**Title**
A Case Study of Cooperation between Municipalities in the Miño River (The Area on the Spanish-Portuguese Border)

**Författare**
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**Sammanfattning**
Abstract
The aim of this case study is to analyze cooperation mainly in issues related to water management in the area along the Miño river. The study focuses on the Spanish municipalities that limit with the river and that are in the border area with Portugal. There was a key issue which was discovered during the reading and analysis of data, a change of no cooperation to cooperation on the Spanish-Portuguese border. There was previously a political culture of no cooperation among the autonomous regions in Spain, which could have affected cooperation with the region of north Portugal. The fact the both countries have different administrative cultures could also impede cooperation. Nevertheless cooperation seems to have developed and in order to study this phenomenon the researcher uses a qualitative method and relies on a choice of institutional theories. This research studies how institutions affect cooperation in this particular case. The theories will analyze the impact of political institutions and the relation between institutions and individuals. They also help to identify how human behaviour affects processes and events.
Nyckelord
Keyword
Water management, institutionalism, historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, trans-boundary cooperation, Spain, Portugal
A Case Study of Cooperation between Municipalities in the Miño River
(The Area on the Spanish-Portuguese Border)

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Supervised by Prof. Geoffrey D. Gooch.

Cover - Map of Galicia and the North of Portugal. (2003-05-05)
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Maps of Spain and Portugal, the regions of the study and picture of the Miño river.

Map of Spain and Portugal

Map of Spain and Portugal

Map of Spain and Portugal (2003-05-05)

Map of Spain and Portugal

Map of Spain and Portugal (2003-05-05)
Map of Galicia and the Portuguese border

Map of the north of Portugal


Map of the municipalities along the Spanish-Portuguese border.


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A municipality has to be responsible because its actions affect other municipalities and, in the case of the Miño river, other countries.

1. - Introduction-

This research will focus on a Spanish area that is limited by the Miño river and the Portuguese border. It will be examined how the EU membership has affected the relations of the two countries and if there has been a change in the way they cooperate. Cooperation between these countries can become a problem because they have different administrative cultures. One of the reasons why this study was chosen is that it can be an example, for future studies, of how countries with different political and administrative cultures can be affected by the Europeanization process.

The case study is about the region of South Galicia, in Spain. This region was chosen because it had many interesting characteristics (own language and culture, historical identity, and different environmental problems to other regions of Spain…). It also seemed suitable because of the language convenience for the researcher. This is an area that has a natural division with the Portuguese border, the Miño river. The researcher will focus on the Spanish side but will also study the north Portuguese region to get information that will allow a better understanding and reliability of the information.

According to Börzel, T. the autonomous regions in Spain or Comunidades Autónomas (CCAA) have had an institutional culture in which there was no cooperation among them and where they just worked with the central government in bilateral meetings. This culture of no cooperation started to change when they realised that it just promoted the centralization of territorial competences and that it affected the institutional autonomy of the CCAA. The creation of a multilateral framework of intergovernmental cooperation was a break in the path dependency and it was a consequence of the Europeanization process. The implementation of European environmental polices became difficult and expensive for the CCAA. There was cooperation and efficiency among them when elaborating Joint Plans and Programs (JPPs),

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7 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002.
which are Community-funded programs that help and reduce the cost of the implementation of different European environmental policies.\textsuperscript{10}

There is a set of personal hypotheses that the researcher will try to prove. The first is that the European Union (EU) has broken the “path dependency” of no cooperation with its influence when regions started to cooperate and work on Communitarian funded-programs. Another is that the river works as a natural border dividing, on one hand, the two countries; but unifying, on the other hand, the regions. In a way, the river might be developing new ways of cooperation (e.g. water management, environmental projects).

According to Börzel, T. ‘Europeanization affects federal or regional member states in a different way than more centralized member states’.\textsuperscript{11} It is possible to wonder if the ways and means of cooperation differ among them due to different administrative cultures.

In the case of Spain there is a body, the regional government that has relation with local and national authorities and is a link between the two levels of governance. Portugal, as centralised state, has a central government that deals with the local authorities in bilateral meetings; there is no regional government. It should be noticed that there are no autonomous regions\textsuperscript{12} and that negotiations are just at the level of national and local government.

This research makes an analysis of a specific area in these two countries: the area of the Miño river. It will be possible to understand this Europeanization process by looking at current ways of cooperation, the way water is managed and the relations or networking among the municipalities in the area North Portugal and South Galicia.

This case study examines cooperation in the Miño river on border issues and it has been chosen because it provides an example of relations in a cross border area between municipalities with institutional differences.\textsuperscript{13} It can also represent an example for future studies of countries with different structures and with no previous cooperation, which are affected by the Europeanization process.

There will be elements that will relate both regions because they are linked historically and culturally. The fact that Portugal follows a centralised model of government and Spain has a decentralised or semi-federal government can create problems in the way institutions work and cooperation is understood.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, p.2.
\textsuperscript{12} (except Azores and Madeira that are different because they are considered regions with government and autonomy)
1.1 -Disposition-

Chapter one is an introduction to the study. It explains the research questions and the purpose of the investigation.

Chapter two is a broad presentation of the method used in the study. Here we look at the problems involved and to the reasons why it is used. There is more information about the way a case study is developed and how and why interviews have been chosen as the main mode of getting data.

Chapter three introduces the theoretical framework, new institutionalism, and studies the theories used in this research: historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism. Chapter four works as background and offers an overview of elements that might influence the cooperation process in the Miño area. It explains the influence of the EU and the differences between the two models of governance and administration.

Chapter five presents the data which is analysed according to the theories. The theories offered in chapter three will try to explain the means and ways of cooperation.

Chapter six provides a discussion connected to the research questions, the findings and conclusions of the researcher and offers developments for future investigations.

1.2- Purpose of the study and research questions-

This case study will analyse cooperation, first and foremost, in issues connected to water management in the area along the Miño river. The study focuses on the Spanish municipalities that limit with the Miño river and the Portuguese border.

