

ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS BETWEEN FRANCE AND SPAIN 2007-2013 - STAKEHOLDERS AND TERRITORIAL IMPACT

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Abstract

The overall aim of this research is to study the dynamics of economic and territorial development in the cross-border spaces along the border between France and Spain. In particular, it analyses the characteristics of INTERREG IV-A cross-border cooperation projects in the period 2007-2013. It explores these as an example of the dynamics produced between stakeholders and development projects on both sides of the border. To this effect, a database system was set up in order to transfer all the information on the projects and then to extract concise quantitative and cartographic information, using the possibilities offered by geographic analysis systems.

Keywords: *INTERREG, cross-border spaces, territorial stakeholder, cartography, cooperation projects*

1. INTRODUCTION

The present text is part of a research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation entitled “25 years of cross-border projects between Spain and France in the framework of the European Union (EU). A geopolitical analysis of territorial plans, projects, agents and results”. One of the aims of which is to create knowledge and make a joint

analysis of French-Spanish cross-border spaces, paying particular attention to territorial cooperation projects and their methods, central figures, and results. The project is led by the Territorial and Environmental Analysis and Planning research group at the University of Girona, with the participation of researchers from the Universities of Perpignan-Via Domitia, Toulouse II-Le Mirail, Paris 8, and the Basque Country. The project started in January 2012 and now, over one year later, we are presenting the first results from our analysis of the cross-border projects, the stakeholders, and the territorial implications.

In this article, we present the results from a database of cross-border projects that enables the extraction of comparative information, an analysis of partners involved in development projects, and to delimit the area (using cartography and GIS) affected by the impact of local development projects. The database was compiled from POCTEFAⁱ 2007-2013 projects, the main source of information at our disposal. Important references have been the INTERREG Ex-post assessments made by the European Union and by the managing authorities (LRDP, 2003; PANTEIA, 2010). These documents evaluate whether the global programme has achieved its established goals (social and economic cohesion, environmental protection, economic development, mutual knowledge and cultural objectives, etc.). Despite their completeness, a deep cartographic study is still missing and therefore so is a deep knowledge of the cross-border framework in which projects, actors and territories are represented. Therefore this paper tries to develop a new methodology in order to understand cross border dynamics, such as the allocation of resources and stakeholders.

1.1. The INTERREG initiative from 1989 to 2020

Since the 1990s, the European Union has supported cohesion policies by means of a growing number of initiatives (INTERREG, LEADER, EQUAL, etc.) and increasing financial resources. The INTERREG initiative, probably the most ambitious of all these programmes, was set up in the late 1980s to stimulate cooperation between European regions at different levels (Perkmann, 2003). The project has been financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). One of its main aims is to reduce the influence of state borders and to foster a more balanced development in border regions. These regions often suffer from general neglect, depopulation, and economic and social isolation because of their territorial fragmentation, geopolitical location on the periphery, distance from decision-making centres, and so on.

The INTERREG initiative has run through several different phases: INTERREG I (1989-1993 programming period), INTERREG II (1994-1999), INTERREG III (2000-2006), and the currently operational INTERREG IV (2007-2013). The next phase will coincide with the period covering the European 2020 strategy (2014-2020). At the same time, each INTERREG is made up of three strands of action and funding: INTERREG A (cross-border cooperation), INTERREG B (transnational cooperation), and INTERREG C (interregional cooperation). INTERREG A aims to develop cross-border spaces socially and economically with common development strategies. It is applied to regions adjacent to the border, with the participation of national, regional, and local institutions. This is by far the largest strand in terms of budget and number of programmes (see Table 1). INTERREG B operates at the intermediate level, where generally non-contiguous regions from several different countries work together to solve problems of cross-border coordination. Finally, INTERREG C embraces all EU member states in order to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments through large-scale information exchange and sharing of experiences (networks). This last strand receives the least funding of the three.

The specific nature of INTERREG lies in the obligatory collaboration between the authorities of two or more member states and the need to apply a project on a common cross-

border basis. Once the operational programmes have been approved by the European Commission, implementation is co-ordinated by steering committees, made up of representatives of the authorities responsible for Cohesion Policy measures in each member state. These can be both central state agencies and regional agencies. Like almost all Cohesion Policy measures, INTERREG projects require co-funding to be provided by member states, regional authorities or the project leaders as such. The amount of co-funding required differs by region, ranging from 50% down to 0% in the poorest regions. The overall figure in the space analysed in the present study was 35%. The final beneficiaries of INTERREG funds are usually public authorities, interest associations, and non-profit organisations, such as chambers of commerce, employer organisations, unions or research institutes. Under the current INTERREG IV programme, private firms are only eligible if they apply through a consortium of several firms, whereas in previous programme periods, they were not eligible at all. The 2007-2013 programme also differs from its predecessors by placing a legal tool at the disposal of the local authorities in order to strengthen territorial cooperation. The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is largely the result of the limitations of previous legislative figures and is an innovative figure in this territorial context.

