

Social Capital and Governance in European Borderlands: A comparative study of Euroregions as policy actors

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees, in any other institutions. The dissertation contains no materials previously written and/or published by any other person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Sara Svensson
January 31, 2013

ABSTRACT

The dissertation contributes to the literature on multi-level governance in Europe and the literature on borderlands by investigating local cross-border governance. It focuses on motivation, participation and interaction patterns of one type of actors, the local governments that constitute the backbone of much institutionalized cross-border cooperation in Europe. Local governments, especially small ones, have frequently been neglected by researchers, who instead tend to focus on actors representing regional bodies or major towns. The dissertation therefore argues that more attention devoted to the attitudes and behavior of local governments can enhance our understanding of variance in function and performance of the type of institutions often referred to as Euroregions. The dissertation uses the concept of social capital (as understood by Coleman 1990) and addresses two specific questions: (1) Why and how do local governments participate in cross-border cooperation institutions (Euroregions) and how do they interact? (2) How does social capital impact the performance and function of Euroregions?

The dissertation relies on an extensive dataset consisting of more than 200 interviews. The core is 138 interviews with political representatives (mayors) and organizational representatives (Chairs and Managers) of six Euroregions located along three national borders (Hungary/Slovakia, Sweden/Norway and Austria/Germany). A mixed-method approach is used in the analysis of the data, combining qualitative content analysis with social network analysis.

Results demonstrate that local governments do not form or join Euroregions primarily due to policy concerns. Instead these organizations are mostly driven by a normative dimension of identity, sometimes in conjunction with the instrumental motivation to access funds, but only rarely to solve policy needs. For the creation of between-group social capital it is important that there is a fit between the motivation of the members and the range of activities a Euroregion conducts. Euroregions for which instrumental grant-seeking played an important role are less likely to reinforce and create the kind of trust-based networks that are beneficial for Euroregional performance. Inter-municipal cooperation is a resource that plays an important role both at the time of Euroregional formation and later into its operation, and dense communication networks on one side of the border are related to how active the members become in the Euroregional organization.

The dissertation therefore argues that high levels of within-group social capital serve as a precondition for high levels of between-group social capital. However, evidence could not be found to support the expectation that a high level of between-group social capital in the form of cross-border communication is associated with high organizational performance in the form of cross-border cooperation intensity. Nonetheless, short-time boosting of a Euroregion's cross-border cooperation intensity (project, budget) through external grants without access to that underlying resource of social capital is risky and requires solid and skillful technical management to place it in the cross-border governance space.

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INTRODUCTION

‘Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor’s boundary stone’, is a Bible quote (Deut. 27:17, New International Version) referring to mankind’s ancient and enduring tendency to set, maintain and defend its borders and thereby its personal territorial space, but could just as well symbolize the nation-state’s obsession with doing the same on a larger scale. However, in recent decades national borders have increasingly been seen as non-optimal or arbitrary, and there has been a remarkable shift towards addressing policy issues derived from that inadequacy with non-conflictual means. Under the umbrella terms of ‘globalization’ and ‘regionalization’ scholars have analyzed processes of re-scaling and reterritorialization (Castells 1996, 1997 and 1998, Deas and Lord 2006, Harvey 2006) referring to how power has shifted away from national arenas to new territorial and non-territorial spaces. One manifestation on the ground is the proliferation of local cross-border alliances of public authorities around the world, which is especially notable in Europe, North America and Southeast Asia (J.W. Scott 1999).¹

In Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union have long been pushing a cross-border cooperation agenda, and a decade into the 21st century virtually all internal and external borders have examples of cross-border cooperation initiatives set up by sub-national authorities, referred to in this dissertation as ‘Euroregions’. Europe is therefore an ideal setting for investigating local cross-border governance and the role of these initiatives. This in itself is not an original observation. Corey M Johnson notes that “Europe provides an excellent

¹ Broadly, these alliances have been created for the purpose of public goods creation (e.g. economic development and conflict resolution), and they should not be taken as a sign that borders (or their importance) are vanishing. There seems to be consensus among borderland scholars that the opposite is true; human-created territorial borders are here to stay in the foreseeable future, and the length of heavily fortified ‘wall-type’ of borders have actually increased (Vallet and David 2009, 2012). However, the neo-liberal argument stating that national borders constitute barriers for economic development has undoubtedly been persuasive (Foucher 1998) and may be one driving reason for the creation of alliances that strive for ameliorating disadvantages created by barriers.

laboratory for exploring how border regions offer new spaces of/for governance, cultural interaction and economic development” (Johnson 2009a:177) and the same assumption seems to be underlying other research on cross-border cooperation initiatives in Europe as well. However, much of the literature is either single-case-based or the discussion is held at a very general level, and relatively little has been done in terms of using comparative empirical data in order to systematically study governance processes in borderlands (notable exceptions are Perkmann 2003, 2007a, 2007b, Blatter 2000, Deas and Lord 2006, Koff 2007a, J.W. Scott 1993 and 2012). The dissertation is the result of an effort to tackle research questions related to cross-border governance in general, and cross-border cooperation between local authorities in particular, in a manner that is both theory-driven and rich in empirical comparable data.

Key concepts

Before proceeding to specify the research questions I will briefly clarify the main concepts and terms that are frequently used in the dissertation. Each of these will be discussed in-depth in connection with the literature review and analytical framework in Chapter 1, but they are summarized below to aid understanding.

Euroregion: A formalized cooperation initiative between sub-national authorities, often including private and non-profit actors, located close to a border in two or more countries in Europe. This understanding of Euroregions relies heavily on Perkmann’s often-cited definition: “more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous sub-national authorities across national borders” (Perkmann 2002:104). Formally, the members of Euroregions can be administrative regions, local governments or a combination of both. The focus of this study is on Euroregions including local governments among its members.

Policy actor: Within the dissertation, Euroregions are understood both as networks and as a policy actor, which interacts within a broader network of actors involved in policy processes relevant to the cross-border space. Lacking executive powers, Euroregions are not policy-makers in the most traditional understanding of the word, but they are policy actors in that they have the potential to take part in all stages of the policy process (Lasswell 1956).

Local governments: The lowest administrative unit according to the territorial statistical system of the European Union, i.e. LAU 2 or NUTS 5 (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics, abbreviated NUTS, see European Commission Eurostat 2012). In the dissertation ‘local government’ is used interchangeably with municipality.

Region: Unlike ‘local government’, ‘region’ is a term that often carries multiple meanings and different connotations. Materialist-functionalist interpretations focus on regions as political-administrative and/or economic spaces, whereas constructivist interpretations stress the importance of shared perceptions of belonging and identity (Hettne 1994, Keating 1998, de Blij and Murphy 2003). In the dissertation the term is used to denote delimited political-administrative regions (such as NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions or Euroregions as delineated by its membership) unless otherwise stated.

Social capital: A set of social relations of which a single or a collective subject can make use at any given moment. The understanding and use of social capital in the dissertation builds primarily on Coleman (1988, 1990), and the formulation of the definition draws on Trigilia’s comment on Coleman’s work (2001:430). I further use the term *institutional social capital* to denote a collective resource created and owned by a group of organizations, in this context a resource created and owned by local governments in the borderlands. *Within-group social capital* (Grix and Knowles 2003) refers to the social capital of local governments on one side of the border, whereas *between-group social capital* refers to trans-boundary social

capital, i.e. created and owned jointly by the local governments that are members of the cross-border institution.

Euroregional function and performance: The role Euroregions play in the cross-border governance landscape and how well they perform this task. Performance is assessed by reviewing organizational capacity, how the organization carries out the (metaphorical) roles of seismograph, loudspeaker, and display window, and the extent to which the Euroregion in question has a space in the cross-border governance landscape, i.e. the ability to appropriate policy space.

Research questions

The starting point of the research is the empirical observation that local governments located close to a national border in Europe increasingly tend to form or join organizations with local governments located on the other side of that border. The number of such organizations has risen sharply over the past two decades. In the academic literature this phenomenon has been noticed primarily due to its linkage to debates on European integration, new regionalism, how globalization should be understood at the local level and to multi-level governance as a new modes of policy-making (e.g. Johnson 2009a:177, J.W. Scott 2007:53, Herrschel and Tallberg 2011:8, Koff 2007b:13-20, Brunet-Jailly 2011, Sassen 2007:209). A core question is if, and to what extent, the nation-state is losing importance, and what that means in practice. By investigating the operation of cross-border political institutions in a European setting, the dissertation aims at contributing to this body of literature, with a special attention to governance.

As stated above, a review of the literature on cross-border cooperation reveals that much of the discussion is either held at a very general level or is based on empirical research on

single cases. Another observation is that the perspective of local governments that make up the majority of members of these organizations are curiously missing from most of the academic writing on the topic. Instead, empirical research tends to rely on interviews with ‘key actors’, which usually translates into a relatively narrow selection of actors from the regional level and the main urban center/s in the borderland in question.² I claim that uncovering the attitudes and behavior of local governments with the help of the theory of social capital will enhance the understanding of how local cross-border cooperation works. This gives rise to two specific research questions:

(1) Why and how do local governments participate in Euroregions and how do they interact?

This question focuses on the local government as the unit of analysis. The aim is to understand the motivations behind local governments’ decisions to join and maintain membership in Euroregions, and how local governments relate to the organization and to each other. This includes sub-questions on local governments’ motivations for membership, the importance they attach to cross-border cooperation in different policy areas, the extent to which they take part in decision-making processes, and how often they are in contact with other members. The purpose is to understand the degree to which this creates social capital.

(2) How does social capital impact the performance and function of Euroregions?

The knowledge gained by answering the first question is expected to play a crucial role in answering the second question, which focuses on the organization as the unit of analysis. It presupposes a mapping question (how do these institutions perform and function?), and it is

² It is striking how little detail on underlying data is included in much writing on cross-border cooperation, and I am aware that it is therefore somewhat unfair here to take as example one of those which actually does provide specification. Nonetheless, an article on cooperation at the Finnish-Russian border is probably typical. An endnote specifies that the research is based on ten open interviews with ‘key actors’ from municipal, regional and national levels, and from expert institutions, i.e. the number of interviews with each of these would be one or two. Moreover, the research in that case relied on 6 questionnaires from municipal governments, private companies and NGOs on one side of the border, and 11 on the other (Eskelinen and Kotilainen 2005).

expected to yield knowledge on the role that social capital plays in driving these cross-border cooperative institutions.

The dissertation's focus on local governments does not mean that I do not recognize the importance of private, non-government or other government level actors. Many policy decisions affecting borderlands are not taken locally, and regional integration initiatives pursued under the broader heading of European integration may spur the creation of Euroregions in a top-down fashion, although as Koff points out, cross-border integration does not always coincide with the presence of supranational initiatives (Koff 2007b:28). Nevertheless, the in-depth focus on the local public authority level enables insights within one project that could otherwise not be made.

Contribution and policy relevance

The dissertation addresses the specialized field of borderland studies, and the broader field of European governance studies.

First, the dissertation adds value to the growing stock of literature on borderlands by:

(a) its truly comparative nature despite well-known challenges to such endeavors in this field due to language and access difficulties;

(b) the unusual research design in terms of the embedded cases incorporating both the organizational and membership levels of Euroregions;

(c) drawing on the theory on social capital in a more structured and empirically connected way than has been done before in the context of borderlands.

Second, by going down to the lowest level of policy-making, the dissertation uncovers how governance in an integrating Europe works on the local level. This relates to literature on multi-level governance, European integration and policy networks. The use of the concept of

social capital to denote network and trust settings has the advantage of distinguishing the resource of a network from a description that it exists.

Third, the dissertation is policy-relevant in terms of shedding light on the functioning mechanisms of Euroregions that can be of value for European or national policymakers seeking to understand the potential of, or promote, cross-border integration. In addition, local policymakers can use the findings to assess the benefits and potential costs of increasing their activity in a Euroregion or of joining one. Dissemination of research findings in the form of lectures or short papers have been offered to all participating interviewees and organizations, and several dissemination activities already took place in 2011 and 2012.

Structure of the dissertation

To answer the questions posed, Chapter 1 integrates the literature review with the presentation of the analytical framework. I relate the dissertation's research on European local cross-border cooperation between local governments to a larger literature on multi-level governance and policy networks. I proceed to account for how Euroregions emerged as policy actors within such a multi-level governance space, and the roles they can perform. After that, I outline the main parameters of the first level of analysis, that of the membership of Euroregions and their attitudes and behavior. This is divided into motivation, participation and interaction, and I review what existing literature says on each of these topics. Finally, I review what research has established so far about how Euroregions perform as organizations, and how a model incorporating social capital may help explain performance.

Chapter 2 gives a detailed account of the research design and the methods used for data collection and analysis. Special emphasis is placed on the methods of case selection and operationalization of the dependent variable of the project. The chapter is not merely a

technical account, but also sheds additional light on what these Euroregions are and what they do. In this way, the content of the method chapter complements the information given in the context of the literature review and analytical framework.

The following three chapters (Chapters 3 through 5) are devoted to the embedded case studies. Each is structured around the two levels of analysis (members as units of analysis and Euroregions as units of analysis) and aims to answer the two research questions in the context of each borderland. Chapter 3 analyzes the data collected at the Slovak-Hungarian border, Chapter 4 the data from the Swedish-Norwegian border, and Chapter 5 draws on material from the Austrian-German border.

Chapter 6 addresses the same questions as the empirical case studies, but uses a different method. Tools from social network analysis are used to map communication links between the local governments of four of the studied Euroregions, and the data derived is then used to test some of the theoretical expectations suggested in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 7, I use the cross-case data to revisit the initial model and compare theoretical expectations with the empirical findings.

The conclusion summarizes the dissertation and key arguments, proposes venues for further research and offers some final remarks.

Research limitations

The dissertation focuses on local governments as members of Euroregions, and Euroregions with only regional membership will therefore not be considered. The rationale is that the voice

of local governments, particularly those that are not major towns, has frequently been neglected in much of the research on ‘local’ cross-border cooperation.³

The dissertation does not deal directly with socio-economic integration or economic development, which may, or may not, follow from political cooperation within the kind of bodies this dissertation focuses on (Euroregions). Regional development is influenced by many factors, of which the level of cross-border cooperation and integration is likely to be one. Much is needed in terms of improved theoretical foundation and statistical data availability before any credible theory-building can link Euroregions to regional development. Cross-border socio-economic integration suffers from similar problems regarding comparable data, and more research of the kind carried out in this dissertation is needed in order to develop an analytical framework and suitable methods for investigating whether, and to what extent, Euroregions can contribute to socio-economic integration.

³ See Demidov and Svensson 2013 for a discussion on the contested meaning of ‘local’ when it comes to cross-border cooperation at EU’s external borders.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the analytical framework that will structure the empirical investigation, and integrates this with a review of the relevant literature including definitions and elaborations on important concepts. As stated in the introduction, the dissertation aims to provide new knowledge on what happens on the ground in local government cross-border cooperation organizations (Euroregions), especially on the link between the activity of local governments that are members of Euroregions and the capacity of these organizations to establish themselves as important policy actors in cross-border governance arrangements.

I will therefore start by outlining how the dissertation relates to the literature on multi-level governance and policy networks (section 1.1). I continue with an in-depth elaboration on Euroregions as policy actors, drawing on a specialized inter-disciplinary literature on borderlands and borderlands institutions (section 1.2). In section 1.3, I focus on the first level of analysis, i.e. the members of the organizations, and outline how the literature on network resources, especially the literature on social capital, will provide a hitherto largely missing perspective with the potential to explain Euroregional function and performance. The section is divided into sub-sections on motivation, participation and interaction, which will also structure the empirical analysis. The next section (1.4) returns to Euroregions as organizations; it reviews what previous research has established when it comes to factors influencing cross-border integration and cross-border cooperation, and suggests an explanatory model, which incorporates a bottom-up social capital perspective. I also spell out the theoretical expectations that can be formulated based on the literature and suggest what complementary knowledge is needed for further theory-building. Finally (section 1.5), I summarize the implications of the analytical framework for the research process and the structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Cross-border governance through networks

Since the last decades of the 20th century the claim that worldwide the political system is changing has gained virtually general agreement in the scholarly community; public policy can not be understood by studying decisions taken at national level and by political institutions only. The focus of the debate has therefore not been whether a change is taking place, but on how this change should be conceptualized, and to what extent it is happening. In the 1990s, Manuel Castell's trilogy on the 'network society' received much attention, both within and beyond the scholarly community; one central thesis was that globalization entailed a shift from 'spaces of places' (government tied to specific geographic boundaries) to 'spaces of flows' (functional-based governance linking up geographically distant places via electronic and material communication corridors) (Castells 1996).

Another less well-received term indicating interdependencies and interactions between local and global levels was 'glocalization' (Courchene 1995). In the 1990s, British scholars started referring to the state as 'hollowing-out' (Jessop 1993, Rhodes 1994), because power shifted up-wards (to EU), down-wards (to sub-national units) and side-wards (to non-state or quasi-state actors) and the 'hollowing-out' term was quickly taken up by scholars elsewhere as well. For scholars studying public policy processes in Europe, 'multi-level governance' (MLG) has come to be the most widely used label for this new political system (the term was coined by Gary Marks, see 1993:392 and 402-403, who further developed it with Liesbet Hooghe, see Hooghe and Marks 2001). It derived from studies of the European structural funds disbursement regime, but soon was applied across policy fields. Deconstructing the term, the notion of 'level' refers to the hierarchy of European, national and sub-national

levels, whereas the ‘governance’ aspect refers to cross-sectoral inclusion of non-state or semi-state actors into governance systems (Bache 2012).⁴

If public policy in Europe in the 21st century is made and implemented within such a multi-level governance framework, a logical consequence is that there is a multitude of organizational actors involved. To understand the system, there is a need to “describe and analyze interactions among all significant policy actors, from legislative parties and government ministries to business associations, labor unions, professional societies, and public interest groups” (Knoke et al. 1996). Knoke and Laumann have called this an ‘organizational state approach’ (Laumann and Knoke 1987), which in Europe was adopted by European Union actors as well.

It should be emphasized that the idea of policy networks is not new. It can be traced to the literature on pluralism and its study of ‘iron triangles’ and ‘issue networks’ in the US, e.g. Lowi 1964, Heclo and Wildawsky 1974, Heclo 1978, or neo-corporatism’s investigation of exclusive governmental links with powerful organized labor interests in some European and Latin American countries (Schmitter and Lehmbruch 1979). However, the modern focus on policy networks has sought to overcome the divide between pluralism and corporatism, and claims governance by networks to be different from (and possibly better than) market or hierarchy based government. Policy networks are defined “as a set of relatively stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that cooperation is the best way to achieve common goals” (Börzel 1998:254). Networks have been shown to facilitate coalition building and efficient allocation of resources, as well as ameliorate risks and shocks from institutional

⁴ Later, a distinction was made between two types of MLG arrangements, Type 1 and Type 2 (Hooghe and Marks 2003), where the former “describes system-wide governing arrangements in which the dispersion of authority is restricted to a limited number of clearly defined, non-overlapping jurisdictions at a limited number of territorial levels, each of which has responsibility for a ‘bundle’ of functions. By contrast, Type II describes governing arrangements in which the jurisdiction of authority is task-specific, where jurisdictions operate at numerous territorial levels and may be overlapping” (Bache 2012:630).

transformation (Christopoulos 2006:786), but they have also been criticized for weakening accountability and concealing issues of power (see e.g. Lynn 2012).

The changes outlined above are of great importance for local cross-border areas. First, the existence of local cross-border governance institutions can be seen as a proof of systemic transformation. (In the words of Joachim Blatter: “transnational integration and domestic decentralization/regionalization are challenging the dominance of national administrations in governing cross-border regions”, Blatter 2004:532.)⁵ Much research on cross-border areas in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on capturing the extent of this transformation and understanding the relative powers between the nation states and the borderlands (e.g. J.W. Scott 1999, van Houtum 2000:64 and 66; O’Dowd 2003; Perkmann 2003).

Second, the study of borderlands and borders also accentuate how the research paradigm of globalization can be challenged by a competing paradigm of securitization. According to human geographer and border scholar David Newman, borders are never “lines in the sand or on a map”, but constructed and evolving institutions “through which territories and people are respectively included or excluded within a hierarchical network of groups, affiliations and identities” (Newman 2003:13). While cross-border cooperation generally is increasing in the world (Vallet and David 2012), borders are in discourse and practice viewed and handled through two different paradigms, which can be referred to in shorthand as globalization and securitization (Newman 2006, 2012) or parallel processes of de-bordering and bordering (see e.g. Warwick and Lang 2007:61). Globalization is expected to lead towards a ‘world society’ (Castells 1996, 1997 and 1998, Albrow 1990) “where common belonging transcends the notion of a world which is highly compartmentalized and categorized” (Newman 2006:177). Hence, borders are interpreted as harmful barriers and cross-border cooperation as a means to control and reduce damage, thereby strengthening economic

⁵ Note the emphasis here on the existence of cross-border organizations as a symptom of MLG arrangements, not a consequence. I concur with Koff’s argument that “border integration is not simply a logical outcome of globalization or multi-level governance” (Koff 2007b: 21).

development and social cohesion in border areas and beyond. In the paradigm of securitization, on the other hand, borders are spaces of weakness, prone to penetration of ‘dangerous’ elements such as ‘criminals’ and ‘terrorists’. Thus, cooperation is desirable only as far as it does not threaten security, and as a consequence we see walls being erected at an increasing number of places (e.g. US/Mexico, Israel/Palestine, etc), and borders are made more difficult to cross (e.g. external borders to the Schengen passport-free area).⁶

Third, to understand the political power of Euroregions over policy issues in a particular cross-border area, it is helpful to view the Euroregion as one policy actor within a network of actors with different competencies and interests in relation to the policy issues of relevance to borderlands. The Euroregion is, in turn, also a network consisting of public authorities, sometimes including non-state actors. Euroregions thereby fit neatly into what researchers on regions have labeled ‘new regionalism’, where the “prefix ‘new’ marks a conceptual and practical departure from the conventional and planning-related territoriality, defined by using specific criteria and indices” (Herrschel and Tallberg 2011:8).

The purpose of the next section is to describe Euroregions in relation to these three aspects.

1.2 Euroregions as policy actors

‘Cross-border alliances’, ‘cross-border micro-regions’, ‘EU-regios’, ‘cross-border working communities’ - many names are used by practitioners and academics for the phenomenon I investigate, but the term I use is ‘Euroregion’. This I define as a *formalized cooperation initiative between sub-national authorities, potentially including private and non-profit*

⁶ I have earlier elaborated (Demidov and Svensson 2011) on how developments in the last decade have accentuated the dilemma European Union policymakers face in relation to handling the EU’s external borders. The problem is straightforward to express, but hard to solve; on the one hand, the Union seeks to strengthen its border controls in order to prevent unwanted penetration (mainly illegal immigration and criminal activities), on the other hand, policy measures in this direction often harm economic development and social cohesion in the border areas.

actors, located close to a border in two or more countries in Europe. This understanding of Euroregions relies heavily on Perkmann’s frequently cited definition: “more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous subnational authorities across national borders” (Perkmann 2002:104). However, I use ‘formalized’ rather than ‘institutionalized’, to distinguish it from new institutionalism’s view of institutions as “rules of the game together with their enforcement arrangements” (North 1990:3). ‘Formalized’ in this context refers to collaboration taking place within a separate association or resting on some sort of memorandum of understanding between the parties. Euroregions are therefore *organizations*, i.e. “collectivities whose participants share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informal structures, to secure this end” (W.R. Scott 2002:23).

Two further clarifications deserve to be made regarding the definition. First, although Euroregions are defined as organizations, it is sometimes useful to refer to the Euroregion as the *geographical space* within which the Euroregion operates, i.e. the territorial coverage of the local governments and regions that are its members (Medeiros 2011). This is analogous to how states and municipalities depending on context can be understood both as organizations and as territorial space. Second, ‘Euroregion’ has a macro-regional connotation, but the core of the definition transcends Europe and could be used in other territorial contexts as well. For studies outside Europe, the term ‘cross-border micro-region’ is probably the closest equivalent.

1.2.1 Historical and legal context

The first Euroregion – the Dutch-German EU-Regio – was initiated in 1958, the same year as the creation of the European Economic Community. This Euroregion started its operation via a memorandum of understanding between municipal associations on each side of the border,

pointing at specific policy problems – especially within infrastructure – and suggesting solutions to these. When the EU-region later formed a joint decision-making body, it was officially supported by Prince Claus, who saw Euroregions as capable of representing the interests of a cross-border area (Müller V. and Hoebink 2003). Additional Euroregions were founded in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the Scandinavian countries, for instance the Öresund Committee in 1964 and the Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän/Dalsland in 1980. A rapid expansion started in the late 1990s, and today there are up to 200 such initiatives in Europe (see Chapter 2 for the universe of cases considered in this dissertation).

How the Euroregions would fit into existing structures of public administration was not self-evident, and efforts to coordinate policy around this issue were coordinated by the Council of Europe rather than the European Community. This resulted in the so called ‘Madrid Convention’ (European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities⁷), signed in 1980 and mandating signatories to promote and support cross-border cooperation between local and regional authorities. To facilitate the integration into public administration structures, model agreements on intrastate and local level were included as guidance, although they lacked treaty value (Art. 3, para 1). Until the late 1980s the European Union was not an active actor in this field, but since 1990 substantive financial contributions have been distributed via regional policy structural funds, and from 2007 through the European Territorial Cooperation program.⁸ In addition, a new legal instrument was launched by the European Union in 2007: European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The EGTC is promoted as “a new European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation”

⁷ The language of the treaty demonstrates how Euroregions are viewed as promoters of ‘peace and prosperity’; the assumption is that cooperation facilitates cross-border mobility of goods, services and people, which in turn is expected to lead to economic growth and social cohesion. See for instance the Preamble: “[C]o-operation between local and regional authorities in Europe makes it easier for them to carry out their tasks effectively and contributes in particular to the improvement and development of frontier regions” (Council of Europe 2012).

⁸ The cross-border cooperation strand disbursed 5.6 million EUR in the 2007-2012 budget cycle (European Commission Inforegio 2012).

(European Commission Inforegio 2012). It was designed to overcome complex or disadvantageous legal situations; Euroregions have registered as various kinds of non-profit associations and sometimes separate associations have been created on each side of the border bound together only by a memorandum of understanding. It should be noted that according to the definition of Euroregions used here, the EGTC is a sub-type of this category and in 2012 less than 30 Euroregions had chosen to adopt this legal form.⁹

1.2.2 What Euroregions do: policy activities and the seismograph, loudspeaker and display windows functions

As stated above, Euroregions are networks acting as policy actors within a broader network of actors involved in policy processes relevant to the cross-border space. The territories of Euroregions are not governed in a conventional, territorial sense (Perkmann and Sum 2002:15) if by being governed we understand the deference to decision-making made by one political (elected) body, and hence they are *not policy-makers* in the most traditional understanding of the word. However, as *policy actors* they can potentially take part in all stages of the policy process (Lasswell 1956). They can play important roles in the problem-formulation and agenda-setting stages, and depending on the national context, their local and regional members have competences to make decisions on some issues. They can be implementation organizations for certain policies, and would often be the only type of organization pushing for evaluating policies on a cross-border dimension.¹⁰ Using the terms Scharpf applied to the various bodies of the European Union, a Euroregion can also be labeled as a policy-shaper, and not a policy-setter (Scharpf 1994:71).

⁹ For an overview of early challenges with the legal measure, see Committee of Regions 2011.

¹⁰ While the stages model of policy process is frequently rejected as being more of a heuristic device than an accurate theory of real policy processes, Euroregions would also be identified as policy actors in competing models, such as the garbage can model (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972) the policy streams model (Kingdon 1984) or the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier 1988). With such approaches, an important role of Euroregions might for instance be to identify cross-border cooperation as a solution before other actors are aware that there is a problem.

Typical policy areas that Euroregions engage in include transport linkages, environmental protection, and tourism (Topaloglou et al 2012, Deas and Lord 2006), but there are also many examples of involvement in economic, labor and social policies (Perkmann 2002). At the European level they are represented primarily by the Association of European Border Regions, which in turn works closely with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). The latter is a European assembly of local governments and regions, which is an advisory body to the European Parliament, the European Council of Ministers and the European Commission. It is mandatory for these bodies to consult the CoR in twelve areas, one of which is transnational networks (Committee of the Regions 2012). However, there is no standardized model for how Euroregions should be involved in the management and implementation of European program funding.

As policy actors within their territories, Euroregions have functions that can be described using the metaphors of seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows:¹¹

The seismograph: A seismograph is an instrument for “detecting and recording the intensity, direction, and duration of a movement of the ground” (The Free Dictionary 2012). Often it is used to detect earthquakes, but it also functions as a meter to measure normal ground movements. Through its political representative and by outreach activities, the Euroregion measures the intensity of attitudes and preferences that have potential cross-border relevance. Taking the analogy further, it can also warn other actors of potential eruptions of conflict.

The loudspeaker: When ‘movement on the ground’ leads to the identification of gaps and needs pertaining to the cross-border area, the Euroregion can take on the role to make those heard by relevant policymakers at local, regional, national and European level. In other

¹¹ I am much obliged to Christian Bidner, District Governor of Kufstein, Austria, and former Head of the Tyrolean Office of the Common Representation of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino in Brussels, for inspiring these metaphors.

words, it performs advocacy work for resources or policy interventions. Table 1 lists potential channels for exerting influence and modes of persuasion.

Table 1. *How a Euroregion can access and influence other policy actors*

Channels for exerting influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Multiple positions of member representatives; B. Within-party contacts to people in power; C. Indirect representation via other organizations; D. Partnerships with non-state actors;
Modes of persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Commissioning reports on the issue to be raised; 2) Arranging seminars or conferences dedicated to the issue to be raised; 3) Sending delegations to decision-makers; 4) Writing statements/resolutions

The display window: Representations of symbols and assets available within the territory of the local governments and regions forming the Euroregions can be brought together and showcased by the Euroregion, thereby strengthening the image of the Euroregion externally as a destination for, for instance, investors and tourists, and internally to members and the population as a cohesive region.

The fulfillment of these different functions influences the capacity of the Euroregions to do what Perkmann (2007b) refers to as the ‘appropriation of policy space’, i.e. the degree to which they can “establish themselves as important players within the overall context of cross-border strategies in a given border area” (Perkmann 2007b: 867).

*

Before moving on to the membership of Euroregions (section 1.3) and how an analysis of membership can be expected to enhance the understanding of how Euroregions work (section 1.4), the essence of the theoretical approach so far can be summarized as this: Euroregions are formalized cooperation initiatives between sub-national authorities located close to European

borders. They are policy actors within a broader network of actors involved in policy processes relevant to the cross-border space. The increasing presence of Euroregions fits well with the interpretation of governance and political systems in Europe offered by the literatures on multi-level governance (Marks 1993, Hooghe and Marks 2001) and new regionalism (Keating 1998, Jeffery 2000, Brusis 2000), and is therefore literature that will be built on, not contested, in this dissertation.

1.3 The membership of Euroregions

As the dissertation seeks to establish if there is a link between social capital and Euroregional performance as policy actors, it is important to define the aspects that will be crucial in the empirical research. These are the motivation for local governments to join and stay members of a Euroregion, the way they participate in the Euroregion as an organization, and how they interact with other members within the Euroregional territory. I argue that these factors impact the formation of social capital, the use of which as a core concept is justified at the end of this section.

1.3.1 Motivation

Euroregions at internal European borders are usually seen from the perspective of globalization rather than securitization. They are seen as closely intertwined with the regional integration process, which seeks to decrease the importance of borders, thereby generating a general expectation for “deeper levels of cross-border cooperation in Europe” (Koff 2007b:19-20) and a tendency to regard such a development positively.¹²

¹² This positive attitude towards cross-border cooperation frequently extends to the scholarly community as well. Koff notes that “it seems that authors are forwarding normative judgments concerning the need for heightened border integration rather than explaining the processes that cause it” (Koff 2007b:12). A critical observer of my research would probably have detected

This is also emphasized by Joachim Blatter, who in the mid 1990s carried out empirical research in four cross-border regions in Europe and North America (Blatter 2000). He argued that cross-border cooperation in Europe – on national, regional and local level and including both governmental and nongovernmental actors – had been primarily driven by ‘polity’ (identity-based community-building) as its *leitmotif*, whereas cross-border cooperation in North America was driven by ‘policy’, in terms of being primarily instrumental by following the theme of free trade without political integration and responding to actual problems occurring out of that (Blatter 2000). The image of cross-border cooperation institutions conveyed by Blatter is one of territorially bounded *consociations*,¹³ increasingly dominated by regional actor networks driven by the idea of European integration. This is shown in the lower left box in Table 2, which depicts Blatter’s four ideal types.

Table 2. *Ideal types of cross-border cooperation regimes.*

	Formal	Informal
Policy: Instrumental	<i>COMMISSIONS</i> Expertise/rules Experts: engineers, lawyers	<i>CONNECTIONS</i> Information, material resources Brokers: Urban planners, economic and business developers
Polity: Identity-based	<i>CONSOCIATIONS</i> Affective symbols Integrators: leading regional politicians	<i>COALITIONS</i> Values, ideology Mobilizers: party leaders, association leaders

Source: Blatter 2000:49.

In the next Table (3) I combine the concepts of Newman and Blatter, taking into account the numerous Euroregions that in the 1990s and 2000s were created along borders that were or became external Schengen borders. The table depicts predictions as to the distribution of Euroregions according to these authors’ arguments. Note that this does not

initial normative assumptions as well. However, that does not mean that those assumptions could not be questioned later in the process.

¹³ Blatter followed Duchacek in the use of the term ‘consociation’, seeing trans-border cooperation confederalist consociations of subnations (Duchacek 1986, 103; Duchacek 1984, 9). This is not in line with the classical definition of consociations by Arendt Lijphart, who used the term to describe power-sharing in ethnically or linguistically divided societies (Lijphart 1977) .

correspond to the European Union portrayal of Euroregions as primarily responding to local or regional policy problems that cannot be dealt with within the national contexts, referred to as ‘filling the gaps’ (European Commission Inforegio 2012).

Table 3. *Interplay between border paradigms and cross-border cooperation leitmotifs.*

Border paradigm (Newman)	Securitization	Leading idea (Blatter)	
		Polity	Policy
	Globalization	External Schengen borders: few Euroregions	External Schengen borders: most Euroregions
		Internal Schengen: most Euroregions	Internal Schengen: few Euroregions

This theory is based on a macro-level (top-down) approach, not taking into consideration which actors were responding to these discourses and how (bottom-up approach). The dissertation looks, however, at one type of actors that had decision-making powers to respond to these different perspectives, the leaders of local governments that had the choice whether to join a Euroregion and not, and later, whether to stay in these organizations or not. The theory above can be used to construct competing theoretical expectations regarding the motivation of these leaders. The expectations will be spelled out later in this chapter (section 1.4.3), and are based on two ‘camps’ of grounds of motivation.

Normative explanations: Following Blatter (2000), identification with a polity is a key driver in Europe, and actors (local governments) would therefore follow a *logic of appropriateness*, using the well-known label of March and Olsen (1989) for behavior that is based on what you should do in a specific situation. Examples of such a basis for joining or maintaining membership in a Euroregion include common ethnicity as well as adherence to what is perceived as European values (e.g. cooperation is inherently good).

Instrumental explanation: The main alternative to this is instrumental explanations, which follows a *logic of consequences* (again March and Olsen 1989), in which local governments act upon the expectations of achieving clear instrumental goals. As expressed by Koff, “border communities are not unlike other polities where political decisions are based on the short-term interests of political entrepreneurs” (Koff 2007b:22), and political leaders “are rational actors that compete within political and economic systems for various resources” (Koff 2007b:21). In my analysis, I distinguish between two major strands of instrumental incentives in the border setting. The first is motivation based on accessing funding (grants from European or national sources dedicated to cross-border cooperation, see Perkmann 2003). The second is motivation based on common policy needs, the reason for cooperation which the European Union calls ‘filling the gaps’ (European Commission Inforegio 2012) and which is also frequently expressed in academic literature, e.g. “territorial cooperation offers the grounds for functional cooperation towards problem-solving and challenge-tackling” (Topaloglou *et al* 2012:1).¹⁴

It would be possible to develop these categories further; for instance, in previous writings on Central and Eastern Europe I have further differentiated between incentives and obstacles in relation to normative and instrumental factors, and whether action is induced by local or external actors (see Medve-Bálint 2013, Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a and 2012b). For the purpose of the dissertation, it is, however, enough to distinguish between the categories of instrumental versus normative motivations.

¹⁴ It can be added that grant-seeking coalitions may be rational on part of the actors, but still leads to a situation that resembles non-rational depictions of policy processes (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972, Kingdon 1984) in the sense that cooperation as a *solution* is identified *before* the problem. If, on the other hand, an existing recognized policy problem is the leading factor, cross-border cooperation constitutes a means to devise appropriate solutions. This aligns with a traditional rational view of policymaking.

1.3.2 Participation and interaction

Local governments that are members of Euroregions can participate in the organizational life of Euroregions in different ways. They may be detached, i.e. rarely participating in meetings or events and receive information rather in writing than in person. They may be listeners who regularly attend meetings and events to get information on ‘what is going on’ in terms of possibilities, but without a strategic objective for their membership. Finally, they can also be active members that regularly attend meetings and events with a strategic approach, thereby contributing to the agenda of the Euroregion as a policy actor.

These categories are not static; members can change their engagement over time depending both on who is holding office and on the issues at stake. Moreover, even if just a few take part in institutional development, those in the second or third category might be relied upon if called. Nonetheless, it can be expected that having more active members at a certain point in time indicates higher levels of social capital within the organization than the opposite. Likewise, it can be expected that the chance that the members ‘on the floor’ can contribute if necessary is higher if there are bonds established through interaction between members from different categories. An indicator of the existence of bonds is communication between members, and the empirical question enabling assessment of this is if communication primarily happens between members belonging to the same national state, i.e. one side of the border only, or if it happens equally across the whole Euroregional network, i.e. also across the border. Another question is if communication primarily takes place within the framework of events arranged by the Euroregion, it indicates the presence of opportunities going beyond those directly created by the Euroregion.

A further line of inquiry in relation to participation and interaction is whether discussion is taking place along partisan lines or not. Although a Euroregion in itself is not a state actor, Euroregions are essentially *democratic political* policy actors, since most members are local

governments and regions, represented in Euroregions by elected officials. Euroregions are thereby typical of modern governance perspectives, in that the line between public and private is increasingly blurred (Ostrander 1987:7), and that public and private can be seen as a spectrum rather than as a dichotomy. Due to the Euroregion's composition of politicians they could be expected to be well equipped to deal with policy problems with inherent conflictual potentials such as ones over resources. However, this depends on whether partisanship and different opinions are allowed to surface, or if there is an internal organizational climate of consensus-seeking and depolitisization.

1.3.3 Institutional social capital

The three aspects outlined above – motivation, participation and interaction – affect the *institutional social capital* of Euroregions, and this section aims at defining how this concept will be used in relation to the broader theory of social capital.

A rich body of knowledge has been accumulated over a relatively short period of time on how social capital can help us understand phenomena and developments where other factors, such as classical political institutions, do not sufficiently explain variation. That makes the concept attractive to use in borderland settings, which lack joint institutions with legal-political authority. The possibility that resources can be created via the combination and recombination of inter-human and inter-institutional relations is a promising path for better understanding organizational performance. For the analysis of local government involvement in Euroregions I will argue that a Coleman-based understanding (Coleman 1990) of social capital will offer a valuable contribution to the literature on borderlands and cross-border cooperation, in which the concept of social capital - when it has been applied - has frequently been ill-defined. Below I will first give examples of earlier usage of social capital in

borderlands studies, before positioning the dissertation in relation to the wider debates on social capital.

1.3.3.1 Social capital in the literature on borderlands and cross-border relations

In order to demonstrate that it is possible to deploy social capital as a conceptual tool in borderlands studies, I will review three texts. Each of these highlights how the concept needs to be handled with precision and care.

Arguably the most important piece of work is Jonathan Grix and Vanda Knowles' 2003 essay analyzing the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina at the Polish-German border as a bridging organization with the potential to improve the accessibility and maximization of social capital, i.e. both increase the level of social capital and make it easier to use. Grix and Knowles define social capital as "the product of interaction between actors" (Grix and Knowles 2003:154), whereas the level of social capital is determined by the quality of these relations, which means that they see social capital as a collective asset primarily. The article takes a direct stance against Putnam's quantitative approach to studying social capital (by measuring proxies such as voter turnout, number of associations or survey results on trust, Putnam 2000) and instead advocates the investigation of social context and structures. Especially useful is their distinction between within-group social capital and between-group social capital. The former refers to stocks of social capital on either side of the border, such as personal or official networks among municipalities in one country, and the latter to relations across the border (Grix and Knowles 2003:158).¹⁵ Importantly, they suggest that the low levels of within-group social capital seem to limit the development of between-group social capital. In fact, the Euroregion might even hinder the access or maximization of social capital

¹⁵ The definition of group is simple in their account; 'group' refers to the resident population on either side of the border or the combined population. It is worth noting that they do not problematize what constitutes one "side" of the border, although there is no simple way to tell how close someone has to be to the border to be border-close.

by focusing too exclusively on between-group social capital, and neglecting the development of within-group social capital or even encouraging rivalry between local actors.

Sonja Deppisch (2008) partly builds on Grix and Knowles in her investigation of the governance process and level of cooperation in the Austrian-German Euroregion Via Salina. Deppisch characterizes Via Salina as having a low level of action (Deppisch 2008:78). The explanation for this lack of activity is sought in the lack of existing social capital and in insufficient investment in social capital formation. Unfortunately, the role and meaning of social capital change throughout the text. It is not operationalized or defined in terms other than being “cooperation among localities”, a definition that brings forward a risk of tautology, since cross-border cooperation is also the object of study. At one point, she portrays social capital as a theoretical background which in combination with the theory of actor-centered institutionalism and regional governance can explain performance. Social capital is said to be an independent variable and an intervening variable, as the weak state and meager accomplishments of the Euroregion partly can be explained by insufficient levels and use of social capital. However, she also writes that the Euroregional cooperation has added little trans-boundary social capital in Bavaria, which makes it a dependent variable.

If Grix and Knowles, as well as Deppisch, concentrate on the network aspect of social capital, Jouni Häkli (2009) considers trust to be the key component of social capital and analyzes it in relation to cross-border cooperation along the Tornio River at the Swedish-Finnish border. Rather than being a personal disposition, trust exists in interactions, and Häkli therefore rejects the use of surveys to capture aggregate stocks of ‘generalized trust’. Instead he uses actor-network theory in his investigation of whether the Tornio River can serve as a boundary object with an agency of its own, sometimes being a ‘force of divergence’, and at other times a ‘point of contact’. He declares the river to be both a concrete and an immaterial manifestation of bridging social capital. Further, he points out that the tight links between

officials have not been matched by links or trust between the local populations, thereby leaving “the achieved transnational landscape hanging in the air [...] without deeper rooting in the borderlanders’ social and political fabric” (ibid:237). However, efforts to mitigate the flooding of the unregulated river have made the river into a ‘bridge’ which in itself contributes to trust-building.

The three reviewed texts put social capital and its two key components – networks and trust – at the forefront of discussion, but it should be emphasized that social capital may sometimes be a smaller piece of a larger analytical jigsaw. In other academic works, references have been made to past social capital that enforcements of stricter border regimes tore apart, or social capital can be mentioned in passing when analyzing or describing cross-border cooperation. A quote by Liam O’Dowd might be seen as typical for these kinds of comments: “Close analysis of existing cross-border cooperation shows clearly that the reality often falls short of the rhetoric. It reveals [...] excessive emphasis on physical infrastructure and ‘hard’ economic outcomes, rather than on ‘soft factors’ like *social capital and trust*” (O’Dowd 2003:24, my emphasis). In such writings, social capital is often uncritically regarded as something good, what Scott describes as a “primary goal of local and regional development” (J.W. Scott 2003:150). Scott also comments on the difficulty in assessing the governance contributions of transnational regionalism: “Detractors might point to the lack of concrete results in terms of investments or physical development. On the other hand, the mere existence of networks and working groups across borders could be seen as helping create the *social capital*” (J.W. Scott 2003:136, my emphasis).

References to the potential dark sides of social capital are much rarer. An exception is Sophie Bouwen’s observation that increased economic integration of border regions in the form of labor commuting might be harmful for individuals’ networks and trust relationships in their home communities due to less time spent there without this being offset by new cross-

border bonds (Bouwens 2004). Her argument is therefore that practices that are generally considered ‘good’ for cross-border integration (cross-border commuting) might actually cause decreased stocks of within-group social capital (to use the terminology suggested by Grix and Knowles) without increasing stocks of between-group social capital.

The review of these texts demonstrate that when social capital has been used in borderlands studies scholars have frequently failed to clarify whether social capital is the independent or dependent variable of the research, referred to different groups as owners of social capital without justification or elaboration, and did not state clear theoretical expectations. In order to avoid that, I will provide a background to the development of the concept of social capital and the debates it has sparked, and position the dissertation in relation to these. This will then be used to construct a theoretical model, which is clear about the issues mentioned above, and to put forward theoretical expectations to be explored during the empirical research

1.3.3.2 Key debates on social capital

The concept of social capital is usually attributed to three ‘founding fathers’ - Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert D. Putnam, even if earlier references to the concept can be found. Whereas Bourdieu saw social capital as an individual asset, a resource that generally contributes to reproducing social divisions as members of the privileged classes would have disproportional access to this resource in combination with other types of capital (Bourdieu 1986), Coleman argued that social capital was a collective non-divisible good, and stated that “unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structures of relations between actors and among actors” (Coleman 1988:S98). Putnam utilized the concept in his studies of how regional development in Italy could be explained by variations in the stock of social capital, by which he meant density of social networks combined with the degree of trust in other people and authorities (Putnam 1993). Compared to Coleman his focus is more on civil

participation and the importance of associations, rather than the relations between actors (Putnam 2000).

For the purpose of the dissertation neither the class-based perspective of Bourdieu nor Putnam's focus on civic engagement holds significant analytical promise. The focus on cooperation in Euroregions requires more theoretical development regarding these organizations' internal and external relations, before research is motivated on the general production and reproduction of social, economic and political power in borderlands. Likewise, while social capital in the form of civic engagement (membership in associations, etc.) may contribute to good governance¹⁶ in the borderlands (as well as in other settings), that should be a later inquiry. On the other hand, Coleman's advocacy for explanation of social systems (e.g. a Euroregional organization) through the examination of processes internal to the system fits the two-level approach of this dissertation.

“Explanation of the behavior of social systems entails examining processes internal to the system, involving its component parts, or units at a level below that of the system. The prototypical case is that in which the component parts are individuals who are members of the social system. In other cases the component parts may be institutions within the systems or subgroups that are part of the system.”(Coleman 1990:2)

Following Coleman, I see social capital as *a set of social relations of which a single or a collective subject can make use of any given moment*. It should here be noted that Coleman does not express the definition this succinctly, either in his 1988 seminal article or in his 1990 book on social theory, and the definition is therefore an abbreviation taken from Carlo Trigilia's comment on Coleman's work.

¹⁶ According to Putnam, social capital contributes to a well-working democracy (and good governance) by two parallel mechanisms. The first is a mechanism that is external to the individual and that consists of improved flows of political information, when people freely express their demands on government, and these demands and interests are channeled through associations that in neo-Toquevillian fashion are assumed to lend the represented views a 'clearer shape'. The second is an internal capacity-building mechanism residing in the individuals that engage in civic engagement, resulting in their acquiring "habits of cooperation and public-spiritedness, as well as the practical skills necessary to partake in public life" (Putnam 2000:338).

“a set of social relations of which a single subject (for instance, an entrepreneur or a worker) or a collective subject (either private or public) can make use at any given moment. Through the availability of this capital of relations, cognitive resources – such as information or normative resources such as trust – allow actors to realize objectives which would not otherwise be realized or which could only be obtained at a much higher cost.” (Triglia 2001:430).

This Triglia quote parsimoniously captures the mechanisms (cognitive resources such as information, and normative resources such as trust) whereby social capital according to Coleman is expected to contribute to well-functioning social systems, i.e. collective enterprises such as the Euroregion in this dissertation.

Numerous claims have been made with respect to the different forms that social capital may take. The most common is the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Bonding social capital refers to ties existing in closed networks – the frequently cited example is the mafia or other criminal gang, but it can just as well be other types of homogeneous networks that are more or less difficult for outsiders to join. It can be simply “connections to people like you (family, relatives, kinship)” (Woolcock and Sweetser 2002:26). Bridging and linking social capital both emphasize links outside the immediate community. The first refers to social networks in or between groups that are socially heterogeneous such as different professional groups. The latter is similar, but it should be connections to people or institutions that have informal or formal powers (Dahal and Adhikari 2009, Woolcock 2001, Mayoux 2001). Bonding social capital has often been portrayed as “the dark side of social capital” (Baron, Field and Schuller 2002:10-11), whereas bridging and linking social capital is often portrayed as normatively preferable.

The use of social capital as an explanatory factor in social sciences has been criticized on many grounds, more than can be explored in this section.¹⁷ I will, however, briefly comment on three points of criticism.

¹⁷ For critical essays on social capital in general, see essays in Baron, Field and Schuller 2000. For criticism on Putnam, see McLean, Schultz and Steger 2002.

The first is that there is nothing ‘new’ with social capital; social science has always been interested in questions of social interaction and networks. Coleman’s response, which this dissertation seeks to reinforce, is that the:

“value of the concept lies primarily in the fact that it identifies certain aspects of social structure by their function, just as the concept 'chair' identifies certain physical objects by their function, disregarding differences in form, appearance, and construction. The function identified by the concept 'social capital' is the value of those aspects of social structure to actors, as resources than can be used by the actors to realize their interests” (Coleman 1990:305).

The second point is that there is an element of circularity in much theory on social capital, in which social capital is presented as both a precondition for and as an outcome of phenomena such as development or good governance. However, as long as the concept is clearly applied this does not need to be an analytical problem. As will be seen in section 1.4, this dissertation will assume that cross-border social capital *is* mutually reinforcing (circular), but that differentiation between within-group and between-group social capital, where the second is one dimension of Euroregional function, helps address this when it comes to analytically distinguishing cause from effect. While I will further elaborate on this in the next section, where the model guiding the research is presented, the main claim of this section is that dense communication patterns between political representatives of local governments according to the theory of social capital would create a latent resource for further development.

A third point of criticism is that social capital has been deliberately used by a neo-liberal hegemonic power exercised by global institutions such as the World Bank (Harriss 2001), to de-politicize development in poor countries by holding communities responsible for their own poverty (*they should create more social capital*) and by obfuscating issues such as redistribution of resources, zero-sum political trade-offs, and class-based power. This point will be taken into account in the dissertation, since the issue of de-politicized discourses in cross-border regionalism will be a part of the empirical investigation (see section 1.3.2).

To sum up the argument so far: social capital is a convenient shorthand for the resource that may emerge from motivation, participation and interaction patterns among the local governments that constitute the basis of most Euroregions. This actor type (local governments) and this approach (interaction-based) have received little attention in the growing literature on borderlands (see literature review above). Drawing on Coleman (1988, 1990, interpreted by Trigilia 2001), I define it as set of social relations of which a single or a collective subject can make use of any given moment, and in the dissertation I investigate the relation of *institutional social capital as a collective asset*, i.e. the joint social capital of public authorities (local governments) taking part in Euroregions, to Euroregion function and performance. This does not mean that individual social capital, or population-level social capital as a collective asset might not matter as well, but the role of these will have to be taken on in future research, due to time and resource limitations. In the model in the next section I will also rely on one distinction taken from the literature on cross-border cooperation, namely Grix and Knowles distinction between *within-group* and *between-group* social capital, where the former refers to social capital on one side of the border, whereas the latter refers to the social capital of the whole border area.

1.4 Understanding Euroregional performance

The purpose of investigating the local government membership of Euroregions, using the concept of social capital, is to contribute to the literature on the performance and functions of cross-border cooperation between sub-national authorities.¹⁸ Cooperation and interaction across national borders has been examined by geographers, economists, political scientists, anthropologists and political scientists. Below, I have made a narrow selection of relevant

¹⁸ In the dissertation, well-performing and well-functioning Euroregions are in turn assumed to have a positive impact on cross-border social and economic integration, and probably on social-economic development, although that is outside the scope of this study.

contributions, which help identify independent variables that can explain performance and function.

1.4.1 Factors influencing Euroregional performance

As the number of Euroregions has grown rapidly, discussions have also intensified on what has caused this increase, as well as what may influence their chances for long-term viability and institutionalization.

As pointed out by Jukarainen, there is a disconnect between an abundance of case studies and theory-building on this matter (Jukarainen 2006), but a conceptual article by Henk van Houtum (2000) distinguishing between three theoretical strands of debate has been widely cited: the ‘flow approach’, the ‘cross-border cooperation approach’ and ‘the people approach’. Of these, the first and the third will be used to identify factors of importance.

The ‘flow approach’ is linked to classical and neoclassical economics and has a distinct rationality-based notion to it with ‘*Homo Economicus*’ as both the role model and assumption of how humans behave. Borders are seen as hindering ‘free flowing’ and state borders are “distortions in the market networks” (Lösch 1940:205, cited in van Houtum 2000) which leads to inefficient or sub-optimal economic spaces (see also Hansen 1977 and 1986 and Martinez 1990). However, an argument against van Houtum’s bundling of rational-economic approaches into one group is the fact that economic theory can make two opposing predictions for cross-border economic cohesion; removed barriers can lead to increased economic activity and mobility, but at the same time borders can be a source of dynamism-creating ‘friction’ between areas with different economic conditions. For example, the above-mentioned study by Bouwens (2004) argued that European policies to promote integrated cross-border labor markets are likely to fail “since it is not economic similarities, but (large) differences related to the existence of borders that seem to cause cross-border commuting”

(Bouwens 2004:148-149). Thus, economic cohesion in a borderland can be interpreted as either an impediment or a catalyst for cooperation.

The permeability of the border is a relatively constant factor across most of Europe and therefore that in itself is not an independent variable. What varies significantly is the socio-economic levels between countries. Economic heterogeneity or homogeneity in a border area is therefore likely to be a factor impacting cooperation. While the literature is not clear as to which of these could be expected to further cooperation, I argue that differences in economic levels would cause tensions that would negatively influence trust levels and willingness to communicate across the border, which would be inhibiting for the function and performance of the Euroregions. Hence, the first variable is *economic homogeneity*, which refers to similarity in terms of the level of economic development (GDP).¹⁹

Another factor that draws both upon literature and common-sense is the favorable effect of cultural-linguistic proximity. In other words: if the people on each side of the border speak the same or similar language and identify themselves as having a similar culture, that will facilitate cooperation (this is studied by scholars within what van Houtum labeled ‘the people approach’). Other relevant work includes Anderson and Wever 2003, Kramsch and Hooper 2004, Strassoldo 1982, Newman 2003 and Jessop 2002.

