

Territorial cross-border cooperation in higher education. A case study of the eastern Pyrenean border

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Abstract

This article debates on the changing geographies of higher education and research cross-border cooperation by providing a critical analysis of academic cross-border cooperation in the European Union. We examine the role of higher education and research institutions within the multi-scalar and multi-actor context of cross-border cooperation in the European Union with a specific insight on the Pyrenean border. In this regard, the Catalan cross-border space on the eastern Pyrenean border constitutes an interesting case study. Considering both its dissymmetry and rhetoric of a culturally unified space, it reveals tensions and complexities in the making of an academic cross-border collaboration built on a rhetoric discourse of territorial proximity recently shaken up by national and regional injunctions.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation; higher education; research; Eurocampus; Pyrenees

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Resum. *Cooperació territorial transfronterera en l'educació superior. L'estudi de cas de la frontera oriental dels Pirineus*

Aquest article debat sobre les geografies canviants de les cooperacions transfrontereres d'educació i investigació superior i proporciona una anàlisi crítica sobre les cooperacions transfrontereres universitàries implantades per la Unió Europea. Basant-nos en la frontera pirinenca, analitzem el paper d'aquesta cooperació tot tenint en compte les seves múltiples escales i la diversitat d'actors que hi participen. En aquest sentit, l'Espai Català Transfronterer, en el sector oriental de la frontera pirinenca, constitueix un interessant estudi de cas. Aquí, mentre que s'ha desenvolupat un discurs emfatitzant l'existència d'una unitat cultural, la realitat és que aquest espai continua marcat per les asimetries presents a banda i banda de la frontera. Aquest estudi de cas revela, per tant, les tensions i complexitats en l'establiment d'una col·laboració transfronterera en l'àmbit acadèmic, construïda sobre la base d'una retòrica de proximitat territorial, però sacsejada recentment pels requeriments nacionals i regionals.

Paraules clau: polítiques transfrontereres; ensenyament superior; investigació científica; Eurocampus; Pirineus

Resumen. *Cooperación territorial transfronteriza en la educación superior. El estudio de caso del sector este de la frontera pirenaica*

Este artículo debate sobre las geografías cambiantes de las cooperaciones transfronterizas en educación e investigación superior y proporciona un análisis crítico sobre las cooperaciones transfronterizas universitarias implantadas por la Unión Europea. Basándonos en la frontera pirenaica, analizamos el papel de esta cooperación teniendo en cuenta sus múltiples escalas y la diversidad de actores que participan. En este sentido, el Espacio Catalán Transfronterizo, en el sector oriental de la frontera pirenaica, constituye un interesante estudio de caso. Aquí, mientras se ha desarrollado un discurso enfatizando la existencia de una unidad cultural, la realidad es que dicho espacio continúa marcado por las disimetrías existentes en un lado y otro de la frontera. Este estudio de caso revela, por lo tanto, las tensiones y complejidades en el establecimiento de una colaboración transfronteriza en el ámbito académico, construida sobre una retórica de proximidad territorial, pero sacudida recientemente por los requerimientos nacionales y regionales.

Palabras clave: políticas transfronterizas; enseñanza superior; investigación científica; Eurocampus; Pirineos

Résumé. *Coopération territoriale transfrontalière dans l'enseignement supérieur. Le cas d'étude de la frontière orientale des Pyrénées*

Cet article examine les changements de la géographie de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche en matière de coopérations transfrontalières et propose une analyse critique des coopérations universitaires transfrontalières mises en place par l'Union européenne. Nous analysons le rôle de cette coopération transfrontalière à différentes échelles et en tenant compte des multiples acteurs qui y participent, en s'appuyant plus spécifiquement sur le cas de la frontière pyrénéenne. L'espace transfrontalier catalan, en particulier, apparaît ici comme un cas d'étude intéressant, notamment car un certain nombre de contradictions s'y déploient. Alors que se développe un discours mettant en avant la proximité culturelle, cet espace reste en effet marqué par ses dissymétries de part et d'autre de la frontière. Ce cas d'étude révèle ainsi les tensions et complexités propres aux coopérations transfrontalières universitaires, tiraillées par des logiques nationales et régionales multiples et parfois contradictoires.

