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**Roles and Meanings of Informality in Transnational Accountability:
the EU Migration Crisis in the Realm of Transnational Municipal Networks**

MA thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Roles and Meanings of Informality in Transnational Accountability: the EU Migration Crisis in the Realm of Transnational Municipal Networks

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Abstract

This master thesis investigates the meanings and functions of transnational accountability by analyzing the informal means of organizing accountability in emerging transnational governance networks. In this regard, the study will shed light onto a transnational municipal network (TMN) named EUROCITIES to understand the new realm of transnational governance in greater detail and examine its potential for transcending accountability gaps among conventional state-based actors. Accountability will be construed as an institutional arrangement within a broader governance setting and investigated in terms of ‘to what’, ‘to whom’, and ‘by what means’. When transnationality enters the picture, new non-state actors earn presence on the one hand, while the three focal points of accountability relationship becomes obscured on the other, leading to the issue of accountability gap. In this conceptual framework, the project examines the accountability relationship of EUROCITIES as a single case study as an intersection of the concept, transnational realm, and real-life issue of the 2015/2016 migration crisis, utilizing a qualitative inductive analysis. It concludes that EUROCITIES operates based on a new, more emancipatory sense of accountability to outperform the formal accountability, which makes it, both the secretariat and its member cities, an adaptive partner for the EU to address the accountability gap and the crisis.

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Introduction

This project investigates the meanings and functions of transnational accountability by analyzing the informal means of organizing accountability in emerging transnational governance networks. In this regard, the study will shed light onto a transnational municipal network (TMN) named EUROCITIES to understand the new realm of transnational governance in greater detail and examine its potential for transcending accountability gaps among conventional state-based actors. Accountability will be construed as an institutional arrangement within a broader governance setting and investigated in terms of ‘to what’, ‘to whom’, and ‘by what means’. When transnationality enters the picture, new non-state actors earn presence on the one hand, while the three focal points of accountability relationship becomes obscured on the other, leading to the issue of accountability gap. In this conceptual framework, the project examines the accountability relationship of EUROCITIES as a single case study as an intersection of the concept, transnational realm, and real-life issue, utilizing a qualitative inductive analysis.

The 2015/2016 EU migration crisis has been selected in order to contextualize the conceptual phenomenon. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) referred to 2015 as “the year of Europe’s refugee crisis”, an unprecedented influx of refugees and asylum-seekers arrived at the EU’s external border across the sea and via land routes that year, overwhelming the administrative capacity of the receiving municipalities. After reaching the external border, the refugees traveled further, creating points of arrival, transit, and destination across the region. Today, the crisis is still an ongoing issue although its significance may differ depending on one’s standpoint. To many, for instance, the refugee crisis may have shifted into other facets, focusing on migration or movement within the Schengen Zone in general. It has exposed a rift in the EU’s solidarity, particularly in relation to the EU’s decision in the same year to impose the so-called ‘quota refugees’ on the member states as part of its relocation scheme.¹ In the eyes of EU sceptics, on the other hand, it has become a crisis of their national identities. Needless to say, the crisis has been construed as

¹ More details can be found in Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 as well as Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece.

a humanitarian catastrophe that has evoked considerable public sympathy. Regardless of the stances, however, the provision of the necessary public services to those who have entered the EU as refugees necessitates not only an immediate action and a long-term vision, but also a seamless transfer of jurisdictions across national borders. This research, thus, interprets the phenomenon as “the crisis of EU governance” (Börzel, 2016, p.19) in the sense that the EU was unable to implement coordinated action across its member states and was confronted with a form of accountability gap. The urgency of the issue, the cross-boundary migration, and the disagreement in the crisis response among the EU member states make the EU refugee crisis a valuable case to explore transnational accountability and accountability gap.

The thesis is organized into the following structure. The next chapter introduces the conceptual phenomenon of accountability as well as transnational accountability, and discusses the new dynamics which emerge when transnational networks enters the political and societal environment. Chapter 2 continues to set the foundations of this project by visiting the current academic research on TMNs by reviewing the existing understanding on what they are, what they do, and how they function leading to the discussion of the research gap between accountability and TMNs. Chapter 3 introduces the 2015/2016 EU migration crisis and explains the relevance of the event for contextualizing and understanding the practical and theoretical emergence of transnational networks. Chapter 4 combines the essence of the preceding chapters into a coherence research design and delivers the findings in details in order to realign them to the threefold research question of 1) To what do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable?, 2) To whom do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? and 3) By what means do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? Chapter 5 presents the findings and aligns them in order to respond to the research questions. Chapter 6 revisits the conceptual framework that are introduced in Chapter 1 and further assesses the roles and meanings of accountability within a TMN, and what it implies to the migration crisis. It concludes that EURO CITIES operates based on a new, more emancipatory sense of accountability to outperform the formal accountability, which makes it, both the secretariat and its member cities, an adaptive partner for the EU to address the accountability gap and the crisis.

Chapter 1. Conceptual Framework

This chapter introduces a concept pivotal to this project, transnational accountability. It locates governance as a broader arrangement, in which the concept finds itself. Furthermore, it views accountability as an institutional arrangement. Based on these premises, the chapter reviews the existing definitions and meanings of the concept, followed by discussion of three focal points, accountability to what, to whom, and by what means (how), through which the existing literature navigates itself. Finally, the analysis will show that the emergence of transnationality adds complexities to the concept of accountability in a sense which broadens and blurs the three focal points and diverges from the state-based framework.

1. What governance is

As mentioned above, this thesis locates governance as a broader arrangement, in which accountability finds itself. Throughout this thesis, the governance is defined as “all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market, or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization, or territory, and whether through laws, norms, power, or language” (Bevir, 2012, p.1). The word governance, according to the author, embodies the shift in the focus away from ‘government’ and the hierarchical arrangement of actors (Ibid., p2), and toward ‘market’ and ‘network’ of actors, who can now govern, as well as the coordination and decision-making these new actors engage themselves in (Ibid., p.3). This, in turn, obscures the boundary between the state and society (Ibid., p.5), which he refers to as the ‘new’ governance. The new mode of governance is hybrid, multi-jurisdictional, and plural, and involves multiple arrangements, levels of governance, and stakeholders as an interacting, connected whole (Ibid., p7). In other words, new governance, with its arrangements and actors, traverses and crisscrosses the traditional jurisdictional divisions. In this light, Kjaer (2004) formulates the concept of governance that is “broader than government” and entails “steering and the rules of the game” (p.7).

2. Creating a conceptual framework for transnational accountability

For the purpose of capturing both the agency and agents, this project views accountability as an ‘institutional’ arrangement, in that institutions “prescribe appropriate

behavior for different actors in different situations” (Olsen, 2013, p.450). Accountability as an institutional arrangement can be further categorized into a formal and informal realm. North’s (1990) conceptualization of institutions as the “rules of the game” (p.3) in social life and that these institutions were regulated both by ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ constraints. Rested on this tradition, Helmke and Levitsky (2004), for instance, define the former as “rules and procedures that are created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official” (p.727), whereas the latter refers to “socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created (Ibis.).

Informality and informal institutions entail various meanings and are associated with formal institutions positively and negatively, but the distinction in between the two can be relatively vague and context-dependent. However, scholars share one conviction in common; informal institutions matter. Morris and Polese (2016) examine informality in higher education institutions and shed light onto the practice of ‘informal payments’ that are initiated by students and directed towards teachers in a former Soviet country. Authors have found out that informal payments are “not necessarily systematic” although they do occur frequently (p.492). Moreover, their research respondents have placed a high value on “help[ing] one other” and “gain[ing] access to services to information” (p.491), thus rationalizing the practice on the one hand, but they were not particularly proud of informal payments as the means to achieve the objectives on the other. Darden (2008) discusses the role of corruption, such as bribery and embezzlement, with an intriguing twist. While these informal practices tend to be linked with private practices within ineffective states as burdens almost intuitively, the author argues it is possible for informal practices to be institutionalized and effectively reinforce formal state functions (p.36). This provides an alternative perspective to the traditional argument over the relationship between formal and informal institutions; if one switches the analytical lenses to view the state “as a form or organized domination that is not necessarily based on law, it becomes clear that bribery and other corrupt practices can provide the basis for robust states of a different type” (Ibid., p.54). communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels” (Ibid).

With the variations above in mind, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) identify and classify the four types of informal institutions by whether the informal institutions strive for

converging or diverging from the intended outcome of formal institutions and perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of formal institutions. ‘Complementary’ informal institutions “[address] contingencies not dealt with in the formal rules” or “[pursue] individual goals within the formal institutional framework” (p.728). ‘Accommodating’ informal institutions “create incentives to behave in ways that alter the substantive effects of formal rules, but without directly violating them” (p.729). This type of informal institutions, for instance “reconcile” the diverging interests among the involved actors (Ibid.). Competing informal institutions, on the contrary, emerge when actors disregard or breach formal rules and protocols purposefully (Ibid.). This includes, for instance, adherence to custom law at expense of state law. Lastly, “substitutive informal institutions rise in situations where formal, or more precisely, state institutions and their authority are lacking and ineffective, characterized by gentleman’s agreements or self-defense patrols to ensure safety of the community: “Hence, substitutive informal institutions achieve what formal institutions were designed, but failed, to achieve” (Ibid). However, there is a room for more variations to interpreting what institutions can be. Schmidt (2008) discusses in her elaborative theorization of ‘discursive institutionalism’ that actors, or agents, the ideas they hold and the discourses, a ‘dynamic’ process in which those ideas are exchanged, negotiated, and agreed, can impact the formal institutions.

The definition of accountability varies from scholar to scholar, yet they seem to agree on accountability as a regulatory, restrictive concept with a various degree. For instance, it is described as a “social relationship”, in which an actor feels “obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct to some significant other” (Bovens, 2007b p.184). In this light, Macdonald (2014) refers to accountability as “moral or institutional relation” (p.428) in which “one agent (or group of agents) is accorded entitlements to question, direct, sanction or constrain the actions of another – particularly where these actions involve the exercise of public power or authority within a governance system” (Ibid.). The definitions further diversify into adherence to normative standards (Bovens, 2010, p.947), a “legal obligation” (Considine, 2002, p.22), the processes for the involved individuals and organizations to “answer for their actions and consequences” (Deloffre, 2016, p.726). Romzek (2000) applies the term “answerability” (p.22) for one’s performance instead of an obligation. However, the

underlying connotation of ‘arrangements’ penetrates through them. A number of other scholars pair the term ‘accountability’ with ‘mechanisms’ (Koenig-Archibugi, 2010), ‘relationships’ (Koenig-Archibugi, 2004; Olsen 2015), and ‘chains’ (Mason, 2008) as well. In this light, Boström and Garsten (2008), point out that accountability can be ensured by organizational arrangements, which are not only implemented in the form of tangible, formal mechanisms, such as benchmarking, evaluation protocol, implementation of code of conduct, or auditing on the one hand, but also in the form of ‘softer’, informal managing efforts, including voluntary regulations, standards, or even blaming and shaming, on the other. Likewise, Romzek (2014) understands informal accountability as one “outside the realm of formal agreements and official reporting relationships” (p.814). In the meantime, however, it is equally important to posit whether there may be an alternative category to accountability, especially considering the impact of actors in institutions as Schmidt above describes.

There is also a range of forms of accountability. First, similar to governance, accountability can be classified into vertical and horizontal dimensions. Vertical accountability is characterized by a hierarchical principal-agent relationship, which is “based on close supervision of individuals who have low work autonomy and face internal controls” (Romzek, 2000, p.23). The horizontal arrangement, in contrast, introduces the concept of “accountability to administrative forums, to citizens, clients, and civil society” (Bovens, 2007a, p.110). In addition, Keohane (2006) presents internal and external accountability. In internal accountability, actors “depend on those who created them for financial support, legitimacy or other resources” (p.79). In external accountability, in contrast, actors, either individuals or organizations, are “held accountable not to those who delegated power to them, but to those affected by their action” (Ibid.).

Lastly, scholars often form their inquiry into the questions of accountability to what (for what), to whom, and by what means (i.e. Macdonald, 2014; Schmitz et al., 2012; Romzek, 2000). For instance, Schmitz et al. (2012) in their study on NGO accountability, organize their empirical findings around the description of “on what” leadership views accountability, “to whom NGO leaders feel they are accountable to”, and “how they implement accountability in their organization” (p.1177). Macdonald (2014) investigates the meanings of accountability in “relation to what” (p.428), “to whom” (p.429), and “through

what means” (p.430) and focuses on the subject matter, stakeholders, and institutional means that are arranged, which may, for instance, take form of ‘hierarchical’, ‘legal’, ‘market’, ‘peer’, as well as ‘public reputational’ mechanisms (Ibid.). *Table 1-1* summarizes the aspects of accountability discussed above, which will be relevant to this project. To briefly summarize and build a broader point of view, this project places accountability as an institutional arrangement, which situates itself a given governance arena. Within the institutional arrangement, there is a sense of obligation or answerability to one’s own conduct. Such obligation may be observed at a formal and informal realm, and there are various dimensions to which such obligation may be assigned. To further investigate accountability in specific cases, it will be valuable to formulate the investigation on accountability to what, to whom, and by what means.

Table 1-1. A summary of components of accountability relevant to this project.

What it is	Of what	To what	In what realms	In what dimensions	Guiding questions
Institutional arrangements	Obligation to explain Answerability	One's own		Vertical	To (for) what
		conduct and	Formal	Horizontal	To whom
		performance	Informal	Internal	By what means
		(Individuals or organizations)		External	(i.e. hierarchical)

3. Entering transnational arena and what it means to the concept

When a concept crosses territorial border, by cross-border movement of people, commodities, as well as issues for instance, it generates a new arena for non-state actors and weakens the traditional state-based hierarchical governance as well as accountability structure. Dingwerth and Pattberg (2006) define transnationality as an interaction between states and non-state actors across borders, while ‘global’ implies a unified whole that consists of various policy levels (p.196). In other words, there may be many instances of transnational governance in a specific policy field, but there should only one global governance arrangement for the whole policy field. It is equally important that transnationality does not

mean the absence of nation states. That being said, Waylen (2004) states that when governance crosses national jurisdictions, it pertains not only to the “co-ordination and control mechanisms” of a collective entity, but also to “the regulatory norms, discourses and practices that help to establish the terms and meaning of policies” (p.558). Transnationality is likely to yield more influence to non-state governance actors, both individuals and organizations. Transnational actors, such as international organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), transnational corporations (TNCs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), operate across boundary and increase their presence in governance beyond the traditional system of national borders. In addition, scholars such as Bexell et al. (2010) stress the relevance of civil society actors as an emerging transnational agent, including but not limited to advocacy networks, social movements, and philanthropic foundations.

