



The motivations of municipalities for emergence and participation in cross-border associations of municipalities: The Spanish-portuguese case of the Atlantic Axis of the Northwest Peninsular/Eixo Atlântico do Noroeste Peninsular (EANP)

Nuno Miguel da Costa Ribeiro e Silva

Abstract

This article addresses the theme of cross-border cooperation, particularizing its implementation in cross-border municipal associativism. The approach is materialized in the analysis of a successful structure of cross-border cooperation: the Atlantic Axis of the North-West Peninsular (EANP) and is carried out from the perspective of the participating municipalities. It is now considered relevant to know what motivations were involved in the decision to create this Association and what are the reasons that led the various municipalities to participate in this organization.

Key words: Cooperation; Cross border; Municipalities; Networks; motivations

1. Introduction

This article addresses the theme of cross-border cooperation, particularizing its implementation in cross-border municipal associative. The approach is materialized in the analysis of a successful structure of cross-border cooperation: the Atlantic Axis of the North-West Peninsular (EANP) and is carried out from the perspective of the participating municipalities. It is now considered relevant to know what motivations were involved in the decision to create this Association and what are the reasons that led the various municipalities to participate in this organization.

1.1. Theoretical framework

The New Public Management as a management model is difficult to be correctly defined (McLaughlin, 2002: 409). It is essentially a management model that seeks to organize and operationalize, in a different way, the Public Administration and its agents, seeking to improve the performance of public services; increase efficiency; avoid corruption; guide the Public Administration to the needs of citizens; open the Public Administration to the company; introduce more transparency in the operation of public services; define and identify competencies and responsibilities; avoid waste (Warrington, 1997).

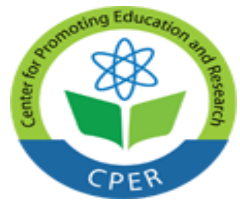
One of the consequences of the New Public Management is the fragmentation of the Public Administration (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 1996). This has led to the state changing the way it operates, emerging, a new system, governance (or governance), which has given rise to new problems.

The emerging administrative structure highlights the growing number of small structures, acting autonomously or almost autonomously. Fragmentation introduced a new institutional arrangement in which organization and inter-organizational coordination became the central factors. There are a number of interdependent actors, which means a shift in activity across networks, the characterization of which is largely based on trust and mutual adjustment (Rhodes, 1997).

Pierre and Peters(2000) identify within the structural approach of the concept of governance, four distinct conceptualizations: hierarchies, markets, communities, and networks. In the case of the conceptualization of governance as networks, the networks of public policies (policy networks) are one of its most common manifestations. In this perspective, a multiplicity of actors interacts and participates in the processes of conception and implementation of public policies (...), with the assumption that the actors now hold a relative autonomy vis-à-vis state authority (Rodrigues, 2010).

Klijn (2008) points out that the concept of governance is essentially confused with that of a governance network, stating that, in the final analysis, governance corresponds to the process that takes place in the respective networks.

Relationships in the network are based on reciprocity and trust-based interdependence. Each actor shares norms and a mutual interest, having advantages in maintaining the network active and not undermining the existing trust between the participants, which would reduce the



efficiency of the system. Non-cooperation becomes more burdensome as it results in increased transaction costs (Williamson, 1985). Kickert and Koppenjan (1997) point out that this new form of governance promotes cooperation among participants within the structure of inter-organizational relationships.

When we speak of governance, we refer to self-organized inter-organizational networks characterized by interdependence, exchange of resources, rules, and significant state autonomy (Rhodes, 1997:15); it is a continuous process through which diverse or conflicting interests are accommodated and the co-operative action developed. (Commission on Global Governance, 1995:2). These interactive arrangements, in which public and private actors participate, aim to solve social problems and create social opportunities, taking care of the institutions within which these government actions take place (Kooiman, 1999).

Mattessich et al. (2001), in dealing with the issue of collaboration, presents it as a well-defined relationship with mutual benefit between two or more organizations with the aim of achieving common goals and purposes. According to the authors, the relationship includes a joint commitment to relationships and goals; the joint development of a structure as well as shared responsibility; shared authority and accountability; and still shares resources and rewards. Collaboration brings previously separated organizations to a new structure with full involvement and commitment to a common mission.

1.2. *The Atlantic Axis of the North-West*

The Atlantic Axis of the Northwest Peninsular (EANP or EA) is a Cross-Border Association of Municipalities (ATM) of Galicia (Autonomous Community of Spain) and Northern Portugal that has a privileged position in the context of the Galician-Portuguese "Euroregion".

