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Researching MediaSpace in a European cross-border region: The meaning of places and the function of borders

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Abstract: Mass media can represent and help to recompose European spaces. The aim of the current article is to ascertain whether the journalistic representation of space within a European cross-border region is related to the economy driven functional integration favored by the EU's new regionalism policies. Based on a content analysis of two interconnected newspapers located in the trans-frontier area centered around the Luxembourg economy, the objective is to explore the spatial arrangements orienting the mediatization of cross-border regionalization. The results show that new regionalism—meaning the definition of a de-bordered and urban regional unit based on economic competitive advantages—is not necessarily the most important geographical set of ideas leading to the production of images in a trans-frontier and European region. Each of the chosen newspapers has developed a cross-border agenda assigning specific values to state borders and places within this regional and functional setting.

Keywords: media, border, place, new regionalism, cross-border regions

1 Introduction

The mass media are often viewed as key actors among those intervening in the European integration process (Fossum and Trenz, 2006; Trenz, 2008). Their representation of the European Union in general has been considered as eroding its legitimacy. The European agenda-setting has been defined by nationally oriented mass media, the current infotainment trend, and the tendency to cover only negative news associated with the EU are viewed as key reasons for the rather pessimistic vision of this political construction delivered to the citizens of the continent (Galpin and Trenz, 2017; Meyer, 2005; Urbáníková and Volek, 2014). European affairs coverage has been analyzed in the national quality press as well

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as the more popular media, even if the former has received greater interest from the scholarly community (Kevin, 2003; Papathanassopoulos and Negrine, 2011). Further, the media can also represent—directly or indirectly—spatial phenomena determined by political rescaling at the European level, the emergence of collective actions and procedures that go beyond nation-states, and the consequent transformation of policymaking within nation states (Olsen, 2002).

However, the mass media representation of one specific regional construction strongly shaped by EU policies is relatively unknown: cross-border urban regions. The current article explores the representation of this type of regional space to establish whether the relevant media coverage portrays mainly a functional integration determined by the EU-inspired new regionalism promoted in borderlands: a de-bordered space structured by interconnected economic poles generating specific functions and leading to the emergence of strong urban centers and peripheries across state borders. The trans-frontier area organized by the dynamic economy of Luxembourg has been chosen as a case study. Following a review of literature on the EU regional imperatives and their potential relation to the news agenda in Europe borderlands, the research argument and methodology are presented. The results and a discussion are then developed in consecutive sections. First, we analyze the cross-border collaboration between the chosen media and their represented hierarchy of urban places in the trans-frontier region to find out if these journalistic activities explicitly refer to the de-bordered and center-periphery functional dynamics related to new regional EU policies. Second, the objective is to qualify the newsworthiness of this cross-border region by analyzing the issues addressed and their location in actual space. The last part is dedicated to a discussion of the structuring spatial factors which play a part in the construction of mass-mediated space at the level of this cross-border and urban area, with a focus on the value given to places and borders by the chosen media.

2 Spatial integration and representation beyond borders: EU regional priorities and MediaSpace

Spatial integration across state borders in Europe is linked to implementation of the EU regulations, cross-state partnerships, and policy coordination (Dühr, Stead, and Zonneveld, 2007; Durand and Lamour, 2014; Lamour and Decoville, 2014; Stead, 2012). The purpose of these policies has been to encourage the mobility of people, goods, capital, and services across state borders in order to support Europe's competitiveness in a globalized economy (Jensen and Richard-

son, 2004; Moisis, 2011; Richardson, 2006). The metropolitan spaces across state borders, in particular, have held the attention of EU policymakers (ESPON, 2010). The spatial integration favored in these areas by European public authorities is associated with a new regionalism (Brenner, 2009; Keating, 1998, 2013). These cross-border spaces are conceived as new regional entities, including borders to be transformed into a spatial interface and a series of urban places expected to connect with one another in order to secure their common economic development (Deas and Lord, 2006; Lamour, 2011, 2014a; Luukkonen, 2015;). These regional units are expected to be managed by multi-level governance networks (Brenner, 2009; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Keating, 1998, 2013). The implementation of new regional policies leads to the progressive constitution of an in-between European space, with its urban centers and peripheries determined by the economic organization of space.