In terms of accountability, transnationality blurs or complicates the relationship of ‘accounters’ and ‘accountees’ of the traditional principal-agent structure, which could lead to new accountability gaps. Koenig-Archibugi (2010) emphasizes several crucial differences between (domestic) accountability and transnational accountability. For instance, when viewed transnationally, accountability relationships are “often parts of larger chains of accountability” by which intermediaries and proxies connect “ultimate accountability-holders” to “ultimate accountability-providers” (Ibid., p.1150). Furthermore, the non-binding ‘soft law’ (social accountability) tends to prevail over ‘hard law’ (legal accountability) (Ibid.). In a more recent work, Koenig-Archibugi and Macdonald (2013) provide a further systematic analysis of transnational accountability by intermediaries in the context of non-state governance arrangement, where governance can be provided without involving the state actors. In this work, the authors introduce “surrogate accountability” or “accountability by proxy” (p.500): accountability arrangements, in which “actors exercise accountability on behalf of other actors and is not itself accountable to them” (Ibid.). This dimension of accountability arrangements is placed as an opposite of what they refer to as “beneficiary accountability” (Ibid), by which “policymakers are held directly accountable to those most affected by their decisions” (Ibid.). However, these distinctions of transnational accountability may only begin to manifest themselves at an ‘operational level’ of analysis as

opposed to a conceptual level, where, norms, actors, and institutions that are involved in a specific accountability relationship remain abstract without sufficient details (Macdonald, 2014, p.428).

Provided that the principal-agent structure at a transnational level is rather unclear at the transnational level, the existence literature raises concern for accountability gap, which obscures the three focal points of accountability to what, to whom, and by what mean. Accountability gap is frequently associated with public accountability, which as Bovens (2007) stresses, is the “hallmark of modern democratic governance”, in which those in power is held accountable by the public for their acts and decisions that affect public management (p.182). This form of accountability and the gap can be applied to state actors as well as non-state and private actors. In this light, accountability gap, for instance, refers to collusive behavior between government officials and members of a TNC (Koenig-Archibugi, 2004, p.239), or “gap between demands and responses” (Koenig-Archibugi, 2010, p.1151). Accountability gap manifests itself in several other forms as well, all of which obscures the three focal points in accountability to what, to whom, and by what means. Nelson and Cottrell (2016) illuminate the paradoxical context in which the organizations function by example of the International Olympic Committee; while it stands as the symbol and champion of universalism utilizing the transcending appeals of sports, its day-to-day operation is characterized by political, profit-driven, and self-serving motives. Such claim questions the subject matter of the existing accountability structure (to what). Moreover, there is a wealth of literature on democratic deficit in the EU (i.e. Curtin et al., 2010; Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Katz, 2001; König, 2007). This would be a case where the question of to ‘whom’ (beneficiaries of the specific accountability) blurs. Likewise, scholars also point out the discrepancy between rhetoric and implementation of transnational actors. Barnett (2016), for instance, maintains that governance institutions that operate at the global level with a robust accountability mechanism are “much better at preaching accountability than living it” and an excess of accountability can hamper the organization’s ability to serve public interest (p.134). These criticisms illuminate the vagueness of institutional means, by which accountability is ensured transnationally.

Chapter 2. Contextualizing the Concept

The previous chapter briefly discussed the concept as well as the setting of accountability and the implications of situating the concept transnationally. It delineated some of the existing definitions, types/forms, as well as the realms of the concept, and added what differences transnationality yields to the concept, including the emergence of intermediaries or proxies and inclination toward softer, non-legally binding means to maintain accountability structure. This chapter introduces transnational municipal networks (TMNs) as a new forum and actor of accountability, thus transnational accountability, in an effort to contextualize the conceptual framework. It will delineate what TMNs are, how they operate, and what mechanisms can be found, all of which will feed into the final section outlining the gap in current academic literature for further research.

1. How to define Transnational Municipal Networks

While the state governments and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) have long been construed as the predominant actors in the negotiation and decision-making process at the global and transnational level, emerging issues and challenges necessitated emerging actors. In recent years, a burgeoning amount of political demands has introduced the network of cities beyond and across national borders, named transnational municipal networks (TMNs) or transnational city networks (TCNs). Many consist of 1) a secretariat and ‘coordinators’, 2) presidency, board, and general assembly, and 3) member cities (Kern & Bulkeley, 2009, p.314). Some, such as C40, boast a world-wide membership, while a number of others, including Union of Baltic Cities, operate at a regional and transnational level. There are also state-based organizations as characterized by National Leagues of Cities in the US. According to Acuto and Rayner (2016), 29% of the 170 TMNs that they have studied cover environment-related issues as their primary focus, followed by poverty or inequality (16%) and energy (12%) (p.1154). The existing body of research has investigated how TMNs operate and function from a range of aspects including, but not limited to, the organizational features to better understand how to define the networks and what they entail.

Scholars view TMNs quite differently when conceptualizing them. Kern and Bulkeley (2009) posit TMNs as agents of Europeanization in the multi-level governance

setting, whereby Europeanization is construed as the means of accomplishing multi-level governance (p.312). Europeanization, according to the authors, has become increasingly a two-way process between the EU institutions and local authorities. Earlier, Europeanization referred to the process by which the decisions made at the EU-level would impact the local authorities. Today, it also encompasses a phenomenon where local authorities influence these decisions directly (p.312). With that being said, it is argued that establishing and developing TMNs in Europe accelerates and enhances the process of Europeanization (Ibid.). Dai (2003) shares the sentiment and states that there is a kind of “symbiotic relationship” between the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission and not just with TMNs but also transnational policy networks, and they “reinforce each other’s position as policy actors within the EU power structure” (p.197). Acuto and Rayner (2016) demonstrate TMNs as a diplomatic entity as they “constitute mediated ‘international’ relations between rightful representatives of polities (cities in this instance)” (p.1148) and “result in agreements, collaborations, further institution-building and cooperation across boundaries” (Ibid.). Betsill and Bulkeley (2004) introduce the notion of TMNs as a ‘transnational advocacy network’, which consists of both state and non-state actors that “operate simultaneously within domestic and international political arenas” in order to seek support internationally (p.474).

2 How Transnational Networks work

Existing literature also discusses the means and instruments that TMNs employ in order to achieve their objectives. Busch et al. (2018) introduce five processes that TMNs specialize in regarding climate change: 1) Enabling internal mobilization, 2) formulating emission reduction goals, 3) institutionalizing climate trajectories, 4) enabling direct exchange, and 5) offering project support. More specifically, these networks attempt to solve climate governance at the municipality level by raising awareness among the local policy-makers and residents (p.225). Moreover, networks assist municipalities not only to set their CO2 reduction goal but also embed the necessary climate change policies into the local framework (p.226). TMNs also stimulate direct exchange of ideas between municipalities by organizing cooperation beyond borders or regular conferences, which can boost motivation

among member cities (p.226). Lastly, TMNs provide support for member cities to implement tangible programs to ensure tangible results within the communities (Ibid.).

Similarly, Kern and Bulkeley (2009) discuss the operation of TMNs in terms of their internal and external ‘governing’. Internally, TMNs create ‘best’ practices and later share them with member cities (p.320). Moreover, the networks also fund, often jointly with external organizations such as the EU, and facilitate transnational projects (p.321). In the EU context, the European Commission has successfully increased its influence on TMNs by providing funding for their projects, thus inducing the process of top-down Europeanization (p.324), and that funding has become a crucial determining aspect of daily operations of the TMNs they have examined (Ibid.). In the realm of climate change governance, a system of “recognition, benchmarking, and certification” is incorporated as more of an “interventionist approach” (p.322). Externally, TMNs strive for influencing intergovernmental organizations, for instance, by earning observer status (p.323) and by cooperating with and competing against other transnational networks (p.324). The outcome of these efforts largely hinges on the “nature of the intermediation” between a TMN and a broader policy-making realm of a specific policy field the network is interested in (p.326). Hakelberg (2014) captures the core essence of the arrangement as follows: “strategies deployed by TMNs to steer their members towards adoption are strategies for ‘governance by diffusion’” by which certain policies will further disperse (p.110). Last but not least, there is another unappreciated aspect in the landscape of TMNs that is worth shedding light onto in addition to the means of information sharing and dissemination, and learning from best practices as the driving mechanism: creating a social fabric. Betsill and Bulkeley (2004) point out that the level of engagement and mobilization toward ‘financial’ and ‘political’ resources that the member cities have exhibited in the studied network “held together through the creation of financial, political, and discursive ‘glue,’ and that the exchange of information and other material resources is a means through which such connections are secured rather than being an end in itself” (p.490).

3 Possible mechanism(s) of governance for TMNs

Examining accountability structure will lead this project to observe an essence of network governance, one of the most recent governance trends, within which accountability

situates itself. As Drezner (2015) elucidates in a concise manner, arrangements of a network are determined by “the extent to which actors (also called *nodes* in the argot of network analysis) exploit their relationships with other actors (called *ties*)” (p.87). From the governance perspective, network arrangements comprise of how actors use institutions and structures of authority, and collaborate for the purpose of allocating resources and coordinating joint actions (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p.231). Klijn (2008) suggests the following three types of analysis on networks. First, actors should be construed as the “basic units of analysis” (p.137) as the original sources of actions. It is the perceptions that actors hold that “inform and inspire the choice of strategies” (Ibid.). Second, the decision-making process as well as its acceleration and stagnation behind policy outcome and implementation deserves attention (Ibid.), as it reflects an intricate interaction of the relevant actors. Third, the characteristics of the network itself is critical as well (Ibid., p.138). One possible approach, according to the author, would be to map the patterns of interactions, in which a researcher identifies the “central” and “peripheral” actors as well as who is connected to whom (Ibid.). However, mapping by itself would not reveal the rules, especially the informal ones, that guide the behavior no matter how complex the diagram may be (Ibid.), which should not be neglected when studying a network. Additionally, in case of TMNs, transnationality is likely to alter, more or less, the nature of the network arrangement as well; it may solidify the ties of the actors, enabling a seamless transition of jurisdictions between actors driven by a shared vision, or undermine the network, producing merely an amalgamation of sporadically located entities without an autonomy to execute joint implementations. Likewise, jurisdictional contestation against national governments and domestic legislative system may hamper the actions networks intend to implement. Lastly, the ultimate outcome of network governance may not be a policy in a transnational setting if the network consists of non-state actors across borders.

4. The research gap between the actor and concept

So far, this chapter has discussed what TMNs are as well as what their functions entail in order to successfully achieve their goals. Despite the potential of TMNs, the existing literature lacks the width as well as the depth, exposing multiple shortcomings. First, the

ongoing study as well as the portfolio of the existing networks almost disproportionately center around climate change, and the roles of TMNs in the realm of migration governance at the global and transnational level are under-researched. In this regard, while there is research linking domestic city-networks and accountability (Holemen, 2011), one on transnational networks is lacking. A number of TMNs, including the prominent ones, such as C40 and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, were in fact founded for the purpose of tackling climate change and advocating sustainable urban development. Secondly, the existing literature on TMNs center around the formal and quantifiable features in the way they are organized. Quite a few works mentioned earlier, such as Bouteligier (2013) and Bansard et al. (2017), approach a specific conceptual phenomenon through the visible, institutional structure of TMNs, including but not limited to the distribution of membership, official targets, and protocols. Others, such as Rashidi and Patt (2018), analyze a dataset that covers 127 cities around the world and provide statistical evaluation. In other words, there is a considerable room left for an in-depth qualitative analysis to step into the informal institutions that govern TMNs. By focusing its research on the migration crisis of 2015/2016, this thesis will contribute in filling this specific research gap in the following chapters and provide insights on TMNs in policy fields other than climate change and the formal structure by which they operate.

Chapter 3. Migration Crisis

The previous chapter discussed transnational municipal networks (TMNs) as an actor to contextualize the concept of transnational accountability. This chapter introduces the final piece of the conceptual phenomenon, the 2015/2016 EU migration crisis. This research chooses to specify the timeframe of the crisis as 2015 to 2016 although it is an ongoing phenomenon, following the trend in the existing academic literature (i.e. Chtouris & Miller, 2017; Niemann & Zaun, 2018; Wolf & Ossewaarde, 2018). It also intends to refer to the phenomenon as migration crisis as opposed to refugee crisis in order to include forcefully displaced people, refugees, and asylum-seekers as widely as possible. This chapter first introduces some of the challenges of migration governance followed by a section that elaborates the relevance of the 2015/2016 migration crisis to the conceptual framework of transnational accountability as well as to transnational municipal networks (TMNs).

1. Migration as a policy field

Migration has been construed as a challenging field to establish one comprehensive governance framework, both at the global and transnational level. There have been initiatives, for instance in tackling cross-border displacement due to natural disasters, but they laid bare the complexities of steering through national sovereignty, the simultaneous flows of internal and external displacement, and the fundamental causes of the displacement, as international organizations struggled to weave an effective plan through them all (Betts, 2015, p.72).

Quite a few works in the existing body of literature problematize how the notion of migration and migrants have been constructed and how it further impacts the way relevant policy is drafted. Scholars point out that there is a “fear of numbers” (Anderson, 2017, p.1530; Oelgemöller, 2011, p.412). The concept as well as the phenomenon of migration, according to Anderson (2017), indicate a ‘problematic’ mobility while not all mobility receives the level of scrutiny equivalent to migration, and migration “signals the need for control” (p.1532). The author stresses that ‘migrant’ and ‘migration’ are a product of policy and public discourse, and a deeper issue lies in the fact that ‘migration’ is detached from other areas of policy (p.1535). Narrowing down the notion of migration, Esses et al. (2017). lays out how ‘refugees’ shape certain trends in public attitude. According to the authors, the

public tend to perceive them as a threat and competition, which is further bolstered by a sense of attachment to national identity and ingroups, both intricately aligned with ethnic identity (p.87). These tendencies ultimately lead to dehumanization of refugees. Thus, as one way to alleviate such an attitude toward refugees, the authors urge policy makers to carefully draft their message that pertain to refugees and their resettlement, and “avoid rationalizing policies on the basis of preventing threat” (p.104).

Scholars also raises concerns for the roles of nation states in migration governance. Castles (2004) points out that migration policy almost always ‘fails’ to fulfil its intended objectives due to the underlying presumptions that do not capture the reality. These include, for instance, include the paradoxical duality between a state-based logic of ‘migration control’ and transnational mobility of migration (p.212). Likewise, a policy cycle tends to be short and fitted for electoral terms whereas migration is long-term in its nature (p.213). Acknowledging that cross-border migration is typically portrayed as a matter of state sovereignty and borders, Geiger and Pécoud (2014) express concern that states and their emphasis on ‘sovereign control’ of human mobility may hinder cooperation despite its recognized usefulness. Similarly, Faist (2018) applies the phrase “cognitive dissonance” (p.416) as he discusses the paradoxes that surround forced migration reflecting on the onset of the 2015/2016 crisis; there is a “tension between national concerns and the rule of law” (p.414). Namely, national states are conflicted between national, cultural, and security concerns and an international obligation to champion human rights (Ibid.). Chimienti (2018) further substantiates Faist’s claim by pointing out that “states are still in denial of our transnational ‘connectiveness’ in both the worst-case (serious communicable diseases, ecological disasters and terrorism) and in the best-case (knowledge transfer, international collaboration and agreements) scenarios” and all forms of economic and human mobility are only “placed at both extremes, according to the ideological viewpoint” (p.425). While these arguments do not explicitly undermine the importance of nation states, the claims do demonstrate an inconvenient mismatch of a continuous flow of migration and compartmentalized borders. Such state-based conceptualization is also linked with the distinction between the country of origin, transit, and destination, which Oelgemöller (2011)

calls “arbitrary” (p.420) and individuals falling into the “juridico-political gap” (p. 420) of transit countries become invisible and “suspended” of recognition (p.419).