Since its creation in 1992 the Axis has undergone a complex evolution influenced by the community context to a greater extent and by the state and regional constraints of the states in which they are inserted (Domínguez, 2004: 37).

We start with the institutional evolution of EA since its foundation and following Domínguez (2008) (but also others like Cancela, 2008: 162-167; Domínguez, 2004: 3-51):

According to Domínguez (2010), Galicia and the North of Portugal were already at the forefront of the process of European integration, as in October 1991 the

Galician-Northern Portugal Work Community was born the first of the Luso-Spanish frontier and in April 1992, the Atlantic Axis of the Northwest Peninsular (EANP) was born, an association of urban municipalities.

In the Founding Declaration of the Axis, it is stated that 'it is indispensable to overcome physical barriers by means of public infrastructures that allow a single cross-border market to be established'. In order to make the necessary infrastructures a reality, it was pointed to the Community support provided for in the Delors II package and the claim was clear.

Twelve cities, Ourense, Ferrol, A Coruña, Santiago, Pontevedra, Vigo, Porto, Braga, Bragança, Chaves, Viana and Vila Real - Lugo would still arrive in time to be a founding city in the approval of the Statutes they subscribed this foundational Declaration.

The Axis has gone a long way that according to Domínguez (2008) can be structured in three stages:

The founding stage (1992-1999): "takes place with the presidencies of the two cities that began the constitution of the Axis: Porto and Vigo. In 1995 the Galician cities of Vilagarcía de Arousa and Monforte de Lemos were incorporated and, in 1997, three Portuguese cities of Vila Nova de Gaia, Guimarães and Peso da Régua.

In the context of the main achievements of this stage, it is worth mentioning, firstly, the elaboration of the I Strategic Study of the Atlantic Axis. Secondly, the Axis bet on a series of actions that made it visible to the society of the euro region (the Atlantic Axis Games, the Atlantic Axis Regatta, and the Atlantic Axis Painting Biennial, among others). Finally, in the light of the Oporto Declaration, the EANP began to submit competitive applications to Community programs to support cross-border cooperation (Domínguez, 2008).

The Consolidation stage (2000-2006): In 2002 the statutes are amended. A new body is included: the General Secretariat, with management, representation, and signature of contracts and agreements with third parties (among others).

From the operative point of view, one of the great stakes was the Euro-regional integration. In 2000, the agreement for the integration of the Axis in the structure of the Galician-Northern Portugal Work Community was signed as the Special Commission.

The second of the stakes made by the Axis at this stage was that of the knowledge society. In 2000, the Galicia Norte de Portugal Euroregion Infrastructure Map was



approved and published; secondly, the claim of a high speed rail corridor Porto a Coruña, within the priorities of the major trans European networks (Domínguez, 2008).). The consolidation of the Axis also resulted in the submission of approved applications to European programs.

The International Projection stage (2007-2010): Operated the substantial expansion of the member cities, from 18 to 28, in 2007, with the incorporation of the Portuguese cities Barcelos, Mirandela, Famalicão, Vila do Conde and Matosinhos and Viveiro Galicians, The Boat of Valdeorras, Lalín, Verín, and Carballo. In 2008, they went from 28 to 34, with the entrance on one side of Lamego, Penafiel and Macedo dos Cavaleiros and on the other of Ribeira, Sarria and O Carballiño.

The Atlantic Axis Strategic Agenda provided a number of key ideas, including the need to foster governance and partnership; the promotion of a balanced territorial model, and cities with greater centrality.

2. Research Questions and Objectives

In this investigation, we sought to understand the motivations for the emergence and participation of the various municipalities in the Cross-border Associations of Municipalities and in particular in the EANP, seeking to verify the existence of an interested and opportunistic behavior of the participants, each of them intends, with their participation in these organizations, to solve problems that they are particularly facing.

Thus we have as hypothesis/inquiry question:

I. The emergence and participation of municipalities in the Transboundary Association of Municipalities "Atlantic Axis of the Northwest Peninsular" (EANP) were based on opportunistic and self-interested behavior.

In order to assess the corroborability of this hypothesis, a set of questions was given, and the following were considered to be more pertinent to the study in question:

What were the reasons for the emergence of ATM-EANP from the perspective of the participant municipalities? What are the reasons for the adherence of municipalities to the structure? [What is the interest at the time of accession? And what was the degree of involvement in the creation of the structure?] Among others.