The media plays a role in the definition of space, notably by fixing spatial representations used by people to shape their social space in their everyday lives (Burgess, 1990; Burgess and Gold, 1985; Lamour, 2019a; Lamour and Lorentz, 2016). That “stabilizes the existing central place orientations and ties in with living spaces through spatially selective information” (Blotevogel, 1984, p. 79). However, there has not been a strong interest in the media representation of the cross-border urban integration favored by EU policies and leading to trans-frontier central place orientations. The Copenhagen-Malmö region across the Danish and Swedish state border is one of the rare areas where investigations have been carried out (Falkheimer, Blach-Ørsten, Eberholst, and Möllerström, 2016). As suggested by Slaatta (2006), we can expect the European representation of issues by national and state-bordered mass media to be from a national angle because of their long-term interactions with other institutions within a nation-state. Nevertheless, as Slaatta also rightly adds, the mass media are themselves “structured according to political and economic structures in society, and are consciously or unconsciously participating in the constant negotiation and contestation of what kind of Europe we might be asked to imagine” (2006, p. 21). At the heart of the mass-mediated representation of European regions lies the “MediaSpace” (Couldry and McCarthy, 2004, p. 1) within which reporters determine their agenda, that is, “the kinds of space created by media and the effects that existing spatial arrangements have on media forms as they materialize in everyday life” (2004, p. 2). These influential spatial arrangements are located in the lifeworld of news producers and consumers. As suggested by Gasher (2015), the economic spatial factors constraining the news producers, such as the space of circulation and advertising, cannot explain the news coverage established by news organizations. Other parameters related to the material/digital globalization of flows and the emergence of an increasingly mobile society are instrumental determi-

nants leading to a specific representation of space. Research related to the new mobility paradigm shows that there is “a complex ‘relationality’ of place and persons connected through performance” (Urry and Sheller, 2006, p. 214). Mobility within and across bounded places is one of the key criteria helping to define an increasing number of today’s places (Agnew, 2011; Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Linchuan Qiu, and Sey, 2007; Lamour and Lorentz 2019a, 2019b). The media cannot ignore this phenomenon. The increased mobility is not responsible for the disappearance of spatial borders, but it can lead to a more selective process of bordering by specific stakeholders (such as reporters) located on specific spatial scales (Paasi, 2009a; Rumford, 2006). The mass media is thought of as an institution influenced by, and involved in, the production of state-bordered spaces and places while producing news associated with nations (Billig, 1995). However, the mass media located in the borderlands of Europe can present a more European and relational vision of places depending on the regional context (Grieves, 2013; Lamour, 2014b; Lamour and Lorentz, 2016).

The impact of people’s mobility on the news coverage of space in Europe can be especially important at the scale of borderland areas, which have experienced a radical transformation, particularly due to the implementation of the Maastricht and Schengen Treaties and the consecutive liberation of flows between a series of places mainly for economic purposes. These areas can be viewed as hybrid European “soft spaces” (Allmendinger, Chilla, and Silker, 2014, p. 2704), meaning that they are relational zones determined by cross-border mobility rather than institutional boundaries. Does this mean, however, that the mass media located in these contexts simply portray this cross-border and regional space experienced by a proportion of the residents and determined by the ‘new regional’ imperatives of the EU? What can the media coverage of these cross-border regional areas tell us about the spatial arrangements structuring the MediaSpace at this localized and urban European scale?

3 Argument and methodology

It is argued that the economic and functional integration boosted by European policies within cross-border metropolitan areas is taken into consideration in the news coverage of media located in this specific context. To paraphrase Slaatta (2006, p. 21), the media is “consciously or unconsciously participating in the constant negotiation and contestation of what kind of Europe we might be asked to imagine” in cross-border areas. However, this integration determined by the new regional agenda and implicit of European economic centralities and peripheries

is not necessarily the structuring spatial arrangement of “MediaSpace” (Couldry and McCarthy, 2004) in this context. The media’s investment in cross-border news reporting, the represented hierarchy of urban places across state borders, and the newsworthiness associated with the places constituting this urban hierarchy can reveal the existence of other spatial arrangements, and more precisely the co-existence of different meanings associated with places and borders within trans-frontier regions.