Administrative settings have received less attention, but Perkmann did test for the importance of the administrative system (2003) and found that decentralization in general was a favorable factor, and furthermore that similar systems in the cooperating countries were key (see also Herrschel 2011:171). While it can be assumed that decentralization in general is favorable, as it means control over more policies at local and region level, it is therefore even safer to state that *politico-administrative similarity* constitutes a favorable condition, which is the third variable.

¹⁹ Note that this concept does not refer to differences or similarities in terms of economic sectors. Two economies can be equally ‘well off’ but depend on different sectors (services, industry, etc).

1.4.2 Adding local institutional networks as explanatory factor

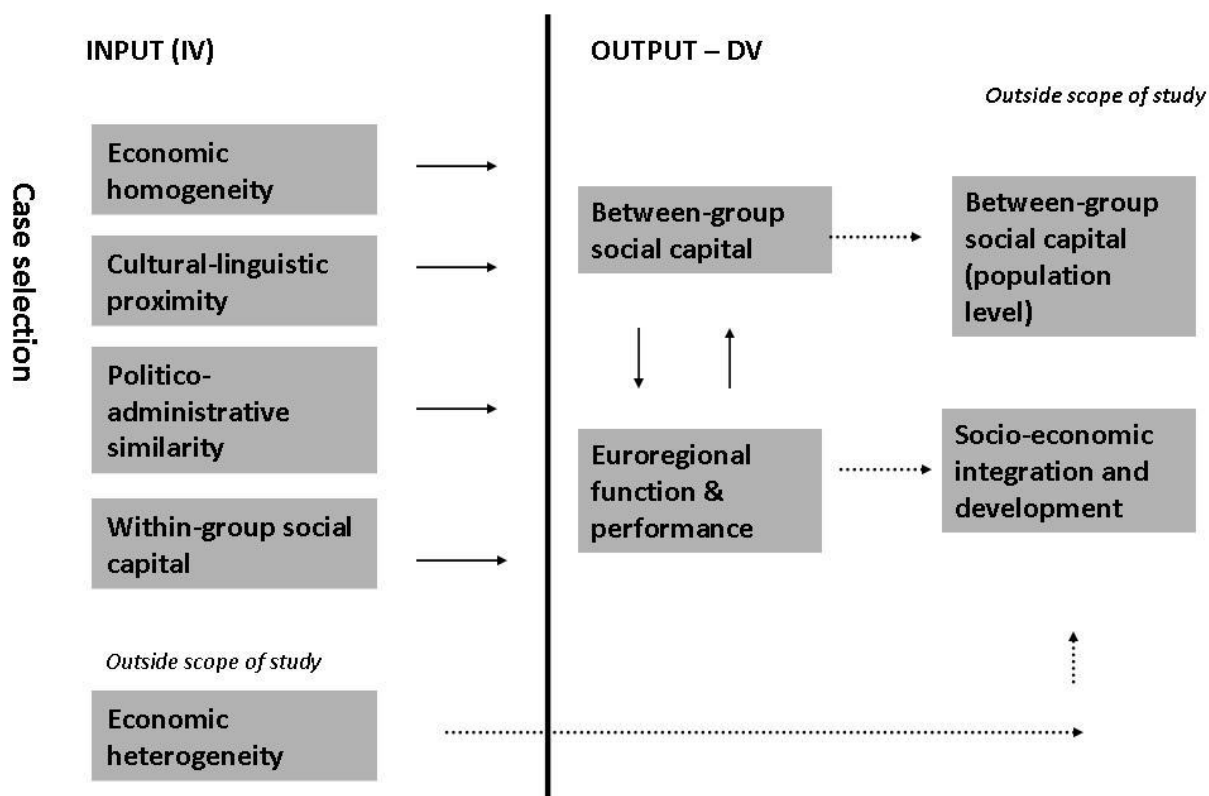
Still, it would be naïve to expect the level of cultural-linguistic affinity, economic homogeneity and administrative similarities to predict how Euroregions can perform. If so, Euroregions located at the Polish-German, the Spanish-French, or the Slovenian-Italian Euroregions, not to speak of cross-border micro-regions outside Europe, could not be expected to work efficiently under any circumstances.²⁰

This dissertation contributes to the literature by focusing on networks as a study variable, specifically at the resources of the local government members that make up the Euroregions. It assesses why and how local governments engage in Euroregions, and how they interact; close contacts and active participation indicates higher levels of social capital, and the dissertation investigates how that relates to organizational performance. It also looks at if this is preceded by similar endowments of social capital in domestic local government communities.

Based on the building blocks presented in the section, and adding social capital, a model (Figure 1) of Euroregional function and performance can be assembled, indicating both its causes and consequences.

²⁰ The limitation of external conditions as explanatory factors was pointed out in Koff 2007, asking why “integration fails in areas where supranational initiatives are present whereas it succeeds in places where such strategies are absent?” (Koff 2007b:28)

Figure 1. *Model of hypothesized relationship.*



The model's vertical line emphasizes the main distinction between the input and the output side. As outlined in the previous section, three factors are depicted as known conditions favorable for cross-border cooperation (formalized in Euroregion), integration and development: cultural-linguistic proximity, which refers to the possibility of involved actors to 'speak the same language' in its both metaphorical and literal sense, political-administrative similarity referring to the actors operating within broadly similar politico-administrative contexts, and economic homogeneity, referring to broadly similar levels of economic development. It should be noted that case selection may control for these, see Chapter 2 on research design and methods.

The model also includes within-group institutional social capital, i.e. social capital held by domestic sub-national local governments as a group. On the output-side the model contains a two-dimensional dependent variable which highlights the mutually reinforcing

connection between the trans-national (between-group) institutional social capital and cross-border cooperation intensity. These two are in turn expected to influence overall socio-economic development and integration, and also lead to peaceful relations among inhabitants (population-level social capital). The latter is outside the scope of the present study (indicated by dashed line), as is the possibility that economic heterogeneity would impact integration.

The advantage of the model and the differentiation between within-group and between-group social capital is that it avoids tautological reasoning, while recognizing an expected association between between-group social capital and Euroregional performance.

1.4.3 Theoretical expectations

With the reviewed literature and the suggested model in mind it is possible to spell out some theoretical expectations that will be in focus of the study. However, it should be emphasized that in the dissertation I do not limit myself to examining these theoretical expectations (i.e. hypothesis-testing), but I will also seek to refine and build theory in relation to the research questions (hypothesis-generation).

The first set consists of rivaling expectations related to the motivation, participation and interaction of local governments in Euroregions.

- 1. Local governments' motivation for joining and maintaining membership in a Euroregion is based primarily on normative identity-based incentives.*
- 2. Cross-border cooperation draws on the experience of increased inter-municipal cooperation within the national state.*
- 3. The existence of a state border significantly affects communication between local governments.*

For each of these statements rivaling hypotheses can be formulated: (1b) *Local governments' motivation for joining and maintaining membership in a Euroregion is based*

primarily on instrumental incentives; (2b): Domestic intermunicipal cooperation does not further cross-border cooperation between local governments; (3b): The existence of a state border does not significantly affect communication between local governments.

The second set of expectations relates to the second research question, which includes causality. Again, a few words about circularity and possibly tautology should be added. Between-group social capital is something that can be related to the goal of Euroregions in general (creating links between people, in this study people representing local governments). We *should* therefore find between-group social capital where there is a successfully implemented Euroregion. The theoretical expectation of the role of different forms of social capital is therefore that within-group social capital serves as a *precondition* for between-group social capital, which in turn is associated with cross-border cooperation intensity. The expectations can therefore be spelled out as:

4. *A high level institutional within-group social capital is associated with a high level of institutional between-group social capital. In other words, strong local domestic networks increase the likelihood for strong local transnational networks.*
5. *A high level of institutional between-group social capital is associated with high organizational performance of Euroregions. In other words, high cross-border communication intensity between Euroregional members is associated with a Euroregion's cross-border cooperation intensity.*

For both, the rivaling hypotheses would simply be that no association between these conditions exists. In addition to examining these expectations, the research is expected to further add to theory by adding knowledge on the relation between motivation and social capital, give details on the interests and priorities of the local governments that constitute the membership of a majority of Euroregions, and refine measurements of Euroregional performance.

1.5 Conclusion

The introduction established the relevance of adding to the knowledge on the local cross-border cooperation organizations between sub-national authorities (Euroregions), which have increased dramatically in numbers over the past two decades. This chapter situated the study within the literature on policy networks and multi-level governance. It then utilized specialized literature on cross-border cooperation to map out the factors that are known to impact performance, while emphasizing why these cannot be expected to explain all variance. It then identified the theory of social capital as a useful shorthand for a perspective that has been largely missing, the resources latent in the local government membership network. It pointed out how studying motivation, participation and interaction add up to social capital that can be divided into within-group and between-group assets depending on whether it is the resource of the community on one side of the border or across it, and it finally suggested a model that brings this together and will guide the research.

It should be clear from this chapter what the dissertation does not do. It does not investigate the social capital of individual actors, neither does it investigate the social capital of the borderlanders, i.e. the population living in these areas, and the effect that might have on performance. It will focus on local governments as members, and not on regional authorities, and will not look outside Europe although much cross-border cooperation is taking place there as well.

In the next chapter I will move on to the research design and methodology of the dissertation, focusing on how key variables will be assessed, and how other variables are controlled for.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

What is the best way to investigate a new type of political institution in the European governance landscape? Methodological concerns by necessity accompany any dissertation project from its onset to its completion, each having its own difficulties. While I had identified factors from the literature that were likely to be conducive to efficient functioning and performance (see Chapter 1), I assumed that the processes and operations within these Euroregions would also be context-dependent. I knew that the possibility to adequately answer my set of questions was constrained by practical issues such as resources, access and language, and I also knew that statistical data on cross-border regions in general were patchy, to say the least, and that there was virtually no accumulated data on the Euroregions as institutions. The value of quantitative data would therefore be limited, and to some extent relying on qualitative data was imperative. The use of the case study research method, defined by Yin as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2009:18), appeared to be the best option. As the inquiry was still theory-driven, I chose an *embedded multiple-case design* with multiple units of analysis (Yin 2009:46) selected as to predict “contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons” (Yin 2009:54).

The primary aim of this chapter is to be transparent as to how I conducted this study, and I therefore detail crucial elements such as case selection and operationalizations. However, it is also an intended secondary effect that this endeavor should not be merely a technical account, but should also shed additional light on what these Euroregions are and what they do. In this way, the content of this chapter complements the information given in the preceding chapter and will give the reader a deeper understanding of the topic.

2.1 Selection of cases

The universe of cases of institutionalized cross-border cooperation structures of any kind would be in the thousands. Even when we only count formalized cooperation between public authorities, the number would be very high. While an encompassing effort to categorize and compare these for commonalities and differences would surely be a rewarding endeavor, it was beyond the aims of the current project. Instead, it focused on a part of the world where the development towards removing borders as obstacles has gone furthest, namely Europe and its ‘Euroregions’.

For the research aims in general and the case-selection process in particular it is necessary to know how many such Euroregions there are, and where they are located. This, in turn, depends on the interpretation of especially two parts of my definition of a Euroregion (*formalized cooperation between sub-national authorities in Europe, frequently extended to include private and non-private actors, located close to a border in two or more countries*), namely what it means that cross-border cooperation is formalized and what it means that the sub-national authorities involved should be in the proximity of a border.

Starting from an inclusive interpretation I constructed a dataset of Euroregions merging records from the database of the Association of European Border Regions²¹ with the listings of Perkmann (2003) and Deas and Lord (2006) resulting in a list of 190 organizations. Using online sources I incorporated basic facts on countries covered, type of members (local, regional, national), year of establishment, number of inhabitants in the region, area covered, website address and secretariat contact details into the dataset. This list also contained large-scale cross-border cooperation in the form of Working Communities that might span sizable portions of the European continent (examples of cross-border structures thereby excluded are ‘The Working Community of Danube Countries’, ‘The Nordic Council of Ministers’ and the

²¹ Used with the permission of AEBR president Martin Guillermo-Ramirez (2009).

‘Carpathian Euroregion’). As I intended to investigate local patterns of involvement and participation, as a first step I excluded such macro initiatives and included only what by Perkmann (2003) is referred to as ‘micro cross-border regions’ usually covering areas in a 50-200 km proximity to a border.

The second step involved interpreting formalization, which is harder to pin down, although Perkmann’s listing (ibid.) differentiating between ‘integrated’ and ‘emerging’ micro cross-border regions served as a good starting point. In order for an organization to be formalized I deemed that it must have a formal agreement towards institutional independence (the formation of an organization) and to have a minimal institutional independent history. The thresholds I selected for this was a 5-year cut-off point (i.e. as the case selection was done in 2009, I did not include organizations established after 2004), and organizational independence (i.e. not being projects or short-term spin-offs from regional agencies, but note that this requirement does not require that the organization should be based on any specific kind of legal entity).²² To sum up,

- the universe of cases is comprised of *formalized* cooperation between sub-national authorities in Europe, frequently extended to include private and non-profit actors, located *close* to a border in two or more countries,
- the comprehensive term used for these in the project is Euroregions;

To qualify for consideration as cases the Euroregions should fulfill several scope conditions derived from the definition. They should be:

- *micro* cross-border region and not large Working Communities;
- established by 2004, i.e. at the time of case selection (2009) have a five-year institutional history;

²² Some listings in the AEBR database were also excluded because of being uni-lateral initiatives for improving cross-border relations. According to my definition there needs to be membership from at least two countries, which is the usual understanding of cross-border cooperation.

- organizationally independent with a long-term mission, i.e. not project-based;

This resulted in a reduced dataset comprising 91 cases listed in Annex A. The setting of scope conditions to clarify and list the universe of cases was a necessary preparation for the process of assessing the independent variables. The next step contained a serious resource constraint, since a detailed, nuanced and fully accurate assessment would not be possible even for the reduced number of 91 cases, due to the extensive use of primary and secondary source that would have been needed. At the same time even a superficial assessment adds to the validity of the case selection, as well as to the knowledge-building of the investigator (me), and hence a certain time-investment was justified. Bearing in mind that the tables presented in this section by no means constitute a final ‘truth’ or should be used as evidence in any other context, the reader is invited to make a critical judgment of the procedure as such.

First, each case of the 91 was assigned a dichotomous value (‘high’ or ‘low’) for the factors that the literature review had identified as facilitating factors: ‘cultural-linguistic proximity’ (ethnic, linguistic and historical ties), economic homogeneity (similarity in economic development), and politico-administrative similarity (similarity in terms of territorial governing). I used relative crude, but yet intuitive, indicators to assign values: ability to understand the minority or majority language on the ‘other’ side of the border, national GDP in 2008, federal or unitary political-administrative systems, respectively.

One weakness of the indicators is that the data was inferred from national rather than regional level and that low pre-existing knowledge of individual Euroregional cases made differentiation between Euroregions along the same border difficult. It is possible that a growth region in a particular region in an otherwise weak country can approach the level of economic activity of a lagging region on the other side, and the other way around. It is also clear that there may be cases of small Euroregions that constitute partly separate economic systems, so that the differences would be higher or lower than for another Euroregion along

the same border. The same may be said for cultural-linguistic proximity. While this very likely has given rise to wrongly assigned values in some cases, I still argue that the large number of cases included is high enough to allow for some degree of error. The procedure was also more transparent and open for replication than many other small-N case-based studies undertaken for PhD projects.

The table of the 91 cases was the basis for the final selection of which Euroregions to include as case studies. They were selected according to the well-known case selection technique of the ‘Method of Difference’ technique (also known as the Most Similar Systems Design) - dating back at least until John Stuart Mill (1865) – mandating the selection of cases that are similar in every respect but one. If the outcome is different, the study variable can be assumed to play a role. Relationships are hence established by mimicking experimental research. While the method is debated (see George and Bennett 2005:153-179), it is widely used due to its logical appeal and potential to aid inductive theory-building in social sciences.

In the context of the dissertation project in focus in this paper, the method implies selecting from cases that resemble each other on the three variables above. Table 4 was created based on the table resulting from the work described in the previous section. It sorts the cases according to cultural-linguistic proximity and economic homogeneity, and highlights cases with disparate administrative systems in grey. To clarify, administrative asymmetry refers to major mismatches, such as when a region in a federal (or devolved) state should cooperate with a significantly weaker region of a unitary state or when levels of fiscal and legal decentralization differ widely.

Table 4. Cases according to cultural-linguistic proximity, economic homogeneity and politico-administrative similarity

	High ‘cultural –linguistic proximity’	Low ‘cultural-linguistic proximity’
Low economic homogeneity	<p>Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn FI/EE Hungarian-Austrian Cross-border Regional Council (West-Pannon Region) HU/AT</p> <p style="text-align: right;">N=2</p>	<p>Euregio Bayerischer Wald-Bohmerwald-Sumava AT/CZ/DE Euregio Egrensis D/CZ Euregio Weinviertel-Sudmahren/West-Slovakia AT/CZ/SK Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa DE/CZ/PL Euroregion Pomerania DE/PL Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina DE/PL Euroregion Saule LT/LV/RU/SE Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober DE/PL Euroregion Silva Nortica AT/CZ Euroregion Elbe/Labe DE/CZ Euroregion Erzgebirge Krusnohori DE/CZ</p> <p style="text-align: right;">N=11</p>
High economic homogeneity	<p>Arko Cooperation SE/NO Comite regional franco-genevois-canton de geneve region rhone alpes CH/FR Conseil du Leman CH/FR Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion HU/RO East Border Region Committees GB/IE Euregio Inntal AU/DE Euregio Pskov-Livonia EE/LV/RU Euregio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein AU/DE Euregio Steiermark - Slowenien AU/SI Euregio TriRhena CH/DE/FR Euregio Via Salina AU/DE Euregio Zugspitze-Wetterstein-Karwendel AU/DE Europaregion Tirol AU/IT Euroregion Neogradiensis HU/SK Euroregion Bile-Biele-Karpaty CZ/SK Euroregion Bug PL/BY/UA Euroregion Country of Lakes - Ezeru Zeme BY/LV/LT Euroregion Delta - Rhodopi BG/GR Euroregion Evros - Meric - Maritsa BG/TR/GR Euroregion Ipel HU/SK Euroregion Nemunas -Niemen-Hemah BY/LT/PL/RU Euroregion Oberrhein (Trirhena plus Pamina) CH/DE/FR Euroregion Podunajsky Trojspolok / Harmas Duna- videk Euroregion HU/SK Duna-Hídverő Euroregion HU/SK Euroregion Sajó - Rima - Slaná - Rimava HU/SK Euroregion Sesupe LT/PL/RU Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru MD/RO Gränskommitten Østfold - Bohuslän/Dalsland SE/NO Grensekomiteen Østfold – Värmland SE/NO Hajdu-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion HU/SK Hochrheinkommission CH/DE Inn-Salzach-Euregio AU/DE Ipoly Euroregion HU/SK Irish Central Border Area Network - ICBAN GB/IE Ister-Granum Euroregion HU/SK Duna (Hídverő Euroregion) HU/SK Lille Eurometropole franco-belge FR/BE North West Region Cross Border Group GB/IE Oresundskomiteen SE/DK Region Insubrica CH/IT Tornedalsradet FI/SE Transmanche Euroregion BE/FR/UK Zemplen Euroregion HU/SK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">N=42</p>	<p>L'Espace Mont-Blanc CH/IT Castilla y León - Região Centro ES/PT Castilla y León - Região Norte ES/PT Comunidade de Trabalho Região Norte de Portugal-Galicia ES/PT Comunidad de Trabajo Extremadura-Alentejo ES/PT Conference des Alpes franco-italiennes CAFI/ IT/FR Conference des Hautes Vallées FR/IT conseil Valais-Vallée d'aoste du Grand St. Bernard IT/FR Ems Dollart Region DE/NL EUREGIO DE/NL Euroregion Maas-Rhein BE/DE/NL Euroregion Rhein-Maas Nord DE/NL Euroregion Rhein-Waal DE/NL Euroregion SaarLorLuxRhein DE/FR/LU Euroregion Tesinske Slezsko - Slask Cieszyński CZ/PL Euroregion Beskidy-Beskydy PL/CZ/SK Euroregion Euskadi-Navarre-Aquitaine ES/FR Euroregion Glacensis CZ/PL Euroregion Lower Danube MD/RO/UA Euroregion Middle Danube-Iron Gates + Euroregion Danube 21 BG/RO/SRB Euroregion Morava-Pcinja-Struma BG/MK/SRB Euroregion Nestos-Mesta BG/GR Euroregion Praded - Pradziad CZ/PL Euroregion Puszcza Białowieska PL/BY Euroregion Silesia CZ/PL Euroregion Tatry SK/PL Extremadura - Centro ES/PT Fehmarnbelt region DE/DK Kvarnenradet FI/SE Mittnorden FI/NO/SE Nordkalottrådet FI/NO/SE PAMINA DE/FR Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregion ES/FR Scheldemond BE/FR/NL Skargardssamarbetet ('Archipelago') SE/FI Sonderjylland-Slesvig DE/DK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">N=36</p>

Note: Grey shading indicates differences in politico-administrative systems. N=91

The selection of cases was therefore to be made among the non-shaded cases in the lower left box, which contains cases operating in areas with similar linguistic-cultural, politico-administrative and economic level conditions. It can be added that as the Method of Difference also implies that the cases must display variance on the study variable; a preliminary examination of all cases drawing on familiarity with national contexts and existing cases studies of some of the Euroregions indicated that there would indeed be variety in terms of local institutional networks (between-group social capital) and organizational function and performance.

In order for the project to produce added value beyond the theoretical advancements, some geographical spread was preferable. In addition, I was cautious about the accuracy on the local level of the case selection. As showed in Table 4 the Euroregions from the same national border fall in the same boxes due to the crude estimation of the values of the indicators. For more precise knowledge the case studies themselves would have been needed, i.e. implying a Catch 22 scenario in which I could not have selected a case until I knew the independent and dependent variables, and I could not have known these fully until I would have done the case study.

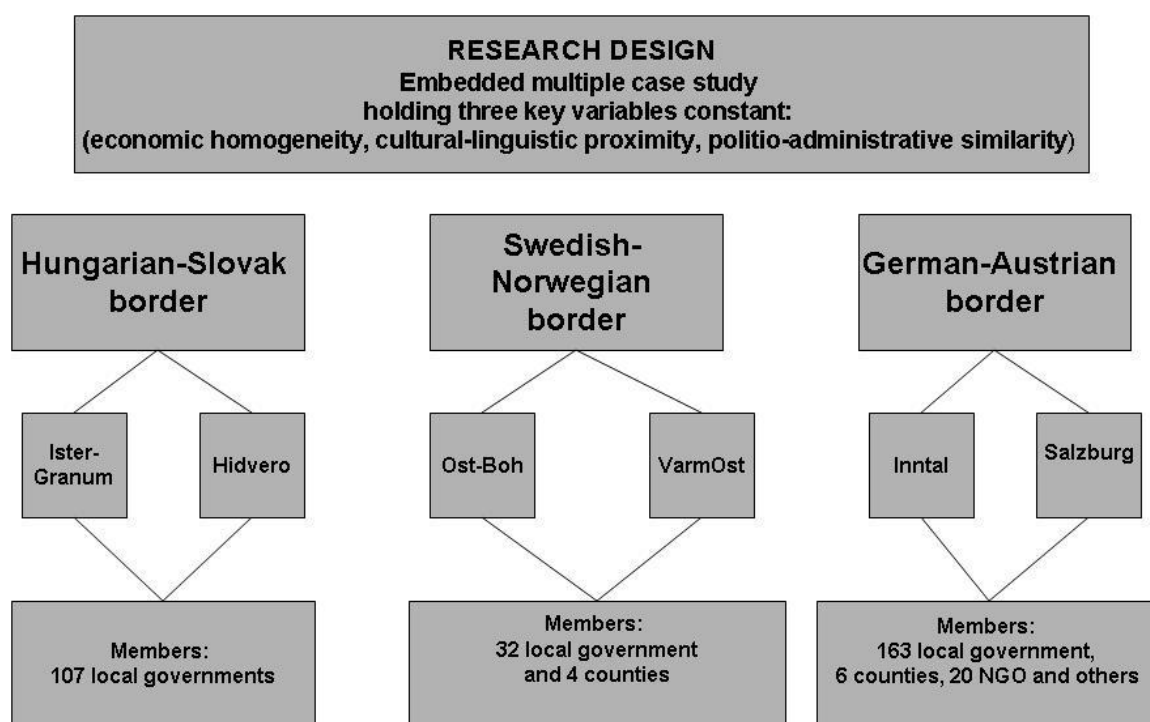
The strategy to deal with this was to select three national borders from the identified cell in the table, and from each of these borders to select two case study organizations to allow for the examination of variation within the same context. At three national borders²³ I therefore first selected three cases that had some coverage in the literature on cross-border cooperation or in promotion materials: the Ister-Granum EGTC at the Hungarian-Slovak border, Gränskommitten Østfold-Bohuslän-Dalsland at the Swedish-Norwegian border, and the Salzburg Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein Euroregion at the Austrian-German border. I then selected the Euroregion located next to each of them, to control for variation

²³ The final decision was also based on language knowledge and resource issues. I would be able to conduct interviews in the Scandinavian languages, English, Hungarian and German but would need interpreters for any Slavic or Latin language.

along one national border: Hídverő Association, Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold and EuRegio Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge–Mangfalltal. The cases that were selected are depicted in Figure 2 and maps can be found in Annex B.

What makes this an embedded multiple-case research design is that the Euroregion itself constitutes the first unit of analysis, but each member is another unit of analysis, together comprising a second level of analysis.

Figure 2. *The case study design*



In the next section I will elaborate on what kind of data that was extracted from these case studies and how it was collected.

2.2 Type of data and data collection process

Much research on cross-border cooperation has worked with selective empirical data, often focusing on a small number of key actors, such as managers and representatives of major towns (for examples of micro-level case studies relying on this type of data, Haase and Wust 2004, Eskelinen and Kotilainen 2005, Knippschild 2008). Such an approach means that the bulk of the members are left out of the investigation, with potential loss of valuable data as a consequence. It also neglects the political aspect of the membership. As can be inferred from going through the websites of Euroregions, as was done in the case selection phase, they have mostly small administrative offices, and binding decisions are taken by the highest political representatives of each member. Moreover, in the present study, gathering the voices and behavior patterns of the local members is of special importance, since I seek to identify the resources resident in the combinations and re-combinations of links between the actors that constitute the organization. Therefore, the local governments as members of the Euroregions constituted a crucial source of data.

A large number of interviews have been conducted for the study. All in all, 206 interviews were made. According to Esaiasson et al, interviewees can be divided into informants and respondents, where informants are seen as witnesses that are able to report about reality, whereas with respondents thoughts and perceptions are more important (Esaiasson et al. 2007). While this distinction is analytically clear, in reality one interviewee can fruitfully be treated as both. Especially early in the process it is important to get 'truths' in the form of facts (how often does the board of the organization meet? How often do you attend meetings? Which projects are currently running?), but at the same time the purpose of the interviews was to tap into their thoughts and perceptions as well, thereby generating knowledge in interaction between me as researcher and the interviewee (Mason 2002:63). Out of this large material in the analytical phase, 138 interviews were treated as core material.

These were interviews with the highest political representatives (usually mayors) of member organizations, or the administrative leadership of the six studied organizations (see List A in Annex C).

About half of the remaining interviews (see List B in Annex C) were done in the context of a related study conducted with a PhD colleague, where we were also interested in the attitudes of local governments that could potentially be members of Euroregions but are not (see Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a). Although they were valuable for giving context on cross-border contacts in general, they have not been systematically analyzed in this project. The same goes for a number of interviews I have carried out with actors at other authorities (regional, grant-giving organizations etc.), and interviews with actors in or from Euroregions that were eventually not selected.

The highest political representatives of Euroregion members (mayors) were first contacted by email followed by one reminder and then phone calls in case of non-response. Most of the interviews resulting from this took place in the offices of the interviewee, although about thirty interviews with member organizations in the Hungarian-Slovak and four interviews with Norwegian mayors were conducted via phone. The interview guide with member representatives contained three parts: one on their general attitudes towards cross-border cooperation, one on their specific experience of their Euroregion involvement and one on their communication relations with other members of the Euroregion. The interview guide contained both open and closed questions.²⁴ The interviews were semi-structured; in addition to open questions the questionnaire included quite a large number of quantitative assessment questions and also a network part. Interviews generally lasted about 45 minutes, with variations between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours. While the questionnaire was standardized, an accumulative effect took place in that if one informant/respondent emphasized one aspect in a

²⁴ Asking respondents to assign a value to the importance of cross-border cooperation in different policy fields, or the level of partisanship within the organization, served well in order to make them also take stances and motivate their decisions. It also made the note-taking easier.

specific question, this could be raised in later interviews (Trost 2005). One overhaul was done of the questionnaire after a pilot study in the Hungarian-Slovak borderlands in the spring months of April-May 2010 (six members were interviewed and six local governments that were not members of a Euroregion). Chairs and managers of Euroregions were interviewed twice, once within the first round of empirical research, and once by phone towards the end of the research period to solidify findings and elaborate on certain key concepts (see interview guides in Annex D).

Textual data included primary data such as statutes, by-laws, strategy documents and web sites. A vast amount of additional textual material was also gathered during the fieldwork, such as brochures on cross-border projects or institutions, and also on single local governments and their profiles. This material was gathered relatively randomly, and while it was later catalogued and categorized, it was not included in the analysis, see section 2.4.1.

Finally, some data was gathered through participant observations of meetings and arrangements by the Euroregions. While at some of these events the observation part was emphasized more, in others I did become a participant, as for instance when I presented my research at a Euroregional meeting at the Swedish-Norwegian border. These observations resulted in field-notes that were afterwards worked into ‘small stories’ in English on the events.

In connection with both interviews and observations, a lot of related material was collected, much of which was never used directly in the analytical stage. This includes a number of books, brochures and CD-ROMs on cross-border relevant projects as well as on the different local governments, but also the occasional souvenir gift. How I dealt with the analytical and ethical implications of this is referred to in section 2.4.1 and 2.5.

2.3 The dependent variable and its operationalization

Before proceeding to how the data was analyzed, it is here necessary to take a step back and look at how I approached the dependent variable of the project, the function and performance of Euroregions in the context of how cross-border cooperation in general has been – and can be – assessed and evaluated. As mentioned above, the literature on ‘borderlands’ has grown steadily over the past decades (Stoddard 1986, Kolossov 2005) and the diverse academic disciplines involved is reflected in the variety of ‘outcomes’ that are studied. Geographers might look at the emergence of transnational landscapes or how mental images of space correspond to territorial delimitations in a borderland context (e.g. Stoddard 1986, Martinez 1990, Kramsch and Hooper 2004, Kramsch and Mamadou 2003), while anthropologists and sociologists investigate the degree to which there are specific borderland practices, interactions and identities (e.g. Collins 1998, Schack 2001), often portrayed in terms of ‘periphery’ versus ‘core’ mentalities. As can be expected, economists rely on economic performance as the dependent variable, and especially have focused on the extent to which state borders constitute barriers that hinder and reduce economic output (Lösch 1940, Medeiros 2009 and 2010). Naturally, these disciplines use methods that differ in how an outcome is defined and assessed from those practiced within political science and its sub-disciplines; the qualitative constructivist approaches that dominate geography and anthropology, or econometric methods, are only marginally useful when establishing the success of institutions of political-administration cooperation across borders.

This section aims to review how the literature has attempted the latter, an effort that has been hampered by the tendency of single-case studies not to problematize this aspect, and the relative scarcity of comparative studies. The larger body of evaluations and reports carried out on regional integration is therefore also considered, although the structures these focus on are slightly different and studies are thereby included in which the existence of Euroregion (i.e.

institutional cross-border political-administrative cooperation) is one of several independent variables that may contribute to the dependent variable (i.e. cross-border socio-economic integration).

Blatter argues against the use of common indicators in his comparative study of two Euroregions with cross-border cooperation in two North American regions. In his view, the ‘dependent variable’ is extraordinarily complex due to the variation in the forms of cross-border cooperation according to their different functional logics, and that indicators cannot be coded in easy dichotomous categories²⁵ (Blatter 2000:71).

A different standpoint is taken by Perkmann (2002, 2003, 2007a and 2007b), who is the author who has done most to conceptualize and operationalize what a well-functioning Euroregion would entail. An assessment of 73 Euroregions in 2003 used the concept cooperation intensity, measured by the existence of a legal arrangement, a common permanent secretariat, a documented development strategy, and a broad scope of cooperation in multiple policy areas (Perkmann 2003:159-160). In 2007, he assessed a limited number of Euroregions in terms of their capacity to become established as policy entrepreneurs. As indicators he used organizational development, diversification of resource base, and whether they appropriate cross-border policy activities within their areas. The last referred to the ability of Euroregions to stand out as important players in the cross-border policy-making arena, compared with other agents such as public or semi-public authorities, commercial entities or civil society organizations (Perkmann 2007:12).

Perkmann’s indicators capture important dimensions but his use of dichotomous categories is problematic, for instance on whether there is a ‘legal basis of cooperation’. This in itself is irrelevant, since having some sort of legal document (at least a Memorandum of

²⁵ The example he gives is the existence or non-existence of produced satellite maps marking the cross-border regions, which in a European context would mark an emergent sense of cohesive ‘regionness’, whereas in the Northern American context can be a working tool against unwanted mobility across the border (Blatter 2000:71). As it happens, this is also a telling example of how indicators ‘age’, as the mere existence of such a map is even more void of meaning in the age of GPS and Google Earth, making a discursive non-dichotomous approach to any map imperative.

Understanding) is a basic condition for being ‘formalized’, in the definition of Euroregions I apply. What is relevant is the strength of the legal base, with a Memorandum of Understanding indicating weakness in comparison to having parallel registered legal entities in the concerned countries (common option) or even a common entity, for instance via the recently adopted instrument European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation. A similar argument can be made for the development strategy, where the importance is not if a document like that exists (it is rather the rule than the exception among Euroregions), but if it is implemented or not.

Gabbe and von Malchus try to avoid these problems, by using a tri-partite scale (low, medium, high) in their assessment of the same variable, ‘intensity of cross-border cooperation’, for which they use the indicators legal capacity, scope of actors involved, range of themes covered and involvement in management in EU structural funds (Gabbe and von Malchus 2008:93).

It is worth noting how the issue of what would constitute a well-working Euroregion is often treated in passing in the literature. The following are just a few examples from various edited volumes and journal articles on cross-border cooperation. Szabó and Koncz (2006) take the ‘awareness and perceptions’ of members and local actors on the activities of the Euroregion as signifiers of success. This is related to ‘visibility’ in the larger community (does the population know that the Euroregion exist as such?) and ‘social embeddness’ used by Baranyi, along with ‘ability to promote cooperation activities’ and ‘tangible results’ (2006). Deppisch assesses an Austrian-German Euroregion in terms of, among other factors, being ‘proactive’ rather than ‘reactive’, having ‘stable structures capable of making decisions’ and pursuing a ‘wide range of thematic fields’ (Deppisch 2008:70). Other examples include ‘added value’ (J.W. Scott 2006) and an interesting aspect elaborated on by Sparke (2002), namely of regions that may be ‘hyped’ by academics, policymakers, think tanks and media

outlets as up and coming regions, but which have very little to show for it. To what extent should such ‘hype’, or in other words ‘effective framing’, be considered constituent of success?

Some of the factors mentioned above, such as ‘tangible results,’ refer more to factors of regional socio-economic development in general or socio-economic integration, than political-administrative cooperation. One example demonstrating the difficulty of this is a series of working papers on the Portuguese-Spanish and Swedish-Norwegian borderlands, Medeiros (2009, 2010), who sought to establish a correlation between EU funding for cross-border cooperation and the socio-economic performance of these regions by correlating a socio-economic index with the amounts of invested Interreg funds. While the effect of externally funded projects on socio-economic performance is an important issue, the study could not control for the many other factors that play a role for socio-economic performance. This decreases the reliability of his findings from the Swedish-Norwegian border that the Interreg funding “didn’t have the necessary impact” but that it nonetheless “reduced the barrier effect” (Medeiros 2009:14).

Similar indicators would be used by studies that do not try to establish this causal link but set out to map the general state of integration. An example of a consultancy report that extensively discusses methodological aspects of measuring cross-border integration is a report on the Oresund region covering parts of Denmark and Sweden (Oresundsregionen, Oresund Network, and Interreg IIIA 2004).²⁶ It suggests 14 indicators including patterns of, and attitudes towards, commuting, traffic, trade, housing, culture, tourism, education and research. While these indicators do give a good picture of overall integration in the Oresund region, they have limited transferability, since a larger comparative study encompassing a range of

²⁶This consultancy report expresses well the belief that enhanced welfare follows socio-economic cross-border integration: “the ambition to create an integrated Oresund region rests on the persuasion that a bigger and more integrated region gives rise to increased growth and more welfare from both economic, cultural and social perspective’ (Oresundsregionen, Oresund Network and Interreg IIIA 2004:8, my translation).

European regions would have to consider the varying availability of public statistics and survey data. Short-comings in this area have been cited as one of the main reasons for the difficulties in evaluating the impact of European funding on cross-border integration.

“A general characteristic of INTERREG/CBC specific indicators, like the ones presented in the illustrative examples accompanying this chapter, is that they tend to require special gathering of information, e.g. from surveys. There might be a few examples when general statistical sources can be used (e.g. workers’ cross-border commuting) but the frequency of updating and level of detail are unlikely to suit the INTERREG cycle. [...] The sources of information represent a major constrain with serious implications such as high costs.”(AEBR and European Commission 2000:61)

In fact, the vast evaluation machinery of the European Union has met with a number of inhibiting factors when it comes to evaluating funds for cross-border cooperation. The report quoted above advocates the use of “mixed packages of quantitative and qualitative methods” and “more complex and subtle set of ‘measurements’” to deal with the “intermediate nature of many of the results/impacts” (AEBR and European Commission 2000:59). The document suggests a number of indicators for assessing the cross-border funding program Interreg, out of which the indicators grouped under ‘institutional situation’ is of special relevance for this dissertation project. This category includes the percent of organizations with informal contacts across the border, the existence of cooperation agreements and formal cross-border structures (AEBR and European Commission 2000:66).

The ex-post evaluations of the Interreg cycles have also emphasized the measurement difficulties and lack of literature. An interim report of Interreg III 2000-2006 (Pandeia/1st interim expost 2009) investigated ‘the depth and intensity of territorial cooperation’, among other factors looking at the nature and quality of the directly applicable legal instruments that can be used for cooperation within parts or all of the program area, and nature and quality of existing permanent cross-border cooperation structures (Pandeia/1st Interim Expost 2009:252).

For convenience, Table 5 contains a table listing the different concepts and indicators included in this review of the academic and policy literature. While surely not exhaustive, it

shows the diversity of factors that can be taken into account, while also displaying that many are lacking in operationalization.

Table 5. *Measurements of ‘success’ from academic and policy literature*

Conditions, concepts & indicators associated with institutional cooperation by the Euroregion	added value, perceived ‘regionness’, Ability to promote cooperation activities, Visibility, social embeddedness, local actors perceptions and knowledge about Euroregion activities, orientation towards the interest of the other side, policy entrepreneurship capacity, wide range of thematic fields, stable structures capable of making decisions, organizational development, diversification of resource base, degree of appropriating cross-border policy activities within their areas, legal arrangement basis, existence of a common permanent secretariat controlling its own resources, existence of a documented development strategy, existence of a broad scope of cooperation in multiple policy areas, legal capacity, scope of actors involved, involvement in management and implementation of EU-programmes, similar to conventional local or regional authorities, percent of organizations with informal contacts, no. of ad hoc forums, no. of cooperation agreements, no. of years the structured and visible cross-border cooperation exists within parts or all of the program area, nature and quality of the directly applicable legal instrument that can be used for cooperation within parts or all of the program area, nature and quality of existing permanent cross-border cooperation structures established between territorial authorities that operate in part or all of the program area
Conditions, concepts & indicators associated with socio-economic integration	border traffic, foreign trade, commuting, attitude towards commuting, no. of contacts with the official labor agency dealing with the region, people’s travel patterns and traffic patterns, company activities and establishment of new companies, housing (movement of residency), hotel nights, media usage patterns, cooperation between civil organizations, number of registered student loans for studies in the other country, volume of commuting for study purposes and research cooperation, physical situation (time saved and convenience gained in travel time), promotion of urban, rural and coastal development, cooperation in the domains of RTD, training, culture and health, development of entrepreneurship, legal and administrative cooperation on obstacles, reduction of isolation (transport), improvement to the productive fabric, residents participating in cultural activities on other side of the border, common spatial planning, percent of population speaking other country’s language,
Conditions, concepts & indicators associated with socio-economic development	Tangible results, GNP per capita, activity rate, companies per 10,000 inhabitants, proportion of population with higher education, physicians per 1,000 inhabitants, libraries per 10,000 inhabitants, environmental protection and renewable energies, improvement of the quality of life

To sum up, bearing in mind that Euroregions have attracted significant scholarly attention from a variety of disciplines, including sociology, geography, anthropology and political science (sometimes bundled together as ‘borderlands studies’), the relatively little guidance offered by the literature on evaluation and assessment is striking. As demonstrated by several decades of implementation studies in public policy, obvious questions are raised by including ‘success’ or related concepts in general; it is frequently unclear what the dependent variable in implementation studies should be (goal achievement? outcome? output? governing

capacity?) and the related issue what constitutes success is even more complicated (e.g. Hill and Hupe 2002, Winter 2006). This is especially the case when there are multiple actors involved, which is true for Euroregions. The scarcity of discussions around this issue in borderlands studies in general may be due to the bulk of the work being single case studies, at most with a summarizing chapter if published in an edited volume. More guidance and materials for reflection can be derived from evaluations carried out or ordered by main actors involved in cross-border cooperation, including actors on Community, national and local level, although these evaluations usually have a somewhat different baseline (i.e. evaluating the impact of Community funding).

In the light of the review above, the dissertation takes the following approach:

The dissertation investigates the performance and function of Euroregions, i.e. the institutional cooperation within Euroregions as policy actors (organizations), whereas socio-economic integration and development within the Euroregions as territories is outside the scope of the study.

The label '**intensity of cross-border cooperation**' used by Perkmann 2003 and Gabbe and von Malchus 2008 captures the performance aspect of institutional cooperation, and will therefore be used throughout the dissertation.²⁷ This will be assessed by a tri-partite scale to allow for some comparison with the work of Gabbe and von Malchus and avoid the pitfalls of the dichotomous scale used by Perkmann. Intensity of cross-border cooperation is operationalized via the use of six indicators drawn from both Gabbe and von Malchus and Perkmann's work, as the literature review above has shown these to be most in line with the aim of this dissertation. These indicators are legal capacity, robustness of administrative arrangement, meeting activity, adherence to development strategy and mission statement, budget size and project size, and will be elaborated below.

²⁷ While I have elsewhere (Medve-Bálint and Svensson, 2013) also applied Perkmann's 2007 use of the term 'policy entrepreneurs', this will not be applied in the present study due to controversy around whether policy entrepreneurship can be attributed to collective actors or not (Mintrom 1997 used policy entrepreneurs as a label of individuals, not collective actors).

Legal capacity refers to the legal arrangement of the Euroregion, where not having independent legal personality yields the assessment ‘low’, having any variation of legal personality based on national law yields the assessment ‘medium’ and the adoption of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation yields the assessment ‘high’. The latter is due to the heavy promotion of this instrument by the European Union, and its higher potential for making the Euroregion a funding implementation agency.

Robustness of administrative arrangement refers to the existence and size of an administrative secretariat. A Euroregion without an independent secretariat (relying on the administrative resources of one of its members) yields the assessment ‘low’, 1-3 employees is assessed as ‘medium’, and 4 or more employees is assessed as ‘high’.

Meeting activity refers to the frequency of, and attendance rate, at closed and public meetings arranged by the Euroregion. A ‘low’ meeting activity is where members (elected politicians, civil servants appointed to working groups or citizens) attend meetings or events yearly or less often, ‘medium’ indicate more regular activity, and ‘high’ requires approximately monthly meetings.

Adherence to development strategy and/or mission statement refers both to whether a development strategy/mission statement exists, and to whether it is continuously followed up on, for instance referred to in annual reports or in interviews. ‘Low’ assessment indicates absence of such a document and/or no consistency with the document. ‘High’ assessment indicates the presence of a detailed and realistic agenda, which is strategically pursued. ‘Medium’ assessment is for cases falling in between those.

Size of budget refers to the organization’s own budget. Budgets below 100,000 EUR a year are assessed as ‘low’, and a Euroregion having more than 1 million EUR in own annual budget would yield a ‘high’ assessment. The values in between fall in the medium category.

Project intensity refers to projects not only carried out by the organization as project owner (included in the budget below), but also projects where the Euroregion is initiator or active advisor. A Euroregion that has not had or been in any way involved in more than one or two projects running at the same time over the past years would receive the assessment ‘low’, whereas a Euroregion with a high number of projects spread over different themes would be assessed ‘high’.

In addition to assessing the intensity of cross-border cooperation, the dissertation also seeks to assess the **intensity of cross-border communication** and trust relationships, both on the domestic side and in the borderlands as a whole. This indicates the presence or absence of *within-group and between-group social capital*, respectively, as defined in Chapter 1.

Four indicators are used: strength of cross-border communications, perceived trend of contacts between local governments, levels of trust of the other side, and absence/presence of conflict (politisization of issues). In other words, the dissertation examines the social capital of participating members of Euroregions (between-group social capital), and measures cross-border communication between local governments as estimated by its political representatives, using the methods outlined in the next section. The same method is applied to the presence of social capital among local governments on only one side of the border (within-group).

Finally, how Euroregions function as policy actors will in the research be discussed using three analytical categories representing the extent to which they can appropriate policy space by carrying out the three roles of seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows in accordance with the framework laid out in Chapter 1.

2.4 Methods of analysis

2.4.1 Working with interviews and texts

The interviews included both open-ended and closed questions, but comments were encouraged also to the latter ones. I took notes via laptop during the interview and revised them afterwards to enhance readability. After that I translated these notes into English. The interviews were generally not recorded, since the judgment made before fieldwork was that especially at the Hungarian-Slovak border a tape recorder might inhibit interviewees' willingness to talk due to the politically sensitive issue of minorities. Because the interviews were not transcribed, quotes are not verbatim. This might have caused some loss of possibility to analyze and interpret nuances in some instances. As Silverman notes: "It is simply impossible to remember (or even note at the time) such matters as pauses, overlaps, inbreaths and the like" (Silverman 2009:240). But Silverman also adds: "Now whether you think that such things are important will depend upon what you can show with or without them." (ibid.) In this case, I considered the importance of this loss very minor. It can be added that for the sake of checking reliability I recorded and transcribed all second-round interviews with Euroregion managers and chairs (especially used to assess cross-border cooperation intensity), and I could not distinguish any difference in usability of this data compared to the notes from interviews with mayors.

On the other hand, there was one factor that might have caused serious loss in terms of nuance. Only a handful out of more than 200 interviews was conducted in English, and the rest needed to be translated from the original Hungarian, German, Swedish or Norwegian. Uncountable quotes by respondents that at a first glimpse seemed pregnant with analytical meaning turned out to be so more in the way the respondent had been witty or colorful in his/her phrasing, which was often close to impossible to translate. Moreover, there is always

the possibility that I as a non-native speaker of all languages except Swedish might have missed an ambivalent meaning or misinterpreted a statement. There is therefore a certain loss of data in the English translations. On the other hand, at times during the analytical phase this disadvantage turned into an advantage, as during the process of translating I was able to reflect upon diverging understandings of words and detect patterns I might otherwise not have identified.

I also used primary data such as statutes, by-laws, strategy documents and web sites, in order to (1) gather facts and (2) analyze and interpret organizational aims and justification in relation to data gathered from the interviews. In contrast, the vast amounts of additional grey material in the form of brochures etc, was used primarily for fact-finding. The additional material also contained a limited number of non-textual gifts (postcards, mugs).

A qualitative content analysis (Patton 2002:453) of the data was conducted in two steps. In the first phase of the research I sorted the material using ordinary excel sheets based on topics directly derived from the questionnaire. In the second stage of the research I coded the material based on analytical categories with the help of the software AtlasTi. There were two sets of codes, one related to the members as units of analysis (examples of codes include ‘instrumental motivation’, ‘normative motivation’, ‘information-seeker’ and ‘inter-municipal cooperation’) and the other related to the organizations as units of analysis (examples of codes include the functional categories of ‘seismograph’, ‘loudspeaker’ and ‘display window’). Such a two-step approach to empirical data, going from topical to analytical coding, is in line with the recommendations of Richards (2005) when it comes to handling qualitative data.

2.4.2 Social network analysis

Positive or negative powers inherent in structures can be represented by sociometric graphs, something that was recognized already in the years immediately before and after WWII (introduced by Jacob Moreno in the 1930s and complemented by the work of other German emigrées such as Kurt Lewin and Fritz Heider (see J.P. Scott 2000:9). For two of the three national borders under study (Slovakia-Hungary and Sweden-Norway) I collected comprehensive data on the communication patterns between members of the 4 Euroregions at these two borders. A similar full-scale data collection was not done at the Austrian-German border and social network analysis could therefore not be used on this data. However, in that case there were more secondary sources that dealt with inter-municipal and cross-border that could be consulted. The data is to the best of my knowledge the only relational dataset of members in a cross-border cooperation organization, although there are other relational datasets of cross-border policy networks, see Chapter 6. While it is used to answer specific questions in the dissertation, it has potential for addressing other research questions in the field of borderlands studies, especially if combined with network data on infrastructure or geographical distances.

Social network analysis offers a multiplicity of tools for various purposes, here only those of directly relevance for the dissertation's questions were applied. The relational data was analyzed with the help of the softwares UCINET and CEUNet.

2.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical aspects of conducting social science research is receiving increasing attention, and the university to which this dissertation is submitted adopted a guideline for ethics in research during the period when I conducted my fieldwork. As those guidelines did not exist at the

design stage, other sources were consulted that made it clear that the ethical considerations that needed to be made for this dissertation were relatively straight-forward. Looking for instance at the checklist provided by the British Economic and Social Research Council (2010), the project did not include any components that would normally raise a warning flag such as involving children, vulnerable groups, psychological experiments etc. Respondents or informants were mostly politicians (elected officials), who in this capacity can expect a higher level of scrutiny.

In general I followed general practice in social sciences that demands that research participants must participate voluntarily, confidentiality must be respected if promised, participation must be voluntary, harm must be avoided, independence and impartiality of researchers must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit (Silverman 2009:155-156).

All respondents gave informed consent²⁸ to participate. This implied that I included information about the research project in the initial email and started each interview by retelling this information and offering to answer questions. I then asked the respondent whether he/she agreed to let me use what they were saying in the research. Note that this consent was not given upon the condition of anonymity, and none of the respondents questioned this or required anonymity.

Whether to pay people to participate is frequently an issue in experimental research or for focus groups (Barbour 2007, Silverman 2009), but this was never an issue during the research process. Instead, I intended to ‘reward’ participants for their time by sharing research results both directly after the interview and later when earlier versions of this dissertation were presented as conference papers and in other venues. However, I was quite frequently presented with small gifts such as books, mementos with municipal logos etc, as well as

²⁸ See Warren 2002 and Marzano 2012 for critical discussions on the origins of the term ‘informed consent’ (how it has traveled from medical research to social science research in a relatively short post WWII-period) and on challenges related to acquiring ‘true’ informed consent.

refreshments (coffee, tea and a few times meals). Hence, I as a researcher benefiting from the process came up on a small scale. It is conceivable in principle that such gifts would influence the analysis in the way that I would have treated material generated by an interviewee ‘nicer’ because he/she treated me with cake, but due to the small monetary value of these gifts in combination with my inability after 200 interviews to keep in mind who served what makes this rather unlikely.

2.6 Reliability, validity and replicability

Finally, a few words on reliability, validity and replicability. As with all qualitative (and most quantitative research) this project also contained the risk that assessments were inconsistent between interview respondents, and also that assessments would have been done differently by another observer. This is the problem of reliability, i.e. “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley 1992:67). The reliability of the fieldwork was enhanced by the fact that about a third of the interviews at the Slovak-Hungarian border were conducted in cooperation with a fellow researcher, which offered ample opportunity to compare our assessments. I further worked with more than one case in the same time period in order to avoid completely different evaluations. The consistency between respondents on factual issues was partially tested in the social network analysis, which showed that the majority of respondents would converge with their counterpart’s assessment of communication frequency between them.

Validity refers to the “extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley 1990:57), something that can be understood both in terms of external and internal validity. One could for instance question whether mapping of

communication patterns really captures within-group and between-group social capital, or whether respondents' own recollections of motivations match a larger story of emergence. As I see it, there is no 'easy fix' for validity, and my way to deal with this has been to allow for a dialogue between theory and empirics, and constantly question and challenge the research process in which I have been engaged.

Finally, would this study be replicable? In principle, yes, it would be possible to go back to these six Euroregions, utilize the same questionnaire to the persons who would then be in office, or use my interviews to look for an alternative analysis. The underlying material will be kept on file for a number of years to come. Even though this replication is unlikely to happen, it would be feasible and gainful to replicate parts of the study with a different kind of case selection, and the results coming out of this would have bearing on the reliability and validity of the present results.

CHAPTER 3: A CASE STUDY OF TWO EUROREGIONS AT THE HUNGARIAN-SLOVAK BORDER²⁹

On March 7, 2011, around 50 mayors were gathered in the ceremonial hall of the once-beautiful town hall of Esztergom. They had come from smaller and larger settlements in the surrounding area, where the Danube bends south after having served as a west-east border demarcation between Hungary and Slovakia for about 160 kilometers. The reason to be there was to attend a special general meeting; the task of the day was to dismiss and replace the manager. The atmosphere was tense, with heated discussions on procedural issues masking the larger problems underneath. Less than two years after the Ister-Granum had reconstituted itself as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – under much publicity and as one of the first Euroregions in Europe to utilize this new legal form - the organization was in serious difficulties. There was widespread discontent among its members with the manager and there were members wanting to leave the organization or refusing to pay their dues. In the months to come it would also be clear that an EU-supported project that had already started was underfunded and at considerable costs would have to be terminated.

Two weeks later, on March 25, 30 kilometers west on the other side of the Danube, a smaller group of mayors had an amicable morning session. Radvan nad Dunajom (or Dunaradvány in the language of the Hungarian majority in this settlement located in Slovakia) hosted a monthly meeting of the Hídverő Association. As usual, most of the 18 local government members were present and there were plenty of laughs and informal chats over plentiful refreshments supplied by the host, the mayor of Radvan nad Dunajom/ Dunaradvány. The agenda dealt mainly with administrative issues on the Slovakian side, but the participants

²⁹ Some of the interviews in Hungary on which this chapter is built were conducted together with fellow CEU PhD candidate Gergő Medve-Bálint, and were used in the publications Medve-Bálint and Svenson 2012a, 2012b and 2013. While the analytical framework in this chapter is different from those publications, some paragraphs and sentences in section 4.1.2, 4.1.4 and 4.2 are similar. I am much obliged to Gergő for an uncountable number of stimulating discussions on cross-border cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe.

who had come from Hungary seemingly enjoyed the time for talking despite the fact that there were few issues related to a cross-border dimension.