In order to complete the investigation, two variables were defined:

a) The nationality of the participating municipalities (Portugal/Spain).

b) Date of adherence to the structure, essentially dividing the municipalities into two groups of actors: the 18 pioneer municipalities (between founders and first enlargements) and the remaining 16 participating municipalities, namely those integrated after the 2007 and 2008 enlargements.

It should be noted that within this variable (date of accession to the structure) it is possible to identify other elements that can be considered as important explanations, as far as the results obtained, if not the pioneer municipalities in the structure (founders and first enlargements until 1997) are those municipalities that have a "greater weight" in each of the regional contexts (Galicia and Northern Portugal) and the most representative of the "Euroregion". This reality is recognized by demographic, economic, geographic and political factors

The following table shows the location, as well as the number of inhabitants of the founding municipalities along with those who joined the EA during the 1990s.

The methodology used in the elaboration of this work was quantitative and qualitative, seeking to assess the opinion of the participating municipalities in the Transnational Association of Municipalities "Eixo Atlântico does Norte Oeste Peninsular" (EANP).

In this way, the questions and variables were operationalized, and questionnaires sent (in 2014) to all municipalities belonging to the Atlantic Northwest of the Peninsular (34 municipalities) were used, with a response rate of over 97% (only one municipality Viveiro did not answer);

Interviews were also carried out (the year 2014). The interviewees were representatives of 10 municipalities that are members of the EANP selected according to the country of origin: Spain / Portugal), of the geographical location: Coastal / Inland; and the time of belonging to the structure: until 1997 after 2007.

The interviewees were representatives of the following municipalities: Lugo, Ourense, Verín, Carballiño, Santiago de Compostela; Guimarães, Porto, Matosinhos, Vila do Conde, Viana do Castelo.

3. Empirical elements: Results and discution

The research question defined:

The emergence and participation of municipalities in the Transnational Association of Municipalities "Eixo Atlântico does Norte Oeste Peninsular" (EANP) is based on opportunistic and self-interested behavior of the same.



Let us check the elements obtained, with respect to this hypothesis, regarding, first, the reasons for the emergence of the EANP, and, second, the reasons that were the basis of the adhesion of the municipalities to the structure.

3.1 Emergence of the EANP

The first question of the data collection instrument wanted to know what are the two most relevant reasons for the emergence of the ATM (presented by crossing the age of accession).

In general terms, the first aspect chosen as the most important aspect for the emergence of the EANP is the promotion of regional development (60.6%, n = 20), followed by European Union support (18.2% %; n = 6). Due to the antiquity, there are no large percentage differences, since in both cases the same reasons are the most pointed: 61.1%; n = 11 and 90%; n = 9 in the first option and 22.2%; n = 4 and 13.3%; n = 2 in the second category.

As for the second most relevant aspect, the percentages are more dispersed, however, the second reason considered most important is the opportunity to develop activities that would not be possible to do otherwise due to lack of dimension (24.2%, n=8), followed by promotion of regional development (21.2%, n = 7), support from the European Union and increased regional lobbying with the European Union (both with 18 , 2%, n = 6). By groups, it is verified that these are the motives most pointed, both by municipalities prior to 1997 and by the most recent, without large percentage differences.

Thus, in the questionnaires, the reasons advanced by the municipalities as motivators for the emergence of EANP were:

- (i) Promoting regional development;
- (ii) The development of activities that would not otherwise be possible due to lack of scale;
- (iii) The possibility of accessing Community funds.
- iv) Lobbying with other actors such as central administrations and mainly with the European Union (EU).

In the interviews it was repeatedly mentioned that: when the EANP was created it was to constitute itself as a political lobby and the main objectives were the EANP as a lobby for the prioritization of large projects (interview of 05/13/2011) such as the development of Portugal and Galicia, then motorways and universities, tourism, historical centers, infrastructures, ports, accessibility, airports, and the development of the relationship with the Central

Administrations and the promotion of intercultural dialogue: projects and events approximation (06/13/2011); In fact, the basic idea behind the EANP is: "Together to be stronger" (...) the EANP enhances the co-operation that moves the population and economic interests such as financing, community funds, tourism , among others (interview 31/05/2011).

According to Domínguez (2010): "In the light of the Oporto Declaration (1992), the Axis began to present competitive applications to community programs to support cross-border cooperation successfully achieved in two of them: the Atlantic Hub Observatory , within RISI II; Millenium, within RECITE II ".