2. METHODOLOGY

The initial aim of this research was to create a database enabling the extraction of information for an overall interpretation of all the territories along the French-Spanish border. The authors needed to design a database that would:

- a) contain and classify by type all cross-border projects since 1989 until the present day
- b) allow to extract valuable information on the number and type of stakeholders involved
- c) chart the results and operate numerically with the data introduced

Furthermore, the database of French-Spanish cross-border projects had to be designed in such a way as to be compatible with other databases that might be available or created for other borders between European countries.

Bearing in mind these determining features, we designed a database system made up of three tables, related to a common field. The first table (A-PROJECTS) collects general information on the cross-border projects. Each register corresponds to one particular project. The information fields are as follows: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Start year, 4) End year, 5) Type of projectⁱⁱ, 6) Origin of funding, 7) Full funding, 8) European funding, 9) Project leader partner, and 10) Geographic code of partners. The second table (B-PARTNERS) collects information on all the partners participating in the projects. Its function is to describe and represent the characteristics of the stakeholders. Each project has several registers, depending on the number of partners involved. The following fields were studied: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Name of partner, 4) Type of partnerⁱⁱⁱ, and 5) Geographic code of partner. The third and last table (C-TERRITORY) collects the territories where the project has a direct expected impact, in relation to its specifically designed actions and outcomes. Each project has one or more registers, depending on the number of affected territories. The territories cannot be superimposed and must cover a homogenous area. The following fields were studied: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Name of geographical space, 4) Geographic code.

To represent the projects and the partners cartographically, we decided to use area representation, i.e., layers of polygons corresponding to the area of each territorial stakeholder. Thus, to each stakeholder was assigned a geographic or territorial code. The

territorial codes mostly coincided with the official European NUTS (*Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics*) classification: NUTS 1 (States), NUTS 2 (Regions: autonomous communities in Spain, regions in France), NUTS 3 (Regional subdivision: provinces in Spain, departments in France). For the municipal partners, we used the Local Administrative Units (LAU Level 2, formerly NUTS Level 5), the official European codes for this administrative scale.

Cartographic layers and *ad hoc* geographic codes were designed for areas with a territorial range that did not coincide with the above classification, as for example *comarcas* and *mancomunidades de municipios*^{iv} in Spain and *pays* and *communautés de communes*^v in France. It also proved necessary to adapt maps and codes in other cases, for example to deal with associations of regions. The vast majority of territorial stakeholders participating in cross-border projects fitted one or other of the geographic codes (and corresponding geographical area) designed for this study. However, difficulties were encountered in classifying some partners, such as universities, which can exert diverse territorial influences. It was finally decided to include each one in its corresponding NUTS 3 area.

The option of assigning a code and a geographical area to each stakeholder enabled us to represent simultaneously several partners on different territorial scales, although this required some previously developed map algebra operations. A methodological problem arose when we wanted to represent one or more overlapping partners from different territorial perspectives on the same information layer, e.g. the partners of a project involving both Girona city and Girona province. One way of solving this problem was using map algebra, by calculating the sum of the different layers represented by the partners. Thus, the sum of Girona city (value=1) and Girona province (value=1) takes into account both partners and their territorial areas, and reflects the double participation of Girona city (value=1+1=2), since Girona city is included in Girona province (see Figures 2a and 3a).

Moreover, map algebra facilitated other operations of interest for this research, such as the representation of projects and stakeholders, not only in absolute numbers but also as a weighted value. In this case, we used the total funding assigned to each project or the funds managed by each of the stakeholder partners to weight the cartographic representation and thus gain a more accurate view of the expected real territorial impact of the cross-border projects (see Figures 2b and 3b). Obviously the funding's assignment is not a determinant factor to evaluate territorial impact, but it was used as an initial assessment.

As a first step in the research project, we applied the whole database to represent all the cross-border projects involved in the financing of the POCTEFA 2007-2013 programme. The same structure could be used to increase the amount of available information by including previous, and even future, INTERREG projects.

3. RESULTS: ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

3.1. Types of projects

The POCTEFA 2007-2013 programme included 133 approved projects, which were classified into nine thematic areas (see Figure 1). It was observed that the largest category of projects (almost 40% of the total number) dealt with “local economic development”, which included the tourism sector, promotion and innovation of traditional activities, professional training, and support for production activities. The outstanding features of this category are farming and stock raising projects, such as the introduction of quality certificates (OTRAC and G+T VALORA), the adoption of working techniques (AGRI-PROXI), the introduction of new

technologies to reduce negative externalities such as carbon dioxide emissions, and professional training (LAZOS-LIENS-LOTURAK).

The next main category contained environment-related initiatives (17%), mostly transversal projects spanning the entire Pyrenean area, with participant partners from several different regions (chiefly research centres, universities and regional administrations). Examples included projects for the joint management of hydrological resources (BIDUR and TTA II), forestry resources (UNCI'PLUS and DYNAFORREST) and coastal resources (MARE-UDINA). The third category was “basic research” (14%), as opposed to applied research to support enterprise, which belongs to the economic development category. This type of project often included participation by universities, especially those of Barcelona, Toulouse, Perpignan, Girona and the Basque Country. These three categories alone cover three quarters of the total number of projects, thus indicating the three key aspects for revitalizing this area: enterprise, research and environment. One last category with over 10% of the projects covered “culture and education”, mainly promoted by cultural and identity links, particularly in the Catalan and Basque cross-border spaces. The remaining categories - accessibility and transport (6%), territorial planning (5%), social cohesion and integration (3%), health (3%) and security (2%) - had few approved projects.

