



**CROSS-BORDER NETWORKS IN INFORMAL AND FORMAL
COOPERATION IN THE BORDER REGIONS ANDALUSIA-
ALGARVE-ALENTEJO AND SOUTH FINLAND-ESTONIA**

Journal:	<i>European Planning Studies</i>
Manuscript ID:	CEPS-2012-0144
Manuscript Type:	Original Paper

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3 **CROSS-BORDER NETWORKS IN INFORMAL AND FORMAL COOPERATION IN THE BORDER**
4
5 **REGIONS ANDALUSIA-ALGARVE-ALENTEJO AND SOUTH FINLAND-ESTONIA**
6
7

8 **ABSTRACT**
9

10 Fostering border relations among the people in border regions seems a precondition for the
11 future envisagement and success of cross-border regions and European Integration. Related
12 studies to border relations observe the weakness of these informal border contacts and
13 relations. However, weak ties represent an opportunity for interaction, and little has been
14 said about how they might play in the construction and performance of institutional cross-
15 border cooperation. In this work, we examine the nature of personal border networks of
16 professionals working in cross-border cooperation and how they are interconnected with
17 the institutional cross-border cooperation.
18
19

20 This paper is based on a qualitative research of two different border regions: Andalusia,
21 Algarve and Alentejo (AAA), and South Finland and Estonia (SFE). The methodology is multi-
22 method, using semi-structured interviews, with specific questions for applying social
23 network analysis (SNA). A total of 43 interviews were conducted with experts who worked
24 in different institutions involved in cross-border projects. 34 out of 43 also completed a
25 section in the questionnaire to apply SNA. Conclusions point out different patterns of border
26 relations in both border regions. In AAA, most of the cross-border relations are weak and
27 related to their involvement in institutional cross-border cooperation. In SFE, border
28 relations also rely on personal reasons. Nevertheless, they all imply a significant value as
29 opportunities for greater interaction.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52
53
54
55 **Keywords:** Border relations, networks, social capital, institutional cooperation, Estonia,
56 Finland, Spain, Portugal.
57
58
59
60

1. INTRODUCTION

Parallel to the institutional evaluation and reports of the Interreg programme, in recent decades, different scholarly appraisals pay attention to the objectives of cross-border cooperation from different perspectives. In recent years there have been revisionist and evaluative works in order to create a balance of the political cross-border objectives and the reality of programme impacts (Valencia, 2007; Kepka, 2004; Szul, 2006; Thomas, 2006; Yoder, 2003). Within this trend, another research profile aims to offer a complementary analysis. Houtum (2000) refers to the growing interest in integrating a more people-oriented analysis of cross-border cooperation. A people approach inserts the human dimension on the border construction, despite the political and institutional reification of borders. The interest is in the disparity of a political construction and the reality of border areas. Institutional cross-border cooperation needs to be supported in a social background and in line with the border context. The social frame entails a conglomeration of different and relevant aspects like people identity, cultural and educational rapprochement, social border relations and border behaviours to ensure the sustainability of cross-border cooperation projects and the future European integration (Leibenath, 2007; Knippenberg 2004; Kraïke, 1998).

Generally, they remark on the division or gap between the projected scenario for cross-border regions at the political level and the daily reality of the people living in the border (Paasi, 2001, Löfgren, 2008), their relations with the border and border behaviour. In this sense, the cross-border cooperation is performed by “institutional architects” like elite

1
2
3 politicians and other business actors that draw a top-made design of the territorial, political,
4
5 economic and social margins of border regions. At the grass roots level, there are “border
6
7 bricklayers”, dwellers, commuters, SMEs (small and medium enterprises), and associations
8
9 for whom the political map might not fit or correspond with the margins of their social life,
10
11 border behaviour and informal relationships with neighbours. This mismatch usually takes
12
13 place between a more regional and national written, planified discourse and a more local,
14
15 spontaneous narrative. The idea of increasing European social and economic integration
16
17 through Interreg and cross-border cooperation generally lies very much in Castells’
18
19 recurrent ideas of the future network society (1989). Accordingly, the “ever closer union”
20
21 seems a direct projection of a Europe as a “space of flows”. However, the reality of border
22
23 territories and border dynamics take a slower path. The social and economic dynamics of
24
25 border regions seems to be much more heavily based on the territorial proximity of people
26
27 and institutions; specifically, a border region that remains more in the “space of places”.
28
29 People’s lives usually do not pass far beyond the territorial proximities (____anon. 2011;
30
31 Lundén, 2004). The mismatch between the new political regionalization process and the less
32
33 integrated, daily social life of people from the border regions causes border regions to
34
35 become “laboratories of European integration” (Knippenberg, 2004). Even in those regions
36
37 enhanced in political rhetoric as pilot projects or models for cross-border cooperation, there
38
39 are discrepancies about the expectations of people commuting, mobility and cross-border
40
41 integration through the new bridges and infrastructures of communication (Löfgren, 2008,
42
43 Hosper, 2006). Regarding the mosaic of border regions and the experimental character
44
45 exposed above, European integration seems to be characterized as a faltering process.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Nevertheless, cross-border cooperation programmes are expected to increase the mobility
4
5 and social integration among people living in the borders and to create “regionauts”. Using
6
7 the definition of Thomas O’Dell, regionauts are those people who have developed skills of
8
9 using the world on both sides of the border (O’Dell, 2003, in Löfgren, 2008: 196). The
10
11 expected emergence of a new prototype of border citizens, “regionauts”, flies over the
12
13 bridge but has not yet clearly landed. Does institutional cross-border cooperation promote
14
15 these profiles in citizens from border regions? Going into more detail of an opposite pattern,
16
17 we can consider that, in border regions, people’s lives and work are attached to the border
18
19 region as far as their lives are linked to the territorial proximity of the border. Their daily life
20
21 might be directly affected by the social and economic activity of the border regions, though
22
23 they are not only passive recipients of projects and programmes’ impacts. Their perception
24
25 of the border and neighbours, and their personal attachment to the border, might insert a
26
27 difference in the development of cross-border projects. Additionally, a strong, nationally-
28
29 oriented infrastructure, mass media, national cultures and identities which are fixed on a
30
31 daily basis to territorial proximity and border social distance are consistent enough to
32
33 estimate if we could really use the term of regionauts to people living in the border regions.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 Within this people oriented research, there are more cultural or cognitive approaches that
44
45 focus on the constructions of identities, the influence of culture, and people’s attitudes,
46
47 perceptions and narratives related to their border living (Paasi, 2001; Berg, 2000; Ehlers and
48
49 Buursink 2000; Hospers, 2006; Löfgren, 2008). Other types of research could be discerned. A
50
51 research more oriented to a behavioural and structural approach could focus on people’s
52
53 border behaviour, their border relations and trends in crossing the border like those based
54
55 on border commerce or shopping, tourism, or daily commuting. Different studies have
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 analysed the pattern of cross-border labour mobility in specific border regions (Buch, Dall,
4
5 Niebuhr, 2009; Van Houtum and Van Der Velde, 2004; Hansen and Nahrstedt, 2000). Their
6
7 exploratory insights remark that the labour mobility across borders is not as strong as it
8
9 might be expected after years of programmes performance. Cross-border mobility seems to
10
11 be more heavily based on exceptional cases and concentrated in specific niches of activities
12
13 than in an average pattern of labour cross-border mobility. However, studies on labour
14
15 mobility and commuting seem to answer more to other types of research centred in the
16
17 study of flows across border in economic terms (Van Houtum, 2000). The European Union
18
19 has enhanced the free movement of capital, goods, and labour. People mobility across the
20
21 border are then considered as part of the new dynamic of economic flows provoked by a
22
23 removal of barriers and economic border flows. Nevertheless, dispersed or weak patterns of
24
25 border crossing reflect the general lack of social relations between the borders where social
26
27 distance might be even bigger than territorial distance.
28
29
30
31
32

33
34
35
36 Considering the rich bibliography on institutional cross-border cooperation, there is a lack of
37
38 focus on how border regions are lived in and constructed through everyday cultural practices
39
40 (Jukarainen, 2007, in Löfgren, 2008). However, besides the focus on attitudes, values,
41
42 perceptions, identity processes, and symbolic and cognitive reification of borders, it is
43
44 necessary to add a social axis where quantity and quality of relations between neighbours
45
46 take precedence. The approximation to the study of border regions based on cultural capital
47
48 (Löfgren, 2008) needs be complemented with a stronger perspective on social capital. This
49
50 work aims to introduce a different inquiry through the study of social relationships. There is
51
52 also a significant lack of research on people's border relations. The nature of these
53
54 relationships, how these border networks are interconnected to daily life, or how they might
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 be related to the cognitive aspects like identity and perceptions still comprise a broad field of
4
5 research to uncover. At the same time, the interest in the people approach has focused on
6
7 the missing social-cultural dimension in the political construction of border regions and
8
9 cross-border cooperation. In this respect, it can be interesting to investigate how border
10
11 relations among people in boundary areas might be related with institutional cooperation.
12
13 Are these relationships an effect of progressive institutional border infrastructure and
14
15 institutional cooperation or an inevitable precondition for a better achievement of the
16
17 objectives of cross-border projects?
18
19
20
21
22

23
24 Analysis of social networks provides a new or refreshed theoretical perspective and
25
26 methodological potential in the study of people's border behaviour and cross-border
27
28 relationships at individual and institutional levels. An exemplary research on the relevance
29
30 of social relations both at an informal or formal level of cross-border cooperation was
31
32 initiated by Grix and collaborators (2001, Grix and Houzvicka, 2002; Grix and Knowles,
33
34 2003). Cross-border cooperation can be a result of not only formal agreements between
35
36 institutions at different governmental levels who work through the development of projects
37
38 and programmes. There are also enterprises, organizations, and other lobbying actors
39
40 whose active role might determine the development of the border regions. Additionally, the
41
42 border flows between people might hamper or support the continuity of any formal or
43
44 informal initiative of cross-border cooperation. This set of border flows represents a diverse
45
46 and even complex conglomerate of social interactions between different actors. Cross-
47
48 border cooperation becomes a process where different actors interplay with each other in
49
50 order to produce certain outcomes or to capitalize on the value of available resources.
51
52 Traditionally, however, different sections of disciplines interested in the analysis of cross-
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 border cooperation have tried to describe cross-border cooperation without explaining it as
4
5 a process of social transactions or relationship-buildings. The interest in the study of border
6
7 relations both at an informal or more institutional, formal level means conceiving cross-
8
9 border cooperation as a process of investment in contacts and relationships that represent
10
11 opportunities that could promote social and economic integration.
12
13