Mots-clés: politiques transfrontalières; enseignement supérieur; recherche; Eurocampus; Pyrénées

Summary

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1. Introduction

Cross-border collaborations are part of the administrative landscape in European border areas (Perkmann, 2003). They allow cross-border cooperation amongst contiguous local and regional authorities and highlight new dynamics in former peripheral territories (Darnis, 2015). Higher education and research are taking a growing role in cross-border agendas. In promoting cross-border partnerships, academic stakeholders aim to build European-sized campuses, thus fostering international attractiveness at the “margins” of the UE. Cross-border areas and their universities now play a specific role in the strengthening of the European higher education space. As Gunther Oettinger, European commissioner for budget and human resources, noted: ‘Cross-border academic cooperation is a key element to achieve better integration of regions into the European space’.¹

Beyond the celebration of successful Eurocampuses, this article debates on the changing European cross-border geographies of higher education and research by providing a critical analysis of cross-border collaborations. To investigate this issue, we will examine the role of higher education and research institutions within the multi-scalar and multi-actor context of cross-border cooperation along the Pyrenean border. More specifically, we will focus on the Catalan cross-border space. Based on the analysis of academic collaborations since the 1990s and fieldwork investigations, the purpose of this article is to highlight the complex mechanisms of academic cross-border collaborations especially for peripheral and smaller universities facing competition from larger, neighbouring institutions. We will first deal with cross-border higher education policies, drawing the picture of a problematic cooperation guided by the competitive logic of the European research space. Second, in analysing cross-border academic cooperation at the Pyrenean scale, we will explore the dissymmetries, pioneering experiences and academic geostrategies at stake. Third, regarding the Catalan case, we will examine the paradoxical nature of this academic cross border space. Indeed, the ‘border effect’ reveals different and contradictory strategies leading to a divided and hierarchical academic cross-border landscape. Our study relies on a methodology combining an analysis of academic cross-border projects (from 2007 to 2015) using a

1. Public meeting: ‘Europe in a nutshell - Experiences with the implementation of cross-border groupings of higher education institutions’, Brussels, September 11th 2017.

database supplemented by other technical documents² and in-depth interviews with several academic stakeholders.³

2. Higher education territorial cross-border cooperation in the EU

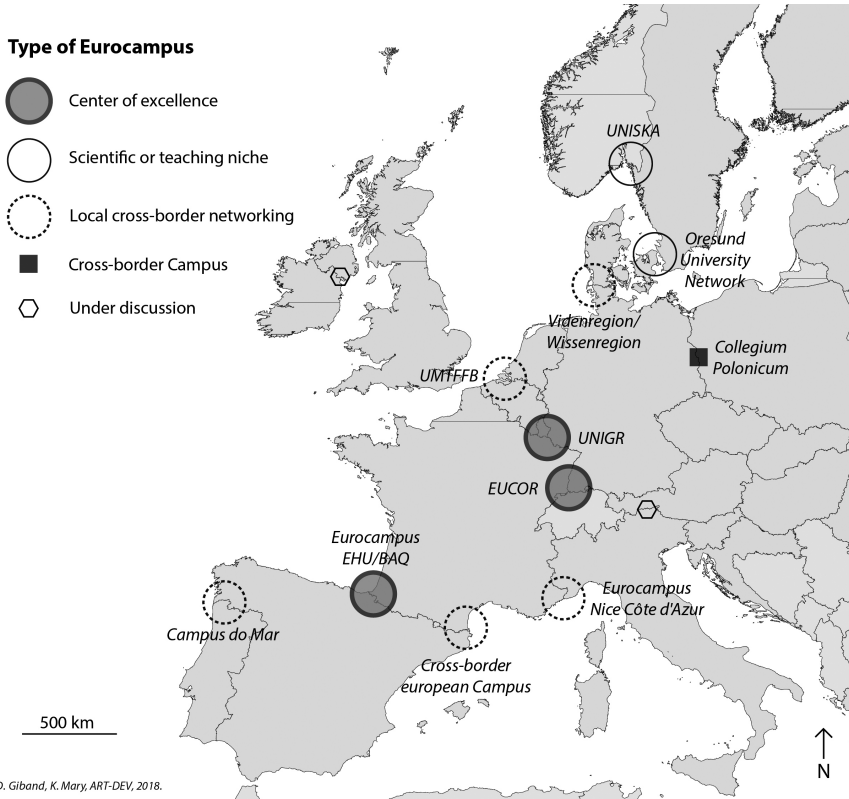
The promotion of a European research and higher education area (ERA and EHEA) and the incentives for cross-border territorial cooperation are major European Union (EU) political issues (Enders et al., 2005). Sponsored by EU programmes, they are structural elements of the EU cohesion policy and of its competitiveness strategy. The Europe 2020 strategy places higher education as one of the five goals of the EU strategy for employment and growth. With the EU 2014-2020 cross-border financial programming, a new context has emerged which nurtures local and regional incentives for more integrated academic cooperation. Although there is a vast body of literature on cross-border collaborations in higher education from a global perspective (Knight, 2008; Kosmützky and Putty, 2016), little has been said about territorialised cross-border cooperation in higher education in the EU context (Harrison et al., 2016).