Why did the Ister-Granum Euroregion reach the verge of disintegration, whereas the Hídverő one showed no such tendency? They both operate in a geographical area with similar economic, politico-administrative and ethno-cultural conditions.³⁰ In addition, in terms of institutional design, Ister-Granum clearly ‘did things right’: the organization adopted internal organizational structures that had worked in other Euroregions and even went beyond that by adopting a legal form especially designed and promoted by the European Union for such organizations. Hídverő, on the other hand, works on the basis of an association based in one of the countries (Slovakia), with members from the other side (Hungary) technically being honorary members. Therefore, it is puzzling that the internal evaluations of the organizations were so different in 2011. The aim of this chapter is to find out why, while at the same time seeking to answer the two research questions guiding the project: (1) Why and how do local governments participate in Euroregions and how do they interact? (2) How does social capital impact the performance and function of Euroregions?

As outlined in Chapter 2, interviews and participant observation constituted the core of the data collection. The statutes of the associations and minutes from meetings constituted additional data, and secondary literature was used where available and appropriate. Seventy-eight interviews with organizational and member representatives were carried out. In addition, the study is informed by additional interviews made with non-members on the Hungarian side and a dozen interviews with other actors within Hungarian cross-border cooperation.

This and the following two empirical chapters have been built up in similar ways. Section 3.1 gives an overview of the region in terms of geographical, economic, historical and politico-administrative characteristics (partly relying on data gathered by interviews and

³⁰ Hence, these two cases reflect on the micro-level the overall research design of this dissertation project.

partly on secondary literature and policy documents), while section 3.2 introduces basic facts about the two Euroregions. The analytical part of the chapter starts in section 3.3, which focuses on the motivation, participation and interaction of Euroregions (research question 1). Section 3.4 discusses the second research question, analyzing the performance and function of the two Euroregions beyond the snapshot that was given in this introduction. The conclusion links the two questions together, and points forward to the analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 of the relation between institutional endowments of domestic (within-group) and transnational (between-group) social capital.

3.1 The Hungarian-Slovak border area

3.1.1 Definition of the border area

The border between Hungary and Slovakia is 680 kilometers long and is formed by water ways (the Danube and the Ipoly rivers) or mountains (the Carpathians). In the language of the European Union's program for cross-border cooperation support, five NUTS3 level counties on the Slovak side and eight on the Hungarian constitute one single border area. This area covers 61,500 square kilometers, has a population of 8.7 million and includes the capitals of both countries. While such a definition of what a border area is can be useful, it is clear that it does include territory that is not considered to be close to a border in everyday thinking. For instance, while Bratislava defines itself as a border city ("the only capital to border two neighboring countries"), Budapest tends to emphasize its core/center character ("lies in the heart of the Carpathian Basin").³¹ The present dissertation, on the other hand, seeks to explain processes at the micro-level, in the area in the immediate vicinity of the border. It focuses on the cooperation of local governments within Euroregions that, as argued in Chapter 1, can be

³¹ The formulations are from the official websites of Bratislava and Budapest, see reference list for details. Similar rhetoric is frequently used in official communication towards investors and tourists.

seen as *both* organizations *and* territories. For this purpose, I focused on a smaller territory surrounding the border where the Danube bends south; the administrative boundaries of this area are the Slovak district of Nitra, the Hungarian county of Komárom-Esztergom, and part of the Hungarian Pest county.

Currently, there are four Euroregions active in this area according to my definition: Vah-Danube-Ipel, Ister-Granum EGTC, Hídverő Association and Pons Danubii. However, the first is outside the scope of the study as it functions only at regional level. Pons Danubii, was only registered in 2010, and was therefore excluded from the population according to the criteria of 5-year institutionalization history (see Chapter 2) in the case selection phase.

The ability of local governments to cooperate on, and shape, policy, is both enabled and constrained by the political and institutional environment. In the case of Slovakia and Hungary, the combination of strong central government and a contested history has implications on the ground. Likewise, the local financial situation in the public and the private sector constitutes an economic environment, in this case relatively unfavorable, in which the Euroregional collaboration takes place. The next sections contextualize the first-step case selection, which was based on the requirement of similarity between the two sides of the border in terms of cultural-linguistic proximity, politico-administrative similarity, and economic homogeneity. None of these would have been expected to work very differently for the two Euroregions examined in this chapter, thereby creating the puzzle regarding their different standings.

3.1.2 History and ethnicity: asset and challenge

The frequent changes of state borders in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th century made them contested frontiers heavily burdened with conflicts (Hardi 2005, van Houtum and J.W. Scott 2005). This was further complicated by the ethnic cleansing after World War II through

which millions of people were driven from their homes in the pursuit of a ‘one people one country’ principle (Eriksonas 2006). These processes are heavily noticeable in the region under study, which belonged to the territory of ‘Great Hungary’ during the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy. At the end of World War I the territory, in which the majority were ethnic Hungarians or spoke Hungarian, became a part of Czechoslovakia. During World War II, the borders temporarily changed again when Hungary sided with Germany, but at the end of the war the area was again reintegrated with Czechoslovakia. In the late 1940s, forced population swaps took place (Markus 2011:365) that directly or indirectly affected thousands of people in what are today the Euroregions under study. For a modern visitor the many expulsion memorial stones that in recent years have been raised in villages on the Slovak side of border constitute a reminiscence of this. On the Hungarian side memorial stones in villages and small towns tend instead to commemorate the perceived injustice of the World War I peace treaty. In the decades following the war the Hungarian minority only partly assimilated. For example, Hungarians on both sides of the border refer to the villages and towns with their original Hungarian names: for instance, the town of Štúrovo is referred to as Párkány, and the villages Zlatná na Ostrove, Sokolce and Marcelová as Csallóközaranyos, Lakszakállas and Marcelháza, respectively. For that reason, site names are consistently given in both languages in this chapter. Another example is that Hungarian is still the dominant language of instruction in basic education in the area.

The end of the Cold War had contradictory consequences for the Hungarian minority. On the one hand traveling in general, and border-crossing in particular, became easier; plans soon formed on restoring the bridge between Esztergom and Sturovo/Párkány that was destroyed during the war and the existing bridge between Komárom and Komárno/Révkomárom could more easily be used for personal travel. On the other hand, following the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, the proportion of Hungarian-speakers

dramatically increased in relation to that of the majority, since most of the ethnic Hungarians lived in what became Slovakia. This had political ramifications in terms of Hungarian secessionism being perceived as a real threat by some Slovak politicians (Goldman 1999:199). This, in turn, led to tensions between the Slovak and Hungarian government, which would be a recurrent issue through the 1990s and 2000s.³²

On the Hungarian side, ethnicity is first and foremost an issue of mayors wanting to support the preservation of Hungarian culture on the other side. However, ethnicity is further complicated by the existence of numerous villages that preserved their Slovak or German character from the past: due to settlement policies during the Habsburg Monarchy, many villages of ethnic Slovak or German population were established centuries ago. In the county of Komárom-Esztergom 10 settlements had Slovak, while 22 had German 'minority self-governments' in 2010. In three places both minorities had their self-governments established (Slovak National Self-government in Hungary 2010, German National Self-government in Hungary 2010). Since these villages are mostly very small in terms of population, usually below 1,000 inhabitants, this still comes out at as a very low share of the population, between 1 and 3 percent (Interreg Hungary-Slovakia 2007:11). Being German (referred to as Swabians, *svábok*) or Slovak had, however, minor importance compared to the Hungarian identity in Slovakia. Very few Germans and Slovaks use their ethnic tongue on a daily basis, despite efforts at revival via the introduction in the 1990s of self-governments referred to above (Vizi 2008:124).

The cultural-linguistic proximity of the people living close to the border must be interpreted in the light of these larger historical changes. The proximity did contribute to the emergence of the two Euroregions and does act as a facilitating factor for political and

³² In the interviews made with local mayors references to national-level politics came up frequently on both sides of the border, often not related to any question asked in the questionnaire. "If these higher-ups could leave us alone to deal with things it would much better" was a common comment. Yet, these references contrasted with the result of the direct question on the importance the central government puts on cross-border cooperation. The dominant answer here was that the "government does not care".

administrative leaders, both in terms of communication capacity and communal identity. However, the proximity is at the same time a cause of national-level tensions that may inhibit cooperation at the local level, as will be seen in section 3.4 on performance and function.

3.1.3 The distribution of political and administrative powers

The typical member of any Euroregion along the Hungarian-Slovak border is a local government that is democratic, poor and small. In fact, these are the common characteristics of local governments in much of Eastern Europe, and in this section I will elaborate on each of these factors (local government political autonomy, resources, and size of local governments), as they are all of relevance for involvement in cross-border cooperation.

Reforming the political and administrative structure at the sub-national level was high on the agenda early on in the transition period. Developing a system with democratically elected local governments that would hold both policy setting and policy implementing powers was considered important for the stability and survival of the new democracies (Péteri 1991:12, Elander and Gustafsson 1991:1, Wollmann 2007:17)³³. However, among the post-communist countries the reforms were carried through with varied speed. Both Slovakia and Hungary belonged to the ‘fast-movers’, together with Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia (Soós et al. 2002). For instance, in Hungary, one of the first decisions of the new parliament in 1990 concerned the local governments, the adoption of Act LXV on Local Governments. In both Hungary and Slovakia the highest decision-making body is the local assembly, which is elected every four years, and the mayor is directly elected for the same period. Hungary differentiates in that local governments have the right to be active within any

³³ Local government expert Gábor Péteri wrote already in 1991: “Obviously local autonomy was the main issue in the revolutionary year of 1989 in East-Central Europe. The ‘velvet Czechoslovakian,’ “negotiating” Hungarian revolutions destroying old institutions and regimes expressed – among others – their need for a modern local government system, built up from below” (Péteri 1991:12). An international conference on local government was held in the same year, and the editors of the resulting publication claimed that local government reform might be more decisive for “stabilizing the post-socialist societies” than democratization of national political systems and capitalist transformation (Elander and Gustafsson 1991:1)

policy areas they find important, whereas Slovakian local governments can only set and implement policies within areas explicitly permitted by the state (Lidström 2003, Sopóci, Hrabovská and Bunčák 2006:357).

The power of the regional level was reduced in the early days of transition in both countries, even in comparison with the condition under socialism (Soós 2010:112). Several subsequent reforms have strengthened the regions, but they are still comparably weak.³⁴ The index of regional authority developed by Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010) assessed Slovakia's self-government regions (NUTS 3 level) as having an index value of 6 and the counties of Hungary as 9 (*samospravne kraje*, NUTS 3) and the Hungarian counties a value of 9 (*megyék*, NUTS 3).³⁵ For statistical and some planning purposes, Hungary has seven NUTS 2 regions (*tervezési-statisztikai régiók*) and Slovakia has four (*oblasti*). Both countries also allow, and encourage, local governments to form regional associations, for instance to take on public service duties that are difficult to carry out at local level.

Introducing local level elections and local competences in various areas was only one step towards functioning local democracy. As stated by the organization Local Government and Public Sector Initiative in its Annual Report 2008: "Freely electing mayors and councils are not enough. To deliver to their constituencies, local governments need clear and significant responsibilities, *commensurate financial resources*, and sufficient managerial skills." (LGI 2009:11) Hence, while the local governments on paper seem fairly strong in both countries, especially in Hungary, their general capacity is inhibited by a lack of funds (primarily caused by lack of taxraising powers) and managerial capacity.³⁶

³⁴ For the role of European Union conditionality versus domestic political interests in these processes, see Pálné Kovacs 2009 and Brusis 2005.

³⁵ The assessment is valid for 2006 and does not take subsequent developments into account. Hungary's counties receive the same value as the UK counties (9), whereas Slovakia's have the same value as Ireland. In a federal country like Germany the regions (Länder) receive a value of 21, whereas Catalonia in unitary but devolved Spain get 14.5 (Marks, Hooghe and Schakel 2010:359).

³⁶ The respondents in this study frequently commented on their difficult financial situation, but at the direct question of how they saw the economy of their villages or towns, most answered "average", as they were aware that the situation is dire for almost everyone. Although, in the course of this fieldwork, I have seen many examples of how external funds – usually EU –

The third factor is the average small size of local governments. The Euroregions of this chapter belong to three administrative NUTS 3 regions: the number of local governments in Slovakian Nitra is 350, in Hungarian Pest 187 and in Hungarian Komárom-Esztergom 76 (European Commission Eurostat 2012). In both countries the number of local governments increased dramatically after communism and powers were conferred to the local units, in an effort to copy Western European levels and connect to pre-communist history (Lidström 2003:219). In the mid-90s, the countries had stabilized at around 3,000 (3,130 and 2,875 respectively) local governments for a population of 10 million in Hungary and 5.4 million in Slovakia (Lidström 2003:183). In both countries, more than half of the local governments have less than 1,000 inhabitants (Swianewicz 2010:2). Moreover, there is a concentration of extremely small local governments in Central-South Slovakia (Klimovsky 2009), i.e. where the fieldwork took place. This explains why so many of the members of the Euroregions on both sides of the border are small; one local government that I visited for this project (Zalaba in Slovakia) had no more than 175 inhabitants.

The so called territorial fragmentation is an issue that has been heavily debated by policymakers, and the issue of the optimal size of local government is also a contested academic question. An overview and test of different arguments related to this can be found in Swianewicz 2010. While diverging assessments persist, the dominant view is that territorial fragmentation does hamper efficient policy making and delivery due to economy of scale. However, there has been heavy resistance to amalgamations both in Slovakia (Klimovsky 2009) and Hungary (Hajdú 1999, Pfeil 1999 and Horváth 2000) due to negative memories from socialist forced municipal restructuring.

Instead, in both countries, inter-municipal cooperation in various forms was early identified as a remedy for this. In Slovakia the process has been mainly bottom-up and

have been used to repaint or conduct light renovation of a town hall, a playground or a school – the majority of the interviews have taken place in locations with maintenance needs decades overdue.

entirely voluntary. There are four types of inter-communal cooperation: (1) national associations, (2) joint municipal offices, (3) voluntary institutionalized regional associations/micro-regions, and (4) specific-purpose associations (Klimovsky 2009:1107). Joint Municipal Offices exist in order to execute some specific competences such as garbage collection, whereas voluntary regional micro-regions can have more diverse tasks. In Central-South Slovakia several voluntary institutionalized regional associations were formed in the 1990s and early 2000s, including the Déli Regió (South Region), the Érsek-udvar region, and also the Hidverő region. The members of Déli Regió are also mostly members of the Ister-Granum region and formally, Hidverő is exactly such a formation of municipalities.³⁷

In Hungary, the Act on Local Government in 1990 specified three ways in which municipalities could form associations: common body of representatives, official administrative associations, and institutional management associations. Several subsequent changes were made, most importantly the Act on Regional Planning in 1996 that introduced regional development micro-regions consisting of local governments and central officials (Pfeil 1999). New legislation in 2004 (related to EU accession reforms) introduced the principle that territories without already existing voluntary micro-regions would be forced to organize. The number of micro-regions rose to 166, usually running at least three joint service provisions (OECD 2007).

To sum up, on both sides of the border we find local governments that have been legally empowered in order to strengthen democracy, yet their poverty and small size make the relationship with the central state heavily unequal. In addition, the regional layers are weak, which makes the central states appear as even stronger.

³⁷ This explains why the Hungarian members are honorary members. In the Danube Euroregion from 2003 Hidverő was an official partner on the Slovak side and Tata micro-region the partner on the Hungarian side.

3.1.4 Regional infrastructure and economic development

On the Slovakian side, the major urban centre is the city of Nitra in the north, whereas Komárno and Štúrovo are the largest towns right at the Hungarian border.³⁸ On the Hungarian side many of the inhabitants in Pest county work in Budapest, whereas Komárom-Esztergom county has several urban centers. These include the regional capital Tatabánya, as well as the border towns Esztergom, Komárom (located opposite Komarno in Slovakia, once one town) and Tata.³⁹

The dominant historical reference point among political leaders on both sides is the Austrian-Hungarian dual monarchy pre-1918, at which time the whole area was a part of this vast empire. At that time, there was some regional cohesion around the church center of Esztergom, meaning that economic activity clustered around Esztergom with relatively similar economic conditions in the surrounding rural areas. Today, however, the economic situation differs starkly on the two sides. During the time of communism the Hungarian side had substantial industrial presence, which was followed by a significant inflow of foreign investment in the 1990s and 2000s. Two large foreign establishments played an important role for cross-border mobility, the Suzuki factory in Esztergom (Magyar Suzuki Corporation, subsidiary of Suzuki) and the Nokia factory in Komárom (Nokia Komárom Kft, subsidiary of Nokia Corporation). Both these factories employ people from either side of the border, and generally are the only two ‘cross-border employers’ mentioned in the interview data. However, cross-border mobility was affected negatively as the county of Komárom-Esztergom was hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis, with unemployment rising from a low 5.5 % in early 2008 to 9.9 % by the third quarter of 2009. Unemployment rates have since then improved and was 7.9% in the first quarter of 2012 (Hungarian Statistical Office 2012), but

³⁸ As of December 31, 2010, 83,444, 35,664 and 10,733 inhabitants respectively (Slovak statistical office 2011).

³⁹ As of December 31, 2009: 76,644, 32,052, 19,835, and 25,644 inhabitants, respectively (Hungarian Statistical Office 2011).

both Suzuki and Nokia have reduced their workforces compared to 2008, and the numbers of workers coming over from Slovakia has dropped significantly.

The bordering Slovak region of Nitra, especially the three districts (*okres*) adjacent to Hungary, have a slightly different character with fewer urban centers and a regional economy more relying on agricultural production than in Komárom-Esztergom.⁴⁰ In 2011, 31.9% of agricultural output in the Slovak Republic was produced in the Nitra region (making it by far the country's most important agricultural region) whereas it produced only 8.7% of the industrial output. The financial crisis of 2008 made less of a difference for Nitra than for Komárom-Esztergom though. Unemployment peaked already in 2001, when 23.1% of the workforce was unemployed, compared with 12.5% in 2011 (Slovak Statistical Office 2012).

*

This overview of cultural-linguistic, politico-administrative and socio-economic conditions of the overall Slovak-Hungarian border area and the part where the case study organizations are located highlighted: (1) the possibility for cross-border cooperation to consist of cooperation between ethnic Hungarians due to the presence of a Hungarian minority, (2) the similarity in terms of administrative set-ups with strong central states, weak regional layers and small local governments having significant constitutional powers but hampered by lack of financial and skill resources, and (3) the mixed economic picture with generally similar levels of living conditions but with different economic activities in the region under study. Having thus contextualized the earlier case-selection factors, I move on to introduce the two organizations that were investigated within the framework of this project.

⁴⁰ It is beyond the scope of the present study to explain these divergent economic paths, but it is clear from the interview data that a common perception is that south Czechoslovakia, and later south Slovakia, was neglected in development policy as a non-articulated punishment to the Hungarian minority in the region. As expressed by one mayor in the study: "We kept our nationality, and had to drink the soup that came with it." (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum and Hídverő: #A58)

3.2 The case study organizations

3.2.1 *Ister-Granum EGTC*

Ister-Granum EGTC is a Euroregion consisting of 82 local governments located around the rivers Danube, Ipel and Hron⁴¹ at the central part of the Hungarian-Slovak border. The local governments cover an area of 2,200 square kilometers (Eck, Jankai and Ocskay 2007) and had approximately 175,000 inhabitants in 2011. The biggest towns are Esztergom in Hungary and Štúrovo (Párkány) in Slovakia, with 30,000 and 11,000 inhabitants respectively. For more than half a century, there was no permanent connection between those two towns, which are located on opposite sides of the Danube River, since the bridge between them was not rebuilt after having been destroyed during World War II. When in 1999 an agreement was reached between the two countries to rebuild the bridge, it was perceived as not only the necessary precondition for setting up a regional cross-border cooperation framework, but also as an important symbol of unity. The bridge features frequently in tourism promotion materials from the area and in the logo of the Euroregion.⁴²

It was therefore not a coincidence that the first declaration of intent to set up a cross-border cooperation was signed in 2000 by the Slovakian Juhny Micro-region and the Hungarian Esztergom-Nyergesújfalú Microregional Development Association, which together covered 35 local governments across the border. After the preparatory stage, the Ister-Granum Euroregion was established in 2003 with more than 100 participating local governments from Komárom-Esztergom and the neighboring Pest county in Hungary and Nitra county in Slovakia. In 2008 the Euroregion adopted the legal instrument of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC, EC 1082-2006). This legal personality had been introduced

⁴¹ Ipoly and Garam in Hungarian. The name Ister-Granum refers to the Latin names for Danube and Hron.

⁴² The bridge was often referred to in interview situations as well. One long-time mayor and early initiator of cross-border cooperation said: “The [idea of] Ister-Granum became interesting when the bridge [in Esztergom] was built. Before that you had to travel by ferry, which often stopped working when there was fog, or the wind was blowing, or there were big waves, or the ferry lads were not in the mood to work.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A87)

via a regulation in 2006 and was intended to facilitate cross-border cooperation. The regulation had been actively lobbied for by, among others, Hungarian MEP István Pálfi. He was also active in promoting Hungarian-Hungarian cross-border cooperation, and had named Ister-Granum the “most exemplary and most comprehensive” cross-border cooperation in the border areas surrounding Hungary (István Pálfi Memorial Website 2012). Thus, expectations for Ister-Granum to serve as a show-case, together with personal stakes related to the usage of the EGTC legal instrument, might have accelerated the discussion process around a legal reconstruction. Fourteen municipalities, primarily located in Slovakia, opted out of the EGTC, and a further four left in the following years, leaving the current membership at 82.

The highest decision-making power within the EGTC is held by representatives of its members, i.e. the mayor or deputy mayor of each local government, via the General Assembly, which should meet at least twice a year. Executive powers are in the hands of the Senate, consisting of eight members. The mayors of Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány) take turns as Chair and Deputy Chair. The statutes list six working committees to deal with specific issues such as environment or culture, some of which had been in place before the legal reconstruction, but three years after the inauguration of the EGTC none of these had been set up or renewed.

In 2010 the EGC had a turn-over of approximately 65,000 EUR, or 18,144,000 HUF, (Magyar Állam 7017-7018).⁴³ However, in spring 2011 the organization had more than 1.7 million HUF in unpaid memberships. Moreover, it had unpaid bills and difficulties to find the resources to cover the pre-financing of a project on tourism for which it had won support from

⁴³ A separate consultancy-oriented unit, the Ister-Granum Euroregion Ltd. had a turnover of about 75,000 EUR, 20,652,000 HUF. This unit had been set up before the creation of EGTC, but was scheduled for liquidation and merger with the EGTC as soon as it could be legally arranged.

the European Union's Interreg program.⁴⁴ The pre-financing subsequently had to be paid back to the EU as the project's financing solved.

3.2.2 *The Hídverő Euroregion*

The Hídverő Euroregion⁴⁵ consists of thirteen Slovak and five Hungarian settlements located west of the Ister-Granum Euroregion. The association is registered in Slovakia as an inter-municipal organization, which means that only the Slovak settlements can be full members, whereas the five Hungarian settlements are officially 'honorary members'. In practice, there is little differentiation made between full and honorary members, but one consequence is that the Chair is always from Slovakia and regular meetings are always held there. The territory covered by the Euroregion is non-contiguous on the Hungarian side, i.e. the local governments are not located next to each other. The participating local governments are all small in size, ranging from 300 inhabitants (Virt) to 3,800 (Marcelova/Marcelhaza), and the population of the whole area does not exceed 30,000 inhabitants. The organization does not have any regular income except a membership fee of 0.30 EUR per inhabitant, making the annual budget a meager 10,000 EUR. The organization does not have any employees, which means that administrative tasks have to be undertaken by the staff belonging to the Chair (the mayor of one of the members on the Slovak side) of the organization.

In the early 1990s, villages located along the Danube in the area stretching between the towns Komárom–Komarno (Révkomárom) and Esztergom–Štúrovo (Párkány) began to organize annual cultural events called 'Hídverő napok' ('Bridge building days'), which was made possible due to new policies regarding border crossings following the change of regime in 1990. These days offered entertainment, handicraft and commerce with a special focus on the common Hungarian language and heritage. Often, links were forged that became bilateral

⁴⁴ This was the background to the difficult situation narrated in the introduction: the situation was frequently described both in interviews and in the minutes as a crisis, or a very difficult situation.

⁴⁵ Between 2003 and 2008 known as the Danube Euroregion, but in this chapter referred to as Hídverő.

partnerships between Hungarian and Slovakian villages. This was a time that was characterized both by the openness following the fall of the socialist block, but also by Slovak nation-building, as described above.⁴⁶

In 1999, 13 settlements on the Slovak side which had been involved in these cultural days formed an association (a voluntary micro-region), which they gave the same name as the name of the cultural festival, Hídverő Társulás (in Slovak, *Združenie most priateľstva*). According to its by-laws, Hídverő is an organization set up to protect the interest of its members and solve common problems (Statutes, Article II). However, a key sentence is included at the end of the second Article: “The Association can work together with towns and settlements of other regions in the country and abroad too.”⁴⁷

In the same period, Tata Microregional Development Association was formed on the Hungarian side. In 2003, it set up an agreement together with Hídverő Association to form the Danube Euroregion. Neszmély was the leading partner and it was registered in Hungary.⁴⁸ Even though all local governments of the Tata Micro-region in Hungary were formally members, those that had already been honorary members in Hídverő were significantly more active in the set-up and running of the cooperation than others. The Euroregion was subsequently tainted by allegations of corruption towards the mayor of Neszmély, who in the end resigned in April 2008 (*Népszabadság* 2008, *Népszava*, 2008). The Danube Euroregion organization was drawn into a criminal investigation after the resignation, and is by any practical definition defunct.

However, the members who had been most active members still wanted to continue cooperation and the immediate solution was to ‘retreat’ to the original organization of 13

⁴⁶ A mayor who took office in 1994 referred in one of the fieldwork interviews to this as the “worst time of Mečiar”, prime minister at the time, who in his opinion tried to prevent connections with Hungary. “They forbade the contact with the mother country, and we saw the opportunity to break out of this, we joined with 12 other settlements towards the mother country. We always thought that what once broke has to grow together.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A70) Vladimir Mečiar was prime minister for most of the time between January 1993 and October 1998.

⁴⁷ My translation from the official Hungarian translation of the original Slovak, carried out by the Interpreter and Translator Association, March 2, 2006.

⁴⁸ ‘Leading partner’ should not be confused with the technical term ‘lead partner’ used by some EU structural funds projects.

Slovak members and five honorary Hungarian members. Of the Hungarian settlements, these were the ones most eager to continue the cooperation, but also those who had partnership towns among the 13 members of the Slovak association.

*

This section has given an overview of the main characteristics of the Hungarian-Slovak borderland as well as a factual background to the two case study organizations. Before I move on to analysis and research findings, Table 6 provides a summary of key characteristics.

Table 6. *Key characteristics of Hídverő, Ister-Granum and the Hungarian-Slovak borderlands*

Euroregion	Ister-Granum	Hídverő
<i>Founded</i>	<i>2003 Euroregion 2008 EGTC</i>	<i>1999 Association 2003 Euroregion</i>
<i>Local governments in 2011</i>	82	18
<i>Approximate population 2010</i>	175,000	30,000
<i>Working language</i>	<i>Hungarian (dominant), Slovak (rarely)</i>	<i>Hungarian (dominant), Slovak (frequently)</i>
<i>Border existing since</i>	<i>1919 (except 1938-1944)</i>	<i>1919 (except 1938-1944)</i>
<i>State form</i>	<i>unitary</i>	<i>unitary</i>
<i>National GDP(IMF 2010, in USD)</i>	<i>HU: 14,808, SK: 17,889</i>	<i>HU: 14,808, SK: 17,889</i>
<i>Regional GDP (Eurostat, NUTSII 2008)</i>	<i>Közép-Dunántúl: 9,500 Západné Slovensko 11,400</i>	<i>Közép-Dunántúl: 9,500 Západné Slovensko 11,400</i>

3.3 Motivation, participation and interaction of local governments in Ister-Granum and Hídverő

Patterns of motivation, participation and interaction among members of the two Hungarian-Slovak Euroregions in the study, Ister-Granum EGTC and Hídverő Association, constitute the focus of this section. I seek to answer the questions ‘why are the local governments members of the organization?’, ‘how do they participate in the organizations?’ and ‘how do they interact with each other?’ This means that members of Euroregions are the primary units of

analysis in this section, while section 3.4 will treat the organizations themselves as the primary unit of analysis.⁴⁹ The analytical framework driving the analysis of motivation and participation follows what was introduced in Chapter 1, and will be briefly recapitulated in 4.3.1 below.

3.3.1 Motivation

As detailed in Chapter 1, the motivation to join and stay in a Euroregion can broadly be divided into two groups, one based on identity/polity and one based on instrumentality. In the analysis, the instrumentality group has been sub-divided into two further groups; the first is materialistic gains through grant-seeking, and the second specific policy problems that are thought to be better solved jointly. In this section I analyze the stated motivations for membership based on these categories. It should be noted that a local government can base its membership on more than one motivation, in which case answers were sectionalized and coded into multiple categories

The first category is *identity/polity*, and 40 respondents were coded in this category. The overwhelming part of these emphasized that the Slovak villages and towns in the cooperation were a part of Hungary before the peace treaty signed after World War I:

“Here of course the Trianon⁵⁰ story is a Hungarian specialty, and a little bit you can take care of this through the creation of the Euroregion.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A138)

“[We want to] bring the population together, in the interests of the old Esztergom ‘castle region’ and the two sides of the current border.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A53)

“The goal is the Hungarian-Hungarian connection [...] the regional cohesion of the Hungarians.” (Mayor, Slovakia-Ister-Granum: A108)

⁴⁹ The analysis relies on primary data collection: 78 interviews were conducted with members of the two Euroregions as represented by their highest political representatives. Six of those have double membership, and have been interviewed as to their attitude towards both organizations. In total, 67 out of 82 members of Ister-Granum (81%) and 17 out of the 18 members in Hídverő Association (94%) were interviewed. See Chapter 3 for more details on method and data collection.

⁵⁰ The peace treaty between Hungary and the winning allies after World War I, signed in 1920.

“For Hídverő the main aim was the Hungarian-Hungarian connection.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő and Ister-Granum: A 58)

“On the other side there are settlements that are Hungarian. They were Hungarian historically and they are so today.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: A47)

“We always thought that what once was broken has to grow together. We wanted to get closer to each other.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: A70)

“We want to build a spiritual bridge between Slovakia and Hungary, the two riverbanks that belong together should be bound together.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: A69)

“First I should say that those who live in the ‘Northern Highlands’⁵¹ are Hungarians. It is true that it is on the other side of the border in a legal understanding, from the point of international law, yes. But from a cultural point of view over there is no different from here. But I don’t want to put politics into this, we are in a good relationship with everyone there, the Slovaks just as much as the Hungarians.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: A135).

Several respondents mentioned that this cooperation was only possible due to the political changes in Eastern Europe after 1989:

“The cooperation started after the change of regime, in order for us to keep the Hungarian-ness, keep the traditions, the culture and the mother tongue.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő and Ister-Granum: #A68)

“We formed this [cooperation] so that we can nurture the relations with the mother country [...] In 1989, we did not have any connections. Perhaps we were allowed to go over [to other side of the border] twice a year. The young mayors don’t even know how it was.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A66)

“The political situation was such that there was almost enemy status between the two countries. We decided that we wanted to improve the situation.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A59)

Common identity ran as a theme through interviews with respondents from both organizations, but there was a marked difference in how often it was mentioned. Among Hídverő respondents, 13 out of 17 referred to this, whereas in Ister-Granum 35 out of 72 did the same, i.e. this sentiment was stronger in Hídverő. This was in spite of Ister-Granum having a special territorial historical tie; it covers an area broadly converging with the

⁵¹ ‘Northern Highlands’, or ‘upper province’ is the Hungarian name for the part of southern Slovakia that belonged to Hungary before World War I.

historical administrative region Esztergom county. These historical circumstances were mentioned by several respondents, but more so on the Hungarian side than on the Slovak:

“We did not set up any specific goals for the participation [in the Euroregion], we just wanted to belong to the community. The Euroregion was set up for the cohesion of the old ‘castle region’, and we thought that its goals were acceptable.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A45)

“It was a natural thing to do because we are part of the Esztergom Micro-region, and Esztergom had an important role in bringing this together. We feel ourselves very much at home in this organization.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A16)

“Once we belonged to the Esztergom county [on both sides of the Danube], it was a historical thing, we found it natural.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A109)

The small Slovak minority living in Hungary seldom featured as a reason for cooperation, neither did the possibility for inter-ethnic cooperation, i.e. that Hungarian local governments would seek to include Slovak-speaking Slovak villages in the Euroregion. Thus, the quote below by a Hungarian mayor is an exception:⁵²

“We wanted to get connections to the other side, because we are a Slovak village, and that is why it was interesting.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A129)

Aside from ethnic belonging, identity/polity motivation can also be based on the belief that cooperation has an intrinsic value, i.e. that *cooperation per se* is valuable and that inter-municipal cooperation is an important element of current and future local government practices. This did occur among interviewees, but less frequently.

“We are open, if somebody knocks on our door [and invite us to a cooperation], we don’t say ‘no’.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A8)

“We thought we’d better not be left out of something. We were the mass, so to speak, we were not the ones initiating this and we are not very active.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A49)

⁵² Another exception is #A87, which besides its Euroregional engagement is a part of a partnership arrangement of four villages: a Slovak Hungarian village, a Slovak Slovak-speaking village, a Hungarian village with a Slovak minority and a Hungarian village without minorities.

“I thought it would be a good idea to get together.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A61)

Instrumentality, the second motivation category, was very common in the Ister-Granum group (29 answers coded in this), whereas only a few mentioned this in Hídverő. How the mayors referred to this did not differ much; the formulations in interview situations were very similar:

“We would like to access sources of funding.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A9)

“We joined because of the application possibilities; a European integrating association always brings greater advantage than if you apply as a small local government.” (Mayor, Hungary, #A131)

“We thought of opportunities to apply for money.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A19)

“The opportunities to apply, because EU supports cross-border cooperation.” (Mayor, Hungary, #A17)

“The main reason was to get money, from Europe, and regional money too. The idea was that we should get more for development.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A110)

Whereas expectations as expressed in the citations above mainly were directed towards the European Union, some also pointed out the role of Esztergom in supporting the Euroregion:

“I got money from Ister-Granum, it was not EU money though. It was for a cultural house in 2009. We got the most from Ister-Granum because the smallest and poorest had the highest chance to get something.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum, #A92)

“[The membership] brought a lot, both moral support but also money. It was the local government of Esztergom that gave money to distribute to villages.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A64)

All these answers, which are just some examples from the interviews, express how the Euroregion by Ister-Granum members were seen as a direct means to access grants, even if

identity also played an important role. Sometimes, this double motivation was expressed clearly:

“The first is to have connection to our sister settlements on the other sides, the villages and the towns, the other is that we should be able to apply for European money.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A132)

The statutes also emphasize this focus on economic (and social) development. Article one lays down that the emphasis is on “the full range of regional development activities [...] for promoting and strengthening economic and social cohesion”. The text leaves no doubt regarding from where resources for this development should come. The statutes specifies that “the specific objective of the Grouping” is “that by the co-financing of the European Union” achieve this economic and social cohesion.⁵³

However, neither the statutes nor the interview material gives any support for the idea that common policy problems constitute an important reason for cross-border inter-municipal cooperation. Only a few respondents pointed to a specific policy problem:

“They emphasized that there would be an infrastructure corridor [North-South corridor] which would imply a reviving economical role.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A52)

“There were issues to be solved, such as the hospital. Infrastructure was another.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A15)

The overall analysis therefore showed that identity/polity constitutes the motivational base-line for cooperation in both analyzed Euroregions, but in Ister-Granum materialistic expectations, primarily in the form of access to grants, featured prominently as well.

3.3.2 Participation

Local government motivation for membership constituted an important piece of the picture of Euroregional function and performance. How local governments engage with Euroregional

⁵³ Curiously, the wording implies that the rationale for the organization would not exist if the European Union did not provide funding for cross-border cooperation.

organizations in which they are members is a second piece of the picture, and this is the focus of analysis in this section.

A couple of years prior to the recording of the interview material (the bulk of which was collected in 2010 and 2011) both Euroregions went through a significant shift in their legal form. In 2008, Ister-Granum transformed into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Ister-Granum was the second Euroregion in all of Europe to do so, and it therefore received considerable international attention, including invitations to its management and political leadership to speak at practitioner conferences and seminars. The introduction of the EGTC tool was supposed to give a more secure legal position, but members also expected it to facilitate access to European funds. An unforeseen consequence of the reorganization was that only 89 out of 103 local governments chose to remain in the EGTC (seven more left 2008-2011). Within the framework of this study I did not systematically approach governments that exited, but interviews and conversations with representatives of three of them and interpretations by other actors (other mayors, managers) give reason to assume that members took the moment of transformation as an opportunity to reflect on cost and benefits of the membership. As expectations of direct returns to individual local governments in the form of external funds had been an important instrumental motivation for Ister-Granum, some found that if such expectations had not been fulfilled it was not worth continuing to contribute even the modest membership fee and time investment required.

Meanwhile, Hídverő had gone through a turbulent time as well. In 2003, all local governments of the Tata Micro-region in Hungary had joined up with Hídverő to continue the cross-border cooperation efforts under the name *Danube Euroregion*. As already mentioned, the work was led by the mayor of Neszmély. However, the Euroregion was drawn into an investigation of corruption directed towards the mayor of Neszmély, and after his resignation in April 2008 (Népszabadság 2008; Népszava 2008), the initiative died out. All local

governments of the Tata micro-region left the cooperation, except those five Hungarian settlements that had been previously active in Hídverő, which now returned to calling itself by this name alone.

At the time when the interviews were conducted these events were already seen as something in the past, and members expected the new and renewed organizational forms (Ister-Granum and Hídverő respectively) to function. Membership in the organization was not a salient political issue in the settlements; generally it was considered a low-cost investment as none of the Euroregions require much from the members in terms of resources, either for membership fees (less than 10 Eurocents per inhabitant per year in both organizations) or in terms of time commitment to meetings. Even if preparation, travel time and attendance to meetings are included, the time investment is limited.

Before going into how members take part in the organizations, it should be noted that the frequency and style of meetings in which members could take part differed starkly. Ister-Granum generally has 1-2 meetings open to all members per year, in addition to separate activities, which were few in the years 2009 and 2010, i.e. shortly before the interviews were conducted. The assembly meetings usually take place in Esztergom, although they are occasionally located in Štúrovo (Párkány). Due to the high number of members they have to take place in rooms seating many persons, settings not always conducive for debates. Formal agenda items such as elections of Senate and Chairs constitute a big part of the meetings, as is information from the Manager on ongoing and planned projects. An assembly meeting typically lasts two-three hours with food afterwards. In Hídverő, meetings rotate among the Slovak members, and they usually last from morning refreshments until lunch. The schedule is relaxed to allow for plenty of informal socializing between the mayors. Most agenda items concern Slovak issues, as Hídverő functions as both a cross-border forum and a micro-regional platform for cooperation within Slovakia. Especially changes and implication in

social legislation constitute common themes. However, discussions related to ongoing or planned projects between members in the association are also standard items (e.g. projects on clean Danube beaches river banks, or preservation of ruins from Roman times).

In the analysis of interview data, the local governments were divided into three groups regarding how they engaged with the organization:

- Detached: rarely participating in meetings or events, receiving information rather in writing from the organization;
- Listeners: regularly attending meetings and events, but doing it mainly to seek information, deputies or lower-ranked administrators might be sent to meetings to get this information rather than the highest political representative (mayors);
- Active: regularly attending meetings and events with a strategic approach and contributing to the agenda.

The results of the analysis demonstrated a distinctively different pattern between the two organizations, as outlined below.

Detached members. Hídverő did not have any members coded into this group, as its monthly meetings have very high attendance rates, with no settlement consistently opting out. All mayors would attend in person, except one mayor on the Slovak side that generally delegated attendance to his more experienced deputy mayor. In Ister-Granum, on the other hand, there was a large group, roughly a third of the members (especially Hungarian members), in which the mayor stated that he/she had not attended any meetings over the last year. The reason given for this was mostly that the members conditioned engagement with visible output (activity of the Euroregion) and perceived the organization to have an ineffective management:

“There are too many layers in the cooperation. I cannot see through how it works.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A50)

“Not much has happened in the last years. There were just some reports, and then there are the Ipoly bridges.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A60)

“The colleagues around here don’t go much either.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A47)

The implicit expectation was that the responsibility for moving things forward clearly lay with the managing team and the political leaders of Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány). Mayors would frequently refer to a ‘golden time’ of enthusiasm around the creation of the EGTC. This ‘golden time’ ended when the manager who had been the driver of the legal reconstruction was dismissed under circumstances that were unclear to members and perceived as being due to personal difficulties with the mayor of Esztergom. The subsequent manager did not make visible efforts to connect to representatives of the many small settlement members, which the previous one had, and interviewees seldom indicated trust in his commitment:

“The problem with them is that they change managers all the time, this is like the third one in a year, and the things get stuck.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A123)

“I don’t participate very often, because of this. Although I did attend the last one, and it looks as if the situation might consolidate. We also could be pleased to see that at least more than half of the members attended the meeting.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A115)

All in all, the interview material indicated significant amounts of indifference, expressed as non-emotional disapproval, and explained by respondents as a sound reaction to ‘nothing happening’ at the level of the Euroregion

Listeners. However, even in Ister-Granum, the largest group of members was not the detached ones, but the group consisting of members attending meetings regularly but without a strategic goal or set of priorities for their relation with the organization. Roughly half the members could be categorized into this group, with an overrepresentation of Slovak settlements:

“I usually go to the assemblies, mainly to get information.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A128)

“I always go to the meetings. If for some reason I cannot go I send someone.” (Mayor, Slovakia: Ister-Granum: #A63)

Also in Hídverő, this group was relatively large, constituting more than a third of participants:

“These are pleasant, friendly meetings. You can get contacts and interesting information.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: A66)

“If I don’t go to the meetings, that’s a rare exception, because I like to listen to the colleagues, and you can talk freely there and get information, which is important for me.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A73)

“The main activity at the meetings is to exchange experience and information, for instance we hear about the Hungarian side.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A57)

Active members. Most of the Hídverő members can be classified as active. Since meetings rotate between the Slovak members, every (Slovak) member has the chance to set the main part of the agenda at least once a year. Probably partially due to the participating local governments being relatively equal in size and all being located close to the border, none of the members were perceived as more higher-ranked than the other. The situation in Ister-Granum differed significantly in this respect, as the towns Esztergom in Hungary and Štúrovo (Párkány) in Slovakia are perceived as leaders in the cooperation:

“We are almost 100 settlements, but Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány) are still the leaders. Esztergom was so strong that we trusted in them and let them have everything because they were strong. We could not believe that such a big town would get into such serious troubles.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A91)

“Esztergom ruled everything, they even paid for small projects in the villages [...] it would have been good if that could have continued. It is really the case that bigger settlements with perhaps 3,000 inhabitants have other ways of thinking than us who have around 200. You cannot dream about miracles here.” (Mayor, Slovakia: Ister-Granum: #A125)

When the local elections in 2010 resulted in a political stalemate in Esztergom, this was therefore seen as a major drawback also for the Euroregion. Esztergom elected an independent mayor, who could not cooperate with the majority party in the local council (and national government), Fidesz. This political strife⁵⁴ had consequences for Ister-Granum, as support both in terms of finances and time diminished:

“Now when Esztergom is in such a bad situation nothing works. [...] Now we have to pay, we will ask members to pay one or two membership fees in advance, so that we can pay the pre-financing [of a failed EU-funded tourism-project].” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A87)

This quote demonstrates that turning events around was perceived as an uphill battle if Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkany) were not on board, even if there were a few other actors trying to steer the Euroregional cooperation in a strategic manner, mainly town representatives (e.g. Lábatlan and Szob in Hungary, Muzla/Muzsla and Želiezovce/Zseliz in Slovakia).

This section has so far outlined the degree of engagement of members in the two Euroregions. In terms of the political character of participation, both organizations are political in the sense that they are composed by elected officials, with only the Ister-Granum secretariat employees serving as regular civil servant participants (as mentioned in section 3.2, Hídverő does not have an independent secretariat but relies on the administrative capacities of the local government of the serving Chair). However, party politics was described as irrelevant for internal debates and decisions in the organization,⁵⁵ and in the analysis I was also not able to establish any dividing lines in opinion according to party lines. This is partly due to mayors in smaller Hungarian settlements usually being independent, whereas Slovak mayors in the studied area generally belong to one of the Slovakia’s two ethnic Hungarian

⁵⁴ Interested readers may consult websites such as *Local and Regional Monitoring Institute* or *Politics.hu*. See for instance articles in English at <http://www.politics.hu/20120117/multi-issue-referendum-to-be-held-in-esztergom-amid-ongoing-political-battles/> or <http://www.localmonitoring.eu/en/article/1638> [Accessed August 22, 2012].

⁵⁵ In both organizations, party politics and national differences (Hungarian-Slovak) was ranked lowest when asked about what lines of differences could cause conflicting opinions within the Euroregion politics. The other alternatives (small vs. big towns, close vs far from the border, administrative vs political status), scored higher but were still not considered important, which imply that the character of the Euroregion is perceived as depoliticized.

parties.⁵⁶ On the other hand party politics was perceived as important for Ister-Granum, but not for Hídverő, when it came to relations to the national level, especially Hungary. Many mayors stated openly their expectations that a government considered ‘friendly’ on the Hungarian side would result in more direct support for the Euroregion.

In summary, the participation seems to differ considerably between the two organizations. Whereas the Euroregion Hídverő had members that regularly attended meetings, either as passive information-seekers or active members, Ister-Granum had a layered membership, with a significant part indifferent, the majority passive and only a minority being active in driving the organization forward.

3.3.3 Interaction

This section uncovers to what extent, and how, members interact with each other, as manifested in personal communication (via face-to-face meetings, telephone or email). The findings are largely based on network analysis of communication data as provided by the respondents, and on qualitative analysis of statements relating to communication. The social network analysis will be elaborated on in Chapter 6, and only the core findings are included here.

Intermunicipal cooperation became increasingly common in the investigated period on both sides of the border as local governments joined up for cooperation and service delivery. Both involved states adopted policies supporting inter-municipal cooperation in order to counteract perceived inefficiencies due to local government fragmentation (large numbers of small settlements). This process predated *and* developed concurrently with the formation of cross-border cooperation. The social network analysis showed that most local governments

⁵⁶ Before the conduction of interviews, in 2009, a second Slovak-Hungarian party was formed (the Bridge Party), which was communicated as a less ethnically radical party than the Hungarian Coalition Party. While this split undoubtedly was a big political issue for all active politicians of Hungarian ethnicity in Slovakia at the time, I could not establish any direct effects of this on the working or inner relations of either of the two Euroregions.

have weekly or monthly contact with local governments in the same micro-region, whereas domestic contacts outside the region were much rarer. Mayors indicated an increase in contact frequency over time. This implies a presence of domestic local institutional social capital (within-group social capital) built up within these institutions that could potentially be utilized by the emerging cross-border institutions as transnational local social capital (between-group social capital).

This gives support for the claim that domestic local social capital leads to the generation of between-group social capital as cross-border communication is also claimed to have been increasing over time, albeit not to the same extent as domestic communication. Nonetheless, the study also demonstrates the large extent to which communication takes place within the nation-state context. The communication pattern clearly falls into one Hungarian and one Slovak pattern cluster. The pattern differs between the two analyzed organizations. Especially in Ister-Granum there are few cross-border links on a weekly or monthly basis, whereas Hídverő has somewhat more. Overall, the Hídverő network is denser, as revealed by the social network analysis.

The next question is why, and about what, the mayors communicate with each other. This is important, as research on inter-organizational relationships has shown that information transmission is one of most significant relationships for efficient network output (Laumann and Knoke 1987). Much of the cross-border communication takes place only at events and meetings arranged by the Euroregions, and tend then to focus on the political realities of the local governments and information exchange on how things are done ‘on the other side’. When it comes to communication outside the framework of the Euroregion, this focuses less on political development or public service delivery and more on various events. Especially in smaller local governments, it is perceived as something positive, or ‘good manners’, to invite representatives from nearby settlements on the other side of the border to cultural events

arranged in or by the municipality. For instance, most villages have annual cultural days ('the village day'). When the mayors meet at those events, conversation tends to revolve around general problems, such as unemployment, rather than around concrete ideas for cooperation or solutions:

"We meet mainly with those here around the Ipoly river, [the settlements of] Letkes, Vámosmikula, etc. We use to talk to each other and come to each others' cultural events, our musical and dance groups perform there, and the other way around. The same goes for sport competitions."(Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A128)

"We are in contact with the other mayors and their representatives in this area. We talk about our problems, that no one has money for anything, that is the biggest problem."(Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A127)

Examples on communication focusing on concrete policy issues could mainly be found between Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány), for instance about access to the hospital located in Esztergom, issues related to the current bridge and a planned bridge, and competition and cooperation around tourists. It could also be found around the Ipoly river, where bridges and roads leading to bridges constituted a common concern for settlements and local governments such as Szob, Salka (Ipolyszalka), Ipolydamasd, Letkes, Tesa, etc.

All in all, the research shows that the reserves of between-group social capital are relatively weak, especially in Ister-Granum. Table 7 summarizes the assessments in the different categories.

Table 7. *Between-group social capital of Hídverő and Ister-Granum*

	Euroregion	Ister-Granum	Hídverő
BETWEEN- GROUP SOCIAL CAPITAL	<i>Strength of cross-border communications</i>	low	high
	<i>Perceived trend of contacts</i>	somewhat increasing	increasing
	<i>Level of trust to other side</i>	medium	high
	<i>Presence of conflict (politicization of issues)</i>	low	low

This section on motivation, participation and interaction has treated Euroregions as the primary unit of analysis, seeking to answer questions as to why and how they participate in the two investigated Hungarian-Slovak Euroregions, but also how they interact with each other. Motivation, participation and interaction patterns constitute independent variables that were expected to show some variation. This turned out correct, as Ister-Granum had a stronger instrumental grant-seeking element, combined with the identity/polity component that was virtually the sole base of the Hídverő cooperation. Participation patterns differed in that Hídverő had more active members, taking turns to drive the cooperation, whereas the majority of Ister-Granum members were either indifferent or passive information-seekers. This finding was reinforced by the analysis of interactions, which showed Hídverő to have more bonding between-group social capital than Ister-Granum due to its more frequent communication. I will now move on to how the organizations function and perform as Euroregions, before discussing how the function and performance is related to the factors discussed in this section.

3.4 Function and performance of Ister-Granum and Hídverő

This section deals with organizations as primary units of analysis, and elaborates on the dependent variable of the project: what do they do and how well do they do this? In other words, what are the functions and performance of Euroregions? I first introduce the policy

areas they concentrate on via typical projects and which policy areas they prefer. I then look at how the performance of the two case study organizations can be assessed in terms of intensity of cross-border cooperation, judged by categories used in the literature (primarily Perkmann 2003, 2007), and to assess the appropriation of policy space, I determine to which extent the two cases at the Hungarian-Slovak border function as seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows (see Chapter 1).

3.4.1 Policy areas and typical activities

Table 8 summarizes the policy areas that are considered most important by the members of the organizations (interviewees were asked to grade a number of policy fields) and two activities carried out by the Euroregions that were frequently referred to.

Table 8. *Typical cooperation areas and activities of Hídverő and Ister-Granum*

<p style="text-align: center;">Ister-Granum</p> <p>Most important to members: culture, economic development, creating a common regional identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <p>Ipoly fish ladders. Interreg III/A supported project to help enhance the free movement of water species in the river Ipoly, especially in the area close to the local governments Tesa (Hungary) and Ipeľský Sokolec Ipolyszakállas (Slovakia). The Euroregion was officially one of the project owners, together with the municipality of the town Esztergom, the district Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya) in Slovakia, Union Ipoly and the Middle-Danube-valley Environmental and Water Directorate.</p> <p>Ipoly bridges: Before World War II there were 47 bridges crossing the river Ipoly, most of which were destroyed during the war and not rebuilt. Only four worked until the change of regime in 1990, one of which was in the Euroregion area, at Letkes-Ipolyszalka (Hungarian Government Office 2012). The Euroregion has constituted an arena for discussing where bridges would be needed, and has also given support for much of the paperwork to apply for money and receive state support for rebuilding bridges. At the time of writing interstate agreements to build (sharing costs) had been signed for two bridges: between Ipolydamásd (Hungary) and Chlába/Heľmbe (Slovakia), and between Vámosmikula (Hungary) and Pastovce/Ipolypászto (Slovakia) (Slovak Government Office 2010).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Hídverő</p> <p>Most important to members: culture, regional identity-building, creating a common European identity</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <p>Bridge-building Days. This is an annual cultural event, the organization of which rotates between the members of the Euroregion. The event focuses especially on activities that connect with the common cultural heritage in the area (folk dance, musical performance, food).</p> <p>Historical site preservation: “In the footsteps of the Romans at the Roma river”. The Hídverő members Iza/Izsa (Slovakia) and Almásfüzitő (Hungary) received funding from the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Cooperation Program 2007-2013 program in order to restore and erect a museum to educate and remember settlements at these sites during Roman times. The project runs 2010-2012 and has a total budget of 10.3 million EUR.</p>

The difference in priorities between the two Euroregions was established in section 3.3.1 on motivation, in which it was demonstrated that Hídverő membership was motivated primarily by identity/polity in the form of ethnic kinship, whereas the motivational base for Ister-Granum was both ethnic kinship and instrumental expectations (grant-seeking). This table reinforces this by showing how Ister-Granum members ranked economic development as the second most important policy area among 12, whereas Hídverő ranked those highest related to identity-building. In Hídverő the typical activities are in line with this priority, as both the cultural days and the joint Roman heritage project are culture-related. For Ister-Granum the picture is different. When asked what they know about what the Euroregion actually does, the members typically mentioned the fish ladder and the bridge projects at the Ipoly River. While these projects were undoubtedly received positively in the few settlements where these are located, mayors in most other member municipalities did not see any immediate benefit for themselves, nor how it would contribute to the overall development in the region.

3.4.2 Cross-border cooperation intensity

I will now turn to the cross-border cooperation intensity, and assess how they perform in categories derived from the literature (see Chapter 2). Table 9 summarizes the assessments, which I will then elaborate upon.

Table 9. *Cross-border cooperation intensity of Hídverő and Ister-Granum*

Euroregion	Ister-Granum	Hídverő
<i>Strength of legal arrangement</i>	high	low
<i>Robustness of its administrative arrangement</i>	high	low
<i>Meeting activity</i>	low	high
<i>Adherence to development strategy/mission statement</i>	medium	low
<i>Budget</i>	medium	low
<i>Project intensity</i>	medium	low

The *legal arrangement* of Ister-Granum is strong, as the organization has adopted the legal form European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, which has been developed by the European Union (in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the Association of European Border Regions), to specifically serve cross-border regions. Hídverő, on the other hand, has a weak organizational form, as the five Hungarian settlements are only honorary members in the association, which is registered in Slovakia.