14
15
16
17 The network analysis relies on the idea that the whole society is a big network (Requena,
18
19 2008), which is composed of social actors at many different layers: states, companies,
20
21 institutions, social groups and individuals. It is possible to represent the social structure
22
23 where actors appear to be related in one way or another. Networks or relationships are the
24
25 core of the structural perspective of social capital which consists of the investment in social
26
27 relations with expected returns (Lin, 2008: 6). Social capital has entailed a complex,
28
29 analytical delimitation that has led to different conceptual and methodological approaches,
30
31 such as the distinction between structural and cognitive social capital. The cognitive
32
33 dimension of social capital centres on the analysis of the role of norms of trust and
34
35 reciprocity. In structural social capital, the core of analysis is relations, primarily
36
37 acquaintances in which individuals or institutions invest and through which they gain access
38
39 to resources (Burt, 1997; Lin, 2008). However, common to the different theoretical and
40
41 empirical approaches is the idea that social capital implies a social interaction from which is
42
43 possible to produce economic, social or political outcomes. Despite the difficulties at the
44
45 methodological level, it is assumed that high levels of social capital positively influence
46
47 improved economic and/or political developments (Woolcok, 2001). The structural
48
49 perspective of social capital, through the study of border networks, captures the relational
50
51 and processual character of cross-border cooperation. It can provide a general approach
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 applicable to different regions in order to compare the nature of people's border relations
4
5 and behaviour. It offers the opportunity to understand the nature of institutional or
6
7 informal relations across border regions and the whole picture of the structure of these
8
9 relationships. If we ask which border regions are more socially and culturally integrated, or
10
11 why some border regions are more successful in cross-border cooperation in governance,
12
13 the analysis of people's network and institutional network is necessarily in an analytical
14
15 fashion. The social network analysis provides a more accurate approximation to the nature
16
17 of border relations both within the social and informal boundary of people and within their
18
19 institutional and formal cooperation.
20
21
22
23
24
25

26
27 In the literature of cross-border regions, research on people's border behaviour and border
28
29 relations has not been frequent. Lundén's work (1973) on interaction across the boundaries
30
31 of Norway and Sweden could be considered as an initial step. Data from one week diaries of
32
33 contacts and activities outside of habitants' own localities was collected. This diary method
34
35 has been a classical or standard method of network research, though soon replaced by
36
37 other, more feasible techniques like the name generators (Lin and Erikson, 2010). In later
38
39 research, Lundén (2004) has analysed the influence of different factors on people's
40
41 boundary behaviour, including the patterns of border-crossing among dwellers from
42
43 different border cities and border regions. In this respect, the study concludes that the
44
45 territorial limitation of people's networks tend to be rather limited including those living in
46
47 border areas. Recently, a detailed study of social reality in the regions of Alentejo, Algarve
48
49 and Andalucia describes the patterns of border relations between these regions (_____
50
51 anon. 2008). The study accounts for the commercial and labour relations characterized as
52
53 almost nonexistent such as labour mobility and weak commercial relations with the
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 territories closest to the border. Regarding the traditionally less targeted cultural and social
4
5 border relations, the study demonstrates that the informal friendships and personal support
6
7 networks across the border are very few and weak compared to those relationships from
8
9 the same region or municipality where individuals live. Finally, it states that a strong
10
11 endogamy of social and personal relations at local and regional levels exists, contrary to the
12
13 weak and superficial characteristics of border relations between Portuguese and Spanish
14
15 people. However, the current pattern of border networks can be a crucial area of political
16
17 intervention for the progressive social integration and cohesion across the border region. In
18
19 this work, we consider that those informal and personal relationships of people from border
20
21 areas might imply significant and valuable relational bridges, not only for informal and social
22
23 relations, but also for a more formal and institutional cooperation.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 **2. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY**

33
34
35

36 An interesting target of analysis is those professionals dealing with cross-border projects in
37
38 their daily work. Do people involved in cross-border cooperation have significant border
39
40 relations? Or, is their social life much more attached to the territorial local or national
41
42 proximity? If they have border networks, what kind of relations do these tend to be? Are
43
44 they related to their work in institutional cooperation? Do these border relations matter for
45
46 their work in institutional cooperation? The goal of this paper is to analyze the nature of the
47
48 personal border relations of experts on cross-border cooperation from both border areas.
49
50 To begin, an analysis is required of the relevance of border relations within their personal
51
52 networks. Secondly, the target is to know what kind of border relations they maintain and if
53
54 they are closely related to their work in cross-border cooperation. Findings from both
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 border regions will help to take the pulse of the social cohesion between border regions. At
4
5 the same time, this analysis will add a valuable perspective on how experts' personal,
6
7 informal networks and formal relations might be intertwined.
8
9

10
11
12 This paper is part of a broader research project designed with a multi-method and
13
14 triangulation criteria between methods. The research was carried out during 2010 and 2011
15
16 in two different border regions where the linguistic similarity (Portuguese-Spanish and
17
18 Finnish-Estonian languages) has been historically a link for social interaction. Both border
19
20 regions are sub-areas of cooperation within respective Interreg A programmes. The border
21
22 region integrated by Alentejo, Algarve and Andalusia (AAA) is one of the five areas of
23
24 cooperation of the POCTEP (CBC Programme Spain-Portugal 2007-2013). The border region
25
26 between Southern Finland–Estonia (SFE) forms one of the thirds sub-programmes of Central
27
28 Baltic Interreg IV Programme 2007-2013. Both multi-annual programmes have been
29
30 preceded by the cross-cooperation with Interreg III A for the period between 2000 and
31
32 2006. Results discussed in this work are based on the analysis of qualitative, semi-structured
33
34 interviews and the quantitative and visual analysis of their personal networks. Interviewees
35
36 were considered as “experts”, defined as professionals from different institutions who have
37
38 or have had professional experience in cross-border projects of Interreg A and in cross-
39
40 border cooperation in general. Most of these experts worked in public institutions which are
41
42 members or beneficiaries of cross-border projects. A few of them were not directly involved
43
44 with Interreg projects, though their work was based on the cooperation with the
45
46 neighbouring country.
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 The selection process of interviewees encountered the difficulty of contacting professionals
4
5 of cross-border cooperation. Institutional cross-border cooperation registers or a directory
6
7 of experts working in CBC does not exist. Accordingly, it was not possible to do a random
8
9 sample, so a theoretical sample was applied. Although this study does not aim to make
10
11 inferences about general patterns of border relations in both border regions, the results of
12
13 our qualitative and quantitative analysis could provide meaningful information to continue
14
15 in this line in future research with bigger samples. The available data from Interreg Projects
16
17 provides public contact information of those institutions participating in European projects.
18
19 This initial contact data, and the help of other informants, was used for applying the
20
21 snowball technique for selecting experts based on the criteria of having experience in cross-
22
23 border projects. Experts with long experience in cross-border projects initiatives out of
24
25 Interreg were also included, as they equally represent part of institutional cross-border
26
27 cooperation. A total number of 43 semi-structured interviews were done across four
28
29 different countries. A questionnaire for obtaining personal networks of interviewees was
30
31 included in interviews and was applied to those who agreed to report relational data. A total
32
33 of 34 experts participated in reporting their personal networks. Table 1 shows the same
34
35 distribution of both achieved interviews and personal networks.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 **Table1**

46
47
48
49
50 Experts were asked to report up to 25 people with whom they usually related,
51
52 independently of the method of contact, kind of relations or origin of contacts. Certain
53
54 attributes of these relations were also collected: origin of the people, intensity of relations,
55
56 kind of support received from the contact, and type of relation (if the contact comes from
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 friendships, family, work, etc.). Experts' network data was analysed from Social Network
4 perspectives using specific software (Freeman, 2004; Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002).
5
6
7 The interviews were processed with Atlas.ti for content analysis in order to classify the
8 information for the interpretation of data, and a list of codes was created considering the
9
10
11
12 following criteria:

- 13
14 - The relation and attachment of the expert to the border region, reasons for going to
15 the neighbouring country and the most known area
16
17
18
19 - Relations with people who are from the neighbouring country
20
21
22 - If experts have lived or live in the neighbouring country
23

24 The discussion of results in the following sections is based on the triangulation of content
25 analysis from interviews and quantitative analysis of personal networks. To contribute to
26 the analytical discussion of experts' networks, some interview quotes from experts are
27 included. These quotes appear with some data of the experts' profile in order to understand
28 the relation between experts' profiles and the content of the quotes, though preserving the
29 experts' anonymity.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 **3. TYPES OF EXPERTS' NETWORKS**

41
42
43
44
45 Examining the experts' networks in both border regions, we have extracted a synthetic
46 typology of personal networks applicable to both border areas considering the following
47 indicators: total number of people reported in the personal network; number of people in
48 their personal network from the same country as the expert; number of people from the
49 neighbouring country; number of people from third countries; number of people from the
50 same city as the expert; number of people from other localities and counties; number of
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 people within the same region of experts (Algarve, Alentejo, Andalusia, South Finland and
4
5 Harju county in Estonia)¹; people from other cities of the country. Accordingly, eight
6
7 different types of identified experts' networks represent the 34 networks collected across
8
9 the four countries. Principally, these types of networks have been categorized into those
10
11 without border contacts and those that have border contacts and/or some other contacts
12
13 from third countries, independently of how many. Among those experts who did not report
14
15 any contact from the neighbouring country, we can differentiate between those whose
16
17 network is more locally oriented and those more locally-regionally oriented. The rest of the
18
19 networks have the indicator of border relations in fewer or greater number which is
20
21 concomitant with the local and regional relations. However, it is also interesting that other
22
23 types of networks introduce an additional indicator of international relationships. This tends
24
25 to occur more frequently among experts from South-Finland. At the same time, considering
26
27 the people quoted from a border neighbouring country, we have discerned three types of
28
29 personal-informal relations coming from family, personal friendship reasons, and working
30
31 reasons. The following description presents the type of experts' personal networks that
32
33 were found in the two border regions, showing some examples:
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 *1. Local:* This network structure means that experts usually relate with people very close to
44
45 the territory where he/she lives. It is a network limited to spatial proximity where the
46
47 majority of contacts are from the same municipality of the experts. This kind of network was
48
49 found mostly on the Spanish side. Figure 1 belongs to a Spanish expert from a local
50
51 municipality of the border area. Despite being close to the border and participating in CBC,
52
53 this expert is representative of the stronger endogamy of national networks among Spanish
54
55 Experts. The network also shows the high density of the expert's family and work relations,
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 with a second group of work ties. This type of structure was also found in the rest of the
4
5 countries.

6
7
8 **Figure 1**

9
10 2. *Local/Regional*: The majority of people reported belonging to either the same
11
12 municipality where the experts live or to other close localities generally within the same
13
14 county (in the case of Finland and Estonia), province (in the Andalusia region) or *conselho*
15
16 (within the Algarve or Alentejo regions) . This kind of network occurs mostly with experts
17
18 who live and work in a different place from where they come from.
19

20
21
22 **Figure 2**

23
24 3. *Local/Regional/Cross-Border*: This type of network practically corresponds to the former
25
26 with additional border relations. Though experts' networks are based in local and regional
27
28 relations, there are some relations from the most proximal area in the neighbouring country
29
30 to the border. Most of the networks of this type were found in the Portugal side of the
31
32 border region AAA.
33

34
35 4. *Local/Regional/Binational*: This type is also very similar to the precedent. Although the
36
37 expert listed people from the neighbouring country, these relations were not from the
38
39 border area. In the case of the AAA border region, these relations came from important
40
41 cities of Spain and Portugal. In addition, in the case of the SFE border region, people cited
42
43 were from places further from the border area, such as south Estonia or northern counties
44
45 of Finland, for example. The professional trajectory and mobility explain why certain experts
46
47 relate more with people from the neighbouring country who are not located in the border
48
49 area. The Personal Network of Figure 2 shows a Portuguese expert's network characterized
50
51 by a great density and the predominance of work relations. Some of them are border
52
53 relations from the bigger cities of Spain. This expert works at the regional level in CBC and
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 has work relations mostly with people who live in Seville and Madrid, where regional and
4
5 national institutions involved in CBC are located.
6