2.1. *A problematic cooperation guided by the competitive logic of the European research space*

Territorial academic cross-border cooperation is a problematic cooperation (Pasqualoni and Scott, 2011). Marketed as an important issue at the European, national and local levels, it rarely appeared as a major component among EU cross-border programmes until the 2000s. Indeed, higher education represents only a small part of the EU Interreg funds. Many barriers, among them legal, linguistic, disciplinary, national academic regulations and types of governance, limit achieving such cooperation. Dissymmetries between universities along internal EU borders (number of students enrolled, variety of disciplines taught, tuition fees) and the division of academic competences among different levels of public authorities are additional explanatory factors. Academic cross-border cooperation emerged in the late 1980s boosted by European mobility programmes (such as Erasmus)

2. This paper used a database compiled of cross-border programmes (POCTEFA and Interreg) implemented along the Pyrenean border (2000-2015) and developed by the Territorial and Environmental Analysis and Planning research group at the University of Girona. The authors would like to thank M. Castañer, J. Feliu and J. Martin, University of Girona. We have completed this database with the analysis of other cross-border projects and initiatives (Interreg I, II, III and IV, Leader, programmes emanating from CÉT Pyrénées Méditerranée). We also used data and documents provided by the University of Girona and the University of Perpignan. The authors would like to thank Professor Ben Khelil (UPVD) and Professor Agüera (UDG) for their help.
3. Interviews were conducted both in Perpignan and Girona with key actors involved in cross-border issues, especially directors of cross-border academic programmes and vice-presidents in charge of international affairs.

Figure 1. Existing, underway and planned cross-border Eurocampuses

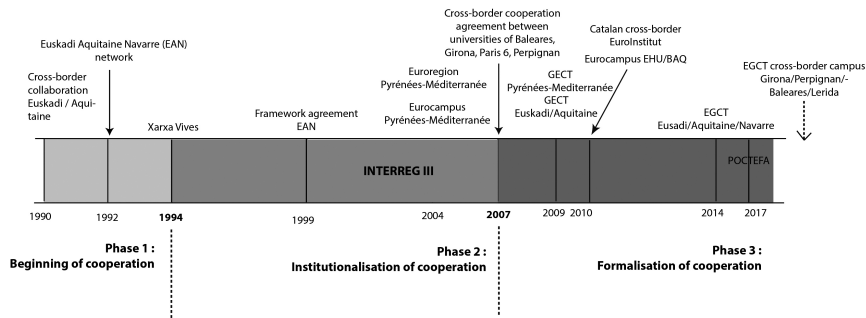


Source: Giband and Mary (2018).