Likewise, Ister-Granum has a robust *administrative arrangement*, since it has three full-time employees, whereas Hídverő has to rely on the local government where the Chair is located for administrative support. This has consequences for the amount of activities that can be carried out. On the other hand, none of them have been able to set up working groups, or similar, that would draw in a larger number of members:

“I used to be Chair of the working committee on environment, six, seven or eight years ago. We did a study on waste collection in the member municipalities, how it works. That was so that others could see good practices and examples; we disseminated this among the members. We used to meet perhaps four times a year, I don’t remember, so much has happened since then. Then we just started to meet less and less, there were things we had to do, the financial crisis came, and somehow it just stopped. In the EGTC there are no working committees, I don’t know why.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A113)

The reasons cited by interviews with the political and administrative leadership for why working groups were not set up is that they took too much time for the management, and that it was difficult to get participants to be committed beyond the initial meeting. An additional reason might have been that the working groups that were set up before the EGTC were set up by political participants and not administrative staff, making them partially overlapping with the assembly forum and leaving them with few links into executive-administrative branches of local governments.

Meeting activity is low in Ister-Granum, with some years only one assembly, in others two taking place. Hídverő, on the other hand, has regular monthly meetings with high attendance. Activity was higher at the time of the transformation to EGTC and when there were financial troubles, but the agendas have not been exciting enough to draw many members to meetings.

Ister-Granum has a medium sized *budget* in a European perspective. It has received national funding to secure its operational costs, but it has had difficulties to get more than a few projects funded by the European Union. Although a Euroregion does not need to run projects in its own name, the expectation (as expressed for instance in the statutes) has been that it would be a project-owner, especially with European Union support. This expectation has only partially been fulfilled. Hídverő, on the other hand, has a miniscule budget, consisting only of membership fees, since it does not have any external support. All its projects are officially run by a selection of its members. It has, however, been successful in receiving sponsors for events such as the annual Cultural Days.

The limited budget is reflected in *project intensity*; Ister-Granum has annually had between 1-4 projects, whereas Hídverő has generally focused on one project at the time.

3.4.3 Appropriation of policy space

The ability to appropriate the policy space in borderlands depends on how well the Euroregion can perform the three functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window. For this section I rely mainly on the interviews with managers and Chairs of the organizations, but also on documents and member interviews.

3.4.3.1 Seismograph function

The municipalities taking part in the Hídverő Euroregion are all small, which facilitates contact between the representatives in the Euroregion (the mayor) and ordinary citizens. However, structured and strategic dialogue with civil society organizations is non-existent. Civil society organizations do not constitute important partners according to the Chair, and their involvement is limited to the engagement of church, cultural and sport associations in different events. No inventory of civil society organizations operating in the area has been made.

In Ister-Granum the picture is different. Throughout its existence, the Euroregion's representatives have adhered to the European Union-promoted idea of civil society organizations as major channels through which the ones affected by the policies are expected to take part in the policy-making process (Smismans 2006, Kohler-Koch 2009). Several efforts have been made to institutionalize civil society involvement. In 2002 the Euroregion initiated a *Civil Parliament*, in which 50 organizations from both sides of the border took part. The parliament was supposed to serve as a generator of ideas for the Euroregion, i.e. to have a seismographic function. However, the civil society organizations' interest did not persist and only a few meetings were held. A few years later the Euroregion commissioned a study of civil society organizations in the region, their attitudes towards cooperation with local governments and their knowledge and practice of cross-border exchange. The study counted

432 civil society organizations operating within the Hungarian area of Ister-Granum and 85 on the Slovak side (Bartal and Molnar 2006:20, 45). On both sides cultural activities dominated as the purpose of civil society organizations. A clear majority of the civil society organizations stated that they had good relations with local governments, but only a third of the civil society organizations knew the Ister-Granum Euroregion. The knowledge of the Euroregion was highest in the center, primarily among associations located in Esztergom, but it diminished the further away the associations were located from this center (Bartal and Molnár 2006:72, 76). As for contacts with civil society organizations on the other side, 20% of the Hungarian civil society organizations stated that they had regular contacts, while 14% of the responding Slovak organizations said the same (Bartal and Molnár 2006:45, 69).

Following the study, a new civil society parliament effort was made in 2007. For this purpose, 700,000 HUF (approximately 2,500 EUR) was allocated, and the re-inaugurated parliament was supposed to appoint six members to a Regional Development Council that would serve as an Advisory Board to the newly founded EGTC (this Regional Development Council should not be confused with the Hungarian Regional Development Councils on NUTS 2 level). However, this initiative did not take off either, and in the following difficult years the relation with civil society was given less attention. At the time of writing, a new way of involving non-state actors was envisioned, the carrying out of an 'Ister-Granum salon', a one-time event, that if successful would be repeated, where business representatives and CSOs would have a chance to meet policymakers.

Member representatives offer another route to channel needs and opinions of the whole cross-border territory into the work of the Euroregion. For Hídverő this was relatively easy as most local governments are small and their representatives attended meetings regularly. In the case of Ister-Granum this was not functioning fully as many members were passive. The sheer number of participants inhibited the capacity of the leadership and the

management to have personal knowledge and contact with all of them. A common complaint among small-size members was that the leadership and management (especially the manager serving 2009-2010) did not care about the small local governments. One of the managers succeeding him claimed to want to change this:

“It is alpha and omega that the director knows the needs of the members, because it is also about good relations within the EGTC, and between the executive and the members. Maybe [the lack of good relations] before was the reason for the general assembly [sometimes] not having a quorum.” (Manager, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A118)

3.4.3.2 Loudspeaker function

There are multiple ways in which Euroregions can approach decision-makers within the policy network to advance their interests. As indicated in Chapter 1, channels for exerting influence include: (a) multiple positions of member representatives; (b), within-party contacts to people in power; (c) indirect representation via other organizations; and (d) partnerships with non-state actors. Further, there are four main modes of persuasion: (1) commissioning reports on the issue to be raised; (2) arranging seminars or conferences, (3) sending delegations to decision-makers; (4) writing statements/resolutions in the name of the Euroregion.

Hídverő has on purpose largely avoided taking on the function of loudspeaker. National rules and regulations are taken as set, and issues that would require the involvement of other levels are avoided. This does not mean that the organization does not have access to any channels for exerting influence. Persons within the organization have held multiple positions, for instance in organizations promoting Hungarian interests, and there are contacts to people in power, especially national-level politicians or bureaucrats of Hungarian origin. It does not have any indirect representation via other organizations though, and does not have any formal

partnerships with non-state actors. The four modes of persuasion have been largely unused, with the exception of occasional seminars and conferences.

The situation in Ister-Granum is more differentiated. The Chair and the Deputy Chair (these positions rotate between the mayors of Esztergom and Štúrovo / Párkány) have multiple positions. The mayor of Štúrovo (Párkány), who at the time of fieldwork served as Chair, is for instance also a member of the European Committee of the Region, an advisory body consisting of 344 members representing local and regional governments from the 27 member countries (European Committee of the Regions 2012). Both he and the Deputy Chair are both frequently invited to national conferences. However, their role as representative of the Euroregion often takes the backseat in these situations.

“I usually speak as the mayor of Štúrovo (Párkány), because in that capacity I’m more known than as the Chair of Ister-Granum, that always need some extra explanation, especially since it rotates between being Chair and Deputy chair. So I rather do it as the mayor of Štúrovo, but of course I speak in the name of the region.” (Chair, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A122)

“I can be the Chair of Ister-Granum, but also the Chair of the Esztergom-Nyergesújfalu Micro-region. As Esztergom is in a difficult political situation, when I see that there is something the town cannot do, I try to mobilize the Micro-region or Ister-Granum, because there are good relations in there, and big support for this. This is an advantage for me, and I use it.” (Deputy Chair, Ister-Granum, Hungary: #A119)

Within-party contacts to people in power (e.g. Ministers) is considered an important channel for exerting influence in both organizations, and is something that is done on a one-to-one basis. However, whereas Hídverő’s cultural focus is less dependent on actors at other levels, Ister-Granum’s focus on socio-economic development makes it more vulnerable. During the history of the Euroregion it has mattered in terms of support whether the political party Fidesz has been in power (1998-2002, 2010--) or a Socialist-Liberal coalition (2002-2010). On the Slovak side contacts have been with the Hungarian ethnic parties, since the party politics in this part of Slovakia is not divided along right-wing ideological lines:

“I believe party links is important it terms of financial support. Now the Euroregion gets support from the Ministry for its maintenance costs. This we can thank the previous manager for, who was in quite a good relationship with the current government.” (Deputy Chair, Ister-Granum, Hungary: #A119)

“I trust that we can get special support for Ister-Granum. If Fidesz stays strong, we can survive this. Our own connections are working, they worked before too. I am often asked by the local council representatives what is happening with this. I always try not to go into a debate. I tell them, ‘kids, be calm, have patience, this will be fine, it will work’.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A87)

Indirect representation of the interests of the Euroregion via other organizations is done to a very limited extent. Ister-Granum is a member of the European Association of Border Regions, and via its early adoption of the EGTC has had the possibility to provide feedback on the process of making this legal restructuring. The ambition has been to cultivate non-state relations, but as this has been fraught with difficulties it was never possible to enlist civil society organizations as help in lobbying efforts.

Ister-Granum has both arranged seminars and commissioned several reports on issues interesting for it, such as bridges, civil society development, strategic plans and others. The efficiency of these activities is difficult to prove, however, and they have been questioned by impatient members.

“We decided to rather support projects that are concrete, like a bridge or fish ladders, so not really such things as conferences or studies or I don’t know what, that we rather like to see concrete things.” (Deputy Chair, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A119)

The Euroregion has been unwilling to approach decision-makers formally via delegations or written statements. Instead persuasion is more *ad hoc*.

“The one who sees a chance to bring up the topic does so [in person], we don’t do this in writing.” (Chair, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A122)

According to the Deputy Chair, it is not even the task of the political leadership, and should instead be left to the management.

“Even if we as mayors represent the EGTC, the concrete work is done by the management, the manager and two other employees. That would be their task to monitor applications, to negotiate, to decide about things and to conduct lobbying towards the national level and to represent the interests of the EGTC. It depends on their skills and contacts how this will succeed.” (Deputy Chair, Ister-Granum, Hungary: #A119)

However, Ister-Granum can still point to some successes, for instance regarding the bridges over the Ipoly River, which was pointed out by members as a typical project (Table 7), and which needed involvement up to the state level. The bridges also illustrate how single local governments are sometimes able to act more strategically than the overall Euroregion:

“We have a plan for an Ipoly river valley biking road, but we cannot apply for funds. The critical part is between Damasd and Letkes, the regulation of Ipoly and the surrounding area has not been regulated properly, we cannot apply because we would need the Slovak government too. The ownership [of the land] is not sure, and it is not irrelevant which party is in the government, the previous one left long shadows, and it is hard to deal with this now. We are too small to solve this. You would need the state. *[Did you do lobbying for this?]* Honestly, we gave priority with Helemba, Pászto and Vámosmikula to have the bridges built, to have a crossing, and you know it is the case that you have to make priorities, that was more important than a bike road, this is a small part, you would need to change the state agreements.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A133)

3.4.3.3 Display window function

Hídverő has done little to market itself as one coherent region, mainly because the cross-border dimension was based on bilateral partnership agreements between specific municipalities, and the Hungarian participants therefore are not located next to each other.

Ister-Granum has tried to work with this function through several identity-creating projects. A map created at the time when the EGTC was founded was in frequent use (website, promotional materials, power point presentations at international meetings, etc), although it soon became obsolete as some members left the cooperation and the map also included the territory of several local governments that had never been a member. Another

example is how the indoor and outdoor water park owned by Esztergom offered reduced fees for inhabitants within the Ister-Granum region:

“There are such activities, small ones, like a map of the Euroregion or a calendar of the Euroregion, small projects like these, but when we won the big regional tourism strategy project we unfortunately had to decline it.” (Chair, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A122)

Although there is no survey data on how well the Euroregion is known among the population, the impression among the leaders is that Ister-Granum has good name-recognition:

“Ister-Granum is a brand, which is used for any activity in the region, one example could be how Ister-Granum takes part in the wine association and at cultural events, then Ister-Granum is present there with its brand, that means that you could be, or the mayors could be, proud of our Ister-Granum region.” (Manager, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A118)

However, this popular familiarity with the Euroregion is not translated into a general feeling of regional cohesion among its members. Frequently in interviews with Ister-Granum members it was stated that everyone only looks at concrete interests for their own local government:

“We would need such an identity development, at least in Hungary the regional identity is zero, you really would need to develop that. Especially since everybody here deals with how we can expand, that there is little money for the local governments, and they ask ‘we paid this membership fee, but tell us what we get for it’, that’s why we need some concrete things that they get or can get, but also to explain that everything that is good for the regional territory is also good for them, that’s why I suggested we would do micro-regional plans.” (Deputy Chair, Ister-Granum, Hungary: #A119)

Finally, the Ister-Granum has managed to function as a display window also towards actors at other levels, especially towards European policymakers.

“So Ister-Granum was established as the second EGTC in the EU, it has until this day a really good name in Brussels structures you know. It is always mentioned as a good example, as a positive example of territorial cooperation. This good example is also used in Hungary.” (Manager, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A118)

3.4.3.4 The governance space

The cross-border area constitutes a governance space with multiple actors, where the Euroregions need other decisionmakers to implement their agendas. Figure 3 represents the main partners of the Euroregions within a multi-level governance framework. The vertical dimension represents different levels and the horizontal dimension represents sectoral diversity (the *governance* part). The figure clearly displays how the cross-border dimension is not placed easily within a two-dimensional representation. I have indicated the actors exclusively dealing with cross-border governance (included the investigated Euroregions) by inserting a baseline as a separate cross-border cooperation vertical and horizontal space. As Hídverő declines active lobby work, the figure only displays the Ister-Granum governance space.

Figure 3. *Involved actors in cross-border policy issues: Ister-Granum and Hídverő*

MULTI-LEVEL DIMENSION	GOVERNANCE DIMENSION		
		State	Non-state
	Supranational	Committee of the Regions (partially, via the Chair)	Association of European Border Studies, Mission Operationnelle Transfrontaliere, Central European Service for Cross-Border initiatives (Budapest-based), Hét Határ Önkormányzati Szövetség
	National	Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Development (Hungary), Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Agriculture (Slovakia)	
	Regional	Nitra district (Slovakia)	Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Eurohid Foundation (defunct), Jövő Foundation, Regional Development Agency in Štúrovo (Párkány)
	Local	Local governments that are members, especially Esztergom, Štúrovo (Párkány)	Several efforts to draw in associations in the work, but mainly successful with Esztergom associations, Slovak local associations Local/regional businesses
Cross-border baseline			
Interreg (VATI) (weak connections for both)			

Source: *Multi-level governance framework* (Marks 1993, Hooghe and Marks 2001, Bache 2012)

Overall, the figure demonstrates that the network of actors within which the Ister-Granum navigates is rather thin. The regional state level is all but empty, as is the national non-state level. Interestingly enough, Ister-Granum has had better contacts on the supranational than the national level. A special weakness has been the lack of dialogue with the authority managing the cross-border cooperation funds, Interreg funds, which in the 2007-2012 budget cycle was managed by a Hungarian authority. Although Ister-Granum received EGTC status, this did not facilitate access to funds, and the perception is that the Euroregion is not treated preferentially in its project applications compared to other applicants:

“We cannot really influence them [the Interreg]. We are just placed in front of ready facts. These are the programs, whether you like them or not. [...] It is very often not what the small villages need, but that for which there is money, for that you have to apply, that’s how it is, even if it might be that a settlement needs something else, but for which you cannot apply.” (Chair, Ister-Granum, Slovakia: #A122)

The results for appropriation of cross-border cooperation activities are summarized in Table 10, which also includes an assessment of member satisfaction. Hídverő members were in general very positive towards their Euroregion, whereas the picture was more mixed in Ister-Granum. The low satisfaction relates to motivation for membership when instrumental expectations are not fulfilled. It should be added that this captures one point in time, though, as the majority of interviews were conducted in 2010 and 2011. Respondents in some supplementary interviews carried out in 2012 tended to point out that recent developments were hopeful.

“I just feel that the Ister-Granum is more directed towards the Hungarian side. I would not say that there is nothing for the Slovaks, there are for instance the [Ipoly] bridges, but because there are more Hungarian villages in Ister-Granum it is more tilted towards them.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő and Ister-Granum: #A67)

“I would say that the colleagues from the Northern Highlands [in Slovakia] were more active, for instance getting the fish stairs.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A49)

“On the other side they got many bike roads and much money, the majority went there, more I do not know.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A110)

“Thus, it was a political thing, nothing is working, the picture is not working. Ister-Granum did not succeed to bring anything to the Slovak part. Well, there are some brochures, some parrot talking about tourism, wine area, a couple of cultural actions, but there was no big investment projects.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A127)

As can be seen in the quotes, there were also perceptions, even if not widespread, in both Hungary and Slovakia among Ister-Granum members that ‘the other side’ got out more of the cooperation. Overall, this justified the assessment of member satisfaction as low in Ister-Granum, whereas it was high for Hídverő. Both organizations are assessed as medium in appropriation of cross-border cooperation activities, Ister-Granum because it has made efforts to carry out the functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display windows, but it has had problems with all of them. Hídverő has only properly carried out the seismograph function, but on the other hand it has appropriated the cross-border space to some extent, as it has no other active cross-border forums in the area that could compete with this.

Table 10. *Member satisfaction and appropriation of cross-border governance space of Hídverő and Ister-Granum.*

Euroregion	Ister-Granum	Hídverő
<i>Member satisfaction</i>	low	high
<i>Appropriation of cross-border governance space</i>	medium	medium

*

As seen in this section, Hídverő and Ister-Granum are two Euroregions that function and perform very differently in terms of activities, organizational capacity and the way they situated themselves in the cross-border governance space. The concluding section will link these results to the motivation, participation and interaction patterns discussed in section 3.3.

3.5 Conclusion

The scenes in the beginning of this chapter depicted one Euroregion in crisis, and another one that seemingly flourished. Why had the former (Ister-Granum EGTC) had arrived at the verge of disintegration whereas the latter (Hídverő Association) showed no such tendencies? Further research and analysis demonstrated the inherent difficulties in defining ‘success’ or ‘performance’ when it comes to organizations in general, and Euroregions in particular, as discussed in Chapter 2. Ister-Granum scored higher than Hídverő in five out of six categories in cross-border cooperation intensity. It also had made considerable efforts to fulfill all three functions of siemograph, loudspeaker and display window. Nonetheless, Hídverő was assessed favorably in the two performance categories, due to its satisfied members and unthreatened position as a mediator for cross-border contacts in the area. While earlier efforts to make something grander out of Hídverő with the Danube Euroregion had come to nothing, the core organization had survived. In spite of these assessment difficulties, the investigation allows for making some statements in relation to the two main research questions.

The first question asked why and how local governments in the central Hungarian-Slovak borderland participate in Euroregions and how they interact. This was analyzed from the perspectives of motivation, participation and interaction of local governments. The analysis demonstrated how identity/polity constituted a basis motivation for membership in both Euroregions, but in Ister-Granum this was complemented by an instrumental motivation that was mainly grant-driven, i.e. members expected to see concrete inflow of resources as a direct result of their membership. The results were in line with the findings of both Blatter (2000) and Perkmann (2003). The investigation established how Ister-Granum had a large share members that were either indifferent or passive information-seekers, and only a small clique driving the cooperation, whereas the members of Hídverő tended to be more active and equally ranked within the organization. Finally, Hídverő had denser communicational

networks, both domestically and across the border. Nevertheless, overall cross-border communication is relatively sparse for both organizations, with weekly and monthly contacts being the exception rather than the norm.

The second question asked how social capital, resulting from motivation and interacting patterns, influence Euroregional function and performance. The analysis demonstrated the importance of congruence between motivation and actual activities. The case of Ister-Granum showed how a Euroregional organization, in which many of the members base their membership on visible grants, will suffer from an output legitimacy problem (see Scharpf 1997a:19). This makes it more difficult to create actively participating members, who are in close contact with each other also outside the framework of Euroregion meetings, i.e. the kind of membership that signifies the presence of strong between-group (transnational) social capital.

Conclusions can also be drawn as to the distribution of social capital between three subsets: bonding, bridging and linking social capital. The analysis showed that the interaction between local governments indicated the existence of strong bonding social capital on institutional level for Hídverő, whereas Ister-Granum had little of this resource. Hídverő had access bridging social capital (a network including other sectors) locally, whereas Ister-Granum has struggled to do the same on a regional scale. Ister-Granum had, however, only been moderately successful, and that as well concentrated to the heart of the cooperation, Esztergom. Both organizations have linking social capital, but concentrated to some personal party-based affiliations of some actors, limited in scope.

To sum up, Hídverő possesses bonding social capital, and also partially bridging social capital, which enables it to perform the seismograph function well, but does not utilize these resources to attempt to perform the other two functions (loudspeaker and display window).

Ister-Granum is lacking in terms of bonding social capital, is working to create bridging social capital, but uses the linking in a non-strategic manner.

To what extent such between-group social capital is also a consequence of within-group (domestic) social capital will be analyzed and discussed in detail in Chapter 6. However, before that, Chapter 4 and 5 give the results of the research at the two other national borders.

CHAPTER 4: A CASE STUDY OF TWO EUROREGIONS AT THE SWEDISH-NORWEGIAN BORDER⁵⁷

The international European road *E18* leads from Craigavon in the United Kingdom to Saint Petersburg in Russia, with much of its 1,900 kilometers located in Norway and Sweden. It is the main route for motor traffic between the capital cities Oslo and Stockholm, and on that way it passes through forested rural areas in the area surrounding the border. At the end of the 1980s there was widespread discontent among decision-makers and citizens in the local governments close to the border about the road being unsafe and slow, and in need of urgent funding for improvements. Local decision-makers on both sides realized that the problem was not confined to Norway or Sweden, due to significant flows of people and goods crossing the border, and decided to take joint action. In 1990, the municipalities located closest to the border set up a forum to coordinate actions towards the central decision-makers and authorities of each state. In the mid-90s this developed into a regular committee, consisting of the leading politicians from all member municipalities, registered in Norway. The Euroregion Värmland-Østfold had thus been formed, henceforth referred to as 'VarmOst'.

This chapter uses this organization and its neighbor to the south, Gränskommitten Bohuslän-Østfold -Dalsland (henceforth 'OstBoh'), as cases to explore the same research questions as the overall study: (1) Why and how do local governments in the South Swedish-Norwegian borderlands participate in Euroregions and how do they interact? (2) How does social capital impact the performance and function of Euroregions? In addition, the chapter follows one additional line of inquiry, to see whether there is such a thing as 'Scandinavian exceptionalism' when it comes to cross-border cooperation.

⁵⁷Part of the analysis of qualitative and relational data in this chapter and in Chapter 7 has been published in Swedish in Svensson and Ojehag 2012. Andreas Ojehag, PhD candidate at Karlstad University and one of the lead researchers in an inter-disciplinary project on the Swedish-Norwegian borderlands, also provided valuable intellectual input on the links between globalization and local processes.

The same methods are used as in the other case studies in the dissertation (see Chapter 2). Suffice to say, the data underlying the analysis consists of organizational material (statutes, minutes, promotional material) and 39 interviews with representatives of the OstBoh and VarmOst Euroregions.⁵⁸ The analysis was facilitated by the use of the softwares AtlasTi, UciNet and CEUNet.

The chapter is structured in a similar way to the other case studies. The Swedish-Norwegian borderland cooperation is introduced in section 4.1 against the backdrop of Nordic integration and its emphasis on border issues. The area at the southern part of the region is described in terms of geography, economy, history and politico-administrative settings, relying partly on data gathered by interviews and partly on secondary literature and policy documents. This also serves to contextualize and qualify the criteria that were used for the decision to select the Swedish-Norwegian border area as one of those to be studied in this dissertation. The section finishes with a brief description of the two organizations. The analysis starts in section 4.2 using the local governments as units of analysis. It examines why they engage in Euroregional cooperation and how they do so (mode and intensity of engagement with the organization), and also how they interact with each other, both within and outside the framework of the Euroregion. Section 4.3 focuses on the organizations as units of analysis: I first determine the functions that the organizations fulfill and the type of projects and policy areas that are prioritized. I then discuss the type and level of institutional social capital endowments available to the organizations. Conclusions are drawn and the ground set for the final case study in section 4.4.

⁵⁸ For the sake of consistency throughout the dissertation I refer to the highest political representatives of local governments as mayors, although the official title in Norway and Sweden is ‘chairman of the local government board’.

4.1 Cross-border cooperation in the Nordic Countries

One of the few efforts to systematically categorize and compare organizational cross-border regions of Europe was made in a much cited article from 2003. In this, Markus Perkmann constructed a typology in which Scandinavian institutions constituted a separate type, all having high cooperation intensity and large geographical scope (Perkmann 2003). Likewise, Medeiros in a 2011 article refers to the “so called Scandinavian-type Euroregions” (Medeiros 2011:152), described as “older and, as a consequence, should have a higher degree of maturity and better outputs in generating positive and effective territorial impacts” (Medeiros 2011:142). However, the previous chapter on two Hungarian-Slovakian Euroregions demonstrated the pitfalls of comparative assessment in general, and the assumption of similarity within one geographical context in particular. Instead, I argue that the main line of Scandinavian ‘exceptionalism’ refers to the relative unimportant role played by European-level actors (Council of Europe, European Union, Association of European Border Regions) compared to Nordic Cooperation actors (Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers). I further argue that, on the other hand, such exceptionalism is not applicable to the function and performance, where there is significant variation.

Several Euroregions in the Nordic countries were established as early as the 1960s and 1970s, and the idea that local cross-border cooperation is beneficial stems from the post-World War II years. Local cross-border cooperation was one of the issues that had been taken up by the Nordic Council, founded in 1952, and included in the Treaty of Cooperation between the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden signed on March 23, 1962. Article 25 stated that when “the need and the necessary conditions exist for joint economic development of adjoining parts of the territories of two or more contracting parties, these parties shall jointly endeavor to promote such development” (cited in Anderson 1967:174).

Analogous to the European integration process, intense work was done in the 1950s in order to foster Nordic unity. Although having much in common, these countries also share a history of wars and tensions. World War II added additional strain with two countries occupied by Germany (Denmark, Norway), one country in liaison with Germany during part of the war (Finland), one occupied by the Allies (Faroe islands) and two declared neutral (Iceland, Sweden). Even though Sweden accepted many refugees from the occupied countries, and the vast forested Swedish-Norwegian borderland served as a supply center for the resistance, the fact remained that the allegedly ‘neutral’ country of Sweden let German troops pass on its soil on their way to Norway, which meant an extra strain casting shadows on the relations long after the war had ended (see Ekman 2005 on Norwegian-Swedish relations after the war).

It was in this context of intertwined unity and discord that the Nordic Council was founded, consisting of Members of Parliament from the participating countries. Together they developed and negotiated the Treaty of Cooperation that set forth the common goal to “maintain and develop further cooperation between the Nordic countries in the legal, cultural, social and economic fields” (Treaty of Cooperation, 1962, Article 1). The *Nordic Council of Ministers*, a similar cooperation on governmental level, was formalized in 1971 a time when none of the countries had joined the European Union yet. The Nordic Council of Ministers took on an active role in promoting the cooperation between local and regional authorities located close to the borders, and started to give financial and technical support to border regions.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The annual budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2012 was 932 million DKK, approximately 125 million EUR. Out of that 10.5 MDKK, approximately 1.4 million EUR, was given in direct support to the operation of Euroregions. In addition, other budget lines can be utilized for project applications depending on their activities (Nordic Council of Ministers 2012:5). According to the 2009-2012 strategy plan of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Business, Energy & Regional Policy, the current aim is to make “functional regions located on two or more sides of national borders sustainable and developing and thereby benefiting the people in the Nordic border areas” (Nordic Council of Ministers 2012:116, my translation).

If the Nordic cooperation (manifested by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers) is more important for cross-border regions in Scandinavia than the European cooperation (manifested by the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the European Association of Border Regions), we can expect to see greater operational importance of this support in organizational documents and more reference to the Nordic Council and other Nordic organizations in the interviews with organizational representatives and members. Evidence in support of the latter will be presented later in this chapter, and I will therefore argue that there is a case for talking about ‘Nordoregions’ rather than ‘Euroregions’.

4.1.1 The Norwegian-Swedish border area

The border between Sweden and Norway stretches over 1,600 kilometers, making it one of the longest borders in Europe.⁶⁰ The borderlands are mainly constituted by mountains, pine forests and plenty of lakes, and although the southern part of the border is more populated than the rest, it is still mainly a rural area characterized by longer distances between settlements than in other parts of Europe. It takes one and a half hour by car for the chair of VarmOst, one of the studied organizations, to visit his deputy, located 101 kilometers away. The distance between the secretariat of OstBoh, the other studied organization, and the Norwegian Chair is even greater, 119 kilometers. In that sense, Perkmann is right in that the geographical scope of these Euroregions is large compared with many European Euroregions (Perkmann 2003). However, as I have argued elsewhere, what matters is cognitive distance, which is relative rather than absolute (see Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a). This was evident from my interviews, in which interviewees from these organizations rarely referred to geographical distance, unless their local governments were located at the outskirts of the territory covered by the Euroregions. Hence, what mattered was the relative perception of

⁶⁰ In fact, the length roughly equals the distance between the centers of two of the case studies in this study, as the driving distance between the towns Halden in Norway and Esztergom in Hungary is 1,588 kilometers.

being furthest away, not the absolute distance. Neither size (geographical scope) nor absolute distance is therefore a factor that will feature in my analysis in this chapter.

The border between Norway and Sweden marks a linguistic and cultural difference, although the languages are so close that the nationals of one country have no problem understanding the nationals of the other. This is especially true of the borderland areas, where the local Swedish dialect has many similarities to the Norwegian language spoken in that area.⁶¹

Although Scandinavia to the outside world has a reputation as a rather homogenous area characterized by high welfare, high taxes and high incomes, there are differences between the areas on each side of the border. While the Swedish side for the past four decades has been characterized by overall out-migration and population loss, the Norwegian side has benefited from Oslo serving as a motor for the economy (Interreg Sweden-Norway and CERUT 2007, Regionfakta 2012, Fyrbodal Intermunicipal Cooperation 2012, Østfold Regional Analysis 2012).

There is also a marked difference in equivalised disposable income; the average one-person household (under 64 years of age) had 27% higher disposable income in Norway than in Sweden in 2009 (Haagensen 2012:66). This difference can be assumed to be higher in the border area, since the Norwegian side is located close to Oslo. However, official statistics do not take into account income generated in the other country. That affects, for instance, the municipality of Årjäng (member of VarmOst), which ranks low in Swedish income lists, but in fact has an average-affluent population due to the high proportion of the workforce employed in Norway (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A98).⁶²

⁶¹ Norway officially recognizes two versions of the Norwegian language (bokmal and nynorsk) along with Sami and Romani languages (Nordic Council 2012).

⁶² This means that although I categorized Sweden/Norway as an economically homogenous border area in the case-selection phase of this project, homogeneity is indeed a relative phenomenon and the cut-off point that was used (50% national GDP-difference) is crude. While the differences along the Norwegian-Swedish border are not as big as for example differences at the Polish-German or Finnish-Russian border, there are still differences big enough to have effects on mobility patterns.

In total, the volume of commuting taking place across the Norwegian-Swedish border is bigger than in the Swedish-Danish Oresund border area (Interreg Sverige-Norge 2007, 32), despite the latter receiving more attention in media and from researchers. In 2008, 26,000 persons commuted daily or weekly from Sweden to Norway, compared to 21,000 from Sweden to Denmark (Haagensen 2012:90). While labor mobility is gravitating towards Norway, the flow is reversed when it comes to shopping and real estate purchase. A number of shopping centers specifically catering to Norwegian customers have sprung up on the Swedish side in the 1990s and 2000s (for more on this see Löfgren 2008, Olsson, Berger and Gottfridsson 2011). This has been called an “unplanned integration, often seen as a problem by the Norwegian state, but a blessing for the weak economy on the Swedish side” (Löfgren 2008:207).

The Swedish entry into the European Union in 1995 had some effects on the frequency of controls at the Swedish-Norwegian border⁶³ as well as on customs regulations. However, it did not have any significant consequences for everyday life among nearby municipalities and populations. What did change for cross-border cooperation was that the border areas became eligible for European Union funds for cross-border cooperation; Norway joined the EUs Interreg for cross-border program as well on a voluntary basis, but funds are located separately. Norwegian project owners receive their financial assistance directly from Norwegian sources instead of via the European Regional Fund (Interreg Sverige-Norge 2012).

The politico-administrative settings are similar in the two countries in that they are both characterized by having strong states and local governments, whereas the regional level traditionally has been weaker. However, in recent decades there has been a trend towards regionalization through increased cooperation between local governments.

⁶³ Nordic citizens have been allowed to freely pass the border without passports since the 1950s, according to the 1957 Agreement on Suspension of Inter-Nordic Passport Controls (Nordic Council 2012).

In Norway inter-municipal cooperation has emerged as an answer to the perceived problem having too many small municipalities. In spite of much debate, municipal consolidation has not taken place (ECON Analyse 2006:1) and as a result more than half a dozen of the investigated municipalities have less than 2,000 inhabitants. Instead, municipalities in Norway increasingly form specific-purpose organizations, for example on health provision for elderly, garbage collection or education.⁶⁴ In the Østfold administrative NUTS 3 region, three inter-municipal organizations operate. The members of OstBoh are primarily members of the inter-municipal organizations (regionrad) Nedre Glomma and Mossregionen, whereas all members of VarmOst are also members of the IndreØstfold inter-municipal organization except Aremark and Moss. The border town of Halden does not partake in any such organization. In the Norwegian part of VarmOst, Indre Østfold is the highest organ for inter-municipal regional cooperation. It is an organization consisting of ten municipalities in Østfold. In addition there are number of organizations created for specific tasks, such as the protection of vulnerable children, fire protection, etc. These can be run either as jointly owned companies, via municipal agreements or a task-specific non-profit (Regional Portal for Indre Østfold 2012).

The number of specific task organizations is lower in Sweden, but there are several regional initiatives. Examples include Region Värmland, Region Västra Götaland, Fyrbodals Kommunalförbund, West Sweden, Finsam Värmland (labor market and social insurance management) and Västra Värmlandssamarbetet (business development policy). Kommunalförbundet Fyrbodal incorporated in 2001 actors from previous organizations such as BOSAM, Fyrstadskansliet and KommunalförbundetDalsland. Cooperation generally dates back to the 1970s with formalization in the 1980s and 1990s. The discourse of mutual

⁶⁴A survey from 2006 showed that many of them have bad oversight and knowledge of these organizations. Hence, while the increased nesting of municipalities into intermunicipal organizations in this study is used as an indicator of strengthened networks and trust relations (i.e. social capital), it is also true that these organizations may weaken general societal transparency and political legitimacy (ECON Analyse 2006).

independence is emphasized as the overall justification for its existence: “Since long the municipalities have seen the advantages of cooperation. This has implicated the creation of several institutions for cooperation within this geographical area. What is new is the change of county design [the creation of Västergötlands region] has increased the opportunities for coordination in Fyrbodal. More and more it has become clear that the municipalities within the area need each other in order to jointly develop a strong region” (Fyrbodal Intermunicipal Association 2004:8).

4.1.2 The case study organizations

The focus in this chapter is on the most southern part of this long border, from the joint archipelago of Strömstad and Hvaler to roughly the beginning of the mountainous areas. The two Euroregions operating in the area (OstBoh and VarmOst) cover a territory much of which is sparsely populated, but which still constitutes a nexus between the three major cities of Oslo, Gothenburg and Stockholm. The international European roads E6 (Oslo-Gothenburg) and E18 (Oslo-Stockholm) constitute vital infrastructural elements around which the two Euroregions gather. The former has a higher traffic load (approximately four times the annual amount, Interreg Sverige-Norge 2007:33), but each road constitutes the most important public road in their territories. Administratively, both Norway and Sweden are unitary states with historically strong states combined with strong municipalities (in terms of financial independence and scope of activities). The regional tier has been largely an arena of state administration (in Norway via *fylken*, in Sweden via *lansstyrelserna*), even though both countries, especially Sweden, has gone through a process of political regionalization, i.e. increased power to elected regional decision-making bodies or regional associations of municipalities. Table 11 provides a summary of the case selection criteria (outlined above) and the main characteristics of the two Euroregions.

Table 11. *Key characteristics of OstBoh, VarmOst and the Swedish-Norwegian borderland*

Characteristics \ Euroregion	OstBoh	VarmOst
<i>Founded</i>	1980	1990
<i>Local governments in 2011</i>	22	15
<i>Approximate population 2010</i>	470,000	210,000
<i>Working language</i>	Swedish (dominant), Norwegian	Norwegian (dominant), Swedish
<i>Border existing since</i>	1751, 1905 (dissolved union)	1751, 1905 (dissolved union)
<i>State form</i>	unitary	unitary
<i>National GDP(IMF 2010, in USD)</i>	SE: 61,098, NO: 96,591	SE: 61,098, NO: 96,591
<i>Regional GDP (Eurostat, NUTS 2 2008)</i>	Norra Mellansverige: 31,100 Østfold 32,755	Norra Mellansverige: 31,100 Østfold 32,755

In section 4.2 and 4.3 the relevant aspects of the two organizations and their members will be analyzed together, but they are here introduced separately in order to provide a brief factual background.

Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold (VarmOst) is an association registered in Norway, consisting of fifteen municipalities, ten on the Norwegian side (Aremark, Askim, Eidsberg, Römskog, Marker, Trøgstad, Skiptvet, Spydeberg, Hobøl and Moss) and five on the Swedish side (Säffle, Årjäng, Grums, Bengtsfors and Karlstad. Nine of them are located within 50 kilometers distance from the border (seven on the Norwegian side and two on the Swedish side). The biggest towns are Moss and Karlstad⁶⁵, located at each end of the covered territory, thereby creating a rectangular region characterized by two poles at each side with small or midsize municipalities in between. However, Moss and Karlstad have not acted as locomotives for the cooperation, but have been less active than the smaller municipalities located between them.⁶⁶ Out of the municipalities in Region Østfold, 55% are members of

⁶⁵ In 2010 Moss had 30,030 inhabitants, Karlstad 86,348, whereas the remaining ranged from 688 (Römskog) to 15,466 (Säffle) (Norwegian Statistical Office 2012, Swedish Statistical Office 2012).

⁶⁶ In the academic literature, borderlands have often been characterized as *peripheral* (van Houtum 2000:60). VarmOst mirrors such a structure on the scale of the Euroregion, as those municipalities directly at the border are the smallest ones and hence also the most peripheral.

VarmOst, and out of the municipalities in Region Värmland 31% are members. Both Region Østfold and Region Värmland are also members, although the organization has a clear local (inter-municipal), rather than regional, character. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, VarmOst was founded in 1990 as a single-issue committee and gradually took on more tasks until it became a multi-purpose cross-border regional body in the mid-90s. Revised by-laws of VarmOst, valid through 2011, were adopted in 2001 and confirm the primacy of municipalities through the first article, which states that the organization “[...] is an organ for continuous contact and cooperation between those municipalities that are a part of it” (Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold 2011, my translation).

It further states the goals of the organization:

“to promote and actively participate in cooperation across the border with special emphasis on infrastructure, information and removal of border obstacles, in addition to cooperation within health, business development and competence development. [The Euroregion] shall initiate, analyze and coordinate projects that are of interest to the municipalities at the border. [It] can also take tasks which it considers favorable for cooperation in the region.” (Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold 2011, my translation).

The management is carried out by one part-time employee, and the financing of the basic operation of the organization is split into four parts. The regions of Østfold and Värmland, the Swedish municipalities and Norwegian municipalities, each finance 25%. For the first 20 years of its existence the organization had a limited annual budget, since it did not receive any direct external funding for operational costs. Expenses in 2010 were 304,095 NOK (approximately 40,000 EUR). However, this did not include the funds for any of the projects initiated by VarmOst as the organization let municipalities stand as official project owners. For instance the three-year-long project “The children’s border region”, which aimed at stimulating tourism in the area, had a total budget of approximately 1.5 million EUR (6.4 million SEK and 6.5 million NOK). In 2011, the organization was recognized by the Nordic Council as a border region association, and it received an annual assistance of 400,000 NOK.

Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland, OstBoh, consists of 22 municipalities and two regions. Fourteen municipalities are situated on the Swedish side of the border and eight on the Norwegian side. Some members on the Swedish side are indirect members via the inter-municipal association Fyrbodal, whereas others have individual membership allowing them to cast individual votes. The Swedish municipalities are all small to mid-size in terms of number of inhabitants, ranging from Färgelanda with 6,691 inhabitants in 2009 to Trollhättan with 54,873. The Norwegian local governments have a somewhat wider span, with the smallest municipality Aremark having only 1,420 inhabitants, while 72,760 were registered in Fredrikstad in 2009. Four of the Swedish municipalities and seven of the Norwegian ones are located very close to the border (within 50 kilometers to the nearest main border crossing point). The two regional members are Østfold fylkeskommune and Västra Götaland county,⁶⁷ although as in the case of VarmOst, this organization also has a local government rather than a regional character.

OstBoh was funded in 1980 and operates under the Fyrbodal inter-municipal association, i.e. it does not have its own legal personality.⁶⁸ In 2010 it spent 3,900,000 SEK (approx 390,000 EUR) on overhead costs and various projects; the largest income was project money (approximately 2 million SEK), Nordic Council financial support (1.3 million SEK) and member fees (0.5 million SEK). It is steered by a Board comprising the highest political leaders of most of the member municipalities, and an Executive Committee consisting of the highest political leaders of five municipalities close to the border. Its secretariat employed three people in 2011 (Gränskommitten Østfold-Bohuslän-Dalsland 2012). The by-laws state that the organization is:

⁶⁷ Västra Götaland is relatively new region, created in 1998 by merging the counties of Alvsborg, Goteborg and Bohus and Skaraborg. Most of the municipalities in this very large region are not members of OstBoh (14 out of 49 are members on the Swedish side, whereas 8 out of 18 municipalities in Østfold region on the Norwegian side are members).

⁶⁸ The legal set-up of Euroregions in Scandinavia varies greatly (Hörnström 2011), and it is hence not a coincidence that VarmOst and OstBoh have different legal arrangements

[...] a forum for continuous contact between the municipalities in the border region and the regions, aiming to promote such contact. Its task is to work for a sustainable development and faith in the future among the inhabitants of the region, to work for the region's resources to be seen as common, and to further contribute to the historical, cultural and linguistic cohesion, to help, facilitate and encourage inhabitants to disregard the mental, practical and formal border that divides the two countries of the region" (Gränskommitten Østfold-Bohuslän-Dalsland 2012, my translation).

In the 2000s OstBoh has devoted much of its work towards reducing 'border obstacles', defined by the Nordic Council as "official decisions, laws and regulations that make it problematic to move, study, commute or conduct business activities across the borders within the Nordic countries" (Nordic Council 2010:3, my translation). The strategy to prioritize this work thus follows the strategy of the Nordic Council.

*

This section has set the ground for the analysis by elaborating on the local context of the macro-criteria used to select the Norwegian-Swedish border as one of the case study areas, and by introducing the two organizations to be studied at this border. The analysis of the data in relation to the research questions starts in the next section.

4.2 Motivation, participation and interaction of local governments in OstBoh and VarmOst

This section seeks to understand patterns of motivation, participation and interaction among local governments that are members in the Euroregions OstBoh and VarmOst. It aims at answering the questions 'why are they members of the organization?', 'how do they participate in the organizations?' and 'how do they interact with each other?' This means that the section deals with the members of Euroregions as the primary unit of analysis, while section 4.3 will treat the organizations as the primary unit of analysis.

4.2.1 Motivation

The aim of this section is to establish whether the motivation for membership in a Euroregion for the investigated local governments was primarily normative or instrumental by nature. As discussed in Chapter 1, the first type of explanation draws on identity and polity as leading ideas, whereas the other relies on rational/instrumental motivation, which can be either directly material (for instance return in the form funding opportunities) or policy-need driven (expected gains from cooperation around policy needs).

The analysis found that in both organizations *identity/polity* was the dominating motivation. Half of the VarmOst, 8 out of 15 interviewed mayors were coded as having elements of this side in their answers, and 13 out of 22 of the OstBoh members. The most common type of answers was that membership is considered unproblematic and something that is expected of them:

“It seems reasonable that we are in. Seems cheap otherwise.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A35)

“There has been a wish to be a part of this, because one thinks one is a part of the larger region, it is natural for Trogstad to be in that and to support it. The organization is in our neighboring area.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #A107)

“For us it is a bit far off [...] we are in the periphery. At the same time it would seem strange if we were not in it, much [work in the organization] is about border-related problems, and we have many Norwegians here, for instance tourists, and in that way it is natural.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A33)

“As of 2010 we are direct institutional members [*and not members via the inter-municipal organization Fyrbodal*]. The municipality of Bengtsfors made the same decision, and we thought it would look strange if that municipality is a direct institutional member, and we are not. There was no discussion around it, everyone agrees.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A35)

“Often it is some type of action, and then you join if you want to or not. [This is] the herd animal mentality.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A99)

These answers all bring forward notions of reasonableness, expectations, and something that you do because others do it. The answers also indicate that the membership is rarely reflected on. In fact, throughout the history of the organizations, there have been few cases of

exit. One Norwegian municipality left VarmOst, and one Norwegian municipality left OstBoh briefly in the 1990s only to rejoin after a change in the political majority. Another Norwegian local government and two Swedish ones had discussed the value of the membership in their local councils, but in most cases the membership had not been challenged. Answers also frequently indicate that cooperation *per se* is valuable, that inter-municipal cooperation is an important element of current and future local government practices.

“I hope the work will continue at least on the same level as today, cooperation is the future “ (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A39)

“There is an increase in associations generally.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh: #A42)

“We joined both around 1993. Before that, Moss was a bit on its own. I decided that we should get more involved with Østfold , but also with the Swedes.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh and VarmOst, #A30)

This belief in cooperation as having an intrinsic value has been confirmed also in other studies in the same or close-by areas (Sundin and Hagen 2006:101, Olsson and Miles 2012:107). Sundin and Hagen describe cooperation as a ‘political watchword’ frequently evoked by respondents from the public sphere both in relation to cross-border cooperation and domestic actors from different sectors (Sundin and Hagen 2006:101).

Embeddedness in inter-municipal cooperation arrangements domestically frequently featured as a motivation as well. In the case of OstBoh this is part of the structure on the Swedish side, as some local governments are direct members (individual membership) whereas others have institutional membership via the inter-municipal organization Fyrbodal. This arrangement is unique, but on the Norwegian side membership in the inter-municipal organization *Yttre Østfold* and *Indre Østfold* still played an important role for membership in the Euroregions (the members of *Yttre Østfold* were generally members of OstBoh, and those of *Indre Østfold* members of VarmOst).

“It is a part of the regional solution, what we do on this side as well. It is the same municipalities that are in.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #A99)

“We joined 1981, via the predecessor of what is now called Fyrbodal. We have thought about becoming direct members. It does not make any practical difference, but would have a symbolic meaning.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A26)

References to common heritage, history or culture were rarely made, which makes the following quote unique in this context:

“Basically, Värmland (the county) stands with one leg in Sweden and the other in Norway, but we have lifted one leg too high from the ground. I guess it was good that the Union [between Sweden and Norway] was dissolved in 1905, but we should do more.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A105)

Thus, the stated motivations for being a member of a Euroregion mainly belong to the identity/polity category. I now turn to whether there are rational/instrumental reasons as well. Such answers do feature and were found in ten interviews, most of these Swedish member municipalities in either Euroregion hoping to capitalize on the growth on the Norwegian side due to the expanding Oslo region.

“It is a part of our stated political objectives and aims to work with contacts in Norway. It is because of the labor market. We have lost 1,700 jobs here, and we want to make the region ‘rounder’ so to speak. One should be able to live in one place and work in other.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A28),

“Norway is important. I think we do too little, and that we should connect better to Oslo, Østfold and the Østfold region. I think Karlstad could play a much clearer role to connect Stockholm and Oslo and make them closer. I think they need each other. Both stand next to each other and look south towards Brussels but I think they should turn to each other. Oslo is a hot area, much growth there, and Stockholm is as well.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A105)

“I think the Norwegian issues are very important, not only for Säfle, but for all of Värmland, depending on what happens around Oslo.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: A100)

These quotes clearly illustrate how cooperation with Norway is perceived as having strategic importance. Throughout the interviews (often before or after the recorded setting), respondents on the Swedish side would also share fact snippets they had picked up elsewhere

and clearly found relevant, such as asking me if I knew that ‘Østfold is the fastest-growing region in Norway’, ‘that Oslo is the economically hottest area in Scandinavia’, ‘if I knew that border municipality X depended on Norway for X number of jobs’, etc. On the Norwegian side references to material returns were few and far in between, although one respondent mentioned that the Euroregion might help reversing the one-sided shopping stream from Norway to Sweden (Mayor, OstBoh: #A31) and two mentioned the need to get more Swedish tourists to Norway (Mayor, OstBoh: #A22, mayor, VarmOst: A104). What do not feature at all are answers referring to funding and grant opportunities. Accessing EU or other funds is *not* an important motivation for being a member in a Euroregion.

The major difference between the two Euroregions manifested in the area of instrumental expectations regarding common policy needs. The introduction to this chapter detailed how growing concerns about the deteriorating quality of the international European road E18 led to the creation of a single-issue committee that became the Euroregion VarmOst. The importance of the road as a rallying factor, or joint policy problem, was clearly visible in interviews:

“The goal was to get [the road] E18 improved and extended. On the Norwegian side this has come really far, there it is a success and the Border Committee was very active in that.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A98)

“The E18 extension, there has been a good cooperation around that, we pushed on both the Swedish and Norwegian side.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #104)

“It started as a cooperation forum for the challenge of the roads which were bad and narrow, and so it continued.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #A103)

OstBoh in fact emerged during a period of less salient policy problems. This does not mean that there had not been potential policy problems that could have served as catalysts for cross-border cooperation already in the 1970s. *Idde fjord*, the inlet from the Nordic Sea that is also a state border between Sweden and Norway, was heavy polluted and over-used for maritime traffic. However, rather than spurring cooperation, the irritation on both sides was so

high and state agencies were so much involved that cooperation efforts broke down totally (Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland 2005:3). Instead, it was a political initiative with a lower profile that would eventually lead to the creation of the OstBohEuroregion. A long-time vice president of OstBoh remembered on the occasion of the organization's 25th anniversary:

“We had a meeting at the TanumsGastgifveri restaurant and Kjell A. Mattson [politician in Stromstad] asked if we should not start doing something with the Norwegians.” (Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland 2005:3).

The quote again indicates how ‘doing something’ in a general sense was more important than ‘doing something about something specific’.

To sum up, the local governments in the two Swedish-Norwegian case studies join and maintain membership in the Euroregions primarily due to reasons of identity/polity reasons, whereas instrumental reasons (related to material or policy needs) takes the backseat. However, VarmOst also has a strong policy-need dimension, as the cooperation grew out of concern about the quality of road number E18.

4.2.2 Participation

Being a member of the two Euroregions is a low-cost investment. The membership fees are miniscule in relation to overall municipal expenses. Fees in 2010 ranged between 2,000 NOK and 36,000 SEK, approximately 200 EUR and 3,600 EUR per local government (see Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold 2010:9, and Gränskommitten Bohuslän-Østfold-Dalsland 2010:25). While extra costs are still incurred by travel to meetings, working time invested in preparation and attendance, it is still not very resource-intensive compared to other type of activities.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Due to this low intensity in terms of resources, participation and interaction cannot be explained very well by resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, Scharpf 1978). The resources that the different municipalities bring in are also relatively similar as they are only one type of actor. Note that this assessment partially differs from Sundin and Hagen 2006,

As in the previous chapter, the local governments were divided into three groups based on their engagement with the organization as inferred from interview data: detached, listeners and active.

The number of **detached members** was low, mainly consisting of a few local governments of OstBoh who are indirect members via the inter-municipal organization Fyrbodal on the Swedish side.

“We don’t have any representation, it has not been interesting to us. We don’t participate in meetings, but get information through the inter-municipal organization [Fyrbodal]. Sometimes I look at the agenda.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A36)

“Once we hosted a meeting. Then I was there. Otherwise I don’t really know what’s happening at meetings.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A34).

The group of **listeners** was larger, constituting roughly one third to half of the members (this also varies over time as political majorities and personalities of leaders change). The type of information Euroregions can provide to these listeners mainly consists of three components:

- what happens in other municipalities, especially on the other side of the border;
- larger trends in the borderland area (commuting, employment, migration, etc);
- project and funding opportunities.

Both Euroregions in the study emphasize the importance of getting to know more about political, social and cultural developments on ‘the other side’, for example the OstBoh standing item of ‘going around the table’ was mentioned by several as useful.

“We have started to always take a round around the table to hear what has happened in each municipality – you can think about whether this is something

who find resource dependence theory applicable when it comes to cooperation between twin towns located directly at the border. Out of the four pairs they investigated, one is located within the area of this study (Årjäng-Marker).

we should think about – this information we did not have before.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh: #A41)

This is perceived as especially important, since local newspapers devote very limited space to what happens in the other country. OstBoh has been a constant supplier of statistics and reports relevant to the borderland, whereas VarmOst has done so on an irregular basis. In line with the finding above that funding or grants do not feature as important statements for being a member of a Euroregion, it is not surprising that the members also do not mention that project or funding opportunities make up an important part of the agendas.

Engagement can also be passive if the highest leadership (Mayor) does not attend or follow-up on meetings. This was stated in only one case:

“I have chosen not to attend. You get so many invitations as a mayor and even if the meetings are not long, they involve long travels, I have chosen to delegate this to others.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A30)

While delegation does not have to mean anything less in terms of outcomes, the high ratio of mayors that attend meetings themselves points to the political meaning attached to the cross-border cooperation institution.

Active participants, who utilize meetings to advance issues of cross-border relevance or generate ideas for joint projects, constitute roughly half of the members. They perceive of meetings as more than information points:

“We think that our activity in OstBoh will increase significantly. There is political consensus in the municipality that this is important.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A28)

”There is an internal strategic debate now: what do we want the role of the organization to be? [...] In addition to the school issue [settling of fees across the border for commuting children] we want to raise the issue of housing registration [of Norwegians owning houses in the municipality. [The Euroregions] have not dealt this very much because before every municipality should do everything themselves, but now there is more of cooperation.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A35)

“There can be a living discussion, even if it is not a hot debate. The questions have been established before.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A40)

The work and atmosphere of both Euroregions are described as *political but not partisan*. By ‘political’ I mean that the organizations consist of elected officials, with only the secretariat employees as regular civil servant participants. None of them have standing working groups that would include administrative staff, although especially OstBoh usually has several project groups with civil servant participation. However, the groups are not partisan, in that differences in political party origin rarely makes a difference at meetings, and all respondents rate the importance of political parties as very low for how issues are dealt with. Similar to other regional forums in Scandinavia, there is a process of depolitisization, in which consensus (Hudson 2001, Säll 2011) is valued as something good, rather than something that hides structures of power that after all still exist.