The EU has become an important element because it tries to develop cooperation at national, regional and local level. The researcher will try to see if cooperation has followed the previous path or not. In order to find out how cooperation is developing, the theories will be used to see if there is continuance in the way cooperation takes place, using the historical institutionalism approach or if actors influence the processes, using rational choice institutionalism. The theoretical framework used will first try to discover the way in which institutions affect cooperation and if there are other elements that can influence cooperation.

There will be three basic questions:
1. How can two countries with different political cultures work together or cooperate? What form of collaboration is developed?
2. For what reasons and at what level is cooperation developed in the areas around the Miño river?
3. How does the EU influence this cooperation?
1.3 -Approach of the thesis-
Although these two countries share similarities and are working together on issues that the EU is pushing forward; one is a semi-federal state and the other is a centralized one. Since they joined the EU they have been developing in different ways and this has affected the way institutions and individuals work.

Water management is an important issue that affects these countries differently. We have to notice that there are areas (in both countries) with serious water problems such as: water pollution, bad management, lack of water quantity. Therefore, cooperation is needed between the two national governments to manage and protect water. The researcher has chosen this case study because of the necessity of cooperation and because of the influence of the EU. Nonetheless, this area of study, the Miño river does not have a lack of water quantity or quality (not in the Spanish nor in the Portuguese side). The way water management takes place here will differ from other dry areas of the countries.

1.4 -Issues to be considered and limitations-
When analysing cooperation in this cross border region it should be also remembered that the differences between these two countries play an important role but that there is also an Europeanization process that affects them both. The EU is supporting cooperation at the supranational, the national and sub-national level (on local and regional issues) so that there are relations top to bottom and vice versa among the levels.\textsuperscript{14} The theories used will try to explain the appearance of cooperation using to the data acquired during the interviews. The study will focus on the Spanish region that limits naturally with the Miño River but information on the Portuguese side will be used to validate the information acquired in the interviews. The north of Portugal is an area on which there are not many published studies and for that reason most of the data will be taken from the interviews carried out there. There are not many studies of Galicia\textsuperscript{15} either although this region together with Portugal has a similar historical, regional and national background. In this research, interviews will be the most important method of getting data. There is also little literature published on the issue which will limit the reliability of the information provided by the interviewees. In order to have consistent material or data, interviews, on the Spanish side, have been completed with others on the Portuguese side.


\textsuperscript{15} Situated in the northeast of Spain. It is a region with a historical and nationalistic background.
2 -Method-

2.1 -Qualitative methodology-

There are several reasons why it was decided to use qualitative method. The qualitative method allows the researcher to value the results and understand better the results of the study. It also enables to get a better picture of what is happening and how it can be understood. The method of approach helps to understand a specific situation or case study and finally analyses the data that was acquired mostly by interviews.\textsuperscript{16} The study of the information obtained by the interviews with local authorities, NGOs and companies dealing with the water management will help to understand if these two different forms of administration can cooperate and which ways of cooperation are developed. A quantitative method did not seem suitable in this study due to the nature of the interviews which were structured, standardized and with long answers.

This research is trying to study the processes and ways of social and political cooperation on this border. This will affect the way information and findings are presented.\textsuperscript{17} The qualitative method helps to understand the way people and institutions cooperate and by which means. Water management will be used as a way of linking: authorities, institutions and information, all together. For example, the authorities that were interviewed were in charge of water management and other areas.

It is important to remember that researchers should be aware that they carry a set of assumptions, which might influence the way they understand or interpret the data and affect the research process.\textsuperscript{18} The main purpose of this research is to develop a logical understanding and analysis of the phenomenon following a particular theory. It will not just be about collecting data, doing a description, accounting observations and showing extracts from the interviews. The data will be used to find out an interesting issue that can complement the findings that other researchers might have done.\textsuperscript{19} The qualitative method has two main weaknesses: validity and reliability; being aware of them the researcher will try to minimize them.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p.38.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p.38.
In this case research design the researcher will have to include five elemental components to get the best results: the questions of the study, the propositions in it, the units of analysis, a logic that links the data and criteria to be able to interpret the findings.\textsuperscript{21} The quantitative method seemed not suitable in this research because it assumes a stable reality, is verification oriented, confirmatory, ungrounded and objective; while the qualitative method is discovery oriented, exploratory, grounded and subjective.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{2.2 -Case study-}

A case study gives the possibility of studying in detail and understanding in depth how cooperation is developed. Most case studies use a qualitative method or a combination of methods. As Goode and Hatt pointed out in Punch: “the case study then is not a specific technique, it is a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied”.\textsuperscript{23}

Yin points out in Punch that a case study is an empirical research that investigates an existing and current phenomenon within its real life context. The boundaries between phenomenon and context are sometimes not clearly defined. Therefore the boundaries have to be described and identified clearly since the beginning. Research questions help to define the focus of the case study.\textsuperscript{24}

Case studies offer an opportunity to study contemporary events with two important elements that improve the final result: interviews and a direct observation of a situation. The event of our study is to understand how cooperation take place among these countries and to discover if it has been affected by previous decisions, the way institutions work or by actors’ interests. A case study can be either explanatory or exploratory. In this case study data will be crucial because the theories will offer tools to look for explanations and will prove if the issue recognized at the beginning of the study was true.

This case study of cooperation, on a cross border area, was chosen because it can make this research can represent an example for the future, when other countries with different structures and a culture of no cooperation feel affected by the Europeanization process. The researcher will not try to prove generality but there are always certain similarities with other case studies (such as the one done by Carmen Moniz Sánchez in another Spanish-Portuguese

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid, p 152-3.
border area divided by the Guadiana river).\(^{25}\) The research, with a deductive methodological approach, was influenced by the choice of themes and the research questions.\(^{26}\) In order to compare the information obtained in the interviews it will be needed some sort of comparative study that will look at institutions and compare data to develop a theory on cross-border cooperation.\(^{27}\)

According to institutional analysis, institutions are bodies that shape the behaviour of their members creating roles, procedures and rules. Institutions have culture, tradition and values of their own that affect society.\(^{28}\) The two studied regions can be seen as a ‘natural group’ because they are in almost permanent contact for different reasons (economy, movement of workers…). Regions, when comparing them, have to share common characteristics: economic (both are in the EU’s market), political (both are democratic countries) and social (they share the Iberian identity, catholic religion…).\(^{29}\)

The non-physical boundaries can be difficult to differentiate, in this case, because of the closeness and similarities that these two regions have, like: historical, cultural and linguistic connections. This research will focus on the way cooperation takes place among the municipalities and on finding the reasons for cooperation.