The methodology is based on a qualitative content analysis of all news articles with a cross-border dimension produced by two borderland newspapers during a period of three consecutive weeks. It has been common to consider one week on a yearly basis in order to comprehend the long-term representation of issues in the mass media (Lund, 2001). The period was extended to three weeks in the current research to prevent biased results related to the potential existence of events that monopolize the news agenda during many consecutive days. Three types of relevant information are encoded for each article in an Access database: first, meta-level information characterizing each published story (names of reporters, size of articles, reproduction of articles published on the other side of the border); second, places mentioned in each piece of news and located in Luxembourg or Lorraine; third, the key topic at the center of each article (Economics, e.g., business, job creation; Mobility, e.g., the public transport strategies; Social issues, e.g., health, education; Politics, exclusively news about party politics, elections, debates in political assemblies and sovereign power organization such as the justice and police systems; Sundries, e.g., crimes, accidents; Culture, e.g., concerts, leisure and tourism; Sport, e.g., professional competition, amateur sport; Other, e.g., environmental issues, housing development). Finally, information related to the identity of the chosen mass media is collected in the literature dedicated to them. This third type of information is used to understand the choices the media make concerning the spatial representation of the selected cross-border region.

The research is based on an analysis of the cross-border metropolitan region centered around the small state of Luxembourg. The booming economy of the Grand Duchy affects the neighboring regions of France (Lorraine), Belgium (Wallonia), and Germany (Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate) in terms of jobs and spatial development (Figure 1). Luxembourg employed 175,000 cross-border workers in 2017, half of whom came from Lorraine (STATEC, 2018). The agglomeration of Luxembourg City concentrates the vast majority of these jobs, which greatly benefit employees living in the neighboring countries. The city itself claims 40 % of all positions located in the Grand Duchy while only representing 18 % of the population of Luxembourg (MDDI, 2012). The cross-border functional area centered on Luxembourg City exists because of Maastricht and Schen-

Figure 1: The trans-frontier metropolis centered around Luxembourg

gen treaties—in conjunction with differentiated competitive state policies (e.g., employment and business taxes), and a series of cross-border multilevel governance policies aimed at facilitating trans-frontier flows. This leads to the progressive building-up of a functional Greater Luxembourg comprising economic centralities based in the Grand Duchy and residential peripheries for cross-border commuters located in Belgium, France, and Germany; public stakeholders based in Luxembourg play a central role in the multi-level governance by facilitating cross-border flows of these commuters (Decoville and Sohn, 2012).

Two daily newspapers are considered within this cross-border urban area. One in Luxembourg (*Le Quotidien*) and one in Lorraine (*Le Républicain Lorrain*). They share the same type of readership in terms of age (mature active people and pensioners) and social class (middle class and the regional elite). The main difference concerns nationality. *Le Quotidien* attracts a mix of nationalities based in the Grand Duchy while *Le Républicain Lorrain* targets the more nationally homogeneous group of French people based in Lorraine. Cross-border workers based in France and working in Luxembourg are partly integrated into the readership of *Le Républicain Lorrain* but less so in that of *Le Quotidien*. The readership of the two newspapers is different in terms of size: 94,000 readers for *Le Républicain Lorrain* and 25,000 for *Le Quotidien* in 2018. However, the circulation area of the two newspapers also differs. *Le Républicain Lorrain* is diffused in a French region containing more than 2.3 million inhabitants, while *Le Quotidien* find its

readership among a population of 600,000 people based in the Grand Duchy. The choice of these two dailies has been made for the following reasons. First, Lorraine and Luxembourg are the two parts of the urban region which are most affected by the cross-border functional integration. The majority of cross-border workers employed in the Grand Duchy reside in Lorraine, and Luxembourg is by far the main destination for trans-frontier commuters' flows. There is also a long-term urban continuum between the southern part of Luxembourg and the northern part of Lorraine. Second, both newspapers share cultural aspects. They are edited in French, the *lingua franca* for most of the cross-border area. They also target a broad public and, as a print medium, they can offer the largest amount of news compared to radio and television. Third, *Le Quotidien* is diffused mostly in the southern part of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg whereas *Le Républicain Lorrain*'s stronghold is in the northern part of the French region, that is, in the area characterized by a certain cross-border urban continuum. Finally, 50 % of the capital of *Le Quotidien* belongs to the publishing company of *Le Républicain Lorrain*. This shared economic capital implies that both newsrooms can use and publish articles produced by their neighboring daily for their respective publics. Articles of both print newspapers (in pdf-format) that have a border/cross-border dimension (mediation of issues exclusively concerning the neighboring area or either side of the border) have been encoded over a similar three week period between January and February 2017¹. The name of municipalities located in Luxembourg and in Lorraine, and sub-regional divisions of the two areas (French Departments and small regions in Luxembourg) were cross-searched in the pdf-pages of the print dailies in order to isolate articles. For two reasons the websites of the newspapers were not searched. First, the print dailies offer a higher density of news than their websites. Second, the articles found on the websites are also presented in the print version. Other digital information mediated by social media is not used in the current research because the objective is to focus on the spatial representation of mass media. In total, 311 articles were encoded (146 articles in *Le Quotidien* and 165 articles in *Le Républicain Lorrain*). It is a relatively dense representation of the cross-border area compared to other trans-frontier regions. For instance, an overall average of 40 articles per newspaper over a three-week period has been encoded in journals identified as covering the Öresund region linking Copenhagen and Malmö between Denmark and Sweden (Falkeimer et al., 2016).