7
8 5. *Cross-border*: This type of network corresponds with experts that report people from the
9
10 border area of the neighbouring country in the same or greater number to those from the
11
12 same country. Indeed, this kind of network was reported only by one expert from Portugal
13
14 out of 34 experts that answered this part of the questionnaire. And it is explained especially
15
16 by the expert's specific, personal links to the neighbouring country, whose life is related to
17
18 Spain both for working and personal reasons. This kind of network might fit well with the
19
20 idea of regionauts discussed above.
21
22

23
24 6. *Local/Regional/International*: Expanding on the Type 2 'Local/regional network', this type
25
26 is practically the same, with the exception that it incorporates some people from other
27
28 countries. The majority of people listed by experts are from the same locality or region.
29
30 They did not report any relations from the neighbouring country. However, they cited some
31
32 people (friends and family) who live in other, third countries.
33
34

35
36 7. *Cross-border/International*: This type is similar to type five with the international
37
38 dimension added on expert relational structure. It corresponds with those experts whose
39
40 network included a similar or greater number of people from the neighbouring country and
41
42 third countries to the number of people from the same country as the expert. It is
43
44 reasonable that this kind of network appeared in those experts who have been living or live
45
46 in the neighbouring country or in other third countries. Experts from Estonia showed more
47
48 of this pattern. Figure 3 depicts a particular network of an Estonian expert that has had high
49
50 professional international mobility and works in CBC with Finland. The network is rather
51
52 open, with an important number of relations with Finnish contacts both for personal and
53
54 working reasons.
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 3

8. *Local/Regional/Cross-Border/International*: We could term this last type as the most complete and integrative type of network that was found. It is like an accumulative type of the previous ones. The majority of relations reported by the experts pertain to the same country distributed between the same localities as other places. At the same time, approximately one third of experts' relations are both from a border area of the neighbouring country and from some other country. As it was advanced, this kind of network was more common among Finnish experts. All these experts with this type of network had significant border links to Estonia, as they have work links or have lived in Estonia. As an example, Figure 4 shows a network of a Finnish expert who has lived for several years in Estonia due to work-related reasons, and currently works in CBC. The network is also dispersed and though there are border relations, all of them come from work.

Figure 4**3. THE INFORMAL AND FORMAL SIDE OF NETWORKS AND COOPERATION**

The sample size of experts' networks was not large enough or statistically representative to make quantitative inferences. However, it is interesting to note that more than half of experts in the border region of South-Finland and Estonia reported border relations in their personal networks. In the border region AAA, the majority of Portuguese experts (seven out of nine experts' networks) reported border relations, while only three out of nine Spanish experts listed border relations. This difference between Spanish and Portuguese is supported by previous research on border relations between Portuguese and Spanish

1
2
3 people within the same border region AAA. There is a remarkable asymmetry of border
4
5 relations reported by Portuguese and Spanish in their personal networks. Andalusians
6
7 reported in the personal network of support only an average of 0.6 people from some
8
9 Portuguese locality. In contrast, among Portuguese people, those from the Algarve region
10
11 had an average of 9.4 people from Andalusia in their personal networks (____, 2008: 186).
12
13

14
15
16
17 Table 2 represents the average number of relations reported by experts in the four
18
19 countries. Results, though not statistically representative, are very significant and encourage
20
21 further research with bigger samples of respondents. Generally, there is a strong,
22
23 understandable endogamy of experts' personal networks. The majority of people reported
24
25 in experts' personal networks are from the same country. However, there are interesting
26
27 differences between countries and both border regions. It is noticeable that, in the border
28
29 region SFE, there are more border relations; and, while Spanish relational rapprochement is
30
31 minimal, Portuguese experts declare more relations with Spanish neighbours.
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 **Table 2**

39
40
41
42
43 How conclusive can the results of Table 2 be coming from social network analysis? One of
44
45 the criticisms that SNA receives is regarding the high subjectivity involved when the
46
47 individual reports people with whom he/she relates. It might happen that the individual
48
49 does not exactly recall the reality of his/her personal network when they cite them in the
50
51 context of an interview. Regardless, it is a reflection of an individual's awareness of personal
52
53 relations at a certain moment. At the same time, the semi-structured interview
54
55 demonstrated that all the interviewees had personal relations with neighbours (at least as
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 experts in CBC). The difference is that those border relations obtained through the
4 application of a SNA methodology were reported according to the criteria “most usual
5 relationships” in the personal network. From qualitative interviews, all experts mentioned
6 having acquaintances in the neighbouring country, but through personal network analysis
7 only some of these border relations become or are part of their most usual, relational
8 structure. Therefore, though all experts reported acquaintances from the neighbouring
9 country, having border relations as part of usual or daily networks was more normalized in
10 Portuguese, Finnish and Estonian experts than in Spanish ones.
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 Examining the type of relations (from family, friendship or labour) in the border region SFE,
25 the border relations of experts were based proportionally on working and personal reasons.
26 Border relations of Portuguese and Spanish experts with their respective neighbours are
27 more based on working relations. Qualitative analysis from interviews supports this trend.
28 Although all of them have work acquaintances and friendships from their work, in SFE nine
29 experts out of seventeen also mentioned having different personal links with the
30 neighbouring country, independently of those working border relations. A total of eight
31 experts have lived or live in the neighbouring country due to personal family reasons (mixed
32 marriages and being a descendent of a mixed marriage) or working reasons. This border
33 experience is very significant for starting border networks. A different pattern of border
34 relations appears in the border region AAA. When experts commented about their border
35 relationships, all of them affirmed having several acquaintances from their professional
36 work through their participation in cross-border projects. Only a few cases tend to become
37 personal with good friendships developing over time. Two Portuguese experts reported
38 some Spanish friendships that developed from work relations. Comparing the cross-border
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 living experiences between Finnish and Estonians, only one Spanish expert interviewed had
4
5 lived in Portugal due to family-personal reasons.
6
7
8
9

10 Summarizing border relationships are not only a more daily trend among Finnish and
11
12 Estonians experts, but they are also based both on informal relations due to family or
13
14 personal friends, and on formal relations derived from their work in cross-border
15
16 cooperation. From interviews, several experts remarked that the institutional cross-border
17
18 cooperation between both countries is very much based on previous, informal contacts.
19
20 Especially in Estonia, where in the period of Soviet Union decadence and after
21
22 independence, having Finnish contacts was very common for Estonians. This relational
23
24 activity was very representatively highlighted by an Estonian expert in a common saying:
25
26 *“Igal perekond peab olema oma kodustatud Soomlased”* - Every family should have a
27
28 domestic Finnish - (E2, Estonia, Manager, Public Institution, 2010). *“This also tended to*
29
30 *change... but it was very popular... families in the northern part of Estonia them we use to*
31
32 *have friends in Finland”* (E15, Estonia, Manager, Public Institution, 2011). Although in
33
34 modern days this tendency might have changed, it shows how experts from border region
35
36 SFE usually describe the institutional cross-border cooperation, supported in previous
37
38 informal contacts between Finnish and Estonians, *“The contacts at the other side make the*
39
40 *cooperation much more easy to be started”* (E6, Finland, Manager, Development Agency,
41
42 2010). *“This cooperation is grounded on the intense informal relations between Estonia and*
43
44 *Finland”* (E17, Estonia, Manager, Private Company, 2011). In contrast, the Portuguese-
45
46 Spanish border relational activities tend to be more dominated by their formal participation
47
48 in cross-border European projects. Could this difference be interpreted as a stronger
49
50 informal relation between Finnish and Estonians, and more social integration between these
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 neighbours than in the border region AAA, where border relations tend to be reserved for
4
5 professional and formal exchange opportunities? This question definitely urges further
6
7 research to be conducted on the role of informal border relations on institutional, cross-
8
9 border cooperation.
10

11
12
13 Both informal border relations at the margin of working in CBC and formal relations
14
15 originating in offices and meetings seem to be intrinsically imbricated. On one hand,
16
17 informal relations create a breeding ground of experiences that might be potential
18
19 resources for institutional cross-border cooperation. In this sense, these informal contacts
20
21 are bridges and opportunities that facilitate access to resources (other contacts, actors, etc.)
22
23 located in the neighbouring country. The value of these kinds of relations corresponds with
24
25 the bridging dimension of social networks and social capital (Burt, 2008). All experts
26
27 reported having acquaintances from work, some of them developing into friendships. These
28
29 acquaintances are weak ties that might become bridges to other relations and resources;
30
31 their strength lies in their capacity to connect different systems, societies or groups
32
33 (Granovetter, 1983). They are not likely to provide strong cohesion like family relations, but
34
35 become an important source for acquiring resources, which is a foundation of social capital
36
37 and fundamental for cross-border cooperation. On the other hand, these more formal
38
39 relations from work acquire a more informal component over time; these are most of the
40
41 acquaintances and friends from work reported by experts. Those especially from the AAA
42
43 border region commented that those formal contacts from work that become friends soften
44
45 the institutional cross-border cooperation. The working process tends to be easier and more
46
47 fluent. *“They are working mates that I can consider as friends too. We go out together, we
48
49 eat together and even we dance... when there is opportunity for that. Thus, it is a dual
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60*

1
2
3 *relationship that makes easier the work. Sometimes it makes easier to solve difficult*
4
5 *problems”* (E21, Portugal, Manager, Public Administration, 2011).
6
7

8
9
10 For experts, border relations—both from working and more informal reasons—implied
11
12 resources or access to resources. They all imply the existence of investment sources to use in
13
14 order to capitalize on the existing resources. They constitute sources of social capital. On one
15
16 hand, formal border relations created common experiences and opportunities for
17
18 information to flow. To have and to maintain these formal relations firstly implies better
19
20 knowledge of the border area and its needs for development. Secondly, it implies that they
21
22 can generate better knowledge in management of cross-border cooperation (administrative
23
24 procedures, institutional expertise). On the other hand, informal border relations more
25
26 significantly influence the knowledge of the neighbouring country (culture, language,
27
28 national legislation, etc.) and in the information or knowledge of contacts, and contacts’
29
30 resources. It is assumed that the increasing social and economic integration of border
31
32 regions needs to be supported by the existence of different types of border flows, social
33
34 interactions and cross-border relations between people of border regions. If potentialities
35
36 commented on by experts are related to this social and economic integration, then it is
37
38 necessary to accomplish different empirical works on border regions. To identify the possible
39
40 border relations, their patterns and their possible implication in cross-border cooperation
41
42 development, it is a most promising research line.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 This paper has used social network analysis and social capital perspective regarding border
4 relations. It proposes that the study of social integration and cohesion between border
5 regions can be based not only on cultural perspectives focused on bottom approach to
6 identity development and perception of border regions. Results from interviews and
7 personal networks that were analysed demonstrate the patterns of border network among
8 those people who are directly involved in cross-border cooperation. In the border region
9 SFE, interviewees had more border ties based both on personal or informal reasons, like
10 family ties and friendships, and on more formal reasons that emerged from work relations.
11 In the border region AAA, experts' border relations were less frequent and more dependent
12 on working experience in CBC, as most of their border relations are from work. It was
13 interesting to note the significant asymmetry between Portuguese experts' border relations
14 with Spanish neighbours with respect to Spanish experts' border relations with Portuguese
15 people. Although in the border region AAA, empirical research by _____ (2008) focused on
16 general population, their results support our conclusions. According to the triangulation of
17 content analysis and network analysis, we have found that the results show a great
18 coherence.

