. The main impulse is given at the national level, but a substantial autonomy is left to the local or regional actors. There is no real harmonization at national level. The approach remains experimental, but it helps to create a collective consciousness at agglomeration level. If the aims are similar in the three States, the means are not necessarily the same and vary according to the history of each political system. In Switzerland, the coordination depends on the quality of the collective projects (which means negotiation and consensus) and the Confederation plays a real role of coordina-

tion. In France and in Germany, the initiative is taken by the main cities and the metropolitan authority when it exists. The Länder are also largely present in the discussions.

In all cases, the construction of a governance system is a challenge to the classical hierarchical political grid and oblige the different political authorities to increase discussions and relations. The will is always to cross the political boundaries. The cross-border cooperation is quite representative of this movement, but it is also a specific case. The dismantle of the borders introduces a new era of uncertainty for the local territories: they try to reduce it by developing more relations with their foreign neighbours with the help of the European Union. For these reasons, they have to imagine new conceptions of governance.

New functions of borders in the system of governance at agglomeration level

Two types of documents were consulted: official planning documents imposed by the national laws; documents describing strategic orientations produced by the public authorities. The first one are always realized on territories in national frame (Schéma de Cohérence Territorial, Richtplan, Regionalplan, etc.); the second one are elaborated at cross-border level (Agglomération Trinationale de Bâle, Strasbourg-Ortenau) or in the existing collectivities (projet d'agglomération de Strasbourg for example). Other documents produced on higher level were also consulted: the plan describing the future of the cross-border region of the Upper-Rhine valley, the former vision of the Regio Basiliensis (elaborated in the 1970's). Several interviews were made with employees of the urban planing offices in each city.

The analysis tries to determine the spatial strategies of the collectivities and the way they consider the cross-border cooperation. Several criteria were taken into account: the collectivities involved, the legal frame of cooperation, the type of relations, the planned spatial projects, the means allocated (technical and human resources), the realized operations, etc. The 4 properties of the border described by Raffestin (ibid) were used as an analysis grid. The aim is to see which properties of the borders are the most used by each collectivity, in which cases and for which purpose.

Border as legitimacy: the power of relations

All European territories are subjected to similar processes: European integration, globalization, increasing demand for local democracy and the need of a local identity (ANDERSON 2002, p. 3). Location on the border brings in a special factor: the collectivity confronts daily a foreign country, its institutions, its way of life (DONNAN et al.1999, p. 56). Cross-border cooperation means developing international relations, which have been highly regarded since the creation of the EU, and here, on account of the geographical proximity, they can be constant and regular. It is a way for it to legitimize its own proper power.

International relations were not really taken into account in the French decentralization's process. Additionally, the creation in several steps of new collectivities in the 1990's compelled the communes to transfer a part of their competence (BERNARD-GELABERT et al. 2001, p. 10). The fact that they were of recent birth and obtained small recognition from the population obliged them to legitimize its political action. The "Communauté de communes des Trois-Frontières" in the French part of the agglomeration of Basle is the leading political agent involved with the two cities of Huningue and Saint-Louis. In both agglomerations, the *Kreise* play the leading role on the German side: they need to give an impetus to their action which is not well known to the population. On the other side, due to subsidiarity, the *Land* lets the *Kreis* act in its name because of its geographical proximity to the border.