¹ Articles that exclusively represent Luxembourg in *Le Quotidien* and Lorraine in *Le Républicain Lorrain* have not been taken into consideration, because they are not directly related to the other side of the border and cannot be ranked among items expressing cross-border regional integration.

4 Representing a Greater Luxembourg? A focus on the French outskirts

The analysis of articles produced by the newspapers reveals two parallel metropolitan representations, the particularity of which is to put greater emphasis on the functional periphery than on the center of the cross-border region powered by the economy of Luxembourg. The current transformation of the area under the new regional process encouraged by European policies—that is, a state de-bordering and a regional construction determined by economic imperatives (Deas and Lord, 2006; Lamour, 2011, 2014a; Luukkonen, 2015) has been reported on by both media. However, it is not the exclusive reporting proposed by journalists. News not connected to the current economic de-bordering promoted by the EU also has a strong presence. The centrality of peripheral Lorraine in the media coverage and the relative importance of news not related to the current economic restructuring of space can only be explained by the spatial arrangements structuring the MediaSpace of the two connected newspapers. This section of the current article is dedicated to two points of analysis. First, we investigate the two newspapers' journalistic investment and urban focus in the cross-border region. Second, the newsworthiness of the urban places within this region is researched. These two complementary analyses are used in the following part to understand the value given to 'places' and 'borders' by the two mass media outlets in this cross-border context.

The reporting of the trans-frontier metropolitan region: The central periphery

As mentioned previously, both print dailies produce roughly the same number of articles with a cross-border dimension. The substantial number of articles compared with other European case studies (Falkheimer et al., 2016) shows that these two newspapers are keen on representing the cross-border regional area. This interest is also revealed in other ways. First, reporters sign half of these articles. The presence of signatures shows that both newsrooms have decided to invest some professional competence in order to follow cross-border related issues. They do not simply replicate press releases sent by public and private agencies located in the area. Second, these signed articles can also be ranked among the top stories in terms of size and headlines on the page where they are presented. They are the first or second most important pieces of news displayed, and generally account for between a fifth and a third of the page in terms

of size. Consequently, their readership is exposed on a daily basis to this European reality at a local and urban scale. However, the collaboration between the two newspapers shows that the newsroom, which is in the economic center of the cross-border region (*Le Quotidien* in Luxembourg), is not producing the most important cross-border news content. *Le Républicain Lorrain* hardly ever uses the articles produced by its partner whereas *Le Quotidien* is keen on using articles by the French journal (5 vs. 44 % of articles signed by a reporter presented as employed at the neighboring newspaper). If the two newspapers had developed a common agenda in tune with the current center-periphery organization of space boosted by the Luxembourg economy and encouraged by EU policies (Deas and Lord, 2006; Luukkonen, 2015), we could surmise that we would also have found the opposite situation. As a media outlet based in Luxembourg and more easily in touch with the circle of economic and political powers located in the Grand Duchy, *Le Quotidien* can more readily access information important to the readership of *Le Républicain Lorrain*, the territory of which is increasingly dependent on decisions taken in Luxembourg. Nevertheless, news produced by *Le Quotidien* is barely found in *Le Républicain Lorrain*. This is a first indication that the Luxembourg-Lorraine center-periphery cross-border integration (Decoville and Sohn, 2012) is not necessarily the most instrumental factor within the news coverage in this cross-border area. The two newspapers are not dependent on the same spatial arrangements to determine what is considered the most important news for their respective audiences.