2. Migration crisis and relevance to transnational accountability

Scholars view the 2015/2016 migration crisis as a contingency that neither the EU nor its member states were fully prepared for. It particularly shook the EU’s border regime, which includes a common asylum policy and the freedom of movement within the Schengen zone. This chapter endeavors to link the crisis to an instance of accountability gap, and, by illuminating the discourse surrounding the EU border regime as one of the possible drivers of this gap, it will emphasize the necessity of studying an alternative forum/actor outside of the conventional state-based premises.

2.1 Migration crisis as an instance of accountability gap

The 2015/2016 migration crisis particularly shook the EU’s border regime, which includes a common asylum policy and the freedom of movement, and left the coastal member states almost powerless with an overload of their administrative capacity. While some of the member states struggled or failed to comply with the Dublin Regulation and allowed migrants and asylum-seekers to travel further without registering, national preferences of the member states to support the EU’s proposal split between the ones that were affected by the crisis and the ones that were not (Hooghe & Marks, 2019). The affected member states, for instance, demanded a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (Ibid.), whereas the non-affected member states preferred the ‘status-quo’ (Ibid., 257). Some point out, however, that the EU did offer its best efforts under the given circumstance. Börzel and Risse (2018) show that the EU did indeed pass crucial measures that ranged from securing funds for purposes ranging from managing the flow of refugees, establishing a list of ‘safe countries’ of origins, to identifying hotspots in Italy and Greece. Nevertheless, the lack of consensus led to an absence of collaborative response to address the influx of refugees effectively. This prompted some of the member states to take matters into their own hands by, for example, tightening border controls (Börzel & Risse, 2018, p.91). The crisis, thus, negatively impacted the Schengen Agreement, one of the quintessential supranational frameworks of the EU.

Niemann and Zaun (2018) agrees to this assessment and states that the EU's response to the migration crisis was actually "more comprehensive than commonly perceived" (p.12). In other words, the success of its response rather hinged on whether the member states would approve and implement the Commission's proposals (Ibid.). Following the thorough analysis of these developments, a number of works (Biermann et al. 2019; Hooghe and Marks 2019; Börzel and Risse 2018) discerned stagnation of EU integration, if not disintegration. In this light, the essence of the migration crisis was not the inability of the EU institutions to react; it was the "growing commitment-compliance gap, which exacerbated the regulator deficits of EU governance" (Börzel 2016). The relevant actors, namely the EU and its member states, held each other accountable which led to the absence of a cooperative action and a stalemate characterized by some of the member states rejecting the relocation-scheme altogether. In other words, there was a gap between accountability demands and responses.

3. What the gap entails in the migration crisis

A number of scholars turn to the discourse on the EU's border regime to illuminate the potential rationale behind the commitment-compliance gap. The literature suggests at least the following three discursive trends: securitization frame to justify border militarization, humanitarian frame, and hybrid frame. The section proposes to investigate a new potential policy-making venue, TMNs, to examine if and by what means it could alleviate the accountability gap.

3.1. Securitization

The first discursive trends that can be observed in the realm of the EU border regime is what scholars refer to as 'securitization' of migrants, which legitimizes both national governments and the EU institutions to opt for exclusion-oriented measures under the name of safety. Williams (2014) defines the notion of securitization of migrants, as well as immigrants, as the act of "linking of unauthorized migration with issues of national security" (p.28). This, in return, plays a central role in "justifying the militarization of national borders" including the incorporation of military technologies, strategies, and in some cases even armed personnel, into border enforcement efforts (Ibid.). In other words, the actors successfully

establish a migration-security 'nexus'. Estevens (2018) further delineates the phenomenon and elaborates the factors which spark anxiety and escalate the formation of nexus in several dimensions. For instance, 'socioeconomic' concern, such as unemployment, the proliferation of informal economy, the stagnation of welfare states, and the deterioration of the urban environment, induces negativity toward migrants (p.4). Similarly, the 'securitarian' dimension demonstrates the concern that grows in the issue areas that includes state sovereignty, borders, and security as a result of viewing migrants as a threat (Ibid.). 'Identarian' is a dimension that reflects domestic anxiety toward potential disturbance in local cultural heritage and demography due to the inflow of migrants. Lastly, the 'political' dimension absorbs the other three trends and supports the formulation of xenophobic discourses (Ibid.). The author confirms a growing presence of the securitizing trend in the EU and raises three potential repercussions: interference with the European Union's fundamental values of equality and protection of human rights, interruption of the development of necessary integration mechanisms, and overgeneralization of migrants into a single category (Ibid., p.12). Securitization is, thus, a manifestation of a "transformation of epistemology" regarding security from "something out there" into a phenomenon that requires an analysis of the "process by which actors construct issues as threats to security" (Karyotis, 2007, p.2-3).

Existing scholarly work recognizes that the securitization discourse has grown in multiple member states over the years. Vezovnik (2018), for instance, reports the process of constructing migrants and migration as a threat in Slovenia, one of the countries that stood along what has become known as the West Balkan Route. After the influx and transit of refugees became a visible issue in September 2015, the rhetoric that framed them as a 'risk' appeared, first by depicting migrating asylum-seekers as 'unpredictable' and gradually associating them with public health concern, violence, or simply an inconceivable 'mass' of 'others' (p.46). The author concludes that the rhetorical tactics applied in securitizing migration strikingly resembled the language applied in the military domain, including the emphasis on fighting, defending, protecting, as well as on controlling and surveilling (Ibid., p.51). In a similar manner, Krzyżanowska and Krzyżanowski (2018) illustrate the securitizing trend in Poland. They claim that the linkage between the crisis and migration has

intensified to a degree where the relatively neutral expression of the migrants (*kryzys migracyjny*) and a more negative expression (*kryzys migrancki*) were applied almost interchangeably in public discourse, including conservative media outlets (Ibid., p.616). The authors emphasize the significance of such merges of the qualitatively different expressions; “it allows negative meanings and connotations to be widely accepted or ‘normalized’” and these meanings could ultimately impact the public understanding of pluralism and diversity (Ibid.). Ibrahim and Howarth (2018) argue that the shift in the construct of risk around migrants pre- and post-crisis occurred when the portrayals of migrants and refugees shifted from individual to collective reflecting the sheer number of them pressuring the internal as well as external borders of the EU (p.1475). Overall, securitization rhetoric emphasizes exclusion instead of inclusion, and control as opposed to care.

3.2. Counter-perspective to securitization

The second discursive trend in the EU’s border regime underlines the necessity of a humanitarian approach. Triandafyllidou (2018) names it as a “moralizing frame” (p.211) and as one of the dominant interpretive lenses that is opposite of the securitization lenses to view the crisis and the pressing situation at the EU’s internal and external borders. A moralizing frame “puts the responsibility of the flows on wars, conflict, and violence in the regions of origin” (Ibid.). In other words, people migrating are construed as victims and are “represented as almost deprived of agency” (Ibid.). Consequently, the European values and ideas are deeply embedded not only as strategies but also as the fundamental premises. The way Italy’s prime minister bolstered his remarks with ‘Christian solidarity’ supports this claim (Ibid.). A humanitarian border regime focuses on protection instead of control, and its advocates view it as a moral duty to respond to the crisis. For authors such as Panebianco and Fontana (2018), it means recognizing refugees and asylum seekers as beneficiaries of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and asylum as a tool for R2P. In this light, potential measures to navigate the crisis include quota systems, provision of temporary protection, and respecting relocation preferences of refugees (Ibid., p.11). The authors argue that if member states fail to protect their populace, which should not exclude non-nationals, or become the perpetrator of crimes, “the international community should adopt appropriate measures, either peaceful (e.g.

diplomatic means, humanitarian aids, targeted sanctions) or non-peaceful, including the use of collective force mandated by the [United Nations Security Council]" (Ibid., p.3). Furthermore, a humanitarian approach not only means inclusion and care but also, ultimately, assisting the migrants to reach Europe. Cuttitta (2018) articulates his standpoint that humanitarianism can enhance the development of policies aimed at strengthening search and rescue operations and establishing a robust relocation mechanism. The author elaborates that admission of migrants and asylum seekers to the EU, including people 'at risk' of death, currently relies greatly on the arbitrary aspects, such as fate. They remain subject to irregular circumstances and deportation (Ibid., p.784).

While the humanitarian approach promotes a discourse of inclusion, acceptance, and migration-centered approach, the usage of the humanitarian discourse can easily be twisted. Triandafyllidou (2018) adds that the moralizing frame can become a useful tool for the EU skeptics or members states that resist or refrain from cooperation toward a comprehensive EU solution. The author points out that Croatia and Serbia, for instance, have turned the argument and utilized the notion of humanitarianism, or rather the absence thereof, as the 'European' problem and not theirs (Ibid., p.211-212). Likewise, Cuttitta (2018) points to the potential hijacking of humanitarian discourse. Border authorities can tighten their control and establish policies that ultimately prevent migrants from embarking on their journey, all under the pretense of humanitarian protection (Ibid., p.784). Pallister-Wilkins (2015) underline that humanitarianism and policing are not mutually exclusive; instead, they are interdependent on one another (p.65). If these views had prevailed after the onset of the 2015/2016 crisis, the gap between member states, as well as member states and the EU may not have existed.

3.3 Hybrid perspective

When one looks at the EU level, the duality of humanitarianism seems even more prevalent and deeply rooted in the theoretical basis of its evolving border regime. Davitti (2018), for instance, argues that the EU has utilized the shockingly high number of deaths in the Mediterranean as an opportunity to "frame recent migration flows as an emergency that, by definition, can only be addressed through the adoption of exceptional measures" (p.1173). Moreno-Lax (2018) classifies this general trend into two subtypes: the 'rescue-through-

interdiction model’ and ‘rescue-without-protection’ model. The former refers to the circumstances in which migrants and asylum-seekers are not allowed to reach the EU under the name of human rights protection. The latter refers to the operations of rescuing, or intercepting at times, of migrants and asylum-seekers facing smuggling or human trafficking. In these situations, border guard officers are confronted with the dilemma whether they should protect their own lives first or those of migrants and asylum-seekers (Ibid., p.131). In a similar oxymoronic manner, Vollmer (2016) applies the ‘hypocritical’ term ‘humane refoulement’ to describe the current border regime, where the treatment may be humane, but the outcome is *de facto* exclusion and/or expulsion (p.733). While the first two discursive frames represent competing depictions of the crisis and are often prone to certain features, such as left/right identification of the political leadership, as well as media outlets, and whether the country is a point of arrival, transit, or destination for migrants, the third frame is a way of “reconciliation through the form of rationalization” when attempting to recognize what the crisis is essentially about (Triandafyllidou, 2018, p.:213).

The 2015 European Agenda on Migration (European Commission) seems to capture the essence of reconciling the two discourses. First, it sets the tone of humanitarianism: “[t]he immediate imperative is the duty to protect those in need. The plight of thousands of migrants putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean has shocked us all” (European Commission, 2015, p.2). Next, it links the protection with the necessity to intersect criminal and smuggling networks and heightened control and policing measures:

The criminal networks which exploit vulnerable migrants must be targeted. The High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) has already presented options for possible Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) operations to systematically identify, capture, and destroy vessels used by smugglers. (Ibid., p.3)

The ‘rescue-through-interdiction model’ is also observable as an effort to “intervene upstream in regions of origin and of transit” in order to provide assistance to those in need (Ibid., p.5):

[...] a pilot multi-purpose center will be set up in Niger by the end of the year. Working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UNHCR and the Niger authorities, the center will combine the provision of information, local protection and resettlement opportunities for those in need. Such centers in countries of origin or transit will help to provide a realistic picture of the likely success of migrants' journey and offer assisted voluntary return options for irregular migrants. (Ibid.)

In this approach, migrants and asylum-seekers will not arrive on the European soil even though it may be their will. Likewise, 'humane refoulement' is relatively visible in the document as well as it encourages a safe return to the country of their departure to deter irregular migration altogether:

The EU will help third countries to meet their obligations by offering support such as capacity building for management of returns, information and awareness campaigns, and support for reintegration measures. The Commission will also revise its approach to readmission agreements, prioritizing the main countries of origin of irregular migrants. (Ibid., p.10)

In order to realize this plan, the Commission need to ensure that member states comply with relevant directives and install a more expeditious structure that will "allow Europe to ensure a humane and dignified treatment of returnees and proportionate use of coercive measures, in line with fundamental rights and the principle of *non-refoulement*" (Ibid.). While Maricut (2017) points out that the institutional responses to the 2015/2016 crisis were only an "upgrading of the security narrative of the Council" (p.171), the document demonstrates more; the Commission's awareness of the circumstances under which it needed to successfully advocate the agenda. This third frame shows that EU acted as a conscious intermediary connecting the two opposing discursive trends weaving them into a policy.

4. Research Outlook

Table 3-1. below summarizes what has been discussed in this section so far as a realm illustrative of the accountability gap which was discussed in the previous section. According to the existing literature, some member states pursued the option to securitize migration and tighten border control while others as well as scholars appealed to a more humanitarian approach to perceive migration and border management, thus demonstrating a different prioritization on accountability. The EU appeared to incorporate both of the two contrasting discursive trends and constituted a rather oxymoronic concept of ‘control in order to care’. These perspectives are not necessarily in tune or aligned with one another, and what drives the wedge, as scholars above pointed out, revolves around ideology and national identity. This discrepancy, however, should also prompt investigation of other levels of analysis and explore whether and how the landscape changes. TMNs, for instance, provides an intriguing mix of characteristics. While the network as a whole connects municipalities across geographical borders, each member city is subject to domestic legal systems. In the meantime, cities are often described as the ‘frontier’ (Oomen & Baumgärtel, 2018) or the ‘center’ (Sassen, 2009) of specific policy-related issues. Would TMNs prove themselves to be viable problem-solving forum and fill the accountability gap, and if so, in what way?

Table 3-1. Three discursive trends, their level of analysis and themes.

Discourses	Securitization	Humanitarianism	Rationalization
Level of analysis	Member states	Member states (and academic community)	The EU
Priority	Internal accountability	External Accountability	Internal and External accountability
Themes	National security	Moral issue	Tighter control to protect human rights
	Threat to society	Care	Rescue-through-interdiction
	Us and them	Human rights	Rescue-without-protection
	Control	Inclusion and acceptance	Humane refoulement
	Exclusion	European value'	

Chapter 4. Research design

The previous chapter introduced the 2015/2016 EU migration crisis as the final piece to complete the conceptual framework as well as the context of this research focusing on transnationality. It stressed the complexity of migration, which is almost inevitably transnational, as a policy and governance field as it has long been construed as within state jurisdiction. Next, it shed light onto the existing scholarly analysis on the 2015/2015 EU migration crisis and introduced a perspective, which viewed it as an instance of accountability gap. Lastly, it endeavored to illuminate a potential driver of the gap, the discourse that has surrounded the EU's border regime in an effort to indicate the possibility of investigating alternative venues and/or actors. This chapter will build on this elaborated framework to incorporate accountability, TMNs, and the migration crisis into a coherent research design to examine the dynamics of transnational accountability in greater depth and detail.

