A View of German-Polish Cross-Border Cooperation: an Experience from the 2007–2013 INTERREG Programme[1]

Javier Martín-Uceda[2], Jarosław Jańczak[3]

Abstract:

The aim of this article is to understand the nature and dynamism of cross-border cooperation in Europe by taking cross-border projects of INTERREG program implemented in the period 2007–2013 as examples and the concepts of (a)symmetry and potential differences as a conceptual framework. The case of the German-Polish border has been chosen and the authors attempt to further the already existing analysis by indicating additional analytical levels and interpreting findings with the help of the concept of asymmetry. INTERREG projects provide a great source of data to help analyse the cooperation processes established within the Schengen Area. The findings of this investigation reflect well the differences between the two countries in many aspects, especially the leading partners in projects (Germans lead more than Poles), as well as the fact that the German actors are more active in general, when at the same time urban and more dynamic areas are more able to take part in projects.

Keywords:

German-Polish border, INTERREG, asymmetry, cross-border cooperation, CBC

Citation (APA):

Martín-Uceda, J., Jańczak, J. (2018). A View of German-Polish Cross-Border Cooperation: an Experience from the 2007–2013 INTERREG Programme. *Pogranicze. Polish Borderlands Studies, vol. 6, no. 3*, pp. 229-251.

1. Introduction

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) is one of the main topics in European cohesion (Harguindéguy and Bray 2009; Medeiros 2013) and the European Union's cohesion policy. The efforts to achieve a better coordinated European space began almost 30 years ago, with the creation of the INTERREG programme. Also, in the

1 This paper is part of the ongoing research project *Cooperación Transfronteriza en Europa, una geopolítica de escala local. Análisis en cinco países europeos de buenas prácticas para la integración y el desarrollo global* (TRANSBORDEURCOP). CSO2015-67124-R (MINECO/FEDER,UE), led by Environmental and Territorial Analysis and Planning (APTA), research group at Geography Department, Girona University (Spain). For more information, www.udg.edu/apta.

2 Javier Martín-Uceda, MA – Environmental and Territorial Analysis and Planning (APTA) research group. Universitat de Girona, Spain. E-mail: javier.martin@udg.edu.

3 Jarosław Jańczak, PhD – Associate Professor at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland and European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. E-mail: jaroslaw.janczak@amu.edu.pl.

last decade of the 20th century, the European Union began to consider territorial cohesion, with documents such as Europe 2000 or Europe XX+ (Richardson and Jensen 2000). In 1999, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) introduced a new territorial vision, with the need to coordinate the territory through better cohesion among the different European regions (Faludi 2005). The new key element would be polycentrism, an attempt to spread economic development beyond European urban centres, allowing the whole space to be part of global processes (Burger et al. 2013; Blăgeanu 2014). To achieve this goal, cross-border areas (CBAs) have a fundamental role. Usually called "European policy laboratories" or even "European integration laboratories" (Gasparini 1999–2000), they are an example of how to manage difficulties in many aspects, like legal asymmetries in many scales, between states, regions and cities inside the EU.

The interest in CBAs on the part of the EU began before the ESDP (Letamendía 2010). The EU, with the aim of diminishing the influence of national borders on the territory, and in favour of more equal development in the whole space, approved in 1989 the INTERREG initiative. The institutions coincided in the need to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion by fostering cooperation through cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. INTERREG has grown in terms of eligible area, budget, and different kinds of actions and projects within internal borders. It involves collaboration among authorities of two or more member states. Also INTERREG as allowed the creation and consolidation of new cooperation networks (Oliveras et al. 2010), like Euroregions, that has become one of the main cooperation actors for cross-border cooperation across the EU (Durà et al. 2018). With the Maastricht Treaty, and the goal of the single market, the border effect became one of the main obstacles to achieving it. The INTERREG programme searches to implicate local and regional actors in the process of eliminating the border "barrier effect", promoting free movement and fostering cross-border projects. It also allows local and regional administrations to take part in the integration process, to shed their peripheral character, become more central and play a role in the new multilevel governance (Wassenberg et al. 2015).

With all this, INTERREG projects provide a great source of data to help understand the cooperation processes established within the Schengen Area. They offer information about which actors take part in these processes, what projects they carry out and their impact on the territory. They are, therefore, a good overview of European cross-border cooperation and the result, positive or otherwise, of European policies. Although the policies are common to all states, the particularity of each territory and border reality affects policy applications and results. The geographical dimension of each border is reflected in the project results and data. For example, even knowing that the majority of borderlands are

rural areas, with specific challenges, cities seems to be more able to take part in projects and resources, as we will see later in the data analysis (ESPON 2007). The Polish-German border reflects this and other realities. However, after applying an analytical methodology to different European borders, we can affirm that some processes and results are repeated, which allows us to briefly summarize CBC at most European Union borders.

Consequently, the aim of this article is to understand the nature and dynamisms of cross-border cooperation in Europe by taking cross-border projects implemented in the INTERREG period 2007–2013 as examples and the concepts of (a)symmetry and potential differences as a conceptual framework. The authors believe that INTERREG projects can give information about actors, processes and impacts to understand the nature of CBC. From different perspectives, asymmetry can be explained with quantitative data, as well as with other elements, such as spatial reality of the territory, administrative configuration and political and economic capacity. Here, the case of the German-Polish border has been chosen because it is especially interesting as one of the „new" borders in the UE, after the eastward enlargement in 2004. More than a decade later, some interesting results remain and will be presented below. Despite the fact that several authors have already addressed the issue (for example, Dołzbłasz 2017), this article attempts to further the analysis by indicating additional analytical levels and interpreting findings with the help of the concept of asymmetry. INTERREG, as the main European fund and instrument to boost CBC, is a good indicator of the capacity of border partners to reduce the "border effect" on their reality and take advantage of it and the resources it provides. It should be added that the Polish-German borderland clearly reflects some of the CBC realities in a European context. Differences in administrative structures, economic development and the financial and political power of actors are examples of asymmetries that can affect, in many aspects, actors' potential and capacity, making differences on both sides.

This analysis contains six sections. After this short introduction, the research and the study area will be contextualized. Then a theoretical framework and the methodology will be introduced to continue with the data analysis and results. To conclude, the paper's findings will be presented and discussed.

2. Research contextualization – German-Polish border legacies

To understand cross-border cooperation and cross-border projects within the INTERREG scheme, contextualization of the German-Polish border is necessary. And this means exploring its historical context and interpreting current events in the light of historical legacies.

