Des modes de vie transfrontaliers ? Travail frontalier et vie quotidienne dans l’agglomération trinationale de Bâle – Lausanne, 20-21 octobre

Yann Dubois
Laboratoire de sociologie urbaine
EPFL, Suisse

Cross-border lifestyles?
Cross-border work and daily life in the trinational city of Basel

Swiss Mobility Conference
Lausanne, 21 octobre 2016
Introduction

- **Cross-border work:**
  - In Switzerland: around 300 000 cross-border workers
  - Very important in some regions, especially around Switzerland.
    - Up to 40% of the working population is engaged in cross-border work in some cities
  - In Switzerland, many jobs are occupied by cross-border workers in cities located next to the borders
    - Around 25% in Basel, Canton of Geneva or Lugano (TI)
  - Main incentives for cross-border work
    - Better-paid jobs
    - Quantity and diversity of jobs
    - Better working conditions
Introduction

- **Cross-border work causes some tensions in concerned territories**

- **Economic issues**
  - Price increase (housing especially) in neighbouring regions (of Switzerland)
  - Pressure on the job market (unemployment, salary) in Switzerland

- **Environmental issues**
  - Strong development of urban sprawl
  - Motorized traffic

- **Social issues**
  - Tensions between inhabitants of cross-border regions
    - Anti-cross-border worker sentiments
Methodology and context

- **Mixed methods**

- **Contextual data**
  - Cross-border work, population, economy, mobility, etc.

- **Interviews**
  - 15 interviews with working people (France and Switzerland)

- **Quantitative survey**
  - 1615 inhabitants of the cross-border city (in Switzerland, France and Germany)

- **Trinational city of Basel**

- **820’000 inhabitants (mostly in Switzerland)**

- **Two languages (German and French) and three dialects**

- **High quantity of cross-border movements,**
  - For example: around 70 000 cross-border workers work in the region of Basel
Des modes de vie transfrontaliers ? Travail frontalier et vie quotidienne dans l’agglomération trinationale de Bâle – Lausanne, 20-21 octobre
Living conditions

- Cross-border work leads to strong financial differences between cross-border workers and non-cross-border workers

- Differences between the French and German job markets
  - Germany: smaller income differences with Switzerland, good working conditions (flexible working hours, high job satisfaction)
  - France: Higher income differences with Switzerland, unattractive working conditions
Daily life: Consumption

- Cross-border workers shop more in Switzerland

- Germans shop foremost in Germany
  - Few go to France

- In France, having the possibility to buy in Germany (cheaper products) is a crucial way to get ahead financially for non-cross-border workers
Daily life: Leisure and social networks

- **Strong differences between cross-border workers and non-cross border workers concerning leisure activities**

- **Switzerland is the main leisure destination**
  - Especially for urban-style leisure: culture, nightlife, shopping, urban walks

- **Germany is attractive, especially for price reasons:**
  - Restaurants/bars: French non-cross-border workers enjoy them especially

- **The French take more advantage of the cross-border territory**
  - A few exceptions because of langue differences

- **Social networks**
  - First and foremost local and national
  - Cross-border workers are more likely to have friends over the border
Daily life in the trinational city of Basel

- Overall the relations between the inhabitants of the Basel area seem good.

- Despite this quite good situation, many risks or challenges have to be highlighted.
Challenge/Risk

Living conditions: cross-border workers – non-cross-border workers

- Living conditions differ strongly different between cross-border workers and non-cross-border workers
  - Non-cross-border workers with low income are less attached to the trinational city, especially in France
    - Jealousy regarding living conditions of cross-border workers
    - The possibility of shopping in Germany lower this problem
      - What about people who are not able to get there (in car) ?

- What are long-term effects?
  - What would be the impact of a strong increase of cross-border workers from Germany?
  - Accessibility to Switzerland becomes more and more difficult for low-income populations
    - The richest are more likely to have more relations at the cross-border scale than 5 years ago, for the others cross-border relations are more likely not to evolve or even to diminish
    - Increase in differences in lifestyles of cross-border workers and non-cross-border workers
    - Risk for the cross-border city cohesion?
Mobility

- **Mobility: one of the most critical aspects**
  - Traffic: Most noticeable element of cross-border work
  - Huge differences in mobility behaviour and expectations between Swiss on one side, and German and French on the other
    - Cross-border workers’ car traffic is a source of tension
Challenge/Risk

Mobility

- **Situation is “less bad” than elsewhere**
  - Basel area: from France: 85% of trips are made by car; from Germany: 80%
  - Geneva region (from France): 92% of trips are made by car
  - Swiss-French Jura (canton of Neuchâtel): 95% of trips are made by car

- **Cross-border public transport lines are rather good in comparison with other cross-border cities**
  - S-Bahn, tramway, bus
  - Intra-national lines in France and Germany are ill-suited

- **Problem encouraging modal shift and improving the situation**
  - 80% of cross-border workers travelling by car have access to a private parking space…
Conclusion

- **Interest of looking at the multiple sides of daily life**
  - Issues in cross-border cities can’t be reduced to cross-border work

- **Lifestyles in the Basel area integrate a strong cross-border dimension, especially among cross-border workers (but not only)**

- **Even if the situation of the Basel area is rather calm in comparison, it is crucial to consider the specific risk/issues that are linked to the presence of a national border**
Thank you for your attention!

Contact : yann.dubois@epfl.ch