In addition to these, applications for the following European funding programs are highlighted below: Innovative Actions in Art. 10 FEDER; RECITE; Fight against exclusion; Urban; Interreg A (Spain-Portugal); POCTEP (Spain-Portugal); Interreg B Atlantic Area; Interreg C (European Interregional) (Domínguez, 2010); the search for the capacity to create an association that is consubstantiate as a lobby with other actors such as the central administrations and the European Union. In fact, the use of the opportunities generated by the accession of Spain and Portugal to the then European Economic Community (EEC), in particular as regards the application for Community funding, was the "touchstone" of the emergence of EANP.

EANP's own founding Declaration (1992) states that "it is a prerequisite for overcoming physical barriers through public infrastructures that allow a single cross-border market to be violated." In order to realize the necessary infrastructures, the Community aid provided for in the Delors II package was pointed out, and the claim was clear: "We, on behalf of the cities that we subscribe to this document, believe that it is fundamental that these funds be channeled into our regions, urban "(Domínguez, 2010).

We note the neuralgic nature of the element financing in the emergence of the EANP, which, however, and despite that, does not definitively constitute the only reason for the association's emergence, as we will see.

In fact, from the statement we verified the search for the solution of social problems and the creation of social opportunities, as alluded to by Kooiman (1999), in the case of the EANP the opportunities perceived by the municipalities are those that we advance. We verified the self-interested nature of the actors in these structures,



noting an opportunistic impetus in the creation of the EANP as a vehicle for taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the accession of Spain and Portugal to the EEC, among them: a larger dimension that enables action in a Euro- European; capacity to apply for Community funds; possibility of becoming a lobbying group, greater political and organizational capacity; among others.

As Kickert (1997) points out, network actors are interdependent, because they cannot achieve their goals on their own, but need the resources of other actors to achieve this, this is a pressure for the association found in the EANP. Interdependence is based on the distribution of resources by the various actors, the objectives they pursue and the perception of resource dependence. Information, resources and objectives are exchanged into interactions. Because these interactions are often repeated, there are processes of institutionalization: shared perceptions, patterns of participation, and rules of interaction are developed and formalized, as happened with the Atlantic Axis.

Klijn (1997) points out the dependence, variety of actors and objectives, and relationships as the main characteristics of networks. Political networks are defined as more or less stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors, which take shape around problems and/or policy programs. In the case of the EANP, the municipalities perceiving a social opportunity (financing, lobbying, political capacity) decided to "institutionalize" their cooperation in a Transboundary Association of Municipalities.

Sorabji (2000) points to Benson's (1978) definition of organizational networks as a cluster or complex of organizations linked to one another by resource dependence. Resource dependence emerges as the basic element of network creation. In the case of the association studied, we are faced with dependence on resources, as mentioned: size, political capacity, organizational structure, financing, among others.

In addressing the issue of collaboration, Mattessich et al (2001) present it as a well-defined, mutually beneficial relationship between two or more organizations in order to achieve common goals. This relationship includes a joint commitment to relationships and goals; the joint development of a structure as well as shared responsibility; shared authority and accountability; and still shares resources and rewards. We find these

characteristics in the EANP, in order for the participants to achieve the fruits of this collaboration, which - as verified by the reasons advanced by the EANP actors for the emergence of the network are intrinsically self-motivated and opportunistic.

In sum, the reasons perceived as having been at the heart of the emergence of the EANP are the association as a vehicle that enhances the dimension and captures the opportunities available to a player with a Euro-regional dimension, namely: the realization of a political Lobby: greater weight in the relationship with Central Administrations; seek to influence the Community framework (financing) by creating border border; the dynamism of culture and tourism, among others. The really relevant objectives are three and are interdependent: the size, the funding and the capacity of Lobby.

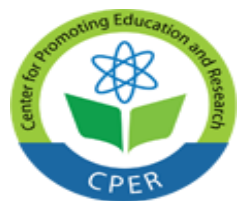
3.2 EANP Membership

With regard to the two most important reasons for membership of the ATM, it is verified in the responses to the questionnaires that the promotion of regional development emerges as the primary reason for membership (57.6%, n=19) EU support (12.1%, n = 4) was immediately achieved. In the municipalities that joined until 1997, the main reason was to promote regional development (61.1%, n = 11) and support (16.7%, n = 3), while for the more recent municipalities the promotion of development (53.3%, n = 8 and 20%, n = 3 respectively).