The current location of the border, set together with the Red Army's march towards Berlin at the end of the Second World War, has been referred in public discourse after 1945 to the establishment of the first Polish state at the beginning of the second millennium. The Piast dynasty managed at that time to unite most of the Western Slavic tribes and – by accepting Western Christianity – joined the family of European states. This happened in the context of relations with the German Empire, expanding territorially to the east. For a short period of time, the Oder River became a border, which later on – especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – Polish historiography used as a symbol of Polish rights to the provinces located alongside this early medieval line. The following centuries, marked by German-Polish territorial conflicts, moved the state border eastwards, establishing a very stable and relatively peaceful frontier until the end of the eighteenth century. The provinces located east of the Oder River, especially Pomerania, East Brandenburg and Silesia, together with Prussia – located between Poland and Lithuania on the coast of the Baltic Sea – not only fell under the control of various German states, but also underwent a process of Germanization of the original Slavic population. Consequently, the political border at the end of the eighteenth century, just before the disappearance of the Polish state, more or less followed (with some exceptions, however) linguistic and cultural divisions (Droß 1964).

After over a century of non-existence, Poland experienced a rebirth in 1918. The following years were marked by a set of conflicts with neighbours over borders. This also affected the German-Polish border, which was eventually recreated following more or less its eighteenth century location, as well as the actual national-linguistic divisions existing at that time. It was established, however, in a series of violent uprisings of the Polish population in border provinces, plebiscites and diplomatic negotiations that left each side unsatisfied with the final solution and national minorities on both sides of the border.

The Second World War drastically changed border relations between Germany and Poland, with consequences that contextualized the next seven decades of border relations and still influence current forms and manifestations of cross-border interactions. This happened on several levels.

First of all, the border itself was set in a new location (Trosiak 1999). As a result of decisions made by the winning powers, especially under the Soviet Union's pressure for a new geopolitical order in post-war Europe, the whole of Poland was moved west. The loss of its eastern provinces (incorporated into the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian socialist republics as parts of the Soviet Union) was to be compensated for territorially by the transfer of eastern German

provinces. Moreover, this border was to make the Soviet Union the main guarantor of the Polish western border, especially when challenged with the expected and inevitable German claims to regain its former provinces, and an ally that Poland would need in the future, binding it firmly to the Eastern Bloc.

Second, as a consequence of the arguments presented above, the German-Polish border became a highly contested boundary with a huge potential for confrontation during decades. Final confirmation of the border became one of the main aims of Polish foreign policy and a determinant of post-1989 developments. The German Democratic Republic accepted the new border and confirmed it in the Treaty of Zgorzelec in 1950 (Koćwin 1993). However, the German Federal Republic considered itself the legal heir of pre-war Germany and it refused to recognize the new border situation until the 1970s. The problem emerged again together with the collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany. The political agreement of the great powers was de facto conditioned by Germany finally recognizing the post-war border with Poland (Kamusella 2010). This corresponded with the German policy of presenting its reunification as part of continental unification and the European project, and building its position based on the principles of reliability, stability and good relations with neighbours. Consequently, the treaty signed in 1990 eliminated, after almost five decades, territorial disputes and solved the problem of the border location between Germany and Poland (Halicka 2013).

Third, border relocation has significantly influenced the border population. Following the decisions taken at the Potsdam Conference, the German inhabitants of the now-Polish western provinces were transferred to both the German states. The new Polish border regions were filled with Poles, mainly from the east of the pre-war state, now in the Soviet Union (Halicka, 2013) and from central Poland. This resulted in a weak attachment of the new settlers to their lands, which was observable for decades.

Fourth, the border populations were not only uprooted (on the Polish river bank) but also isolated from their new neighbours on the other side of the border. The border was hardly permeable, and a harsh crossing regime prevented individuals form circulating across the border (Koćwin, 1993), with a brief deviation in the 1970s when the border regime was softened and the Polish labour force was welcomed in Eastern Germany. When anti-communist opposition arose in 1980, the border was closed again. All this resulted in further alienation of both groups, including a lack of common knowledge about the neighbours' language (Jańczak 2015: 118).

Fifth, this situation had economic consequences that resulted in under-development on both sides of the border. The closed border was even more painful

due to the distance to the economic centres in both Germany and Poland. In the latter case, the borderlands were especially affected by remoteness and temporariness and uncertainty related to the territory because of the territorial claims. Until the 1970s, this prevented the Polish central government from investing too many resources in the frontier areas, which were exposed to external threat.

3. Border characteristics in three sections – structural (a)symmetries and differences in potentials

The context presented above gives a general picture of the German-Polish borderland as it entered the post-communist period, with intensive cross-border cooperation beginning in 1989 and then accelerating together with Poland's entry into the European Union. The cross-border environment was characterized by state distrust, alienation of border populations, low level of permeability and underdevelopment. Paradoxically, they all became elements that, due to ongoing European integration, debordering and geopolitical changes, created a "resource" for Germany and Poland. While the new, united Germany had to prove its peaceful role in the European Union, Poland was preparing for integration into this organization. Cross-border cooperation between the two states and their overcoming the legacies mentioned previously created a perfect opportunity, which was immediately seized by local actors interested in taking advantage of the new situation (Dolińska, Makaro and Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2018). It referred to both the private and public actors. With regard to the former, the end of "real socialism" and the opening of the border led to dynamic flows of people, goods and later capital and services, resulting in an economic boom in the border areas, with millions of border-crossers taking advantage of price differences on both sides. However, these changes also created negative phenomena, especially growing border crime. With regard to public actors, the PHARE Programme was launched in the 1990s as a pre-accession financial instrument designed for Poland and Hungary. It contained a CBC component that very quickly became a training field for local actors in cross-border-project creation and implementation. It not only contributed to networking across the border, but also equipped local actors with the European Union's "know how" in cross-border cooperation. Subnational levels, regions and local authorities became actors in European construction (Keating 2004), giving them a capacity that was previously reserved for states and reinforcing new governance with more actors in European construction (Perkmann 1999; Fricke 2014). The processes described above culminated in the investigated period, together with the Polish entry to the EU, "final" reconciliation with Germany and creation of new initiatives on the border.

The border itself has been diversified and can basically be divided into three sections of different profiles: northern, central and southern. Not only do they correspond with economic and cultural cleavages, but also with administrative ones (the German lands Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg and Saxony neighbour the Polish voivodships of Western Pomerania, Lubuskie and Lower Silesia). Additionally, due to the federal and consequently decentralized state model in Germany and the centralized model in Poland, the INTERREG programmes on the border were developed separately for the three sections. German lands were cooperating here with Poland as a key partner.