1. Research Questions

This research explores to establish a nexus between a primary concept, transnational accountability, and an emerging forum, transnational municipal networks (TMNs) and contextualizes them within the 2015/2016 migration crisis. Furthermore, it aims for illuminating the incalculable aspects of transnational accountability in order to fill the gap in the existing accountability literature. For these purposes, this study relies on 'informal accountability'. Resting on this concept, the study intends to investigate the following core questions: 1) To what do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? 2) To whom do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? and 3) By what means do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? The first question involves the informal norms and standards: "an underlying normative framework that defines the terms on which certain behavior can be assessed" (Macdonald, 2014, p.428). The second question focuses on the so-called 'stakeholders' (Ibid., p.430), which are likely to be plural and multilateral, apart from what is stated in the official publications. Moreover, the third question refers to the types and forms of 'accountability mechanisms' (Ibid., p.431), which may not only demonstrate

themselves in the visible and tangible forms of reviewing and assessing of processes, administrative protocols, as well as the maintenance of public reputation, but also internalized in the belief-system of the actors, interpersonal relationships, individual perceptions, as well as in the decisions that the actors make. These research questions above are intended to explore the lenient patterns in the meanings of the network as well as the conflicts between the expected and actual ownership of accountability.

2. Case selection

A set of criteria were applied to select a sample TMN. First, it needed to have the refugee crisis as part of its agenda. Although there was a wide array of TMNs, whether regional, international, or global, there were only a handful of them that addressed the issues of migration and more specifically, the EU migration crisis. In addition, it was essential that the selected TMN operates transnationally, so that the study would be able to trace the issue as thoroughly as possible as the EU refugee crisis travels across multiple member states from points of arrival, through transit, to the destination. UNHCR (2015) reports in its publication that there are three main sea routes that refugees traveled: via Greece, Italy, and Spain. In addition, Eastern European and the West Balkan states faced an increasing flow of refugees as transit countries. Furthermore, due to the scarcity of TMNs that matched these criteria and in order to avoid the complexity of the overlapping participation in multiple municipal networks per municipality, the sampling needed be done within a single TMN instead of comparing two or more networks. Consequently, this project would focus on a single TMN case study and identify participants from the member cities and members of the secretariat of the network as the ‘actors’ as opposed to treating the entire network as one actor. Lastly, the project intended to select a TMN which targeted the EU or European cities consistently, including those that are affected by the crisis, as opposed to a global network of cities.

After conducting a preliminary research on the existing networks, EUROCITIES was selected as the sampling network as it fulfilled the criteria mentioned above. EUROCITIES, established in 1986, is a network of over 140 cities in Europe. The network and its primary objectives are organized into the following six thematic forums: culture, economic development, environment, knowledge society, mobility, and social affairs (EUROCITIES).

There are multiple working groups within these forums, which are said to be more ‘technical’, according to one of the interview participants. While its official members are ‘cities’, mayors as well as practitioners from the local administration both participate in the network. The forms of participation could vary from being part of a joint statement, attending conferences and meetings, to engaging in initiatives and projects. There is an executive committee, which is composed of twelve mayors that are nominated and selected internally, and meets at least three times a year (EUROCITIES). Crucial decisions are made at the annual general meeting held during the annual convention. EUROCITIES’ secretariat functions are assumed by its Brussels office, which assists member cities to advocate their policy needs to the EU institutions, publishes reports, releases official statements, and coordinates platforms for the member cities to exchange knowledge and expertise.

3. Sampling rationale and method of data collection

EUROCITIES has been vocal about the migration crisis, in terms of what the EU could do to assist cities to overcome the challenges, for instance, by issuing joint statement of member cities, publishing reports, and holding a conference with a relevant theme. At the end of 2015, EUROCITIES conducted a survey on its member cities and collected responses from 34 cities, whose findings were later compiled into the report *Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities* (2016). *Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities* elaborates what types of obstacles the cities faced and what actions they took in response. The report illuminates a range of key findings. For instance, cities demonstrated leadership in coordinating other local actors, such as civil organizations, and also more “flexibility and creativity” than other levels of government (p.6). Moreover, it elucidates how the crisis impacted the municipal budget and overwhelmed the available human resources (p.8). In terms of local sentiment, the report mentions that several cities have experienced “assault and threatening behavior towards refugees and volunteers” as well as “arson attacks and vandalism of refugee shelters” (p.10). At the end of the report, EUROCITIES provides a list of recommendations to the EU institutions to better assist municipalities in need. In January 2017, the network also released a separate report, focusing solely on education of refugees and asylum seekers, which elucidates how municipalities have incorporated children among

refugees and asylum-seekers into the local educational system and ensured their access to education by coordinating both vertically and horizontally (EUROCITIES, 2017). On World Refugee Day in 2016, members of the EUROCITIES executive committee, which consist Mayors of the respective cities, released a joint statement, which was addressed to the head of the European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council, to urge the European leaders to work with cities and “put [the] European values of solidarity, humanity and dignity to the test” (EUROCITIES, 2016). Lastly, EUROCITIES organizes Migration and Integration Working Group, in which a wide range of cities from the country of destination, transit, and to destination in the flow of displaced individuals during the crisis can be found. The group pursues a set of objectives, which include but are not limited to socio-economic integration of young migrants and continuation of effort on irregular migrants. In the meantime, it engages itself in activities, such as drafting policy guidelines and policy statements as well as implementation of relevant projects.

From the beginning of the project, it has been one of the objectives to include both the member cities and members of the secretariat office as participants. Well-established international organizations as well as their secretariat bear the potential to become intermediary agencies steering stakeholders and managing the discourse of a specific issue they are tackling. One such strand has examined the role bureaucracies in international organizations play in administering and diffusing policy ideas. Bauer & Ege (2006) compare the secretariat of two different intergovernmental treaties: The Ozone Secretariat of the Montreal Protocol and the Desertification Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Africa (UNCCD). The findings suggest that a secretariat exerts most influence on the organization’s governance and agenda when it balances the passive and active use of its bureaucratic authority. Nay (2012) claims that secretariats in international organizations are more than a responsive and reactive agent. Instead, they are likely to skillfully define problems, involve multiple actors across sectional boundaries by converging scattered independent projects into one connected framework, and innovate new ideas. Thus, today’s bureaucracies and secretariats of international organizations are gradually earning the reputation of “knowledge brokers” in transnational governance (Ibid., p.60).

Through the recruiting process, the 34 member cities listed in the *Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities* (2016) and the secretariat were contacted and received an invitation to an interview to speak about their involvement with the network in relation to their tasks and challenges of the migration crisis. The invitations were sent between November 2018 and January 2019 via e-mails. This first group of invitation targeted the participation of Mayors. However, the aim was adjusted to municipal practitioners who were actually attending the working group meetings in order to improve response. After omitting the overlaps from the 34 cities and one municipality whose contact officer was not reachable, 49 more members cities listed as the member of Migration and Integration Working Group on the EUROCITIES' official website were contacted. Migration and Integration Working group was selected as the source of possible participants due to the pertinence of the subject matter it handled to that of the project. It was also taken into consideration that those that participated the working group on behalf of their municipality would be involved with migration-related efforts, if not the migration crisis. EUROCITIES Contact Officers for each municipality were the first point of contact, who then established a connection to the appropriate personnel who was actually attending events and meetings that were related to or organized by the working group. A table of the cities that were contacted, containing the date of initial contact and results of correspondence is available in Appendix 1.

The project managed to collect and interview a total of five individuals, three of which were the practitioners at the city administration as illustrated in *Table 4-1*. One of the staff members, who have been involved with migration and integration projects within the network, also agreed to participate in an interview after a referral by another potential interviewee, who needed to decline invitation herself. Last but not least, one EUROCITIES Contact Officer, initially contacted as one of the first points of communication from the list of member cities participating in the working group offered to participate in an interview, offered to provide insights of the inner mechanism between EUROCITIES' Brussels office and the municipality in his day-to-day work, as the municipality itself was not actively taking part in the specific working group or the topic. In fact, those who replied to but declined stated similar reasons.

Table 4-1. Interview method table.

Interviewees	Completion *	Source	Saturation	Format	Length	Recording	Transcript
Category 1: Local practitioners			No				
Interviewee A	Jan 30	Sampling frame		Skype	60 min	Recorded	Available
Interviewee B	Feb 1	Sampling frame		Skype	60 min	Recorded	Available
Interviewee C	Feb22	Sampling frame		Skype	60 min	Recorded	Available
Category 2: Contact officer, staff member of the secretariat			No				
Interviewee D	Feb 13	Sampling frame		Skype	45 min	Recorded	Available
Interviewee E	Mar 6	Referral		Skype	60 min	Recorded	Available

* All interviews were conducted in 2019

The project aimed for conducting a semi-structured interview, where participants would not be strictly confined into the questions listed in the interview guide, which is available in Appendix 2 (addressed to municipalities) and 3 (addressed to the secretariat). Instead, they were encouraged to share their stories and narratives even if it might deviate slightly from the intended questions. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) discuss the benefits of semi-structured, in-depth interview targets “the respondents’ perceptions and feelings rather than social conditions surrounding those experiences” (p.485), point out that the “work of linking interview accounts -- continually analyzed -- and conceptual frameworks-- under construction throughout the research-- clear requires small sample size so that all emerging material can be kept in the researcher’s mind as a totality” (p.495.), which, as the authors conclude, “is the way in which analytic, inductive, exploratory studies are best done” (p.496). Each interview session required between 45 to 60 minutes. All of the five participants received an interview guide in advance and signed a consent form. In accordance with the terms of the consent form, the details of the participants that may reveal their personal

identification and affiliation to a specific municipality shall remain undisclosed in this thesis. Interviews were conducted using Skype and were recorded for the purpose of transcribing.

Before moving on to the method of analysis, it is necessary to elucidate how the circumstance in which each interviewee municipality found itself greatly varied. While the sample size is small, the project managed to interview practitioners at the municipal level from Finland, Italy, and the UK, all of which experienced the crisis differently. A Finnish municipality of Interviewee A (Municipality A) encountered an influx of people albeit, as the interviewee herself acknowledged, less dire in comparison to other cities such as Munich, and the peak has passed. Subsequently, the priorities of their action plan have also shifted. An Italian municipality of Interviewee B (Municipality B) began receiving people fleeing from Syria prior to the 2015/2016 crisis, and the 2015/2016 crisis triggered another wave of urgent situations. The municipality of Interviewee C (Municipality C) presents another distinct situation in the UK, where an influx of displaced people did not directly impact the city, and it had established a formal structure aimed for integrating not only those who were displaced during the 2015/2016 crisis but also migrants in general. Later on, Municipality C welcomed a certain number of Syrian refugees as part of a relocation scheme led by the national government. *Table 4-2* below summarizes these variations. Interviewee D is a contact officer from a municipality in Spain, and the staff member from Brussels office will be referred to as Interviewee E. All interviewees are alphabetized in the chronological order according to the date of the interview.

Table 4-2. Municipalities and their circumstances.

	Municipality A	Municipality B	Municipality C
Country	Finland	Italy	the UK
During the 2015/2016 crisis	Influx of people	Influx of people	Arrival of Syrian refugees as part of the government's relocation scheme
At the time of the interview	Past the initial urgent phase	Continues to be in an urgent phase	Responsibility of the scheme already fulfilled

4. Method of analysis

Once data were collected, the project then applied inductive qualitative coding. Resting on some of the key components of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the project opted out of a set of hypotheses or assumptions based on preconceived conceptualization largely due to the fact that the existing literature resonated with the scope of the project only partially.² For instance, there was an abundance of academic research that investigated accountability and transnational accountability; however, there was only a scant literature on transnational networks of municipalities. Likewise, transnational municipal networks have indeed constituted a growing research field, yet only few works discussed cross-border migration as the context. In other words, having placed itself at the intersection of a specific concept, governance fora, and actual policy issue, the project faced an amalgamation of fragmentary findings from the existing body of literature, and the linkage was missing. It was, thus, deemed most appropriate to take an inductive approach and aim for building a new, ideally overarching, assumption across these domains. After interviews were conducted, the content was transcribed, coded, and analyzed utilizing MAXQDA. *Table 4-3* summarizes categories, codes, subcodes, and the respective definitions. Saldana (2013) elaborates that a code in qualitative survey captures word or short phrase that “symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p.3), and constitutes of “a researcher generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meanings to each individual datum” in order to detect patterns, categorize, and build theories (Ibid., 04). The coding process first focused on less abstract, more literal meanings that were observed in the content, and gradually shifted towards forming more abstract patterns and themes. The coding scheme is intended to demonstrate the findings in terms of how the interviewees comprehended the crisis, what expected behavior emerged out of the ways the interviewees relied on and utilized the connectedness of the network in the crisis setting, what arrangement governed the operation of both the municipalities and the network, and what challenges and obstacles persisted as

² While the grounded theory is overall an intricate method, Hood (2007) points out that one difference between the “generic” inductive qualitative model and grounded theory is the “emphasis upon discovery of new theory developed from data” made by the latter (p.155).

well as how the interviewees made sense of them. Detailed coding scheme with examples and frequency of segments are available in the Appendix 4.

Table 4-3. Coding scheme of the project.

Categories	Codes	Subcodes	Definitions
What the crisis was about	Emergency reception	--	The interviewees directly experienced an influx of people
	Planned integration	--	The interviewees are in the situation to be able to envision in a longer-term of integrating refugees
Expected behavior	Reciprocity	Sharing and learning	Actors share ideas and learn from each other.
		Regional difference	The imbalance in reciprocity of sharing and learning among the peers.
Facilitating arrangements	Coordination	Robust structure	Coordination is ensured through a robust local structure.
		Endorsement and management	Coordination is ensured through an ad-hoc endorsement and management of local organizations.
	Steering (non-binding)	Policy frameworks	Steering is ensured through setting the terms of policy frameworks.
		Funded projects	Steering is ensured through operating funded projects.
	Delegation	--	The secretariat acts and speaks on behalf of the member cities towards external partners.
Challenges and obstacles	Jurisdictional tension	National legislations and decisions	National legislations decisions are creating an interruption at the municipal level.

	Inter-governmental agreements	National decisions made at the intergovernmental level are creating an interruption at the municipal level.
Organizational gaps	--	Internal obstacles that creates discontinuity in realizing the goals.
Inner logic	Limits of competence	Municipalities recognize the limits in the competence of the network.
	Self-evaluation	Whether the interviewees believe their municipality has dealt with the crisis in a satisfactory manner.
	Rationalization of organizational flaws	How the interviewees make sense of the flaws in the network, provided they are aware of the limits of the network's competence.

Chapter 5. Research findings

Findings exhibited multiple trends and patterns, gradually leading to the formulation of the overall configuration of accountability relationship surrounding and within EUROCITIES in the context of the migration crisis. This chapter first introduces the findings in the order of the coding scheme as described in *Table 4-3* in the previous chapter. Next, it will realign the findings in terms of accountability to what, to whom, and by what means in an attempt to derive a set of informal themes. The analysis reveals that accountability dynamics shifted between the formal and informal level for municipalities as well as the secretariat although these shifts did not conflict with the ultimate objectives of addressing the crisis situation. However, there is a potential source of conflict in the accountability structure between municipalities and the secretariat.