Interest in news coming from the marginal Lorraine is also revealed in many other ways. First, most cross-border news presented by *Le Quotidien* exclusively relates to Lorraine (68 % of articles), while *Le Républicain Lorrain* is also given to prioritizing Lorraine rather than the Grand Duchy in its coverage, although 75 % of its articles mention both sides of the region. Actors or places located in Luxembourg in the French newspaper are prominently featured in only a minority of its texts (42 % of articles). Second, there is an overall under-representation of the Luxembourg space whereas the Lorraine region is more detailed. *Le Quotidien* mentions 77 locations in Lorraine in its 146 articles, in particular, a large number of small French municipalities. However, the Luxembourg daily only represents 11 locations situated in the Grand Duchy in its articles. The French newspaper also puts a more detailed emphasis on French locations (62) compared to the Luxembourg ones (28). The city of Luxembourg, where a majority of jobs are found and which is the center of political and economic powers and the origin of the cross-border metropolitan dynamics, is the most-mentioned location in the Grand Duchy in both newspapers, with 22 occurrences in the Luxembourg journal and 40 in the French one. Nevertheless, the peripheral cities of Metz and Thionville in France are more central than Luxembourg City in both newspapers. They

are, for instance, cited 76 and 38 times, respectively, in *Le Quotidien*. In total, both newspapers highlight the urban structure of the Luxembourg-Northern Lorraine area and a French hinterland where most of the French cross-border workers employed in the Grand Duchy live. They also mediate a north-south region circumscribed by the motorway routinely used by this mobile population (Figure 2). Nevertheless, the urban hierarchy represented is not precisely related to that of the cross-border functional space structured by de-bordered economic flows, which are strongly centered around Luxembourg City and favored by EU-led policies (Decoville and Sohn, 2012). An analysis of news content reinforces a peripheral mediation of the cross-border functional region but also two parallel representations of the trans-frontier space.

The metropolitan region approached from the outskirts and peripheral issues

Both newspapers address a large variety of themes (Figure 3). First, articles centered on ‘politics’ understood as elections, political-party activity, debates in parliamentary assemblies and the coordination of sovereign power, such as the organization of the justice and police systems, represent a truly small proportion of information. This is especially true for *Le Quotidien*. This limited representation tends to show that the construction of the trans-frontier metropolis is not determined by local government powers but by multi-level governance networks sharing a series of skills to address specific issues (Brenner, 2009; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Keating, 1998, 2013). Secondly, it is possible to visualize the structural dynamics of the trans-frontier urban region by means of a detailed approach to articles on economic, mobility, and sundry matters, which constitute the relative or absolute majority of news.

The transversal issue in these three topics is the definition of a sustainable and de-bordered space for daily cross-border commuters and the progressive specialization of cross-border space structured by material networks facilitating these flows. This involves the representation of a relational space made of interconnected places characteristic of the EU integration (Allmendinger et al., 2014). The key actors presented in these articles are public and private agencies implementing/addressing the European vision of cross-border ‘new regionalism’ (Brenner, 2009; Keating, 1998) but also members of the public that experience it. It is possible to distinguish three types of information: functional, strategic and innovative. The functional information is about everyday life in the trans-frontier region related to the center-periphery economic organization of space in Greater Luxembourg (Decoville and Sohn, 2012). The newspapers mediate the continued

Figure 2: Mass-mediated municipalities in the Luxembourg-Lorraine cross-border area (focus).

Figure 3. Thematic repartition of articles in both newspapers.

Reading note: 34 % of news is related to sundries in *Le Quotidien*.

Number of articles per newspaper: *Le Républicain Lorrain* (165) – *Le Quotidien* (145).

risk that Lorraine (Dedola, 2017) will deindustrialize, the France-based economic stakeholders whose start-up companies are related to dynamic Luxembourg (Correia, 2017), and the traffic jams, car-related pollution problems and accidents on the main transport networks leading to the Grand Duchy's economic poles. Strategic information is more centered on the public agency debates linking attempts on both sides of the border to define efficient mobility strategies or to get rid of structural bottlenecks. It describes the agenda of the stakeholders involved in the multi-level governance generally associated with new regionalism and cross-border regions (Brenner, 2009; Durand and Lamour, 2014; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Keating, 1998, 2013; Lamour and Decoville, 2014). This information also tends to be from the perspective of Lorraine, with political actors from that side of the border, for instance, the French urban agency Agape (Nonet, 2017) taking the initiative. Finally, innovative news puts focus on future modes of transport, such as locally produced electric cars, that serve directly or indirectly to enable a sustainable and de-bordered space as expected by EU authorities (Jensen and Richardson, 2004; Moisis, 2011; Richardson, 2006) (Chaty, 2017). All news in this 'serious' agenda (in contrast to sport and leisure activities) tends to show that Luxembourg City is the most central location. This urban magnet is among the most-mentioned places. It is also a place whose connectivity issues are most highlighted. 'Mobility' articles form the majority associated with this urban

Figure 4: Topics in the four most-mentioned municipalities in Luxembourg.