To interpret the research results we decided to employ the concept of asymmetry, categorizing it and operationalizing it for further analysis. Although the concept of asymmetry is widely used in border studies (e.g. Decoville, Durand, Sohn and Walther, 2013; Lauth Bacas and Kavanagh, 2013) – similarly to other academic disciplines, especially international relations (e.g. power factor differences), security studies (e.g. asymmetric threats), geography (Guichonnet and Raffestin, 1974), and sociology (e.g. position in social hierarchy) – it is hardly conceptualized. Most of the authors employing it, neither define nor theorize about this category (see: Thomas, 2001; Kupiecki, 2016; Bourdieu, 1984).

In this text, we recognize asymmetry's huge potential to explain border-related processes, assign specific meaning to this concept and propose its categorization. What is usually referred to as asymmetry, we divide into two subcategories: structural asymmetry and difference in potentials.

We attempt to understand structural asymmetry as a situation of inadequate structures, organizations and institutions on both sides of the border because they have various origins (Kubiak 2009: 28), which results in different acting models (Metz and Johnson 2001: 5). As Jussi Laine points out, "In sub-national cross-border contexts, the [structural] asymmetry is regularly manifested by differences in competences, central-local relations, budgetary cycles, administration hierarchies, the roles of elected officers and public servants, and by the extent of central government engagement" (Laine 2012: 57).

Likewise, we categorize the second component –differences in potentials – by paying attention to quantitatively measurable indicators that reveal resources on either side of the border and enable a comparative approach. This means that, for example, GDP level is not an element of structural asymmetry but of differences in potentials.

The tested sections of the German-Polish border presented below represent both structural asymmetries and differences in potentials. Moreover,

both can be approached on two levels. On the one hand, neighboring states represented specific structural asymmetries (resulting from national legacies, dominant administrative cultures, etc.) and differences in potentials (as reflected in nation-wide statistical indicators). But at the same time, a reduction of the scale of analysis reveals different or even reversed construction with regard to both categories. Border-located territorial units can represent structures or procedures that differ (formally or practically) from the ones that are dominant in the center. Also, resources can be more or less intensively allocated near the border (so border regions of a "poorer" state can be richer than their neighbors in a "richer" state). This situation can result from several factors, including level of remoteness (and consequently underdevelopment) of the border regions with regard to their national centers, presence/absence of regional metropolitan centers, economic profile of local and regional economies or cultural/organizational legacies resulting from local historical experience.

We claim that both concepts, structural asymmetries and differences in potentials, can serve as an explanatory framework to understand cross-border cooperation as manifested in joint projects. Consequently, in the next chapter we present our research assumptions.

4. 2007–2013 INTERREG, research methodology, (a)symmetries and differences in potential on the German-Polish border

The INTERREG programme, as investigated in the period 2007–2013, was divided into three strands, A, B and C. The first one (A) was for cross-border cooperation, the second one (B) for transnational cooperation, and the last one (C) for interregional cooperation. In this analysis, we focused our research on cross-border cooperation strand A, as it uses more than 70% of all the resources. It covers 38 internal borders and is divided into 55 programmes in Europe.

Our research was conducted on the German-Polish border, with data from the IV INTERREG (2007–2013) period. We chose this period because it is the most current and "completed" period with the project data available in statistically reliable form. The German-Polish border is divided into three different operational programmes: in the north, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Brandenburg/Poland programme; in the centre, the Poland/Brandenburg programme; and finally, in the south, the Saxony/Poland programme. However, in this research we decided to focus only on the centre and north areas of the border. This decision was taken for two reasons. First, the relations between asymmetries at the national and regional levels are constructed differently in both cases. Second, the southern

section significantly overlapped with the area where two other operational programmes were intensively implemented: Saxony/Czech Republic and Poland/Czech Republic. This may result in methodological problems when comparing cross-border cooperation, with regard to actors' involvement, project type, etc., of the southern section with the two other.

Thanks to INTERREG funds, hundreds of cross-border projects have been developed in the border area. In each project, a minimum of one partner from each of the two states must take part. An analysis of these projects provides interesting information about the relationships established between the different territorial actors, their networks, as well as the types of projects and the distribution of financial resources throughout the territory.

The methodology used in this analysis was developed in a previous research project focused on the Spanish-French border and carried out by the APTA research group[4]. It is used to create a database made up of three tables, related to a common project. The information about each project, such as the complete name, the leader, all the partners that take part in the project, partner condition (public stakeholder or private) and the funding, is presented in a separate table. Each partner has a geographic code, allowing the researchers to create cartographies of all the analysed aspects. The methodology and subsequent cartographic analyses clearly represented asymmetries in CBC, in such aspects as actors' participation and funding localization. More or less participation in CBC projects, and being able to invest and achieve funding for them, are good examples that represent a conceptual framework.

This research uses the same methodology to focus on the Polish-German border (with the Spanish-Portuguese and the Austrian-Italian borders being considered for inclusion in future research). Interpretation of the statistical data is supported by a qualitative approach in the form of interviews conducted among actors involved in cross-border cooperation in the regions. The interviews were conducted in October 2017, with selected actors, such as politicians, researchers and project managers, with different positions in CBC projects.

After the entrance of Poland into the EU, in 2004, the Polish-German border became an internal border of the EU and, at the same time, was eligible to receive European funds, such as INTERREG. Before going to the data results it is important to understand one of the main problems that cross-border cooperation has to face: asymmetries and differences in potentials.

4 For more information and examples about the methodology, see (Feliu et al. 2013).

Structural asymmetries on the German-Polish border are represented first of all by administrative misfit. Germany and Poland have different administrative structures and political units. At the same time, the diverse political subdivisions have different levels of autonomy and political capacities. To make the comparison easier, it is also important to understand how both countries have structured their regional units regarding the European Classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS).

Table 1: Territorial units in Germany and Poland

European Codes	Germany	Poland
NUTS II	Administrative districts (Regierungsbezirke)	Voivodeships (Województwa)
NUTS III	Districts (Kreise)	Subregions (Podregiony)
LAU I/II	Collective municipalities (Verwaltungs-gemeinschaften) Municipalities (Gemeinden)	Districts (Powiaty) Municipalities (Gminy)

Source: The authors

The two German states on the border areas, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg, have no administrative districts, meaning that the NUTS II unit is directly assumed by the states. That said, it is important to understand that Germany and Poland have two different model states: federal and centralized, respectively. This difference means that each actor taking part in a cross-border project has different powers and capacities, which could affect its capacity to participate in cross-border projects. The already mentioned decentralized model in Germany originates from federal legacies of the state with strong competences of actors at local and regional levels. In Poland, centralist legacies are visible despite the administrative reform introduced as part of a political and economic transformation process. Consequently, when some of the urban districts in Germany (as represented for example by Frankfurt (Oder) or Cottbus) are strongly equipped with tasks and competences, the power in Poland at the NUTS III level is relatively weak.