based on bilateral agreements. A few pioneering universities, supported by their Euroregions, began to collaborate on the basis of regional cross-border networks. In strengthening cooperation ties, these institutions sought to go further in the bilateral agreements in order to establish an institutionalised territorial cross-border cooperation. In 1989, five universities of the Upper Rhine area created the first European academic cross-border network (EUCOR). In 1992, the Euroregion Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra (EAN) was created, associating nine universities of South West Europe. In 1994, Xarxa Vives, a network of 21 Catalan-speaking universities from both sides of the Spanish, French and Andorran borders, was set in motion. In 2001, the Oresund University, a collaborative network of 14 universities between Sweden and Denmark was set up. In Tyrol (Tyrol-South and Tyrol-Trentino), international networks of higher education institutions were promoted by Euroregions and regional stakeholders in the early 2010s (Fig. 1). However, until the Bologna process (1998), cross-border cooperation in the

academic field was fragmented and bilateral with limited impacts on the structuring of academic cross-border spaces. The Bologna process (led by national authorities and seeking the convergence of European higher educational systems) and the Lisbon strategy (focusing on the implementation of a European knowledge economy) paved the way for a new higher education European context. Interreg III and especially Interreg IV A (which allowed universities to compete for EU funds) unveiled a decade of growing cooperation projects by helping border universities to reinforce relationships and foster a structured territorial cooperation. Furthermore, the Europe 2020 policy initiated a development strategy in 2010 aimed at centres of excellence in which cross-border cooperation plays a significant role by enhancing clusters of border universities. In 2006, the implementation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) accelerated the institutional formalisation of regional cooperation between border universities. In 2015, Eucor—the EuroCampus was the first academic network to gain EGTC status with French, German and Swiss partners (Fig. 1). This first Eurocampus facilitates student and academic mobility and the financing of scientific infrastructures of a worldwide centre of excellence. Supported by Interreg IV A funds, the University of the Great Region (UNiGR)—founded in 2008—organised an institutional cross-border academic space between six universities in Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium and France in 2015, while in the south-west of the EU, the EHU-BAQ (Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre) Eurocampus has evolved into an EGTC. In these last ten years, other cross-border Eurocampuses have been planned: the French Belgian cross-border Metropolitan University (Lille, Leuven, Mons), Le Campus Européen Transfrontalier (Perpignan, Girona, Andorra, the Balearic Islands), the Nice Côte d'Azur Eurocampus and a few others. Three distinct dynamics can be identified: the organisation of international centres of excellence (Eucor, UNiGR), the fostering of research and creation of educational niches (Oresund University, Campus do Mar), and the promotion of small border universities (Le Campus Européen Transfrontalier, Collegium Polonicum). The first group encompasses large institutions embedded within a dense scientific network in the economic core of the EU. The objective is to create international higher education clusters based on academic cross-border relationships and complementarities. The second group is comprised of institutions that are willing to manage teaching or scientific niches consisting in a networking organisation in a large cross-border territory. The Campus do Mar focuses on marine research (northern Portugal and northwest Spain). Oresund is a network of technological institutions around the Baltic Sea. The third group rallies small-sized universities lacking a strong local academic network and located on peripheral borders of the EU, such as Le campus transfrontalier, which is an association of small universities between France and Spain (Perpignan, Girona, the Balearic Islands) or the Campus Videnregion/Wissenregion along the German and Danish Border (Flensburg and Sonderborg). The Collegium Polonicum, located at the German border in Poland, differs

Figure 2. Academic cross-border cooperation along the Pyrenean borders



Source: Giband and Mary (2018).

from these collaborations as a new campus dedicated to the cross-border academic project was founded.⁴

For border universities, an evident paradox lies in the internationalisation process promoted by the EU. Whereas cross-border cooperation seems to be a strategic component of internationalisation policies, this strategy also has to deal with a growing academic organisation in international networks at the EU and global scales (Harrison et al., 2016). Since 2005, the EU financial research incentives, cross-border programmes (Interreg IV, the Joint Programming Initiatives in 2008) and multilateral programmes (financed by national authorities) help European universities to organise into a cluster of networks at various scales (the League of European Research Universities, the COIMBRA group). These internationalisation dynamics reveal a logic of intense competition between universities to compete for EU funds (H2020, Interreg), programmes and labels. In this competitive environment, border universities are torn between cooperation and rivalry and between the regionalisation process and their own national injunctions. Hence, a competitive environment is structuring the framework of academic cross-border cooperation in response to national regulations, regional integration, European networking and their own international development strategies.