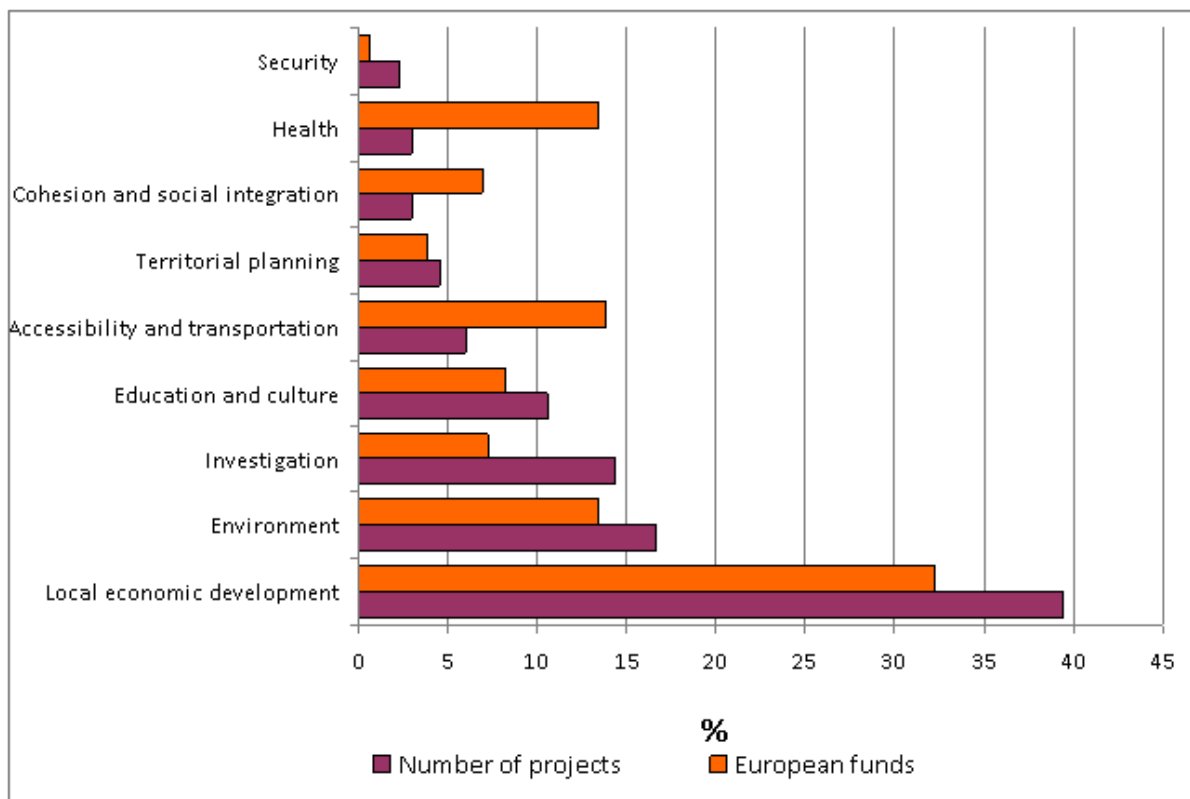


Figure 1. Classification of POCTEFA 2007-2013 projects by number of projects and percentage of EU funding assigned.

Source: Compiled by the authors

However, when examining the amount of money assigned to each category quite a different picture is observed (see Figure 1), instead of looking at the number of granted projects. The budget of the European Regional Development Fund is largely assigned to local economic development projects, with actions of different financial scope: 16 projects benefitted from investments of over €1m, six received €2m, and one received over €3m. Unlike the preceding values, “accessibility and transport” and “health” are now seen to have

greater weight. The latter category received the sum of €20.2m, 90% of which was designated for the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital (HTC) project. The same amount of money was assigned to “environment” projects, of which €18m was for projects promoting natural heritage (85%) and €3m for risk prevention (15%). The same analysis clearly shows that the “basic research” category received only 7% of the budget, despite many approved projects of this type (even more than in the health and transport categories). These were mainly university initiatives of scant economic importance. Social and cultural projects received a similar percentage of the funding. The table is completed with categories of minor economic relevance, such as the 4% assigned to territorial planning (for setting up new cross-border territorial actions such as euro regions and euro districts) and the mere 1% designated for security along the border area.

3.2. Cartographic analysis of projects and partners

As discussed in the Methodology section, the territorial review of the projects was carried out by georeferencing the partners in terms of their administrative area, thus enabling different interpretative exercises on the geographical location of the partners to be performed. A first review was to locate the partners who positioned themselves as project leaders, i.e., the stakeholder who assumes the administrative responsibilities for drafting, organizing, and managing the project. In view of the qualitative importance of the leaders, a first map showing their location was produced (Figure 2a), obtained by superimposing all the leading partners in a series of cartographic layers. On the second map (Figure 2b), however, the sum of the ERDF resources assigned to each project can be observed, according to the location of the leader that manages the funds.