“At meetings you don’t always know which party people represent.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A29)

“In Dalsland many municipalities have been ruled by the Center Party, but you cannot feel that in the border committee [OstBoh].” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A28)

“Political parties are totally uninteresting, I never ask [the Swedes] which party they represent.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh: #A22)

“I usually find out the party, sometimes they have a pin on their jacket so you can see which party they represent, but the issues we take up are often general, for instance geographical things, railway for instance, and not political.” (Mayor, Norway, OstBoh: #A31)

“You look for the least common denominator. I don’t know what party [all Norwegians] belong to, I don’t ask.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A26)

Policy areas that could induce conflicts are either not entered into at all, or cooperation is more at the exploratory stage where potential conflicts do not matter.

“[When we meet government representatives on the issue of unfair competition from the Swedish border towns] we do not represent the border committee [VarmOst]. But we are always open, as late as yesterday I talked to Årjäng and Säffle about this. I have been open about what we are doing, not because they should not have what they get, but because we need more. That is not a conflict. Competition is not bad as long as it is open competition on the same conditions. If we look at it more broadly, we can see that when it comes to

establishment of companies, everything within 50 kilometers from Orje [central location of Marker) is good. Every person moving to that kind of distance is good, if it is on the Norwegian or Swedish side it does not matter, because then something happens in our region, things do not stand still.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #103)

In short, the analysis of participation showed the patterns of the two organizations to be relatively similar, with the exception that OstBoh had some members that were inactive, mainly due to its membership strategy of allowing indirect membership on the Swedish side via an inter-municipal organization. Both organizations were characterized by their members as being political but not partisan, i.e. the organizational culture is one of depoliticized consensus-seeking culture in which difficult topics are avoided. This does not mean that party contacts are not utilized in other connections, which will be clarified in section 4.3 on function and performance of the Euroregions. Before that, the next section investigates the patterns of interaction that local governments within the Euroregions show.

4.2.3 Interaction

In a booklet issued for the 25th anniversary of OstBoh, it was stated that the organization “has the densest and most frequent contact pattern along the whole Swedish-Norwegian border” (Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland 2005:3). How this statement was arrived at is not elaborated on, but the data collected within the framework of the dissertation allows for testing whether OstBoh or VarmOst has the most intensive contact pattern in terms of institutional political communication between its members. This can be done with the help of tools from social network analysis of self-declared values of frequency of communication with each and every member of the Euroregion. A detailed account of the method and the results is given in Chapter 6.

In brief, my findings demonstrate that VarmOst, not OstBoh, has the denser network between the two, and that it is premature to refer to the Euroregions as cohesive and integrated cross-border political networks. The networks clearly display two sub-groups based on national location, connected by a small number of transnational links. Not surprisingly, the cross-border communication network is best developed between the local governments located directly at the border, and they are the ones most likely to interact outside the framework of meetings and events arranged by the Euroregion itself. The majority meets members from the other country only on those occasions (three-four times a year), and also has difficulties to recall the names of their partners on the other side. A survey of name recognition of the OstBoh members showed that they were on average able to give the names of 10.6 out of 21 other mayors in the Euroregion, but out of these an average of 9.2 were from the same country, i.e. the average mayor knows only one (and a half) mayor by name on the other side of the border. However, the variance is big, as some mayors know 3-4 by name on the other side, whereas many do not know any. Again, not surprisingly, the mayors located directly at the border knew more than their peers living further into the country.⁷⁰

The assessment of contacts as sparse is not shared by members themselves, who often referred to contacts as close:

“I know everybody who is in the executive committee. Those who are further in [geographically] I don’t know. Right now I don’t know so many due to the Norwegian elections. Most cooperation is with Römskog, Aremark, and Eidsberg.” (Mayor, Sweden, VarmOst: #A98)

”I think we know each other quite well and that is good. But every four years there are changes with the elections. But the administration remains, so it is important. Therefore we will have a joint day in Karlstad in December. We do that because it is useful, but also because it is an arena for the new [elected politicians] to meet each other. Knowledge of each other leads also to friendship, which makes the cooperation work better. If you have met, know where they stand, than it is easier to go to the phone afterwards and say ‘thanks

⁷⁰The data for VarmOst for this question is incomplete. Due to elections taking place the month prior to the fieldwork, in some cases mayors that had just stepped down were interviewed via phone and the phone setting was not conducive for this type of question.

for last time, there is an issue I need to discuss’.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #103)

“I have come to know Årjäng very well, and with her [the Mayor] I was in Säfte yesterday to take a coffee and talk about border challenges [...] we know each other. I call X when I take the boat on the channel and then we have coffee together.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #103)

“We have learned about how they think on the other side, it has been very informative on what there is on the other side, we learned things, met Mayors...” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #104)

However, asked specifically how the contacts across the border have developed over a shorter time-span, the last five years, there are varied answers. About half the respondents (in both Euroregions) see no change at all or a decrease in contacts, whereas the other half stated that contacts are much denser, expressed in terms as in the two quotes below:

“In the beginning there was not so much contact, very sporadic. The last 15 years it has increased.” (Mayor, Norway, VarmOst: #106)

“The cooperation across the border has increased continuously. Halden and Stromstad had not talked with each other on a political level before the Euroregion started.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A32)

The social network analysis also revealed a relation between the domestic levels of institutional social capital and the levels in the cross-border area. This indicated that strengthening of institutional between-group social capital follows a path of strengthening social capital on the domestic level (within-group). The argument to be advanced is that social capital can then serve as one of several factors influencing how the organizations function and perform.

An alternative way to demonstrate ties between local governments in an advanced joint cross-border policy space would be to use the existence of formal legal arrangements between local governments as the indication of a tie. However, there are only a few such legal arrangements along the whole Swedish-Norwegian border, although there are legal provisions for how this can be done (Skomsöy and Sundin 2005). Examples of the formal arrangements that do exist include an agreement on shared water/sewage for a small location at the border

arranged by the municipalities of Dals-Ed and Aremark, while Marker and Årjäng jointly operate a ski slope.⁷¹

Even though the cross-border regions investigated in this chapter belong to generally well-off Scandinavian countries, the local conditions at the border in these cases are different in terms of the availability of employment, price level, and also, to a lesser extent, income levels. Such local economic heterogeneity fosters mobility across the border, but is generally not conducive for the kind of mutual trust and, to a certain effect, liking, that it takes to sustain and nurture population-level social capital. Mayors in local governments where Norwegians bought houses at cheap prices indicated that common human sentiments such as resentment and jealousy could be found, even if they are not frequent. It is not unreasonable to assume that similar opinions to some extent could be present among the mayors as well, affecting the level of institutional social capital. However, apart from raising awareness that these issues exist, no evidence of mistrust could be found among the interviewees.

Norwegian respondents, on their side, frequently turned to the subject of the precarious economic situation of their local governments as if to emphasize that just because Norway as such is going well, it does not mean that local governments are sitting on any oil funds or riches. In addition, the caravan of shoppers going across the borders – from the policymaker's perspective – constituted an annoyance when local shops could no longer compete. The ambivalence towards the symbolical and practical position of the border may also inhibit progress on creating functioning cross-border regions, as the border especially for those situated closest to it – is viewed as both a source of (unequally distributed) income and as an obstacle. It follows that development that has taken place has done so not because of mobility

⁷¹Policy cooperation is also said to take place without legal arrangements, even though less formalized cooperation can also be assumed to be less substantial. Halden and Stromstad cooperate on business, environment, culture, education and care. Dals-Ed exchanges urban planning plans with its Norwegian neighbors. An example concerns the award of a license for opening a shopping center in Dals-Ed, when the opinion of neighboring Halden was asked for. In addition, Halden was involved in consultations regarding the establishment of a call center company in Dals-Ed, as it saw the advantages of a joint labor market (Lorentzon 2006).

but in spite of it.⁷² While much institutional social capital can be amassed just by repeated face-to-face meetings, reinforcing the common culture, and similarities, this resource would yield more profitable ‘interest rates’ if the economic heterogeneity did not exist.

The results demonstrate that there exists a bonding institutional social capital, due to positive attitudes to each other and to cooperation, but that it could be increased significantly if interaction was more intense. The results also demonstrate some variation, albeit small, between the two investigated Euroregions. Table 12 summarizes the assessments in the different categories (see Chapter 2).

Table 12. *Between-group social capital of OstBoh and VarmOst*

	<i>Euroregion</i>	OstBoh	VarmOst
BETWEEN- GROUP SOCIAL CAPITAL	<i>Strength of cross-border communications</i>	low	medium
	<i>Perceived trend of contacts</i>	increasing	increasing
	<i>Level of trust to other side</i>	medium	high
	<i>Presence of conflict (politicization of issues)</i>	low	low

*

This section on motivation, participation and interaction has treated Euroregions as the primary unit of analysis, seeking to answer questions on why and how they participate in the two investigated Swedish-Norwegian Euroregions, but also how they interact with each other. Motivation, participation and interaction patterns constitute independent variables that were expected to show some variation. This turned out to be correct as VarmOst had a stronger policy-need element, although both were primarily identity/polity-based in motivation. Bonding between-group social capital existed in both institutions, but somewhat stronger in VarmOst. Participation patterns were relatively similar, with the exception that OstBoh had

⁷²This is partially against the argument of some economists, that for instance increased shopping along the Norwegian-Swedish border is an ‘engine for regional development’ (Lorentzon 2011).

some members that were inactive, mainly due to its membership strategy of allowing indirect membership on the Swedish side via an inter-municipal organization.

4.3 Function and performance of OstBoh and VarmOst

This section deals with organizations as primary units of analysis, and elaborates on the dependent variable of the project: what do they do and how well do they do this? In other words, what are the functions and performance of Euroregions? First the policy areas they concentrate on will be introduced via typical projects and preferred policy areas. The two cases are then assessed in terms of cross-border cooperation intensity and appropriation of cross-border space, judged by the extent to which they function as seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows. Table 13 summarizes the policy areas that are considered most important by the members of the organizations (interviewees were asked to grade a number of policy fields), and two specific activities that members highlighted. The purpose of the table is primarily to give a quick overview of policy and project activity.

Table 13. Typical cooperation areas and activities of OstBoh and VarmOst

<p style="text-align: center;">OstBoh</p> <p>Most important to members: infrastructure, economic development, facilitate cross-border mobility</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Contact Fair. Annual business fair that has been organized since 1999 and which aims at mutual benefitting Swedish and Norwegian companies in the border area. Typically 100-150 companies and organizations take part. Participating businesses use online catalogues to request short (25-minute meetings) with each other during the fair. The model was developed under the name Europartenariat by DG XVI (Regional policy) and DGXXIII (Enterprise Policy). 2. Collect, evaluate and assess border obstacles, i.e. differences in legal frameworks between the countries that hinder mobility and business, and lay forward these issues either directly to agencies/ministries or to other fora that can take them further (i.e. Grenseradet).
<p style="text-align: center;">VarmOst</p> <p>Most important to members: infrastructure, facilitate cross-border mobility, economic development</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting high-speed train connection Oslo-Stockholm. Focus of several meetings, seminars, delegations to the capitals and resolutions in the 2000s has been to convince decision-makers that (a) there is a need for a high-speed train between its capitals, and (b) that this should go along the same route as the <i>European route E18</i>, the original joining issue of the Euroregion. 2. Children's borderland. The project was developed by three of the five Swedish members (Årjäng, Bengtsfors, Säffle) and all Norwegian members via the inter-municipal organization Indre Østfold . It serves to coordinate tourism promotion by displaying a joint image to the outside world especially targeting families. The project has a joint website (http://www.barnensgransland.se/).

As seen in Table 13, the ranked preference of policy areas is almost identical, but the absolute values that were attached to each policy activity and what they actually do show that infrastructure is still of the greatest importance for VarmOst, whereas OstBoh focuses more on working directly with business to promote increases in cross-border business links and thereby economic development. OstBoh also worked more strategically than VarmOst, both towards policy issues by using the Nordic Council-developed concept of 'border obstacles' and by annual follow-up and evaluation of its work to see that it follows its set priorities.

Following the operationalization of cross-border cooperation as laid out in Chapter 2, the assessment of this dimension is summarized in Table 14 and is elaborated on below.

Table 14. *Cross-border cooperation intensity of OstBoh and VarmOst*

Euroregion	OstBoh	VarmOst
<i>Strength of legal arrangement</i>	low	low
<i>Robustness of its administrative arrangement</i>	medium	medium
<i>Meeting activity</i>	medium	medium
<i>Adherence to development strategy/mission statement</i>	high	medium
<i>Budget</i>	medium	low
<i>Project intensity</i>	high	medium

Strength of *legal arrangement* is rated highest if the organization uses the instrument European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Both Euroregions score low in this category. OstBoh is not legally an independent organization, but operates under the auspices of an inter-municipal organization on one side of the border (Sweden). Although the stakeholders themselves find the arrangement satisfactory, it does not ensure legal independence. Likewise, VarmOst operates through Norwegian Østfold Bedriftscenter.

The *administrative arrangement* is robust in both cases insofar that both have permanent staff. OstBoh has one permanent full-time employee located in Sweden, and usually one or several part-timers working for specific projects. The VarmOst has one half-time employee located in Norway, but has been skilled in using the resources of its members to keep operational costs down.

Both organizations have regular meetings, and most members participate at least yearly; the majority of mayors take part in two to four meetings a year. *Meeting activity* was therefore assessed as medium for both organizations. Both organizations have strategic plans and mission statements, but OstBoh has been more active in following up activities and classify them in accordance with strategic goals.

In a European perspective, the *budget* of OstBoh is of medium size (approx 300,000 EUR in 2011), whereas VarmOst has a small budget (approximately 94,000 EUR in 2011, but

only 40,000 EUR in 2010). Comparing and assessing project intensity can be deceiving, as Euroregions usually work both as project owners and as project developers. As for owning projects, OstBoh has had an increasing number of projects over the past two decades (6 running in 1994, 4 in 2000, 13 in 2006 and 17 in 2011). As a comparison, VarmOst has not had more than a few (2-3) running in a given year. The remaining project-related activity can be referred to as ‘project development’, in which the Euroregion sometimes takes a very active part, but where it is not the project owner and the resources of that project therefore are not part of its accounting (e.g. the VarmOst project ‘Barnens Grenseland’).

The ability to appropriate the policy space in borderlands (see Chapter 1) depends on how well the Euroregion can perform the three functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window. For this section I rely mainly on the interviews with managers and Chairs of the organizations, but also on documents and member interviews.

The main channel for knowing what is going on and what people care about, i.e. measuring issues of importance as a *seismograph*, is the multiple positions that especially the Chairs have, as they also function as Mayors of a town, but also as participants in other political forums. In that way they bring in issues of political salience, although the organizations do not seem to be well-known by the general public. In none of the cases does the Euroregion leadership (Chair and manager) get contacted directly by citizens about issues related to the cross-border governance area. Instead, in their capacity as Chairs or Managers the most frequent actor type they get contacted by is politicians or administrators.

“Generally it was people who knew Gränskommitten from earlier positions as politicians, or they represented some organization which had applied for funds via Gränskommitten.” (Chair, OstBoh: #A42)

However, citizens’ opinions are to some extent channeled to the Euroregions via civil society, such as sport groups or churches (#A95, #A100). One mode to get a feeling for what issues are burning is to run permanent working groups in different policy areas consisting of

both politicians and administrators. Such permanent working groups had been tried out by OstBoh, but it did not work satisfactorily.

“We had it several years, but then, you have to make people attend meetings, and all the time there are lots of projects, and the same people would be in the groups, and they sort of don’t have the energy to keep on in that way. We have therefore chosen to take it thematic depending on what we have in pipeline.”
(Chair, OstBoh: #A42)

The by-laws of VarmOst allow for having standing working groups, but it has never been tried out. Instead OstBoh has worked more with ad-hoc project groups consisting of politicians and administrators, whereas VarmOst has sought to include the highest administrative officials at its meetings.

OstBoh has worked much with single companies in order to find out what their issues are.

“Right now we have lots of contacts trying to identify border obstacles. We work very hard with business organizations, to get their help to see what border obstacles they meet. Recently we reached out to both single companies and business organizations.”(Manager, Ostboh: #A5)

VarmOst has been much less direct in its contacts with the business sector.

“We don’t work so much directly with business, but we work with issues of importance to business. But maybe you can say that we haven’t mobilized the business sector.”(Manager, VarmOst: #95)

The *loudspeaker function*, i.e. to bring issues to the agendas of those that have decision-making power, is considered very important by both organizations. Political issues for which the Euroregions need decision-makers on regional and national (possibly also European) level can be dealt with via multiple positions of persons in the top leadership, within-party contacts to people in power, the arrangement of events, commissioned reports, delegations to the decision-makers in the capital or at regional level, or written statements. OstBoh has used all of these at times:

“It depends on the issues. It is very different what you can do and how. But if we take the double railway line as an example, we work closely with the Gothenburg Oslo group. We have had seminars, where we collected representatives to discuss how you can do. We have had contacts with the infrastructure minister, [...] you work towards the ministry, we have resolutions, also do our own studies to show the need, so that we not only say that we must have this.” (Manager, Ostboh: #A5)

VarmOst, on the other hand, has focused on the less resource-intensive modes of network contacts (either through multiple positions of high leadership or through party contacts) or sending delegations to Oslo or Stockholm on a specific issue:

“I talk with MPs quite often and we tell them ‘don’t forget the Sweden-Norway-perspective’ and we will help them.” (Chair, Sweden, VarmOst: #A100)

The Chair of VarmOst frequently introduces himself as Chair of VarmOst, and not as Mayor of Säfte. Being a Chair of a cross-border organization is perceived as giving extra weight to arguments, but it is also required by the organization in order to make it less anonymous among the public and relevant policy actors:

“They [the members] said that I should do this, and that is fun, it shows the existence of contact network, they [national politicians] immediately notice this, for instance Lena Ek, the environment minister. Take the example of the wolf policy problem, I then say that this is not just an issue for Värmland, not only Värmland that is affected and is active in this issue, but also the Norwegian side. This means I am spokesperson for both sides in a concrete issue. It can also be the Minister of Agriculture, or Minister of Infrastructure, it is fun. You can do quite a lot while the level of work is still reasonable.” (Chair, Sweden, VarmOst: #A100)

“We have done it [writing declarations] for national transport, but it is also a question of capacity. It takes time to write. We have, what should one say, worked very effectively with low costs on administration. If you had more time you could engage more, take more general issues of principal character related to Norway and Sweden, but it takes resources. It is more that politicians have talked to someone they know, and then we have raised with the regions of Østfold and Värmland.” (Manager, Norway, VarmOst: #A95)

Interacting directly with agencies and actors in Brussels has not been given priority or resources by any of the two Euroregions. What matters is to have relations with the authorities distributing and allocating Interreg funding. Whereas the manager of OstBoh (located in

Sweden) has very close contacts (at least weekly) with the Interreg office, and the Euroregion is consulted when the multi-year priorities are developed, VarmOst has been treated more as an applicant among others:

“We have discussed Interreg at our Board meeting, but as a Euroregion we have not been consulted directly” (Manager, Norway, VarmOst: #A95)

“We give priority to the local and regional level, and the Nordic, but not the European Union, except locally with the Interreg office.” (Manager, OstBoh: #5)

Finally, multiple positions of leading persons within the organizations are considered very useful:

“When it comes to infrastructure, I am also a member of the Board of Region Värmland, something that gives me connections. That is why [person responsible for infrastructure for Region Värmland] is more and more with us, you must involve them. You are a representative and try to monitor and tell what should be done. I believe that gives effect, more people know that we exist now, both politicians and civil servants, they refer to VarmOst.” (Chair, Sweden, VarmOst: #A100)

“Oslo, they have this Oslo Gothenburg cooperation, and we felt that there were decisions taken over our heads, so we wrote an application for membership in this organization too, because we thought that the whole area from Oslo to Gothenburg must be seen as one area, a commuting area, and there was consensus among them, we got in two representatives.” (Chair, OstBoh: #A42)

Despite polity factors playing a major role in why local governments join Euroregions, region-building in terms of identity is not a prioritized issue. The function as *display window* of the region both externally and internally is therefore downplayed.

“We are an organization for the members. If you look at it, it is the members that should get to know each other, we work for the municipalities, so we don’t really work externally, we are not an information service for the public, and then of course, you don’t get that much name recognition by the public.” (Manager, OstBoh: #A5)

This may be due to the little emphasis on history, and rather on the value of cooperation, which might have long-term consequences for identity but is not prioritized:

“Since Värmland will not merge with Vastra Gotaland⁷³, we in Sweden talk more and more about Norway. We cannot stand alone, then we have to take the actual step westwards, to integrate. That is the alternative, not only towards Østfold, can also be Hedmark [further north in Norway].” (Chair, Sweden, VarmOst: #A100)

It should be noted that this downplaying of regional identity issues and history is not a Scandinavian phenomenon in itself. For instance, the Danish-Swedish cross-border region Oresund does heavily promote the concept of the ‘Oresund region’ and its historical links.

Figure 4. *Involved actors in cross-border policy issues: OstBoh and VarmOst*

GOVERNANCE DIMENSION			
MULTI-LEVEL DIMENSION		State	Non-state
	Supranational	Interreg representatives, Nordic Council of Ministers	
	National	Ministries, especially Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment; Agencies: especially Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, Swedish Social Insurance Agency, Swedish and Norwegian Tax Agency, Swedish and Norwegian Customs Agencies	Hunting Association (Sweden and Norway), National parties
	Regional	County Administrative Boards (both countries), Political Regions (Sweden), Inter-municipal associations, Regional Public Employment Service Units, Regional Tax Agencies, Regional Customers Service Units	Regional business chambers, Regional parties
	Local	Local Government Boards and Councils, Civil Servants working for Local Governments,	Individual business companies (especially OstBoh), associations for sports and culture, local parties
Cross-border baseline			
VarmOst, OstBoh, Grensetjensten, Goteborg-Oslo Cooperation, Interreg Sweden, Nordic Council Working Group on Cross-border Cooperation			

Source: Multi-level governance framework (Marks 1993, Hooghe and Marks 2001, Bache 2012)

In terms of policy emphasis, Figure 4 demonstrates that the focus is on specific issues such as customs, labor mobility, tax issues, but also one issue with high salience locally,

⁷³ The tendency in Sweden has been towards merging regions to create ‘super-regions’, but Värmland had at the time of writing not joined any of the ‘supra-regions’, such as Vastra Gotaland.

namely the presence of wolves in the area. For instance, in 2003 VarmOst agreed on a resolution and a letter to the state's regional representatives in Värmland, Akershus and Østfold, demanding that hunting for wolves should be allowed to decrease the number of wolves in the area (Sveriges Radio 2003). The Chair of VarmOst has also raised this issue several times during his period, which started in 2010. (Chair, Sweden, VarmOst: #100)

The results for *appropriation of cross-border cooperation activities* are summarized in Table 15, which also includes an assessment of *member satisfaction*. Members of the VarmOst Euroregion are generally very positive about the organization. The same can be said for OstBoh, with the reservation that the organization in some members' opinion has grown 'too big', and some are passive members. This warrants the assessment medium for OstBoh and high for VarmOst. As for appropriation of policy space, this is assessed high for OstBoh, which is the dominant policy partner when it comes to cross-border activities. As VarmOst is more of a project applicant among others, the assessment here is medium.

Table 15. *Member satisfaction and appropriation of cross-border governance space of OstBoh and VarmOst.*

Euroregion	OstBoh	VarmOst
<i>Appropriation of cross-border governance space</i>	high	medium
<i>Member satisfaction</i>	medium	high

*

This section has showed that there is variation in both performance and function of the organizations. OstBoh scored higher than VarmOst on three out of the six indicators used to assess organizational capacity. Nonetheless, VarmOst could draw on a tighter inter-municipal network to convince members that the organization could do much in terms of lobbying

(loudspeaker function) for its issues with relatively few resources. Both Euroregions do fulfill the three roles of seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows functions, but they do so less as seismographs and display windows than as loudspeakers.

4.4 Conclusion

The line of inquiry in this chapter has been guided by the two research questions: “Why and how do local governments in the south Swedish-Norwegian borderland participate in Euroregions and how do they interact?” and “How does social capital impact the performance and function of these Euroregions?” In addition, I sought to establish whether there is such a thing as ‘Scandinavian exceptionalism’ when it comes to cross-border cooperation.

The first question was analyzed from the perspectives of motivation, participation and interaction of local governments, and I will here summarize the results of these. *First*, the analysis has showed that local governments in both Euroregions become and stay members of Euroregions primarily due to reasons of identity/polity, whereas instrumental reasons (material or policy needs related) take the backseat. However, VarmOst also has a strong policy-need dimension, as the cooperation grew out of concern about the quality of road number E18. This indicates support for Blatter (2000) rather than Perkmann (2003). *Second*, both organizations are characterized as being political but not partisan, i.e. the organizational culture is one of depolitized consensus-seeking culture in which difficult topics are avoided. Active members constitute the relative majority of members, but passive information-seekers also constitute a significant group, whereas few members are inactive. A difference between the organizations is that OstBoh has a relatively larger portion of inactive members, mainly those who are indirect members via Fyrbodalen. *Third*, the interaction patterns between members, based on frequency of communication between the political leadership, are mainly

bound within the national states. This means that the political networks are not integrated within one cross-border regional space, but consist of Swedish and Norwegian separate networks with relatively fewer links in between. As communication was mainly described as positive, the frequency of communication is an indicator of endowments of bonding social capital on an institutional political level. The results indicate that there is such bonding social capital, but that the domestic levels are higher than the local transnational (i.e. within-group social capital compared with between-group social capital).

In order to answer the second question I first needed to assess the two Euroregions along the performance and function index developed in Chapter 1, with special focus on their capacity to become the leading actor within the cross-border governance space (appropriation of cross-border space) and how that could be interpreted in relation to how they fulfill functions as seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows. The analysis showed that there is variation in both performance and function of the organizations.

One of the organizations, OstBoh, has had an annual turnover ten times that of the other, and has been closely involved with cross-border related policy work both in the Nordic Council and with the disbursement bodies for European funds. The other one, VarmOst, was less embedded, not receiving such external funds until after nearly 20 years of operation. On the other hand, it has utilized party contacts and direct lobbying to make progress in the primary goals related to infrastructure investments. Nonetheless, OstBoh scored higher on three out of the six indicators used to assess organizational capacity. The only one where VarmOst scored higher was in the category of strength of legal arrangements, due to its independent status, but spokespersons of both organizations contested that legal status has any practical meaning in the Scandinavian context.⁷⁴ In terms of policy orientation, infrastructure,

⁷⁴For both organizations actors on that side of the border appear to be stronger in influencing strategy and project implementation where it is administratively embedded. The secretariat of OstBoh is in Sweden, and it is organizationally affiliated with a Swedish inter-municipal organization. The management of VarmOst has been vested with Norwegian members, as part-time positions of local development units.

cross-border labor mobility and economic development/business promotion are the most important issues, even though the priority between them differ somewhat. OstBoh has in practice worked much more directly with organizational and individual business representatives, whereas VarmOst has worked more exclusively with governmental institutions. However, none of them are well-known by the general public, and the *seismograph function* could therefore be improved. While the *loudspeaker function* is important for both, VarmOst does this mainly via direct communication to actors at the national level, whereas OstBoh also works with reports, conferences and seminars. The *display window function* is generally downplayed – while both organizations emphasize similarities, the regions are not portrayed as areas that ‘naturally’ belong together or which should be promoted as one region.⁷⁵

The argument in relation to the second question is that these functions can be linked to three different types of social capital. As mentioned above, the analysis showed that the interaction between local governments indicated the existence of bonding social capital on institutional level, but that the level was not very high in the cross-border space, albeit somewhat higher for Varmost. In terms of linking social capital, this is well developed of both, in terms of administrative and party links to actors at the regional and national level. However, OstBoh has been better at creating bridging social capital to other sectors.

Finally, the chapter put the question whether the label ‘Nordoregions’ would be more appropriate for these cross-border cooperation initiatives than ‘Euroregions’, indicating a fundamental difference between Scandinavian and continental cross-border cooperation types. The chapter did establish that the ideational influence of Europe has been limited. Relating to Europe (creating a sense of ‘Europeanness’) came far down the list of policy priorities in the survey. In fact, Norwegian respondents often met the question on Europeanness with a laugh

⁷⁵ Note that this downplaying of regional identity issues is not a Scandinavian phenomenon, the Danish-Sweden crossborder region Oresund very much promotes the concept of the ‘Oresund region’.

or ironic comment. Politicians of parties that officially support Norwegian membership in the European Union recognized the hopelessness of their cause as opinion polls are firmly against memberships. None of the organizations were funded as a result of normative or instrumental incentives (rhetoric or funding) from the European Union. In terms of origin and emergence, these organizations are indeed rather Nordoregions than Euroregions. However, this exceptionalism refers only to origins and not to exceptionalism in terms of organizational activity and performance. In that respect, they are easily assessed along similar dimensions as other European cross-border cooperation initiatives, and also show variation between them. I therefore argue that 'Euroregion' is a justified and appropriate term to use in international contexts, and that Scandinavian cross-border cooperation should not be seen as a species of its own.

CHAPTER 5 – A CASE STUDY OF TWO EUROREGIONS AT THE AUSTRIAN-GERMAN BORDER

The fortress of Kufstein and the Salzburg Castle are historical landmarks signifying the salience of defense policy in medieval times. But at whom, and towards what direction, would the cannons of Kufstein be directed? And which enemy or enemies were the walls of Salzburg supposed to keep out? Throughout centuries, these fortified cliff rocks were subjects of changing territorial allegiance. While boundaries, allegiances and the shape of the ‘enemy’ changed repeatedly, as Bavaria, the Habsburgs, Tyrol, Austria and the Archbishopric of Salzburg ruled the area, the *raison d’etre* of these impressive structures, i.e. defense, required continuous regional efforts to be sustained. Since 1995 both are located in the European Union, and their role in regional policy is related to tourism instead of defense. Kufstein has become the administrative center of *EuRegio Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge-Mangfalltal*, and Salzburg is the most important partner in *EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein*.⁷⁶ These Euroregions are two out of seven that were set up in the immediate years following accession, and they will be examined in this chapter, which presents the last of the empirical case studies.

Here, as in previous chapters, the central research question is: “How does cooperation work?”, while two sub-sets of questions serve to structure the outline of the chapter: (1) Why and how do local governments in the Austrian-German borderland participate in Euroregions and how do they interact? (2) How does social capital impacts on function and performance?

In addition, I will in the chapter seek to demonstrate how Euroregions in the Austrian-German borderlands act as new organizations, which need to compete for the attention and time of its presumptive members, the local governments. The way to compete is to find,

⁷⁶ For the sake of consistency with the rest of the dissertation, the term ‘Euroregion’ will be used instead of ‘Euregio’.

justify and establish the existence of policy problems, and policy opportunities, with a cross-border dimension.

The research relies on a smaller number of interviews (n=20), than the previous chapters, but this was compensated or supplemented by the existence of more primary documents, such as internal evaluations, and secondary literature on cross-border cooperation in the borderland area.

The chapter starts with a descriptive section. The first part (5.1.1) focuses on the factors that determined the selection of borders for this dissertation (cultural-linguistic proximity, politico-administrative similarity and economic homogeneity) and elaborates on these on a micro-level. The second part (5.1.2) gives a brief introduction to the two case study organizations.

Further on, the first research question is dealt with in section 5.2, which states findings related to the motivation, participation and interaction of local governments. Section 5.3 is devoted to the second research question, hence answering the question on how the organizations function and perform as well as how that is related to its motivation and interaction patterns (its social capital). Conclusions are drawn in the final section (5.4).

5.1 The Austrian-German border area and the investigated Euroregions

In this chapter an 822 kilometer long line on the map, and a 522 km² large area, is referred to as the border between and the border area⁷⁷ of Austria and Germany. However, in daily speech and in official documentation such as that of the European Territorial Cooperation program Interreg the border runs between Austria and the German federal state of Bavaria, i.e. the border is referred to as the *Bavarian-Austrian* border, not the German-Austrian border.

⁷⁷ Border area as defined by the European Territorial Program (Interreg Bayern-Osterreich 2007-2013, 2007), incorporating NUTS 3 levels closest to the borders. Note that such as border area definition does not necessarily coincide with citizens' perception of whether they live in a 'border area' or not.

This is of minor importance for the analysis, although it will feature in the context of analysis of politico-administrative symmetry, but highlights the potentials of moving the field of border studies beyond that of national state borders (see e.g. J.W. Scott 2012 or Maganda 2007 for discussions on the meaning of borders between sub-national units).

5.1.1 Cultural-linguistic, economic and politico-administrative characteristics of the border area

The middle part of the Austrian-German border area, where the two Euroregions are located, has been inhabited since the Stone Age, and contained important urban border centers already during Roman Times. For instance, Salzburg was founded in 15 BC as the Roman city of Iuvavum, which would serve as a resting place at the crossing of two important traffic routes and offered convenient proximity to the precious salt mines (Moosleitner 2004a:6, Moosleitner 2004b:12). Pons Aeni, close to the location of today's Rosenheim, was located at the border between the provinces of Noricum and Rätien (Rosenheim City Archive 2012). In the 5th century, as the Roman empire imploded, the Bawarii people (later Bavaria) entered the struggle for power in the area, and grave findings from the centuries up to the first millennium show how the frontier between Bawarii-inhabited and Roman-inhabited areas was in the Salzburg area (Moosleitner 2004c:18). However, the frontier was gradually pushed southwards, which had as a consequence that various dialects of the Germanic language group became the dominant tongue in the area, regardless of whether its speakers in the next 1,000 years were ruled by the Salzburg archbishops, Bavarian kings, Tyrol counts or Habsburg emperors (Dopsch 2004).

This *language homogeneity* was not affected by the major border revisions that took place in connection with the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century, ending with a series of

treaties, which set the borders that are still valid today⁷⁸. However, economic policy during the industrialization period meant that the new borders limited and changed economic interactions. The areas on the western side of the river Salzach, which became the new border demarcation, came under Bavarian rule and thereby were incorporated into the German Customs Union, whereas Salzburg and other towns east of Salzburg were incorporated into the Habsburg economic space, just as was Kufstein, the central Austrian town of today's Euroregion Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge-Mangfalltal (Dirninger 2004:98). Both sides of the border developed favorably in economic terms in the last decades of the 20th century, but those in favour of the EU accession of Austria in 1995 hoped it would mean a further boost for the economy (Müller M.H. 2008: 25). Indeed, the economy on both sides grew after accession, although Bavaria has been able to show more impressive growth figures in the 2000s. In 2011, employment rates were 79.5% in Upper Bavaria, 77.8% in Salzburg and 76.9% in Tyrol. The unemployment rates for the central parts were 4.5% in Salzburg, 5.9% in Tyrol, and below 4% in the Bavarian districts in the studied border area. The latest Eurobarometer income statistics (2011) showed that the income compared to average EU27 was 161% in Upper Bavaria, 141% in Salzburg and 128% in Tyrol (Eurobarometer 2012, Wirtschaftskammer Österreich 2012, Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2012). Hence, while there is overall *economic homogeneity* (see Müller S. 2009:48), especially close to the border, the overall Bavarian growth might turn the area more heterogenic long-term. The economic structure of the border area is diverse, although tourism plays a major role.

An advantage for cooperation in *politico-administrative* terms is that both sides of the border are incorporated in a federal state, but nonetheless the actors in the border area that the

⁷⁸ Treaty of Ried 1813, Treaty of Munich 1816, and minor border corrections made in additional treaties 1818 and 1851 (Roth 2004: 64). In the 20th century the border was de facto removed as a state border during 1938-1945, when Austria was a part of Nazi Germany. For understandable reasons, this period does not receive much space in official documentation surrounding the Euroregions. Economic historian Christian Dirninger writes: "The forced integration [following after the Austrian Anschluss] of the two parts in the Nazi time could presumably in no aspect be seen as a favorable constellation" (Dirninger 2004: 99, my translation).

Austrian and German stakeholders have different possibilities and capacities to act. A study of Euroregion Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein stated that “on the Salzburg side the administrative and political distance between the federal state and local governments is shorter than in Bavaria. Also size is different. While the city of Salzburg is also the capital of the federal state Salzburg, Munich is at a greater distance from the districts of Traunstein and Berchtesgadener Land” (Müller S. 2009:38, my translation). Bavaria is a much bigger federal state (12 million inhabitants) than either Salzburg or Tyrol in Austria (530,000 and 714,000 inhabitants, respectively). This means that Bavaria takes on a quasi-national role (instead of Berlin), which is expressed in the name of the European funding program: Interreg *Bavaria-Austria* 2007-2013.

A further political-administrative difference is that regional districts in Austria do not have political representation, but are merely administrative, whereas the German districts do have political councils. This means that the Euroregion may behave differently towards districts in the two countries (in general, the manager tend to approach non-elected officials, and the Chair elected officials, although that is not always the case, Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, #A79). Nevertheless, the politico-administrative setting of the border is less heterogenic than in many other European border spaces. On both sides of the border there is a multitude of relatively small local governments (*Gemeinde*) along with a smaller number of midsized towns and one bigger city (Salzburg).⁷⁹

Inter-municipal cooperation is prevalent in both countries. In Germany, the Basic Law gives the right to municipalities to cooperate (art 28 II), and cooperation has been actively promoted since the 1960s and 1970s when reforms were also taking place (Bolgherini 2011). Inter-municipal cooperation can take several forms, as the law on inter-municipal cooperation lists four possibilities: working communities, purpose agreements, purpose associations and

⁷⁹ In Austria all local governments have the same fundamental rights and duties, regardless of whether they have town status or not (there is also a third status called ‘market town’). In Germany there are two layers with different functions. Districts and ‘Towns not belonging to districts’ in the first layer, and the level of towns and municipalities the second.

jointly owned municipal companies (Bavarian Ministry of Interior 2012). Also Austria encourages cooperation (Austrian Association of Towns 2012) and regional associations such as Regionalverband Salzburger Seenland and Regionalverband Pinzgau are important partners.

Cross-border cooperation along the entire German-Austrian border developed from the 1970s onwards. The working committee ARGE ALP and the International Bodensee lake conference were founded in 1972, and the spatial planning conference ODROK in 1973. The Euroregions along the border were all founded after EU Accession: Bayrischer Wald-Bohmerwald 1993/94, Inn-Salzach 1994, Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein 1995, Via Salina 1997, Zugspitze-Wetterstein-Karwendel 1998, Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge–Mangfalltal 1998 and Cooperation Bad Tölz-Wolfratshausen-Miesbach-Schwaz 1998 (Interreg Bayern-Osterreich 2007-2013, 2007:53).

5.1.2 The case study organizations

This section provides brief factual backgrounds for the two Euroregions investigated in this chapter. This is done to prepare the ground for sections 5.2 and 5.3 where the relevant aspects of the two organizations and their members will be analyzed together.

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The Salzburg – Berchtesgadener Land – Traunstein Euroregion (henceforth ‘Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T’) was founded in 1995⁸⁰ and is located in the heartland of the historical region Salzburg, and currently incorporates nearly 100 local governments. In addition, the membership consists of two German regional districts (*Landkreise*, NUTS 3, an intermediate level between the federal states and local governments) as well the Salzburg

⁸⁰ Where not otherwise indicated, this section builds on material provided on the websites of Euroregion Salzburg (www.euregio-salzburg.eu) and Euroregion Inntal (www.euregio-inntal.com), or provided in interviews with the Managers of the organization.

Chamber of Commerce and the Salzburg Chamber of Labor.⁸¹ Legally, the Euroregion consists of two separate organizations, set up specifically for the purpose of creating a Euroregion, joined by a binding agreement. It was agreed that German law on private associations would be used for joint activities (Müller S. 2009:12), but the organizations were established on each side of the border to ensure legal presence in both countries. In German they are called ‘carrying organizations’ (*Trägervereine*), and they can be seen as separate pillars that legally support the Euroregion. Each of the two ‘carrying organizations’ officially has a Chair, and these two take turn to be the (externally visible) Chair and Deputy Chair of the Euroregion. To the external world, the Euroregion is presented as one organization, but “it is not a legal person, can not make binding decisions and does not have competences that limits the decision competences of the local governments. The activity field of the Euroregion is therefore strictly dependent on the willingness of the carrying organizations, and in this primarily on the local governments, to give resources of different kinds and support and implement the activities of the Euroregion.” (Ritter 2008:11, my translation).

The preamble of the treaty between the two organizations emphasizes that the organization is linked to the founding ideas of the European Union, containing phrases such as “the objective [is] to realize the aims of the treaties that form the European Union”, while the Euroregion is “dedicated to the spirit of these treaties” and will “contribute to a closer connection between the European Peoples” The treaty lists the tasks of the Euroregion as “to support, assist and coordinate the regional cross-border cooperation between its members, which includes project planning, conceptualization and realization of activities within the

⁸¹ *Wirtschaftskammer Salzburg* (Chamber of Commerce) and *Arbeiterkammer Salzburg* (Chamber of Labour) are economic associations typical of Austrian neo-corporatism (Schmitter 1979) whereby membership in the former is compulsory for all employers in Austria and membership in the latter compulsory for all employees. Due to this policy of compulsory inclusion of members, in combination with extensive participation of these organizations in policy-making and policy implementation, they in practice become semi-public bodies. Inclusion of, or interaction with, these organizations is therefore seen as necessary to efficiently deal with economic issues. A social partnership body founded 1957 (Parity Commission for Salary and Price Issues) has played a key role in negotiations and policy-setting (Müller S. 2009:51)

framework of the European Union Initiative Interreg” (Treaty of the Euregio Salzburg - Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein 1995, my translation, preamble and Article 3).

The highest decision-making body is the assembly, which meets twice a year. The assembly elects a Board of eight members, and an Administrative Council to assist with the tasks that are assigned. The Board appoints the Managing Director, a position that in 2012 was held by the same individual as when the organization was founded. The city of Salzburg is undoubtedly the center of the Euroregion (Hamedinger 2011), but the secretariat of the organization is located in Freilassing, a small town on the German side of the border, and holds three additional employees. In 2011 the Euroregion had 15 working groups, most of which had been working continuously for ten years or more. The working groups consisted of civil servants in specific policy areas appointed by the Board on unlimited terms, thereby ensuring continuity in policy work. The working groups both implement ideas conceived by the Assembly and Board and generate ideas, brought to the Board and Assembly via the Secretariat.

The cost of membership is 26 cent per inhabitant and year in Germany and 15 cent per inhabitant and year in Austria (the Salzburg Region, the Chambers of Commerce and the Chamber of Labor contribute on top of this). In 2011, the Euroregion 2011 spent 374,244 EUR, the two major items being staff costs (220,898) and project support (107,587 EUR). Members, including districts and Salzburg, contributed 146.892,54 EUR, and 236.553,59 EUR came out of the European Territorial Cooperation Interreg support.

The Inntal - Chiemsee - Kaisergebirge – Mangfalltal Euroregion (henceforth ‘Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M’) was founded four years after Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, which in several respects was used as a model organization. For instance, it utilizes the same preamble for its by-laws. Hence, again the ‘embodiment of the spirit’ of the European Union features as the motivation for founding the Euroregion (Euregio Inntal-C-K-M 1998). The

organization consists of 66 local governments and four regional districts (the *Landkreise* Rosenheim and Traunstein in Germany, and the *Bezirke* Kufstein and Kitzbühel in Austria). The territorial core of the Euroregion is the valley around the river Inn, but it stretches beyond that, as indicated in the somewhat long official name.

The organizational structure of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M is more straightforward than that of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, although it follows a similar logic. Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M is formed as a German-Austrian municipal private law association, registered in Austria. It has a secretariat based at the Kufstein College, consisting of a half-time Managing Director, who has access to administrative support within the structure of the college, and is regularly helped out by interns. The president of the Euroregion is elected by the general assembly changes every three years, and should alternate between Austria and Germany. The original statutes envisioned the set-up of working group, but such groups have never been functioning. A revision of the statutes in 2011 allowed for an inclusion of non-voting representatives of different administrative sectors into the Board, in order to create better links between political and administrative officials.

On the German side, the Rosenheim regional district has undertaken to pay the membership fees also for the local governments, whereas the local governments in the Traunstein district and on the Austrian side pay their own dues, which for a small local government does not exceed 200 Euro a year.

*

This section has set the ground for the analysis by elaborating on the local context of the macro-criteria used to select the border as one of the case study areas, and by introducing the two organizations to be studied at this border. Key facts from the section are summarized in Table 16. The analysis of the data in relation to the research questions starts in the next section.

Table 16. *Key characteristics of Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T and the Austrian-German borderlands*

Euroregion	Inntal-C-K-M	Salzburg-BL-T
<i>Founded</i>	1999	1995
<i>Local governments in 2011</i>	66	97
<i>Approximate population 2010</i>	630,000	800,000
<i>Working language</i>	German	German
<i>Border existing since</i>	1813 (Treaty of Ried), non-state border 1938-1945	1816 (Treaty of Munich), non-state border 1938-1945
<i>State form</i>	federal	federal
<i>National GDP (IMF 2010, in USD)</i>	AU: 50,504, GE: 44,558	AU: 50,504, GE: 44,558
<i>Regional GDP (Eurostat, NUTS 2 2008)</i>	Oberbayern: 37,700 , Salzburg: 35,200, Tyrol: 32,200	Oberbayern: 37,700 , Salzburg: 35,200, Tyrol: 32,200

Note: The population number is based on regional membership, some local governments are not members.

5.2 Motivation, participation and interaction of local governments in Salzburg-BL-T and Inntal-C-K-M

As in the chapters on Euroregions at the Hungarian-Slovak and Swedish-Norwegian border, this section revolves around patterns of motivation, participation and interaction among Euroregional members. Here, the members of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M and Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T constitute the primary units of analysis. The section seeks to establish the basis for membership (‘why are they members of the organization?’), their modes of participation (‘how do they participate in the organizations?’) and the intensity and content of their communication (‘how do they interact with each other?’).

The analysis relies both on primary data collection and on secondary sources. Seventeen interviews were conducted with fourteen member representatives or managers (three were interviewed twice); in addition, three interviews were conducted with other cross-border cooperation actors. The analysis could take advantage of 2012 survey data collected by the Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, which contained responses from fifteen members who were or had

been on the Euroregional board, as well as a study containing interviews with five representatives of local governments (mayors) from Euroregion S-BL-T (Müller S. 2009).

5.2.1 Motivation

As detailed in Chapter 2, the motivation to be a member of a Euroregion can broadly be divided into two groups, one based on identity/polity and one based on instrumentality. In the analysis, the instrumentality group has been divided into two sub-groups, the first contains those seeking direct materialistic gains through external funding, while the second contains those seeking benefits through solving specific policy problems. In this section I analyze the stated motivations for membership by the organization based on these (not mutually exclusive) categories.

The first category is *identity/polity*, in which ten answers were coded. The dominating theme was the idea of a united Europe as the motivation for why cross-border cooperation should be supported by membership. In this context, it is worth mentioning that Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T was founded in 1995, the year of the Austrian entry into the European Union, and clearly was a child of that momentum, as was Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, founded a few years later. As stated above, the preambles to their by-laws state that the members are “united in their desire” to achieve the objectives of the European Union and that they seek to “promote a closer union of European peoples”. It calls for action to completely remove what is already referred to as “former borders”. Thus, the founders of these Euroregions deliberately placed them within a narrative of Euroregions as small ‘mini-EU:s’, or laboratories of European integration⁸². The fact that the European Union was not directly involved in financing or promoting these organizations until 1990 is neglected, and so is the long-term support of Euroregions by the Council of Europe.

⁸² The ‘laboratory’ is an often-used metaphor for a Euroregion, recently repeated by the Committee of the Regions in the Official Journal of the European Union (Committee of the Regions 2011).

This belief in Europe (equal to the European Union) as a *leitmotif* could be found in half of the interviews, and the close connection with EU is also present in the logo of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, which features yellow stars much like those on the EU flag. However, the picture was made more complicated by the fact that the inhabitants of member municipalities were perceived to be less enthusiastic than their local political leaders:

“In the meetings you always have the mayor and they have a joint aim [...which is...] the joint Europe. I believe that Europe’s peace project was the most important decision in the last 70 years.” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #85)

“The European Union is unfortunately always viewed negatively, it is always associated with when something doesn’t work. “ (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #84)

“The citizen [in this town] feels primarily as a Neumarkt citizen, then as a Salzburger, then perhaps Austrian, and on fourth or fifth place as European. When you then add the Euroregion, and many persons have projects or contacts with us, and see that it makes sense to have cooperation across the border, then in their thoughts [cross-border cooperation] surely comes before EU. He/she is still Neumarkt citizen first, then Salzburg, the perhaps inhabitant of the Euroregion, then maybe Austria and than the EU. But since it [the Euroregion] always has this EU connotation it is a difficult idea to sell.” (Mayor and Deputy Chair, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #130)

In spite of these perceived negative perceptions among the member municipalities’ populations, there have been no discussions to replace the logo of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M or downplay the European connection. As expressed by the Manager of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M:

“I don’t think that Europe is the first thing that should be thrown from the train when the ride is getting rocky.” (Manager, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A80)

In addition to the European identity theme expressed in the quotes above, a few respondents expressed belief in cooperation having an intrinsic value:

“We wanted to facilitate familiarization with other local governments, and to learn from each other, and be able to give each other some things.” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A85)

“I am convinced that the key [for doing something] is to know each other.”
(Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A84)

Such answers indicate that *cooperation per se* is valuable and that inter-municipal cooperation is an important element of current and future local government practices. More rarely were history, culture or ethnicity alluded to, although it did occur in both Euroregions:

“The regional identity should not be dependent on borders. There is an Inntal identity. And the regional identity was always very strong, both in Tyrol and in Bavaria. We understand each other well. We have more in common with them than with a German from the North, which is something I find positive.”
(Chamber of commerce member, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A74)

“We have the same culture, for instance the Holy Rupert is our saint, our joint saint. Also, you now, Mozart was never an Austrian, he was a ‘Salzburger’.”
(Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #81)

Instrumentality, the second motivation category, featured less prominently than the identity category. It includes both grant-seeking motivation for membership, and membership based on the perception that there are policy problems that need to be dealt with jointly. The two quotes below are the only ones illustrating grant-seeking, and only the second of these refers directly to external funding:

“Well, we thought cross-border cooperation was important and thought there could be certain advantages for the municipality.” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A76)

“We always became donors somehow. When you see Salzburg, how they are able to get to the ‘cooking pots’, that is amazing. I rather would do what I think is important, then I think whether there is funding or not. But the Austrians do what there is funding for.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A84)

That grant seeking is rare as motivation among members was also confirmed by the Chair of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, who testified that the leadership of the Euroregion actually often has to persuade local governments to apply for existing opportunities for cross-border cooperation funding. It is also supported by statistics from the Interreg program.

According to a comparative study of 14 cross-border programs, the German-Austrian border had the highest proportion of approved projects.⁸³

Regarding policy problem solving as an instrumental motivation, although spatial development and infrastructure have been major activity areas for both Euroregions, no references to policy problems were that specific:

“I believe that exchange of experiences is important – you do not need to invent the wheel twice.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A81)

“Today you see that mayors from Tyrol and Bavaria actually call each other, and say ‘*we have that and that problem, how can we solve this jointly?*’”. (Deputy Mayor and Chair, Austria, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A3)

“Earlier each country was on its own. It is still a bit like that, but indeed it is important cross-border cooperation for economic development.” (Representative of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M member Chamber of Commerce: #A74)

The quotes illustrate that while respondents can mention policy problems in very general terms (such as ‘economic development’), there is not any concrete and substantial policy problems causing local governments to enter and engage in the Euroregions. The conclusion of this sub-section is therefore that identity-based normative incentives, namely accession-induced support for European integration as linked to the European Union project, played a key role for membership in both investigated Euroregions. This, in combination with institutional ‘stickiness’, or institutional inertia (Pierson 2000), manifested as unwillingness to question already existing memberships, mainly explain long-time memberships.

5.2.2 Participation

Members of the Euroregions get a number of invitations each year to participate in events organized by the Euroregion. The invitations usually target the mayor, but they may also be

⁸³ Eighty-five percent of ideas and ninety-five percent of submitted full applications were assessed positively, 98% of these received funding. This was the highest out of 14 cross-border programs. (Hummelbrunner 2010: 41-42)

directed to municipal administrative employees regarding specialized topics. The general assemblies are regular events (one per year in Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M and two per year in Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T), to which both Euroregions attach workshops or lectures on specific themes in order to attract members to attend. Participants not representing member municipalities are therefore welcome to attend as well. The two Euroregions in this chapter are both relatively large organizations in terms of membership; one has 66 local government members (Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M), the other 97 (Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T). As in previous chapters, the local governments can be divided into three groups depending on how they engage with the organization: detached, listeners and active.

According to attendance data from general assemblies and an internal survey carried out by Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M⁸⁴, most of the members in both organizations can be found among the groups of *detached members or listeners*. Assembly meetings rarely have more than half of the members attending. Since only the presence of a third of the members is required for a quorum, that does not create a formal problem in terms of ability to take decisions, but it means that the organization needs to be innovative even to get members to be in the second group (listeners). Arranging spectacular events mean less when it comes to attract the members of the second group (listeners) than to make these events efficient in terms of the time and effort it takes for members to attend them. For instance, on July 9, 2010, the General Assembly of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M was held on the island Herreninsel (famous for the ‘fantasy castle’ erected by the ‘mad king’, Ludwig II of Bavaria). After the formal agenda points, a lecture and round-table discussion was led by the Finance Minister of the federal state of Bavaria, the President of the Parliament of Tyrol, the Regional Leader of

⁸⁴ In 2012 Euroregion Inntal conducted a survey among current or former members of the Board, the majority of whom are mayors representing local governments. Fourteen reacted to the statement: “Mayor work actively in the Euroregion and attend assemblies regularly.” Four agreed with the statement, whereas nine answered ‘rather agree’ and one did not agree. The hesitance to agree with the statement might be due to the fact that while assembly meetings in Euroregion Inntal generally has around 40 persons showing up, this only represents half of the members.

Rosenheim and the editor of a large Austrian daily newspaper. The total attendance was only 35 persons.

“It’s important where you have the meetings. We had the general assembly in the castle of the island Herreninsel in Chiemsee, that was of course a great experience, but sort of difficult to get there. You know, you have to take the boat, and the mayors have all these appointments, they have to choose, and they often cannot make themselves available for a half-day or a full-day, especially if they have to travel. But we did that for this one occasion, since the Minister of Finance had the idea that he’d like to come and would like to visit the castle, and that’s why we did it.” (Manager Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A80)

The information sought by those belonging to the category of listeners does not primarily relate to grant access. As pointed out above, the leadership of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has rather experienced that the difficulty is to persuade members to utilize funding opportunities for cross-border cooperation. Information about specific topics (highways, local transportation, hail prevention, hunting, social care, etc.) have been utilized to tempt these members to attend events.