19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43 However, the question is not if border regions should have more border relations among
44 their inhabitants. The relevance in the study of border relations comes from their use value;
45 namely, in the role played by these border relations in social integration and cross-border
46 cooperation. It could be interesting and innovative to inquire if border regions with more
47 border networks (among citizens or institutional actors) show greater social integration and
48 even better management of cross-border cooperation projects and programmes. Experts
49 highlighted the relevance of their border acquaintances as resources in a learning process of
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 cross-border cooperation management or for better knowledge of border needs. Their
4
5 acquaintances implied opportunities of development, as they were represented like small
6
7 pseudo-ambassadors toward the neighbouring country. Following Grix (2001), we assume
8
9 that border relations and their use value are key cornerstones to understand the functioning
10
11 of cross-border cooperation and its improvement. In turn, that would imply an operative
12
13 and contextualised research exercise of social capital in cross-border regions.
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

21
22
23
24 Primary data used in this paper are part of one of the coauthors' Doctoral Thesis in process,
25
26 titled -, supported by the Regional Ministry of Innovation, Science and Enterprise"
27
28 (Government of -) granting one of the coauthors with a PreDoctoral Scholarship.
29
30
31
32

33
34 This paper has also been partially supported by the _____anon.
35
36
37

38
39 At the same time, this work is partially integrated in the project "_____anon.
40
41
42

43 **REFERENCES**

44
45
46
47 BERG, E. (2000) Border Crossing in manifest Perceptions and Actual Needs, in M. VAN DER
48
49 VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.) Border, Regions and People, pp. 151-165 London: Pion
50
51
52
53 Limited.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 BORGATTI, S.P., EVERETT, M.G. AND FREEMAN, L.C. (2002) Ucinet 6 for Windows. Harvard:
4
5 Analytic Technologies.
6
7

8
9
10 BUCH, T.; DALL SCHMIDT, T.; NIEBUHR, A. (2009) Cross-border commuting in the Danish-
11
12 German border region. integration, institutions and cross-border interaction, Journal of
13
14 Borderlands Studies 24, 2, pp. 38-54.
15
16

17
18
19 BURT, R. S. (2008) Structural Holes versus Network Closure as Social Capital, in LIN, N.;
20
21 COOK, K. AND BURT, R.S. (Eds) Social Capital. Theory and Research, pp. 31-56. Aldine
22
23 Transaction: New Brunswick, New Jersey.
24
25

26
27
28
29 CASTELLS, M. (1989) *The Informational City*. Oxford: Blackwell.
30
31

32
33
34 EHLERS, N.; BUURSINK, J. (2000) Binational Cities: People, Institutions and Structures, in M.
35
36 VAN DER VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.) *Border, Regions and People*, pp. 182-201. London:
37
38 Pion Limited.
39
40

41
42
43 _____anon (2011)
44
45

46
47
48 FREEMAN, L. (2004) *The Development of Social network Analysis*, Vancouver: Empirical
49
50 Press.
51
52

53
54
55 GRANOVETTER , M. (1983) The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited,
56
57 Sociological Theory, 1, pp. 201-233.
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 GRIX, J. (2001) "Towards a Theoretical Approach to the Study of Cross-Border Cooperation",
6
7 Perspectives: Central European Review of International Affairs, 17, pp. 5-9.
8
9

10
11
12 GRIX, J. HOUŽVIČKA, V. (2001) "Cross-border cooperation in theory and practice the case of
13
14 Czech-German borderland, Acta Universitatis Carolinae Geographica, 1, pp.61-77.
15
16

17
18
19 GRIX, J. AND KNOWLES, V. (2002) "The Eurregion and the maximization of social capital: Pro
20
21 Europa Viadrina", Regional and Federal Studies, 12, 4, pp. 154-176.
22
23

24
25
26 _____ (anon1)
27
28

29
30
31 _____ (anon2)
32
33

34
35
36 HANSEN, C.L.; NAHRSTEDT, B. (2000) "Cross-Border Commuting: Research issues and case
37
38 Study for the Danish-German Border Region, in M. VAN DER VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.)
39
40 Border, Regions and People, pp. 69-84. London: Pion Limited.
41
42

43
44
45 HOSPERS, G-J. (2006) "Borders, Bridges and Branding: The Transformation of the Öresund
46
47 Region into an Imagined Space, European Planning Studies, 14, 8, pp. 1015-1033.
48
49

50
51
52 KEPKA, J.M.M. (2004) "The Nysa Euroregion: The first ten years. Eurasian Geography and
53
54 Economics, 45, 3, pp. 162-189.
55
56

1
2
3 KNIPPENBERG, H. (2004). The Maas-Rhine Euroregion: A Laboratory for European
4
5 Integration?, *Geopolitics*, 9, 3, pp. 608-626.
6
7

8
9
10 KRÄTKE, S. (1998) Problems of cross-border regional integration: The case of the German-
11
12 Polish border area, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 5, 3, pp. 249-262.
13
14

15
16
17 LEIBENATH, M. (2007) Europeanisation of cross-border governance? A case study on the
18
19 cause, form and consequences of a co-operation project in the German-Polish-Czech Border
20
21 triangle, *Space and Polity*, 11, 2, pp.151-167.
22
23

24
25
26 LIN, N. (2008) Building a Network Theory of Social Capital, in LIN, N. COOK, K., AND BURT,
27
28 R.S. (EDS.) *Social capital. Theory and research*, pp. 3-29. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Aldine
29
30 Transactions.
31
32

33
34
35
36 LIN, N., ERICKSON, B.H. (2010) Theory, Measurement, and the Research Enterprise on Social
37
38 Capital, in LIN, N. AND ERICKSON, B.H. (Eds.) *Social capital. An international research*
39
40 program, pp. 1- 24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
41
42

43
44
45 LUNDÉN, T. (1973) Interaction Across an "Open" International Boundary: Norway-Sweden,
46
47 in LUNDÉN, T. (Ed.) *Boundaries and Regions*, pp. 147-160. Trieste, Instituto di Sociologia
48
49 Internazionale.
50
51

52
53
54 LUNDÉN, T. (2004) *On the Boundary. About Humand at the End of Territory*. Huddinge:
55
56 Södertörns högskola.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 LÖFGREN, O. (2008) Regionauts: the Transformation of Cross-Border Regions in
6 "Scandinavia", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 15, pp. 195-208.
7
8

9
10
11
12 PAASI, A. (2001) Europe as a Social process and Discourse: Consideration of Place,
13
14
15 Boundaries and Identity, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 8, 1, pp. 7-28.
16
17

18
19
20 SZUL, R. (2006) Transborder cooperation: Achievements, hopes, disappointments, and
21
22
23 fears, *Geopolitical Studies*, 14, pp. 9-15.
24
25

26
27 THOMAS, P. (2006) Images and economic development in the cross-channel Euroregion,
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

33
34 VALENCIA, P.J.L. (2007) The Eurocity Baiona - Donostia. Example or utopia in the cross -
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 YODER, J.A. (2003) Bridging the European Union and Eastern Europe: Cross-border
6
7
8 cooperation and the Euroregions, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 13, 3, pp- 90-106.
9

11
12 ¹ The territorial reference of regions is based on Interreg Programmes NUTS III that correspond with the
13 delimitation of Alentejo, Algarve and Andalusia, administrative regions in Portugal and Spain. In the case of
14 Finland and Estonia, Interreg territorial delimitation use Estonia and South Finland that comprises different
15 counties in the south of Finland (see <http://www.centralbaltic.eu/>). However, most of all interviewees belong
16 to the programme areas. In this research a difference between the northern part of Estonia based on Harju
17 county and the rest of the country was considered useful, as most of the experts and population in Estonia are
18 concentrated in this county.
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

**CROSS-BORDER NETWORKS IN INFORMAL AND FORMAL COOPERATION IN THE BORDER
REGIONS ANDALUSIA-ALGARVE-ALENTEJO AND SOUTH FINLAND-ESTONIA**

Teresa González-Gómez (1), Estrella Gualda (2)

(1) PhD. Applicant and Lecturer. Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Huelva, Avda. Tres de Marzo s/n, 21071-Huelva, Spain. teresa.gonzalez@dstso.uhu.es.

(2) Director of the Research Center "Social Studies and Social Intervention", University of Huelva & Researcher of the CIEO – Centre for Spatial and Organizational Dynamics – University of Algarve. Correspondence to: University of Huelva, Avda. Tres de Marzo s/n, 21071-Huelva, Spain. estrella@uhu.es.

ABSTRACT

Fostering border relations among the people in border regions seems a precondition for the future envisagement and success of cross-border regions and European Integration. Related studies to border relations observe the weakness of these informal border contacts and relations. However, weak ties represent an opportunity for interaction, and little has been said about how they might play in the construction and performance of institutional cross-border cooperation. In this work, we examine the nature of personal border networks of professionals working in cross-border cooperation and how they are interconnected with the institutional cross-border cooperation.

This paper is based on a qualitative research of two different border regions: Andalusia, Algarve and Alentejo (AAA), and South Finland and Estonia (SFE). The methodology is multi-

1
2
3 method, using semi-structured interviews, with specific questions for applying social
4
5 network analysis (SNA). A total of 43 interviews were conducted with experts who worked
6
7 in different institutions involved in cross-border projects. 34 out of 43 also completed a
8
9 section in the questionnaire to apply SNA. Conclusions point out different patterns of border
10
11 relations in both border regions. In AAA, most of the cross-border relations are weak and
12
13 related to their involvement in institutional cross-border cooperation. In SFE, border
14
15 relations also rely on personal reasons. Nevertheless, they all imply a significant value as
16
17 opportunities for greater interaction.
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 **Keywords:** Border relations, networks, social capital, institutional cooperation, Estonia,
25
26 Finland, Spain, Portugal.
27
28
29
30

31 **1. INTRODUCTION**

32
33
34
35

36 Parallel to the institutional evaluation and reports of the Interreg programme, in recent
37
38 decades, different scholarly appraisals pay attention to the objectives of cross-border
39
40 cooperation from different perspectives. In recent years there have been revisionist and
41
42 evaluative works in order to create a balance of the political cross-border objectives and the
43
44 reality of programme impacts (Valencia, 2007; Kepka, 2004; Szul, 2006; Thomas, 2006;
45
46 Yoder, 2003). Within this trend, another research profile aims to offer a complementary
47
48 analysis. Houtum (2000) refers to the growing interest in integrating a more people-
49
50 oriented analysis of cross-border cooperation. A people approach inserts the human
51
52 dimension on the border construction, despite the political and institutional reification of
53
54 borders. The interest is in the disparity of a political construction and the reality of border
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 areas. Institutional cross-border cooperation needs to be supported in a social background
4
5 and in line with the border context. The social frame entails a conglomeration of different
6
7 and relevant aspects like people identity, cultural and educational rapprochement, social
8
9 border relations and border behaviours to ensure the sustainability of cross-border
10
11 cooperation projects and the future European integration (Leibenath, 2007; Knippenberg
12
13 2004; Kraïke, 1998).
14
15