A first observation suggests that most of the project leaders are Spanish. The largest group of project-leading partners were in the autonomous community of Aragon, with 30 POCTEFA projects. These partners were mainly from Zaragoza, in particular from the University of Zaragoza. The autonomous community of Navarre had the second largest number of leaders, with 21 projects, especially focused on environmental projects and support for business enterprises. Next came the Basque Country (19 projects), with a large number of private partners, and Catalonia (19 projects), where the regional administration played an important role. Less involvement in project leadership was observed on the French side. Of the three border regions, Aquitaine led with 19 projects, followed by Midi-Pyrénées (14) and Languedoc-Roussillon (5).

Only a few of these project-leading partners represent a complete regional area, of which the most outstanding was the autonomous government of Catalonia, which has led ten projects. Catalonia, through its various departments and institutes, is the most proactive regional organisation, with a strategic investment policy. In the western Pyrenees, the Government of Navarre plays an outstanding role through organism such as the "Environmental Management - Nurseries and Reforestation of Navarre, SA", which leads nine projects. The geographical location of Navarre as a bridge between Aquitaine and the Basque Country and between Midi-Pyrénées and Aragon affords multiple possibilities for collaboration, as for example, the ENECO and ENECO2 projects for the environmental and energy management of small and medium-sized enterprises. The regional governments of the Basque Country, La Rioja,^{vi} and Aragon lead five projects. On the French side, it is surprising to find that the regional government of Midi-Pyrénées does not lead any project. The other two governments of French border regions led a small number of projects, with four in Aquitaine, and one in Languedoc-Roussillon. One reason for the lower level of leadership participation among the French regions may lie in the different territorial organization between the two countries. In Spain, greater regional autonomy facilitates project

management whereas in France, the more centralist territorial organization tends to limit and reduce these opportunities.

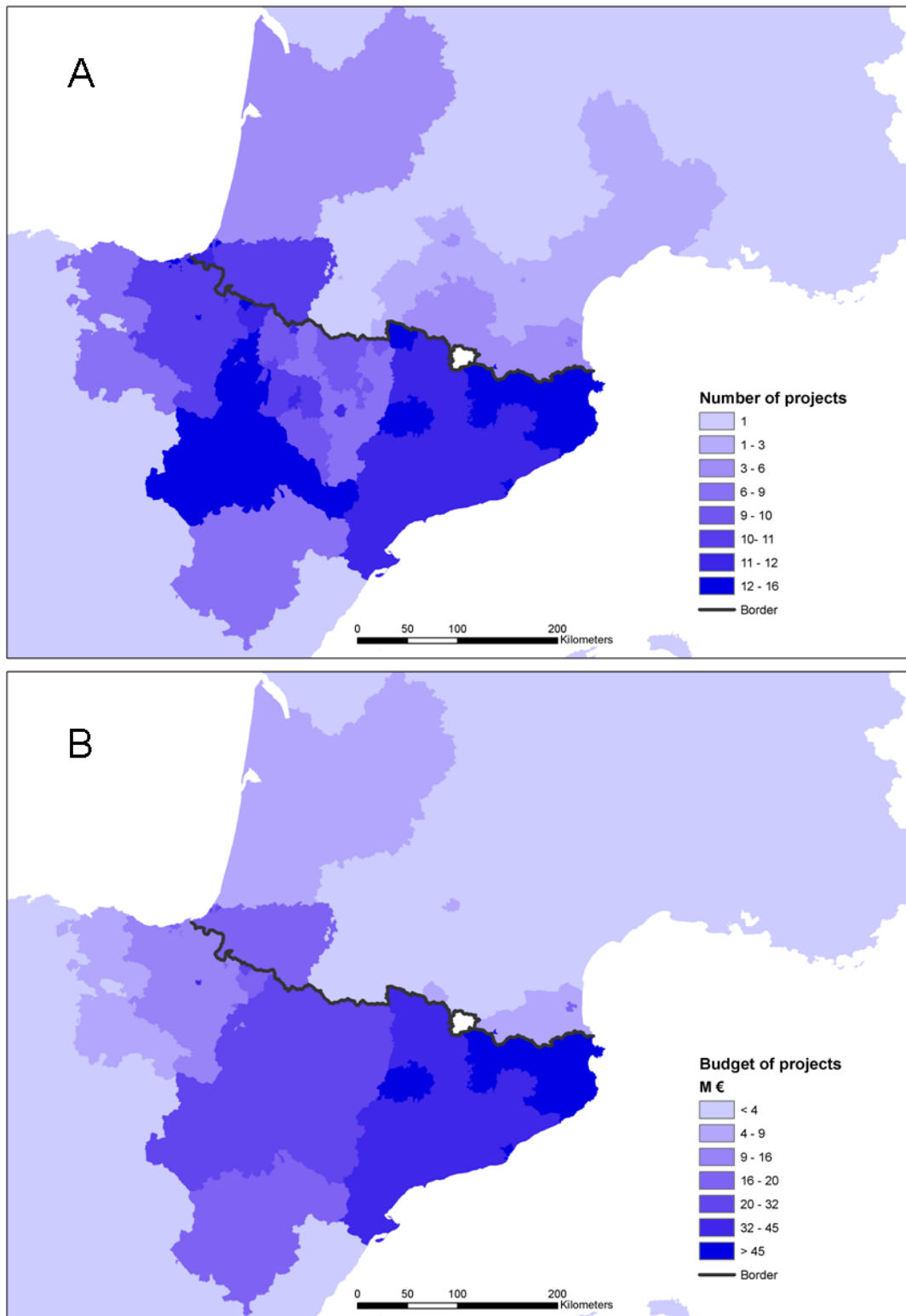


Figure 2. Distribution of project leaders and their resource management.