The reading of an author has influenced this case study. Tanja Börzel studied cooperation among the regions within Spain and Germany. The findings of her investigation offered an interesting perspective to the researcher. It affected how data was analysed and there will be a section explaining her findings.

The material used in the research is varied: books, journals, informative material obtained during the research time in that region and after, when the research was already started. Data was mainly collected through interviews on both sides of the border and it will be analysed by looking at the means of cooperation.

### 2.3 - Interviews -

Interviews are one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Biklen in Ely, M, an interview is “.... *A purposeful conversation usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) that is directed by one in order to get*"
Linking data to propositions is achieved by using a “pattern-matching” idea. Different pieces of information that belong to the same case study can be related to the theoretical proposition. Interviews were not just asking questions and receiving answers; they took place in face-to-face meetings, and the questions were structured and standardized. This way of interviewing has different strengths and weaknesses. The pre-established and standardized questions were made in the same order so that the interviewer played a neutral role and rational responses were stressed out. A set of questions developed by Geoffrey Gooch in earlier studies of border areas was used for the interviews. The questions dealt with: relations at local, regional and national level, environmental and water management issues and the way relation is developed between the different levels. Those interviewed were local authorities and NGOs that dealt with water management in that region. There were thirteen interviews conducted on the Spanish side plus four on the Portuguese side. Interviews were very important as they took place in the institutions. In that way the researcher could observe the administrative culture and understand better the differences among them. Interviewees were chosen according to the place where the municipality was placed; having priority the ones that were near the Miño river and others that were chosen because they had a possible interesting element for the study. Most of the interviewees were officials, in some cases from different administrative levels, so that there was consistency on the acquired data. It was important that there were interviews on the Portuguese side in order to know their opinion about the issues that the Spanish authorities explained. There are some cross border municipalities that were not interviewed for different reasons, although there were two weeks devoted to the interviews in the region. This will limit the research but there is another element that is crucial when talking about interviews: the language. Language becomes another limitation because interviews were answered in Portuguese and Spanish and the translation into English (for this thesis) of certain images or ideas was sometimes difficult. The translator might affect the translation as the interpretation of terminology or images might differ from the actual one. An interview could last around forty minutes. The meetings were formally pre-established in most of the cases but in some cases there was no need of making appointments. The

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33 Jean Monnet Professor in European Integration in Linköping’s University, Sweden. Supervisor of the researcher and researcher of the department of Political Science.
34 The researcher tried to avoid this problem by using methods of translation learned in previous linguistic studies.
interviews took place at the beginning of September 2002, during the fifteen days that the researcher stayed in the area.

The interviews had twenty-one questions in total that were divided into different sections, in that way, there was an order within the interview. At the end of the research there will be a section with the questions asked during the interviews.

One of the reasons to make explorative interviews was that there were few studies on this issue and the area investigated (North of Portugal and South Galicia) had not many publications. The regions of study share a common thing; water quantity is not a big problem because it is not scarce, but water management can differ within a same region. The goal of this research is to learn if there is cooperation between the countries and regions and on which basis.

Structured interviews are usually taped, video recorded or written down; data is transcribed after the interview is completed. These interviews were taped, translated and transcribed from Spanish or Portuguese into English. The interviews were presented in Spanish on both sides. The Portuguese authorities had no problem understanding the questions due to the closeness of the languages and because this is a frontier region. The Portuguese authorities living on trans-border areas have a good understanding of Spanish. Wittgenstein believes that the language used is important in interviews. The words and language used when answering represent a reality for the interviewee.

The researcher had to rely on the honesty and accuracy of participants’ responses when they answered the questions in the interviews. A characteristic found, through the case study, can be measured through self-report.

There are strengths when using interviews. For example: there are meetings face to face with the informants in which large amounts of data can be obtained quickly and they are valuable to notice complex interconnections in social relationships. Data was collected in the natural setting to provide a background perspective. On the other hand there are also some weaknesses that should be remembered. Data can be open to misinterpretation due to cultural differences. The researcher has to rely on the honesty of those providing the data and on the influence that they might have suffered. Another weakness is that if the responses of the interviewees are not sincere those will affect the results. The validity and reliability of a study

35 Interviews were organized after topics.
36 The researcher considered that officials of municipalities or associations would be limited if they answered in a language that was not their mother tongue.
can be a problem when interviews become the main source of information. In order to avoid these weaknesses interviews were done on both sides of the border to contrast the information.

Interviews were an easy way to get updated information of what was going on in the area. It also helped the researcher understand the background, the institutional setting, the relations and ways of cooperation among the interviewed. Qualitative interviewing offered a wider possibility of getting info and of understanding the problems and circumstances that affected the region of study. A comparative analysis can emerge convenient when analysing ways of cooperation. In this case the researcher brings already a political and intellectual culture, which could affect the outcomes. That is why theories are used, to help the researcher and to keep the focus of the study.40

2.4 - Previous studies–

The reading of an author, Tanja A. Börzel, played an important role in the planning of this thesis. It also affected the way the data was studied because it opened a door for this research, for that reason it becomes necessary to examine it from the researcher’s perspective.

The EU and other trans-national organizations emerged as a result of the globalisation of private capital. They promote common regional interests and address problems and issues like environmental protection in the states. The multi-level governance characterizes the decision making within the EU and the relation between the institutions in the member states and at the European level.