1. What the crisis was about

As briefly described in the previous sections, the experience of the municipalities, according to the interviewees, was roughly divided into two patterns: in or out of the emergency situation. In both scenarios, the central component of what made the 2015/2016 migration crisis a crisis for those municipalities was the influx of people incessantly arriving on a daily basis, thus shaping the primary tasks as emergency reception and integration of those who had arrived.

1.1 Emergency reception of refugees and asylum-seekers

When asked to describe what the municipality had experienced, the interviewees began their response by describing the arrival of displaced people. Interviewee A recalled as follows;

Yes, well, in mid-September people started coming from North by train because, if you look at the geography, we have a common border with Sweden. They took trains and buses north then came over the border and started coming down south to larger cities. It was around the 15th of September when it started in our city. The border control wasn't there because we have open borders with Sweden. Eventually, little by little, in about two weeks, 850 people arrived in our city only, and some people went

all the way down to Helsinki. So, that is how it all started here. People arrived at the railway stations, and what happened was that we received a phone call from, I don't know how you call it, the guys that check your tickets, when train left up north, telling "now we have 35 people coming to [your city]" or "now we have 40 persons coming to [your city]" and so on. Every night some hours before the arrival, we had these calls and had to take some action. (Interviewee A)

Interviewee B recounted with a similar emphasis on the arrival of people;

In our city, we started having a big flow of Syrian citizens in the summer of 2013. It was the end of August to September, due to the war in Syria. They arrived in our city by train. When the situation started becoming an emergency as there were so many people arriving at the central railway station, the municipality realized that something had to be done. The city council approved an emergency act, let's call it like this, to face the emergency. This act basically allowed the municipality to open a special center, an emergency center, on each side of the railway station, to talk to the people to understand why they were arriving and what they were asking for. Imagine, it was almost autumn and the weather was not so easy for them to lay down outside of the railway station. (Interviewee B)

The situation, however, was notably dissimilar for Municipality C, which did not directly experience an influx of people. In fact, Interviewee C recalled that the city did not share the same sentiment or sense of urgency with the rest of the members in the working group;

Since joining EURO CITIES, I have been interested in the Migration and Integration Working Group. I attended some meetings. I took part in speed-networking and shared good practice of some of the projects we are working on that demonstrated integration and cohesion, I am not saying we are a perfect city; we have a long way to go but we have done really well. What I found was that when I was attending these meetings, the discussions were around the huge emergencies, such as cities like Athens, and what they were dealing with because of where they were based and the islands around Greece. Our city, on the other hand, is not on the border; it's set inland, [inaudible] compared to other European cities, and I just felt that we were ahead in terms of integration, but integration was not the primary focus of the

working group at the time because they were dealing with these huge emergencies. For them, it was about numbers, putting up emergency buildings, camps, and so on. That was what they wanted the discussions to be around. Quite rightly, that was the priority at the time. (Interviewee C)

All these personal accounts emphasize the centrality of municipal capacity in the matter as opposed to other possible qualities that could have framed the issue, including but not limited to ideology and local and cultural identity, or existing legal frameworks, such as the Dublin Regulation. It was a matter of whether or not the municipalities would be able to receive an unprecedented number of people.

2. Expected behavior

The interviewees emphasized the value of being connected to members of other municipalities in the network, share their concerns, and learn from the successful cases as they continuously dealt with the challenges especially in times of crisis. While such exchanges of expertise are one of the formal functions and objectives of EURO CITIES and interviewees explicitly express genuine appreciation for the opportunities and platforms, it is worth noting that the personal accounts below also indicated a sense of obligation to reciprocate the benefits of learning and sharing when feasibility or usefulness of the knowledge gained within the network were discussed. The findings additionally suggest that there was a regional difference in how the interviewees perceived the utility and usefulness of the shared knowledge.

2.1 Reciprocity

Learning and sharing—Interviewee B expressed how valuable it had been to gain insights into the types of projects that other municipalities excelled at;

Initially, we were really interested in sharing our stories with Athens, but then valuable inputs also came from the cities in northern Europe. They are really skilled at implementing an integration process. We learned, for example, how they organized language courses and addressed public health problems. They are really ahead of us in terms of the integration process. (Interviewee B)

Similarly, Interviewee C illustrated how simple it had been to get in touch with one another within the network to exchange opinions and suggestions;

It is great being involved in EUROCITIES because I can tap into some fantastic friends and colleagues, you can just contact right away and have a discussion. We often refer cities to each other. “Have a chat with Berlin”, that sort of thing. It is really positive in that respect. There are common concerns and kind of common solutions as well, but how we bridge that gap and how we get there is the key thing in sharing some of the good practice. (Interviewee C)

Interviewee C also stressed the significance of being able to ‘give’ in addition to gaining knowledge and insight from her peers;

We have been able to give a little bit more than we receive. We learn from each other all the time; I have learned about so many projects other cities are doing that are absolutely brilliant. I am actually thinking about how it would differ to what we are doing in our city, and if it does not work here, how could we make it work. I think that is how all the cities think about our projects as well. (Interviewee C)

Regional difference in the sentiment toward learning and sharing—Interviewee A shared an instance, where one of the collaborative projects that emerged out of the discussion within the working group was not applicable to her municipality;

Of course, [the 2015/2016 crisis] was a big issue, so we have a lot of discussions still [within Migration and Integration Working Group]. EUROCITIES and the working group, and especially the southern cities, such as Athens and Barcelona, launched this initiative, called Solidarity Cities, and that was also discussed. We hear our country had difficulty with joining the Solidarity Cities because, in our legislation, it is the national side that decides who will be granted a residence permit. We can’t call Munich and say “send us 50 people”; we have to go through the national side. (Interviewee A)

Interviewee B, on the other hand, strongly identified with Athens and Barcelona as they were confronted with similar challenges and tackling similar obstacles;

You know the current chair of the working group is Athens, right? Athens is another city facing similar problems. In one occasion, the Chair, the representative from Athens, asked the 22 cities that had gathered at that time; “do you have any idea how many illegal immigrants you have in your municipality?” Nobody had an answer. This is the kind of a question only a city like Athens can ask, or [name of Municipality B] or Barcelona because they are facing an incredible flow of people. If you ask cities like Tampere or Stockholm, they probably have the precise number. In cities like [Municipality B] and Athens, we literally have no idea. Sharing the situation with Athens is so interesting for us. (Interviewee B)

Consequently, Interviewee B found it rather unrealistic to implement the ideas gained from ‘northern’ cities into her municipality;

While we are facing emergencies, they are really integrating people. I think at the moment; we are going in reverse. Our problem at the moment is not even integration. It is the reception again. I do not know what will happen in the next three months, but we are facing again the problem of reception, and integration is something we can do later when these people obtain legal permission to stay. How can we integrate people that are staying illegally, you know? I think the situation is becoming harder in our municipality, but when we gathered in Amsterdam last May, I saw an incredible project, about work integration, language learning, and social inclusion. The further up north you go, the better their integration system seems to be. They do an incredible job, as you can see in their effort of integrating people from different religions. In our city at the moment, it is really sad to say that we are facing a situation where the central government does not seem to set integration as their final goal anymore; their focus is public safety, public security and so on instead. (Interviewee B)

3. Facilitating governance arrangement

The interviewees mentioned multiple mechanisms that would facilitate their operation. Those from municipalities spoke of the local arrangement, in which municipalities coordinated action in between the national government and local or third-sector

organizations. In addition, Interviewee E indicated a few forms of steering as well as serving the functions as a proxy to the municipalities and possibly to the external partners.

3.1 Coordination

Through formalized structure—Interviewee C presented an instance where vertical and horizontal cooperation was sufficiently formalized;

We have what we call Migration Strategic Board, which oversees migration in the city, brings together partners to understand migration, and collectively looks for solutions. All migration work reports to this particular board. The chair of this board is an advisor to the national government. You have a really good link there. (Interviewee C)

This structure has successfully incorporated local communities, third-sector, and a tool to disseminate information to relevant actors;

We also have Migration Partnership, this is where the migrant third-sector organizations support asylum-seekers, refugees, or destitution. They form part of the partnership, which feeds into the Migration Strategic Board. The partnership has two seats at that board. There is a structure, and there is a strategic part to it and an operational part to it, and there is a blog. (Interviewee C)

These ties and tools helped the municipality aggregate evidence to support the validity of its demand when negotiating with the national government;

Our map shows that new migrants are coming to the city area where it is highly populated, but people live there because it is cheaper, access to housing is easier, everyone in the same community lives there, you share the common language, lots of shops are there, and access to the city center is easy. Lots of properties are procured in that kind of areas, and that creates tension because, for example, there might not be enough school places. It is our role to influence national policy on some of the work that is delivered locally, so that might be that we do not want the Home Office to be procuring properties in this particular area because we have not secured enough spaces for schools or decent-sized accommodations. (Interviewee C)

Through ad-hoc endorsement and management of local organizations—Municipality C was the only case that demonstrated a formalized, more permanent structure designed to tackle challenges associated with migration. Other interviewees recounted how a similar structure was prepared on an ad-hoc basis to contract out the necessary tasks;

During 2014, the municipality organized a more central system for reception because as you can imagine you could not keep men and women, aged and minors, all together in the center. So, the municipality signed a protocol with the Home Office, the interior ministry. [inaudible] The home office would provide some money to our municipality, and [name of the city] organized reception through a public call. You know, so we organized a public call, and organizations like corporations, foundations, and associations, participated to this bid and they sort of won a slot to the reception. They would offer buildings where they could receive people. Through this public call, we distributed these organizations public money because the buildings the municipality was able to provide were not enough. (Interviewee B)

Interviewee A added that Municipality A intended to take charge and ‘manage’ the non-state organizations in the process of crisis response;

I called someone directly through mobile phones and made the connection between the city and the migration office. The mayor and leaders of the city decided that we would make this a humanitarian crisis and that we needed to help people. This was also the message to the migration authorities that [name of the city] was willing to help and at the same time we wanted to take the lead in the situation locally. We did not want all kinds of private entrepreneurs and associations to work here in [name of the city] or if they did, we wanted to keep a certain degree of control over what was happening in our area, so this was the message. I guess we were the only city acting so actively toward the migration office. Many cities helped [...], but we were the only ones that did not have, for example, the Red Cross operating emergency shelters. They were all under our control at that moment. (Interviewee A)

3.2 Steering

While municipalities made an effort to coordinate action with multiple actors, the secretariat of EUROCITIES set forth the underlying policy frameworks and the terms of projects, under which municipalities would exert further efforts. Yet, as these means are non-binding in general, municipalities do not face formal sanctions when they fail to comply.

Through setting policy frameworks—In the early 2000s, EUROCITIES introduced Integrating Cities, a policy framework, under which a number of projects were initiated subsequently. The framework constitutes a charter that functions as a set of guiding principles for signatory cities;

[Integrating Cities] is a policy framework that was launched in cooperation with the European Commission. There is a charter, Integrating Cities Charter, which all members can sign at each local level. Today, we have 39 signatories. The charter sets forth cities' commitments to integrate migrants and to embrace the diversity of its population. By signing the charter, cities engage themselves to reach these commitments in the overall integration as well as integration through services. Within the framework of Integrating Cities, we run the projects [...] and try to implement them in a way that resonates with the commitments that the cities have signed up for. Every two years, we compile a report on the progress the cities have made. It's a monitoring report if you want [to call it that way], to check where they are in the process of fulfilling the commitments and what they do to reach them. The most recent report was published last October. (Interviewee E)

Interviewee A spoke about how the charter would be touched on and guide the migration strategy at the municipality level;

Well, EUROCITIES has the charter for integration issues in cities, and we are one of the signatories. Because of the national legislation, we have to make an integration plan for the city every four years. Since we have signed the charter, it has been one of the documents we always add to our own strategy. We take the document into consideration and always go back and see where we are. EUROCITIES also ask how we are doing with the charter, every two years I think, they have this evaluation process going all the time. I know there are issues we need to do, such as

procurement; we are not buying or procuring goods and services in the way the charter wants us to do. It is a little bit difficult to make what it wants us to do a priority, but in some areas like children's schooling, I think we are very advanced. I think the charter is one of the things that guide us and lead us. Then again, EUROCITIES is not leading our policy I would say. Sometimes we want to bring the ideas to EUROCITIES to lead their policy. (Interviewee A)

The remark by Interviewee A above also implied that compliance does not take the form of a blind, unquestioned obedience.

Though funded projects—Interviewee E described how EUROCITIES' Brussels office would organize and run projects, pointing out the members of the secretariat were in charge of finding funding sources and external partners, drafting a project, and recruiting and selecting participating cities;

We got a grant from the Open Society Institute, to prepare for two mentoring visits on the integration of young refugees and education. For this, we launched a call in the working group announcing two cities would be hosting mentoring visits, where two additional cities that are more advanced on the topic [make a visit] as a mentor, and they exchange experiences. Then the hosting cities have to come up with an action plan, and this action plan is done in collaboration with the mentor. We organized two mentoring visits; one took place in Thessaloniki. Zurich and Amsterdam visited Thessaloniki as mentors, and they helped [Thessaloniki] write an action plan on education for refugees. Thanks to this project, Thessaloniki adopted new measures according to the action plan. (Interviewee E)

The core mechanism was evident in another instance as well;

We ran [a] project in collaboration with Migration Work, which is a think tank and an expert on the topic of migration. In Brussels, we launched a call using our mailing list and website to look for the cities that wanted to be the mentee and also cities that wanted to be the mentor, so there were two different calls. We collected responses in Brussels and chose which cities should visit where. We discussed with the selected cities in advance to prepare the visits and set the agenda, then we went there to see

how it worked. With the help of Migration Work, who monitored every step, the cities wrote their action plan, and we were able to issue them in the end. (Interviewee E)

When asked whether projects would normally emerge top-down or bottom-up, Interviewee E confirmed the former;

It comes mainly from us. [...] When we have a new call from the European Commission that they will fund a new project, we come up with partners, such as Migration Work or the European Volunteer Center. We also come up with concept notes for the project, and we discuss it with the cities. We send out the concept notes with a call and announce we are going to work on this project. In the concept notes, we lay out like this; are you interested [in joining]? If so, why? On what topic? We receive responses from the cities. We receive all the information with regard to the questions we ask on what they want, and we choose [the cities] and the topics. In a way, [projects] come from us, but we try to [respond] to the needs of the cities. Then, we integrate them into our concept notes. (Interview E)

3.3 Delegation

The soft measures mentioned above suggest that the Secretariat in Brussels is an intermediary or a proxy between its member cities external partners, where EUROCIITIES would speak ‘on behalf’ of member cities to the external partners. Interviewee E consistently spoke from the perspective of member cities during the interview. When she was asked what the crisis was about to EUROCIITIES as a whole, the response consisted of what ‘cities’ had encountered;

Some cities are transit places, others are the destination, and even within these classifications, every city faces different challenges because they are the frontline of the internal reception. Cities are where people actually come. Even if it is only for transit, they come. [The reception] necessitates certain services, such as housing, language courses, training, or vocational training, not only for asylum-seekers but also those who have received asylum and decided to stay. There is a number of changes that have emerged, and the cities are the first to be impacted because they are the ones dealing with the people arriving on the ground at the local level. What

we saw within our members was a general trend, in which they took leadership although it was not their role and they did not always have the capacity to do so. We saw they tried implementing a new way of working. (Interviewee E)

She also spoke on behalf of cities when asked who she would need to take into consideration in her own day-to-day operation;

We do general advocacy work to make the voice of cities heard. [In the migration theme], we try to showcase what the cities are doing and what kind of help they need in order to continue doing the good things. As I have told you about the city of Gdansk, the national idea, conception, or reaction to the refugees was not very nice. We saw Gdansk making a choice to cherish the welcoming culture, which is completely on the opposite side of what the national government was doing. Because of this, [Gdansk] did not know what to do exactly. [...] They did not know how to deal with the people arriving. They wanted to know from other cities what to do. This is how and why our network matters. We connect these cities together so they can share their experience. They can all be together at the same table and discuss all things like “how did you do this?”, “we tried hard to engage this stakeholder”, or “you have to have clear distinctions of this, and this”. (Interviewee E)

4. Challenges, obstacles, and how the actors make sense of them

Interviewees also revealed several organizational challenges and obstacles characterized by a jurisdictional tension between a municipality and the national government, whose legislation and decisions tended to hamper the local effort, and a gap between strategic vision and implementation of the outcome of collaborative projects. This also leads back to the facilitating mechanisms in the sense that the local and network mechanisms were two detached streams unless the outcome of a project were to be fully transferred to the municipal level.