2.2. The Pyrenean border: dissymmetries, pioneering experiences and academic geostrategy

Cross-border cooperation along the Pyrenean border is an interesting case study. This long-standing cooperation is registered in bi-national agreements since the 19th century (Harguindeguy, 2004). The entering of Spain in the European Union opened up a period of rapid growth for cross-border cooperation (Har-

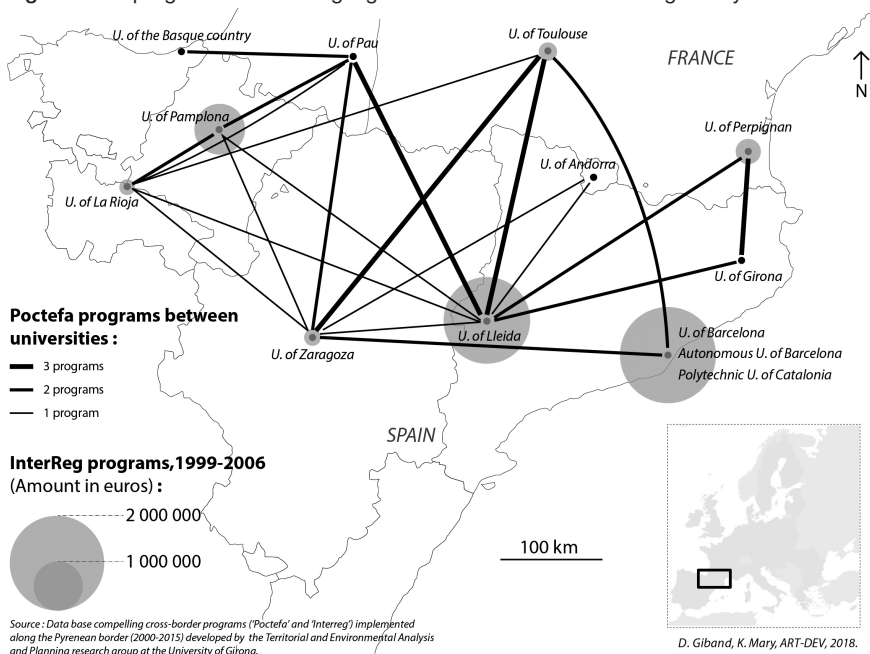
4. Collegium Polonicum is a common project shared by the European University Viadrina (Germany) and Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland).

guindeguy, 2007). While the Interreg I and II programmes paved the way for institutional cross-border collaborations, higher education and research cooperation received little attention from the EU programmes. While in the early 1980s cooperation in higher education was structured around bilateral agreements, in the 1990s, the context of more intense cross-border institutional cooperation led border universities to organise themselves into territorial networks (figs. 2 & 3).

This collaboration took place in three phases (Fig. 2). The EAN Euroregion—created when the Euskadi/Aquitaine/Navarre inter-universities network was organised in 1992—gave the first impetus for academic cooperation. In 1994, on the other side of the Pyrenees, a group of Catalan-speaking universities (Xarxa Vives) was established on both sides of the border from Perpignan to Valencia, including Andorra and the universities in Catalonia (Fig. 4). In the meantime, the Pyrénées-Méditerranée Euroregion supported students and academic cross-border mobility and partnerships. Euroregions on the Pyrenean border act as facilitators, catalysts and network builders in higher education cross-border cooperation. The Interreg III programme stimulated cooperation by financing research and higher education programmes. However, both the Euroregion and Interreg incentives had a scarce impact on territorial academic cross-border cooperation (Fig. 3). A second phase began in the mid 1990s with the Lisbon Convention (1997) and the Bologna Conference (1999), which situated cross-border cooperation in higher education as an important step towards regional development strategies (Knight, 2014). At that time, academic collaboration was institutionalised through cross-border university networks that were ‘advocated as an effective strategy for addressing national and regional development needs while simultaneously strengthening the capacity of the participating institutions’ (Chapman et al., 2014: 619). In the mid 2000s, former bilateral agreements took the shape of territorialised networking cooperation, thus paving the way for a third phase. In 2004, an initial proposal for a Pyrenean-Mediterranean Eurocampus included nearby universities (Perpignan and Girona) along the eastern border (Figs. 2 & 4). In 2007, new partners were added to this first group, drawing an enlarged cross-border network (Lerida). By 2009, an EGCT prefiguring a Eurocampus (the EHA/BAQ Eurocampus) was underway on the western side of the border from Bordeaux to the Basque Country. Along the Pyrenean border, territorial cross-border cooperation led to the slow emergence of Eurocampuses. In both countries, international academic competition prompted national authorities to implement policies to strengthen territorialised cooperation between nearby universities. In Spain, the International Campus of Excellence initiative (2009) fostered the internationalisation of university campuses by labelling the regional grouping of universities according to specific teaching, research and technology transfer criteria. In France, a similar strategy has been implemented since 2006 with the restructuring of the French university map into new ‘pôles de recherche et d’enseignement supérieur’.⁵ This grouping of higher educa-