Decentralization has increased the participation and the difference in the public services. It has become the usual reform among the different Western European governments. The power of the state has suffered three different changes: upward, in the direction of international organizations; downwards, towards regions and cities and finally, outward, to institutions that belong to the state.41

Tanja A. Börzel studied the case of the participation of the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas (CCAA) in the European policy-making. There has been a deep institutional change in the way the intergovernmental relations take place. European issues have separated the rules of decision-making and processes; in which CCAA have certain powers. There has been a competitive regionalism with a culture of no cooperation between the CCAA themselves and with the central government. The creation of a new institutional framework for joint decision-

making promoted the cooperation among the regions and their participation in the European policymaking. The European system of multilevel governance promotes cooperation at all levels: European, national and sub-national.\textsuperscript{42} The interest of Börzel, T. was to see how, why and when did the evolving set of rules and practices, at the European level, affect Member States. The researcher will try to look at how, why and when does cooperation develop at the sub-national level (in the cross-border region North Portugal-South Galicia) and the influence of the EU when doing so.

Institutions affect the behaviour of actors by supplying them with information, financial incomes and capability. Institutions set the rules of the game and change and adapt themselves when there is a redistribution of power. The EU can be seen as a new political structure that offers resources to some actors at the same time that it imposes constrains. Historical institutionalism looks at how institutions structure the reply of a nation-state when there is new environmental legislation.\textsuperscript{43}

Börzel highlights that intergovernmental cooperation and coordination was very weak in Spain. The bilateral institutional culture\textsuperscript{44} did not help to find the benefits of cooperation. Once the regions or CCAA realised that there was a high price to pay in the no cooperation strategy, they started to develop it with the central-state government. The CCAA participate in the European policy making through cooperation between regional and central state administration. Cooperation with the central state (which coordinates European and national funds among the regions) allowed CCAA to have access to the European funding and decreased the cost of implementation and information.\textsuperscript{45}

Joint Plans and Programs identify common objectives and formulate guidelines on how to implement them at the regional level. They also set the framework for the distribution of funding’.\textsuperscript{46} These plans were used to implement some European environmental policies. There was a clear example of cooperation, with the central state and other CCAA, in the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive because of its high requirements. The CCAA developed a National Plan in the sectoral conferences and the Spanish government accepted it. Funds were distributed among the CCAA in bilateral agreements with each region and the central-state administration. Some CCAA were better prepared than others because of their

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. (2002), pp. 18-21 and 27.
\textsuperscript{44} Negotiations were between Autonomous regions and the central state, not between the regions. They saw each other like rivals that tried to get the most from the central state.
better administrative supplies and they could dominate sometimes the multilateral cooperation. This is the case of Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia and Andalucía. The Joint Plans and Programs (JPPs) are Communitarian funded-programs used to implement the European environmental policies. They reduce the cost of the implementation; while the CCAA approve and negotiate the projects. JPPs help to develop joint decision-making and to increase the participation of the CCAA in managing Cohesion Fund money. Bilateral meetings are settled if one or several CCAA have a particular demand or initiative. Bilateral meetings happen usually before the sectorial conferences. There is normally an agreement and they tend to complement rather than substitute the multilateral intergovernmental cooperation.

Portugal does not suffer the same pressure for adaptation because it is centralized state. Other possible methods may be developed in the Europeanization process. The effects of Europeanization differ according to the policy areas and to the level of capability that the regions and the EU have in certain areas. The environmental policy is more part of the EU competences than other areas like culture. Regions might lose some power in areas that were exclusive or shared competence in others where they had no competence before. The new procedures and rules for intergovernmental cooperation do not follow the model of Spanish regionalist culture. This new experience might develop other new ways of cooperation.

Institutions, therefore, change due to aging, reforms, external and internal pressures. Regions usually rely in cooperating with the central-state and their offices in Brussels to make their interests be heard, but the Committee of the Regions is the only one that actually works when talking about policy making.

There have been done other investigations on Portuguese and Spanish border areas that are divided by a river. These studies show that there has been a low level of cooperation or no cooperation that in some cases started after both countries joined the EU.

For example, the research done by Carmen Moñiz Sánchez on the Guadiana river dealt mostly with the management of river basins. According to her study it seems difficult to define the competences of public administrations of both countries at the local, regional and national level. Since 1998 the two countries have been collaborating in order to manage

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48 Ibid, pp. 204-7 (which reduces the implementation costs and ensures access to information.)
49 Ibid, pp. 223-232
50 Guadina river works as a natural border in the south Portugal and the west of Andalucía (one of the biggest regions in Spain).
shared water resources, set their duties and exchange information. Before that there were agreements in which the usage of international waters in shared river basins was improved. The coordination of all the levels and sectors of the administration is a necessity in the area of the Guadiana river. There is a relation between certain uncoordinated economic activities and later environmental problems. Coordinating both Portuguese and Spanish administrations at all levels means an adaptation at all stages to have a consistent action. According to Carmen Moñiz Sánchez, Communitarian Directives and other international agreements are creating the bases for a better management in transnational water basins.\textsuperscript{51}

A different study on an additional border area of Spain and Portugal explains that regions that are in border areas feel far away from the decision making bodies. They have just tried to regain the attention of their national centre instead of creating a positive cooperation with their closest neighbours on the other side of the border. This is the case of Extremadura\textsuperscript{52} and Portugal. Programs for the regional development started after both countries joined the EU. In this case there is no river dividing the area but the projects created by the EU like Interreg have also been used in this area. A body called “Gabinete de Iniciativas Transfonterizas” was created and sponsored by the Commission. This body tried to create and improve the cooperation among the border areas. This office started to work in 1993 to narrow the distance between regional and local institutions.\textsuperscript{53} These different studies show the importance of coordinated actions and cooperation in border areas.


\textsuperscript{52} A region in the west of Spain that limits with Portugal.

\textsuperscript{53} Gabinete de Iniciativas Transfonterizas, \texttt{http://alcazaba.unex.es/~emarmun/gabi/} (2003-05-22)
3 - Theoretical framework-

Theory development is a crucial part in case studies. For that reason, the new institutional theory, which states that institutions affect further developments, will be used to study the two regions. The approach of historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism will be used to answer the research questions. These theories will be used to see how these two local governments work from the institutional and actors’ perspective and to understand if there has been any development of the institutions since the two countries joined the EU in 1986. The research will study if the Europeanization process influenced them, if they still depend on their previous institutions or if they are affected by actors’ choices.