4.1 Jurisdictional tension

National legislation and intergovernmental arrangements—Interviewees presented how the overall stance to the migration crisis and an influx of displaced people could differ at the national and local level and the gap would interrupt the municipal operation;

In 2014 and 2015, the reception system became better and better. In 2016, the Schengen Agreement became suspended. Germany, Norway, France, and Austria, decided to close their border as if they were trying to say “this is enough, you should do something to identify people and stop them. It is not acceptable that all of them are just crossing the border without control”. Because the borders were closed, we were forced to start identifying them and realized that now they had to stay longer in our city. One month, two months, or three months, there was no way for them to cross the border to reach their destination. In 2016, we could see that they started to ask for asylum in our country. This was a completely different way of managing the situation. [...] This meant that they would ask for asylum in [name of the city] and you stay here until you receive the decision regarding your claim. This takes time. (Interviewee B)

A subsequent change in the national migration system further worsened the situation in Municipality B;

As you probably know, as one of the latest developments, with a new government and new Home office, the law changed in December 2018. The law regarding asylum became much stricter. It became nearly impossible for these people to obtain the status as a refugee. It has been two months, and we really see how the situation has started changing again. We have the city full of people with no permission to stay and no recognition of asylum. They are no refugees, they have no permission to stay, they have just become illegal people. Our centers again are full of people, but they are not asylum-seekers this time; they are asylum-seekers who had their applications denied. We do not know what to do with them. We really do not know what to do with them. They are supposed to leave the country, but they will not get to do it. They would never go back. Yet, they can’t cross the border, and they are basically staying illegally in the country and the city, looking for something that, at the moment, we don’t know exactly what it is. (Interviewee B)

Similarly, Interviewee A exhibited that national migration agency could easily alter or interfere with the strategy at the municipality level;

The migration office wanted to move people who need hospital care to the University Hospital in our city because they are the ones to decide when people are staying and where. They also wanted to send here families with children because of the schooling possibility. As a result, we have a lot of families and a lot of people with some health issues to take care of. Or maybe you have a family member who is very sick and needs care. (Interviewee A)

It should be noted these obstacles may be one of the factors why municipalities would seek access to supranational institutions via EUROCITIES beyond the national government;

In general, [dealing with the national government] is quite hard because national governments sometimes do not listen to cities and do not put them at the negotiation table or give them the funds or the financial capacity to deal with the problems they are facing. In the previous projects, we visited Athens, one of the partners of the project, and saw how difficult it was for them to manage things because they did not have the official competence when it came to asylum-seekers and refugees in general. For instance, they did not have the competence in the reception of migrants and housing provision, but the national level did not help much. At one point, Athens had to take on the competencies that they did not possess and they just decided to have them to do things [...]. (Interviewee E)

4.2 Organizational gap

The second challenge surrounding EUROCITIES is an organizational gap that hampers the process of implementing an outcome of a EUROCITIES project at the local level;

One thing that is a bit of a shame is that each project is short, two years only. You do not have an implementation phase. It is also difficult for us to follow up years later, go and check whether the cities managed to do what they planned on doing. We tried to start this work this summer, interviewing the cities that took part in our projects years ago, in order to see what is going on, and also to evaluate the impact of the projects. It really depends on the city and the project. It also depends on the

motivation. When we launch a call for an EU-funded project, for instance, the people who reply are those from the European department. Then, when the project is accepted, the members that actually work with us are from different departments, such as the migration department or volunteering department. They have a different motivation: “why are we working on that, I don’t understand, I don’t speak English anyway”. It doesn’t happen all the time of course, but in some cases, it can happen that there is no motivation or the people are not the right ones. That could be hard.
(Interviewee E)

Interviewee D raised a similar concern as one of the potential reasons why the municipality had become less motivated to participate in projects organized by EUROCITIES;

Quite recently a new working group was created on drug abuse, that was quite interesting for our city, so I contacted different areas in the city council, which were youth and health. Then there was the problem of language. Most people in these areas were quite close to retiring [...] and their English was not very good, so this was creating difficulty with participating actively in the debate within a working group. [...] Hopefully, in the coming years, more young people will have a chance to participate in this working group. (Interviewee D)

Municipality D, while it is not plausible to assume a direct association, has also reduced participation to EUROCITIES in recent years;

I think we are in some way keeping a medium interest in the network. We are not abandoning the network, but we are not so active. Some areas are more acting, and some others which were more active in the past. (Interviewee D)

Such strategy-implementation gap in the EUROCITIES context is almost equivalent of the ‘network-member gap’ provided that the network steers the formation of strategies while it depends on member cities to implement them.

4.3 Inner logic

Limits of competence—When asked if there was anything that both municipalities and the network could do more or could have done differently in addressing the crisis, interviewees

suggested not only their expectation toward the network as an intermediary but also the existence of an institutional limit to what the network could achieve;

I do not think there is much more that EUROCITIES could do with the resources they have. I think it is important that there is our voice in discussions with the Commission. I think EUROCITIES should deliver the message that migration is more than just border control, and we should have some legal means so that people do not need to arrive illegally. As EUROCITIES is a network of cities, one of the things they have been discussing very well with the Commission is that if you want people to integrate, you have to discuss it with the local people because that is where it is happening.
(Interviewee A)

Similarly, while emphasizing the value of disseminating the voices of cities through EUROCITIES, which would otherwise remain unheard, Interviewee B remembered the difficulty of devising collective solutions as each member city tended to represent its own interests;

At the political level, you can make statements; you can make what is happening public, write reports, and send these reports to the Commission basically to ask the European Union to pay attention to municipalities, much more attention. At the moment, at this level, I do not see much more we can do because what is happening at the political level involves different approaches. [inaudible] I hope there will be more funding that we can apply and realize effective projects at the local level. I am not able to think at the national level obviously. This is a very local level. At the same time, this is really sad that every municipality thinks for itself, you know what I mean; "Okay, that city does not seem to be willing to work with us. I have to focus on what is going on in mine." (Interviewee B)

In comparison to the awareness of the organizational limit, the interviewees were more satisfied with the efforts they had invested. When asked whether the municipality has dealt with the crisis in a satisfactory manner, Interviewee B, for instance, responded as follows;

Yes. I would think our municipality is investing a lot of people working on this issue to face the situation. I think we are doing our best in the situation. I feel lucky to be in one of the most active cities in this matter, but of course, you can always do better,

but the response from the local residents has been unbelievable. I would say that every type of effort has been done and it will continue to be done in the near future. (Interviewee B)

Likewise, Interviewee A provided the following response;

I would say yes. There is no hard feeling for not doing our best. (Interviewee A)

Rationalization of the organizational flaws—How do the actors make sense of the overall dynamics, which is subject to the limit of the network's competence and rather individualistic interests among the member cities? When asked how they would respond to skepticism against the impact of TMNs³, the interviewees provided similar rationales. Namely, what the network could offer may be limited and indeed symbolic by itself when confronted with real-life issues, but municipalities would make the dynamics more pragmatic;

I have to say we are the ones to make the network useful. Of course, I can't influence too much on who is working there or what kind of contacts they have within the Commission, but what I can do from here is actively taking part. EUROCITIES is also a learning network. I am getting more and more professional training myself by discussing with my colleagues. I think that is more than just symbolic. [...] What I'm looking from EUROCITIES is the learning and then just a little voice added to the big block of the cities, also from our city so that we can influence the bigger picture in Europe, and bringing up the local perspective in Europe. (Interviewee A)

Interviewee B and E maintained that municipalities ensured that actual action would follow a symbolic gesture;

We as a municipality sign a lot of agreements, conventions, and protocols. Obviously, this is not enough to sign general agreements if you do not organize anything practical afterward. I would say not all mayors of municipalities are available to sign an agreement, depending on the political situations. Our current mayor is really open to receiving migrants and sees the potential of migration and what it means for these

³ Caponio (2018) points out that the member cities of a TMN do not necessarily support the official, instrumental goals of the network and instead focus their attention on "legitimation of existing policies, identity-building and positioning of the city at a European level" (p.2054).

people leaving their country because of a terrible war to obtain refugee status. Not every mayor would do this. Participating in the network could definitely be symbolic and political, but in our city, an operational answer follows a symbolic and political action. I never read statements by the mayor thinking these are just words, and they are going to do nothing, you know. (Interviewee B)

Signing a declaration or an initiative is a symbolic thing. It is important to show that the politicians at the local level are involved, want to make changes, get involved in those topics; of course, symbols are important especially in our time where there are many counter-narratives against refugees and migrants. These symbols could counter them. That's one point. On the other hand, our work on the ground in the cities and writing action plans and trying to change things are quite practical. When you see that some cities do more than the national level does [...] and create a reception structure, such as vocational training, language courses, or field training, or also [seek] funds from organizations because they do not receive funds from the national level, you cannot say it is only symbolic. When you see that some cities try to work with UNHCR to finance reception centers or to create housing for the people because the national level does not do it, it is not symbolic. It is quite 'doing things'. (Interviewee E)

5. Aligning the findings

This section endeavors to view the findings through the lenses of informal accountability *to what, to whom, and by what means*. Responses from the interviewees presented a plethora of the official, formal notions of accountability that governed the network and its member cities, while informal accountability emerged, for instance, as an implicit sense of obligation at the municipality and inter-municipality level, and as a subtle practice of steering at the network level. These means or mechanisms further configured the norm(s) and stakeholders(s) to complete the dynamics.

Table 5-1 below summarizes the dynamics of accountability at the municipality and inter-municipality level. Formally, cities stood for humanitarian principles, stretching the

institutional capacity to receive the influx of displaced people, providing food and shelter despite a growing sense of uncertainty toward the national government. In order to accommodate as many people as possible, municipalities often coordinated action with both the national government and local, third-sector organizations, each fulfilling a unique role to complement each other. In other words, it involved vertical and horizontal coordination. The national government, or the responsible agency or ministry, would provide municipalities with an ad-hoc budget when available. With the new budget, the municipality would contract out the tasks of service provision to the local organizations who had the means and resources to fill the gap. The network situated itself as a bridge between the formal and informal arena. Through participation in EUROCITIES, those local measures, as well as obstacles, were shared and exchanged with peers across borders. Informally, however, the practice of sharing and exchanging ideas presumed reciprocity in order to maintain a delicate balance of mutual benefit, indicating that sharing and exchanging just any knowledge would not suffice as the interviewees displayed a regional difference of opinions between the cities in northern and southern Europe. The way Interviewee A and B recognized Barcelona and Athens differently, or how Interviewee C focused on ‘giving’ suggested the perceived utility and practicality of knowledge and experience that were shared within the network could influence the interest, motivation, or attitude toward each other. The structure of informal accountability, thus, revolved around sharing and exchanging ‘applicable’ knowledge among peers under the common obligation of reciprocating.

Table 5-1. Municipalities and formal and informal accountability.

Municipalities	To what	To whom	By what means
Formal	Emergency service provision	Those that have arrived	Vertical and horizontal cooperation Sharing and exchanging knowledge
Informal	Reciprocity	Peers (other municipalities)	Sharing and exchanging ‘applicable’ knowledge

Table 5-2 below summarizes the accountability dynamics of EUROCITIES, or more precisely, its Brussels office. Formally, the secretariat is driven to support its member cities and assist them to overcome the challenges of the migration crisis by establishing connections to the EU institution, especially the EU Commission, and deriving EU-funded projects that are designed to enhance the institutional capacity of municipalities. The informal aspect of accountability, on the other hand, appeared to center around the directionality of ‘to what and by what means the secretariat holds *member cities* accountable’. At this informal level, the members of EUROCITIES’ Brussels office supporting projects and initiatives were in charge of not only finding funded projects but also drafting the details of the projects and selecting member cities to participate in them. While Interviewee E clarified that the process of determining the details of any project would incorporate the preferences of member cities, the final decisions to shape the project in a certain manner nevertheless rested upon the members of the secretariat. In this light, member cities were subject to the ‘terms and conditions’ of the project they would take part, and the secretariat, as the organizer or the project, would hold the capacity to expect member cities to abide by the project objectives as well as the relevant policy frameworks, under which the project had been formulated. However, the steering would not easily come to fruition unless the strategy-implementation gap that divided the network and municipalities were to be bridged.

Table 5-2. Secretariat and formal and informal accountability.

Secretariat	To what	To whom	By what means
Formal	Capacity building of cities	Member cities Project funders	Ensuring vertical and horizontal connections EU-funded projects
Informal	Policy frameworks Project objectives	Member cities (External partners)	Steering via project management

Lastly, *Table 5-3* and *5-4* are an alternative configuration of the formal and informal accountability structure, illuminating what Romzek (2014) calls “tension between formal and

informal accountability system” (p.832). Each compares the perceptions of accountability between municipalities and the secretariat at the formal and informal level each. Romzek (2014) clarifies that the tension may “arise from disincentives built into the policies and/or contracts or process complexities” (Ibid.). What emerges is a potential source of discrepancy.

Table 5-3. Comparison of formal accountability between municipalities and the secretariat.

	To what	To whom	By what means
Municipalities	Humanitarianism	Those that have arrived	Vertical and horizontal cooperation Sharing and exchanging knowledge
Secretariat	Capacity building of cities	Member cities	Ensuring vertical and horizontal connections EU-funded projects

In terms of formal accountability, as *Table 5-3* indicates, municipalities engaged themselves with an urgent humanitarian relief, while the secretariat envisioned capacity building to assist cities. The former demanded an immediate allocation of money while the latter provided a robust structure, which did not necessarily include direct access to funding. At an informal level as illustrated in *Table 5-4*, the discrepancy between municipalities and the secretariat persisted. Municipalities focused on peers while the secretariat strived for steering and it was no longer about ensuring connection of municipalities per se.