In France and in Germany, cross-border cooperation compels collectivities to organize new relations within their own national State: it is a way to harmonize their points of view before they face the foreign authorities. The system of governance has two levels of organization: one active in each national territory (local level), the other in the international area (agglomeration level). On the first level, a collectivity plays a leading role in the cross-border relations in the capacity of a spokesman. That political role is played by the *Canton* in Switzerland (Basle-city, Basle-Land), by the *Kreise* in Germany (Ortenau, Lörrach) and the *Etablissements Publics de Coopération Intercommunale* (EPCI) in France (CUS; Communautés de communes des Trois-Frontières). Their leading role was progressively built in the course of the cross-border process rather than really anticipated. They need human, technical and financial resources (statistical and planning offices, lawyers, etc.) to reach their goal, and they are not necessarily under their control. In the TAB projects, the resources are concentrated in the two Cantons of Basel. In Germany, they are allocated to the "Kreis" and the cities (Lörrach, Weil am Rhin). In the French part of the TAB, they are deposited with the "EPCI", in the city of Saint-Louis, but the studies are for the most part conducted by the planning office of the *Département* du Haut-Rhin which has its seat in Colmar (70 kilometres from Basel). In the case of Strasbourg, the CUS has its own resources, and on the German side the resources are shared between the city of Kehl and the *Kreis* Ortenau. This organization is a clear reflection of the rules current in each national State (Tab. 2). In France, the system of governance is based on a partnership resulting from cooperation but also from power relations between the collectivities. The Central State is of course involved, but each collectivity sees in the cross-border relation a way to gain in legitimacy. In Germany and in Switzerland, due to federalism, relations are more dependent on hierarchy and subsidiarity, the closest political collectivity is in charge of the operation: cities and *Kreise* (as a decentralized representative of the Land), Cantons.

On the second level, a system of governance proceeds from official cross-border cooperation which, however, also reflects implicit power relations. The cross-border relations appear to be unbalanced because of the difference in size and power between the Metropolitan authorities and the other collectivities. The Metropolis concentrates the resources, which is not the case with the other collectivities. But the border also restores some balance, since the small collectivities are recognized as equal partners, despite their smallness or their economic weakness. They can offer much more than the local resources by mobilizing the resources at different levels in their own national system.

The incentives of the European Union achieve their purposes of developing cross-border cooperation and transforming the border into an interdependence line (MARTINEZ 1994, p. 4). The local authorities are aware that the major differ-

Level and means	France	Germany	Switzerland
LOCAL	Commune	Gemeinde, Stadt	Commune, Ville
	"Etablissement Public de Coopération Inter-communale"	"Kreis"	
	Pays (project and coordination structure)		
Groupement Local de Coopération Transfrontalière (GLCT); District européen			
REGIONAL	"Département"	"Region" (planning authority)	
	"Région"		
		"Land"	"Canton"
NATIONAL	"République française"	"Bundesrepublik Deutschland"	"Schweizer Eid-genossenschaft"
Type of State	Unitary State with devolution	Federation	Confederation
Relations between political authorities	Partnership and competition	Hierarchy and subsidiarity	Affirmation of the federated State
Technical and human resources	Scattered, overlapped, mostly shared	Hierarchy, specia-lized, mostly shared	Concentration in the federated State

Public actors

major actor involved in the cross border cooperation

secondary actor involved in the cross border cooperation

little presence or absence

Tab. 2: Main political structure in France, Germany and Switzerland and in the cross-border agglomeration of Basle and Strasbourg
Sources: CONFÉRENCE FRANCO-GERMANO-SUISSE D'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (1999); Mission Opérationelle Transfontalière (2003)

ences concern the cultural and the legal aspects and devote part of their energy to understanding the functioning of the neighboured territorial system. On the other side, there is a cultural confrontation which gives them a special identity which is a trump card in the competition between territories on global or European scale.

The border makes manifest the power relations between collectivities, in the very attempt to regulate them by cross-border cooperation. But, for the suburban border-cities, the border has also another signification.

Border as resource: the strategy of the suburban border-cities

The suburban border-towns were all facing the same challenge: the border was a difficulty but it also offered protection and opportunities. A political and economic centrality is established through the location on the border which is also a strong element of identity. On one side, it restrained some flows, the border-town being the last centre for the people who did not want to cross the boundary. On the other side, due to the existence of differences (rules, taxes, etc.), a specific commercial offer existed and attracted people from the neighbouring countries.

The dismantling of the European borders leads to the breakdown of that organization. The restraining function of the border is blurred, and the population of the whole agglomeration can now be considered as potential consumers. The border is not a barrier anymore and it can not underline the identity. The border-cities react by using the changes in a positive way. They reinforce their centrality, carrying out a strong urban planning policy. To reach this aim, they develop a contradictory policy: they assert their affiliation to the urban space (the agglomeration), but at the same time construct an image based on the differences represented by the border.