This case study looks at how institutions matter and why they matter when there is cooperation. It tries to understand the way institutions work, their procedure and the effects they have on cooperation. It should be clear that there are formal and informal institutions. A formal institution can be defined as a legislative or legal framework and an informal institution as a set of shared norms, ways of doing things or of interaction among organizations.⁵⁴

The interviews with officials offer an institutional and actors’ perspective that is used in the analysis. The official version on institutional cooperation can be found in books but the interviews offer a data that is related to the area of research. The terms “relation and cooperation” have different meanings and this should be observed as they implicate different connections involving the institutions and the actors.

‘Relation -(noun 1) the way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, a thing’s effect on or relevance to another… *(relations) the way in which two or more people countries, or organizations feel about and behave towards each other…’⁵⁵

‘Cooperation (also co-operation) -> noun (mass noun) the process of working together for the same end…’⁵⁶

The theories used play a significant role in this research since they offer steps to follow when analysing the data and will help to understand the reason why it has appeared cooperation. The usage of these theories (historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism) might affect the results.

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⁵⁶ Ibid, p 404. It should be noticed that the researcher wanted to define these terms from a Political Science dictionary or encyclopaedia, but they did not seem to appear in any of the ones looked up.
3.1 -New institutionalism-

This approach can study the formal institutions of government and the less "official" organisations, like the environmental groups in the regions of our study. New institutionalism has different definitions. For some authors it is connected to preferences, which are institutional options and incentives that can structure the choice of decision-making rules. According to Hall and Taylor: political science has currently three ‘new institutionalisms’ (historical, rational choice and sociological institutionalism) each one focusing on a certain situation and looking at the way institutional impact and human action work as forces. They suggest that a combination of them is the best new institutionalism. Marc and Olsen, in Peters, declare that there are seven strings of institutionalism: normative institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, empirical institutionalism, societal institutionalism and network institutionalism. The researcher has just focused on two of them; rational choice intuitionalism and historical institutionalism as they seem to be able to explain better the appearance of cooperation.

New institutionalism can also be seen as the study of institutions since they have been transformed becoming larger, more complex and more important for social life. It studies among other things: the autonomy of political institutions, the inefficiency and the symbols of the formal institutions.

Finally, the term new institutionalism assumes that there was an old institutionalism. It is necessary to look at the “old institutionalism” and to the schools of thought that were created to understand the new one (looking at the theoretical and empirical directions they took). Here, the state and social institutions affect the nature of the policy process. According to Huntington in Kamrava, institutionalism “is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability.” The state develops the rules, procedures and it acquires a path that prevails because of the political institutionalism. States operate controlling society in a country and internationally, influencing and being influenced by other states, companies and international organizations.

57 Hague, Rod and Harrop, Martin. (1982) p.8
63 Ibid. (1996), pp. 43-45
Historical institutionalists see institutions as the norms, procedures and paths to follow that are established formally or informally.\(^{64}\) The political structures can be: the different bodies or institutions, norms, rules, buildings, workers, ideas, behaviour, symbols, internal organisation and many more.\(^{65}\) As Gronnegaard Christensen sees it, institutions do not only try to survive but have their own tools to avoid change and to keep the patterns of behaviours.\(^{66}\)

### 3.2 -Historical Institutionalism- (Structural Perspective)-

Once new institutionalism is understood better then it is possible to study historical institutionalism or the structural perspective. The old institutionalism tended to see that there was a mutual influence of the state and the society in a long-term pattern. The new institutionalism saw that there was just one direction of interaction, from society to politics.\(^{67}\) Historical institutionalists think that policy choices, which are made earlier in history, determine the final decisions, help to understand the way a policy develops and follow the previous path. Finally, only a strong political force can change the ‘path dependency’ created by an initial decision.\(^{68}\)

Other authors believe that the structure of the institution is what affects society and creates the path dependency, not the way it works. Cross-national comparisons show the effect that political institutions have on the way organisations, citizens and legislators connect or relate.\(^{69}\) This study will compare the way cooperation is understood among the different institutions on the border and try to find if there is a link between the current institutional procedures and the previous way of working.

The approach of historical institutionalism looks at the way the institutions adapt themselves to the new necessities and at the way they depend on the already established institutions. Börzel, T. argues that to be able to understand the domestic impact of Europeanization, the instrumental and the cultural dimension of institutions should be taken into account.\(^{70}\) There is an interdependence of society and political institutions. Political institutions are connected to the symbols and ideas that society has assimilated and that politicians use to get public support and to establish policies. The political elite are the one that create and define the structures and procedures that institutions will follow and how policy issues will be

\(^{64}\) Hall and Taylor, (1996), p.938
\(^{65}\) March and Olsen, (1984), p.741
\(^{66}\)Peters, (1999), p. 67
\(^{67}\)Ibid, pp.9-10
\(^{68}\) Ibid, p.19
\(^{69}\) Hall and Taylor, (1996), p.937
understood. In that way they become political actors. Therefore political systems are dependent on society and vice versa. 71

A path dependency starts when an institution is created and from the moment a policy choice is made. This will have effect on time influencing future policies. Peter Hall believes that policies are influenced and shaped by ideas, institutions and policy choices. The patterns created by a ‘new’ policy will affect future policies. The development of the path dependency will work on the improvement of the previous rules or structures created by institutions. Institutions themselves have to adapt to new situations and to develop new policies when the ones created previously were inadequate. The researcher looks at the evolution, to the way institutions are influenced, to the development and finally to the outcome. 72 When cooperation takes place there are different groups getting involved in one issue; this might affect the result, choices and procedures. Administrators need the consent of the organized institutions to make a change or to find an alternative; the institution will study the consequences. Therefore we have that a networking will affect the alternatives chosen. It is possible to predict the result of a negotiation by looking at the actors that are participating and to rules that were previously eliminated (the ones that did not offer the right solution).73

According to what Verdier says, institutions or policy networks are generated to ease insecurity and its effects. Policy networks (created by politicians) manipulate and affect the way social preferences are symbolized. 74