5. Pole of Higher Education and Research.

Figure 3. EU programmes involving higher education institutions along the Pyrenean border



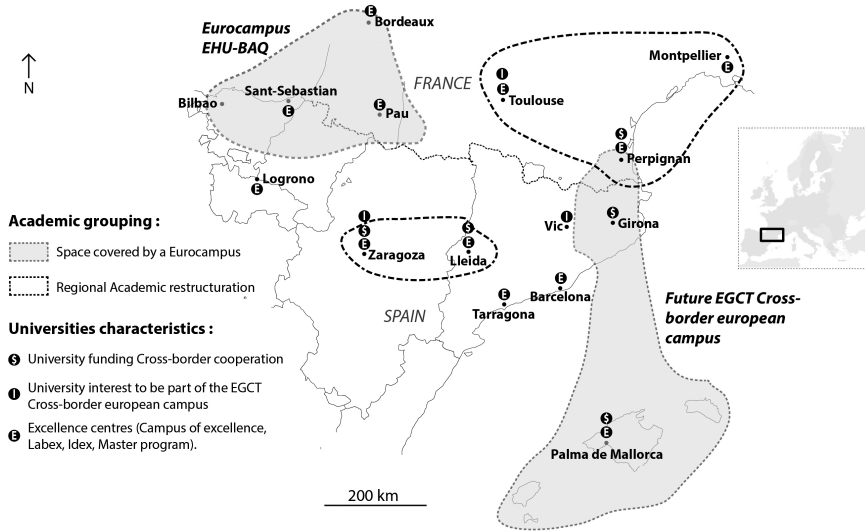
Source: Giband and Mary (2018).

tion institutions at the regional level is supposed to enhance a territorialised development strategy in order to build international class university clusters, designed in 2003 as COMUE⁶ (Fridenson, 2010). In this new institutional framework, cross-border cooperation is viewed as a strategic action aimed at building Eurocampuses in order to promote student mobility, scientific cooperation and international attractiveness.

The implementation of the POCTEFA⁷ programme speeds up this changing landscape by strengthening territorial networks of cooperation (Fig. 3). University leaders appear as territorial entrepreneurs using cross-border areas as strategic places where to find symbolic and material resources for international competition (Perkmann, 2007). A bipolarised map of academic cooperation is drawn along the Pyrenean border. Two different cross-border academic geopolitical realities emerged. On the west side, the EHA/BAQ Eurocampus is the most structured network (Fig. 3). Carried out by large universities (University

6. 'Communauté d'universités et d'établissements' are territorial regrouping of universities and research institutions at a regional scale according to the higher education Act of 2013.
7. Programme Opérationnel de Coopération Territoriale Espagne-France Andorre, Operating Programme for Territorial Cooperation between Spain-France-Andorra.

Figure 4. Academic landscape at the Pyrenean border, 2017



Source: Giband and Mary (2018).

of Bordeaux, University of the Basque Country), it works as a common space for strategic reflexion and collaboration involving more than 200 000 students. On the eastern part, small universities' leaders in Perpignan and Girona start in 2007 to organise a Eurocampus including the universities of the Balearic Islands and Andorra. In the meantime, large universities (Toulouse and Barcelona) remain outside the limits of this Eurocampus project.