16
17
18
19 Generally, they remark on the division or gap between the projected scenario for cross-
20
21 border regions at the political level and the daily reality of the people living in the border
22
23 (Paasi, 2001, Löfgren, 2008), their relations with the border and border behaviour. In this
24
25 sense, the cross-border cooperation is performed by “institutional architects” like elite
26
27 politicians and other business actors that draw a top-made design of the territorial, political,
28
29 economic and social margins of border regions. At the grass roots level, there are “border
30
31 bricklayers”, dwellers, commuters, SMEs (small and medium enterprises), and associations
32
33 for whom the political map might not fit or correspond with the margins of their social life,
34
35 border behaviour and informal relationships with neighbours. This mismatch usually takes
36
37 place between a more regional and national written, planified discourse and a more local,
38
39 spontaneous narrative. The idea of increasing European social and economic integration
40
41 through Interreg and cross-border cooperation generally lies very much in Castells’
42
43 recurrent ideas of the future network society (1989). Accordingly, the “ever closer union”
44
45 seems a direct projection of a Europe as a “space of flows”. However, the reality of border
46
47 territories and border dynamics take a slower path. The social and economic dynamics of
48
49 border regions seems to be much more heavily based on the territorial proximity of people
50
51 and institutions; specifically, a border region that remains more in the “space of places”.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 People's lives usually do not pass far beyond the territorial proximities (Fragoso et al. 2011;
4
5 Lundén, 2004). The mismatch between the new political regionalization process and the less
6
7 integrated, daily social life of people from the border regions causes border regions to
8
9 become "laboratories of European integration" (Knippenberg, 2004). Even in those regions
10
11 enhanced in political rhetoric as pilot projects or models for cross-border cooperation, there
12
13 are discrepancies about the expectations of people commuting, mobility and cross-border
14
15 integration through the new bridges and infrastructures of communication (Löfgren, 2008,
16
17 Hopper, 2006). Regarding the mosaic of border regions and the experimental character
18
19 exposed above, European integration seems to be characterized as a faltering process.
20
21
22
23
24
25

26
27 Nevertheless, cross-border cooperation programmes are expected to increase the mobility
28
29 and social integration among people living in the borders and to create "regionauts". Using
30
31 the definition of Thomas O'Dell, regionauts are those people who have developed skills of
32
33 using the world on both sides of the border (O'Dell, 2003, in Löfgren, 2008: 196). The
34
35 expected emergence of a new prototype of border citizens, "regionauts", flies over the
36
37 bridge but has not yet clearly landed. Does institutional cross-border cooperation promote
38
39 these profiles in citizens from border regions? Going into more detail of an opposite pattern,
40
41 we can consider that, in border regions, people's lives and work are attached to the border
42
43 region as far as their lives are linked to the territorial proximity of the border. Their daily life
44
45 might be directly affected by the social and economic activity of the border regions, though
46
47 they are not only passive recipients of projects and programmes' impacts. Their perception
48
49 of the border and neighbours, and their personal attachment to the border, might insert a
50
51 difference in the development of cross-border projects. Additionally, a strong, nationally-
52
53 oriented infrastructure, mass media, national cultures and identities which are fixed on a
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 daily basis to territorial proximity and border social distance are consistent enough to
4
5 estimate if we could really use the term of regionauts to people living in the border regions.
6
7

8
9
10 Within this people oriented research, there are more cultural or cognitive approaches that
11
12 focus on the constructions of identities, the influence of culture, and people's attitudes,
13
14 perceptions and narratives related to their border living (Paasi, 2001; Berg, 2000; Ehlers and
15
16 Buursink 2000; Hospers, 2006; Löfgren, 2008). Other types of research could be discerned. A
17
18 research more oriented to a behavioural and structural approach could focus on people's
19
20 border behaviour, their border relations and trends in crossing the border like those based
21
22 on border commerce or shopping, tourism, or daily commuting. Different studies have
23
24 analysed the pattern of cross-border labour mobility in specific border regions (Buch, Dall,
25
26 Niebuhr, 2009; Van Houtum and Van Der Velde, 2004; Hansen and Nahrstedt, 2000). Their
27
28 exploratory insights remark that the labour mobility across borders is not as strong as it
29
30 might be expected after years of programmes performance. Cross-border mobility seems to
31
32 be more heavily based on exceptional cases and concentrated in specific niches of activities
33
34 than in an average pattern of labour cross-border mobility. However, studies on labour
35
36 mobility and commuting seem to answer more to other types of research centred in the
37
38 study of flows across border in economic terms (Van Houtum, 2000). The European Union
39
40 has enhanced the free movement of capital, goods, and labour. People mobility across the
41
42 border are then considered as part of the new dynamic of economic flows provoked by a
43
44 removal of barriers and economic border flows. Nevertheless, dispersed or weak patterns of
45
46 border crossing reflect the general lack of social relations between the borders where social
47
48 distance might be even bigger than territorial distance.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Considering the rich bibliography on institutional cross-border cooperation, there is a lack of
4
5 focus on how border regions are lived in and constructed through everyday cultural practices
6
7 (Jukarainen, 2007, in Löfgren, 2008). However, besides the focus on attitudes, values,
8
9 perceptions, identity processes, and symbolic and cognitive reification of borders, it is
10
11 necessary to add a social axis where quantity and quality of relations between neighbours
12
13 take precedence. The approximation to the study of border regions based on cultural capital
14
15 (Löfgren, 2008) needs be complemented with a stronger perspective on social capital. This
16
17 work aims to introduce a different inquiry through the study of social relationships. There is
18
19 also a significant lack of research on people's border relations. The nature of these
20
21 relationships, how these border networks are interconnected to daily life, or how they might
22
23 be related to the cognitive aspects like identity and perceptions still comprise a broad field of
24
25 research to uncover. At the same time, the interest in the people approach has focused on
26
27 the missing social-cultural dimension in the political construction of border regions and
28
29 cross-border cooperation. In this respect, it can be interesting to investigate how border
30
31 relations among people in boundary areas might be related with institutional cooperation.
32
33 Are these relationships an effect of progressive institutional border infrastructure and
34
35 institutional cooperation or an inevitable precondition for a better achievement of the
36
37 objectives of cross-border projects?
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 Analysis of social networks provides a new or refreshed theoretical perspective and
49
50 methodological potential in the study of people's border behaviour and cross-border
51
52 relationships at individual and institutional levels. An exemplary research on the relevance
53
54 of social relations both at an informal or formal level of cross-border cooperation was
55
56 initiated by Grix and collaborators (2001, Grix and Houzvicka, 2002; Grix and Knowles,
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 2003). Cross-border cooperation can be a result of not only formal agreements between
4
5 institutions at different governmental levels who work through the development of projects
6
7 and programmes. There are also enterprises, organizations, and other lobbying actors
8
9 whose active role might determine the development of the border regions. Additionally, the
10
11 border flows between people might hamper or support the continuity of any formal or
12
13 informal initiative of cross-border cooperation. This set of border flows represents a diverse
14
15 and even complex conglomerate of social interactions between different actors. Cross-
16
17 border cooperation becomes a process where different actors interplay with each other in
18
19 order to produce certain outcomes or to capitalize on the value of available resources.
20
21 Traditionally, however, different sections of disciplines interested in the analysis of cross-
22
23 border cooperation have tried to describe cross-border cooperation without explaining it as
24
25 a process of social transactions or relationship-buildings. The interest in the study of border
26
27 relations both at an informal or more institutional, formal level means conceiving cross-
28
29 border cooperation as a process of investment in contacts and relationships that represent
30
31 opportunities that could promote social and economic integration.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 The network analysis relies on the idea that the whole society is a big network (Requena,
41
42 2008), which is composed of social actors at many different layers: states, companies,
43
44 institutions, social groups and individuals. It is possible to represent the social structure
45
46 where actors appear to be related in one way or another. Networks or relationships are the
47
48 core of the structural perspective of social capital which consists of the investment in social
49
50 relations with expected returns (Lin, 2008: 6). Social capital has entailed a complex,
51
52 analytical delimitation that has led to different conceptual and methodological approaches,
53
54 such as the distinction between structural and cognitive social capital. The cognitive
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 dimension of social capital centres on the analysis of the role of norms of trust and
4
5 reciprocity. In structural social capital, the core of analysis is relations, primarily
6
7 acquaintances in which individuals or institutions invest and through which they gain access
8
9 to resources (Burt, 1997; Lin, 2008). However, common to the different theoretical and
10
11 empirical approaches is the idea that social capital implies a social interaction from which is
12
13 possible to produce economic, social or political outcomes. Despite the difficulties at the
14
15 methodological level, it is assumed that high levels of social capital positively influence
16
17 improved economic and/or political developments (Woolcok, 2001). The structural
18
19 perspective of social capital, through the study of border networks, captures the relational
20
21 and processual character of cross-border cooperation. It can provide a general approach
22
23 applicable to different regions in order to compare the nature of people's border relations
24
25 and behaviour. It offers the opportunity to understand the nature of institutional or
26
27 informal relations across border regions and the whole picture of the structure of these
28
29 relationships. If we ask which border regions are more socially and culturally integrated, or
30
31 why some border regions are more successful in cross-border cooperation in governance,
32
33 the analysis of people's network and institutional network is necessarily in an analytical
34
35 fashion. The social network analysis provides a more accurate approximation to the nature
36
37 of border relations both within the social and informal boundary of people and within their
38
39 institutional and formal cooperation.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 In the literature of cross-border regions, research on people's border behaviour and border
51
52 relations has not been frequent. Lundén's work (1973) on interaction across the boundaries
53
54 of Norway and Sweden could be considered as an initial step. Data from one week diaries of
55
56 contacts and activities outside of habitants' own localities was collected. This diary method
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 has been a classical or standard method of network research, though soon replaced by
4
5 other, more feasible techniques like the name generators (Lin and Erikson, 2010). In later
6
7 research, Lundén (2004) has analysed the influence of different factors on people's
8
9 boundary behaviour, including the patterns of border-crossing among dwellers from
10
11 different border cities and border regions. In this respect, the study concludes that the
12
13 territorial limitation of people's networks tend to be rather limited including those living in
14
15 border areas. Recently, a detailed study of social reality in the regions of Alentejo, Algarve
16
17 and Andalucia describes the patterns of border relations between these regions (Gualda, et
18
19 al. 2008). The study accounts for the commercial and labour relations characterized as
20
21 almost nonexistent such as labour mobility and weak commercial relations with the
22
23 territories closest to the border. Regarding the traditionally less targeted cultural and social
24
25 border relations, the study demonstrates that the informal friendships and personal support
26
27 networks across the border are very few and weak compared to those relationships from
28
29 the same region or municipality where individuals live. Finally, it states that a strong
30
31 endogamy of social and personal relations at local and regional levels exists, contrary to the
32
33 weak and superficial characteristics of border relations between Portuguese and Spanish
34
35 people. However, the current pattern of border networks can be a crucial area of political
36
37 intervention for the progressive social integration and cohesion across the border region. In
38
39 this work, we consider that those informal and personal relationships of people from border
40
41 areas might imply significant and valuable relational bridges, not only for informal and social
42
43 relations, but also for a more formal and institutional cooperation.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 2. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 An interesting target of analysis is those professionals dealing with cross-border projects in
4
5 their daily work. Do people involved in cross-border cooperation have significant border
6
7 relations? Or, is their social life much more attached to the territorial local or national
8
9 proximity? If they have border networks, what kind of relations do these tend to be? Are
10
11 they related to their work in institutional cooperation? Do these border relations matter for
12
13 their work in institutional cooperation? The goal of this paper is to analyze the nature of the
14
15 personal border relations of experts on cross-border cooperation from both border areas.
16
17 To begin, an analysis is required of the relevance of border relations within their personal
18
19 networks. Secondly, the target is to know what kind of border relations they maintain and if
20
21 they are closely related to their work in cross-border cooperation. Findings from both
22
23 border regions will help to take the pulse of the social cohesion between border regions. At
24
25 the same time, this analysis will add a valuable perspective on how experts' personal,
26
27 informal networks and formal relations might be intertwined.
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 This paper is part of a broader research project designed with a multi-method and
37
38 triangulation criteria between methods. The research was carried out during 2010 and 2011
39
40 in two different border regions where the linguistic similarity (Portuguese-Spanish and
41
42 Finnish-Estonian languages) has been historically a link for social interaction. Both border
43
44 regions are sub-areas of cooperation within respective Interreg A programmes. The border
45
46 region integrated by Alentejo, Algarve and Andalusia (AAA) is one of the five areas of
47
48 cooperation of the POCTEP (CBC Programme Spain-Portugal 2007-2013). The border region
49
50 between Southern Finland–Estonia (SFE) forms one of the thirds sub-programmes of Central
51
52 Baltic Interreg IV Programme 2007-2013. Both multi-annual programmes have been
53
54 preceded by the cross-cooperation with Interreg III A for the period between 2000 and
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 2006. Results discussed in this work are based on the analysis of qualitative, semi-structured
4
5 interviews and the quantitative and visual analysis of their personal networks. Interviewees
6
7 were considered as “experts”, defined as professionals from different institutions who have
8
9 or have had professional experience in cross-border projects of Interreg A and in cross-
10
11 border cooperation in general. Most of these experts worked in public institutions which are
12
13 members or beneficiaries of cross-border projects. A few of them were not directly involved
14
15 with Interreg projects, though their work was based on the cooperation with the
16
17 neighbouring country.
18
19
20
21