Institutions moreover affect the hopes that individuals might have and the actions they will perform. Customs become part of the human being and dependency on them is created easily because institutions do not change whereas situations around individuals do change. When individuals think that institutions need change, institutions themselves have already given them the options that individuals will choose; institutions control the process since the very beginning.75 Other authors think that institutions affect politics and limit the results in a way, but there is always another fact that starts the process and affects the outcomes.76

71 March and Olsen, (1984), pp.737-739
72 Peters, (1999), pp.63-65
73 March and Olsen, (1984), p.78
76 Steinmo, Sven and Thelen, Kathleen and Longstreth, Frank. (1992), Structuring Politics. Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis. Cambridge University Press, USA, p. 3.
Institutionalist, as Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo see it, ‘are interested in the whole range of state and social institutions that shape how political actors define their interests and that structure their relations of power to other groups’.77

There are certain weaknesses in this theory that will be minimized by the researcher; as it provides little or no capacity to predict change and it is also more descriptive than explanatory.78 On the other hand, historical institutionalism facilitates a better understanding of the impact of political institutions in the relations among institutions and individuals. 79

3.3 - Rational Choice Institutionalism- (Actor Perspective)-

The approach of rational choice proposes to analyse human behaviour; in that way an actor’s interest approach can be extended to explain a wide range of situations. It can provide new ways to identify non-rational elements in processes, events or situations that affect human behaviour.80

Rational choice is a normative theory that establishes what should be done in order to accomplish our aims or goals. It does not work on which should be the aims of the actors but on the means used to get their goal. Rational choice is descriptive; in this theory there are some recognised choices that follow a pattern.81 Elster Jon declares that: ‘According to the principle of methodological individualism, there do not exist collective desires or collective beliefs’.82 This will question the concept of political culture as institutions or political parties would not represent the will of the citizens. It is assumed, in this research, that there is a level of representation of collective desire and beliefs in those authorities or institutions that are elected democratically.

Downs (in Hindess) believes that individuals are ‘utility maximizers’, which means that they try to achieve the most from the available resources to achieve their goals.83 It can be thought that institutions will work in the same way and will try to obtain the same, if not more results than individuals. Institutions might, as seen before, affect the way individuals act but they can also be affected by individuals, as they are a part of the institutions.

For Downs, the main goal of politicians is usually to: create policies, to be rewarded while they are in office and to win the next elections. Voters that support politicians also study the

82 Ibid, p.3.
programs, the benefits they will bring to society and the cost that changes will have for society in general and for them in particular. Olson sees that special interests are very often situated within the government themselves. So, in that way, personal interests come together and get institutional representation. It can be a political party, interest group or any other form of association. There is a bargaining any time there is cooperation. A group must satisfy certain requirements to be able to enjoy the benefits of cooperation.

Supposing that in politics, people strive for election or re-election to public office or for national self-interest in international affairs or for political recognition and social status; then, it is possible to explain, predict and describe their behaviour.

Rational choice approach claims to be able to produce great results by just studying a few relative assumptions. There are three assumptions, according to Hollis in Hindess that provide a useful starting point for rational choice: a) actors are rational and are able to be sensible when they have to choose between different ends. b) Actors are self-interested too and c) they do not need to be located within specific groups because they are social atoms.

There are two problems when using rational choice: first, the normative and explanatory role of the theory assumes that its notion is clear; second, it cannot tell us what rationality requires and why sometimes people or institutions do not behave rationally.

There are game situations in bargaining. The final outcome depends on the behaviour of the groups that have completed different interests while trying to maximize their own outcome. Ethics is the theory that considers the common interests of society and maximizes the utility of moral value. What the researcher has to look at then is if cooperation takes place in form of game theory or of ethics theory. A researcher using data in a case study can describe a situation and study which kind of interests develop cooperation.

A cooperative game can have different outcomes depending on the negotiation rules that govern the bargaining process. An agreement among actors, on the costs of the fulfilment of certain requirements, is achieved by bargaining. Rules play an important role and usually follow a pattern (in which past experiences affect the way things are done now). Informal institutions are social norms, ways of doing things, procedures and customs. They affect the bargaining process. In that sense, when analysing data it will become crucial to remember the

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85 Elster, Jon (1986) p 84.
86 Where rationality is understood in a utilitarian way.
89 Elster, Jon. (1986), pp.88-9
90 Ibid, pp.100-2
role of the EU when setting rules, procedures, requirements and outcomes in cooperation. It is interesting to think about how cooperation would develop if the EU would not promote cooperation and affect it with its rules. Rational choice needs testable propositions that once experienced can explain political behaviour.

Political scientists label rational choice as “public choice”. An actor will choose a rational action based on an election among the preferences and the achievement of the maximum benefits at the lower costs. This is a process in which individual actions are unified to generate a social outcome. Coleman in Zey states that ‘collective behaviour is a simple (and rational) transfer of control over one’s actions to another actor…. made unilaterally, not as part of an exchange’. Actions (or the control of them) are transferred to others that wish to maximize the benefit. According to what Coleman believes: individuals’ maximation create balance within the general public, because there is, then, a balance of control among some actors. Collective rationality can be understood as the consequence of a public rational dialogue that aims to obtain a common good. In a political process the community forms and supports a decision. One of the downsides to rational choice could be that it cannot explain most social relationships on which society and organizations are based on. Institutional rational choice is used to understand the way institutions and individuals cooperate to create preferences. Institutions limit and influence individual behaviour at the same time as it offers structures and mechanisms in which individuals see that their aims can be better accomplished. Constancy and prediction on the results can be achieved when an institution is involved. Formal and informal structures work in the channelling of a rational action.

Power relations are two-sided when talking about cooperation. Powers or institutions try to maximize as much as possible and to benefit from cooperation. The elite can be considered the powerful group in politics and the citizens or general population the weak one. The researcher should analyse who and what has a stronger influence on cooperation. The elites involved in cooperation change the way cooperation takes place, the procedures and the final aims.