Reading note: 34 % of articles mentioning Luxembourg City are about mobility issues.

Number of articles mentioning the municipalities: Luxembourg (62), Esch (21), Bettembourg (20), Dudelange (19).

pole, and the other main Luxembourg municipalities which were reported on and traversed daily by French workers to reach Luxembourg City. The second topic most often associated with these municipalities, ‘Sundries’, also contains other transport-related information such as car/train incidents and traffic congestion (Figure 4).

Lorraine is also at the center of a less economy-driven representation of the cross-border region. First, it is an area where professional and amateur sports people from Luxembourg practice a series of sports as well as being a region in which sports(wo)men engaged in competitions in Luxembourg reside (Le Républicain Lorrain, 2017). There is a cross-border sporting space. The Grand Duchy is often mentioned in these articles, but most of the articles tend to focus on such events when they take place in Lorraine or, when the events are hosted in Luxembourg, but the sportsmen and women come from France. The capital city of this cross-border sporting space is Metz, especially its professional soccer team which plays in the French premier league and contains one or two Luxembourgish players in its team. This privileged place that Lorraine occupies is also found when cultural issues are presented.

Lorraine is also the part of the mass-mediated cross-border area where most of the crime stories occur. The difference between sport and culture is that *Le*

Républicain Lorrain tends to mention criminal activities in Luxembourg only if there is a connection with Lorraine. *Le Quotidien*, on the other hand, is rather keen to represent malpractices occurring exclusively in Lorraine, plus the ones involving both countries. This different attitude of the two newspapers is not related to an absence of criminal activities in Luxembourg. In fact, *Le Quotidien* provides its readership with a large proportion of articles related to criminal affairs based only in the Grand Duchy. Other spatial factors are at the basis of this mediated differentiation and the overwhelming focus on what is happening in Lorraine.

5 News from a Greater Lorraine: Spatial parameters of a contextualized MediaSpace

The current case study helps us to explore the spatial arrangements that determine the representation of the cross-border area including Luxembourg and Lorraine. Reporters have to select newsworthy events related to specific places. The value of these place-located events depends on the spatial scale within which they are framed. The border also has a function in the definition of the representation. State boundaries connect or separate spatial objects involved in the production of news contents. It is possible to distinguish specific places, scalar framing, and (de)bordering conditions for each newspaper.

From the functional and cross-border regionalization of places ...

Le Républicain Lorrain in France has a localized European agenda, which is determined by a *functional and cross-border regionalization of places*. Places at the center of its representation are 1) the French locations with a large share of commuters crossing the France-Luxembourg border or 2) the locations in Luxembourg which are above all meaningful for these French commuters, hence the importance of ‘mobility’ issues in the most mediated municipalities in the Grand Duchy. In both cases, it is always cross-border mobility which is at the basis of this representation, or to use the words of Castells et al., these “places do not disappear [...] but they exist as points of convergence in communication networks created and recreated by people’s purposes” (2007, p. 172), that is, mainly workers commuting in the cross-border space. It shows that the key cross-border scale for the mediation of places in the newspaper is the functional region structured by

the liberalization of flows encouraged by the EU (Jensen and Richardson, 2004; Moisis, 2011; Richardson, 2006). It is, as mentioned by Slaatta (2006), one of these European spatial realities affecting society which simply cannot be ignored by the media as it affects a share of their readership. However, the French places also have an agenda that is not related to Luxembourg (information not considered in the current research), whereas places in Luxembourg tend to be ignored if they do not affect the space experienced by French residents. Furthermore, there is a greater emphasis on Lorraine than on Luxembourg in the analyzed articles as presented earlier. Finally, *Le Républicain Lorrain* hardly ever uses news produced by its partner in Luxembourg. Consequently, there is a continued bordering of space that is instrumental in the definition of *Le Républicain Lorrain's* news agenda. It shows that increasing mobility across states does not lead to the collapse of all borders, but only to a more selective process of bordering (Rumford, 2006).