At the same time, however, differences in potential, differently structured at various levels, can be detected in the German-Polish borderland. First of all, Germany is much more economically developed than Poland, which is reflected in a GDP per person ratio that was 5 to 1 at the time of the research. This was reflected in the resources available on each side of the border and in the budgets of actors involved in cross-border cooperation, human and administrative

capacities, etc. On the other hand, those differences are reversed at the local level and vary between the northern and the central part of the border. The eastern provinces of Germany are among the least developed in the state, with high levels of depopulation and economic depression requiring federal transfers of money. The Polish side of the border, on the other hand, has benefitted from the transformation and integration, successfully taking advantage of the deborderization process over the last two decades. Additionally, in the northern part, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the least developed German land, with no strong urban centres and a net outflow of inhabitants. The Polish Western Pomerania, on the other hand, has a dynamic profile, especially due to the city of Szczecin, an urban metropolis located directly on the border, which was, before 1945, the centre of the nowadays divided Pomerania region, and has been, as a harbour city and university centre, a source of regional growth for the last years. Differences in potentials are not the same, however, in the central part of the border where Brandenburg neighbours the Lubuskie region. The metropolis of Berlin is the main centre (also a strong influence on the Polish side of the border) in this border region that is remote, peripheral and rural in the national context.

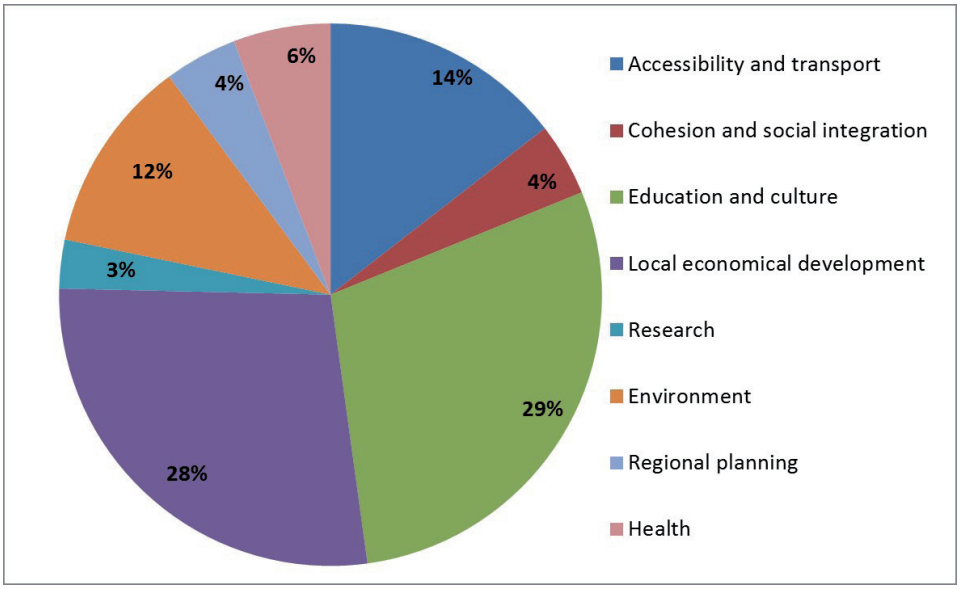
5. Research findings

An analysis of the INTERREG projects in the period 2007–2013 in two sections (the northern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland and the central Brandenburg/Poland) in the German-Polish borderland reveal several interesting findings that tell a lot about the nature and dynamism of cross-border cooperation in the region. These findings regard project type, project leaders and partners, and their distribution.

5.1 Project type

The first element to analyse about cross-border cooperation is the number of projects developed. In the north, in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland operational programme, 69 projects were approved in the period 2007–2013. On the other hand, in the central programme, approval was given to 110 projects. The projects are of different types, and for this analysis nine categories were approved: local economic development, environment, research, education and culture, accessibility and transport, regional planning, health, cohesion and social integration, and security.

Figure 1: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland project type



Data: INTERREG - authors' calculation

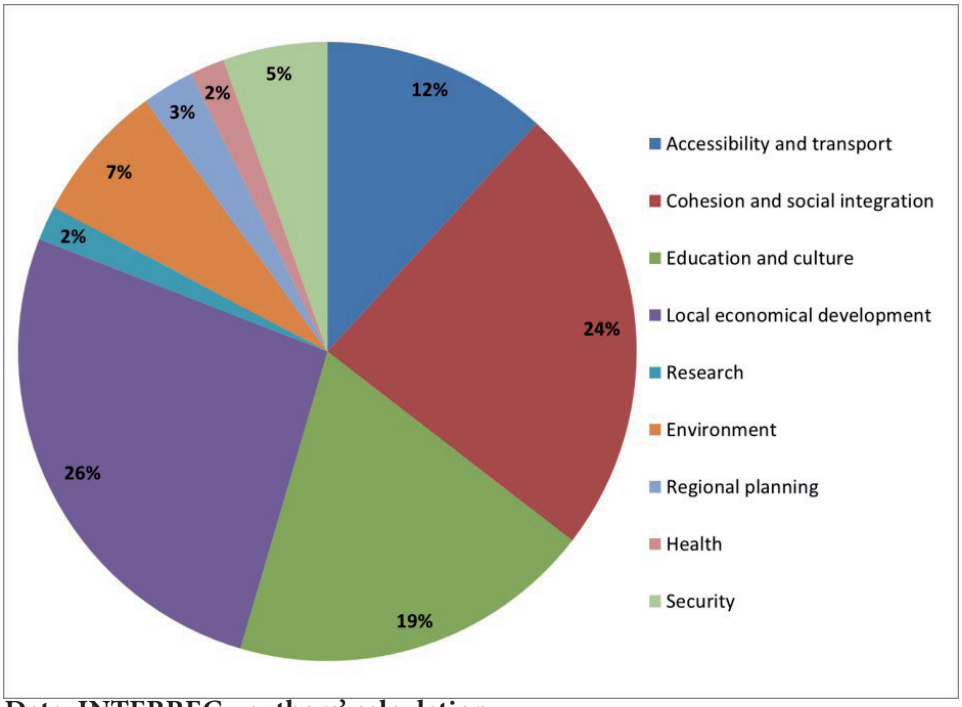
As can be observed, there are some differences between the two programmes (Figures 1 and 2). Education and culture is the main type in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland programme, while local economic development is the main one in the Brandenburg/Poland programme. The second type is local economic development in the north and cohesion and social integration in the central programme.