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93 ibid, p.18
96 (regional, national, local or international elite)
There are some problems when using rational choice as the predictions of rational choice analysis are not subject to unequivocal test. There is also sometimes little relationship between the institutions described in the theory and the ones with which members are familiarised. In order to solve this there should be a simplification in the models but this can eliminate details that show life in an institution.³⁷

Rational choice claims to be an empirical science, consequently, its results have to be evaluated empirically. The results of the research might appear different to what it was expected compared to other theories.

3.4 -Analytical tools-

The theoretical framework used to understand the appearance of cooperation is both historical institutionalism and rational choice. The event, which the researcher will try to analyse using the analytical tools that these theories offer us, will enable us to classify, analyse and understand the findings. There are limitations in the theory that should be taken into account; otherwise the final outcomes will not demonstrate the correct information. A theory is a way of understanding reality; therefore we should be open to recognize which of these two relied theories contribute most to our understanding of the development of cooperative relations on the Spanish-Portuguese border.

Historical institutionalism’s theory will enable us to see the way in which formal and informal institutions influence the ways and means of cooperation.

- The researcher will try to find out if there is a path dependency that will affect cooperation (in case there was cooperation before) and explain the reasons why there is cooperation.
- The influence of the EU, as an external actor, on issues like cooperation will be examined and the procedures and regulation, which Member States of the EU have to follow, will create another element of analysis.

Rational choice institutionalism could also explain the reason why there is or there is not cooperation, as there is always a certain level of bargaining among several actors.

- It will be possible to understand who and what influences cooperation. The maximizing idea of rational choice will be tested, in order to understand the phenomena better.

Institutions and individuals create preferences. There is another factor to be considered, if institutions offer structures and influence the individual behaviour, what and how actors influence institutions. The EU might appear here as a new institutional element that not only influences but also chooses which are the correct models of cooperation and reinforces them, in some cases, with funds. Here rational choice will analyse the role of funds as a goal in cooperation.
4. -Background-

It seems necessary, for the researcher, to have a general background of the characteristics of the administration, government, society and region of study. This will offer a better understanding of the circumstances that influence the region and institutions.

4.1 -Political Culture, civil society and public participation-

It is interesting to see how these elements affect and are affected by institutions. The differences among society and institutions need to be understood from a theoretical perspective. It is important to understand the meaning of these terms and to study the characteristics that they have according to the place institutions are settled; that is, on which side of the border they are.

4.1.1 -Political culture-

Political culture plays an important role in this study because it affects the way people and institutions interact. To be able to understand a better and further description of the political culture in the area around the Miño river it is necessary to understand the broad meaning of the term.

Political culture can be perceived as the values and beliefs of people when thinking about politics. To acquire a political culture is a diffuse process in which the role of institutions, education, family and society has a great effect. As Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, after Almond, see it, there are three types of political culture: parochial (in societies where citizens are passive actors), participant (where the citizens are aware that they can play an active part in politics) and civil culture (where the citizen is active enough in politics to express personal preferences and would not refuse or accept decisions made by the political powers). The political powers can be seen as the elite. Elite can have their own political culture with their beliefs and attitudes about politics. They can have their own view of how politics and society work. Elite takes an important role in policy making because they represent society.

4.1.2 -Civil society and interest groups-

Civil society can influence governments by getting involved in campaigns, in community groups and by individual contacts with officials. There are different ways in which people

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99 Ibid, p. 64-7
participate; it depends on: their education, the access to information, the free time and the social status. The political elite will act according to the pressure created by those interested in politics, like: party workers or pressure groups. A government also needs popular support (from civil society and interest groups) to keep its legitimacy. Civil society can be seen as public associations that can exert certain control and limit the power of the state. Civil society represents ‘the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, and bound by legal order or set of shared values’. Victor Pérez-Díaz argues that a civil society requires a consensus on rules and procedures. It is a complicated and sophisticated institutional constrict that requires the right environment because it is very fragile. This research studies interviews made to the elite and interest groups because they represent, influence and are influenced by society. It seems relevant to know not only the point of view of the elite when talking about cooperation and water management but to hear other levels of active society. Interest groups are a way of public participation that acts as intermediary between states and individuals. It can be an organisation of individuals that share certain characteristics, interests or identity. The new types of communication affect the interactions among individuals. Their main goal is to influence public policy and the decisions made by the government. This is a difference with the political parties that try to be in the government and try not to influence but to change policies. There is a division between interest groups. According to the Blondel’s classification, there are: customary (e.g. ethnic groups), institutional (e.g., military, church), protective (e.g. trade unions) and finally promotional groups (e.g. environmental groups). Promotional groups generally promote or value certain activities and try to influence the government by the usage of public opinion, publicity and pressure. They defend the interests of their members and do not hesitate being controversial in order to influence more. The channels used to influence society and government can be connections with the elite or bureaucracy, political parties and mass media. Mass media is used to address the

100 A high social status will make them more respectful when giving opinions.
105 Hague and Harrop (1982), pp. 75-78.
106 Ibid, p.79.
population in general but the journalists are the ones that choose which issues are relevant and that gives them power of decision. Specialised environmental groups offer expert information that helps in a way the mass media.\textsuperscript{107} Sanctions are the biggest threat to governments and the strength of the reports on illegal actions will depend on the commitment of the group.