It should be noted that following the option for a more comprehensive and subjective response to regional development, the idea of obtaining Community support and the possibility of forming lobbying with entities such as the EU are the outstanding choices. Municipal interviewees, in fact, almost all the interviewees, participants of the EANP stressed the "central importance of community support", among others) as an important element for adherence to the structure, having even been adjectival as "essential" and "Fundamental" in several interviews.

The ability to increase "claiming power in a consistent way" with the central governments and, more incisively, with the EU was another of the most selected aspects.

In this way, in general, the motivations of the municipalities for joining the Atlantic Axis are fundamentally the two elements: financing, by means of applications for Community funds and the capacity for pressure, to make themselves heard, to act as a lobby with Community bodies, and of course also the financing



element is there. This regional lobo element is more chosen by the more recent members in the structure which denotes a qualitative and significant change in the logic of adhesion, unveiling a more enlightened political dimension.

As for the second reason for joining, the most frequent responses are to develop activities that would not otherwise be possible (27.3%, n = 9) and to promote regional development (21.2%; = 7). Support for the EU (18.2%, n = 6) was also highlighted.

By groups, the municipalities before 1997 opted to promote regional development and the development of activities (27.8%, n = 5 and 22.2%, n = 4 respectively), as well as the demand for development institutional (16.7%, n = 3). On the other hand, in the recent municipalities, the development of activities (33.3%, n = 5) and the obtaining of EU support (26.7%, n = 4).

In addition to the previously mentioned elements, the second motif stands out the idea of the development of activities, initiatives that otherwise would not be feasible due to lack of size. This is a key and, by definition, characteristic aspect of the association, it has emerged - as we will see that in most of the interviews funding, the possibility of accessing Community funds, pressure and at national and Community level. In this respect, the example of the "TGV" has repeatedly been mentioned in the "road and rail infrastructures".

Another exemplary element regarding the issue of association as an enhancer of initiatives of another magnitude, superior to those of the singularly considered municipalities, was the promotion, namely "at the tourist level.

As motivations of the municipalities for the adhesion to the Atlantic Axis, as well as the ones expressed as pressures for the emergence of the EANP stand out - in the questionnaires but also in the interviews - fundamentally two elements that make use of the dimension factor: financing, through applications for funds and lobbying at EU and national levels (as a paradigmatic example of this particular concern in the recent (2010, 2011 and 2012) EANP toll roads on the "SCUT" motorways of Northern Portugal].

The leitmotiv of the municipalities for the adhesion to the EANP went through: possibility and capacity to access and to avail of funds and community support (interviews of 07/06/2011, 05/14/2011, 05/31/2011, 06/24/2011); consequently, the consequent lobbying capacity, at both Community and

national levels, such as road and rail infrastructure, such as the TGV. (Interviews of 05/14/2011, 06/24/2011, 05/31/2011, 06/24/2011). In addition to this, the association is also seen as an enabler of initiatives of a different magnitude, superior to those of the singularly considered municipalities, such as tourism promotion. (Interview of 11/05/2011);

In the interviews (as in the questionnaires), the most recent municipalities in the structure are the ones that accentuated the capacity to pressure other entities (interviews of 05/20/2011, 05/31/2011; 06/27/2011) ; This element of regional lobbying - most selected by the most recent members in the structure seems to reveal a qualitative and significant change in the logic of accession, revealing a more enlightened political dimension.

The product of this research confirms the one mentioned by Kickert and Koppenjan (1997) when they mention that this new form of governance promotes the cooperation between the participants within the structure of inter-organizational relationships. In this way in the EANP we verified that it is in the interest of each municipality that the network-EANP is active and fruitful, being, each actor has an interest in the consequences of the action of the network and, therefore, adapts its behavior, so as to appearance of the expected fruit.

They are, therefore, worthy of note, as reasons for municipalities joining the EANP: privileged access to community funds, the exponentially expanded claim, the ability to participate in a lobby, but also the networking "And" on "the Axis; and the capacity to promote initiatives of a greater magnitude than those of the singularly considered municipalities, such as the promotion of tourism (of the various cities and events developed by them), the promotion of a balanced territorial model, the agency of urban ecology of character (Central Galicia, Interior Galicia, Arouza Barnanza), the Research Department, Transport Strategy, among others.

We thus verify the self-interested nature of the actors in these structures and find the self-interested impetus of creation and adhesion to the Atlantic Axis to take advantage of the opportunities generated through the Euro-regional dimension.