The case of Kehl is highly illustrative. Since the end of World War II, Kehl has been known to the population of Strasbourg for its commercial centre offering products which are unobtainable or less expensive than in France. Just across the Rhine, Strasbourg is famous for its European institutions. Kehl used this European image to obtain in the 1990s to be the seat of cross-border institutions (Euro-Institut, Infobest, etc.). On the other hand, Kehl built green areas along the rivers to underline its German originality (preserving nature in the city, its situation on the Rhine). The *Landesgar-*

tenschau, a garden and art festival organized by Kehl and Strasbourg in 2004 was a way to reinforce its centrality and its image (KRIEGER 2004, p. 189). The border is erased (the continuity of the urban space is stressed), but on the other side, the differences are maintained: Kehl is a place near Strasbourg, in its suburban area, but with a German identity. The suburban border-cities of the Three-national Agglomeration of Basle conducted a similar policy, but using the image of art and of innovation in architecture in the continuity of Basle.

The suburban border-cities exploit two functions of the border: difference and regulation. In a way, the ambivalence of the border is considered as a resource. All the city councils argue the same way: as part of the agglomeration, they can apply for European funds, and as collectivities in their own State they can claim that they are a showcase. But in all cases, the strategy of the suburban border-cities depends on the orientation of the metropolitan authorities.

Border as relation: the governance systems of two metropolitan areas

The building of a cross border urban area is one of the strategic orientations of the two metropolitan authorities and this supposes cooperation through the borders. But, the orientations are not the same in the two agglomerations: the strategies, the means allocated, the relations between the collectivities are the results of a complex history. It all depends on the way each national State and national territory was built up (in time and in space) and of the relations between the States. It is also the result of the confrontation between several national systems (political and cultural) and of the relations developed between the "local" public authorities (Tab. 3).

The cross-border cooperation is a way to strengthen their participation in a global competition, for three reasons. First, it is an addition to the size of the metropolis and to its readability. That area has more diversity than the city itself. Second, it helps to build an international and European image. A cross-border agglomeration means urban spaces in several countries and the resulting knowledge and experience of several national systems. Third, the agglomeration is easy to find on a map of Europe because there are very few large cities located on borders.

	City, metropolitan authority	Strasbourg	Basle
Territorial situation	Local	Border city, former Republic	Enclave, State-city
	National	Periphery of a medium-size State	Periphery of a small State
	European	Near the Rhine axis	Node on the Rhine axis
Vision of the territory	National	Unitary	Federate
		Integrated territory	Association of territories
		1 boundary	"network of borders"
	Border (general)	Protection and relation	Regulation
	Dyade	Symbol of reconciliation	International gate
Identity and image strategy	National	Showcase, Symbol of reconciliation	Gate metropolis
	Metropolitan authority	European metropolis	Small «worldcity»
	Suburb border cities	German suburb of a French city	French and German suburb of a Swiss metropolis
		European city in the cross-border area	Architecture and Art

Tab. 3: The cross-border governance's system in Basle and Strasbourg and its territorial components
Sources: TAB (2002); Kanton of Basle-City: Zukunft Basel (2001); ADEUS (2004); websites, interviews

In the two agglomerations, a flexible system of governance worked out in partnership was developed. It was based on projects and visions of urban planning and was relied on good will. But the need to create a more definite structure, that could be recognized by the public authorities and the population in each state, became apparent.

Basle is building a territory based on its three-national agglomeration, and along a Swiss-made method of dialogue between all the major political agents and decisions taken in common (TAB ibid). In 2001, the association TAB was created: its composition is one third of the representatives for each country, and it holds a general assembly every year. Even if the Swiss Cantons seem to be the most powerful, some kind of regulation exists, because the TAB has three components which have in theory an equal political power. The relations are based on mutual respect: for every problem the best solution is a collective, consensual solution, which it inevitably takes time to find. The governance's system is largely inspired from the Swiss system of collegiality combined with consensus (Leresche 2001, p. 21). The system works thanks to the determination of the public agents, and to the existence of a genuine cross-border consciousness, which emerged during the 1960's and the 1970's and which was encouraged by the Regio Basiliensis. Even though there was a decrease in the relations during the 1980's, the political, economic and planning actors thought that part of the future depended on good relations with the neighbouring territories. Those images and the representation of an area "without border" helped the public actors to cross the borders. Cooperation is a matter of time, but the level of the relations changed. They were first developed on the regional level (1960's); but nowadays they are more concentrated on the agglomeration level. Geographical proximity is an important factor in the increase of the relations, for it makes frequent and improvised meetings possible. The TAB association gives a definite shape independent from each collectivity. It is linked to the policy of agglomerations initiated by the Confederation.