Education is the third most frequent type in the central area, while accessibility is third in the north. This shows that problems common to all the projects need to be solved all along the border, especially the ones regarding social cohesion, economic development and transport. These problems are shared by all the borders around Europe. As a result of being a peripheral area, with a border that acts as a "wall", the economy and social interrelation are limited and a lack of communication occurs with the other side of the border. Like the majority of the borderland areas in Europe, the German-Polish border area has problems related to social cohesion and economic development.

During the interviews with some actors in the area, both in public and private sectors, all agree that social issues are the biggest challenge in border cooperation (Interview 2). After decades of isolation, disconnection and mutual mistrust (Interview 3), social cohesion is still a challenge. Education is a good way

of working in that direction. There are several examples of scholar projects in the border area.

Figure 2: Brandenburg/ Poland project type



Data: INTERREG - authors' calculation

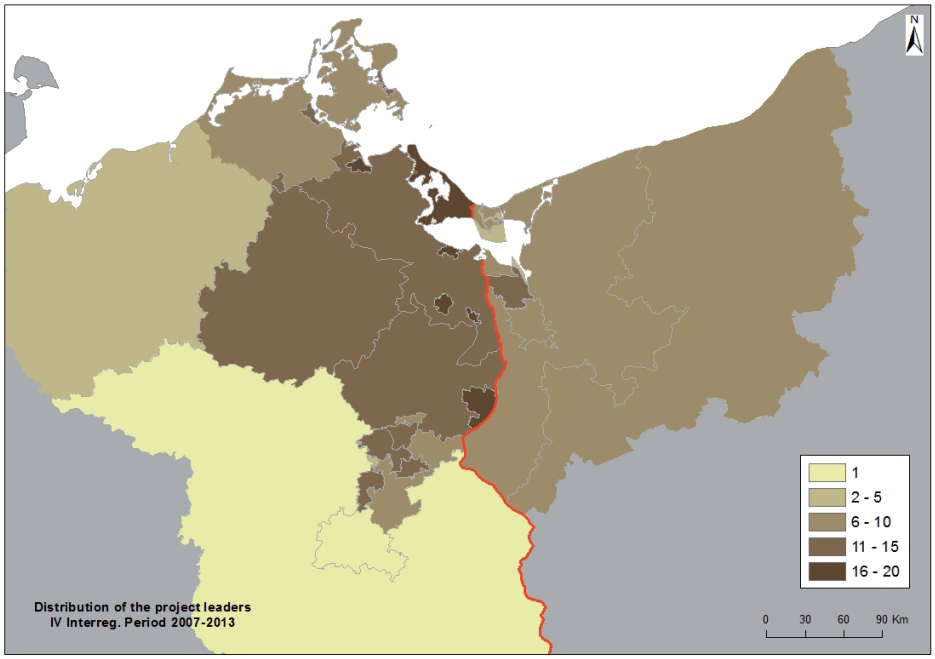
5.2 Actors involved in CBC: project leaders and partners

The analysis takes into account the type of the tested projects, some aspects about participants, e.g. if they are public or private stakeholders, who the leading actors are and all the other actors that take part in them. For this research, however, we will take into account only the distribution of actors, leaders and all the other participants. Other aspects, such as whether they are public or private, are not considered here. We emphasise the leading actors' role because they have more administrative responsibilities regarding the organization and management of the projects. All the projects have a leading actor and, at least, one other actor on the other side of the border. The analysis of the actors that take part in the different projects has been divided into two parts. First, the leading actors are important because they play an important role in project management, and have more responsibilities than the rest. Second, the analysis takes into account all the partners in the

project, not only the leaders. Analysing the results of both programmes, there are some common elements, but also some differences, with regard to project leaders.

As it is possible to see in Map 1, the German actors lead more than Polish actors at all the regional, district and local levels.

Map 1: Distribution of project leaders: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland programme



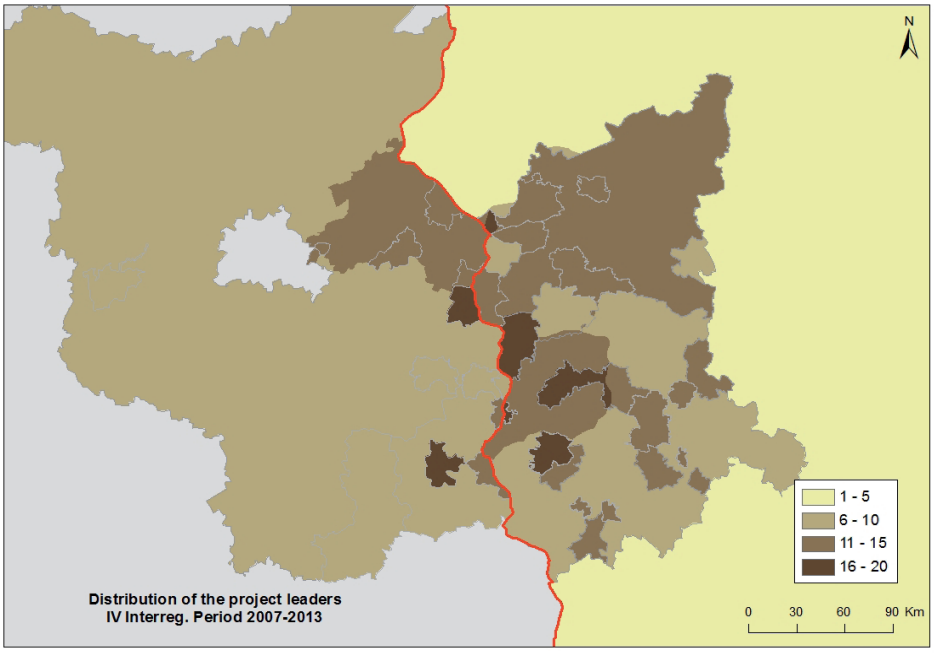
Data: INTERREG IV - authors' calculation

Of the 69 projects in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Poland programme, only 15 are led by Polish actors; 46, by Germans; and 8 by other common structures, like the Pomerania Euroregion. The majority of the projects (42) are led by local partners: 29 German, 13 Polish. The second most important leading partners are districts (NUTS III), 14 leaders, 12 German for just 2 Polish. Finally, 5 are led by regional partners, all German.