Table 5-4 Comparison of informal accountability between municipalities and the secretariat.

	To what	To whom	By what means
Municipalities	Reciprocity	Peers (other municipalities)	Sharing and exchanging ‘applicable’ knowledge
Secretariat	Policy frameworks Project objectives	Member cities (External partners)	Steering via project management

6. Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the expert interviews. Through demonstrating the interviewees' perception of the crisis, informal behavioral rules, facilitating arrangements, as well as the organizational challenges and obstacles, the chapter revealed the following key aspects: 1) while the accountability structure shifted between the formal and informal levels, the ultimate objective of addressing the crisis situation remained the same, and 2) there was a sign of discrepancy, if not a disagreement, both at the formal and informal level between municipalities and the secretariat indicating an interruption of connectivity as a network. The next chapter will further investigate these two key findings in terms of 1) what can be inferred in terms of what accountability is and what it entails in the realm of TMNs, and 2) what are the implications of the type of transnational accountability that has emerged out of the findings to the 2015/2016 migration crisis.

Chapter 6. Final Assessment

This assessment will connect the aspects introduced as the central concepts at the beginning of the thesis, accountability and transnational accountability, to the key findings from Chapter 6, then explore the implication to migration governance as illustrated through the expert interviews. First, the chapter argues that the meanings of accountability which have emerged from the findings are more emancipatory than the existing notions and the secretariat pays attention to complementarity of their advocacy and steering efforts with the broader EU setting. Next, it will label these attributes as ‘exceeding’ and ‘transformative’ informal institutions and add them to an existing typology of informal institutions. At the end of the chapter, these assessments will be applied to the 2015/2016 migration crisis and the discursive trends that surrounded it to shed light onto the latent abilities of TMNs outside of the conventional state-based framework.

1. Meanings of transnational accountability

How do the findings actually deviate from the existing accountability literature? While the existing literature on accountability in general, as well as transnational accountability given that it is said to be similar at a conceptual level (Macdonald, 2014), stresses the characteristics of rewards and sanctions and portray accountability as constraints, the findings exhibited a rather emancipatory trait, freeing and stimulating the actors towards taking action.

Earlier, this project introduced multiple definitions of accountability, which predominantly consisted of the system compliance, as well as rewards and sanctions to reinforce them. The definitions ranged from adherence to normative standards (Bovens, 2010, p.947), a “legal obligation” (Considine, 2002, p.22), the processes for the involved individuals and organizations to “answer for their actions and consequences” (Deloffre, 2016, p.726), to an “obligation to explain and justify” one’s conduct (Bovens, 2007b, p.187). The findings, on the contrary, were overwhelmingly proactive in comparison to what the existing conceptualizations has outlined both at the formal and informal level although the sense of obligation or answerability was present. At a formal level, where statements by the interviewees indeed contained an abundance of narratives and personal accounts of their

experience of the crisis at the municipal level, what triggered the formation of accountability configuration was the influx of displaced individuals. It shaped the sense of responsibility among the municipalities of the interviewees as well as the secretariat to react to it, the former by addressing the urgent situations at hand, and the latter assisting municipalities to build the capacity to do so. This central pillar determined whom the actors' sense of accountability was intended to: from municipalities to those who have arrived and from the secretariat to affected member cities. Municipalities invested efforts and resources to coordinate actions with other actors in order to overcome the crisis and relied on EURO CITIES to share and exchange knowledge and experience. The secretariat ensured that the forum and channel would be available for the municipalities to share and exchange and launched EU-funded projects intended to mitigate the challenges. At a more informal level, the focal point of the accountability relationship shifted among the interviewees while the ultimate objective remained the same. The municipalities expected reciprocity and mutual benefits out of what was being shared, whereas at the secretariat level, Interviewee E emphasized the cruciality of steering member cities via project management. In other words, the participants expressed a sense of responsibility and, to a degree, obligation, but they were not intended to restrict or mold their behavior into certain predetermined manners. On the contrary, these perceptions prompted the actors to expand their competence.

2. Sensibility to complementarity and compatibility to formal institutions

The second key findings, the discrepancy in the perception of accountability between municipalities and the secretariat, illuminates the structure the secretariat offered and operated within was fluid and reactive. As an umbrella organization of municipalities, it is publicly known that the members of the secretariat advocates and delivers their voices to the relevant EU institutions, EU commission in particular⁴. However, it needs to be taken into account whether and in what way the secretariat is possibly affected by the EU institutions, their preferences, and the environment in which it conducts its advocacy work. The findings

⁴ Shapovalova (2019), for instance, describes in her effort to unfold the impact of interest groups in the field of EU foreign policy that supranational institutions are most heavily lobbied (p.425). Yet certain domains traditionally reserve the powers to formulate agenda and make decisions for the Council, and those policy fields are particularly challenging for advocacy groups to break through (Ibid.).

demonstrated that while the secretariat did listen to the demands from its member cities, not all were likely to be met by operating funded projects. Nevertheless, when viewed differently, it would also be possible to argue that this was a gesture by the secretariat to be as realistic and practical it could be in order to secure a tangible response from the EU institutions, rather than delivering what municipalities demanded, unfiltered, as a proxy. Such roles and responsibilities of the secretariat resonate closely to the conditions where policy entrepreneurs are likely to thrive. According to Bakir and Jarvis (2018) policy entrepreneurs are an individual who “sell policy ideas to elite decision-makers” (p.465), and policy entrepreneurship is a “context-specific” activity (Ibid.). The authors claim that policy entrepreneurs function as “institutional entrepreneurs”, thus successfully achieving a desired institutional change, “when they are enabled by structural, institutional, and agency-level complementarities” (Ibid., p.466). In other words, EUROCITIES, the entrepreneurs, need to identify or establish a context, where their demands and those of the EU Commission cooperate and reinforce each other. For instance, the members of the secretariat would not be able to outright negotiate allocation of funding to the municipalities knowing it may bypass national governments of member states. Considering the internal politics, the Commission might as well show reluctance or experience backlash from the member states. Endorsing small-scale projects, which only include some of the EUROCITIES member cities that resonate with the values as well as the strategies the EU pursues, on the other hand, would be less contentious while impacting the network as well as the cities in certain ways. In the meantime, this also suggests that EUROCITIES is more of a problem-addressing organization instead of a problem-solving one. That is to say, EUROCITIES and EU institutions need to be not only complementary but also compatible with each other.

3. Informality, informal institutions, and diverse meanings

Earlier, this thesis introduced North’s (1990) conceptualization of institutions as the “rules of the game” (p.3) in social life and that these institutions were regulated both by ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ constraints. Informality and informal institutions entailed various meanings and are associated with formal institutions positively and negatively, but the distinction in between the two can be relatively vague and context-dependent. Indeed, there

were multiple ways by which formal and informal institutions interact, and Helmke and Levitsky (2004) held the underlying belief when they formulated the four types of informal institutions vis-à-vis formal institutions that informal structures “shape the performance of formal institutions in important and often unexpected ways” (p.726). That being said, the authors identified and classified the four types of informal institutions by whether the informal institutions strive for converging or diverging from the intended outcome of formal institutions and perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of formal institutions: ‘Complementary’ informal institutions, ‘accommodating’ informal institutions, ‘competing’ informal institutions, and ‘substitutive informal institutions’. *Table 6-1* below summarizes the typology by the two authors.

Table 6-1 Typology of informal institutions by Helmke and Levitsky (2004).

Outcomes	Effective formal institutions	Ineffective formal institutions
Convergent	Complementary	Substitutive
Divergent	Accommodating	Competing

Where in the typology above would the informal accountability that has emerged out of the findings situate itself in relation to the formal accountability? At an initial glance, it appears most appropriate to classify the informal accountability of municipalities as ‘complementary’ and that of the secretariat as ‘substitutive’ informal institutions as summarized in *Table 6-2*. To elaborate, it should be fair to state that both municipalities and secretariat work towards formal objectives. Thus, the ultimate outcome of the accountability dynamics is intended to achieve what formal accountability strives for, addressing the crisis situation at hand by providing necessary care of the individuals that have arrived (municipalities), and assisting the municipalities to build capacity to do so (the secretariat). However, the presumed effectiveness of formal accountability structure diverges between these two types of actors. Municipalities, on the one hand, perceive the existing formal accountability structure is effective and strive for excelling and demand others to excel within the premise of the existing interaction at reciprocating by providing improved utility. On the other hand, the informal accountability structure of the secretariat indicates that it aims for

exerting an alternative type of influence (steering through project operation via EU Commission) to ensure that its official objectives will be achieved incrementally because the formal accountability structure does not bestow the secretariat authority to produce tangible outcomes. Instead, the secretariat aims for achieving the goals that formal accountability structure by itself may not.

Table 6-2 Interaction between formal and informal accountability.*

	Outcome	Formal accountability	Types of informal institutions
Municipalities	Convergent	Effective	Complementary
Secretariat	Convergent	Ineffective	Substitutive

**Based on the typology by Helmke and Levitsky (2004, p.728)*

Nevertheless, the typology does not do justice to the whole accountability structure that has emerged; there is a crucial emancipatory characteristic to the informal accountability that the respondents demonstrated. In the findings, the municipalities and the secretariat construed themselves as the autonomous actors that determined or were capable of determining the course of action as a network. Interviewees from municipalities were utilizing the network that connected them to their peers proactively, which entailed not only learning from another to strengthen their respective project at the local level but also a willingness and sense of responsibility to ‘give’ rather than just take. Precisely because the municipal actors were proactive, lack of reciprocity and subsequent imbalance of benefits frustrated them as each city faced unique situations. Within the secretariat, the respondent was confident in confirming that it was the secretariat who steered the course of actions for the network as a whole by drafting projects, recruiting and selecting member cities to participate in specific projects, and monitoring the progress after the initial launch. In other words, these informal mechanisms were the primary vehicle for EUROCITIES, if not transnational municipal networks in general, to overcome the skepticism as characterized by Caponio (2018). Namely, the informal accountability structure prompts the municipalities to utilize TMNs more than as a mere tool to legitimate their policy, build identity, or secure

presence at the EU level. Likewise, the informal accountability structure necessitates members of the secretariat to take charge and overcome the vulnerability of the formal accountability mechanisms, such as the interruptions and discontinuities between strategy and implementation and challenges that are inherent to lobbying at the EU level. In other words, the intended outcome of the informal accountability is to outperform formal accountability, which is deemed neither effective nor ineffective per se, but rather adequate. In this sense, it would be appropriate to close this final assessment by proposing a new subtype to the informal institutions typology to better capture the dynamics, which is elaborated in *Table 6-3* as ‘exceeding’ and ‘transformative’ informal institutions.

Table 6-3. Modified typology of informal institutions based on Table 6-1.

Outcomes	Effective formal institutions	Ineffective formal institutions	Adequate formal institutions
Convergent	Complementary	Substitutive	Exceeding
Divergent	Accommodating	Competing	Transformative

The former applies to municipalities, where they strive for exceeding what they are in the existing state of accountability, and the latter to the secretariat, who invests its effort to alter the dynamics into another that is more effective, thus in fact diverging from the formal outcome. Overall, the findings suggest that accountability is not a constraint. Instead, it is an impetus for action.

4. Implications to the 2015/2016 migration crisis

Before closing this chapter, it is crucial to apply the findings to the 2015/2016 EU migration crisis and further explore possible implications. Chapter 4 presented the challenges with migration governance with regard to the constructed negative attitudes toward migration and migrants as well as the paradox of the state-based ‘migration control’ and migration, which is almost inherently transnational. With these premises, it also argued the relevance of the issue to this project by linking it to accountability gap, and illuminated the gap by mapping different discourses that surrounded the EU’s border regime. The three different

discursive trends that were found in the academic literature, namely securitizing, humanitarian, and hybrid, indicated a rift between some of the member states and the EU institutions, holding each other accountable for solving the crisis, as well as the EU's conscious effort to blend the rhetoric to achieve their objectives, which resulted in oxymoronic expressions. That being said, this section examines the accountability structures from the findings, or exceeding and transformative informal institutions, vis-à-vis accountability gap in the migration crisis and posits the viability of EUROCITIES as an actor.

Table 6-4 below summarizes the comparison between the three original discursive trends and the new level of analysis, EUROCITIES. There is, especially, a stark contrast between securitization discourse and what the findings indicated thus far. While the securitization discourse emphasized 'threat', the research participants continuously stressed the necessity of the adequate service-provision capacity to receive those who have arrived in their municipalities. Interviewees did from time to time mention concerns for the local residents. For instance, Interviewee A described how her municipality took preventive measures against possible public health issues, and Interviewee B stated that even if the municipality ignored the situation, the residents would have seen it. Yet, those remarks were made under the premise of receiving displaced individuals first rather than turning them away. Their view was more practical and focused on 'getting the job than' regardless of the discourses and strategies at the national as well as the intergovernmental level. Likewise, the secretariat's attitude of circumventing and diverging from the formal accountability for the purpose of accomplishing the goals indicated preparedness to cooperate with the necessary EU institutions and establish a complementary context and become a compatible partner and its fluidity to address. It would not be preposterous to interpret this configuration that EUROCITIES or TMNs are flexible and adaptive partners to the EU.

Table 6-4. Three discursive trends regarding the EU's border regime and comparison with EUROCITIES.

Discourses	Securitization	Humanitarianism	Rationalization	Problem-addressing
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Level of analysis	Member states	Member states (and academic community)	The EU	TMNs (EUROCITIES)
Priority	Internal accountability	External Accountability	Internal and External accountability	External accountability
Themes	National security Threat to society Us and them Control Exclusion	Moral issue Care Human rights Inclusion and acceptance European value'	Tighter control to protect human rights Rescue-through-interdiction Rescue-without-protection Humane refoulement	Practicality 'Getting the job done' Emergency relief Capacity building Context building Complementarity Compatibility

5. Shortcomings of the research and future tasks

Overall, the findings exposed a distinct form of informal institutions. The accountability configuration that emerged out of analysis suggested that informal accountability structure that was prevalent among the municipalities as well as the secretariat was likely to be a crucial impetus to action that was necessary to overcome the skepticism and outperform the limited competence. However, the findings only indicate this new form of institutions and is not capable of concluding it. Indeed, there is a lot to be done in the future research. First, it will be necessary to collect data from more participants to strengthen inferences and make necessary revisions. It will also be ideal to conduct interviews face-to-face, where the researcher becomes acquainted with the interviewees better and obtains more insights. Next, it should expand the scope into other policy fields including migration in non-crisis conditions. Lastly, the research should also feature global municipal networks to see if there is a crucial difference from transnational fora.

Summary

This project aimed for investigating the meanings and functions of transnational accountability by analyzing the informal means of organizing accountability in emerging transnational governance networks. In this regard, it construed accountability as an institutional arrangement the study endeavored to shed light onto a transnational municipal network (TMN) named EUROCITIES in an attempt to understand the new realm of transnational governance and examined its potential for transcending accountability gap among the conventional state-based actors in the 2015/2016 migration crisis.