The state border currently limits the circulation space of *Le Républicain Lorrain* and consequently the public that is targeted: French residents. More importantly, the state border is what helps the newspaper to justify its legitimacy in space. Borders are constructed at various spatial scales (Paasi, 2009a). They are currently one of the boundaries that secure the presence of *Le Républicain Lorrain* as one of the major mass media related to the bounded region of Lorraine, which has its own cultural identity and political agenda. The common border with Luxembourg is a state limit, but more importantly, also a regional boundary of sameness and otherness which helps to distinguish Lorraine from the neighboring small state of Luxembourg. One should not forget that parallel to the current economy-driven metropolitan regions, the long-standing production of European regional entities characterized by their fixed territorial shape, strong institutional organization and cultural identity production (Keating, 2003; Paasi, 2009b) also continues. These regional constructs have actors who can resist the rules imposed by the promoters of the economically driven new regionalism (Zimmerbauer and Paasi, 2013). Most of the news concerning Luxembourg (except some professional sport issues) is put in the 'Region' rubric of the newspaper and not the 'France' rubric or the 'General news' one including information about foreign countries. Reporters in Lorraine are embedded in a French regional reality which is impacted by a cross-border functional phenomenon worth mentioning, but which does not dissolve the uniqueness of Lorraine into a Greater Luxembourg. The France-Luxembourg state border for *Le Républicain Lorrain*, to use the metaphor of Wallman, is like "the covers of a teabag" (1978, p. 206). It has two sides. Some news from Luxembourg is filtered across this border to be reported in France, but mainly only if it helps to reproduce Lorraine as a territorial shape made up of a mosaic of localized places used by mobile people who cross the state border. The cross-border coverage by the daily is justified by the increasing

elasticity or connectivity of Lorraine's places at the cross-border scale. Still, these places are meaningful exclusively as units located in a Greater Lorraine whose fuzzy boundary is dilated in the Grand Duchy by the daily human mobility of commuters. It shows in some ways that the EU politics and policies that encourage a degree of mobility, while discouraging others, are responsible not only for the dispersion of state borders in space (Balibar, 2004) but also for the mediatized expansion of regional boundaries in space.

... to the institutionalized and cross-border regionalization of places

The representation by *Le Quotidien* in Luxembourg is based on different spatial parameters. It is dependent on *an institutionalized and cross-border regionalization of places*. One can wonder why the Luxembourg newspaper pays so much attention to a series of crime stories occurring in small municipalities in Lorraine, and other news exclusively concerned with this part of France, without sometimes even mentioning the state and region of location of these municipalities. These places are not located in a cross-border relational space determined by the mobility of Luxembourg residents. They are often located in the space hosting the highest density of French-based cross-border workers, but these workers are not included in the readership of *Le Quotidien*. So why would a public based exclusively in the Grand Duchy be interested in these events? This news is routinely produced because of two parallel institutionalizations of the cross-border region combining Luxembourg and Lorraine. First, there was an inherited institutionalization of the cross-border space enacted by *Le Républicain Lorrain* between 1961 and 2001 in the Grand Duchy. The French newspaper, which could not expand in the southern part of Lorraine due to a competitor named *L'Est Républicain*, entered the Luxembourg market with a regional press format that made it one of the most profitable newspapers in the small state (Hilgert, 2004). The aim was to establish Luxembourg as one of the many local editions of the French newspaper. The cost-saving strategy of the French publishing company implied a replication in Luxembourg of most of the news published in Lorraine while adding a series of items especially made in Luxembourg for Luxembourgers. It has meant that over the years, *Le Républicain Lorrain* has helped to build up an encyclopedic knowledge of the different institutionalized and localized places of Lorraine in the Grand Duchy. It shows that the process of European coverage can be based on regional specificities in the borderlands of Europe (Grieves, 2013). The regional and popular identity of *Le Républicain Lorrain*, in contrast to the national and elite/educated middle-class German-speaking newspapers of the Grand Duchy,

such as the *Luxemburger Wort* or *Tageblatt*, implied a need for the reporting of local events, crime news and leisure activities, and more specifically, one of the most central issues within French regional identity, namely the professional soccer team playing in the French national championships: FC Metz. *Le Quotidien* inherited this regional agenda of *Le Républicain Lorrain* when it replaced it in 2001.