22
23
24 The selection process of interviewees encountered the difficulty of contacting professionals
25
26 of cross-border cooperation. Institutional cross-border cooperation registers or a directory
27
28 of experts working in CBC does not exist. Accordingly, it was not possible to do a random
29
30 sample, so a theoretical sample was applied. Although this study does not aim to make
31
32 inferences about general patterns of border relations in both border regions, the results of
33
34 our qualitative and quantitative analysis could provide meaningful information to continue
35
36 in this line in future research with bigger samples. The available data from Interreg Projects
37
38 provides public contact information of those institutions participating in European projects.
39
40 This initial contact data, and the help of other informants, was used for applying the
41
42 snowball technique for selecting experts based on the criteria of having experience in cross-
43
44 border projects. Experts with long experience in cross-border projects initiatives out of
45
46 Interreg were also included, as they equally represent part of institutional cross-border
47
48 cooperation. A total number of 43 semi-structured interviews were done across four
49
50 different countries. A questionnaire for obtaining personal networks of interviewees was
51
52 included in interviews and was applied to those who agreed to report relational data. A total
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 of 34 experts participated in reporting their personal networks. Table 1 shows the same
4
5 distribution of both achieved interviews and personal networks.
6
7

8
9
10 **Table1**

11
12
13
14
15 Experts were asked to report up to 25 people with whom they usually related,
16
17 independently of the method of contact, kind of relations or origin of contacts. Certain
18
19 attributes of these relations were also collected: origin of the people, intensity of relations,
20
21 kind of support received from the contact, and type of relation (if the contact comes from
22
23 friendships, family, work, etc.). Experts' network data was analysed from Social Network
24
25 perspectives using specific software (Freeman, 2004; Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002).
26
27
28 The interviews were processed with Atlas.ti for content analysis in order to classify the
29
30 information for the interpretation of data, and a list of codes was created considering the
31
32 following criteria:
33
34

- 35
36 - The relation and attachment of the expert to the border region, reasons for going to
37
38 the neighbouring country and the most known area
- 39
40 - Relations with people who are from the neighbouring country
- 41
42 - If experts have lived or live in the neighbouring country

43
44
45 The discussion of results in the following sections is based on the triangulation of content
46
47 analysis from interviews and quantitative analysis of personal networks. To contribute to
48
49 the analytical discussion of experts' networks, some interview quotes from experts are
50
51 included. These quotes appear with some data of the experts' profile in order to understand
52
53 the relation between experts' profiles and the content of the quotes, though preserving the
54
55 experts' anonymity.
56
57
58
59
60

3. TYPES OF EXPERTS' NETWORKS

Examining the experts' networks in both border regions, we have extracted a synthetic typology of personal networks applicable to both border areas considering the following indicators: total number of people reported in the personal network; number of people in their personal network from the same country as the expert; number of people from the neighbouring country; number of people from third countries; number of people from the same city as the expert; number of people from other localities and counties; number of people within the same region of experts (Algarve, Alentejo, Andalusia, South Finland and Harju county in Estonia)¹; people from other cities of the country. Accordingly, eight different types of identified experts' networks represent the 34 networks collected across the four countries. Principally, these types of networks have been categorized into those without border contacts and those that have border contacts and/or some other contacts from third countries, independently of how many. Among those experts who did not report any contact from the neighbouring country, we can differentiate between those whose network is more locally oriented and those more locally-regionally oriented. The rest of the networks have the indicator of border relations in fewer or greater number which is concomitant with the local and regional relations. However, it is also interesting that other types of networks introduce an additional indicator of international relationships. This tends to occur more frequently among experts from South-Finland. At the same time, considering the people quoted from a border neighbouring country, we have discerned three types of personal-informal relations coming from family, personal friendship reasons, and working

1
2
3 reasons. The following description presents the type of experts' personal networks that
4
5 were found in the two border regions, showing some examples:
6
7

8
9
10 1. *Local*: This network structure means that experts usually relate with people very close to
11
12 the territory where he/she lives. It is a network limited to spatial proximity where the
13
14 majority of contacts are from the same municipality of the experts. This kind of network was
15
16 found mostly on the Spanish side. Figure 1 belongs to a Spanish expert from a local
17
18 municipality of the border area. Despite being close to the border and participating in CBC,
19
20 this expert is representative of the stronger endogamy of national networks among Spanish
21
22 Experts. The network also shows the high density of the expert's family and work relations,
23
24 with a second group of work ties. This type of structure was also found in the rest of the
25
26 countries.
27
28
29

30
31 **Figure 1**
32

33
34 2. *Local/Regional*: The majority of people reported belonging to either the same
35
36 municipality where the experts live or to other close localities generally within the same
37
38 county (in the case of Finland and Estonia), province (in the Andalusia region) or *conselho*
39
40 (within the Algarve or Alentejo regions) . This kind of network occurs mostly with experts
41
42 who live and work in a different place from where they come from.
43
44

45
46 **Figure 2**
47

48
49 3. *Local/Regional/Cross-Border*: This type of network practically corresponds to the former
50
51 with additional border relations. Though experts' networks are based in local and regional
52
53 relations, there are some relations from the most proximal area in the neighbouring country
54
55 to the border. Most of the networks of this type were found in the Portugal side of the
56
57 border region AAA.
58
59
60

1
2
3 4. *Local/Regional/Binational*: This type is also very similar to the precedent. Although the
4
5 expert listed people from the neighbouring country, these relations were not from the
6
7 border area. In the case of the AAA border region, these relations came from important
8
9 cities of Spain and Portugal. In addition, in the case of the SFE border region, people cited
10
11 were from places further from the border area, such as south Estonia or northern counties
12
13 of Finland, for example. The professional trajectory and mobility explain why certain experts
14
15 relate more with people from the neighbouring country who are not located in the border
16
17 area. The Personal Network of Figure 2 shows a Portuguese expert's network characterized
18
19 by a great density and the predominance of work relations. Some of them are border
20
21 relations from the bigger cities of Spain. This expert works at the regional level in CBC and
22
23 has work relations mostly with people who live in Seville and Madrid, where regional and
24
25 national institutions involved in CBC are located.
26
27
28
29

30
31 5. *Cross-border*: This type of network corresponds with experts that report people from the
32
33 border area of the neighbouring country in the same or greater number to those from the
34
35 same country. Indeed, this kind of network was reported only by one expert from Portugal
36
37 out of 34 experts that answered this part of the questionnaire. And it is explained especially
38
39 by the expert's specific, personal links to the neighbouring country, whose life is related to
40
41 Spain both for working and personal reasons. This kind of network might fit well with the
42
43 idea of regionauts discussed above.
44
45
46

47 6. *Local/Regional/International*: Expanding on the Type 2 'Local/regional network', this type
48
49 is practically the same, with the exception that it incorporates some people from other
50
51 countries. The majority of people listed by experts are from the same locality or region.
52
53 They did not report any relations from the neighbouring country. However, they cited some
54
55 people (friends and family) who live in other, third countries.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 7. *Cross-border/International*: This type is similar to type five with the international
4 dimension added on expert relational structure. It corresponds with those experts whose
5 network included a similar or greater number of people from the neighbouring country and
6 third countries to the number of people from the same country as the expert. It is
7 reasonable that this kind of network appeared in those experts who have been living or live
8 in the neighbouring country or in other third countries. Experts from Estonia showed more
9 of this pattern. Figure 3 depicts a particular network of an Estonian expert that has had high
10 professional international mobility and works in CBC with Finland. The network is rather
11 open, with an important number of relations with Finnish contacts both for personal and
12 working reasons.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26
27 **Figure 3**

28
29 8. *Local/Regional/Cross-Border/International*: We could term this last type as the most
30 complete and integrative type of network that was found. It is like an accumulative type of
31 the previous ones. The majority of relations reported by the experts pertain to the same
32 country distributed between the same localities as other places. At the same time,
33 approximately one third of experts' relations are both from a border area of the
34 neighbouring country and from some other country. As it was advanced, this kind of
35 network was more common among Finnish experts. All these experts with this type of
36 network had significant border links to Estonia, as they have work links or have lived in
37 Estonia. As an example, Figure 4 shows a network of a Finnish expert who has lived for
38 several years in Estonia due to work-related reasons, and currently works in CBC. The
39 network is also dispersed and though there are border relations, all of them come from
40 work.
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55

56
57 **Figure 4**
58
59
60

3. THE INFORMAL AND FORMAL SIDE OF NETWORKS AND COOPERATION

The sample size of experts' networks was not large enough or statistically representative to make quantitative inferences. However, it is interesting to note that more than half of experts in the border region of South-Finland and Estonia reported border relations in their personal networks. In the border region AAA, the majority of Portuguese experts (seven out of nine experts' networks) reported border relations, while only three out of nine Spanish experts listed border relations. This difference between Spanish and Portuguese is supported by previous research on border relations between Portuguese and Spanish people within the same border region AAA. There is a remarkable asymmetry of border relations reported by Portuguese and Spanish in their personal networks. Andalusians reported in the personal network of support only an average of 0.6 people from some Portuguese locality. In contrast, among Portuguese people, those from the Algarve region had an average of 9.4 people from Andalusia in their personal networks (Gualda and Maya, 2008: 186).