The cross-border public relations are more recent in Strasbourg. After the Second World War, with the help of the Central State, the city developed a "European ambition" (Kleinschmager 1997, p. 31) and engaged in partnerships with other large cities in Europe. The border was considered as a barrier limiting the influence of the city. Outside Kehl, the cross-border area was largely ignored. At the end of the 1980's, the CUS considerably raised the cross-border relations with the aim to increase the influence of Strasbourg on the right side of the Rhine. But the balance between Strasbourg and Kehl is very difficult achieved owing to the disparity in size. The cross-border cooperation is now built on another level with the *Kreis* of Ortenau. The Eurodistrict created in 2005 intended to organize and realize the main project at agglomeration level. The ambition was very high when the first discussions began in 2003. An agreement was difficult to find because the authorities did not have the same vision about the competences to transfer. Besides, each component wanted to house the seat of the new organization. For both states, France and Germany, Strasbourg-Ortenau appears as a symbolic "territory" on account of its troubled history. However, in comparison with Basle, the relations are more conflicted. The event of the garden and art festival was very symbolic: it was considered as a big French-German event and attracted more than a million visitors from both countries, but each authority handled its own part of the garden and created its own program of events. But the final result is that the agglomeration has now a real cross-border place, the "garden of the two banks" located on either sides of the Rhine and a symbol, the bridge *(Die Passerelle)* linking the two banks. The bridge and the garden are now new concrete symbols of cross-border relations, places where the German and the French, people from Strasbourg and from Kehl, mix together.

One may note by the way that the system of governance seems to be more complicated in Basle but also more balanced than in Strasbourg. The Canton of Basle-city considers itself as a small territory, an enclave encircled by several kinds of borders. By reason of its power, the Canton was in a position to undertake an international policy with the neighbouring States of France and Germany (Staehlin 1988, p. 153). But it has also developed cooperation with the neighbouring Cantons in Switzerland.

Even if during the last 15 years the cross-border relations have increased, a difference in degree exists between Strasbourg and in Basle (Tab. 3). First, each State has a different vision of its territory and its borders and that vision influences the relations established by the metropolitan authority. France has a integrated vision (Citron 1987): the territory was long considered as homogeneous and unique and surrounded by a single militarized border. Border regions were peripheries which had to be fully integrated to the territory and to the nation. The State exercised a powerful control on the border-regions and had built a powerful military and defence system from the 17th to the 20th century (Nordman 1998). Strasbourg was a military place in the French territory, but also in the German system (Livet et al. 1982). That was not the fact in Basel. Switzerland is a heterogeneous territory made of different States organized in a Confederation. Such an association of territories means that there are several kinds of borders: inner, between the Cantons and between the linguistics groups, outer, with other Countries. The border of Switzerland is defined by regulation, which means openness rather than closure. There are less tensions on the outer border than on the inner border: Switzerland appears as "a intricate network of borders" (Leimgruber 1989, p. 115).

Second, despite their location on the Rhine as the major transport axis, Strasbourg and Basle do not play the same role on the transport network. Strasbourg was considered as a military place and a gate of France on the Rhine. The military power was enabled to control the network and the transport facilities. For example, the airport of Strasbourg was managed by the military power until 1996 (Kleinschmager 1997, p. 49). The transport network (motorway, railway) was improved along with the rest of the French territory, but the connection with Germany was long largely ignored. Despite its location on the French-German border, Strasbourg is not a great centre of connection between France and Germany: it has a peripheral position in France and on the Rhine transport axis. On the contrary, Basel was considered as one of the main gateways of Switzerland to the world (through the Rhine) (Bergier 1983, p. 287). The aim of the Confederation and the Canton is also to maintain efficient connections with the neighbouring countries. Basel is a major railway and international junction, a stopping place between north and southern Europe, but also between western and eastern Europe.