Having found that the reasons for municipalities' adherence to the EANP are intrinsically self-interested and opportunistic, it is appropriate, however, to scalp and distinguish the various sub-types of reasons:



If, on the one hand, common to all municipalities, we have the element of association as a dimension-inducing factor, which empowers the actors to act in a Euro-regional space that fosters opportunities of a larger dimension than the singularly considered municipalities, and in a differentiated logic compared to other intercommunal associative structures but integrated only by actors from one country, concomitantly and consequently there is the possibility of access to competitions to support cross-border cooperation, which is, as a first, strong reason for participation in the association.

We can, however, find other pressures for the association at this level: on the one hand, an endogenous factor: the municipalities want through the association between peers solve problems that are singularly debated, namely: the realization of infrastructures, accessibility, promotion/promotion of tourism, increase of the capacity to demand, political, administrative and institutional, among others; on the other hand, a factor that is exogenous to municipalities, but which encourages them to cooperate: the European Union itself is a source of incentives and therefore, of pressure for the association, by making funds available (for example via Interreg IC or Program Operational Cooperation Spain-Portugal Cross-Border Cooperation 2007-2013) for structures with this cross-border configuration. The confirmation by Perkmann (2003) that these entities are primarily concerned with the practical resolution of problems in a wide range of fields of everyday administrative life is reiterated; these tend to be local policy areas with a recognized need for policy coordination or management of cross-border interdependencies.

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3.3 Interest and involvement in the creation of the EANP

As regards the interest of the organizations, at the time of joining the Association, the highest percentage of representatives of the participating municipalities reported that ATM would have a high interest for Municipalities (60.6%, $n = 20$), followed by moderate interest (33.3%, $n = 11$). Only two entities reported little interest (6.1%, $n = 2$). By comparing seniority, it was found that none of the elements of the older municipalities reported little convenience, with the percentage being distributed between high and moderate interest (55.6%, $n = 10$ and 44.4%, $n = 8$), but the presence of high interest is more salient in the more recent municipalities (66.7%, $n = 10$).

As regards the question of involvement in the foundation/creation of the Association (table 6), it can be seen that for municipalities that are founding members and taking into account valid answers (15), it is observed that the involvement of organizations in the creation The foundations of TMJ were high (53.3%, $n = 8$) or moderate (40%; $n = 6$) for most members. The comparison between



the Portuguese and Spanish municipalities reveals that involvement is considered to be greater by the Portuguese municipalities, since the corresponding to 71.4% (n = 5) indicates that the involvement was high and 28.6% (n = 2) indicated moderate participation. On the other hand, in the Spanish municipalities the involvement was mostly moderate (50%, n = 4) and there is a percentage of 12.5% (n = 1) that mentions that participation was scarce.

4. Conclusion

We note the self-interested nature of the actors in these structures and an opportunistic impetus to the creation of the EANP as a vehicle to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the accession of Spain and Portugal to the EEC, among them: a larger dimension that enables action in a Euro-European; capacity to apply for Community funds; possibility of becoming a lobbying group, greater political and organizational capacity; among others.

In the case of the EANP, the municipalities perceiving a social opportunity (financing, lobbying, political capacity) decided to "institutionalize" their cooperation in a Transboundary Association of Municipalities. The participants aim to achieve the fruits of this collaboration, which - as verified by the reasons advanced by the EANP actors for the emergence of the network are intrinsically self-motivated and opportunistic.

The reasons perceived as having been at the heart of the emergence of the EANP are the association as a

vehicle that enhances the dimension and captures the opportunities available to a player with a Euro-regional dimension, namely: the realization of a political Lobby: greater weight in the relationship with Administrations central; seek to influence the Community framework (financing) by creating border border; the dynamism of culture and tourism, among others. The really relevant objectives are three and are interdependent: the size, the funding and the capacity of Lobby.

As motivations of the municipalities for the adhesion to the Atlantic Axis, two elements stand out: financing (through applications for Community funds) and the capacity for pressure, to make themselves heard, to act as a lobby with Community bodies, and of course here too. Financing element is patent. This regional lobo element is more chosen by the more recent members in the structure which denotes a qualitative and significant change in the logic of accession, revealing a more enlightened political dimension.

In addition to the elements listed, it is also worth mentioning the idea of developing activities, initiatives that otherwise would not be feasible due to lack of size. In this way, we conclude that: the emergence of the Transborder Association of Municipalities of the Atlantic Northwest Peninsular and the participation of the municipalities in the same is based on opportunistic and self-interested behavior of the participants.

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