Table 2 represents the average number of relations reported by experts in the four countries. Results, though not statistically representative, are very significant and encourage further research with bigger samples of respondents. Generally, there is a strong, understandable endogamy of experts' personal networks. The majority of people reported in experts' personal networks are from the same country. However, there are interesting differences between countries and both border regions. It is noticeable that, in the border

1
2
3 region SFE, there are more border relations; and, while Spanish relational rapprochement is
4
5 minimal, Portuguese experts declare more relations with Spanish neighbours.
6
7
8
9

10 **Table 2**

11
12
13
14
15 How conclusive can the results of Table 2 be coming from social network analysis? One of
16
17 the criticisms that SNA receives is regarding the high subjectivity involved when the
18
19 individual reports people with whom he/she relates. It might happen that the individual
20
21 does not exactly recall the reality of his/her personal network when they cite them in the
22
23 context of an interview. Regardless, it is a reflection of an individual's awareness of personal
24
25 relations at a certain moment. At the same time, the semi-structured interview
26
27 demonstrated that all the interviewees had personal relations with neighbours (at least as
28
29 experts in CBC). The difference is that those border relations obtained through the
30
31 application of a SNA methodology were reported according to the criteria "most usual
32
33 relationships" in the personal network. From qualitative interviews, all experts mentioned
34
35 having acquaintances in the neighbouring country, but through personal network analysis
36
37 only some of these border relations become or are part of their most usual, relational
38
39 structure. Therefore, though all experts reported acquaintances from the neighbouring
40
41 country, having border relations as part of usual or daily networks was more normalized in
42
43 Portuguese, Finnish and Estonian experts than in Spanish ones.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52
53 Examining the type of relations (from family, friendship or labour) in the border region SFE,
54
55 the border relations of experts were based proportionally on working and personal reasons.
56
57 Border relations of Portuguese and Spanish experts with their respective neighbours are
58
59
60

1
2
3 more based on working relations. Qualitative analysis from interviews supports this trend.
4
5 Although all of them have work acquaintances and friendships from their work, in SFE nine
6
7 experts out of seventeen also mentioned having different personal links with the
8
9 neighbouring country, independently of those working border relations. A total of eight
10
11 experts have lived or live in the neighbouring country due to personal family reasons (mixed
12
13 marriages and being a descendent of a mixed marriage) or working reasons. This border
14
15 experience is very significant for starting border networks. A different pattern of border
16
17 relations appears in the border region AAA. When experts commented about their border
18
19 relationships, all of them affirmed having several acquaintances from their professional
20
21 work through their participation in cross-border projects. Only a few cases tend to become
22
23 personal with good friendships developing over time. Two Portuguese experts reported
24
25 some Spanish friendships that developed from work relations. Comparing the cross-border
26
27 living experiences between Finnish and Estonians, only one Spanish expert interviewed had
28
29 lived in Portugal due to family-personal reasons.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 Summarizing border relationships are not only a more daily trend among Finnish and
39
40 Estonians experts, but they are also based both on informal relations due to family or
41
42 personal friends, and on formal relations derived from their work in cross-border
43
44 cooperation. From interviews, several experts remarked that the institutional cross-border
45
46 cooperation between both countries is very much based on previous, informal contacts.
47
48 Especially in Estonia, where in the period of Soviet Union decadence and after
49
50 independence, having Finnish contacts was very common for Estonians. This relational
51
52 activity was very representatively highlighted by an Estonian expert in a common saying:
53
54
55
56
57 *"Igal perekond peab olema oma kodustatud Soomlased"* - Every family should have a
58
59
60

1
2
3 domestic Finnish - (E2, Estonia, Manager, Public Institution, 2010). *“This also tended to*
4 *change... but it was very popular... families in the northern part of Estonia them we use to*
5 *have friends in Finland”* (E15, Estonia, Manager, Public Institution, 2011). Although in
6
7 modern days this tendency might have changed, it shows how experts from border region
8
9 SFE usually describe the institutional cross-border cooperation, supported in previous
10
11 informal contacts between Finnish and Estonians, *“The contacts at the other side make the*
12 *cooperation much more easy to be started”* (E6, Finland, Manager, Development Agency,
13
14 2010). *“This cooperation is grounded on the intense informal relations between Estonia and*
15 *Finland”* (E17, Estonia, Manager, Private Company, 2011). In contrast, the Portuguese-
16
17 Spanish border relational activities tend to be more dominated by their formal participation
18
19 in cross-border European projects. Could this difference be interpreted as a stronger
20
21 informal relation between Finnish and Estonians, and more social integration between these
22
23 neighbours than in the border region AAA, where border relations tend to be reserved for
24
25 professional and formal exchange opportunities? This question definitely urges further
26
27 research to be conducted on the role of informal border relations on institutional, cross-
28
29 border cooperation.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 Both informal border relations at the margin of working in CBC and formal relations
44
45 originating in offices and meetings seem to be intrinsically imbricated. On one hand,
46
47 informal relations create a breeding ground of experiences that might be potential
48
49 resources for institutional cross-border cooperation. In this sense, these informal contacts
50
51 are bridges and opportunities that facilitate access to resources (other contacts, actors, etc.)
52
53 located in the neighbouring country. The value of these kinds of relations corresponds with
54
55 the bridging dimension of social networks and social capital (Burt, 2008). All experts
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 reported having acquaintances from work, some of them developing into friendships. These
4
5 acquaintances are weak ties that might become bridges to other relations and resources;
6
7 their strength lies in their capacity to connect different systems, societies or groups
8
9 (Granovetter, 1983). They are not likely to provide strong cohesion like family relations, but
10
11 become an important source for acquiring resources, which is a foundation of social capital
12
13 and fundamental for cross-border cooperation. On the other hand, these more formal
14
15 relations from work acquire a more informal component over time; these are most of the
16
17 acquaintances and friends from work reported by experts. Those especially from the AAA
18
19 border region commented that those formal contacts from work that become friends soften
20
21 the institutional cross-border cooperation. The working process tends to be easier and more
22
23 fluent. *“They are working mates that I can consider as friends too. We go out together, we*
24
25 *eat together and even we dance... when there is opportunity for that. Thus, it is a dual*
26
27 *relationship that makes easier the work. Sometimes it makes easier to solve difficult*
28
29 *problems”* (E21, Portugal, Manager, Public Administration, 2011).
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 For experts, border relations—both from working and more informal reasons—implied
39
40 resources or access to resources. They all imply the existence of investment sources to use in
41
42 order to capitalize on the existing resources. They constitute sources of social capital. On one
43
44 hand, formal border relations created common experiences and opportunities for
45
46 information to flow. To have and to maintain these formal relations firstly implies better
47
48 knowledge of the border area and its needs for development. Secondly, it implies that they
49
50 can generate better knowledge in management of cross-border cooperation (administrative
51
52 procedures, institutional expertise). On the other hand, informal border relations more
53
54 significantly influence the knowledge of the neighbouring country (culture, language,
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 national legislation, etc.) and in the information or knowledge of contacts, and contacts'
4
5 resources. It is assumed that the increasing social and economic integration of border
6
7 regions needs to be supported by the existence of different types of border flows, social
8
9 interactions and cross-border relations between people of border regions. If potentialities
10
11 commented on by experts are related to this social and economic integration, then it is
12
13 necessary to accomplish different empirical works on border regions. To identify the possible
14
15 border relations, their patterns and their possible implication in cross-border cooperation
16
17 development, it is a most promising research line.
18
19
20
21
22

23 24 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

25
26
27
28
29 This paper has used social network analysis and social capital perspective regarding border
30
31 relations. It proposes that the study of social integration and cohesion between border
32
33 regions can be based not only on cultural perspectives focused on bottom approach to
34
35 identity development and perception of border regions. Results from interviews and
36
37 personal networks that were analysed demonstrate the patterns of border network among
38
39 those people who are directly involved in cross-border cooperation. In the border region
40
41 SFE, interviewees had more border ties based both on personal or informal reasons, like
42
43 family ties and friendships, and on more formal reasons that emerged from work relations.
44
45 In the border region AAA, experts' border relations were less frequent and more dependent
46
47 on working experience in CBC, as most of their border relations are from work. It was
48
49 interesting to note the significant asymmetry between Portuguese experts' border relations
50
51 with Spanish neighbours with respect to Spanish experts' border relations with Portuguese
52
53 people. Although in the border region AAA, empirical research by Gualda et al. (2008)
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 focused on general population, their results support our conclusions. According to the
4
5 triangulation of content analysis and network analysis, we have found that the results show
6
7 a great coherence.
8
9

10
11
12 However, the question is not if border regions should have more border relations among
13
14 their inhabitants. The relevance in the study of border relations comes from their use value;
15
16 namely, in the role played by these border relations in social integration and cross-border
17
18 cooperation. It could be interesting and innovative to inquire if border regions with more
19
20 border networks (among citizens or institutional actors) show greater social integration and
21
22 even better management of cross-border cooperation projects and programmes. Experts
23
24 highlighted the relevance of their border acquaintances as resources in a learning process of
25
26 cross-border cooperation management or for better knowledge of border needs. Their
27
28 acquaintances implied opportunities of development, as they were represented like small
29
30 pseudo-ambassadors toward the neighbouring country. Following Grix (2001), we assume
31
32 that border relations and their use value are key cornerstones to understand the functioning
33
34 of cross-border cooperation and its improvement. In turn, that would imply an operative
35
36 and contextualised research exercise of social capital in cross-border regions.
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

46
47 Primary data used in this paper are part of one of the coauthors' doctoral thesis in process,
48
49 titled "Social Capital Applied to Cross-border Cooperation: A Comparative study of two border
50
51 regions", supported by the Regional Ministry of Innovation, Science and Enterprise"
52
53 Government of Andalusia, Spain) granting one of the coauthors with a PreDoctoral
54
55 scholarship.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 This paper has also been partially supported by the eseis, Social Studies and Social
4
5 Intervention Eeseach (University of Huelva, Spain, www.eseis.es), by the Foundation for
6
7 Science and Technology (FCT, Portugal) and the Centro de Investigação sobre o Espaço e as
8
9 Organizações (CIEO, Universidade do Algarve, Portugal, www.cieo.ualg.pt).

10
11
12 At the same time, this work is partially integrated in the project “Territorial Analysis and
13
14 Cross-border Cooperation of Euroregion Alentejo-Algarve-Andalusia: Historical balance and
15
16 potentialities for the new European period/frame 2014-2020”, University of Huelva.
17
18 Research project of Excellence (Call 2011). Financed by the Regional Ministry of Economy,
19
20 Innovation and Science, Secretary of Universities, Research and Technology, Andalusia
21
22 (Junta de Andalucía).
23
24
25
26
27

28 REFERENCES

29
30
31
32
33 BERG, E. (2000) Border Crossing in manifest Perceptions and Actual Needs, in M. VAN DER
34
35 VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.) *Border, Regions and People*, pp. 151-165 London: Pion
36
37 Limited.
38
39

40
41
42 BORGATTI, S.P., EVERETT, M.G. AND FREEMAN, L.C. (2002) *Ucinet 6 for Windows*. Harvard:
43
44 Analytic Technologies.
45
46
47

48
49
50 BUCH, T.; DALL SCHMIDT, T.; NIEBUHR, A. (2009) Cross-border commuting in the Danish-
51
52 German border region. integration, institutions and cross-border interaction, *Journal of*
53
54 *Borderlands Studies* 24, 2, pp. 38-54.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 BURT, R. S. (2008) Structural Holes versus Network Closure as Social Capital, in LIN, N.;
4
5 COOK, K. AND BURT, R.S. (Eds) Social Capital. Theory and Research, pp. 31-56. Aldine
6
7 Transaction: New Brunswick, New Jersey.
8
9

10
11
12 CASTELLS, M. (1989) *The Informational City*. Oxford: Blackwell.
13
14

15
16
17 EHLERS, N.; BUURSINK, J. (2000) Binational Cities: People, Institutions and Structures, in M.
18
19 VAN DER VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.) *Border, Regions and People*, pp. 182-201. London:
20
21 Pion Limited.
22
23

24
25
26 FRAGOSO, A.; GUALDA, E.; VILLEGAS, E.L.; DE MARTINS, V.; GUALDA, J.M.; GONZÁLEZ, T.
27
28 (2011) Desarrollo e Identidades en la Cooperación Transfronteriza: La Complejidad de las
29
30 Relaciones España-Portugal, in MARQUEZ, J.A. (Ed.) *Cooperación Transfronteriza Andalusia-*
31
32 *Algarve-Alentejo*, pp. 397-409. Huelva, Universidad de Huelva.
33
34
35