Third, the development is dependent on the relations between the national States and the metropolitan authorities, and the autonomy that is granted to these authorities. In the French political system, the CUS has great power, but the main responsibilities remain in the hands of the central State (PETER 2001). Despite its large autonomy within the French system, the CUS is not considered as a full-size partner because the legislative capacity is missing which means that the collectivity as not a complete control of its territory. In Basel, the main amenities are controlled and financed by the Canton or by private foundations. This direct control is lacking in Strasbourg where strenuous negotiations take place between the CUS and the Central State for the development and maintenance of the metropolitan amenities, which are partly controlled and financed by the central State which intended that the city should be a showcase of France. In fact, the power next to the border is markedly higher in Basel than in Strasbourg, so that the decisions can be taken very quickly, if necessary. The proximity helps to have a good appreciation of the border, a knowledge of way the political institutions are organized in the neighbouring countries. Basel has a long-standing know-how in the matter of cross-border relations and negotiation, which is not the case for Strasbourg, where during a long time all the international relations were controlled by the central State.

The two metropolitan collectivities of Strasbourg and Basle do not develop the same strategy with their neighbouring and foreign public authorities. In the governance system of TAB, the border is used for the purpose of relation, but in Strasbourg, the border is rather used as a means of regulation. Additionally, the cross-border process in Basel is gaining in autonomy and having an organization of one's own, while in Strasbourg the cross-border process is more characterized by confrontation and relations of power. Despite these facts, the cross-border cooperation has substantially increased in the two agglomerations. The cross-border cooperation helps the metropolitan authorities to be better noticed on the global level.

Conclusion

The Interreg programms open financial opportunities to cooperate. The cross-border cooperation has become inevitable at local level: the collectivities are developing visions and projects which contribute to shape the consciousness of belonging to a cross-border agglomeration. Cross-border relations are not a simple component of little significance in the international relations between neighbouring States, but are the expression of real proximity links between foreign collectivities separated by a boundary. The increase of such a cooperation manifests the assertion of public power at local level and points to a transfer of the interest of the national States in France and in Germany from their own boundaries to the outside borders of the European Union. The Swiss Confederation and the Cantons are deeply involved in that process. The relations are not forced into conformity with a norm: they are made of the confrontation of public authorities which do not have the same competences and the same autonomy.

The cross-border governance's system thus elaborated consists in regulation and combines balance, flexibility and mutual recognition. In the case of Strasbourg, the balance has been established by the implication of the German *Kreis* of Ortenau as representative of the Land and of the communes. In the case of Basle, the balance resides in the negotiations between the three components. The decisions concerning the projects are made in common and each authority has the duty to translate it into its own national system. The process sometimes takes a long time and requires mutual trust and the knowledge of the foreign political system. The flexibility appears in the weak degree of institutionalization of the governance system. The process, however, also testifies to the fragility of the system. Institutionalization is a way to secure the perpetuation of the process in time and to give shape to a new territory. The governance's system also has a strategic dimension: the collectivities have to imagine a common future and to look ahead for harmonization, cooperation and complementary. That goal also compels them to think about their own territories and identities.

Cross-border cooperation appears more and more as made possible by structural links resulting from negotiations and new concepts. Cooperation requires equality between the several public authorities: in the cross-border process, the suburban border cities have in theory the same powers as the metropolitan authorities. The collectivities try to legitimize their action in that way and to assert themselves within the national political system. The metropolitan authorities take advantage of their cross-border image at international level to show that they occupy an original position and that they have experiences in complex public management.

There are some incidental differences between the processes in the two agglomerations. The system of governance is influenced by the political system in which the metropolitan collectivity is located. The experience of international relations at different levels of the Canton of Basle is much higher than that of the *Communauté Urbaine* de Strasbourg. This is the result from the complex history of the relations between France and Germany and the strong control exercised by the national government in both the German and the French political systems. The political organization of Switzerland entails a great autonomy for the Canton of Basle. That fact, combined with the proximity of the border, the smallness of the territory and the location on a major European transport axis, forces the Canton to take a strategic view of its future development.

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