3. The eastern Pyrenean border as a paradoxical cross-border territory

Perpignan and Girona are in many ways emblematic of the interest and limits of academic cross-border cooperation. These two mid-sized cities (about 120 000 inhabitants each) share almost the same demographics. While about 10 000 students are enrolled in Perpignan, Girona has over 15 000 students on its campus (Table 1). Although at some point these two universities had a strategic interest in constructing a cross-border space, they have several structural differences that lead to a paradoxical cross-border cooperation.

3.1. Difficulties to build an academic cross-border territory

The EU institutional context encouraged the universities of Perpignan and Girona to collaborate and implement cross-border activities. However, a combination of several elements limited and postponed such a collaboration. In 2006, the 'Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur' (PRES; centres for

Table 1. Universities in the East Pyrenean context

	Number of universities	Number of students enrolled	Professors and researchers	Master programmes	PhD programmes	Research centres	Label of excellence	International ranking*
Barcelona	7	227 076	18 512	834	254	898	Yes	Yes
Toulouse	2	107 300	56000	315	180	143	Yes	Yes
Montpellier	2	66 464	2758	136	157	98	Yes	Yes
Girona	1	15 000	700	40	14	26	No	No
Perpignan	1	10 000	404	37	36	12	No	No

* University listed in one of the most widely used international university ranking systems: Times Higher Education, Jiao Tong ranking, QS ranking and Global university ranking.

research and higher education) were created in France. Perpignan was included in one of them along with the University of Montpellier, which rejected Perpignan's involvement in a cross-border PRES with Girona. The University of Montpellier was seeking to merge all the regional universities within a single institution under its flagship. The French state did not allow it, claiming each university could only be involved in one PRES. This conflict over the positioning of a major regional university around Montpellier placed a barrier on cross-border collaborations. On the other side of the Pyrenean border, the International Campus of Excellence initiative clearly gave an advantage to large universities. With seven universities, Barcelona centralised almost all of its funds, leaving little to other universities in Catalonia, such as Girona (Table 1).

Regarding this context, the universities of Perpignan and Girona felt threatened by the larger, regional universities in Montpellier and Barcelona. But the POCTEFA programme to promote cross-border cooperation along the Pyrenean borders helped them to implement cooperation on a local scale. They decided to work together by considering that they shared strategic objectives and had an interest in investing at the local cross-border scale according to a rhetoric of 'universities of proximity' rooted in the same cultural territory.⁸

3.2. *The 'border effect': two territories, two different logics?*

Although cooperation between the universities of Perpignan and Girona would appear to be somehow logical, its concrete application seems rather complicated. Indeed, these two institutions evolved in different contexts on two main levels (Fig. 4).

The first deals with two different higher education systems. The academic traditions of Spain and France are different. For instance, the European 'LMD'⁹ system is operational in France, but not in Spain. But more importantly, the sources of income are quite different. While tuition is practically

8. Interviews with a former rector of the University of Perpignan (June 2017) and with the former head of the Catalan cross-border affairs at the university of Girona (October, 2017).
9. 'Licence (bachelor's degree), master's degree, Phd' .

free in the public higher education system in France, this is not the case in Spain where tuition fees for master's degrees can cost several thousands of euros per year. Consequently, it is difficult to design joint degrees and mutual curricula. Facing injunctions to expand an international academic offering, the University of Girona recently adapted its international strategy. It is now strategically targeting overseas markets to ensure the very existence of many master's degrees. South American countries have been targeted for further international development and cooperation, leaving behind other cross-border joint programmes.

The University of Girona is implementing a financialisation strategy by reaching the South American market; they are targeting the higher middle class candidates in certain South American countries who are willing to pay several thousand euros per year for a Master degree. By doing that, the university often creates new master's degrees to ensure more income¹⁰. (J. Lugand, personal communication, June 30, 2017)

This strategy was also described in another interview conducted in October 2017 with the former director of the Catalan Cross-border Institute at the University of Girona:

The person in charge of the international relations here recently redesigned his cabinet: now one person will focus on South America and the other on the rest of the world. South America is clearly our priority now, not cross-border cooperation¹¹. (J. Anguera, personal communication, October, 2017)