36
37
38 FREEMAN, L. (2004) *The Development of Social network Analysis*, Vancouver: Empirical
39
40 Press.
41
42

43
44
45 GRANOVETTER, M. (1983) The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited,
46
47 *Sociological Theory*, 1, pp. 201-233.
48
49

50
51
52 GRIX, J. (2001) "Towards a Theoretical Approach to the Study of Cross-Border Cooperation",
53
54 *Perspectives: Central European Review of International Affairs*, 17, pp. 5-9.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 GRIX, J. HOUŽVIČKA, V. (2001) Cross-border cooperation in theory and practice the case of
4
5 Czech-German borderland, *Actas Universitatis Carolinae Geographica*, 1, pp.61-77.
6
7

8
9
10 GRIX, J. AND KNOWLES, V. (2002)The Eurregion and the maximization of social capital: Pro
11
12 Europa Viadrina”, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 12, 4, pp. 154-176.
13
14

15
16
17 GUALDA, E. (Ed.) (2008) Realidad Social en Andalucía, Algarve y Alentejo. Huelva:
18
19 Universidad de Huelva.
20
21

22
23
24 GUALDA, E. MAYA, I. (2008) Redes de Apoyo Personal en el Area Fronteriza, in Gualda (Ed.)
25
26 Realidad Social en Andalucía, Algarve y Alentejo, pp. 177-188. Huelva, Universidad de
27
28 Huelva
29
30

31
32
33 HANSEN, C.L.; NAHRSTEDT, B. (2000) Cross-Border Commuting: Research issues and casae
34
35 Study for the Danish-German Border Region, in M. VAN DER VELDE; H. VAN HOUTUM (Eds.)
36
37 Border, Regions and People, pp. 69-84. London: Pion Limited.
38
39
40

41
42
43 HOSPERS, G-J.(2006) Borders, Bridges and Branding: The Transformation of the Öresund
44
45 Region into an Imagined Space, *European Planning Studies*, 14, 8, pp. 1015-1033.
46
47
48

49
50 KEPKA, J.M.M. (2004) The Nysa Euroregion: The first ten years. *Eurasian Geography and*
51
52 *Economics*, 45, 3, pp. 162-189.
53
54
55

1
2
3 KNIPPENBERG, H. (2004). The Maas-Rhine Euroregion: A Laboratory for European
4
5 Integration?, *Geopolitics*, 9, 3, pp. 608-626.
6
7

8
9
10 KRÄTKE, S. (1998) Problems of cross-border regional integration: The case of the German-
11
12 Polish border area, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 5, 3, pp. 249-262.
13
14

15
16
17 LEIBENATH, M. (2007) Europeanisation of cross-border governance? A case study on the
18
19 cause, form and consequences of a co-operation project in the German-Polish-Czech Border
20
21 triangle, *Space and Polity*, 11, 2, pp.151-167.
22
23

24
25
26 LIN, N. (2008) Building a Network Theory of Social Capital, in LIN, N. COOK, K., AND BURT,
27
28 R.S. (EDS.) *Social capital. Theory and research*, pp. 3-29. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Aldine
29
30 Transactions.
31
32

33
34
35
36 LIN, N., ERICKSON, B.H. (2010) Theory, Measurement, and the Research Enterprise on Social
37
38 Capital, in LIN, N. AND ERICKSON, B.H. (Eds.) *Social capital. An international research*
39
40 program, pp. 1- 24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
41
42

43
44
45 LUNDÉN, T. (1973) Interaction Across an "Open" International Boundary: Norway-Sweden,
46
47 in LUNDÉN, T. (Ed.) *Boundaries and Regions*, pp. 147-160. Trieste, Instituto di Sociologia
48
49 Internazionale.
50
51

52
53
54 LUNDÉN, T. (2004) *On the Boundary. About Humand at the End of Territory*. Huddinge:
55
56 Södertörns högskola.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5 LÖFGREN, O. (2008) Regionauts: the Transformation of Cross-Border Regions in
6
7
8 "Scandinavia", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 15, pp. 195-208.
9

10
11
12 PAASI, A. (2001) Europe as a Social process and Discourse: Consideration of Place,
13
14
15 Boundaries and Identity, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 8, 1, pp. 7-28.
16

17
18
19 SZUL, R. (2006) Transborder cooperation: Achievements, hopes, disappointments, and
20
21
22 fears, *Geopolitical Studies*, 14, pp. 9-15.
23

24
25
26 THOMAS, P. (2006) Images and economic development in the cross-channel Euroregion,
27
28
29 *Geography*, 91, 1, pp. 13-22.
30

31
32
33 VALENCIA, P.J.L. (2007) The Eurocity Baiona - Donostia. Example or utopia in the cross -
34
35
36 Border collaboration, *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles*, 44, pp. 325-340.
37

38
39
40 VAN HOUTUM, H. (2000) An Overview of European Geographical Research on Borders and
41
42
43 Border Regions, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 15, 1, pp. 57-83.
44

45
46
47 VAN HOUTUM, H.; VAN DER VELDE. M. (2004) The Power of Cross-border Labour Market
48
49
50 Immobility, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 95, pp. 100–107.
51

52
53
54 WOOLCOCK, M. (2001) The place of social capital in understanding social and economic
55
56
57 outcomes, pp. 1-34 in <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/5/13/1824913.pdf>
58
59

1
2
3
4
5 YODER, J.A. (2003) Bridging the European Union and Eastern Europe: Cross-border
6
7
8 cooperation and the Euroregions, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 13, 3, pp- 90-106.
9

10
11
12 ¹ The territorial reference of regions is based on Interreg Programmes NUTS III that correspond with the
13 delimitation of Alentejo, Algarve and Andalusia, administrative regions in Portugal and Spain. In the case of
14 Finland and Estonia, Interreg territorial delimitation use Estonia and South Finland that comprises different
15 counties in the south of Finland (see <http://www.centralbaltic.eu/>). However, most of all interviewees belong
16 to the programme areas. In this research a difference between the northern part of Estonia based on Harju
17 county and the rest of the country was considered useful, as most of the experts and population in Estonia are
18 concentrated in this county.
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

TABLES

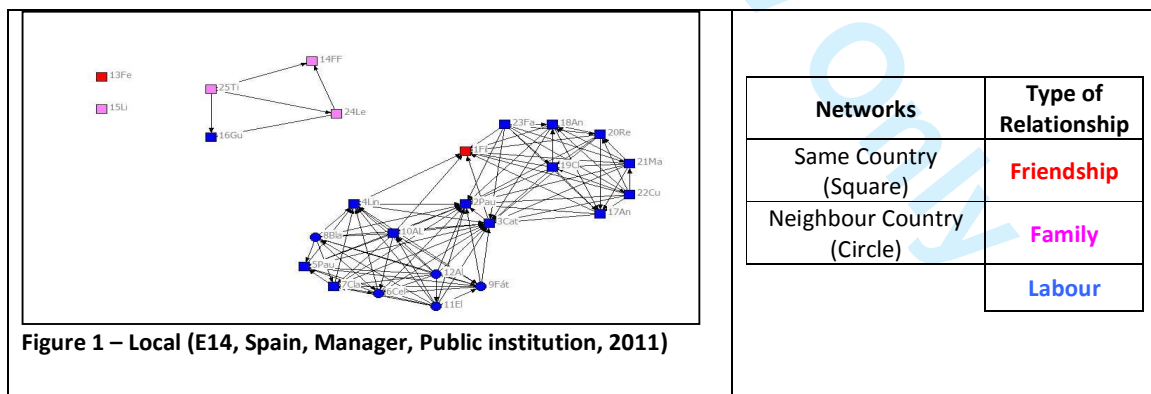
Table 1- Sample distribution in border regions AAA and SFE

Regions	Border region Alentejo- Algarve-Andalusia (AAA)		Border region South Finland Estonia (SFE)	
Techniques	Spain	Portugal	Estonia	Finland
Interviews	11	11	11	10
Personal Networks	9	9	8	9

Table 2 – Experts Networks’ Characteristics

Mean	Estonia	Finland	Portugal	Spain
Number of people listed in network (0-25)	11.6	20.4	18.3	19.5
Number of people from the same country	7.5	15.3	14.0	17.7
Number of people from the neighbouring country (border relations)	3.3	2.9	4.1	1.0
Number of border relations for personal reasons	1.5	1.0	1.3	0.0
Number of border relations for working reasons	1.5	1.9	2.7	1.0
Number of people from other countries	0.8	2.1	0.0	0.5

FIGURES



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

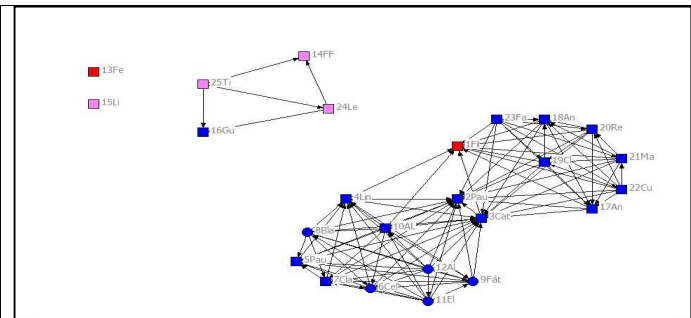


Figure 2 – Local/Regional (E17, Portugal, Manager, Public Institution, 2011)

Networks	Type of Relationship
Same Country (Square)	Friendship
Neighbour Country (Circle)	Family
	Labour

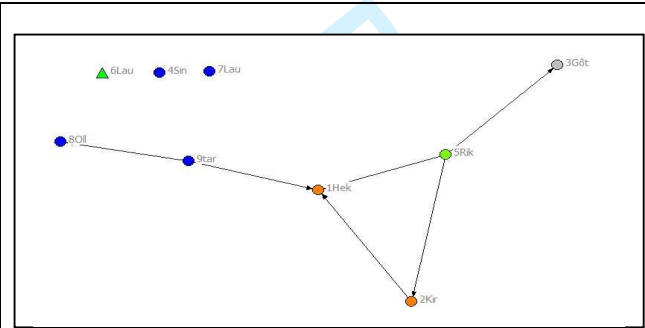


Figure 3: Cross-border International (E2, Estonia, Manager, Public Institution, 2010)

Networks	Type of Relationship
Neighbour Country (Circle)	Personal
Other Country (Triangle)	Personal and Labour
	Labour
	Other

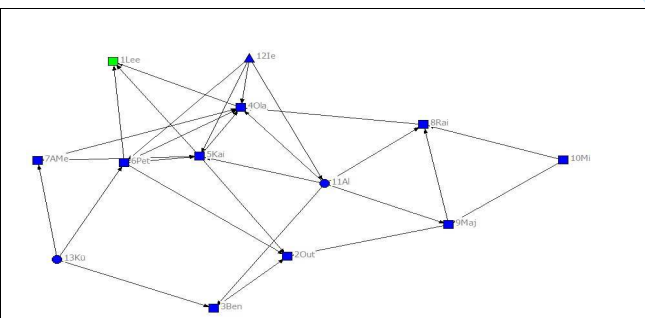


Figure 4- Local/Regional/Cross-Border/International (E21, Finland, Professor, University, 2011)

Networks	Type of Relationship
Same Country (Square)	Friendship and Labour
Neighbour Country (Circle)	Labour
Other Country (Triangle)	