Source: Compiled by the authors

The second map (Figure 2b), illustrates another dimension of project leadership. It shows the amount of ERDF resources managed by each regional area acting as project leader.

Overall, almost three quarters of the total resources assigned to the POCTEFA programmes were for Spanish leaders and only slightly over one quarter for French-led projects, despite the relatively important weight of Aquitaine. Catalonia and Aragon were the regions with project leaders managing most ERDF resources (24% and 20% respectively). On the other hand, the homologous regions on the French side managed the fewest resources, only 3.9% for Languedoc-Roussillon and 8% for Midi-Pyrénées. As already suggested, the reason for this disparity may lie in the greater administrative opportunities for facilitating project management in Spain. Pyrenean cross-border cooperation takes usually place along two geographical axes. There is a vertical cooperation where we find partners belonging to different countries (France and Spain) with spatial contiguity (i.e. Aquitaine-Navarre) and a transversal one that involves actors belonging to the whole eligible area focussing on a specific topic (environment, employment, disaster prevention, etc). Cross-border projects in POCTEFA programme are usually vertical, and the concentration of a large volume of resources in one country, of necessity, means the management of fewer resources in the other one. Even so, this imbalance was not as strong in the more western regions, where project leadership was more equally distributed (16% Navarre and Aquitaine, 10% Basque Country).

Figure 3 represents the distribution of all the partners participating in the projects, without taking leadership status into account. This information opens up a more complex, interpretative dimension of the dynamics of territorial development, as it represents the whole range of territorial agents mobilised by the projects. On the map showing the total density of partners (Figure 3a), unlike on the previous map, we now see a large number of partners on the French side, particularly in the western sector. The densest spaces coincide with the municipality of Toulouse and Haute-Garonne department and with the municipality of Pau and Pyrénées-Atlantiques department. The fact that these two municipalities are departmental capitals is significant, but the real reason for the high density of stakeholders lies in their concentration in these two departments. Other territories with high stakeholder participation were Ariège and Hautes-Pyrénées departments, and even Pyrénées-Orientales department. These results show the high capacity for mobilisation and participation of stakeholder groups at departmental scale along the French border. The corresponding stakeholders in the Spanish provinces are more active at the NUTS 2 scale (autonomous communities). At the NUTS 3 scale (Spanish provinces/French departments), partners are more likely to be provincial councils, provincial agencies, chambers of commerce or agriculture, private enterprises, universities, etc. Thus, for example, the reason for the high density in the Haute-Garonne department lies in the numerous contributions from the University of Toulouse, and the high density in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department by the combined participation of the departmental government and the University of Pau.

On the Spanish side, the density of partners was not found as much at the provincial scale, despite the relative importance of the provinces of Zaragoza and Barcelona due to the high participation of their respective universities. The provincial partners in Guipuzcoa also play an important role on the Spanish side. Overall, however, results in Spain were largely determined at the autonomous community scale.

Apart from the departmental-level stakeholders, certain places showed a notable presence of stakeholders operating at a minor supra-municipal scale, such as *comarcas*, natural parks, *pays* and French agglomerations. Thus, on the Atlantic French side, we found a particularly high density of them in the supra-municipal Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes*, a group of 12 French municipalities that participate in quite a few projects, usually together with the province of Guipuzcoa or the Basque Country as a whole, and in particular with Bidasoa *comarca*. The Aspe Valley, although it does not appear as such on the map, is another French *communauté de communes* noteworthy for the number of projects (especially environmental projects) in which it participates, as is the case of the Pyrenees National Park,

straddling Hautes-Pyrénées department (Midi-Pyrénées region) and Pyrénées-Atlantiques department (Aquitaine region). This was not the only stakeholder natural park on or near the border, as all the other parks appear at some stage or other. Finally, we must mention the participation of many French *pays*; in particular, the border *pays* such as Pays Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Pays Couserans, Pays Comminges, etc.