The group of listeners is the group most likely to experience change in its composition. There have been local governments that have left both organizations, usually in connection with change in political leadership, and others have been added. For instance, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T started out with 87 local governments as members, and in 2012 the number was 97. This is due to the organization’s growing reputation and deliberate campaigning:

“Sometimes new local governments are added when they look for us. Others you have to deliberately target, for instance through projects. We had a drive in Pinzgau when we informed all mayors and invited them to become members. Through that we won one more local government.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A79)

The *active members* mainly consist of those that volunteer to engage in the Board. This still does not mean a large investment in terms of time-commitment, and even duties formally carried out by members (such as treasurer or secretary) are frequently in practice handled by the secretariats:

“I have been treasurer since three years, and have been even longer in the Board. However, in the reality the accounting is done by the Manager, I’m just formally the treasurer, he [the Manager] can deal with this, we use to change positions every three years.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A75)

Despite the relative low share of active members, those that are active are able to achieve results partly due to the stability among elected mayors and thereby in the Board. Mayors are elected for relatively long periods of time (six years in Bavaria and Tyrol, five years in Salzburg) and tend to be reelected. For instance, general elections in Tyrol in 2010 did not lead to any change in the composition of the Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M Board. Stability may also be furthered by a depoliticized climate, in which partisan conflict issues are rarely discussed. For the case of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, this was established in a 2009 study according to which interest conflicts were rare (Müller S. 2009:59⁸⁵), and was also seen in interviews for this dissertation:

“We try to find a joint common denominator, where we can see if the problem formulation is the same on both sides.” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A85)

“We are all in the same boat, we are all municipal politicians from 64 local governments, which party we belong to is not important [...] we are looking for topics that all have an interest in.” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A75)

“I usually ask about party affiliation. It is not a problem if it is red, yellow or black - we have the same problem - but it still interests me, because you understand why someone says some things.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A81)

The non-partisan-ship of political relations at local level was confirmed in a study of cross-border cooperation between two of the Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T members Hallein and Bechtesgaden (Aufschnaiter et al. 2008): “Looking at ‘actor-dependent factors’, it is clear, that on both sides issue politics rule, not party politics, when it comes to anchorage in the political-society system. At municipal level personal contacts and informal information is

⁸⁵ According to the study, interest conflicts, if existing, would be solved by majority voting, but no examples of such majority voting procedures were given in the study (Müller S. 2009).

important for politics and the civil society in Hallein and Berchtesgaden.”⁸⁶ (Aufschnaiter et al. 2008:30, my translation).

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All in all, participation patterns of member representatives did not differ significantly between the two organizations. Both have many members, the majority of which who do not participate actively in organizational affairs.

5.2.3 Interaction

In the borderlands an integrated network, or a political community, is created when it is as common for a political (or administrative) representative to recognize, meet, talk or write to a representative of the other side, as to someone on his/her own. To assess to what extent such a political community exist in these Euroregions, one suitable method is social network analysis, which will be applied in Chapter 6 for four of the case study organizations in this dissertation. Although the allocated resources for field research did not allow for a full mapping of the political relations within the two Euroregions at the Austrian-German border, the interviews that were made with members provide some support for three propositions. First, the cross-border linkages are still relatively weak. All the interviewed local government mayors had significantly fewer and weaker communication links with local governments on the other side of the border than with those in their own country:

“The discussions [at the Euroregion assembly] are very interesting, but they are perhaps not very efficient. But it is important for the reason that you meet your colleagues from the other side. We would not meet otherwise, but the network is rather loose. You recognize them when you meet them, but there is no cooperation outside [the Euroregion].” (Mayor, Austria, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A76)

⁸⁶ The study concluded that the visions of the Euroregion were hard to realize on local level for other than ‘soft politics areas’ such as sport and cultural events. ‘Hard politics’ cooperation was prevented by competitive thinking and different legal systems in the two countries (Aufschnaiter et al 2008). On the other hand, the cooperation between two other local governments, Laufen and Oberndorf, on areas such as schooling and spatial planning, shows that it is possible to cooperate beyond hard politics.

“Most of the people know each other, but despite of that, when an assembly meet, Traunstein at one table and Salzburg at another. It is the same at intermunicipal associations. It must be how people are.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A79)

Second, contacts are perceived to have increased over time. When asked about the amount of cross-border contacts over the past five years, most respondents in both organizations indicated an increase.⁸⁷ Third, parallel with the tendency towards increased cross-border networking, local governments also tend to increase contacts within domestic networks i.e. on one side of the border, via micro-regional associations. This enables a tentative estimation of the indicators used to assess between-group social capital, to be used in the analysis of the second research question, related to the performance and function of Euroregions.

Table 17. *Between-group social capital of Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T*

	Euroregion	Inntal-C-K-M	Salzburg-BL-T
BETWEEN- GROUP SOCIAL CAPITAL	<i>Strength of cross-border communications</i>	medium	medium
	<i>Perceived trend of contacts</i>	somewhat increasing	increasing
	<i>Level of trust to other side</i>	high	high
	<i>Absence/presence of conflict (politisization of issues)</i>	low	low

*

This section on motivation, participation and interaction has treated members of the two Austrian-German investigated Euroregions as the primary unit of analysis, seeking to answer questions as to why and how they participate, but also how they interact with each other. Unlike the case study organizations in previous chapters, the ones in this chapter showed less variation. The chapter demonstrated the primacy of identity/normative motivation over

⁸⁷ This is sometimes promoted by direct activities by the Euroregions. Especially Euroregion Salzburg has been active in this, for instance through the organization of special “Mayor marches” across the border, having the explicit aim of making mayors know each other.

instrumental motivation. In both, the majority of members were detached or listeners, and not active members. Networks across the borders were strengthening and a low but increasing endowment of between-group institutional social capital could be identified.

5.3 Function and performance of Salzburg-BL-T and Inntal-C-K-M

The previous section dealt with members as units of analysis; in this section, the organizations constitute the units of analysis and the objective is to assess their function and performance in accordance with the analytical framework established in Chapter 1 and carried out in the two preceding case study chapters. I start by outlining the policy areas within which the Euroregions are active, and the typical activities they engage in, and proceed to assess their organizational capacity and the extent to which they are able to appropriate policy space. The analysis of the latter focuses on whether they take on roles as seismographs, loudspeakers and display windows, and how that is related to their capacity to take place within the governance landscape.

5.3.1 Policy areas and typical activities

Both organizations' statutes list a number of activities within which the Euroregion can engage: spatial development, economic development, traffic, environment, culture and sports, health care, energy, waste treatment, tourism, agriculture, innovation and technology transfer, education, social cooperation, emergency services, communication, cooperation on public security and cooperation on public concerns (Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T 1996, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M 1998). However, whereas Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has had projects within most of these (on this, see also Gabbe and von Malchus 2008:93), the range of activities carried out by Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has been more limited, mainly focused on spatial

development, business promotion, higher education⁸⁸ and youth policy. Table 18 lists the areas said by members to be most important, and typical activities (frequently mentioned by members and/or featuring prominently in Euroregional documents).

Table 18. *Typical cooperation areas and activities of Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T*

<p style="text-align: center;">Inntal-C-K-M</p> <p>Most important to members: infrastructure, European identity-building, economic development</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinated hailstone prevention. An initiative that the Euroregion took in the first years of its operation was to brokerage an agreement between Bavaria and Tyrol allowing the Bavarian hail prevention team to fly also over Tyrol. 2. Multiple generation house –Flintsbach: The local government of Flintsbach, situated in Germany, right at the Austrian border, seeks to integrate care activities for elderly and young children under one roof. The care center will use volunteers who receive some sort of compensation, and the training will be carried out together with the Austrian Red Cross. A cross-border forum for mayors to be held in the house is scheduled for 2012 or 2013.
<p style="text-align: center;">Salzburg-BL-T</p> <p>Most important cooperation areas: infrastructure, European identity-building, environment</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spatial Planning Coordination project. The Euroregion provided co-funds and management support as well as served as a focal point for its members for this three-year-project which resulted in a master plan for spatial development in the borderland area. The importance of including local governments, and not only the regional level, was highlighted in all program documentation. 2. Euroregion Summit Meeting (EuRegio Gipfel). Annual meetings/conferences to which leading politicians from regional and national level are invited to learn about topics prioritized within the Euroregion. For instance, the 2010 meeting took place on May 5, 2010 in Salzburg. The meeting was arranged by the governor (Landeshauptfrau) of Salzburg. In the meeting, there were representatives of the government of Salzburg, political leaders of the Berchtesgaden and Traunstein regions, city of Salzburg, the government of Upper Bavaria, the State Chancellery of Bavaria and the central Salzburg administration. Five topics were dealt with: The intention to continue to cooperate on an annual Professional Information Fair after 2001; location of a new bridge at Oberndorf/Laufen; to develop the idea of the transnational regional City Transportation system; the promotion of hydro power at the lower Salzach, joint efforts to influence the shape of the Interreg policy program after 2013.

Between the two organizations, the priorities resemble each other, the only difference being that Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has environment in third place and while Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has economic development there. Notable is the high score of European

⁸⁸ The University of Kufstein has a large intake of students from the other side of the border.

identity-building, supporting the argument made in the previous section on this as a motivation for membership.

In addition to these ‘typical activities’, the European Territorial Cooperation program for cross-border cooperation (Interreg) has allocated implementation tasks for smaller projects directly to the Euroregions located at the border. This means that each Euroregion has a ‘small project fund’ from which it can award funds for projects up to total project values of up to 25,000 EUR. Thereby the Euroregions become interesting for both members and non-members as grant-givers, and make them a natural first point of contact for information about European CBC programs, even those not included in the small project fund. It also implies a natural point of connection and contact between the Euroregions and the Interreg program (see more in section 5.3.3 below). This contact is mostly kept up by the managers of the Euroregion; for the 2007-2013 programming period the Manager of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T was included as a voting member of the Monitoring Committee, whereas the Manager of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M was asked to be an advising member.

5.3.2 Cross-border cooperation intensity

In Chapter 1 indicators of cross-border cooperation intensity were selected from those that have been used in the literature on cross-border cooperation. Using a tri-partite scale, six dimensions were assessed: strength of legal arrangement, robustness of its administrative arrangement, meeting activity, adherence to development strategy/mission statement, budget size and project intensity. The assessment scoring is summarized in Table 19 and is elaborated on below.

Table 19. Cross-border cooperation intensity of Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T

Euroregion	Inntal-C-K-M	Salzburg-BL-T
<i>Strength of legal arrangement</i>	medium	medium
<i>Robustness of administrative arrangement</i>	medium	high
<i>Meeting activity</i>	medium	high
<i>Adherence to development strategy/mission statement</i>	medium	high
<i>Budget</i>	low	medium
<i>Project intensity</i>	medium	high

Strength of *legal arrangement* is rated highest if the organization uses the instrument European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), and lowest if it is not formally registered. Both Euroregions in this chapter score medium, as they have a functioning structure, even though the Euroregion does not exist as one legal organization but legally consists of two organizations (*Trägervereine*) having a cooperation agreement between them. In several recent and ongoing research projects (e.g. Evrard and Chilla 2012) the EGTC is promoted as a positive tool for cross-border cooperation. Müller wrote in 2009 “As soon as [this law] is implemented, the national ‘carrying associations’ of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T [...] not be needed anymore, since the Euroregion can be a legal person in itself.” (Müller S. 2009:66) However, as of 2012 Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M had not raised a discussion around reconstituting into an EGTC, whereas the discussion that did take place in Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T led to a decision not to take the idea of reforming into an EGTC forward:

“As you know we have around 100 members. [If we wanted to regroup into an EGTC] every local government would have to vote again on the membership. As I have said that [the Euroregion] is always connected with EU, we don’t want to risk that many local governments do not follow.” (Deputy Chair Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Austria: #A130)

While the Manager sees several advantages of an EGTC formation (easier structure, own legal entity, ability to carry out own projects instead of relying on the ‘carrying organizations’, better external representation), he repeats the concerns of the Deputy Chair:

“It does not have anything to do with the construction of the EGTC. It is rather a bit the question what risk the introduction of an EGTC brings when it comes to the membership of the local governments. In order to create a new legal person, with the same members, then the local councils have to approve that, and that could backfire, so that they say ‘we are not interested’ and take the reconstruction as an opportunity to exit.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A79)

Adherence to development strategy/mission statement. Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T receives the assessment ‘high’ in this category, as it has activities in all the areas outlined as important in its original mission and in a document elaborating on the mission statement. Early on, it also conducted a 650-page long assessment study on what work would need to be done to enhance integration, and this ‘Development concept’ (Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T 2000) was used as a guide for project generation in the years to follow. While neither the long mission statement nor the development concept includes quantitative indicators that can be used for follow-up work, they still allow members and external parties to make their own judgments. On the other hand, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M receives the assessment ‘low’, as its objectives are stated on its website, but are not further developed, and not referred to in other documents or parts of the website. An internal survey showed some dissatisfaction with the set-up of joint long-term aims and objectives. Only four out of 15 thought that the aims for regional development were possible to realize, and that “aims are clearly operationalized and measurable”. The majority did not agree with the statement that Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M ‘takes strategic initiatives and moves development’.

The *administrative arrangements* are robust in both organizations, but differ in scale. Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has a four-staff team including a full-time manager, whereas Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M only has a half-time manager, assisted by Kufstein College staff

and occasional interns. Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T is therefore put into the ‘high’ category, whereas the evaluation is ‘medium’ for Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M. For the latter, the assessment is affirmed by an internal Board member survey from 2012, in which only one out of 15 respondents gave an unqualified ‘yes’ to the question if there is enough personnel for project- and network management. While there is no equivalent evaluation of Salzburg, no interviews indicated dissatisfaction with the managerial resources.

Both organizations have regular meetings. However, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T also runs 15 working groups with administrators meeting between twice and eight times a year. Therefore, the *meeting activity* is assessed as ‘medium’ for Inntal and ‘high’ for Salzburg, even though annual assembly meetings rarely gather more than half of members. Since only a third is needed for a quorum, the low numbers are not seen as a problem by the leadership.

“When you take into account the appointment-related stress the mayors have, it is actually quite good, we always have the capacity to make decisions.”
(Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A79).

Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M does not have working groups. Originally a number of working groups were envisioned (mentioned in the statutes), but they only functioned for a short time in the early 2000s, according to an early Board member, who at the time of the interview was a civil servant with the Rosenheim region

“In the beginning we made long lists of priorities, and we tried to set up working groups, lots of people were involved, but very soon we felt and saw that some imaginations in the cooperation were an illusion. For instance, in the area of culture, sport and tourism, we had this working group to which for the first meeting 50 people came to try to discuss how we could create a cross-border tourism area. But we soon realized that it is difficult enough to make local governments cooperate on the domestic side. So the ideas we had on cross-border cooperation soon were hit by reality.” (Former manager, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A78)

As of 2012, no new initiatives had taken to reinstate permanent working groups. However, a revision of the statutes in 2011 allowed for an inclusion of non-voting

representatives of different administrative sectors into the Board, in order to create better links between political and administrative officials.

The *budget* of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T is medium-sized from a European perspective (374,244 EUR in 2011), and has varied between approx. 300,000 EUR and 500,000 EUR over the past ten years. The budget for Euroregion Inntal was 42,500 in 2011. As pointed out in previous chapters, comparing and assessing *project intensity* can be deceiving, as Euroregions usually work both as project owners and as project developers. In the case of these two Euroregions, the task to manage the small project funds boosts the Euroregional budgets.

5.3.3 Appropriation of policy space

As in previous chapters, I now move on to how well Euroregions can appropriate policy space in borderlands, which depends on how well the Euroregion can perform the three functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window.⁸⁹ For this section I rely mainly on the interviews with managers and Chairs of the organizations, but also on documents and member interviews.

5.3.3.1 Seismograph function

A Euroregion has different ways through which it can receive, register, categorize and measure policy issues of importance to the Euroregion *constituency*, i.e. the inhabitants of the territory of the Euroregion. The most important is undoubtedly through participation and communication of its members. As seen in the previous section, both Euroregions have large memberships, a relative large part of which is passive in their membership. In both Euroregions it is mainly the task of the secretariat and the Chair/Deputy Chair to conduct

⁸⁹ See Chapter 1 and previous case study chapters for elaborations. In short, as a *seismograph* it measures the intensity of attitudes and preferences with cross-border relevance, and can thereby convince its members of their existence. As a *loudspeaker* it performs advocacy work for resources or policy interventions, and as a *display window* it strengthens the image, both towards external and internal communities, of the Euroregion as a single area.

active outreach to members and encourage them to include the cross-border dimension in municipal strategic thinking, preferably without making it a grant-access exercise only. Another way to serve as a seismograph is through direct contacts with citizens and interest representations (civil society or firms). A precondition for this is that these groups know about the existence of the Euroregion. While no data is available on the extent to which the two Euroregions are known, the perception is that recognition is growing.

“Those whom we have supported earlier [*with the small project fund*] know us of course, but interestingly there are more and more people approaching us who know us from media, so I would say that we are increasingly known, but it should not be overestimated.” (Chair, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, Austria: #A3)

A similar effort to estimate how well Euroregions are known was made by Müller S. 2009. Interviews with five mayors within the Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T area were carried out within the framework of her research project (as were interviews in two other Euroregions). The conclusion drawn based upon these interviews was that the Euroregion was positively assessed, but little known outside the town of Freilassing, the location of the secretariat. The study highlighted which groups that the Euroregion would be known to.

“In addition to representatives of the local governments and other local and regional politicians, it is mainly the highly educated and professional middle classes to whom the Euroregion is a concept. In addition, of course politically engaged or interested persons know of the Euroregion. On the other hand, the Euroregion is not so known among elderly and less educated people and professional groups, who don’t have contact areas to the Euroregion in their work. It can be established, that a certain minimum level of interest in local political processes is necessary for knowledge about Euroregions and their tasks.” (Müller S. 2009: 71, my translation).

Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M monitors the flow of incoming spontaneous phone calls or visits, which in the past years have been around 70-80 a year. Most of the inquiries concern possibilities and technicalities related to funding, and are evenly distributed from local governments, civil society organizations and firms. For this to happen, it is important that the

Chair is known as this, even though he/she performs other public functions as well⁹⁰, most notably as a mayor:

“I’m sure that I’m more well-known as a mayor than as chair or deputy chair of the Euroregion. Maybe partly due to me being mayor for longer time, and since there is a monthly newspaper with a page on Euroregional news in it, with picture, etc, I’m getting more well-known”. (Deputy Chair and former/rotating Chair, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Austria: #A30)

The previously mentioned internal survey in Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M showed that half of the respondents did not think that firms take part in Euroregional work, and the answers regarding civil society organizations such as tourist organizations were only slightly better.

While the Euroregions have done much for increasing cooperation, an obstacle is the perceived increased hostility towards the European Union. Euroregions in Austria and Germany are seen as intimately entwined with the European integration project, which is something that may also backfire:

“Unfortunately, EU is not seen very positively, it’s not as I thought it would be that people would realize the importance of European history so that they would be enthusiastic for this. So for electoral strategic reasons I have to play it down a bit, I do my [Euroregional] work and I do it enthusiastically, but politically there is simply nothing to harvest from that.” (Deputy Chair, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Austria: #A30)

In Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T there is a well-functioning system for exchanging information between political and administrative officials, thereby also helping the Euroregion decision-making bodies (politicians) to know about perceived problems and issues within the region. The main vehicle for this is the 15 working groups, which function well due to meticulous work by the secretariat in supporting them by administrating agendas, meeting localities, minute-writing, etc. These networks can then serve as important generators of ideas. As seen before, this has not been the case in Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, which after a long

⁹⁰ Chairs of both organizations estimate the time they dedicate to Euroregional work to be between 10% and 25% on an annual basis. The Chair of Inntal estimates it to 10-15%, whereas the Salzburg estimates half a day per week (10%) in years when he is the Deputy Chair, and 20% in the years when he is Chair.

period without any institutionalized participation of non-elected officials has introduced a system of adjunct Board members. This was explicitly said as an alternative to try to reinstate permanent working groups.

“Yes, that was the idea behind this. It needs resources to advise working groups all the time, to write protocols, to follow-up some projects, and then instead we chose to select certain persons, for certain topics, and integrate them into the Board. Because after all, it is important to know people in the region and create contacts.” (Manager, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A80)

Whereas Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has found a system for collecting policy-related information and implementing policy, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has been struggling to set up a structure working for a smaller organization. It remains to be seen whether the system of adjunct people on the board from a few areas can rectify the lack of permanent groups by instilling creativity into the system.⁹¹

5.3.3.2 Loudspeaker function

Both Euroregions have utilized the various channels for exerting influence and modes of persuasion outlined in Chapter 1: multiple positions of member representatives; within-party contacts to people in power; indirect representation via other organizations; partnerships with non-state actors; commissioning reports on the issue to be raised; arranging seminars or conferences; sending delegations to decision-makers; and writing statements/resolutions in the name of the Euroregion.

Successful utilization of any of these is increased by support coming from two sides of a nation-state border, meaning political weight behind any statements:

⁹¹ That membership stretches beyond local governments (including chambers of commerce and chambers of labor) also means extra channels outwards: “At least the networks here have become deeper. In the area of the chamber of commerce the contacts are better and more intensive, especially in new businesses. Through many years’ participation in fairs, autumn holidays, good networks could be created, which are good for the companies. For instance, if a company knows the managing director in Rosenheim and other institutions, than it is good for both sides. If you want to settle in Germany and already know who the mayor is, that makes it easier, just to have this personal contact.” (Member, Chamber of Commerce, Euroregion Salzburg: #A83)

“When there is something that cannot be decided in the region we conduct intensive lobbying; that means 100 local governments joining together as one voice.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Germany: #A79)

“This means that this is not only a political committee, a working group or one local government that is talking, but this is a position which represents all members of the Euroregion, this means all votes thrown into one vessel so to speak.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Germany: #A79)

A difference could be seen in that Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has taken greater care to form joint delegations and to always make sure that issues prioritized by the Euroregion is spoken for in the name of the Euroregion.

“I lobby in the name of the Euroregion [not as mayor or regional representative]. You go alone or two if it is possible, but we always speak for the two sides of the border, not only for our side.” (Deputy Chair, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A130)

“As Euroregion, we always try to act together when we approach one side. If there is a written statement, it is always signed by both the Chair and the Deputy Chair [who represents different sides], and when we have a top meeting, both of them must be there.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Germany: A79)

Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has had rather an *ad hoc* approach to this.

“This is rather a task for the Board. That is rather in the background, currently we don’t do that, although it could happen. I would say that the board members go to where it is suitable for them, and if it is possible they also bring the Euroregional agenda onboard.” (Manger, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, Austria: #A80)

Such an *ad hoc* possibility was for instance the entry in 2009 of the German Traffic Minister, who had a background from the region:

“When you have a minister who knows the area, then you can some things into movement.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A75)

Both Euroregions could bring forward a range of issues, for which they have conducted systematic interest representation. An example from Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T pertained to the distribution of Interreg funds in the upcoming (2013-2020) funding period. There was reason to believe that a large chunk of the territorial cooperation funds would go to the eastern

borders, and the Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T decided to persuade decision-makers on the utility of funds at the Austrian-German border. They considered the German government the most crucial to get on board, and therefore approached a German Minister.

“We could get him to come to an event arranged by the Euroregion with high participation of its members, and through him we could say ‘dear German Parliament, these programs should continue because they make sense in many respects. We could give these reasons to the Minister in his hands, and get him convinced, so that he will act on behalf of these programs.” (Deputy Chair, Austria, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A130)

Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has over the years written a number of resolutions and letters, which were discussed in the Assemblies and signed by the representatives of the Euroregions and then forwarded to decision-makers. These have primarily concerned infrastructure, such as the location of large highway projects.

Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M has been involved in numerous events related to the construction of a tunnel through the Brenner Base Tunnel, which is mainly an Austrian-Italian project, but which has infrastructure ramifications for the Inntal area as well. The perception was that the federal state and state levels on the German side did not prioritize this project, and at several occasions the Euroregion therefore invited ministers and state secretaries from Berlin or Munich to come to events, with the purpose to keep this issue on the political agenda (Chair, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #A3).

In the politics surrounding such a large infrastructure project, the Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M is nonetheless a small player. There is, however, one example that demonstrates that the opinion of the Euroregion does carry weight in local conflicts of interest. In 2010 and 2011 one local government (a member of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M and located directly at the border next to the highway A12) wanted to approve the building of a shopping mall that could potentially attract external visitors passing by on the main north-south highway. However, surrounding local governments at both sides of the borders saw the mall as a threat to local small shops. The Euroregion was asked by the authority granting approval to give an opinion.

After much deliberation in the Board and in the assembly, it was decided that the Euroregion would speak against the project. The resolution written on the topic states:

“The project would not have only positive effects on the liveliness of single shops and town structures on both sides of the border [...] To sum up, in parallel with the potential for additional purchase power through visitors driving through the area, from the critical aspects of landscape and regional planning, the project might impact negatively the local governments and towns in the surrounding area of Bavaria and Tyrol. Also, the large shopping area goes against the aims of the spatial and regional planning of Bavaria. From the current perspective, it can unfortunately only be rejected.” (Resolution 2010:3-4, my translation)

Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T is known and well regarded enough that its name can be used for goodwill when individual members, especially the business chambers, conduct campaigns for their own issues.

“Lobbying can be made when you plan something for which EU funds are necessary. If you have the blessing of the Euroregion, that already has a value. [...] that is why we also want to have the Euroregion with us.” (Member representative of Chamber of Commerce, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Austria: #A83)

5.3.3.3 Display window function

Of the two investigated Euroregions, only Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has the display function explicitly referred to in its objectives:

“The Euroregion shall make an important contribution to the creation of a joint regional identity among its inhabitants, while taking regional diversity into account. This means continuous information about work and service activities as well as cultural and spare time activities, in the whole area of the region. It is also to inspire participation in those activities. This means that inhabitants can better identify with the Euroregion, but also that existing activities and service offers become better utilized.” (Euroregion Salzburg, Mission document, p. 3)

The information about work and service activities thus mentioned in the mission statement has indeed taken place since then, as has extensive media contacts and active

project support to joint events. While the Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M does not have the display window function among its objectives, it has also made efforts to promote their region⁹², as a coherent region:

“I consider it important that the Euroregion becomes more known in the population. Of course the primary target group is the local governments, but the citizens live in these local governments and are a part of their decision-making process. Therefore it is important that the Euroregion is known, and that the mayor forwards the content of discussions. I’m glad to see that some local governments have signs at their entry, which contains also the logo of the Euroregion, because that signifies also the territory of the Euroregion.” (Manager, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M, Austria: #A80)

The road signs at the entry point, like similar signs displaying partnership towns, or distances to different locations, signal identifications that local governments want to display. Another model, frequently applied by cross-border cooperation initiatives around the world (Blatter 2000), is the production of maps of the territory (see Annex B). This work is directed inwards, to give inhabitants a sense of belonging to one region. Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has worked extensively with maps and other tools in their external marketing of the region, both as a tourist destination and as a location for investment. Cooperation around attracting investments has proved more difficult than the tourism promotion:

“Location marketing is not so easy, since each region also looks at its own interests. We do work together, but it is not easy. The other part is much easier, because there tourism organizations or cultural organizations work together and develop this together.” (Manager, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, Austria: #A79)

“There is in some branches a thinking of competition, especially in areas where the access to the profession is different (e.g. craftsman). You might have jealousy there, but in general people recognize the advantages [with cross-border cooperation].” (Chamber of Commerce, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T: #A82)

“You know, sometimes Bavaria and Tyrolians were competitors as well, and in Tyrol they have made investment somewhat easier and faster in Tyrol. In

⁹² A majority of the respondents to a survey by Euroregion Inntal agreed with the statement “it is important to be seen in on the regional level in public work”, but fewer agreed that the Euroregion and its supported project owners were indeed mentioned by media.

Germany it is rather restrictive, you need a plan, etc.” (Mayor, Germany, Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M: #Flintsbach)

The quotes show that when it comes to attracting investment, there is internal competition for resources, and the region’s ability to act as one agent is hampered by competing interests. External visibility can facilitate the interest representation discussed in the previous section on the loudspeaker function. Through its membership in Association of European Border Regions, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T is visible on European level, which is less the case of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M. A consequence of this is the higher attention given to Salzburg in academia.⁹³

5.3.3.4 The governance space

At the time of writing (2012), the Euroregions examined in this chapter have existed for 17 and 13 years, respectively. Both have carved out a space for themselves among the actors that are relevant for dealing with policy issues that have a cross-border dimension. For instance, in the previously mentioned survey of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M local government members, most of the respondents agreed with the statement “the Euroregion has an organized and active network management – within and outside the region.” According to the same survey, most respondents found that cooperation with other regional actors worked well or rather well, whereas four thought that it did rather not work or they could not say.

Figure 5 contains the main actors with whom the Euroregions interact within a multi-level governance space.

⁹³ For instance, a search in Google Scholar results in ten times more hits for Euroregion Salzburg than for Euroregion Inntal, in various combinations (approx. 340 versus 35). The same is true for regular Google (September 2012).

Figure 5. Involved actors in cross-border policy issues: Salzburg-BL-T and Inntal-C-K-M

MULTI-LEVEL DIMENSION	GOVERNANCE DIMENSION		
		State	Non-state
	Supranational	Committee of the Regions (Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T), Brussels Office of Bavarian Local governments, Brussels Salzburg Office	Association of European Border Regions (Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T)
	National	Infrastructure/traffic ministries (<i>rare</i>)	Infrastructure/traffic ministries (<i>rare</i>)
	Regional	Regional coordination points, Salzburg, Spatial and Economic Ministries of the Federal State of Bavaria, Cultural Ministry of Bavaria, participants in the Interreg Monitoring Committee, Regional government, Regional administration	Chambers of Commerce (Euroregional members), Chambers of Labour, Leader groups, Regionale Tourismusorganisationen, Regionale Wirtschaftseinrichtungen
	Local	City of Salzburg, City of Kufstein, City of Rosenheim	Hunting association, fire protection associations, local action groups (within the LEADER program)
Cross-border baseline Interreg (strong connections with Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T, relatively strong for Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M)			

Source: For references on the multi-level governance framework see Marks 1993, Hooghe and Marks 2001, Bache 2012.

Three points should be made in relation to the figure. First, an important reference for regional action is the Austrian system of regional management coordinators, offering an institutional system through which actors can work jointly for regional integration. Also in the cross-border governance space, they have become focal points. The appreciation of the Euroregions is demonstrated, at least externally, on the website of the regional management coordinators, which state: “Euroregions constitute a special form of regional management. Euroregion is the term for a regional trans-border organization aiming to work stronger across national borders. They contribute significantly to European integration.” (Austrian Federal Chancellery 2012)

Secondly, an increasingly important issue for the role of the Euroregions in the policy space is how they position themselves vis-à-vis the administrative bodies managing European funding. Large variation can be seen across national areas; the model found at the Austrian-German border does take the Euroregions into account, whereas others treat them just as project applicants among others. The operational program of the funding period 2007-2013 emphasizes the importance of Euroregions (Interreg Bayern-Osterreich 2007-2013) and they have been charged with certain implementing functions within the program (the small projects fund) and receive financial support. Officially, Euroregions are pointed out to prospective project applicants as important cooperation partners: “In the last years Euroregions have taken upon themselves a key function concerning the promotion, implementation and advising of Interreg projects. Therefore, Euroregions are contact points when you are thinking of a project” (ETC Interreg Program Bavaria-Austria 2012).

Still, the support for the Euroregions is not unquestioned. Voices have been raised to say that the Euroregions are ‘too political’ and that it is better to distribute EU funds with purely technical implementing institutions (Manager of Interreg program: #B61)⁹⁴

Third, the system of long-term functioning working groups of the Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has enabled the Euroregion to become more firmly embedded as an actor in an emerging governance space. Moreover, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has also cooperated more intensely than Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M with both European funding for cross-border cooperation (ETC Interreg Bavaria-Austria 2012) and with the program LEADER+, the latter through institutionalized regular information meetings between the local action groups of LEADER and the Euroregion secretariat. The visibility on European supranational level should not be over-stated though. Interviews carried out in 2009 (see Müller S. 2009) with representatives of two interest representation offices in Brussels (Office Salzburg and Office

⁹⁴ I am aware that this speaks against the previous argument that a Euroregion always brings an added-value by bringing in political weight. The statement demonstrates that the creation of a cross-border political space is sometimes not assessed as important even by people working day-to-day with regional integration issues.

for Bavarian Local Governments) demonstrated that the Euroregion is seen as just lobby actors among other. “The Euroregions come to the offices but are not actively contacted. That is primarily due to that the task of the offices is not to represent single districts or towns, but to be their association. That is why all Euroregions are equally treated, even though Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T through its annual visit in Brussels, has somewhat closer contacts [than others]” (Müller S. 2009:61, my translation).

Table 20 gives the assessment for appropriation of cross-border space together with the internal evaluation of member satisfaction for both Euroregions.

Table 20. *Member satisfaction and appropriation of cross-border governance space of Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T*

Euroregion	Inntal-C-K-M	Salzburg-BL-T
Appropriation of cross-border governance space	medium	high
Member satisfaction	medium	high

*

To sum up, section 5.3 has demonstrated variation in how the two Euroregions function and perform. Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T scored higher than Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M in five out of six categories of organizational capacity, and has a wider application of the three functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated two Euroregions that appear similar from a number of aspects; in addition to operating within a similar context that determined the case selection (cultural-linguistically close, political-administratively similar, and homogenous economic development level), they were founded relatively close in time, are of a similar size and

operate with similar structures⁹⁵ and have the same overall EU-related rhetoric in their original documents. Nonetheless, the outputs of the organizations are different. Salzburg has become an actor in the cross-border governance space by conducting activities within a large number of policy areas and supporting more projects. As demonstrated in this chapter, a large part of the membership in both organizations is passive and does not see policy problems that the organizations should solve. However, the cost – in terms of financial and human resources – of membership is low, so while the organization offers events, and possibility for information, they stay. In a way, these are Euroregions in search of challenge, or to be more specific, policy problems or policy opportunities, as members do not enter the cooperation with existing problems or opportunities in mind. In this respect, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T has performed better, through early mapping, the study of strategic areas and the allocation of resources to a secretariat big enough to support working groups.

The study of two organizations at the Austrian-German border was the last out of three empirical chapters investigating how cross-border cooperation institutions in the form of Euroregions cooperate, asking why and how local governments participate in Euroregions, and if social capital impacts the performance and function of Euroregions?

The next chapter will ask the same questions, but using a different method to allow for more in-depth reasoning around the importance of member participation and interaction in relation to performance and function.

⁹⁵ The main difference is that Euroregion Salzburg has a mirror arrangement and Euroregion Inntal is registered only in Austria.

CHAPTER 6: A SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF RELATIONAL DATA

In line with previous chapters, this chapter is concerned with how local government engagement and interaction in Euroregions influences how these organizations perform and function. However, this chapter responds to the issue of governance in trans-border regionalization by applying a different approach and method. The approach is network-centered, focusing on communication patterns among the local governments that constitute the backbone of much institutionalized cross-border cooperation in Europe. The method is application of tools from social network analysis. Two questions are specific for this chapter: First, to what extent do local governments within Euroregions communicate with their counterparts across the border in comparison with how much they communicate with local domestic neighbors? Second, is there a relation between the specific characteristics (the topography) of the communication networks between the local governments on each side of the border, and the topography of communication networks across the border? In Chapter 7, the results of the latter question will be used to discuss how such a relation impacts on Euroregional function and performance.

The chapter relies on an extensive and unique dataset consisting of data on more than one hundred political representatives (mayors) of Euroregions. I collected this data during the interviews, which provided the qualitative material that was analyzed in previous chapters. The data has enough coverage to allow for analysis of the four case study organizations located at the Hungarian-Slovak and Swedish-Norwegian borders.

The chapter starts with a review of how network analysis has been used in cross-border contexts, and how my approach differs from mainstream usage (section 6.1). It proceeds by elaborating on the method in terms of describing how the data was collected and how it was analyzed (section 6.2). Section 6.3 tackles the first chapter-specific question and appraises the

extent to which borders limit communication between political actors, whereas section 6.4 deals with the relation between internal and external networks, i.e. the second chapter-specific question. The conclusion discusses the findings in relation to both the posed questions and the overall dissertation topic.

6.1 Policy networks in borderlands

As stated in Chapter 1, a Euroregion can be seen as a network of actors (local or regional governments), and as a policy actor within a broader network of actors (other organizational players relevant to policy-decisions taken in the cross-border landscape). This is a view of Euroregions fitting in with the multi-level governance view of Europe, as well as on the emphasis on the role of policy networks in policy-making. Over the past years researchers have increasingly applied relational approaches to policy-making, and this is true for borderland scholars as well.⁹⁶ At least two major European research projects including network-approaches to borderland studies are currently underway, projects that did not exist at the time when this dissertation was planned. The project Metronet studies the effect of policy networks dedicated to transportation and regional marketing in four western cross-border regions.⁹⁷ The border area as a complex governance system is also an important component of the EU Border Regions project, which entails a comparative study of EU's external borders.⁹⁸ Preliminary mapping of cross-border networks has been carried out at the Ukrainian-Hungarian-Slovak border (Gerő and Micsinai 2012).

⁹⁶ For instance, this chapter benefited from discussions among researchers working on relational data and policy networks at the conference 'Unpacking cross-border governance', held September 6-7, 2012, in Luxembourg.

⁹⁷ The project Cross-border metropolitan governance in Europe is a three-year project led by the Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies (CEPS/INSTEAD) and funded by National Research Fund of Luxembourg.

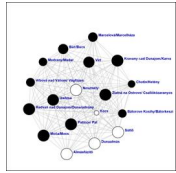
⁹⁸ The project EUBorderregions is a four-year project led by the University of Eastern Finland and funded by the EU FP7 research program.

The difference between these research projects and this dissertation is not the questions that are asked, but the delimitation and definition of the type of networks those questions relate to. For example, one publication resulting from the Metronet project stated the research objective as finding out “the extent to which the existence of national borders [...] still limit interactions between the partners”(Walther and Reithel 2012:3). Another asked “to what extent is the presence of a state border affecting the forms of the networks and the role of actors?” (Dörry and Decoville 2012:19). Both these are virtually the same as the first research question of this chapter: to what extent do local governments within Euroregions communicate with their counterparts across the border in comparison with how much they communicate with domestic neighbors?

However, while their questions pertained to governance networks in two specific policy fields (transportation policy and regional markets), and included actors both with and without formal decision-making power (e.g. private firms), this study looks at actors joining up for multiple-purpose action across policy fields within one organization, and studies their internal relations. I argue that taking a relational approach to the ‘network within the network’ gives us information, which contributes to understanding the position of the organization/network within the governance landscape.⁹⁹ Figure 6 depicts the Euroregion as one actor, which in turn consists of actors, within a multi-level governance space.

⁹⁹ A qualitative analysis of each Euroregion’s position within the governance space was conducted in chapter 4-6, but a substantial further data collection would be needed for a social network analysis.

Figure 6. The inter-organizational network in the border MLG landscape

	GOVERNANCE		
LEVEL	State		Non-state
	Supranational		Supranational
	National		National
	Regional		Regional
	Local		Local

Note: The vertical dimension indicates the hierarchical notion of levels. The horizontal dimension indicates sector diversity (state and non-state in its simplest typology). The Euroregion in the middle is a visualization of the Hídverő Association network, see Figure 10. Source: The author's interpretation of the MLG framework, see Marks 1993:392, Hooghe & Marks 2001: 2-4, Kochler-Koch 1996: 366-375, Bache 2012.

Moreover, the objective is not only to see whether communication networks are nation-bound (the Chapter's first research) but also to see if there is a link between political communication networks on one side of the border and communication networks across the border (the Chapter's second research question). In Chapter 1 a model was presented of how the accumulation of social capital embedded in governing institutions on each side of the border was expected to facilitate the creation of local transnational institutional social capital. The terms 'within-group' and 'between-group' social capital was used following Grix and Knowles (2003), who referred to social capital in the form of networks on one side of the border as 'within-group social capital' and local transnational social capital as 'between-group social capital'. The expectation in this chapter would then be to see a relation between such within-group and between-group social capital.

6.2 Method

That policy actors talk to each other is both a condition for, and a result of, coordination and cooperation on policy in different forms. Talking is used here as a metaphor for all kinds of

personal communication, such as face-to-face contact, telephone or email, regardless of the topic on which the conversation is taking place. But how usual is it that policy actors do just that? For example, one 2006 study of the OstBoh Euroregion described the organization as a forum where cooperation and contacts “daily take place” between “leading politicians and representatives of the member municipalities” (Lorentzon 2006:15, my translation). However, the Lorentzon study contained little evidence to back up this statement, whereas I in this dissertation provide data to test this statement. The data is the communication patterns between members of the Euroregions, which I investigate by using social network analysis, SNA (see e.g. Wasserman and Faust 1994, J.P. Scott 2000, Hannemann 2001, Borgatti and Everett 1997). The underlying assumption is that “relationships among interacting actors are crucial, that actors and their actions are interdependent, and that because of their relational ties they are able to channel flows of (in-tangible) resources” (Dorry and Decoville 2012:15, drawing on Wasserman and Faust 1994:4).

The dataset was collected for the purpose of the dissertation and is to the best of my knowledge unique in its scope and coverage. While it is used for a quite specific question in the dissertation, it has potential for addressing other research questions in the field of borderlands studies, especially if combined with network data on infrastructure or geographical distances.

Social network analysis offers a multiplicity of tools for various purposes, here only those directly relevant for the two questions specific to this chapter will be applied (the measures density, the E-I index, and visualizations).

Density “describes the general level of linkage among the points in a graph” (J.P. Scott 2006:69), in this case referring to communication links between mayors and their immediate staff in the investigated areas. Density has been calculated for the entire networks (Euroregions), for partial networks (domestic networks on one side of the border), and for

intra-group vectors (cross-border linkages). The E-I index is meant to be an easy intuitive measure for the degree to which links are concentrated within sub-groups. The E-I index was devised by Krackhardt and Stern (1988) and is a simple formula in which the number of internal ties are subtracted from external ties and then divided by the total number of ties. The main reason for including it is to enable comparison with studies from the Metronet 2012 project, although the measure has some deficits that will be pointed out in section 6.3. Finally, the visual display of networks is one of the more alluring aspects of social network analysis, although one should be careful not to interpret graphs too literally. For instance, the distances between nodes within the visualizations are not 100% representations of underlying data, but approximations done by software algorithms. Two programs have been used for calculations and visualizations: Ucinet (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 2002), the most widely used program for network analysis in the social sciences, and CEUNet.¹⁰⁰

The political representatives of local governments were asked to rate the frequency of contacts, specified as communication in person, via telephone or email, with other local governments in the investigated areas. Note that ‘communication’ as the basis for links in the network is close to what Walther and Reitel in their study refer to as ‘information exchange’, which included all exchanges through personal interaction, phone, email, social media or circulation of documents’ (Walter and Reitel 2012:6, see also Dorry and Decoville 2012 and Durand and Nelles 2012 for publications from the same study). Unlike their work, however, my study also took into account the frequency of communication, as the respondents could choose between ‘no communication’, ‘at least yearly’, ‘at least bi-annually’, ‘at least monthly’ and ‘at least weekly’. These categories were based on my assumption of how communication networks could look like. However, during the course of the fieldwork it became clear that local governments are relatively preoccupied with their own issues. ‘Weekly contact’ was

¹⁰⁰ CEUNet is program under development at the Center for Network Science at Central European University. I am grateful to the Center’s Carl Nordlund for guidance with the software and valuable input to this chapter.

therefore rare, and if considered a threshold for a communication link, it would constitute a very strict requirement. Hence, for the purpose of analysis, the primary decision to be made was whether ‘at least monthly’ or ‘at least twice a year’ should be interpreted as frequent communication. For the first analysis I used ‘at least monthly’ as the cut-off point, and hence dichotomized the data along these lines. For the sake of seeing how patterns change, I have also made limited calculations with different cut-off points, and some outputs of ‘at least weekly communication’ have been included in tables.

In the studies mentioned above respondents were asked to consider a two-year time frame when assessing their exchange of information. In the framework of this dissertation respondents were asked to assess the situation ‘now’ (which meant 2010 for the majority of interviews, and 2011 for some). However, the way the mayors reasoned around this and other questions in the face-to-face interviews indicated that they were in general framing their thinking around election cycles, i.e. they were thinking how they behave in their current election cycle. In practice this means that whereas the interviews in Hungary for instance were made at the end of an election cycle, the interviews in Sweden were made rather towards the beginning. While this might have influenced the outcome, differences of this sort would be impossible to avoid due to the different times at which elections take place in the six countries involved.

The lack of longitudinal data is a curse that plagues most social network analysis studies.

“In an ideal operationalization environment, SNA would be but one of a number of methodological tools that should be utilized in capturing an agent’s volition, preferences and action. We also recognize that the effects of action can only be captured through longitudinal analysis which is unfortunately beyond the resources of most research projects.” (Christopoulos and Ingold 2011:40)

An effort to capture the time dimension was made by asking the respondents to assess the overall change in communication compared with five years ago (i.e. in all cases an election cycle earlier), but it is clear that this data is only a proxy.

Missing data is more serious in network analysis than in statistical analysis. Samples can generally not be used (although exceptions can be made for some measures) and the effect of missing data is multiplied throughout the network. Preferably one should work with complete data, but a response rate above 85-90% is usually recommended (J.P. Scott 2000). The most common causes for missing data are ill-defined networks, respondent inaccuracy or non-response (Kossinets 2005). In this study, the networks VarmOst, OstBoh and Hídverő were complete, i.e. they had a 100% response rate, whereas the larger Ister-Granum had a response rate of 82%.

The direction of ties was not considered in the analysis. The assumption is that there is a communication link if someone has indicated communication with a local government that did not provide data or indicated a relation of weaker strength. This was the way to deal with the lower response rate for Ister-Granum.¹⁰¹ In technical terms this meant that reciprocity was not required in order to establish a link and that the data therefore could be mirrored (symmetrized and maximized).¹⁰² In order to test to which extent this would increase the density of a network, I checked the density of a separate network, municipalities in the Hungarian county of Komárom-Esztergom. By symmetrizing the already dichotomized data, the number of ties grew by 25%, i.e. the number of links was 25% higher if I allowed it to be enough that one mayor said that he/she was in contact with another local government at least weekly or at least monthly.

¹⁰¹ In the fast-growing literature on network analytical methods and network science, it is acknowledged that approaches to missing data are still understudied (Huisman 2009, Borgatti, Carley and Krackhardt 2006, Kossinets 2005). However, this is one of the generally recognized methods (see Stork and Richards 1992).

¹⁰² The same was for instance done in the Dorry and Decoville cross-border study: 'We did not consider the direction for the relations between the actors, instead we symmetrised and maximized them. This allows us to overcome the problem of missing out on actors when people forgot to mention established relation to other network actors whereas their counterparts did. However, the reader has to be aware that there might be a slight overestimation of the network's density due to the symmetrisation.' (Dorry and Decoville 2012:20)

This indicates two things. First, there is no major distortion in the high-response data, such as we would have if we symmetrized data between ‘ordinary people’ and ‘celebrities’ on the question whether they are familiar with each other. In fact, the symmetrization can have even made the set more reliable as some mayors found it difficult to choose between the options of ‘monthly’ and ‘bi-annually’ (for instance when they communicated every second month, which to them seemed closer to the value of “at least monthly” than “at least yearly”). Second, the symmetrization led to a real gain in data. Nevertheless, this does not eliminate the fact that we still do not know anything about ties between non-reporting actors.

6.3 The importance of the state borders

This section analyzes the extent to which local governments within Euroregions communicate with their counterparts across the border in comparison to how much they communicate with local domestic neighbors. Formulated differently, the section seeks to establish whether the existence of national borders limits interactions between local governments. Rivaling hypotheses are easy to state:

H0: The existence of a state border does not significantly affect communication between local governments.

H1: The existence of a state border significantly affects communication between local governments.

Research emphasizing the lingering effect of borders (H0) includes, for instance, the scholarship of van Houtum, who in 2000 wrote that states are “generally unwilling to hand over portions of their sovereignty and political authority to the structured forms of cooperation, sometimes prohibiting and frustrating direct and efficient dialogue between partners in the border regions” (van Houtum 2000:66). On the other hand, support for H1 can be found in the outcomes from the Metronet project (Walter and Reitel 2012, Durand and

Nelles 2012), which found that nationality did not matter for exchange of information within a transport policy governance network.

The two hypotheses were derived from the third theoretical expectation presented in Chapter 1, and were tested on four cases. While the reader should be familiar with them from previous chapters, basic facts are recapitulated here for easy reference.

Table 21. *Overview of case study organizations*

Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslënd-Dalsland ('OstBoh')

Founded in 1980 and located at the most southern part of the Swedish-Norwegian border. It has 22 local government members (14 in Sweden and 8 in Norway). It excels in organizational capacity, especially in relation to adherence to strategic goals. Efforts are geared towards fulfilling a loudspeaker function, whereas the display window function is downplayed. Assessment: High organizational capacity, medium membership satisfaction, high appropriation of policy space.

Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold ('VarmOst')

Founded in 1990 as a single issue network dedicated to the improvement of European route 18. Located north of OstBoh, it has 15 member municipalities (5 in Sweden and 10 in Norway). Its organizational capacity is limited, but it has been able to conduct the loudspeaker function efficiently, mainly through the utilization of personal ties to state-level politicians. Assessment: Low organizational capacity, high membership satisfaction, medium appropriation of policy space.

Hídverő Association

The association is registered as a Slovak micro-region consisting of 13 Slovak local governments with 5 Hungarian local governments added as honorary members. The organization was formalized in 1999 but the participating local governments had cooperated on cultural events since the mid-1990s. The association is close-knit and especially characterized by its frequent (monthly) and well-attended meetings. It therefore has significant potential to function as a seismograph, but does not attempt to carry out loudspeaker or display window functions. Assessment: Low organizational capacity, high membership satisfaction, low appropriation of policy space.

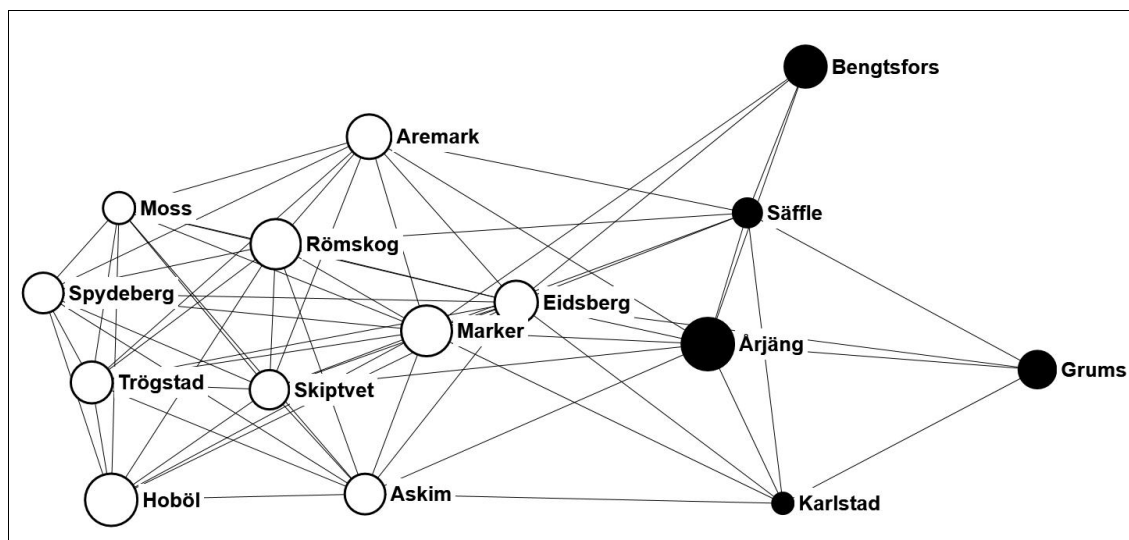
Ister-Granum EGTC

Founded as an ambitious association of more than 100 local governments in 2003, and converted into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2008. In 2012 it had 81 members, almost equally distributed between Slovakia and Hungary. The organization has aspired to fulfill all three functions of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window, but has been most efficient as the latter. Assessment: Medium organizational capacity, low membership satisfaction, medium appropriation of policy space.

Asking to what extent local governments within these four Euroregions communicate across the border should not be seen as a test of a representative sample, but due to their cultural-linguistic affinity they represent cases that are favorable for communication. If the H1 hypothesis cannot be verified here, it is unlikely to be verified anywhere else. Verification, on the other hand, would indicate that integrated political networks can function, at least under favorable conditions.

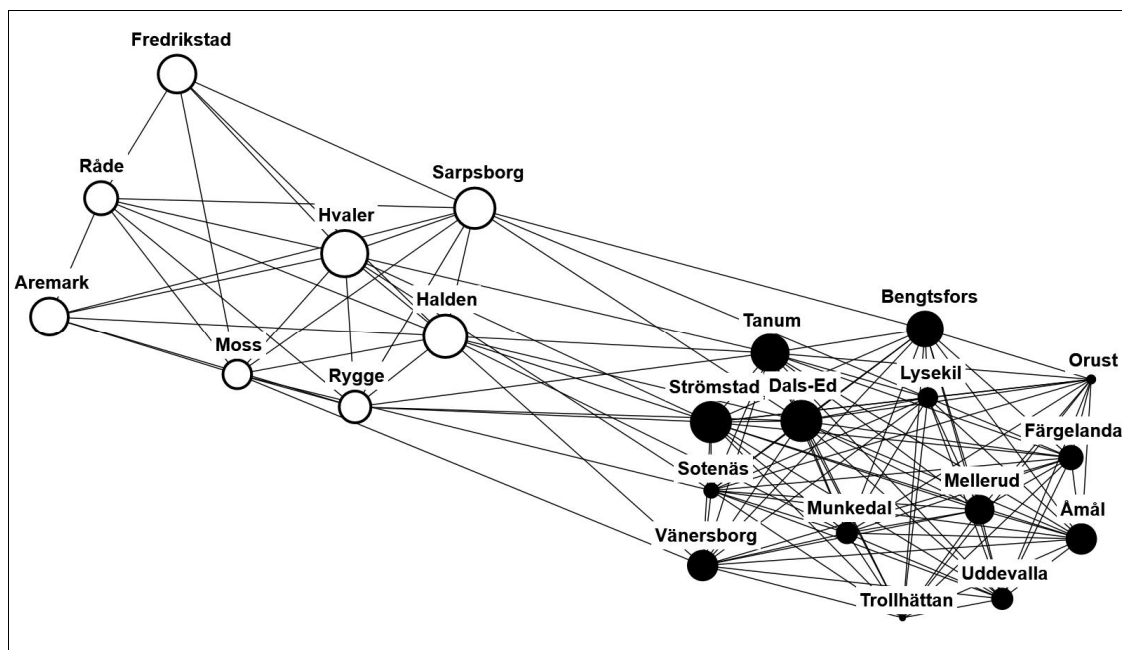
Three social network analysis tools were used: visualization, the E-I index and density calculations. First, a visual display of the networks enables a quick assessment of whether the Euroregions constitute one integrated political communication network. Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the networks in the two Swedish-Norwegian Euroregions, showing communication links that exist on a monthly basis.

Figure 7. *Communciation patterns between local governments in VarmOst*



Note: The figure is based on measurements of communication on monthly basis. White circle = Norwegian municipality. Black circle = Swedish municipality. The size of the circle expresses the distance to the boarder, with larger circles signifying less distance.