On the other hand, the University of Perpignan had to deal with a changing institutional landscape. After the PRES, the time came for the COMUE¹² reform in 2013, which nationally redefined the strategies of French universities. After the long-standing reluctance of national and regional stakeholders in higher education (especially the universities in Montpellier) regarding the Eurocampus project, a new Euroregional strategy emerged with the 2015 regional reform. In the newly enlarged Occitanie region, regional universities were encouraged to concentrate their sources of income and academic activities and the University of Toulouse therefore took on the role of regional leader (Fig. 4). In this new context, the University of Perpignan occupied a geostrategic position. As the head of a cross-border programme at the University of Perpignan stated: "It is the Mediterranean façade of Toulouse"¹³, adding that "Perpignan is the geographical articulation point that allows Toulouse to open up to Barcelona [...], when you work with Toulouse, you work directly

10. Interview with Julien Lugand, head of a cross-border programme in Perpignan, June 30th 2017.

11. Interview with Josep Anguera, former director of the Catalan Cross-border Institute (Institut Català Transfronterer) at the University of Girona.

12. COMmunauté d'Universités et d'Établissements (Community of Universities and Higher Education Institutions).

13. Interview with J. Lugand, June 30th 2017, *op. cit.*

with Barcelona, not Girona”¹⁴. He highlighted a paradox of academic cross-border cooperation: operating cross-border cooperation implies working with larger universities such as Toulouse and Barcelona, far away from logics of geographical proximity. This situation echoes the words of Jean-Pierre Darnis who recently noted that “the geographical scope of cross-border cooperation poses a challenge when it doesn’t consider the depth of the border area that incorporates the main urban hubs” (Darnis, 2015: 39). According to many stakeholders, the strategy of close academic cooperation according to logics of proximity and common culture appears to have been stymied due to macro-regional restructurings. Thus it values large universities’ logics (Toulouse, Barcelona) on the one hand, and small universities to follow their own financial strategies on the other.

4. Conclusion

Beyond the picture of a constellation of collaborations promoted by stakeholders in Perpignan and Girona according to rhetoric discourses of proximity, academic cross-border territorial cooperation follows a different path: one that clearly depends on large universities’ strategies designed at a larger Euroregion scale. In this territorial environment, small cross-border universities are asked to develop a capacity to adapt and integrate. Our study along the Pyrenean border suggests that while universities compete by forming cross-border consortiums, territorial groupings such as Eurocampuses lead to a more unequal and divided higher educational landscape. These multiple initiatives established the foundation for a new cross-border geography in higher education, reshaping cross-border areas along more exclusive lines. A hierarchy emerges opposing large Eurocampuses—piloted by major universities on a Euroregional scale such as what is being planned between Toulouse and Barcelona—and territorialised local alliances associating second rank universities torn between cooperation and rivalry such as Girona and Perpignan.

As other cross-border policies, academic cross-border cooperation in the eastern Pyrenees is still characterised by the weaknesses of local cross-border cooperation (Perkmann, 2007). Following Dupeyron (2008), this kind of local cooperation, embedded in a rhetoric of ‘proximity’, faces some limits, namely the anomy of academic cross-border policies and stakeholders. In this case study, academic cross-border cooperation suffers from the structural weakness of institutional stakeholders with limited material and symbolic resources and is also facing internal competition. Torn between incentives to engage in cooperation and the logic of international competition and regional restructurings, academic cross-border policies appear to be a set of low intensity policies. These low intensity policies are characterised by the scattering of funds, the lack of a mutual strategy and the difficulty of sustaining the projects among cross-border stakeholders. Cross-border

14. Ibid.

entrepreneurship deployed by local academic institutions is unable to offset the negative impacts of a weak attractiveness, a strong internal competition, institutional asymmetries and networking dominated by external stakeholders. A different geostrategy of academic cross-border cooperation is thus underway. The endless postponement of an EGTC for a local cross-border eastern Eurocampus designs other regional geopolitics which avoid the logic of proximity. A Eurocampus project is now planned on a macro-regional scale led by large universities such as Toulouse and Barcelona, which are, paradoxically, peripheral to the border.

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