The data on Map 2 shows an unbalanced capacity of leading projects in favour of Germans in the northern part. If we observe the results for the Brandenburg/Poland programme in the central area, the results are more balanced. In the central area there are 110 projects; 63 are led by German and 46 by Polish

actors, and one by a Euroregion. Also, in this programme local actors lead the majority of the projects, but there is an interesting difference. While Polish local actors lead 25 projects, only 15 German local actors lead projects. And the other difference concerns the NUTS III level, where there is only 1 Polish actor for 29 district German actors. The reason for this huge difference is that Frankfurt-Oder and Cottbus are regional actors because they are urban districts under the German administrative structure. As a result, they have much more autonomy and financial capacity than other local actors in Germany and also compared with Poland.

Map 2: Distribution of project leaders: Brandenburg/Poland programme



Data: INTERREG IV - authors' calculation

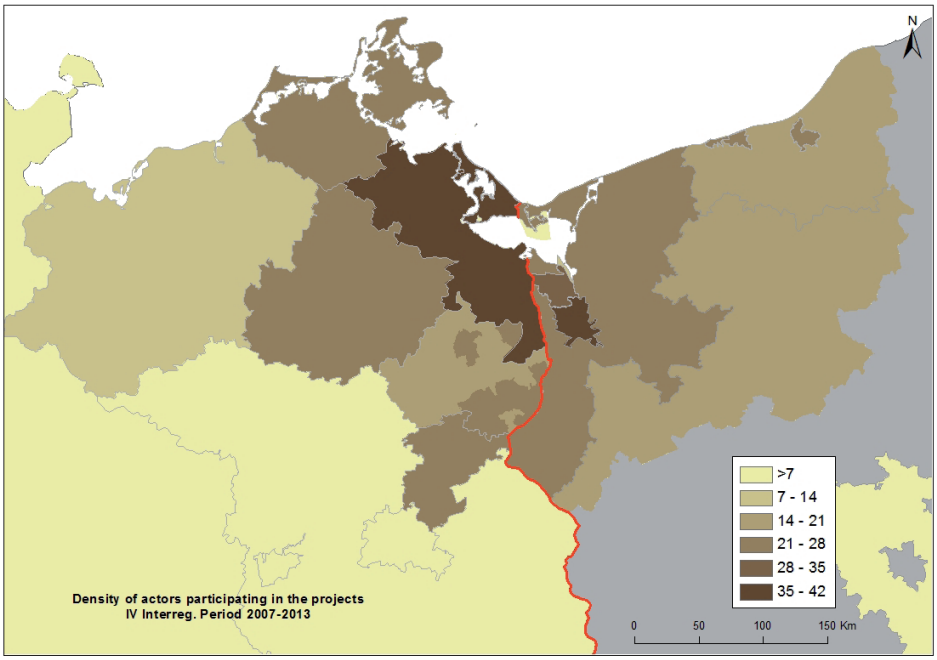
With these comments, we have come to one of the main elements that cross-border cooperation has to deal with: differences between countries in administrative capacities and political decentralization. Germany is a more decentralized country than Poland, and this could be why German actors lead more projects. At the NUTS III level, this difference is evident. The imbalance in favour of German leaders means that they probably have more possibilities and flexibility than the Polish actors (Interview 1 and 3). This explanation follows the logic of asymmetries mentioned at the beginning of the text. However, additional interpretations were

suggested during fieldwork and interviews with the local experts and practitioners. Most of them pointed at imbalance in potentials. They included the argument that the German partners have more technical capacities, more developed standards and more financial resources when initiating and developing cross-border projects (Interview 1) or, more generally, have more capacities and are consequently more interested in joint project creations (Interview 2).

5.3 Distribution of projects' actors across the border area

Another aspect to analyse is the joint participation of all the actors, whether or not they are project leaders. Here again, we identified interesting regularities.

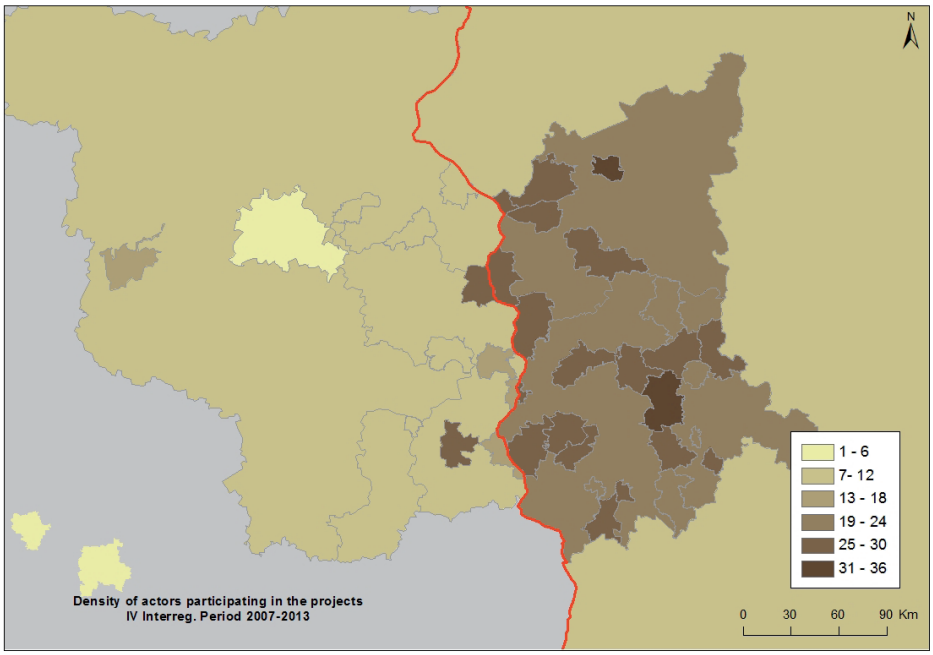
Map 3: Distribution of actors: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/ Poland programme



Data: INTERREG IV - authors' calculation

The collected data show a double reality: on one hand, how administrative differences mean imbalances if we compare partners at the same administrative level; on the other, how urban areas participate in projects more than rural areas. This is true for both parts of the border.