Figure 8. *Communication patterns between local governments in OstBoh*



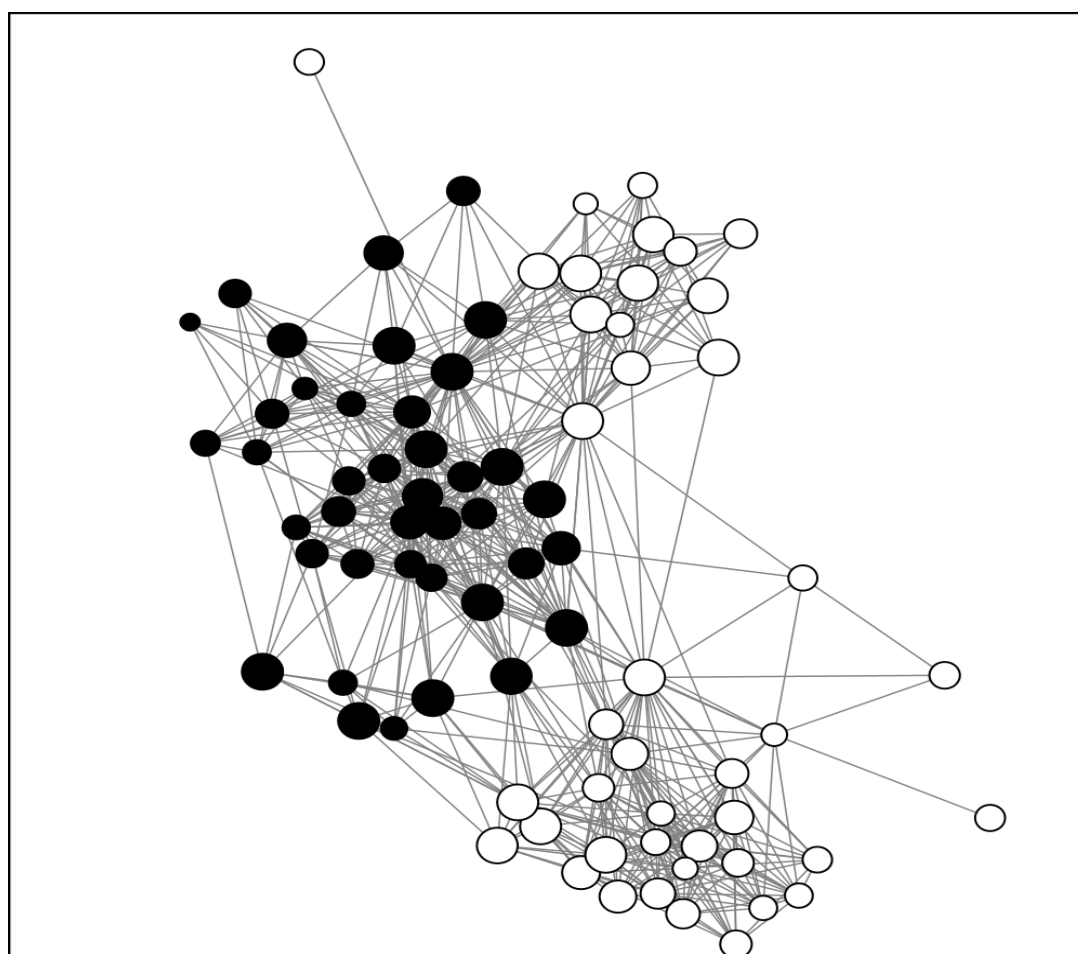
Note: The figure is based on measurements of communication on monthly basis. White circle = Norwegian municipality. Black circle = Swedish municipality. The size of the circle expresses the distance to the boarder, with larger circles signifying less distance.

The figures show that it is premature to talk about cohesive and integrated cross-border networks in these cases,¹⁰³ since the networks are clearly divided into separate clusters based on state affiliation. The visualizations also indicate that closeness to the border (shown as large circles) is important but not decisive for communication. The results do not differ from those appearing from the Hungarian-Slovak data, displayed below. Again, the primacy of the state is clearly visible, even in the case of Hídverő which seems to be a much more integrated political communication network than any of the other three. A particularity is how the Hungarian side of the Ister-Granum network is further divided into two sub-networks that largely follow geographic and internal administrative divisions. One sub-clique mainly consists of local governments located south-west of the Danube river, whereas the other sub-clique largely consist of local governments located east of Danube and east of the border river

¹⁰³ As a control question, mayors in OstBoh were also asked to write down the name of the highest political representatives of other local governments. On average, the members of the OstBoh were able to name 10.6 out of 21 possible among OstBoh's members (their own name excluded). Out of these an average 9.2 were from the same country, i.e. the average mayor knows only one (and a half) mayor by name at the other side of the border. However, the variance is big, as some mayors know 3-4 by name on the other side, whereas many do not know any.

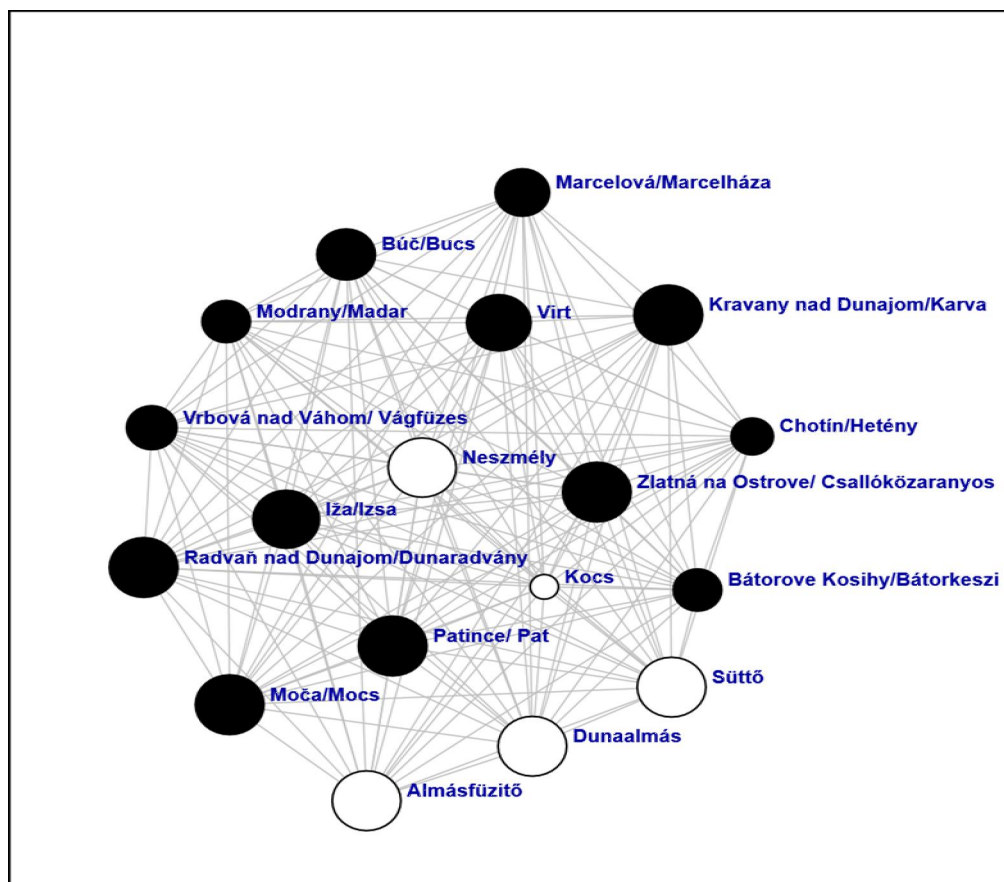
to Slovakia, Ipoly/Ipel. The latter area belongs to Pest county, whereas the former is situated in both Pest and Komarom-Esztergom counties. Distance to the border seems to play less of a role in both networks compared to the Swedish-Norwegian ones, although it still matters somewhat in the Ister-Granum Euroregion.

Figure 9. *Communication patterns between local governments in Ister-Granum*



Note: The figure is based on measurement of communication on monthly basis. White circle= Hungarian municipality. Black circle = Slovak municipality. The size of the circle expresses distance to the border with larger circles signifying less distance. The names of the local governments have not been included due to readability concerns.

Figure 10. *Communication patterns between local governments in Hídverő*



Note: The figure is based on measurement of communication on monthly basis. White circle= Hungarian municipality. Black circle = Slovak municipality. The size of the circle expresses distance to the border with larger circles signifying less distance.

While the visualizations already support the H1 hypothesis that state borders constitute a crucial limiting factor for communication between political actors, two sets of calculations were made to measure the extent of such homophily, i.e the tendency to exchange information with those in the same country. In order to enable a comparison with the Metronet project studies, I first calculated the E-I index values for both the group and the network level. Table 22 shows the result both on group level and for the overall network.

Table 22. *E-I index*

Euroregion	PARTIAL NETWORK		OVERALL NETWORK	
	Country 1	Country 2	Unnormalized	Rescaled
OstBoh (22)	-0.837 (S)	-0.529 (N)	-0.758	-0.939
VarmOst (15)	-0.032 (S)	-0.709 (N)	-0.552	-0.842
Ister-Granum (81)	-0.724 (H)	-0.746 (SK)	-0.735	-0.735
Hídverő (18)	0.524 (H)	-0.418 (SK)	-0.158	-1*

Note: The table shows the E-I index values for partial (domestic) networks and overall networks per Euroregion.

*The rescaled value of Hídverő is mis-leading, since the network has a density of nearly 100% and the rescaled value therefore is calculated on only a couple of 'missing' links.

The E-I index shows that the network is homophilic both on group (country) level and on overall level, with the exception of the Hungarian Hídverő sub-group. This contrasts remarkably against the findings of Walter and Reitel's (2012) and Durand and Nelles (2012). For example, in the Walter and Reitel study of the Basel region governance network on transport policy, Swiss actors had a moderately negative E/I index (-0.271) whereas German and French actors actually had positive values (0.63 and 0.033 respectively). (Walther and Reitel 2012:15) Likewise, by calculating the percentage of homophilic ties, Durand and Nelles found in their public transit study that "the border effect is not a factor for French actors whereas it appears to play a minor role for Belgian organizations" (Durand and Nelles 2012:31).

I see two likely explanations for why the findings of this dissertation diverge from the studies mentioned above. First, those studies pertain to a specific policy area where researchers actively sought actors dealing with issues of cross-border relevance. A few respondents were even removed from the network analysis because they "had no cross-border activities", and therefore were not considered to belong to the network (Walter and Reitel 2012:6). The study in this dissertation and this chapter, on the other hand, paints a realistic

picture of information exchange between local governments that are *formally* involved in a cross-border cooperation organization irrespective of how active they actually are in these initiatives.

Second, there is a methodological reason that can explain the divergent results. The E-I index does not take the size of the sub-groups into account. As all networks except Ister-Granum have different sizes in the sub-groups, this distorts the E-I values, and makes them misleading for comparisons. Using the percentage of homophilic links (Walter and Reitel 2012, Durand and Nelles 2012) leads to the same problem, unless the results are normalized.

Therefore, I argue that the results of the E-I index displayed in Table 22 should be interpreted with caution, and I advocate the usage of densities of cross-border links in comparison to overall densities as a more reliable measure of homophily. These values are given in Table 23. In general, one needs to be careful when comparing networks of different sizes (and here with different rates of missing data), but density is one of the network analytical measures that actually can be compared. The values are scale-free, although a network based on communication obviously has practical limits in how much its nodes can be linked to each other.

Table 23. *Cross-border and overall density values*

Euroregion	CROSS-BORDER DENSITY		OVERALL DENSITY	
	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly	Weekly
OstBoh (22)	0.14	0.02	0.57	0.15
VarmOst (15)	0.30	0.02	0.62	0.23
Ister-Granum (81)	0.05	0.01	0.19	0.07
Hídverő (18)	0.98	0.09	0.99	0.31

Note: The table shows density values for the investigated Euroregions based on monthly and weakly assessment. See body text for explanations of measurements and calculations.

Values on both monthly and weekly scales are given. These are considerably less than overall density values, indicating the limiting factor of the state border in all cases. The exception is Hídverő, which on a monthly basis shows nearly the same results between cross-border and overall density. On a weekly level, there is, however, already a stark difference.

*

All in all, there is strong evidence to say that the extent of cross-border communication between political actors (in this case elected politicians) is low, supporting the hypothesis (H1) that the national state still matters (corresponding to the third theoretical expectation, see section 1.4.3). The existence of a state border therefore makes communication between political actors located close to each other but in different states significantly less likely than communication with local governments in the same state. On the other hand, hypothesis H0 stating that the national state is irrelevant is not supported.

6.4 Within-group social capital and between-group social capital on institutional level

While the previous section established that political communication is heavily tilted towards the nation-state boundaries, it also demonstrated diversity among the cases in terms of how densely connected the Euroregional networks are. The dissertation has hypothesized that the main characteristics and topography of the communication networks between the local governments on each side of the border, and across the border, is related to how these organizations function and perform. The task of this section is to disentangle the first two steps of this, namely whether there is a link between the strength of networks on one side, and across the border. This is important, as membership in a Euroregion is expected to foster cross-border political relationships that could have possible spin-off effects in terms of

encouraging policy cooperation outside the framework of Euroregion. By this I mean that actors would not only communicate at events arranged by the Euroregion, but that the Euroregion serves as a facilitator of contacts so that local governments initiate cooperation in smaller constellations. Social capital on one side of the border (within-group social capital) would facilitate the creation of cross-border social capital (between-group social capital), which in turn would enhance the likelihood of well-functioning Euroregions.

The expectation in this chapter is to see a relationship between within-group and between-group social capital, and the null hypothesis and hypothesis would be:

H0: Having high levels of institutional within-group social capital in the form of network connections does not increase the likelihood that there will also be found high levels of institutional between-group social capital.

H1: Having high levels of institutional within-group social capital in the form of network connections increases the likelihood that there will also be high levels of institutional between-group social capital.

The H1 corresponds to the fourth theoretical expectation spelled out in Chapter 1. To clarify further, this chapter is concerned with the evidence that can be found in the social network analysis of the data, whereas the amalgamation of qualitative and SNA evidence will be used for interpretations in the final chapter. The section therefore starts by looking at what the findings tell us about the presence of within-group social capital in the investigated Euroregions.

The social network analysis of the domestic networks (the Euroregional networks ‘cut in half’) are summarized in Table 24 and demonstrate that there is generally a high density of political communication on a monthly basis. The exception is Ister-Granum, which has considerably lower densities on both sides.

Table 24. *Density values for domestic networks*

Network clique (member nr)	DENSITY	
	Monthly	Weekly
OstBoh Norway (8)	0.93	0.36
OstBoh Sweden (14)	0.99	0.25
VarmOst Norway (10)	0.98	0.49
VarmOst Sweden (5)	0.80	0.20
Ister-Granum Hungary (42)	0.31	0.14
Ister-Granum Slovakia (39)	0.37	0.13
Hídverő Hungary (5)	1.0	0.30
Hídverő Slovakia (13)	1.0	0.50

Note: *The table shows density and centralization measures for the investigated Euroregions based on monthly and weakly assessment. See body text for explanations of measurements and calculations.*

An explanation close-at-hand for the lower density on a monthly basis in the Ister-Granum networks is the larger number of members in these networks. However, it is worth noting that one of the smallest networks (VarmOst on the Swedish side) has significantly lower density than the other ones. This means that the relation between number of members and density is not absolute.

On weekly basis the difference between the networks diminishes. The strongest networks can be found in VarmOst (Norway) and Hídverő (Slovakia). The networks in Ostboh and the Swedish VarmOst come somewhat lower, whereas the Ister-Granum domestic networks have the lowest numbers.

If we then look again at the cross-border densities (Table 22) we see that Hídverő has the highest density values, both overall (0.99 and 0.31), and calculated only for cross-border links (0.98 and 0.09). It is followed by VarmOst (0.62/0.23 for the overall network, 0.30/0.02 for cross-border links) and then OstBoh (0.57/0.15 and 0.14/0.02). They can be said to be in the middle range, whereas Ister-Granum has the lowest values (0.19/0.07 and 0.05/0.01).

These density values do not take development over time into account. As mentioned in the methodology section, lack of time-series data that could indicate change, especially to see

whether within-group and between-group levels increase in overlapping time-periods (a staggered effect), is a deficit.¹⁰⁴ The only substitute for now is to use the actors' own assessment of change over time.

What we can see regarding this in Table 25 is that respondents saw only incremental change over the past 5 years (i.e. stretching back into the previous election cycle). The value 3 in the table represents no change, whereas lower values indicate change in the direction of more communication. Yet, the tendency is more towards tighter than looser networks, especially on the domestic side. This stronger assessment of relative growth of within-group network resources provides tentative support for the claim that there is intensification of communication over time. It can be noted that while assessment of the increase of cross-border contacts is strongest in OstBoh, VarmOst, and Hídverő, the Swedish and Norwegian mayors were significantly surer in their assessment of growing domestic contacts than the Hungarian and Slovak mayors.

Table 25. *Change in estimated contact density over time*

Euroregion	DOMESTIC TREND	CROSS-BORDER TREND
OstBoh (22)	1.85	2.43
VarmOst (15)	1.91	2.42
Ister-Granum (81)	2.69	2.79
Hídverő (18)	2.58	2.50

Note: *How would you estimate that your contacts have developed over the past 5 years? Note that 1 means 'much more contacts' and 5 'much less contacts', 3 is 'no change'.*

*

The task of this section was to elucidate whether there is a link between the density of communication on one side of the border and the density of communication across the border.

¹⁰⁴ While a time series of social network analysis is nigh-impossible to include within the time period of a doctorate, it would be possible to return to the same actors in 2015-2016 to do a follow-up series.

The evidence brought forward with the help of social network analysis indicates that this is indeed the case. While the data does not allow for confirming the direction of causality, or fully asserting development over time, it is reasonable to assume that skills and capacities built up during a period of increased inter-municipal cooperation on one side of the border, will translate to higher probability to achieve the same in the cross-border space. Communication on one side of the border does not create such bonding social capital that is exclusive of others, at least not if the counterpart on the other side of the border is close in terms of cultural-linguistic terms.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated support for two arguments. Firstly, it is too early to speak about the presence of any integrated political networks within Euroregions even in favorable circumstances such as those within which these case study organizations operate. Secondly, there is a relationship between how political representatives of local governments communicate with each other on one side of the border, and the way they communicate within the overall border. This indicates that resources built up through memberships in, for instance, inter-municipal associations and micro-regions constitute resources that can be used for maintaining and developing Euroregions. However, as will be seen in the next and final chapter, such causal inference will need to be qualified to some extent.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The dissertation has sought to investigate local cross-border governance structures and the role of Euroregions as policy actors within these. It has done so by asking why and how local governments participate in the cross-border cooperation organizations that have become so common on European territory, and by asking whether social capital derived from their participation and interaction patterns can influence the function and performance of these organizations. This chapter synthesizes the findings in relation to these questions across cases, and formulates the dissertation's key arguments. It is structured along the two levels of analysis; in section 7.1 the analysis is carried out at the level of members and in section 7.2 at the level of the organizations. The conclusion (section 7.3) brings forward the answers to the dissertation's research questions.

7.1 The participation and interaction of local governments in Euroregions

In this section I highlight the main findings in relation to what motivated local governments to join the Euroregions under study, what their participation looks like, and the extent of mutual interaction between members. In other words, the analysis was carried out at the level of the members (local governments) of the institutions under study. Special attention is given to similarities and differences across the cases to prepare for the analysis of how this may matter for function and performance, which will be discussed in the subsequent section.

7.1.1 Why they participate

The previous section outlined two main claims in the literature as to what has driven the formation of Euroregions. Blatter argued (2000) for the importance of identification, a

normative dimension largely following the explanation of behavior referred to by March and Olsen as logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1989), whereas Perkmann (2003) argued for rational instrumental explanations. I proposed that instrumental explanations in turn can be differentiated according to whether it is grant-driven (the importance of EU financial and technical support, Perkmann's argument) or policy-problem based. Grant-seeking coalitions may be rational on part of the actors, but can lead to situations that resembles non-rational depictions of policy processes (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972, Kingdon 1984) because cooperation as a solution is identified before the problem. If, on the other hand, an existing recognized policy problem is the leading factor, cross-border cooperation constitutes a mean to devise appropriate solutions. This aligns with a traditional rational view of policymaking fashion.

Out of the six cases in this study, the only Euroregion that was clearly formed in response to a policy problem was VarmOst at the Norwegian-Swedish border. The catalyzing factor was the deficient condition of European Route E18. The Euroregion was initially created as a single-issue Committee aiming to exert pressure on the national level on both sides for improvements, and only later transformed into a multi-task body. In all the other cases the identification of policy problems was a process that mainly took place after the organization was formed. In fact, policy problems can potentially even stand in the way of cross-border institution-building as was the case with the OstBoh Euroregion. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the debate around pollution and extensive shipping in Idre fjord was heated to the extent that local politicians feared that joint institution-building would be seen as 'giving in' to the other side. Only when the problem had been partially addressed through intervention from the national level did local politicians open up to the idea of closer cooperation.

The political leaders of a few local governments located closest to the border were typically leading actors in the initial phase. Hídverő offered the only variation to this scenario, as in that case those political leaders were active whose town or village had a twin town/partnership with the other side. No evidence was found of administrators in the local government taking on leading or active roles, with the possible exception of the Salzburg-BL-T Euroregion, where the Austrian city of Salzburg had had some joint technical cooperation with German local governments in the fields of water provision and sewage treatment decades before the Euroregion was established.¹⁰⁵ After the initial negotiations between key actors had taken place, surrounding local governments had to decide whether to join or not. The motivations given by interview respondents (mayors) were in the majority of cases related to either the identification/polity dimension or to instrumental expectations of material returns. A few voices are included in Table 27 to indicate how these themes reoccurred throughout the interviews and across the cases.

¹⁰⁵ This does not mean that Salzburg was policy-driven. All six Euroregions at the Austrian-German border were created at the time of Austrian accession to the European Union, and were driven by Europeanization norms in combination with an instrumental grant-seeking dimension.

Table 26. *Examples of how motivations towards joining a Euroregion were expressed by members*

Identity/polity	Instrumental expectation of material return
<p><i>“These are Hungarian villages, they belonged to us in the past, and many of their inhabitants often visit us.” (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A48)</i></p> <p><i>“A spiritual bridge” (Mayor, Slovakia, Hídverő: #A69)</i></p> <p><i>“It seems reasonable that we are in. Seems cheap otherwise.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh: #A35)</i></p> <p><i>“The vision of Europe was a major reason and a feeling of belonging together. We did belong to Salzburg for 1000 years. Since 1810 we belong to Bavaria, but the mentality is relatively similar, we have the traditions of whip-cracking, the culture is the same on both sides. This ties us more to these people than to those in Berlin or even Munich, which is actually quite far from us. Our center was always Salzburg [...] You don’t think anymore in half-circles but in full circles.” (Mayor, Germany, Interview #A84)</i></p>	<p><i>“We thought that we had better not miss out on something”. (Mayor, Hungary, Ister-Granum: #A49)</i></p> <p><i>“I think it was because of development and such things, and the cooperation, EU funding calls, etc”. (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A86)</i></p> <p><i>“The main reason was to get money, from Europe, and regional money too. The idea was that we should get more for development.” (Mayor, Slovakia, Ister-Granum: #A110)</i></p> <p><i>“It is a part of our stated political objectives and aims to work with contacts in Norway. It is because of the labor market. We have lost 1,700 jobs here.” (Mayor, Sweden, OstBoh and VarmOst: #A28)</i></p> <p><i>“Earlier each country was on its own. It is still a bit like that, but indeed it is important to have cross-border cooperation for economic development.” (Chamber of commerce member representative, Austria, Inntal-C-K-M: #A74)</i></p>

In the quotes, the use of the metaphor of the ‘half-circle’ (policy spaces that are constrained into inefficiency by the nation-state border) as opposed to the ‘full circle’ (the optimal space) encapsulates the idea of borders as arbitrary ‘scars of history’.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the metaphor of the Euroregion as a ‘spiritual bridge’ refers to the polity-dimension, whereas the expression ‘better not missing out on something’ articulates the expectations of material returns, expectations that were present explicitly or implicitly throughout a large number of interviews.

The two themes of identity and instrumental expectations may occur either separately or in conjunction with each other. However, among the investigated cases the identity/polity theme was present to some extent in all cases and the variation constituted of differences as to whether instrumental motivations (grant-seeking or policy-solution) also occurred.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Klatt traces the expression ‘scars of history’ back to the first European Symposium on Transfrontier Regions taking place in 1972. It has been frequently mentioned in European policy documents and by the Association of European Border Regions (Klatt 2006:139).

Table 27. *Identity versus instrumentality as driving motivations*

	POLITY/IDENTITY	INSTRUMENTALITY (grant access)	INSTRUMENTALITY (solving policy problems)
Hídverő	√		
Ister-Granum	√	√	
VarmOst	√		√
OstBoh	√	partial (Nordic Council)	
Salzburg-BL-T	√	√ (EU)	
Inntal-C-K-M	√	√ (EU)	

The presence of polity/identity ideas is not entirely surprising given the case selection (all operating in linguistically and culturally similar areas), but it nonetheless confirms the validity of these concepts when applied to cases that are situated differently in time and space. However, it is important to note that the existence of such motivations in itself does not determine accession to a Euroregion, since local governments that do not join a Euroregion might also appreciate identity-based community-building, material gains or joint solutions to policy problems. Interviews with representatives of nearly 40 local governments in the Hungarian county of Komárom-Esztergom that were not members of any Euroregion showed that other factors are at play as well (Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a).

The most important of these additional factors was the affiliations the local governments already had with other local governments, especially in inter-municipal cooperation bodies, but also to regions.¹⁰⁷ The presence of this factor indicates a certain herd mentality; many joined a Euroregion because others in the same area/cooperation organization did the same. Furthermore, active recruitment on the part of the Euroregion played a role, especially in the two German-Austrian cases, and to a lesser degree in the Ister-Granum case.

Further research might focus also on local governments that had been members of a Euroregion, but left the organization. Except OstBoh, all cases have such experiences. For

¹⁰⁷ In Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a I referred to this factor as 'administrative embeddedness'. The affiliation does not have to be current to influence the decision. In the Ister-Granum Euroregion, representatives of some of the local governments which in the 19th century belonged to the historical church county of Esztergom would bring this up as a reason to join.

instance, in 2011 four local governments left Euroregion Ister-Granum, one left Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T and one left Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M. While this study did not approach these systematically, the accumulated evidence speaks for withdrawal often happening in conjunction with change of political majority in a local government and a questioning of memberships in organizations overall. This then leads to a cost-benefit analysis, and if that is negative, overrides the initial normative/identity motivations. Further research of non-members, both those which never joined and those that left, would be fruitful for consolidating the findings in this study.

Moving on, I turn to how local governments participate and interact within Euroregions, and how that form social capital.

7.1.2 How they participate

This sub-section focuses on the theme of participation, first in terms of engagement with the organization and then in relation to endowments of different types of social capital the organizations might have access to. In terms of participation patterns in Euroregions, local governments of all six cases were divided into three groups:

- Detached: rarely participating in meetings or events, receiving information rather in writing from the organization;
- Listeners: regularly attending meetings and events, but doing it mainly to seek information, deputies or lower-ranked administrators might be sent to meetings to get this information rather than the highest political representative (mayors);
- Active: regularly attending meetings and events with a strategic approach and contributing to the agenda.

All case study organizations showed variation along these categories, but the general tendency was to have a large share of the members falling into the ‘detached’ group, attending a maximum of one or two meetings or events per year. The cases that stand out from this

pattern are the two Hungarian-Slovak Euroregions. One (Hídverő) was characterized by an even and active membership pattern, whereas the other (Ister-Granum) had many members who at the time of the interview had not attended any meeting for more than two years. Along the Swedish-Norwegian border, both organizations had some detached members, but in the case of OstBoh this was mainly due to its membership strategy of allowing indirect membership on the Swedish side via an inter-municipal organization, whereas it posed a strategic challenge for the VarmOst Euroregion to engage its two biggest members in terms of population size: Moss in Norway and Karlstad in Sweden, situated geographically at the two ends of the Euroregional territory. The two Euroregions at the Austrian-German border had large detached groups, but worked strategically to conceive activities that could attract member representatives (mayors), and to place organizational meetings such as assemblies in connection with those.

Participation is also affected by the motivation for membership. As seen in the case of the Ister-Granum EGTC at the Hungarian-Slovak border, an organization in which many of the members base their membership on the expectation to receive external funding, may suffer from an output legitimacy problem (see Scharpf 1997:19). Grants would here correspond to an ‘output’ whereas socio-economic integration would be a long-term outcome, which does not play such a crucial role.

The empirical case studies referred to whether institutional social capital can be classified as bonding, bridging or linking. Based on the degree to which the organization and its members interact with ‘outsiders’, and whether they incorporate interaction with different sectors (civil society, business) and carry out lobbying activities towards the national or European arena, I have classified the investigated Euroregions according to the dominating type of social capital resources they have access to. Table 28 cross-tabulates that with the identity vs. policy dimension discussed above.

Table 28. *The investigated Euroregions according to dominating type of social capital endowments*

Type of network	Polity/Identity	Policy
Bonding	Hídverő	
Bridging	Ister-Granum Inntal-C-K-M	
Linking	Ostboh Salzburg-BL-T	VarmOst

Table 28 shows that the Euroregion that primarily holds bonding social capital is Hídverő. Ister-Granum and Inntal-C-K-M have bridging social capital, due to their broader range of interaction activities with actors from other sectors (e.g. regional development agencies, trade chambers), and OstBoh, VarmOst and Salzburg-BL-T are the ones working most effectively towards the national and European level.

Overall the case studies demonstrated variation across local governments and across cases regarding the motivations for joining a Euroregion. There is also variation in terms of communication patterns and involvement in Euroregional events, as well as in the strength of within-group institutional social capital and what type of social capital dominates. This variance in social capital may then be hypothesized to have an impact on the organizations' performance and function, which is the main theme of the next section.

7.1.3 Participation and different types of social capital

According to the model proposed in Chapter 1, the social capital created by the interactions of local governments on one side of the border (within-group institutional social capital) was expected to play an important role in the creation of joint recourses (between-group institutional social capital). My analysis of (1) presence and strength of inter-municipal associations, and (2) the density of communication between political leaders, showed that there is a trend towards increased inter-municipal cooperation in all investigated areas.

By inter-municipal cooperation I largely followed the definition by Swianeiewicz (2011) and refer to institution-building, policy coordination and joint delivery of services¹⁰⁸ by two or more local governments, that is voluntary and not incidental. “At the same time, and in contrast to amalgamation, there is no definitive transfer of local tasks or competencies; municipal governments keep at least indirect control over the decisions and services that result from cooperation.” (Swianeiewicz 2011:3). The major difference from Swianeiewicz is that I also included institution-building and policy coordination (via for instance best practice exchange) and not only joint service delivery.

All investigated borderlands have seen increased inter-municipal cooperation within the borders of the country. The difference lies in the temporal dimension. In Austria and Germany cooperation became institutionalized in the 1970s, Sweden and Norway followed in the 1980s and 1990s, whereas inter-municipal cooperation in Slovakia and Hungary must be interpreted in the context of regime change bringing an increase in the number of independent local governments, thereby creating both need and opportunity for cooperation. As mentioned above, the inter-municipal cooperation network also creates administrative boundaries that influences which local governments join a Euroregion or not. This could especially be seen in the Hungarian-Slovakian cases, the OstBoh Euroregion (both sides) and the Norwegian side of VarmOst.

For instance, in Hungary the micro-regions of Tata and Esztergom played a crucial role. The former was officially a part when the Hídverő Euroregion was still called the Danube Euroregion, and the municipal members of the Esztergom Micro-region constitute the core of the Ister-Granum Euroregion, although members have also joined from the micro-regions of Dorog, Szob, Szentendre and Vac. References to micro-regions were frequently made during the interviews with the mayors, much more often than to the county regional level. They could

¹⁰⁸ But I also count cooperation on projects and significant policy coordination via best practice exchange

for instance state that a local government joined a Euroregion because the others in the micro-region did so. (For instance, the mayor of a Hungarian member of Ister-Granum: “It was a natural thing to do because we are part of the Esztergom micro-region, and Esztergom had an important role in bringing this together,” Interview #A45). Likewise, references were frequently made to other (non cross-border) projects in the micro-region such as cooperation on schools or elderly care.

Inter-municipal cooperation networks on one side of the border therefore creates important infrastructure for communication. The density of communication networks (how often political representatives of local governments communicate with each other personally, via phone or email) was measured with the help of social network analysis based on data from four of the Euroregions under study. The results of the analysis was presented in Chapter 6, and showed that among those four the Euroregion standing out as having the strongest domestic networks is Hídverő. Ister-Granum has less of such a domestic communication network base to build on, especially on the Slovak side. OstBoh and VarmOst both can draw on strong networks, although VarmOst is significantly weaker on the Swedish side. While such asymmetry (when only one side has strong networks) might have carryover effects in the creation of between-group social capital, it can also lead to the network not being developed fully. I checked for this possibility by comparing with the density values of the overall cross-border networks. This value is very low for Ister-Granum Euroregion, very high for Hídverő, and medium-level for OstBoh and VarmOst.¹⁰⁹ VarmOst does not, however, seem to ‘suffer’ from the asymmetry (in terms of the Norwegian side being more connected than the Swedish) as its values are higher than those of OstBoh.

The social network analysis tool is not designed to capture what the communications entail, but the remarks and comments expressed by the interviewees point to the following.

¹⁰⁹ A more in-depth analysis of the communication networks is available in Swedish in Svensson and Ojehag 2012.

First, across cases bilateral spontaneous contacts are rare across cases, except between a local governments and its few (usually two or three) directly adjoining municipalities. The bulk of the communication takes place within the context of institutions (inter-municipal associations, micro-regions, the Euroregions, meetings arranged by regional level). Hence, the communication depends on the frequency of such meetings. Second, the communication at Euroregional forums is often general and impersonal. The only Euroregion where the average political representative (mayor) could mention more than one or two mayors on the other side by name was Hídverő.¹¹⁰ Third, more intense cross-border communication occurs primarily when a municipality has an official partnership/twin town, or when two local governments are directly adjoining. This again underscores the relative absence of policy needs as a driving motivation for membership. Fourth, communication between administrative staff is rare, except in Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T.

*

This leads to the overall assessment of within-group institutional social capital in Table 29, on each side, and an average value. The table also indicates which of the two countries is the driving force in the cooperation in terms of hosting the secretariat/administrative support. The average assessment therefore gives a higher value to cooperative power for VarmOst.

¹¹⁰ The data underlying this claim is not fully comparable. Although the aim was to ask all mayors to write down the name of the highest political representatives of other local governments, interviews conducted via phone were not conducive to this and there is a low number of respondents in the Austrian-German cases. Nonetheless, with the exception of Hídverő there is no reason to see substantial variation from the case of OstBoh, where – on average – a mayor was able to name the mayors of 10.6 OstBoh members. Out of these an average 9.2 were from the same country, i.e. the average mayor knew fewer than two mayors by name at the other side of the border.

Table 29. *Within-group institutional social capital*

Euroregion	Ister-Granum (HUSK)	Hídverő (HUSK)	OstBoh (SENO)	VarmOst (SENO)	Inntal-C-K-M (AUGE)	Salzburg-BL-T (AUGE)
<i>Indicators</i>						
<i>First country in acronym</i>	medium (driving)	high	medium (driving)	low	medium	high
<i>Second country in acronym</i>	low	high (driving)	medium	high (driving)	medium	medium
<i>Average</i>	low	high	medium	Medium (asymmetrical)	medium	medium-high

Note: The values for Inntal-C-K-M and Salzburg-BL-T are based on qualitative interviews, and not on SNA-analysis.

7.2 Function and performance of the investigated Euroregions

In this section I provide a summary of the analytical results pertaining to the functions and performance of the investigated Euroregions, treated here as the primary unit of analysis. The section is divided into two parts. I first present the Euroregions by briefly describing what they actually do (areas of activity, typical projects, roles performed) and then outline the assessments of their performance in terms of the indicators and criteria discussed in Chapter 2.

7.2.1 *What they do*

On an aggregate level the Euroregions can take on three different roles, the role of a seismograph, a loudspeaker or a window display. These three are not mutually exclusive. To the contrary, the simultaneous undertaking of all three roles implies a more multifaceted organization that is more likely to endure. How did the investigated Euroregions relate to these three roles? To answer that question I will first outline general activities. The statutes of Euroregions typically state that they can act within a broad range of policy fields, but in practice they often become associated with a few concrete events or projects. Members of the investigated areas were asked both to assess the importance of cross-border cooperation in

different policy fields and activities, and to name the activities the Euroregions engage in. The case studies have displayed and discussed the types of cross-border cooperation that are most important to members together with presentations of ‘typical activities’, activities that were commonly mentioned by members or featured highly in their written material. While all information will not be repeated here due to space reasons, Table 30 lists these. The purpose is not to capture the breadth of activity within one case, but to highlight the diversity of practices across cases, and also the potential for conflict when members’ priorities and symbolic projects do not converge.

Table 30. *Typical cooperation areas and activities*

Euroregion	Most important to members	Typical activities
Ister-Granum (HUSK)	(1) culture (2) economic development (3) regional identity-building	Ipoly fish ladders Ipoly river bridges lobbying
Hídverő (HUSK)	(1) culture (2) regional identity-building (3) European identity-building	Bridge-building Days (cultural event) Historical site preservation Iza/Izsa and Almasfuzito
OstBoh (SENO)	(1) infrastructure (2) economic development (3) facilitate cross-border mobility	The Contact Fair (business event) Border obstacle assessment work
VarmOst (SENO)	(1) infrastructure (2) facilitate cross-border mobility (3) economic development	High-speed train connection lobbying. Children’s borderland
Inntal-C-K-M (AUGE)	(1) infrastructure (2) European identity-building (3) economic development	Coordinated hail prevention Multi-generational house – Flintsbach
Salzburg-BL-T (AUGE)	(1) infrastructure (2) European identity-building (3) environment	Euroregion Summit Meeting (EuRegio Gipfel). Spatial Planning Coordination project

A case that demonstrates the potential for conflict between priorities and actual practices is the fish ladder project of the Ister-Granum Euroregion. While this constitutes an example of the kind of concrete projects that many members want to see as output from the Euroregion, it also serves as an example of how there is a struggle for resources that are seen as finite.

Several members on the Hungarian side far from the Ipoly River expressed the sentiment that fish ladders might be a ‘good thing’ but that they do not have anything to do with their settlements. Therefore a fish ladder project cannot serve to legitimize the local government’s further involvement in the Euroregion.

In the cases of Hídverő and OstBoh, the activities most strongly associated with the Euroregion by its members are events entirely in line with their own priorities. The cultural event ‘Bridge-building Days’ is probably one of the most well-known cross-border activities along the whole Hungarian-Slovakian border (the event was frequently mentioned also by members of the Ister-Granum Euroregion). It strongly resonates with the importance members attach to the joint Hungarian heritage of the inhabitants living on the two sides of the border. Likewise, the contact fair organized by OstBoh responds to the primacy assigned to economic and business development, and resonates with a commonly held belief among members that borders constitute an obstacle to economic development. Nonetheless, the contact fair also generates discontent among some local governments that are disappointed by low interest from companies in their own municipality, or overrepresentation by Swedish companies. The perception prevails that Swedish companies have more to win by extended contacts with the booming Norwegian border area than vice versa.

The ‘typical activities’ derived from the analysis of what members and written material emphasized as activities undertaken by the Euroregion also highlight differences in scale and resources. The coordinated hail prevention (Inntal-C-K-M) or coordination spatial planning (Salzburg-BL-T) are not contested and are in line with priorities, but are examples of entirely different scales of activities. The former required a limited coordination task involving few actors, whereas the latter demanded the cooperation of a series of authorities across multiple levels and sectors. The development of a spatial plan requires much more resources than a typical Euroregion can provide on its own, whereas other projects are relying on general calls

for European funding applications (the Ister-Granum fish ladders) or pooling of resources (the Hídverő ‘Bridge-building Days’, the ‘Children’s Borderland’ project of VarmOst).

These activities can be related back to the types of social capital endowments discussed in section 7.1.3 (bonding, bridging, linking) and the three roles (seismograph, loudspeaker, display window) outlined at the beginning of this section. Taking on the role of ‘loudspeaker’ increases linking social capital, whereas the ‘seismograph’ role is important both for the creation of bonding and bridging social capital. Carrying out the ‘display window’ role, thereby portraying the cross-border region as a coherent unit to the outside world, may generate linking social capital, but can also reinforce bonding social capital. An example of the loudspeaker function is the advocacy of VarmOst on behalf of European route E18, or high speed trains towards both national governments. Ister-Granum has been active towards one government (Hungary) but less so towards the other (Slovakia), and has also been present at many European forums. Among the investigated Euroregions, Ister-granum and Salzburg-BL-T were the Euroregions most active in carrying out the role of window display.

7.2.2 Assessing performance and function

The dependent variable in research on cross-border cooperation is frequently ill-defined and its operationalization even more problematic. My fieldwork aimed at assessing performance in terms of cross-border intensity, function, and between-group social capital. Cross-border cooperation intensity was operationalized as strength of legal arrangement, control over budget, robustness of its administrative arrangement, meeting activity, adherence to development strategy-mission statement and project intensity. Function was assessed in terms of playing the role of seismograph, loudspeaker and display window, influencing the capacity to appropriate policy space, the degree to which Euroregions have become the main actors to turn to regarding cross-border activities. Between-group social capital was operationalized as

strength of personal contacts between member institutions, perceived trend of personal contacts, intensity of agreement-based service-policy cooperation in at least one field and level of trust and appreciation/absence of border-related conflicts. The result for each case is displayed in Table 31, and shows how OstBoh, Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T and Ister-Granum score highest overall, Inntal-C-K-M and VarmOst receive middle values and Hídverő scores lowest. One additional indicator of performance was added to the investigation as a consequence of ongoing analysis of fieldwork. This was the internal evaluation indicator of performance, which is the satisfaction of members with the organization, i.e. the belief that the collective action channeled via the formalized institution is indeed achieving what the individual members could not achieve independently (see Provan and Kenis 2008:230 for this definition of network effectiveness).

Table 31. *Function and performance*

	Euroregion+ <i>Indicators</i>	Ister-Granum (HUSK)*	Hídverő (HUSK)	OstBoh (SENO) **	VarmOst (SENO)	Inntal-C-K-M (AUGE) ***	Salzburg -BL-T (AUGE)
CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION INTENSITY	<i>Strength of legal arrangement</i>	high	low	low	medium	medium	medium
	<i>Robustness of its administrative arrangement</i>	high	low	medium	medium	medium	high
	<i>Meeting activity</i>	low	high	medium	medium	medium	high
	<i>Adherence to development strategy/mission statement</i>	medium	low	high	medium	medium	high
	<i>Budget</i>	medium	low	medium	low	low	medium
	<i>Project intensity</i>	medium	low	high	medium	medium	high
FUNCTION	<i>Appropriation of cross-border governance space</i>	medium	medium	High	medium	medium	high
BETWEEN-GROUP SOCIAL CAPITAL	<i>Strength of cross-border communications</i>	low	high	low	medium	medium	medium
	<i>Perceived trend of contacts</i>	somewhat increasing	increasing	increasing	increasing	somewhat increasing	increasing
	<i>Level of trust to other side</i>	medium	high	medium	high	high	high
	<i>Absence/presence of conflict (issue politicization)</i>	low	low	low	low	low	low
INTERNAL EVALUATION	<i>Member satisfaction</i>	low	high	medium	high	medium	high

Note: +Full name of cases: Ister-Granum EGTC, Hídverő Tarsulas, Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland, Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold, Euregio Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge-Mangfalltal and Euregio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein. *HUSK=Hungary and Slovakia, **SENO=Sweden and Norway, ***AUGE=Austria and Germany.

The key conclusion that should be drawn from Table 31 is that between-group social capital and cross-border cooperation intensity do not co-vary, but that there is a congruent pattern between between-group social capital and the internal evaluation of member

satisfaction. The results therefore pointed towards a need to modify the model to integrate these findings. This is the focus of the conclusion, which does this by returning to the dissertation's two research questions.

7.3 Conclusion

This final section summarizes findings from the case studies that answer the research questions, relate these to the initial theoretical expectations, and present a revised theoretical model.

The first research question asked *why and how do local governments participate in Euroregions and how do they interact?* The dissertation found that local governments are mostly driven by a normative dimension of identity, sometimes in conjunction with the instrumental motivation to access funds, but only rarely to solve policy needs. The dissertation further found a link between the type of motivation and the amount of social capital created; for the creation of between-group social capital in the Euroregion it is important that there is a fit between the motivation of the members and the range of activities a Euroregion conducts. Euroregions for which instrumental grant-seeking played an important role are less likely to reinforce and create the kind of networks that are beneficial for Euroregional performance. Overall, the emerging image of Euroregions even in these 'most likely cases' (in terms of having good preconditions for cooperation', see George and Bennet 2005) is that cross-border interaction between local governments is generally sparse. Although significant variation can be measured across the cases, many members of these organizations are passive. Passiveness is often explained by 'not much happening in the Euroregion', although some might also not want more; in line with what research on processes of (new) regionalization domestically has shown (Herrscher and Tallberg 2011), local governments in cross-border cooperation

sometimes prefer institutionally thin arrangements. As ‘thin organizations’ they are vulnerable, members may and do exit, which also change the geographic territories of the border areas the Euroregions represent, and the only protection against this is often a certain level of institutional ‘stickiness’, or institutional inertia (Pierson 2000), manifested as unwillingness to question already existing memberships.

These findings support two out of the three theoretical expectations spelled out in Chapter 1. Local governments’ motivation for joining and maintaining membership in a Euroregion is based primarily on normative identity-based factors (no. 1), and cross-border cooperation draws on the experience of inter-municipal cooperation with the national state (no. 2). However, the national border still determines (and limits) communication between local governments to a significant degree, and there was no evidence that integrated political communities was created within the Euroregions (no support for no. 3).

The second research question asked *how social capital impacts the performance and function of Euroregions?*

Blatter (2000) argued against the use of cross-case indicators of cross-border cooperation in his comparative study of two Euroregions with cross-border cooperation in two North American regions. In his view, the ‘dependent variable’ is extraordinarily complex because the forms of cross-border cooperation vary according to their different functional logics, and indicators cannot be coded in easy dichotomous categories (Blatter 2000:71). I have taken a different stance on this, and maintain the standpoint that it can be done, but that some frequently used indicators (e.g. Perkmann 2007) are not related in the way they were thought to be.

The conventional measures focus on indicators related to cross-border cooperation intensity and organizational capacity, such as the sophistication of the legal instrument used by the organization, the presence of a secretariat, the size of the budget and the number of

projects. I assessed this in conjunction with between-group social capital. However, these did not turn out to be two sides of the same coin. Instead the research suggests that Euroregions should be understood in the context of the general process towards networked governance taking place on the global as well as on the European policy arena. A deepening of cross-border networks and trust relationships is a process happening both after and parallel to processes of intensified cooperation and multi-level networking on the domestic side.

Dense communication patterns, indicating presence of social capital, are not clearly associated with high cross-border cooperation intensity, but for Euroregions to be evaluated favorably by its own members, both within-group and between-group social capital matters. Normative motivations are more conducive for the creation of social capital than instrumental motivations, especially grant-driven expectations can lead to output legitimacy problems if not fulfilled.

How does this compare to the second set of theoretical expectations? It was expected (no. 4) that high levels of within-group social capital would be associated with high levels of between-group social capital, i.e. a pooled and integrated reserve belonging to the entire cross-border area and not parts thereof, and this was supported by the empirical data from the six case studies. Inter-municipal cooperation is a resource that plays an important role both at the time of Euroregional formation and later into its operation, and dense communication networks on one side of the border are related to how actively engaged the members become in the Euroregional organization. The only qualification is that the creation of institutional within-group social capital via associations and communication is not happening at one point in time. Instead, processes of intensified cooperation and multi-level networking on the domestic side are taking place both before and parallel to the deepening of cross-border networks and trust relationships.

However, as indicated above, evidence could not be found to support the expectation (no 5) that a high level of between-group social capital in the form of cross-border communication is associated with high organizational performance in the form of cross-border cooperation intensity. While social capital may still be important for Euroregional function and performance long-term (it is likely to enhance the chance for organizational survival), there is no clear evidence that it has an impact in the short time-span within which most Euroregions have operated so far.

As stated in connection with presenting the theoretical expectations: in the dissertation I did not only aim at examining theoretical expectations (i.e. hypothesis-testing), but I also sought to refine and build theory in relation to the overall research question (hypothesis-generation). My theoretical argument in relation to the second research question is therefore related to time and resource management, and states that long-term successful appropriation of cross-border space is dependent on high levels of within-group social capital, which generates between-group social capital. Short-time boosting of a Euroregion's cross-border cooperation intensity (project, budget) through external grants without that underlying resource in the form of communication and trust networks, is risky and requires solid and skillful technical management to place it in the cross-border governance space. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that it can be done, and that sole reliance on 'networks' is not a long-term viable option either.

CONCLUSION

There is a saying frequently heard and displayed at the US-Mexican border: “I did not cross the border – the border crossed me.”¹¹¹ While it is used as a political slogan to protest US border management and immigration policies through allusions to both colonization and the US-Mexican war, it also encapsulates the idea of borders as man-made, a perspective which I presented already in the opening sentence of this dissertation. But borders as man-made and as social constructs still need to be related to, for instance as accepted ends of political realms, or as obstacles hindering efficient policy-making. This dissertation investigated local level politicians’ involvement in cross-border cooperation initiatives; it made statements on their relation to the borders, to the ‘other side’, and to the relatively new type of policy actor that Euroregions constitute.

On these last pages I will provide a summary of the dissertation and recapitulate its main arguments, comment on the generalizability and limitations of results, as well as on findings that will require further research. Finally, I will elaborate on how it contributes to academic literature and policy making, before making some final remarks.

Summary of findings

The introduction argued that the study of policy-making in borderlands is important, since borderlands constitute territorial spaces where new governance arrangements are clearly emerging, and where it is therefore possible to study both their opportunities and constraints. It argued that more attention to the role of local governments could be expected to yield

¹¹¹ The sentence can be seen on t-shirts and bumper stickers, pops up at art exhibitions and was included in the Grammy-winning *Somos mas Americanos* performed by Los Tigres del Norte: “A thousand times they have shouted at me / ‘Go home, you don’t belong here’ / Let me remind the Gringo / That I didn’t cross the border, the border crossed me / America was born free–Man divided her”.

insights into how governance arrangements work, both in borderland settings and in other contexts.

Chapter 1 established Euroregions as policy actors within a network of actors with different competencies and interests in relation to the policy issues of the cross-border region. The Euroregion is, in turn, also a network consisting of public authorities, sometimes including non-state actors. Instead of relating to the policy process as a rational cycle (the stages heuristics model, Lasswell 1956) or to a non-rational ‘garbage can’ (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972, Kingdon 1984), I outlined how the Euroregion can function as a seismograph, loudspeaker and display window in relation to other actors. The chapter argued that social capital is a convenient shorthand for the resource that may emerge from motivation, participation and interaction patterns among the local governments that constitute the basis of most Euroregions. Following Coleman, I defined social capital as a set of social relations of which a single or collective subject can make use at any given moment, and I narrowed the type of social capital of interest to institutional social capital as a collective asset, and proposed a model to be investigated by empirical work.

Chapter 2 justified the case study method as the most appropriate method for answering the question, due to relative lack of quantitative, survey or secondary material. The case selection procedure was laid out in detail to ensure transparency and improve the understanding of what these organizations are. The chapter also offered a literature review relating to measurement of cross-border cooperation intensity, cross-border cooperation and cross-border development, before arguing for the operationalization taken in this dissertation. It further discussed methods of analysis, ethical considerations, reliability, validity and replicability.

Chapter 3 through 5 presented the case studies. Each of those contained two Euroregions at one national border (the Hungarian-Slovak, the Swedish-Norwegian and the

Austrian-German). The chapters had a uniform structure. First I elaborated on the case selection criteria, and how those played out when moving from the macro-perspective in the case selection phase to the actual situation at the border. I then proceeded to analyze the empirical data yielded through interviews in terms of motivation, participation and interaction. This showed significant variation across cases in terms of motivation and interaction, whereas participation patterns were more similar. The analysis of performance and function showed different linkages to the membership base. In addition, each chapter ran a different theme. The case study of the two Hungarian-Slovak Euroregions advanced the argument that conventional external indicators of performance do not match internal evaluation of satisfaction among members, i.e. a Euroregion which ‘looks good on paper’ may have severe sustainability problems. The chapter on the Swedish-Norwegian borderlands found that the European Union is not as important for cross-border development as previously believed. The case study of two Euroregions at the German-Austrian chapter found an important challenge to be that policy issues need to be actively sought and framed as problems with a cross-border dimension.

Chapter 6 asked similar research questions, but did so by using a different method, social network analysis. The chapter showed how the application of this method is in line with major current research projects looking at policy networks in European cross-border settings. The data analysis demonstrated the significant extent to which communication between local governments is constrained by national borders, and provided support for the existence of a link between the strength of domestic communication and the capacity for dense communication in the cross-border area.

Chapter 7 integrated the findings from the empirical case studies and the social network analysis application, and compared the results across cases. It demonstrated that the networks among municipalities generally intensify on one side of the border before they extend to the

entire borderland, including cross-border links. The creation of institutional social capital on one side of the border increases the likelihood that local transnational institutional social capital will be created as well. However, contrary to expectations, such a social capital is not a precondition for short-term successful Euroregional performance in terms of becoming a leading policy actor in the cross-border governance landscape. Even if long-term, successful appropriation of cross-border space is likely to be dependent on high levels of within-group and between-group social capital, short-term it is possible to hold this place via short-time boosting of a Euroregion's cross-border cooperation intensity (project, budget) through external grants in combination with solid and skillful technical management.

The key arguments following from these findings are summarized in the next section.

Key arguments

Related to the first research questions on why and how local governments participate in Euroregions I argue that:

(1a) Local governments do not form or join Euroregions primarily due to policy concerns. Instead these organizations are mostly driven by a normative dimension of identity, sometimes in conjunction with the instrumental motivation to access funds, but only rarely to solve policy needs.

(1b) For the creation of between-group social capital it is important that there is a fit between the motivation of the members and the range of activities a Euroregion conducts. Euroregions for which instrumental grant-seeking played an important role are less likely to reinforce and create the kind of trust-based networks that are beneficial for Euroregional performance.

(1c) Overall, the emerging image of Euroregions even in these ‘most-likely cases’ (in terms of having good preconditions for cooperation) is that cross-border interaction between local governments is generally sparse. Although significant variation can be measured across the cases, many members of these organizations are passive.

Based on variation in outcome (across national borders with similar preconditions and across cases located at the same national border) and related to the influence of social capital on the performance and function of Euroregions, I argue that:

(2a) Euroregions should be understood in the context of the general process towards networked governance taken place on the global as well as on the European policy arena.