The second process of cross-border institutionalization that influences the news agenda is more recent. It corresponds to the will of the Luxembourg newspaper, in tandem with other papers in the Grand Duchy, to represent the soft institutionalized space named the Greater Region, having united a set of Belgian, French, German, and Luxembourgish executives since the 1990s. It is a multi-level governance system as found in many other border regions set up to address a series of specific issues (Blatter, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Perkmann, 1999, 2007). Most of the news taking place in Lorraine and currently analyzed is grouped under two consecutive rubrics in the 'Metropolis' section of the newspaper: 'Greater Region' and 'Social trends'; two rubrics within which 'foreign' news mainly originates in Lorraine and more precisely in *Le Républicain Lorrain*. The representation of Greater Lorraine shaped by the Luxembourg newspaper is both linked to a long-standing cross-border cultural and regional mediation, thanks to the French newspaper's past presence and to the current imperative to fill two columns (Greater Region/Social trends) at the lowest cost possible. The Luxembourg owner of *Le Quotidien*, Editpress, had struck a series of editorial deals in Europe to import seemingly relevant foreign content with a view to reducing its costs and securing its business model. This strategy has been adopted by *Le Quotidien*. The agenda of the Luxembourg newspaper shows that the state border has a different function to that of the French newspaper. It connects and separates different realities. It is an interface that leads the Luxembourg editorial group to represent a cross-border regional space. Nevertheless, it is a space of co-present places. News from Lorraine is filtered to be published in Luxembourg, but this filtering is not linked to an increasingly relational cross-border space determined by flows, as traditionally considered when investigating EU integrative processes (Allmendinger et al., 2014). In some ways, *Le Quotidien* tends to replicate what *Le Républicain Lorrain* did in Luxembourg before the increasing cross-border spatial integration by the Luxembourg economy: a contained juxtaposition of local places associated with different sub-regional editions. Moreover, the sum of these sub-regional contents constitutes a regional territorial mosaic. To paraphrase Billig (1995), we could say that *Le Quotidien* is an instrument of 'banal cross-border regionalism', that is, a tool helping to imagine a bounded regional totality beyond the state border and also beyond the immediate experience of places found in this region.

6 Conclusion: Mass-mediated places, borders and spatial performance/inheritance

The cross-border functional integration process that is taking place between Luxembourg and its neighboring areas is strongly dependent on European spatial policies, which have facilitated a series of flows across state limits. The mass media located in this cross-border context can represent this functional integration when it is meaningful for their readership. However, the spatial arrangements underlying their mass-mediated presentation of cross-border issues are not simply related to the current economic polarization of space by Luxembourg that is permitted by European policies. There is a series of other spatial frameworks within which reporters determine their professional work and news production (Lamour, 2017, 2018, 2019b). It is currently possible to distinguish a space of performance relatively opposed to a space of inheritance.

Research related to the new mobility paradigm has insisted on a “complex ‘relationality’ of place and persons connected through performance” (Urry and Sheller, 2006, p. 214). Mobility within and across boundaries associated with places is one of the key criteria helping to define an increasing number of today’s places (Agnew, 2011; Castells et al., 2007; Lamour and Lorentz 2019a, 2019b). The current analysis of Luxembourg and Lorraine shows that the mass mediation of places in European cross-border areas can be related to this type of ‘mobility’ performance but also to the presence of a bounded inheritance. The research tends to reveal that there can be a representational dichotomy around the center-periphery organization of space in a trans-frontier environment. The more peripheral French medium is given to represent places linked to the daily mobility of commuters at the cross-border scale whereas the more central medium in Luxembourg tends to report on places with respect to their static and bounded heritage such as their long-term fixed assets (e.g., professional sports teams) and problems (e.g., crimes). It shows that the state border is not always the separating line responsible for a process of internal homogenization versus an external differentiation (Paasi, 1998) but a limit from which different characteristics of European places are selected and mediated. Some complementary research will be needed to find out how the readers of *Le Républicain Lorrain* and *Le Quotidien* use the localized European news to structure their opinions and their daily routines in space. The role of the mass media as an element of European public spheres in the borderlands of Europe depends on what the readership says and does in relation to these representations, as suggested by previous thinking on the influence of media in the social space (Burgess, 1990; Burgess and Gold, 1985; Lamour, 2019a; Lamour and Lorentz, 2016).

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