Map 4: Distribution of actors: Brandenburg/Poland programme



Data: INTERRG IV - authors' calculation

The results indicate that for the northern part of the border (Map 3), the majority of the actors are German. In all three administrative levels (local, sub-regional and regional), German actors are more active than Poles. The main difference appears when we take into account the district level (NUT III). We found 25 German participations of NUT III partners, for only 16 Polish. Especially active is the Vorpommern-Greifswald district, with 14 participations. Also at the regional level (NUT II), we found 10 German and 3 Polish participants.

Analysing the specific data, we can observe how urban spaces, the biggest municipalities, the main actors, are able to participate in projects. Schwedt/Oder, on the German side, is the main city in the north border area and is, at the same time, the local actor that participates in more projects. On the Polish side, Szczecin is the main local actor. Most local authorities take part in 1–3 projects, but Schwedt/Oder takes part in 7 projects and Szczecin is participating in 13 projects.

If we move the analysis to the central programme of the border, Brandenburg-Poland programme (Map 4), the results are similar but with some

differences. There is also a huge difference between the different NUTS III levels, between the German districts and the Polish sub-regions. There are 47 participations by German districts and just 9 from the Polish side. This has an explanation. The cities of Frankfurt-Oder and Cottbus are considered urban districts, not local actors (LAU). At the local level, there is a change if we compare it to the north side of the border: Polish local actors participate more than German municipalities. Major Polish cities take part in different projects: Zielona Góra in 9, Gorzów Wielkopolski in 8 and Gubin in 7. The rest take part in fewer projects, normally 1 or 2.

Again, the difference between the participation of cities and that of rural municipalities are key aspects in the analysis. Frankfurt-Oder and Cottbus or Zielona Gora are the best examples of that. Rural areas probably have less capacity to participate in projects. A geographical element is clearly at play: this is a rural border area, with few urban spaces, as we have seen from the data. Only urban cross-border areas, such as Frankfurt-Oder/Słubice, Gubin/Guben or Schwedt/Oder, and major urban cities like Szczecin and Zielona Góra show high cross-border activity.

6. Conclusions

As indicated at the beginning, the aim of this article is to understand the nature and dynamics of cross-border cooperation in Europe by taking as examples cross-border projects implemented in the period 2007–2013 on the German-Polish border, and the concepts of structural (a)symmetry and potential differences as the conceptual framework. The analysis leads to several conclusions.

First of all, the analysis of CBC reveals how deeply it is rooted in both a historical context and the structural asymmetries and differences in potentials of the partners.

Second, the project types show that social issues are the main topic in CBC between Poland and Germany. However, an analysis of the territorial context reveals some differences. In the northern section, education and cultural projects are slightly more present than local and economic development, which is the main type in the central part of the border. Also in the north, the two main categories cover almost 60% of the projects, whereas in the central programme, there are clearly three main categories. As pointed out previously, local and economic development is first, followed by cohesion and social integration and then education and culture. These results can mean weakness in social cohesion in the border area – a normal situation in a borderland – after decades of almost no connection (Interview 2).

Additionally, a conflictive legacy, visible in population transfers, resulted in mutual ignorance, in a lack of mutual awareness or familiarity, which began to change through cross-border projects after Poland's entrance into the EU.

Third, quantitative results presented in the maps reveal interesting regularities. Structural asymmetries and differences in potentials seem to be the main explanation for the results. And some aspects can explain these asymmetries between the two countries. Maps reflect well the differences between the two countries in many aspects, especially the leading partners in projects (Germans lead more than Poles). This fact is more obvious in the northern part of the border, but also evident in the central area. The greater capacity to lead in German actors can be explained to some extent. On one hand, more administrative capacity and financial resources means – as mentioned in the theoretical framework – a difference in potential (Interview 1 and 3). After the interviews with experts and partners from both sides, differences can also be explained culturally. Germans have greater technical capacity, and may also be more interested in projects. The former East Germany has more needs in economic development, for example, and this proves the structural asymmetry hypothesis.

Fourth, when taking into account all the project partners, comments can be made in the same direction. The German actors are more active in general, but differences in administrative levels are an interesting element to analyse. The NUTS III level is the best example of asymmetry. While German districts are one of the main partners on the German side, Polish sub-regions have almost no participation. If we analyse the local level, there are few differences. We observe that Polish actors take part more than the Germans in the central part of the border. Frankfurt-Oder and Cottbus are considered urban districts (NUTS III), but apart from these two cities, there are more cities on the Polish side, making them more dynamic than the German municipalities.

Finally, one of the main conclusions is that urban and more dynamic areas are more able to take part in projects. They probably have more financial and technical resources, making them more competitive than rural areas. Since the majority of European borders are rural, this seems to be an element to be considered by EU authorities.

The conclusions presented above need further verification and more in-depth explanations. The authors believe that further research on the Spanish-French, Portuguese-Spanish and Italian-Austrian borders they currently conduct will provide more empirical data as well as the possibility of comparing them.

Literature:

Balogh, P. (2014). *Perpetual borders. German-Polish cross-border contacts in the Szczecin area*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Blăgeanu, A. (2014). Polycentrism, strategic spatial planning and its implications. *Scientific Annals of "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iaşi. Volume LX, nr 2., s. II – c, Geography series*.

Bonin, T. von (1998). *1000 Jahre deutsch-polnische Beziehungen*. Wiesbaden.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Burger, M. J., van der Knaap, B., y Wall, R. S. (2013). Polycentricity and the Multiplexity of Urban Networks. *European Planning Studies, nr 22(4)*.

Davies, N. (2005). *God's Playground. A History of Poland, Vol.1, The Origins to 1975*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Decoville, A., F. Durand, C. Sohn & O. Walther (2013). Comparing Cross-border Metropolitan Integration in Europe: Towards a Functional Typology. *Journal of Borderlands Studies, nr 28(2)*. DOI: 10.1080/08865655.2013.854654

Dolińska, K, J. Makaro, N. Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak, (2018). *Cud pogranicza? Zgorzelczanie, gubinianie i słubiczanie o życiu w miastach podzielonych*. Kraków: NOMOS.

Dołzbłasz, S. (2017). *Sieci współpracy transgranicznej na pograniczach Polski*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo I-BIS.

Droß, A. (1964). *Deutschland und Polen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Hannover–Dortmund: Hermann Schroedel Verlag.

Durà, A., Camonita, F., Berzi, M. et al (2018). *Euroregions, Excellence and Innovation across EU borders. A Catalogue of Good Practices*. Departament de Geografia. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

ESPON (2007). Cross-Border Cooperation - Cross-Thematic Study of INTERREG and ESPON activities. Luxembourg.

Faludi, A. (2005). La política de cohesión territorial de la Unión Europea. *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles, nr 39*.