(2b) Following the above statement, deepening of cross-border networks and trust relationships, which happens in conjunction with intensified cooperation and multi-level networking, is a process taking place both after and parallel to processes of intensified cooperation and multi-level networking on the domestic side.

(2c) Long-term successful appropriation of cross-border space is dependent on high levels of within-group social capital, which generates between-group social capital. Short-time boosting of a Euroregion’s cross-border cooperation intensity (project, budget) through external grants without that underlying resource, in the form of communication and trust networks, is risky, and requires solid and skillful technical management to place it in the cross-border governance space.

Further findings and suggestions for future research

There are three themes that have resurfaced repeatedly during my fieldwork, but which have not been worked into the model I proposed for Euroregional performance and function. With further research and elaboration, they might constitute fruitful terrain for new projects.

First, Euroregions should not be seen as static agents representing set territorial boundaries. The investigated cases instead demonstrate how Euroregions expand and contract as determined by political games, recruitment strategies by Euroregions and development strategies by its members. This finding challenges the image of Euroregions as put forward by the European Union, which through its policy documents portrays them as institutions that uncover natural economic spaces.

Second, evidence from the case studies suggests that the relationship between Euroregions and the disbursement institutions of European Structural Funds through the Interreg/European Territorial Cooperation program is both contested and diverse. Preliminary observations indicate that occasionally bottom-up initiatives like Euroregions risk being sidelined as some members or potential members prefer direct communication with European funding bodies rather than to engage in the slow democratic process of cross-border assembly work.

Third, Euroregions constitute new arenas for executing political power. Yet, it is striking how frequently these organizations are portrayed by their members as ‘non-political’ or ‘de-politicized’ consensus-oriented entities. Mayors generally deny that lines of conflict exist along partisan lines, between the two sides of the border or between larger and smaller members. The only line of conflict that is to some extent acknowledged is the different interest that members located directly at the border have in comparison with those located further away. More research on ‘who gets what, when and how’ (Lasswell 1935/1958) when policy is shaped by and within Euroregions would be valuable.

Contribution to literature and policy relevance

Regarding the generalizability of the results, the results can be expected to be valid for the universe of cases (all Euroregions) as well as to institutionalized forms of cross-border cooperation between sub-national units in other parts of the world. For cases with other combinations of preconditions (e.g. unfavorable politico-administrative or language differences), the process whereby between-group social capital is furthered by within-group social capital may be slower. However, there is no reason to believe that the existence of within-group social capital as such would not be conducive for the creation of between-group social capital, thereby enhancing the chances for performing well in internal evaluation by its members.

In addition to the arguments outlined above, the dissertation contributes to the growing stock of literature on borderlands by providing in-depth knowledge of the role of local governments in local political cross-border organizations, and better understanding of the function and performance of Euroregions, and the factors that may influence that. To the best of my knowledge, the former has not been done previously (except by Medve-Bálint and Svensson 2012a, 2012b, and 2013), whereas the latter is part of an ongoing debate to which the research design of this study offered several advantages in terms of generating up-to-date empirical comparative data enabling new theoretical arguments. .

The dissertation is also relevant for researchers interested in domestic inter-municipal cooperation and domestic policy network. The research found that participants themselves did not see Euroregions as a new type of inter-municipal organization despite similarities such as the friction between normative belief in ‘cooperation’ and de facto thin communication linkages across administrative boundaries.

Finally, in terms of policy practice, the findings are relevant both at the local level (Euroregions and their members¹¹²) and for national and European policymakers seeking to further promote cross-border integration. For instance, the research suggests that support for the legal form European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is unlikely in itself to lead to well-functioning organizations if the member network is loose and there is a misfit between motivations and activities. While not going into depth on the relation between funding mechanisms and Euroregions, the empirical data from six cases show very different patterns as to the engagement. Whether this would justify a more uniform system or it is good to tailor these locally, would be up to policy-makers. For local governments involved or considering involvement in Euroregions, the case studies and overall conclusions can stimulate discussions and reflections on their own motivations and expectations from the kind of all-purpose cross-border cooperation bodies referred to as Euroregions in the dissertation, and compare the use of these to for instance bilateral partnerships or function-specific cooperation structures.

¹¹² Dissemination of early findings to some of the Euroregions studied in the dissertation generated much interest. On December 14, 2011, I gave a presentation to members of the VarmOst Euroregion in Karlstad, Sweden, which subsequently organized a study tour to visit the Hungarian-Slovak border area. Within the framework of that visit I had several opportunities to summarize my research findings to Norwegian, Swedish, Hungarian and Slovak stakeholders. The findings from the Austrian-German case studies were presented at the University of Salzburg on November 15, 2012, and presentations at assembly meetings of Hídverő and Ister-Granum are planned for spring 2013.

ANNEX A – LIST OF EUROREGIONS

Name and country of Euroregions that were considered for case selection. Euroregions were defined as formalized cooperation initiative between sub-national authorities, potentially including private and non-profit actors, located close to a border in two or more countries in Europe, and the list therefore excludes macro-regions as well as Euroregions formalized less than five years before the start of the dissertation project.

Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea

- 1 Oresundskomiteen SE DK
- 2 Gränskommitten Østfold –Bohuslan-Dalsland SE NO
- 3 Grensekomiteen Østfold – Värmland SE NO
- 4 Mittnorden FI NO SE
- 5 Kvarnenradet FI/SE
- 6 Nordkalottrådet FI NO SE
- 7 Tornedalsradet FI SE
- 8 Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn FI EE
- 9 Skargardssamarbetet ('Archipelago') SE FI
- 10 Euregio Pskov-Livonia EE LV RU
- 11 Euroregion Country of Lakes - Ezeru Zeme BY LV LT
- 12 Euroregion Saule LT/LV/RU/SE
- 13 Euroregion Sesupe LT PL RU
- 14 Euroregion Nemunas -Niemen-Hemah BY/LT/PL/RU
- 15 Euroregion Pomerania DE PL
- 16 Fehmarnbelt region DE DK
- 17 Sønderjylland-Slesvig DE DK
- 18 Arko Cooperation SE NO

Central and Eastern Europe

- 19 Euroregion Puszca Bialowieska PL BY
- 20 Euroregion Bug PL/BY/UA
- 21 Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina DE PL
- 22 Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober DE PL
- 23 Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa DE/CZ/PL
- 24 Euroregion Glacensis CZ, PL
- 25 Euroregion Praded - Pradziad CZ/PL
- 26 Euroregion Silesia CZ PL
- 27 Euroregion Tesinske Slezsko - Slask Cieszynski CZ/PL
- 29 Euroregion Elbe/Labe DE, CZ
- 29 Euroregion Erzgebirge Krusnohori DE/CZ
- 30 Euregio Egrensis
- 31 Euregio Bayerischer Wald-Bohmerwald-Sumava AT/CZ/DE
- 32 Euregio Silva Nortica AT/CZ
- 33 Euregio Weinviertel-Sudmahren/West-Slovakia AT/CZ/SK
- 34 Euroregion Bile-Biele-Karpaty CZ/SK
- 35 Euroregion Beskidy-Beskydy PL/CZ/SK
- 36 Euroregion Tatry SK/PL

North West Europe

- 37 North West Region Cross Border Group GB/IE
- 38 Irish Central Border Area Network - ICBAN

- 49 PAMINA DE/FR
- 50 Euregio TriRhena CH/DE/FR
- 51 Euroregion Oberrhein (Trirhena plus Pamina) CH/DE/FR
- 52 Comite regional franco-genevois-canton de geneve region rhone alpes CH/FR
- 53 Conseil du Leman CH/FR
- Alpes and Danube Area**
- 54 Conference des Alpes franco-italiennes CAFI, IT/FR
- 55 Conference des Hautes Valleees FR/IT
- 56 L'Espace Mont-Blanc CH/IT
- 57 conseil Valais-Valee d'aoste du Grand St. Bernard IT/FR
- 58 Region Insubrica CH/IT
- 59 Hochrheinkommission CH/DE
- 60 Euregio Via Salina AT DE
- 61 Euregio Zugspitze-Wetterstein-Karwendel AT
- 62 Euregio Inntal AT/DE
- 63 Euregio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein AT/DE
- 64 Inn-Salzach-Euregio AT/DE/HU
- 65 Europaregion Tirol AT/IT
- 66 Euregio Steiermark - Slowenien AT SI
- 67 Hungarian-Austrian Cross-border Regional Council (West-Pannon Region) HU/AT
- 68 Euroregion Podunajsky Trojropolok / Harnas Duna-videk Euroregion HU/SK
- 69 Ister-Granum Euroregion HU/SK
- 70 Duna/Hídverő Euroregion
- 71 Euroregion Neogradiensis HU/SK
- 72 Euroregion Ipel HU/SK
- 73 Ipoly Euroregion HU/SK
- 74 Euroregion Sajó - Rima - Slaná - Rimava HU/SK
- 75 Hajdu-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion HU/SK
- 76 Zemplén Euroregion HU/SK
- 77 Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion HU/RO
- 78 Euroregion Middle Danube-Iron Gates + Euroregion Danube 21 BG/RO/SRB
- 79 Euroregion Lower Danube MD/RO/UA
- 80 Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru MD/RO
- South West Europe**
- 81 Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregion ES/FR
- 82 Euroregion Euskadi-Navarre-Aquitaine ES/FR
- 83 Comunidade de Trabalho Regiao Norte de Portugal-Galicia ES/PT

GB/IE

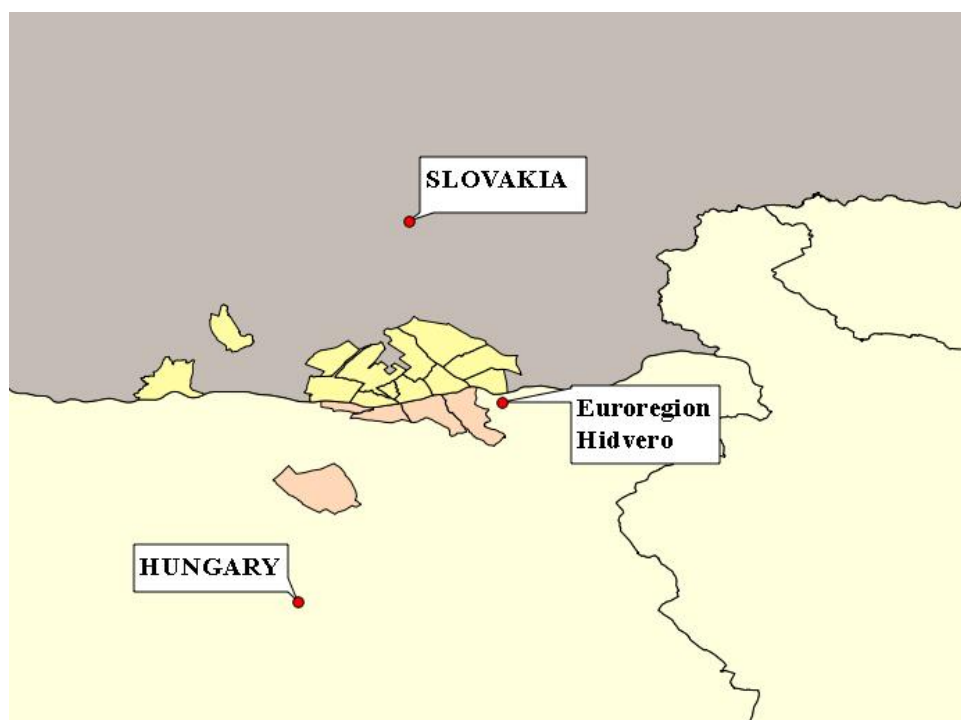
- 39 East Border Region Committees GB/IE
- 40 Transmanche Euroregion BE/FR/UK
- 41 Lille Eurometropole franco-belge FR/BE
- 42 Scheldemond BE/FR/NL
- 43 Ems Dollart Region DE/NL
- 44 EUREGIO DE/NL
- 45 Euregio Rhein-Waal DE NL
- 46 Euregio Rhein-Maas Nord DE NL
- 47 Euregio Maas-Rhein BE/DE/NL
- 48 Euregio SaarLorLuxRhein DE/FR/LU

- 84 Castilla y León - Região Norte ES/PT
- 85 Castilla y León - Região Centro ES/PT
- 86 Extremadura - Centro ES/PT
- 87 Comunidad de Trabajo Extremadure-Alentejo ES/PT

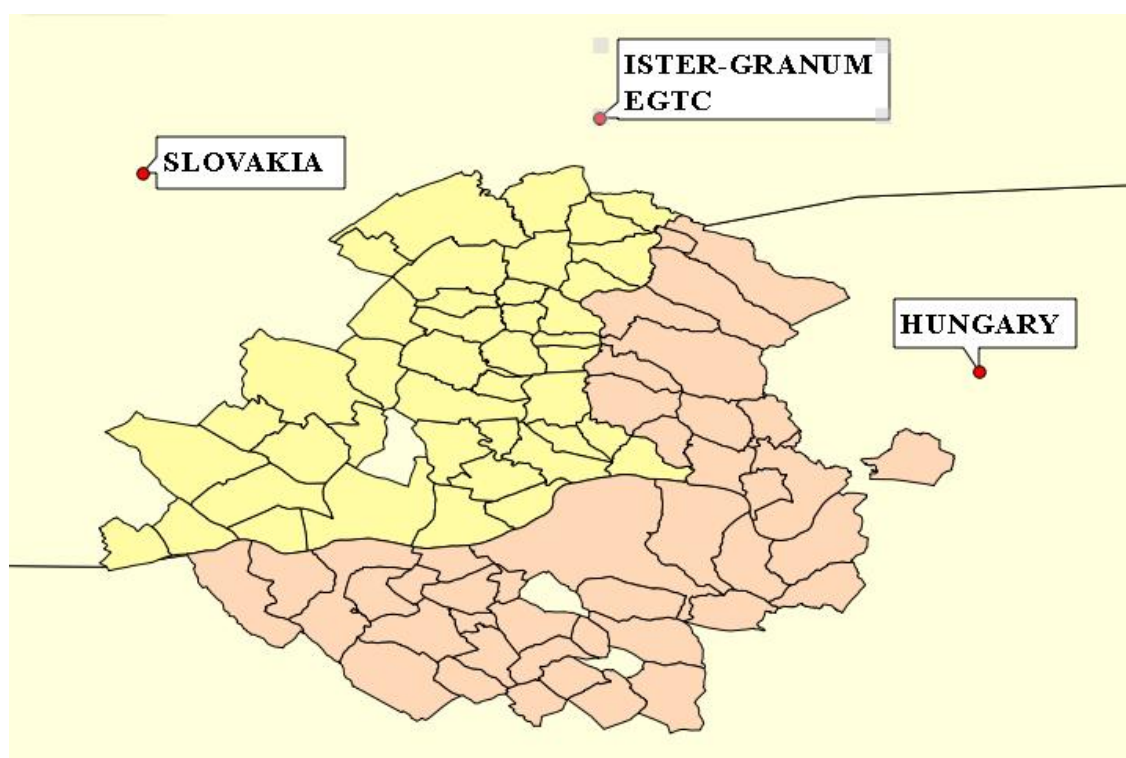
South East Europe

- 88 Euroregion Morava-Pcinja-Struma BG/MK/SRB
- 89 Euroregion Nestos-Mesta BG/GR
- 90 Euroregion Delta - Rhodopi BG/GR
- 91 Euroregion Evros - Meric - Maritsa BG/TR/GR

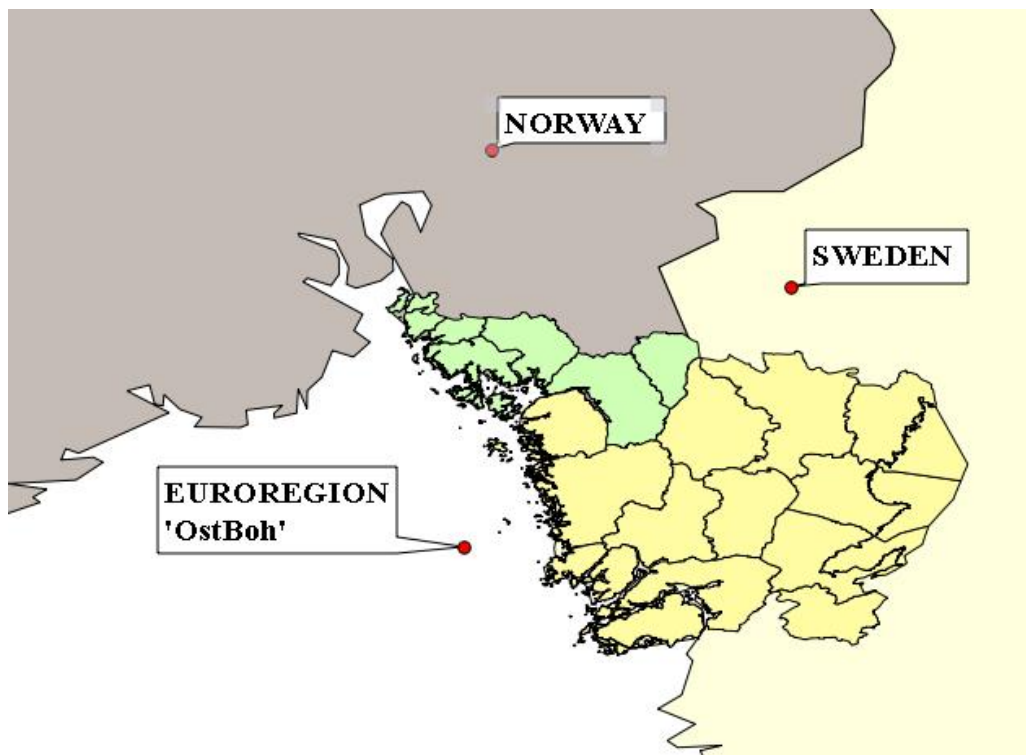
ANNEX B – MAPS OF CASES



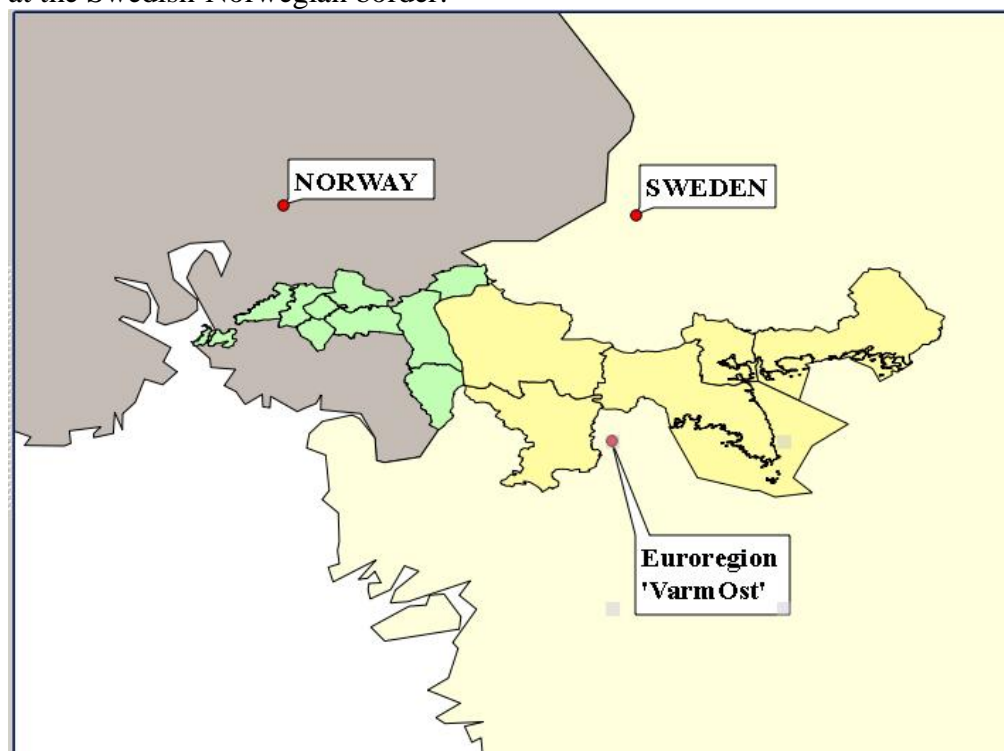
Member municipalities of Hídverő Euroregion at the Hungarian-Slovak border.



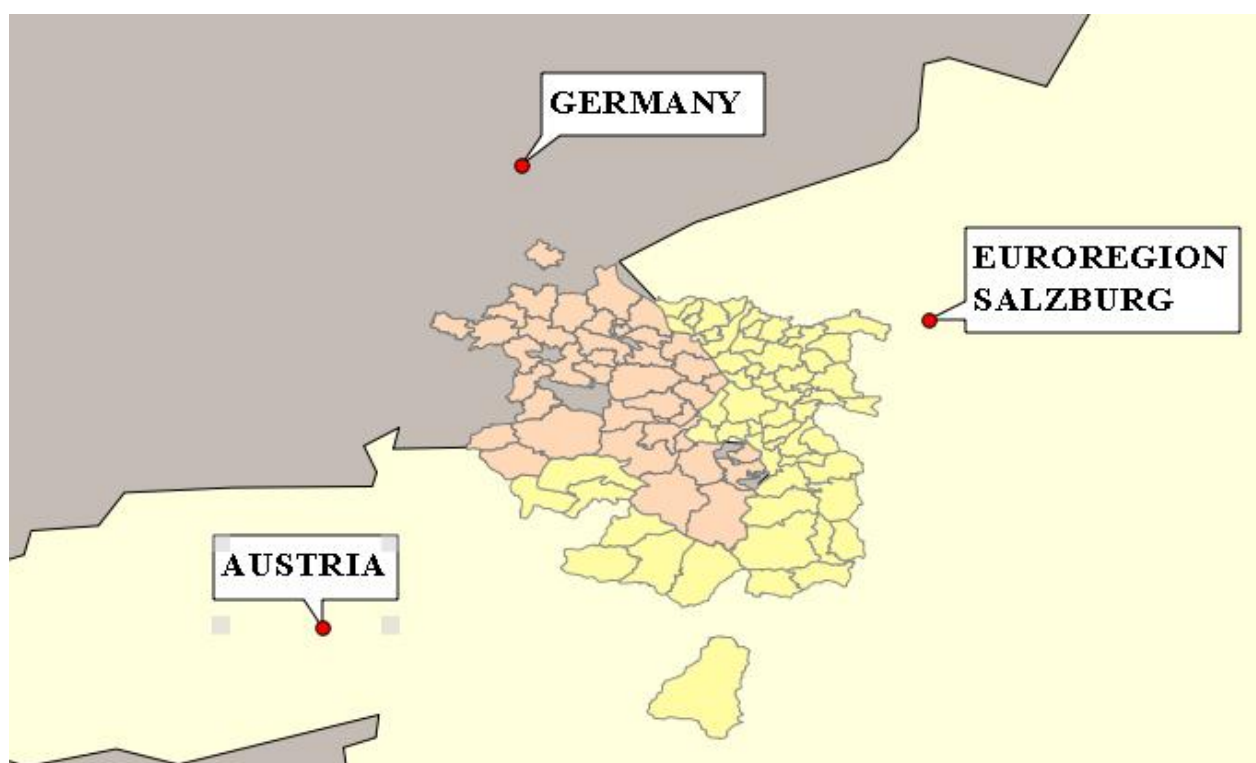
Member municipalities of Ister-Granum Euroregion at the Hungarian-Slovak border.



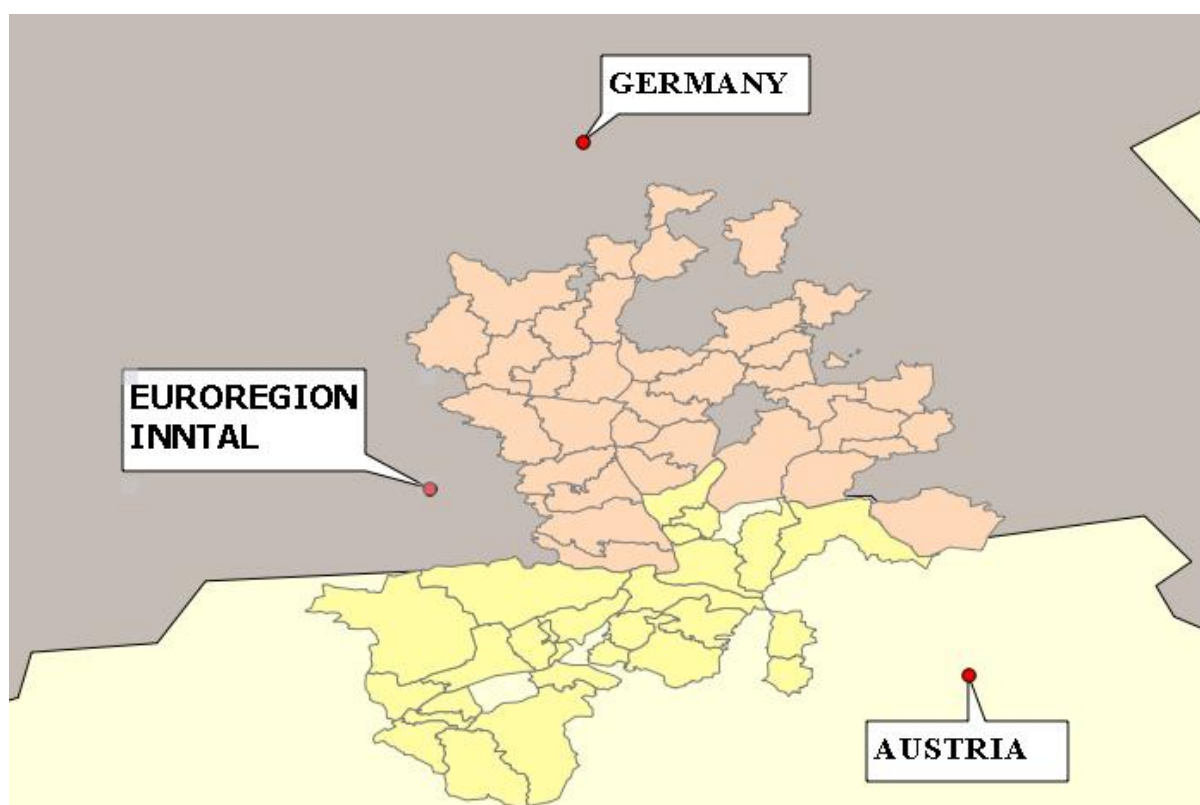
Member municipalities of Gränskommitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland, Euroregion 'OstBoh' at the Swedish-Norwegian border.



Member municipalities of Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold (Euroregion VarmOst) at the Swedish-Norwegian border.



Member municipalities of Euroregion Salzburg-BL-T at the Austrian-German border.



Member municipalities of Euroregion Inntal-C-K-M at the Austrian-German border.

ANNEX C – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Group A: Members of the Euroregions under study (core interviews with mayors and managers)
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Nr	Name, Organization & Title, Country, Date
A1	Yvonne Samuelsson, OstBoh: Manager, Sweden, 2009.06.26, 2010.06.21, 2012.06.11
A2	Rudolf Szép, Ister-Granum: Štúrovo/Parkany, deputy mayor, Slovakia, 2009.07.23
A3	Walter J. Mayr, Inntal-C-K-M: Chair, Austria, 2009.08.03, 2012.06.25 (phone)
A4	Mihály Pánczél, Ister-Granum EGTC: Tokod, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.03.11
A5	János Czermann, Ister-Granum EGTC: Süttő, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.03.16
A6	Bódis Jánosné, Hidverő: Kocs, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.08
A7	Kálmán Murczin, Ister-Granum EGTC: Máriahalom, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.08
A8	József Bánhidi, Ister-Granum EGTC: Annayölgy, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.09
A9	Tamás Steiner, Ister-Granum EGTC: Dág, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.18
A10	László Benkovics, Ister-Granum EGTC: Pilismarót, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.19
A11	Lajos Novák, Ister-Granum EGTC: Dömös, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.19
A12	Lajos Szenes, Ister-Granum EGTC: Tát, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.19
A13	János Tittmann, Ister-Granum EGTC: Dorog, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.19
A14	Béla Horváth, Ister-Granum EGTC: Neszmély, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.03
A15	Tamás Meggyes, Ister-Granum EGTC: Esztergom, Mayor*, Hungary, 2010.06.03
A16	István Török, Ister-Granum EGTC: Lábatlan, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.03
A17	József Petrik, Ister-Granum EGTC: Tokodaltáró, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.07
A18	Istvan Ferencsik, Ister-Granum: manager, Hungary, 2010.06.08
A19	Janos Tóth, Ister-Granum EGTC: Leányvár, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.16
A20	Péter Lévai, Hidverő: Dunaalmás: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010/7/26
A21	József Miskolczi, Ister-Granum EGTC: Nyergesújfalu, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.04
A22	Eivind Norman Borge, OstBoh: Hvaler, Mayor, Norway, 2010.06.20
A23	Lars Braekke, OstBoh: Staff member, Norway, 2010.06.21
A24	Jan Gunnarsson, OstBoh: Uddevalla, Deputy Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.22
A25	Lars-Goran Ljunggren, OstBoh: Vänersborg, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.22
A26	Sture Svennberg, OstBoh: Uddevalla, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.22
A27	Gerg-Inge Andersson, OstBoh: Trollhättan, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.23
A28	Per Eriksson, OstBoh and VarmOst: Bengtsfors, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.23
A29	Tore Johansson, OstBoh and VarmOst: Aremark, Mayor, Norway, 2010.06.24
A30	Paul-Erik Krogs vold, OstBoh and VarmOst: Moss, Mayor, Norway, 2010.06.24
A31	Inger Skartlien, OstBoh: Rygge, Mayor, Norway, 2010.06.24
A32	Clas-Åke Sörkvist, OstBoh: Tanum, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.24
A33	Mats Abrahamsson, OstBoh: Sotenäs, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.28
A34	Robert Svensson, OstBoh: Mellerud, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.28
A35	Martin Carling, OstBoh: Dals-Ed, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.29
A36	Lars-Åke Gustavsson, OstBoh: Orust, Mayor Sweden, 2010.06.29
A37	Alf Sifversson, OstBoh: Munkedal, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.06.29
A38	Ronnie Brorsson, OstBoh: Strömstad, Mayor Sweden, 2010.06.30
A39	Kenneth Carlsson, OstBoh: Färgelanda, Mayor Sweden, 2010.07.02
A40	Roland Karlsson, OstBoh: Lysekil, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.07.02
A41	Kjell Lökke, OstBoh: Råde, Mayor, Norway, 2010.07.06
A42	Per-Kristian Dahl, OstBoh: Halden, Mayor, Norway, 2010.07.07, 2012.05.15
A43	Kurt Svensson, OstBoh: Amal, Mayor, Sweden, 2010.07.07
A44	Zoltán Tóth, Ister-Granum EGTC: Bajót, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.20
A45	Imre Muszela, Ister-Granum EGTC: Epöl, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.26
A46	József Pósfai, Ister-Granum EGTC: Úny, Mayor (email), Hungary, 2010.07.28
A47	Mária Nagy, Ister-Granum EGTC: Piliscsév, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.02
A48	Károly Kollár, Ister-Granum EGTC: Sárísáp: (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.03
A49	Tibor Pallagi, Ister-Granum EGTC: Bajna, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.03
A50	József Bérces, Ister-Granum EGTC: Csolnok, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.04
A51	Lukács Karánsebesy, Hidverő: Almásfüzitő, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.12
A52	Tibor Havrancsik, Ister-Granum EGTC: Mogyorósbánya, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.24

- A53 Lajos Gaál, Ister-Granum EGTC: Keszölc, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.10.06
A54 Gyula Ocskay, Ister-Granum: former manager, Hungary, 2010.11.24
A55 Eva Kristin Andersen, OstBoh: Fredrikstad, Mayor, Norway, 2010.12.21
A56 Jan Engsmyr, OstBoh: Sarpsborg, Mayor, Norway, 2010.12.21
A57 István Domin, Hídverő: Iza/Izsa, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.02.23
A58 Gabriel Duka, Ister-Granum EGTC and Hídverő: Kravany nad Dunajom/Karva, Mayor Slovakia 2011.02.23
A59 Robert Csuda, Ister-Granum EGTC: Hronovce/ Lekér, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.07
A60 Robert Kis, Ister-Granum EGTC: Nova Vieska/Kisújfalu, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.07
A61 László Magat, Ister-Granum EGTC: Kamenný Most / Kőhídyarmat, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.07
A62 Jan Varga, Ister-Granum EGTC: Čata/Csata, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.07
A63 Alexander Hubac, Ister-Granum EGTC: Bruty/Bart, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.21
A64 Etelka Michlian, Ister-Granum EGTC: Zalaba mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.21
A65 Anna Mormarova, Ister-Granum EGTC: Male Kosihy/Ipolykiskeszi, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.03.21
A66 Stefan Edes, Hídverő: Modrany/Madar, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.04.19
A67 Lubomír Púchovský, Ister-Granum EGTC and Hídverő: Radvan nad Dunajom/Dunaaradvány, Mayor Slovakia, 2011.04.19
A68 Jozsef Sipos, Hídverő: Bátorove Kosihy/Bátorkeszi, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.04.19
A69 Olga Szabó, Hídverő: Patince/ Pat Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.04.19, 2012.06.11 (email)
A70 János Szigeti, Ister-Granum EGTC and Hídverő: Búč/Bucs, Mayor Slovakia, 2011.04.19
A71 Ladislav Forró, Hídverő: Vrbová nad Váhom/ Vágfüzes, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.04.20
A72 Sara Lucza, Hídverő: Chotin/Hetény, Mayor Slovakia, 2011.04.20
A73 Eva Varju, Hídverő: Zlatná na Ostrove/ Csallóközarányos, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.04.20
A74 Bruno Astleitner, Inntal-C-K-M: Wirtschaftskammer Tirol: Managing director, Austria, 2011.05.09
A75 Wolfgang Berthaler, Inntal-C-K-M: Flintsbach, Mayor, Germany, 2011.05.09
A76 Josef Dillersberger, Inntal-C-K-M: Schwoich, Mayor Austria, 2011.05.09
A77 Christian Bidner, Inntal-C-K-M, Bezirkshauptmannschaft, Austria, 2011.05.10
A78 Gerhard Prentl, Inntal-C-K-M: Landesratsamt Rosenheim, Leader of the department of economic develoment, former manager, Germany, 2011.05.11
A79 Steffen Rubach, Salzburg-BL-T: Managing Director, Austria, 2011.05.11, and 2012.05.06 (phone)
A80 Walter Weiskopf, Inntal-C-K-M: Managing Director, Austria, 2011.05.11, 2012.06.19 (phone)
A81 Josef Flatscher, Salzburg-BL-T: Freilassing, Mayor Germany, 2011.05.12
A82 Christian Moller, Salzburg-BL-T: Wirtschaftskammer, international contacts Austria 2011.05.12
A83 Stefan Pfisterer, Salzburg-BL-T: Wirtschaftskammer Salzburg, Responsible for contacts with the , Austria, 2011.05.12
A84 Hans Eschlberger, Salzburg-BL-T: Ainring, Mayor Germany, 2011.05.13
A85 Peter Schroder, Salzburg-BL-T: Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Mayor , Austria, 2011.05.13
A86 Arnold Azsvald, Ister-Granum EGTC: Ipelsky Sokolec/Ipolszakallas, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.27
A87 Karol Drapak, ster-Granum EGTC: Mužla/Muzsla, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.27
A88 Zuzana Matuskova, Ister-Granum EGTC: Nana, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.27
A89 Jan Teglas, Ister-Granum EGTC: Strekov/Kurt, mayorSlovakia, 2011.07.27
A90 Ervin Varga, Hídverő: Marcelová/Marcelhaza, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.27
A91 Pál Bakonyi, Ister-Granum EGTC: Želiezovce/Zseliz, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.28
A92 Monika Gora, Ister-Granum EGTC: Pavlová/Garampald, mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.28
A93 Pál Banai Tóth, Hídverő: Moča/Dunamocs, Mayor, Slovakia, 2011.07.28
A94 Vidar Östenby, VarmOst: former manager, Norway, 2011.10.05
A95 Alf Johansen, VarmOst: manager, Norway, 2011.10.12, 2012.06.29
A96 Håvard Jensen, VarmOst: Hobøl, Mayor (email), Norway, 2011.10.20
A97 Svein Olav Agnalt, VarmOst: Skiptvet, Mayor (phone) Norway 2011.10.21
A98 Katarina Johannesson, VarmOst: Årjäng, Sweden, 2011.10.31
A99 Torbjörn Bood, VarmOst: Grums, Mayor, Sweden, 2011.10.31
A100 Daniel Bäckström, VarmOst: Chair and Mayor of Säffle, Sweden, 2011.11.03, 2012.06.29
A101 Britt Gulbrandsen VarmOst: Spydeberg, Mayor (phone) Norway 2011.11.08
A102 Nils Nilssen, VarmOst: Römskog, Mayor, Norway, 2011.11.09
A103 Stein Erik Lauvås (vice ordförande), VarmOst: Marker, Mayor, Norway, 2011.11.09
A104 Trygve Westgaard, VarmOst: Askim, Mayor Norway, 2011.11.09
A105 Per-Inge Liden, VarmOst: Sweden, 2011.11.11
A106 Herland, Knut Jørgen, ordfører, VarmOst: Eidsberg, Mayor (phone), Norway 2011.11.25
A107 Tor Melvold, VarmOst: Trøgstad, Mayor, Norway, 2011.12.14
A108 Eva Čákváriová, Ister-Granum: Bény/Bíňa, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 5.6.2012

- A109 Iren Mikus, Ister-Granum: Érsekkéty/Ket, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 5.7.2012
A110 Alexander Mezei, Ister-Granum: Leléd/Lefá, Slovakia, 5.7.2012
A111 Tibor Nagy, Ister-Granum: Ebed/Obid, Mayor (phone), Slovakia 5.9.2012
A112 Oto Mészáros, Ister-Granum: Ipolypásztó/Pastovce, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 5.9.2012
A113 Gabriel Mihalik, Ister-Granum: Kőbölút/Gbelce, Slovakia, 5/10/2012
A114 Mgr. Štefan Kuczman, Ister-Granum: Lontó/Lontov, Mayor (phone), Slovakia 5/10/2012
A115 Ing.Ludovít Nagy Ister-Granum: Oroszka/Pohronský Ruskov, Mayor (phone), Slovakia 5/10/2012
A116 Beata Székelyová, Ister-Granum: Sárkányfalva/Šarkan, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 5/10/2012
A117 György Illés, Ister-Granum: Pilisszentlászló, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 5/11/2012
A118 Peter Nagy, Manager, Ister-Granum, Hungary, 5/31/2012
A119 Eva Tetenyi, Deputy Chair, Ister-Granum, Hungary, 5/31/2012
A120 Rita Pásztorová, Ister-Granum: Kicsind/Malá nad/Hronom, Mayor, Slovakia, 6/4/2012
A121 Lendvai József János, Ister-Granum: Pilisszentkereszt Hungary, 6/4/2012
A122 Jan Oravec, Chair, Ister-Granum, Slovakia, 6/4/2012
A123 Zoltán Kanizsay, Ister-Granum, Ipolytölgyes, Hungary, 6/6/2012
A124 Katarína Grófová, Ister-Granum: Kisgyarmat/Sikenička, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 6/7/2012
A125 Zoltán Bacsa, Ister-Granum: Kisölvéd/Malé Ludince, Mayor (phone), Slovakia, 6/7/2012
A126 Ján Elzer, Ister-Granum: Garamkövesd/Kamenica nad/Hronom, Mayor (phone), Slovakia 6/9/2012
A127 Ján Józsa, Ister-Granum: Ipolyszalka/Salka, Slovakia, 6/9/2012
A128 Irena Skladanová, Ister-Granum: Ipolybél/Bielovce, Mayor (phone), Slovakia 6/10/2012
A129 Bethlen Farkas, Ister-Granum: Verőce, Pilisszentlászló, Hungary, 6/11/2012
A130 Emmerich Riesner, Salzburg-BL-T, deputy chair (phone), Austria, 6/11/2012
A131 Ferenc Rományik, Ister-Granum: Ipolydamásd, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 6/18/2012
A132 János Bedros, Ister-Granum: Kemence, Mayor, Hungary, 6/18/2012
A133 Laszlo Kiss, Ister-Granum: Letkés, Mayor Hungary, 6/18/2012
A134 Gyuláné Antal, Ister-Granum Nagybörzsöny, Hungary, 6/18/2012
A135 Zoltán Remitzky, Ister-Granum: Szob, Mayor, Hungary, 6/18/2012
A136 Vilmosné Sinko, Ister-Granum: Zebegeny, Mayor, Hungary, 6/19/2012
A137 Irma Gembolya, Ister-Granum: Perőcsény Hungary, 6/21/2012
A138 László Petrovics, Ister-Granum: Nagymaros, Mayor (phone), Hungary, 6/25/2012

Group B. Informants (interviews that informed the context of the study)

- B1 Gábor Rajnai, Oroszlány: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.16
B2 Imre Csöböneyei, Acs, Mayor, Hungary, 2010.03.11
B3 József Áy, Mocsá: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.08
B4 István György, Kerékteleki: Mayor, Hungary 2010.04.08
B5 István Weilandits, Bakonysárkány: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.08
B6 István Aranyosi, Csém: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.09
B7 Lajos Futó, Tárkány: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.09
B8 Klára Horváth, Bábolna: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.09
B9 István Maszlavér, Naszály: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.12
B10 György Nagy, Szomor: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.12
B11 Ferenc Mezei, Szárliget: Mayor (in person*), Hungary, 2010.04.22
B12 Attiláné Szücs, Dad: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.22
B13 Gusztáv Imre Takács, Császár: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.04.22
B14 Imre Petőcz, Bana: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.07
B15 Oszkár Harmados, Vértestolna: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.18
B16 Ferenc Kiss, Kömlőd: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.18
B17 Sándor Nagy, Vértesszőlös: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.05.18
B18 Dr. Erzsébet Udvardi, Kisbér: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.07
B19 György Lunk, Ácsteszér: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.10
B20 Eva Lakatos-Novak, Secretariat of the West Pannonia and Hármas Duna-vidék Eurorégió (Office of the Győr-Moson-Sopron Region): official, Hungary, 2010.06.16
B21 János Zatykó, Komárom: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.06.16
B22 László Rohonczy, Ete: Mayor (email), Hungary, 2010.06.30
B23 Lajos Pintér, Bakonyszombathely: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.20
B24 Alajos Valter, Bokod: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.22
B25 Pál Pogrányi, Dunaszentmiklós: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.26

- B26 Lajos Árvai, Ászár: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.27
 B27 Sáros, György, Gyermely: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.27
 B28 János Dékán, Héreg: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.30
 B29 Zoltán Grüber, Kecskéd: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.02
 B30 Antal Hanig, Csátka: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.02
 B31 László Kálmán, Szákszend: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.02
 B32 Miklós Sógorka, Súr: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.02
 B33 Antal Mór, Aka: mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.03
 B34 József Pölöskei, Réde: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.03
 B35 János Jelli, Tarján: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.04
 B36 Ferencné Szijj, Nagyigmánd: (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.04
 B37 László Beke, Környe: Mayor*, Hungary, 2010.08.09
 B38 József Hartdegen, Vértessomló: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.09
 B39 Gabriella Menoni, Várgesztes: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.09
 B40 Csaba Schmidt, Tatabánya: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.09
 B41 József Hajnal, Vértessomló: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.10
 B42 Attila Pécsvárad, Kisigmánd: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.17
 B43 Károlyné Lamanda, Bársonyos: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.18
 B44 Béla Csabán, Tardos: Mayor (phone), Hungary, 2010.08.23
 B45 József Michl, Tata: Mayor, Hungary, 2010.08.30
 B46 Brigitta László, Carpathian: manager, Hungary, 2009.04.27
 B47 Márta Regner, Europrosperitas 2010 Foundation: staff member, Hungary, 2009.05.07
 B48 András Barányi, VATI Hungary (Public Nonprofit Company for Regional Development and Urban Planning): manager, Hungary, 2009.05.14
 B49 Yvonne Brodda, Joint Technical Secretariat, Austria-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, (VATI Kht.): manager, Hungary, 2009.06.09
 B50 Andrea Frauschi, Eisenstadt: Mayor, Austria, 2009.06.09
 B51 Csaba Horváth, Joint Technical Secretariat, Austria-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, (VATI Kht), Hungary, 2009.06.09
 B52 Istvan Bihari, Sopron-Fertőd micro-region: official, Hungary, 2009.06.10
 B53 Sarolta Jenei, Regional Development Agency (Štúrovo): staff member, Slovakia, 2009.07.23
 B54 Anders Olshov, Øresundsregionen (think tank): Manager, Sweden, 2009.08.31
 B55 Igor Lyubashenko, PAUCI Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation: Research Fellow, Poland 2009.12.10
 B56 Imre Székely, Regional Development Council of the Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron County: Director, Hungary, 2010.02.10
 B57 Tibor Schunder, Baj: (phone), Hungary, 2010.06.10
 B58 Bo Hamra, Interreg/European Territorial Cooperation Program: Manager, OstBoh: former manager, Sweden, 2010.06.21
 B59 Anette Olofsson, Interreg/European Territorial Cooperation Program: staff member, Sweden, 2010.06.21
 B60 László Major, Bakonybánk: (phone), Hungary, 2010.07.22
 B61 Manuela Brockler, Interreg Joint Technical Secretariat: Managing Director, Austria, 2011.05.12
 B62 Christian Dirninger, University of Salzburg, Expert on regional economic history, Austria, 2011.05.12
 B63 Walter Scherrer, University of Salzburg: expert on regional development, Austria, 2011.05.12
 B64 Paul Nemes, Värmland County: international strategic analyst; the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR): Värmland representative, Sweden, 2011.11.17
 B65 Magnus Dagerhorn, Interreg Joint Technical Secretariat (Länsstyrelsen Värmland): Director, Sweden, 2011.11.28
 B66 Maria Takatsné Tenki, Advisor to the City Council of Szombathely, Hungary, 2012.01.13

**Questions answered first by a civil servant and subsequently approved by the respondent.*

ANNEX D – SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

Two standardized interview guides were used. The first one was used for interviews with representatives of local governments or other member organizations, the second was used for follow-up interviews with Chairs and managers of the six investigated Euroregions. Both were administered in Swedish, Hungarian and German. The samples below are abridged versions with simplified formatting, translated into English.

C1. Translation into English of the Swedish questionnaire for the VarmOst Euroregion

General information: location, permission to use interview data, interviewee

Part I: ON THE MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROREGION

Open-ended questions

- What do you know about the local government's early membership in *Gränskommitten*? (Reasons for joining, expectations, activities etc.)
- What activities do you know about that have been carried out by *Gränskommitten* in the past two years?
- Have you taken part in any meeting or activity arranged by *Gränskommitten* in the past two years?
- Do you think that the local government's involvement in *Gränskommitten* will increase or decrease in the next years?
- Can you describe the decision-making process in *Gränskommitten*? Who decides on strategy and projects, and how?
- Who (which actor) would you say have the greatest influence/power in the cross-border cooperation network?
 - Generation of ideas
 - Take part in projects
 - Make work flow smoothly
 - Get resources

Closed questions (scale 1-5, reasoning around assessment and comments encouraged)

- Assess the importance of presence or absence of interest conflicts in the Euroregion in relation to:
 - municipalities close versus far from the border
 - small municipalities versus big municipalities
 - municipalities governed by left-leaning parties versus municipalities governed by right-leaning parties
 - administrative versus political actors
 - Swedish versus Norwegian municipalities
- VarmOst gives priority to six policy areas. How important do you consider these to be?
 - Infrastructure
 - Information & exchange of experience
 - Border obstacles
 - Health care
 - Economic sector/business development
 - Competence development
- In order to enable international comparison, I also ask you to assess how important cross-border cooperation is within the following areas
 - Culture
 - Environment
 - First and secondary education
 - Higher education
 - Emergency/fire
 - Service provision

- Commuting & cross-border migration
- Administration
- Prevent conflicts
- Creation of joint regional identity
- Creation of joint European identity

Part II: ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROREGION

- In what other contexts is the local government interacting cross-border than within the framework of Gränskommitten?
 - International municipal cooperation on service delivery
 - Civil society cross-border cooperation
 - Business sector cross-border cooperation
 - Has the municipality taken part in externally financed (i.e. EU) projects with partners from Norway/Sweden?

Part III: ON SUPPORT FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

- What is your opinion about
 - EU's importance for the scope and quality of cross-border cooperation?
 - The national government's importance for the scope and quality of cross-border cooperation?
 - on local democracy's importance for cross-border cooperation?
- In your opinion, how much do the inhabitants of the local government in general trust (scale 1-8, reasoning around assessment encouraged)
 - each other?
 - local authorities?
 - national government?
 - business and other private enterprises?
 - people on the other side of the border?
 - local authorities on the other side of the border?
 - national governments on the other side of the border?
 - business and other private enterprises on the other side of the border?

Part IV: Communication mapping

Fill in the frequency of contacts with other local governments

Add 1, 2, 3 or 4 for local governments with which you are in contact (political or administrative staff)

(1) = at least weekly you or your staff talk/meet/or communicate in writing with the local government leader or its staff

(2) = at least monthly you or your staff talk/meet/or communicate in writing with the local government leader or its staff

(3) = at least every 6 months you or your staff talk/meet/or communicate in writing with the local government leader or its staff

(4) = at least yearly you or your staff talk/meet/or communicate in writing with the local government leader or its staff

(-) = never in contact

- If you know the mayor by name, please add that after the name of the local government.

A list of local governments members in the Euroregion

- Regarding domestic and cross-border contacts respectively, compare the situation with how it was five years ago.
 - Much more contacts
 - Somewhat more contacts
 - The same

- Somewhat fewer contacts
- Much fewer contacts
- Don't know

Part V (if time allows)

- Which of the following statements on borders to you agree with (multiple choices allowed)
 - In a modern Europe there should be no borders
 - It is not realistic to expect too much cooperation across borders. The obstacles are simply too great.
 - Borders are impediments for economic growth
 - If there are no borders, there is a risk that distinctive cultures will disappear and everyone will be the same
 - Travel without a passport is good, but I don't think we can ever get fully rid of borders.
 - No people who speak a similar language and share a similar culture should be separated because of borders
 - No people should be separated because of borders
- Do you agree with the following statement? *"The residents here have more in common with the residents of the Østfold region than with residents in for instance Blekinge county."*
 - true
 - rather true
 - rather false
 - false

PART VI: ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (if time allows)

- **How would you characterize the financial position of the local government?**
 - very strong position
 - strong position
 - average position
 - less than average position
 - very bad position
- **How would you characterize the economic situation of the inhabitants?**
 - doing well
 - doing rather well
 - average
 - struggling
 - poor
- **What is the state of entrepreneurship and business in the settlement?**
 - very good
 - rather good
 - average
 - bad
 - very bad

C.2. Translation into English of the Swedish follow-up questionnaire with Managers and Chairs

General information: name, title, position since, permission

Section A: Internal policy-decision making

The interviewee was given a summary of research findings from the comparative research and from the research on the specific Euroregion. Depending on the specificities of the Euroregion in question, he/she was then asked to clarify or further elaborate on specific issues within the following areas.

- On the assembly
- On the executive committee:
- On working groups (if there are any in your Euroregion):
- On your responsibilities

Section B: Examples of work in practice

Information was shared with the interviewee on how Euroregions can take on different roles, which can be referred to in shorthand as that of a seismograph, a loudspeaker and a window display.

- If you cooperate with NGOs or the business sector, give examples on what issues you would cooperate with them.
- Many members mentioned xx as an important activity carried out by your Euroregion, why did you decide to focus on this issue? Did it involve the cooperation or decisions of other institutions?
- If you attempt to influence decision-makers on regional, national and European level – can you give any examples of such work and what issues would typically require such activities.
- How do you represent the Euroregion towards the local population / tourists / investors / the national government / the European Union / other actors:

Section C: Relations with other policy actors

The interviewee was given information on how the dissertation interprets the essence of Euroregions as policy actors. He/she was told that the aim of the section was to learn more on how the Euroregion relates to such other actors (e.g. regional or national government agencies, regional and national governments, other cross-border cooperation forums, non-governmental organizations, etc).

- Cross-border forums
 - What other networks/institutions do you know of that deal primarily issues of cross-border relevance? Do you represent the Euroregion or another institution (e.g. your municipality) in those networks?
 - What are the reasons for working with those institutions?
- Other institutions important for your Euroregional work
 - List institutions that you consider very important for your Euroregional work (e.g. at local, regional, national, European and international level, also private actors such as business and NGOs)
 - Who is usually responsible for initiating and/or maintaining contacts with these institutions?
 - Provide contact persons if possible

ANNEX E – OVERVIEW OF CASES: KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Euroregion+ <i>Characteristics</i>	Ister-Granum (HUSK*)	Hídverő (HUSK)	OstBoh (SENO**)	VarmOst (SENO)	Inntal (AUGE***)	Salzburg (AUGE)
Founded	2003 Euroregion 2008 EGTC	1999 Association 2003 Euroregion	1980	1990	1999	1995
Local governments in 2011	82	18	22	15	66	97
Approximate population 2010	175,000	30,000	470,000	210,000	630,000*****	800,000*****
Working language	Hungarian (dominant), Slovak (rarely)	Hungarian (dominant), Slovak (frequently)	Swedish (dominant), Norwegian	Norwegian (dominant), Swedish	German	German
Border existing since	1919 (except 1938- 1944)	1919 (except 1938- 1944)	1751, 1905 (dissolved union)	1751, 1905 (dissolved union)	1813 (Treaty of Ried), except 1938- 1945	1816 (Treaty of Munich), except 1938-1945
State form	unitary	unitary	unitary	unitary	federal	federal
National GDP(IMF 2010, in USD)	HU: 14,808, SK: 17,889	HU: 14,808, SK: 17,889	SE: 61,098, NO: 96,591	SE: 61,098, NO: 96,591	AU: 50,504, GE: 44,558	AU: 50,504, GE: 44,558
Regional GDP (Eurostat, NUTS 2 2008)	Közép-Dunántúl: 9,500 Západoé Slovensko 11,400	Közép-Dunántúl: 9,500 Západoé Slovensko 11,400	SE31/Norra Mellansverige: 31,100, Østfold 32,755 ****	SE31/Norra Mellansverige: 31,100, Østfold 32,755 ****	Oberbayern: 37,700 , Salzburg: 35,200, Tyrol: 32200	Oberbayern: 37,700 , Salzburg: 35,200, Tyrol: 32200

+Full name of cases: Ister-Granum EGTC, Hídverő Tarsulas, Gränskomitten Østfold -Bohuslän-Dalsland, Grensekomiteen Värmland-Østfold , Euregio Inntal-Chiemsee-Kaisergebirge-Mangfalltal and Euregio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein.

*HUSK=Hungary and Slovakia

**SENO=Sweden and Norway

***AUGE=Austria and Germany

****Norwegian Statistical Office, data for Østfold (NUTSIII) in 2007, 272883 NOK in 2007, converted to EUR according to exchange rate Dec 3, 2012.

*****Based on regional membership, some local governments are not members.

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