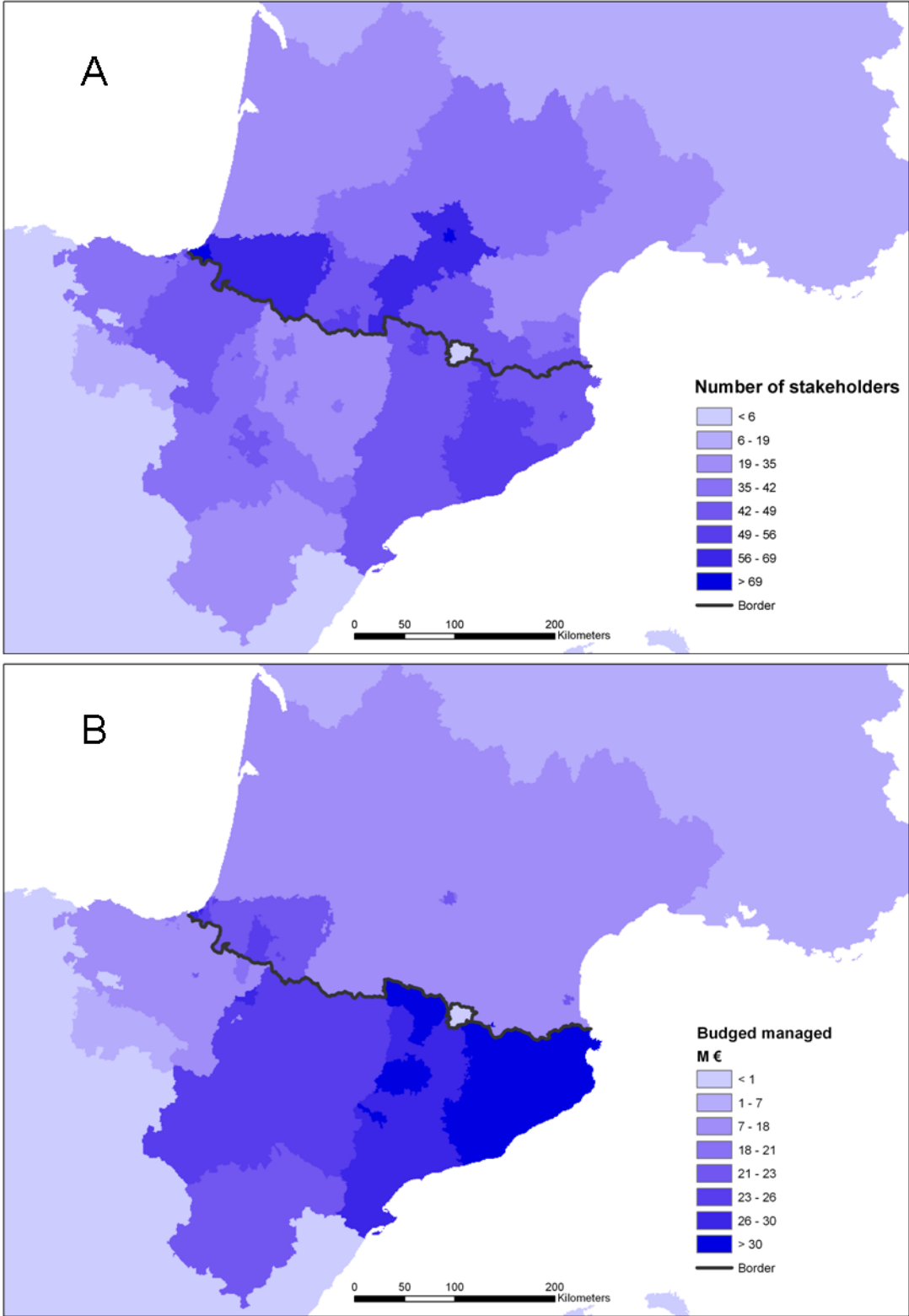


Figure 3. The distribution of project partners and their resource management.

On the Spanish side, on the other hand, supra-municipal bodies participated in greater numbers but with less intensity. Unlike the participation of the French *communautés de communes* (in this respect, the Spanish and French territorial organisations were very different), the Spanish supra-municipal bodies mainly consisted of *comarcas*. Aragon is the autonomous community with the highest number of participant *comarcas* (12), with a notable presence of the border *comarca* of Jacetania. In Catalonia, there were a lower number of participant *comarcas*, but the *comarcas* that participated tended to do so more often, e.g. Cerdanya, Vall d'Aran, Alta Ribagorça and Pallars Sobirà. In the Basque Country, Bidasoa *comarca* had a high level of participation, as did the Salazar Valley and Roncal Valley communities in Navarre. However, in contrast with the French side, the only participant Spanish natural park on or near the border was the Ordesa y Monte Perdido Natural Park.

The participation of stakeholders at a municipal scale (including municipal administration and related bodies and agencies, cultural associations, certain enterprises, etc.) was very dispersed and its distribution did not coincide at all with the border area. By far the most noteworthy at this scale were large capital cities representing strategic partners, such as San Sebastian involved with 14 and Toulouse with 13 projects. Other similar examples were Barcelona (5), Bilbao (4), and Zaragoza (3). On the other hand, attention should be drawn to the participation of other smaller strategic municipalities located nearer the border such as Bayonne (6), Irun (4), Girona (4), and Perpignan (3). Finally, the considerable concentration of municipal partners in the Basque border municipalities in both Spain and France should be highlighted.