Feliu, J., Berzi, M., Vicente, J. et al (2013). Análisis de los proyectos y actores transfronterizos España-Francia en el período 2007-2013. *Geographicalia, nr 63-64*.

Fricke, C. (2015). Spatial Governance across Borders Revisited: Organizational Forms and Spatial Planning in Metropolitan Cross-border Regions. *European Planning Studies, nr 23(5)*. DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2014.887661.

Gasparini, A. (1999–2000). European Border Towns as Laboratories of Differentiated Integration. *ISIG Quarterly of International Sociology, nr 4*.

Halicka, B. (2013). *Polens Wilder Westen. Erzwungene Migration und die kulturelle Aneignung des Oderraumes 1945-48*. Padeborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag.

Harguindéguy, J., Bray, Z. (2009). Does cross-border co-operation empower European regions? The Case of Interreg III-A France–Spain. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, nr 27*.

Harguindéguy, J.B., Ródriguez, P. (2010). Gobernanza multi-nivel y política regio- nal europea. La implementación de IN- TERREG III-A España-Francia. *Revista de Estudios Regionales, nr. 88*.

Interviews 1 (2017). Semi-structured interview with a local politician. Slubice, Poland.

Interviews 2 (2017). Semi-structured interview with civic agent and project partner. Slubice, Poland.

Interviews 3 (2017). Semi-structured interview with a scholar. Slubice, Poland.

Jańczak, B.A. (2015). German-Polish Border: Language Contact and Language Use on the Example of Forms of Address of Polish Vendors from Słubice Bazaar. W: D. Rellstab, N. Siponkoski, (red.), *Rajojen dynamiikkaa, Gränsernas dynamik, Borders under Negotiation, Grenzen und ihre Dynamik. VAKKI-symposiumi XXXV 12.–13.2.2015*. Vaasa: VAKKI Publications 4, 117-126.

Kamusella. T. (2010). The twentieth anniversary of the German-Polish border treaty of 1990: International treaties and the imagining of Poland's post-1945 western border. *Journal of Borderlands Studies, nr 25(2-4)*. DOI: 10.1080/08865655.2010.9695775

Keating, M. (2004). La política territorial y el nuevo regionalismo. In: Morata, F. (ed.) *Gobernanza multinivel en la Unión Europea*. Tirant lo Blanch: Valencia.

Koćwin, L. (1993). *Polityczne determinanty polsko-wschodnioniemieckich stosunków przygranicznych 1949-1990*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Kubiak, K. (2009). Asymetria, pojęcie definiujące czy dezinformujące. W: S. Wojciechowski, R. Fiedler (red.), *Zagrożenia asymetryczne współczesnego świata*. Poznań: WNPiD.

Kupiecki, R. (2016). The Poland-United States Security Relations in The Light Of Asymmetry Theory. *Przegląd Strategiczny, nr 9*. DOI 10.14746/ps.2016.1.3

Laine, J. (2012). Border Paradox: Striking a Balance between Access and Control in Asymmetrical Border Settings. *Eurasia Border Review, Vol. 3, nr 1*.

Lauth Bacas, J., W. Kavanagh (eds.) (2013). *Border Encounters: Asymmetry and Proximity at Europe's Frontiers*. Berghahn Books.

Letamendía, F. (2010). Cooperación transfronteriza europea: regulación , historia y trabajo. *Documents d'Analisi Geografica, nr 56(1)*.

Medeiros, E. (2013). *Cross-Border Cooperation in EU Regional Policy: a fair deal?* Lisboa: POCTEP.

Metz, S., Johnson II, D.V. (2001). *Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts*. Strategic Studies Institute (SSI).

Oliveras, X., Durà, A., Perkmann, M. (2010). Las regiones transfronterizas: balance de la regionalización de la cooperación transfronteriza en Europa (1958-2007). *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica, nr 56 (1)*.

Perkmann, M. (1999). Building governance institutions across European borders. *Regional Studies, nr 33*.

Reitel, B. (2007). Are Cross-Border Urban Spaces European Integration Patterns at Local Level? Analysis of the Management of Urban Areas astride the "French Border". Borders of the European Union: Strategies of Crossing and Resistance.

Richardson, T., Jensen, O. B. (2000). Discourses of Mobility and Polycentric Development: A Contested View of European Spatial Planning. *European Planning Studies, nr 8(4)*.

Thomas, T.L. (2001). Deciphering Asymmetry's World Game. *Military Review, July-August*.

Trosiak, C. (1999). *Pogranicze polsko-niemieckie po II drugiej wojnie światowej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa UAM.

Wassenberg, B., Reitel, B., Peyrony, J., y Rubió, J. (2015). *Territorial Cooperation in Europe - A Historical Perspective*. (Comisión Europea, Ed.). Luxembourg.

Zernack, K. (2001). *Preußen – Deutschland – Polen: Aufsätze zur Geschichte der deutschpolnischen Beziehungen*. Berlin.

Spojrzenie na polsko-niemiecką współpracę transgraniczną: doświadczenia inicjatywy wspólnotowej INTERREG w latach 2007-2013

Streszczenie:

Celem prezentowanego artykułu jest zrozumienie charakteru i dynamiki współpracy transgranicznej w Europie za pomocą analizy transgranicznych projektów finansowanych z inicjatywy wspólnotowej INTERREG i realizowanych w latach 2007-2013. Koncepcje (a)symetrii oraz różnic w potencjałach stanowią ramy pojęciowe i analityczne rozważań. Autorzy wybrali przypadek granicy polsko-niemieckiej i postanowili pogłębić istniejące już badania, wskazując dodatkowe poziomy analityczne i interpretując dane empiryczne za pomocą przywołanych powyżej koncepcji. Projekty finansowane w ramach INTERREG stanowią doskonałe źródło danych pomagające analizować procesy współpracy transgranicznej wewnątrz Unii Europejskiej. Wnioski płynące z przedstawionych rozważań obrazują wieloaspektowe różnice między badanymi państwami w kontekście współpracy transgranicznej. Dotyczy to ilości wiodących partnerów we wspólnych projektach (niemieckie podmioty przewodzą większej ilości niż polskie), ale także ogólnego poziomu aktywności aktorów (ponownie wyższej u tych pochodzących z Niemiec). Jednocześnie

jednostki z obszarów miejskich i reprezentujących wysoki poziomie dynamiki rozwojowej wykazują większą zdolność do udziału w transgranicznych projektach.

Słowa kluczowe:

Granica polsko-niemiecka, INTERREG, asymetria, współpraca transgraniczna, CBC