Chapter 1 introduced conceptual phenomenon of accountability as well as transnational accountability, and discussed what new aspects could possibly emerge when transnationality entered the dynamics. Chapter 2 continued to set the foundations of this project by visiting the current academic research on transnational municipal networks (TMNs), reviewing the existing understanding on what they were, what they do, and how they functioned leading to the discussion of possible research gap. Chapter 3 introduced the 2015/2016 EU migration crisis and explained the relevance of the event to this project. Chapter 4 attempted to combine the essence of the preceding chapters into a coherence research design. Chapter 5 delivered the findings in details and realigned them in accordance with the threefold research questions of 1) To what do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? 2) To whom do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable? and 3) By what means do the actors of TMNs hold themselves accountable. Chapter 6 revisited the conceptual framework that were introduced in Chapter 1 and explored further implications of the findings to transnational accountability, TMNs and to the migration crisis, including possible new meanings.

The findings exposed a distinct form of accountability that was not restrictive and contributed to the existing understanding of the relationship between formal and informal institutions. It argued that the meanings of accountability which had emerged from the findings were more emancipatory than the existing notions and suggested the secretariat strived for establishing complementarity of their advocacy and steering efforts with the broader EU setting. Based on these assessments, it labeled these attributes of informal accountability at a transnational setting as ‘exceeding’ and ‘transformative’ informal

institutions and added them to an existing typology of informal institutions. Lastly, the study applied these new types of informal institutions to the 2015/2016 migration crisis and the discursive trends that surrounded it in order to shed light onto the latent abilities of TMNs outside of the conventional state-based framework to fill the existing accountability gap. More specifically, EUROCITIES' adaptability as a secretariat and willingness to provide emergency relief present the TMN as a viable 'problem-addressing' partner for the EU. However, the findings only indicate this new form of institutions and is not capable of concluding it. Instead, there is a lot to be further researched. First, it will be ideal to collect data from more participants to strengthen inferences and make necessary revisions. It will also be ideal to conduct interviews face-to-face. Next, it should expand into other policy fields including migration in non-crisis conditions. Lastly, the research should also feature global municipal networks to see if there is a crucial difference from transnational fora.

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Appendix 1

Table of that were contacted, date of initial contact and reasons for declining.

1st group	Cities	Country	Date of 1st contact	Reasons for declining
	Vienna	Austria	29.11.2018	
	EUROCITIES Secretariat	Belgium	29.11.2018	
	Ghent	Belgium	29.11.2018	
	Brno	Czech Republic	29.11.2018	
	Espoo	Finland	6.12.2018	
	Helsinki	Finland	6.12.2018	Correspondence stopped.
	Tampere	Finland	6.12.2018	
	Nantes	France	6.12.2018	
	Berlin	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Chemnitz	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Düsseldorf	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Hamburg	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Leipzig	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Munich	Germany	6.12.2018	
	Athens	Greece	29.11.2018	Correspondence stopped.
	Budapest	Hungary	29.11.2018	Cities have no jurisdiction over migration.
	Genoa	Italy	6.12.2018	
	Riga	Latvia	6.12.2018	Unavailable.
	Utrecht	Netherlands	29.11.2018	
	Oslo	Norway	6.12.2018	
	Gdansk	Poland	29.11.2018	
	Poznan	Poland	29.11.2018	
	Lisbon	Portugal	29.11.2018	Interview was cancelled.
	Ljubljana	Slovenia	29.11.2018	Cities have no jurisdiction over migration.
	Barcelona	Spain	29.11.2018	Unavailable.
	Bilbao	Spain	29.11.2018	
	Zaragoza	Spain	29.11.2018	

Gothenburg	Sweden	6.12.2018	Interview did not finalize.
Karlstad	Sweden	6.12.2018	
Malmö	Sweden	6.12.2018	
Stockholm	Sweden	6.12.2018	
Solna	Sweden	6.12.2018	Not yet actively participating in the topic.
Belfast	UK	6.12.2018	
Birmingham	UK	6.12.2018	
Preston	UK	6.12.2018	

2nd group	Cities	Country	Date of contact	Reasons for declining
	Antwerp	Belgium	14.01.2019	
	Brussels	Belgium	14.01.2019	
	Brussels Capital Region	Belgium	14.01.2019	
	Ostend	Belgium	14.01.2019	Correspondence stopped.
	Zagreb	Croatia	14.01.2019	
	Nicosia	Cyprus	14.01.2019	
	Turkish Cypriot community of Nicosia	Cyprus	14.01.2019	
	Prague	Czech Republic	14.01.2019	
	Aarhus	Denmark	14.01.2019	Unavailable.
	Copenhagen	Denmark	14.01.2019	
	Turku	Finland	14.01.2019	
	Bordeaux	France	14.01.2019	
	Lyon	France	14.01.2019	Not actively participating in the WG.
	Nice Cote d Azur	France	14.01.2019	
	Paris	France	14.01.2019	
	Rennes Metropole	France	14.01.2019	
	Strasbourg	France	14.01.2019	
	Toulouse	France	14.01.2019	Correspondence stopped.
	Dresden	Germany	17.01.2019	
	Karlsruhe	Germany	17.01.2019	
	Kiel	Germany	17.01.2019	

Mannheim	Germany	17.01.2019	
Stuttgart	Germany	17.01.2019	
Bonn	Germany	17.01.2019	
Milan	Italy	17.01.2019	
Palermo	Italy	17.01.2019	
Turin	Italy	17.01.2019	
Amsterdam	Netherlands	17.01.2019	
Rotterdam	Netherlands	17.01.2019	
The Hague	Netherlands	17.01.2019	
Utrecht	Netherlands	17.01.2019	
Netwerkstad Twente	Netherlands	17.01.2019	
Bydgoszcz	Poland	17.01.2019	
Lublin	Poland	17.01.2019	
Warsaw	Poland	17.01.2019	
Cluj-Napoca	Romania	17.01.2019	
Timisoara	Romania	17.01.2019	
Madrid	Spain	17.01.2019	
Uppsala	Sweden	17.01.2019	
Zürich	Switzerland	17.01.2019	
Besiktas	Turkey		No information of contact officer.
Beylikdüzü	Turkey	17.01.2019	
Konya	Turkey	17.01.2019	
Brighton & Hove	UK	17.01.2019	
Cardiff	UK	17.01.2019	Not actively participating in the WG.
Edinburgh	UK	17.01.2019	
Leeds	UK	17.01.2019	
London	UK	17.01.2019	Unavailable.
Manchester	UK	17.01.2019	
Sheffield	UK	17.01.2019	Correspondence stopped.

Appendix 2

Interview guide addressed to municipalities

Interview Guide

- *The core questions are written in **bold letters**.
- *It is crucial for this project to hear your *stories* and *narratives* that supplement and elaborate factual statements.
- *Approximate duration of the interview session is 60 minutes.
- *The interview will be conducted in English.
- *The interviewer will record the session and refrain from taking intensive notes in order to engage herself in the conversation.

Focal points	Interview Questions
1) What your city has experienced so far since the onset of the EU refugee crisis	<p>The EU refugee crisis exposed grave situations across cities in the EU member states. Please describe the situation in your city. For example; what was/is the crisis about in your city? How and in what way has the crisis affected your city? How is your city different before and after the onset of the crisis?</p> <p>Do you see the situation has shifted into a new phase today? If so, in what way?</p>
2) Actions and measures that have been implemented	<p>What measures have you, and has your city, taken to tackle the crisis mentioned in 1)? This may also require a brief description of your position and responsibilities.</p> <p>What have been the driving forces that motivate/pressure the city to take such actions?</p>

3) How the situations and measures mentioned above have been handled	<p>As a member of EUROCITIES, to whom do you believe your actions, initiatives, and policy decisions are expected to reach out and respond? In other words, who are your stakeholders, and do they expand with the participation to EUROCITIES?</p> <p>Does being a member to EUROCITIES and Migration and Integration Working Group impact your actions? In what way?</p> <p>With your answers to the previous question in mind, how did you and your city reach a decision to implement the actions/measures mentioned in 2)?</p>
4) Closing questions	<p>Would you be comfortable stating that your city responded, and has been responding, to the EU refugee crisis (Yes / No), and doing so in a satisfactory manner (Yes / No)?</p> <p>Is there anything in handling the challenges concerning refugees and asylum seekers, to which you feel that Eurocities and the working group could contribute more?</p>

	<p>There are scholars who point out that while transnational municipal networks lay out objectives that are problem-oriented and pragmatic, their roles remain rather symbolic. How would you respond to them?</p>
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Appendix 3

Interview guide for the secretariat

Interview Guide

- *The core questions are written in **bold letters**.
- *It is crucial for this project to hear your *stories* and *narratives* that supplement and elaborate factual statements.
- *Approximate duration of the interview session is 60 minutes.
- *The interview will be conducted in English.
- *The interviewer will record the session and refrain from taking intensive notes in order to engage herself in the conversation.

Secretariat functions: Brussels office

Research questions	Interview questions
1) What the network and working group experienced so far since the onset of the EU refugee/migration crisis.	<p>Please describe your role(s) in EUROCITIES and in Migration and Integration Working Group.</p> <p>Please describe the role(s) of the working group in relation to EUROCITIES as a whole and its member cities.</p> <p>Please describe the situation that EUROCITIES experienced in the refugee/migration crisis. For example, what was the crisis about for the network, and how did it affect the working group? Is something different before and after?</p>
2) Actions and measures that the working group has implemented, or assisted municipalities to implement.	<p>Who are your stakeholders? In other words, who or what entities and organizations do you take into consideration in your day-to-day operation?</p> <p>What were the actions you have taken in your capacity in an effort to address the crisis? Or how did you assist the working group and its members to take actions in their respective cities?</p>

3) The roles and meanings of the network (whether and how being connected influenced the actions mentioned above).	<p>With the previous two questions in mind, do you see being a member to EUROCITIES and Migration and Integration Working Group impact the decisions and actions of the member cities? In other words, would any outcome have been different without the network, and in what way?</p> <p>Is there anything in handling the challenges concerning refugees and asylum seekers, to which you feel that the EUROCITIES and the working group could contribute more?</p>
4) Closing questions	<p>There are scholars who point out that transnational municipal networks and their roles are rather symbolic while their objectives are problem-oriented and pragmatic. How would you respond to such voices?</p>

Appendix 4

Categories	Codes	Subcodes	Definitions	Examples (Shorter excerpts)	Counts
What the crisis was about	Emergency reception	--	The interviewees directly experienced an influx of people	People arrived at the railway stations, and what happened was that we received a phone call from, I don't know how you call it, the guys that check your tickets, when train left up north, telling "now we have 35 people coming to [your city]" or "now we have 40 persons coming to [your city]" and so on. Every night some hours before the arrival, we had these calls and had to take some action. (Interviewee A)	8
	Planned integration	--	The interviewees are in the situation to be able to envision in a longer-term and integrate refugees	What I found was that when I was attending these meetings, the discussions were around the huge emergencies, such as cities like Athens, and what they were dealing with because of where they were based and the islands around Greece. Our city, on the other hand, is not on the border; it's set inland, [inaudible] compared to other European cities, and I just felt that we were ahead in terms of integration, but integration was not the primary focus of the working group at the time because they were dealing with these huge emergencies. (Interviewee C)	7
Expected behavior	Reciprocity	Learning and sharing	Actors share ideas and learn from each other.	It is great being involved in EUROCITIES because I can tap into some fantastic friends and colleagues, you can just contact right away and have a discussion. We often refer cities to each other. "Have a chat with Berlin", that sort of thing. It is really positive in that respect. (Interviewee C)	6

		Regional discrepancy	The imbalance of reciprocity of sharing and learning among the peers.	While we are facing emergencies, they are really integrating people. I think at the moment; we are going in reverse. Our problem at the moment is not even integration. It is the reception again. (Interviewee B)	3
Facilitating governance arrangement	Coordination	Robust structure	Coordination is ensured through a robust local structure.	We have what we call Migration Strategic Board, which oversees migration in the city, brings together partners to understand migration, and collectively looks for solutions. All migration work reports to this particular board. The chair of this board is an advisor to the national government. You have a really good link there. (Interviewee C)	2
		Ad-hoc endorsement and management	Coordination is ensured through endorsing and managing local organizations.	During 2014, the municipality organized a more central system for reception because as you can imagine you could not keep men and women, aged and minors, all together in the center. So, the municipality signed a protocol with the Home Office, the interior ministry. (Interviewee B)	6
	Steering (non-binding)	Policy frameworks	Steering is ensured through setting the terms of policy frameworks.	By signing the charter, cities engage themselves to reach these commitments in the overall integration as well as integration through services. Within the framework of Integrating Cities, we run the projects [...] and try to implement them in a way that resonates with the commitments that the cities have signed up for. Every two years, we compile a report on the progress the cities have made. (Interviewee E)	3

		Funded projects	Steering is ensured through operating funded projects.	We got a grant from the Open Society Institute, to prepare for two mentoring visits on the integration of young refugees and education. For this, we launched a call in the working group announcing two cities would be hosting mentoring visits, where two additional cities that are more advanced on the topic [make a visit] as a mentor, and they exchange experiences. (Interviewee E)	4
	Delegation	--	The secretariat acts and speaks on behalf of the member cities.	Some cities are transit places, others are the destination, and even within these classifications, every city faces different challenges because they are the frontline of the internal reception. Cities are where people actually come. Even if it is only for transit, they come. (Interviewee E)	4
Challenges and obstacles	Jurisdictional tension	National legislations and decisions	National legislations decisions are creating an interruption at the municipal level.	As you probably know, as one of the latest developments, with a new government and new Home office, the law changed in December 2018. The law regarding asylum became much stricter. It became nearly impossible for these people to obtain the status as a refugee. It has been two months, and we really see how the situation has started changing again. (Interviewee B)	7
		Intergovernmental agreements	National decisions made at the intergovernmental level are creating an interruption at the municipal level.	In 2014 and 2015, the reception system became better and better. In 2016, the Schengen Agreement became suspended. Germany, Norway, France, and Austria, decided to close their border as if they were trying to say “this is enough, you should do something to identify people	2

				and stop them. It is not acceptable that all of them are just crossing the border without control". Because the borders were closed, we were forced to start identifying them and realized that now they had to stay longer in our city. (Interviewee B)	
	Organizational gap	--	Obstacles that creates discontinuity in realizing the goals.	Quite recently a new working group was created on drug abuse, that was quite interesting for our city, so I contacted different areas in the city council, which were youth and health. Then there was the problem of language. Most people in these areas were quite close to retiring [...] and their English was not very good, so this was creating difficulty with participating actively in the debate within a working group. (Interviewee D)	4
	Inner logic	Limits of competence	Municipalities recognize the limits in the competency of the network.	I do not think there is much more that EURO CITIES could do with the resources they have. I think it is important that there is our voice in discussions with the Commission. (Interviewee A)	2
		Self-evaluation	Whether the interviewees believe their municipality has dealt with the crisis in a satisfactory manner.	Yes. I would think our municipality is investing a lot of people working on this issue to face the situation. I think we are doing our best in the situation. (Interviewee B)	2
		Rationalization of organizational flaws	How the interviewees make sense of the flaws in the network, provided they are aware of the	I have to say we are the ones to make the network useful. Of course, I can't influence too much on who is working there or what kind of contacts they have within the Commission, but what I can do from here is	3

		limits of the network's competency and they are doing the best they can.	actively taking part. (Interviewee A)	
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