As with the previous maps, it is important to compare the density of participation of the different partners with the density of the partners themselves, weighted by the total resources managed in the projects. Starting from the (as yet unproven) premise that the higher the project funding by partners, the greater impact on territorial development, this exercise can provide an initial evaluation of the expected impacts of the development projects in the various territories. To this end, the ERDF resources were taken into consideration plus the funds contributed to the projects by each stakeholder. This new picture (Figure 3b) is quite different from the former one, and shows a greater preponderance of partners on the Spanish side, particularly in the eastern sector. The highest concentration of funds managed by partners was in the northeast of Catalonia, coinciding with the provinces of Barcelona and Girona. Catalonia and Aragon taken together, particularly the provinces of Zaragoza and Huesca, also showed high densities of stakeholder-managed funds. On the other hand, in the Atlantic sector, the French partners managed a larger amount of cross-border project funds (e.g. Pyrénées-Atlantiques department), when compared with Navarre and the Basque Country, the corresponding regions on the Spanish side of the border.

The higher values attributed to some territories, such as the provinces of Girona and Barcelona, was due to major participation and funding by the Government of Catalonia for numerous cross-border projects. The Catalan Government, and its associated institutions, for example, the Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia and the Catalan Summer University Foundation, are involved in many projects that also receive high levels of funding. Such projects included the above-mentioned Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital, and other smaller projects such as NECROPIR (Sustainable Biodiversity in the Pyrenees), GALLIPYR (Pyrenean Network of Mountain Galliforms), CECASALS 2 (Pau Casals Cross-Border Study Centre), etc. However, apart from the major overall stakeholder participation in Catalonia, other Catalan partners participate with a high level of funding at a smaller scale, such as Cerdanya Comarca Council in the Matadero cross-border project, and the municipality of Puigcerdá in the Cross-Border Hospital project. In Aragon, high values of funds contributed

by partners can be identified, notably the provincial-scale partners in Huesca, but above all in Zaragoza, which had a major presence due to institutions such as the University of Zaragoza. Moving westwards towards the Atlantic, an increasingly smaller amount of stakeholder-managed funds was observed. However, several small patches of partners can be found within these places, such as in the Salazar Valley and Pamplona in Navarre, and San Sebastian in the Basque Country.

A very different picture appears when the French side is examined, it is almost the reverse image of the Spanish side. The spaces with the highest density of stakeholder-managed funds were on the Atlantic edge, in particular in the Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes* and the municipalities of Bayonne and Biarritz. This is due to the high volume of funds managed by the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department and, to a lesser degree, by the region of Aquitaine. The numerous cross-border links in the Basque Country and the pivotal role of Pyrénées-Atlantiques department between the Atlantic and central zones can provide the key to understanding these results. No other high-density patches of stakeholder-managed funds appeared in the rest of the French border territories. However, certain territories did stand out, such as Haute-Garonne department and its capital Toulouse, both of which are particularly active through the University of Toulouse. In the Pyrénées-Orientales department, the same was true of Haute-Cerdagne and Capcir and the municipality of Perpignan, owing to their respective management of two large well-funded projects, i.e. the Cross-Border Hospital and the Catalan Cross-Border Stage.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

This article is part of the recently undertaken research project entitled “*25 years of cross-border projects between Spain and France in the framework of the European Union (EU). A geopolitical analysis of territorial plans, projects, agents and results*”. The aim was to reflect and comment on the large, growing volume of cross-border territorial cooperation projects taking place between Spain and France, basing our research on data from the INTERREG programme and, more specifically, the POCTEFA programme. The analysis carried out so far has already produced some interesting results, but sufficiently detailed information has not yet become available on INTERREG programmes funded before the 2007-2013 period.

(1) This study of 133 French-Spanish cross-border projects showed a clear majority of projects concerned with local economic development (40% of the projects and over 30% of the total financing), in fields such as the tourism sector, promotion and innovation of traditional activities, support for production activities, and professional training. There was a wide diversity of stakeholder participation, particularly so in the case of local partners (municipalities, municipal aggregations, intermediary administration, departments/provinces). The next two categories, considerably smaller than the first, were environment and research, with the participation of many research centres, as well as regional universities and administration units. These three categories accounted for 75% of all projects, indicating that the key aspects for the revitalization of this area are enterprise, research, and the environment. Cultural and education projects made up over 10% of the whole, mainly due to the cultural and identity links in the Basque and Catalan cross-border spaces.

(2) A spatial analysis of the projects showed the location of the project leaders, and appraises the qualitative role of these stakeholders who undertake the administrative responsibility of drawing up, organizing, and managing the projects. The first observation was that the majority of project-leading partners were Spanish. We believe that this result is not due to chance, but to the greater management facilities afforded by Spanish administration, which has been less subject to controls and administrative certification than their French homologues. The highest number of project leaders was found among the Aragonese partners,

particularly those in the province of Zaragoza, such as the University of Zaragoza. We also found a high density of project leaders in Navarre, the Basque Country, and Catalonia. On the French side, only the region of Aquitaine and Pyrénées-Atlantiques department stands out in terms of project leadership.

(3) When we turn our attention to the amount of ERDF resources managed by each project leader, i.e., when we weight each project by its monetary importance, a deeper understanding of the reality of the projects is gained. Almost three quarters of the total resources assigned to POCTEFA programmes go to Spanish leaders, of which Catalonia and Aragon manage 24% and 20% of ERDF resources respectively. On the other hand, the comparable regions in France (Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées) manage the fewest resources, thereby reinforcing our previous conclusion regarding the greater administrative opportunities available in Spain. This also introduces a key territorial practice in the cross-border space, i.e., that relationships between partners and projects were mainly produced along a vertical (north-south) axis. Alliances were usually set up between stakeholders north and south of the border, who created their own balances and counter-balances. Transversal (east-west) project-management alliances between stakeholders were much more unlikely to occur.

(4) As regards the total group of partners, both leaders and non-leaders, taking part in the various projects, much mobilization could be observed throughout the French side, particularly in the centre-west sector (Toulouse and Haute-Garonne; Pau and Pyrénées-Atlantiques). In France, there was a special degree of stakeholder mobilization at NUTS 3 scale (e.g. departmental agencies, chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, universities, etc.), whereas in Spain, results were mainly determined at NUTS 2 scale (autonomous communities). However, municipal and supra-municipal partners were very important on both sides of the border. In France, a high degree of participation was observed among supra-municipal bodies (*pays, communautés de communes*, natural parks), whereas the Spanish supra-municipal bodies (particularly *comarcas*) participated less intensively but in greater numbers. The most participative municipal stakeholders tended to be the large cities acting as regional capitals.

(5) When the partners are weighted according to the amount of resources they managed, a greater preponderance of Spanish partners was identified, particularly in the easternmost sector. The highest concentration of funds was managed in Catalonia (Barcelona and Girona) and Aragon (Zaragoza and Huesca), due to the high-budget projects developed in these areas. The further towards the Atlantic, the smaller the amount of funds being managed by Spanish partners, and the greater amount by French partners (Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes*, Bayonne and Biarritz municipalities, Pyrénées-Atlantiques department, etc.). Once again, this fact demonstrates the greater importance of vertical (north-south) collaboration and complementarities between cross-border partners, than those found in transversal (east-west) links.

(6) On the other hand, the aim of the article was not merely to analyse the data and its territorial dimensions, but also to test the chosen method of cartographic representation for the different types, sizes and leading figures involved in cross-border cooperation projects. This seemingly simple task led to the initial problem of having to identify ways to represent partners belonging to different and often overlapping territorial scales. To this effect, a database system was devised with a GIS data treatment method, based on map algebra, which could also be applied to other borders and other case studies. Nevertheless geographers and planners should develop further research to improve these kinds of studies, especially for evaluating impacts, outcomes and cross border projects. Qualitative case studies of some specific projects or territories (Berzi, 2013) could be a methodology employed.

(7) A third significant aspect of the article is what we could call its geopolitical nature. In fact, several of our results can be explained from a geopolitical perspective, starting with the

disparities on either side of the border deriving from the range of competencies existing in Spain and in France, the different levels of decentralization and the consequences thereof. The next phase of our research will study the effect of these differences on the effectiveness of resource application, the agility (or efficiency) of project development, and so on. Of an equally important geopolitical nature are some particularities of cross-border cooperation involving Catalonia and the Basque Country and their counterpart territories in France, which share and may wish to strengthen certain historical, linguistic, and functional aspects. It must be added that this review cannot be made solely at a regional scale, as the logic is often acted out with greater intensity at a local scale.

(8) Finally, we wish to point out the two pending aims of this research project. On the one hand, as already mentioned, the aim was to complete the database of projects in order to carry out a long-term temporal analysis of cross-border cooperation and its results. On the other hand, the research seeks to make a detailed study of a limited number of projects which, for different reasons, may serve as cooperation indicators and references, along the lines already stated (formation of local territorial systems such as Cerdanya, differential treatment of the landscape in cross-border natural spaces, the Basque Bayonne-San Sebastian Eurocity, and so on). There is a lot to be said about twenty-five years of cooperation between France and Spain and, at this time of uncertainty regarding the "European project", it is no doubt necessary to make an evaluation of our shared experiences from which we will all be able to learn and support decision makers (regional, national and European) in order to address a more integrated, shared and long term cross-border governance.

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ⁱ Spain-France-Andorra Territorial Cooperation Operational Programme.

ⁱⁱ We designed our own classification, divided into the following categories: Accessibility and Transport, Cohesion and Social Integration, Culture and Education, Local Economic Development, Research, Environment, Territorial Planning, Health, Security.

ⁱⁱⁱ Classified as: public, private, and consortia.

^{iv} *Comarcas* are traditional local administrative divisions found in parts of Spain. *Mancomunidades de municipios* are free associations or commonwealths of municipalities existing permanently or for a particular period in order to achieve a concrete goal.

^v *Pays* is a French planning category designating a territory with a high functional degree of geographic, economic, cultural and social cohesion, which enables the design and implementation of development projects. *Communautés de communes* are public inter-municipal bodies aiming to create mutually supportive associations of municipalities for joint development projects and territorial planning.

^{vi} La Rioja is not a cross-border administration, but participates in certain projects of this nature because of its proximity to the border and its close relationship with neighbouring autonomous communities.