4.1.3 –Portuguese political culture -

There was a national survey in Portugal that showed that from 1978 until 1993 there was a decrease of the involvement of interest groups in general. The ones that increased were the ones related to sports, religious and cultural associations. According to Thomas Bruneau, interest groups might not have supervised parties in a period, as this survey shows, because they were not very influential.\textsuperscript{108} Portugal has been influenced by different elements since it entered the EU. As Jose M. Magone sees it, the Maastricht Treaty, for example, introduced the concept of social and economic cohesion in the EU. This produced a change of attitudes because trans-national interest organizations showed the possibility of changing the bargaining behaviour. There was a fostering of the culture of cooperation with the European integration process. Before 1986 Portuguese interest groups were characterised by individualism.\textsuperscript{109}

Political culture in Portugal can be classified as 'semiperipherical cultures' because there is not a homogeneous pattern of values. According to a study done at the Technical University of Lisbon, there are four different political cultures: ‘\textit{meritocratic individualism}’ (very traditional, anticommunist, pro-Catholic and class-conscious), ‘\textit{egalitarianism}’ (democratic, radical and from a low social class), ‘\textit{collectivists and conflictual}’ (antifascists, against domination and supporters of the well-being of the state) and ‘\textit{fatalism}’ (not interested in politics and conservative). The three first groups can be usually found in urban or metropolitan areas and the last in the rural areas, mainly among farmers.\textsuperscript{110} These different political cultures create different attitudes towards the political power, political structure and church. There cannot be a strong civil society because the political culture in Portugal is different across the country. This social attitude is a reflection of how is the public participation; there is no cohesion between the different groups.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, pp. 86-91.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, pp.158-159.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, pp. 157-9.
In the case of Portugal there seems to be as well a connection between social integration, economic participation and employment. The Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Portugal are most of the time working to control and limit the power of the state.\textsuperscript{112} Environmental associations are playing a crucial role in environmental education and in offering their expertise to the local and national government. This has become very important for the local authorities, as they usually need more workers and because the information environmental associations offer them is needed in most of the cases. The history of these associations changed with the introduction of two new laws in 1987, just after the European Year of the Environment. The laws helped these associations because they set a legal framework for their activities and because they gave them a place in the political system. There was a will to give citizens the right to participate at the local level and to improve the quality of life.

The support from the national government was an important issue that increased the number of associations. Most of the environmental associations were in coastal regions and worked at national, regional and local level.\textsuperscript{113} A national confederation was created in 1991, the Portuguese Confederation of Associations for the Protection of the Environment. This was an important step in the Portuguese civil society since it was the beginning of a change into cooperation. The members of the confederation were usually young people who offered their expertise to the local authorities and worked on issues like: environmental education or identification of polluters.\textsuperscript{114} Environmental associations are therefore contributing to the participation of the public and the civil society and to the modernisation of the administrative structures. They are improving the transparency of decision-making and helping the environment.\textsuperscript{115} Creating an interest group is not easy because they have to be recognized, licensed and accepted by the state if they want to participate and influence the political process. Political culture was influenced before by class values, corruption, favouritism and an unclear distinction between private and public. It is important, according to Howard J. Wiarda that political culture has moved towards a free, European-oriented and democratic culture.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, pp. 146-152.
\textsuperscript{113} Magone (1997), pp. 152-3.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, pp. 154-5.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, pp. 156-7.
4.1.4 –Spanish political culture-

Spain also joined the EU in 1986, which meant that some major changes had to take place. The high rate of unemployment, the static economy and the inability to create a Spanish collective identity, which would include the Catalan and Basque national identity, were seen as big problems. Spain seemed to handle the problem of peripherical nationalistic problems with a constitutional frame that stood a basis for the civic collective identity. There was an element that helped the process in the areas where there were strong national identities, the blend of people living there.

Jose Amodia, sociologist, claims that: “Spaniards have shown a great weakness when it comes to organizing themselves into units or groups that will form a stable social pattern capable of withstanding the tensions and struggles that are normally generated within the boundaries of any nation”.

There are many differences within the country. Each autonomous region has its own culture, folklore and characteristics. For this reason it is difficult to talk about a Spanish Political culture in general. There are deep regional differences and the Spanish society includes groups that are culturally and linguistically distinct from the rest of the country. Some Spanish people feel in many areas more related and identified with their region than with their nation. According to a country study, the culture of the seventeen autonomous regions form part of a rich and varied Spanish political culture.

Civil society is not strong, structured and feels not responsible of public problems. There is not a concept of collective responsibility but there are starting to appear changes. Society does not seem to fully incorporate women into the labour market. There is a need of change, adaptation and innovation in the labour market. There is a lack of technical workers and a high level of unemployed university graduated students.

On the other hand, according to Claudio Magris, there is an important evolution and an intense cultural expansion. ‘My impression is that Spain has experienced a transformation in the last years and there is a huge development of the civil society’. The Spanish civil society supported the European Membership but it was afraid of the complex and difficult process that it involved. The nationalistic mentality changed into a

119 This is, for example, the case of the Basques, Catalans and Galicians.
121 www.fund-encuentro.org/informes/infol998.htm, (2003-03-02)
communitarian one. The fact that the previously divided Spanish nationalistic society became more unified, due to a new element that was seen as positive by everyone, it helped to create this image of seeing themselves more European. The fact that society was well informed helped the assimilation of the process.\textsuperscript{123}

As Closa sees it: since Spain joined the EU, Europeanism has become very important for the Spanish political culture; it even became a condition to recover the national self-respect.\textsuperscript{124} National and European projects seem to be connected from the point of view of the public opinion. Spanish people do not fear the European integration and do not feel that their language, culture and identity are in danger.\textsuperscript{125}

There has been an instrument of information that has been used in both countries. The EU directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) tried to help associations and to make society be part of the local decision-making process. In this way the national decision-making process would become more democratic and more transparent.\textsuperscript{126} The Portuguese government did not implement the directive until two years after the deadline. There was something significant, the government did not adhere the requirement to consult the public, which was one of the main goals of the directive.\textsuperscript{127}

Environmental Impact studies need the citizens’ opinion. They habitually participate through a citizen or environmental association. Information like the non-technical summary (NTS) is offered before going to the meetings. The opinions of the citizens go directly to the President of the Institute of Environmental Promotion. This has become an important element in the participation of the citizens in the environmental policy making.\textsuperscript{128}

\textbf{4.2 - Levels of governance in Spain and Portugal - Multilevel Governance and State centric.}

There have been shifts of responsibilities between the existing levels of government in the Europeanization process. This has become an interesting element of study in this research. It is interesting to see that there was an important actor that is influencing the development of these two countries, the EU. According to Hooghe and Marks, the EU is pushing for multi-level governance in which the decision-making is dispersed across different territorial levels.

\textsuperscript{123} \url{www.iadb.org/int/DRP/esp/red1/Documentos/BassolsMemorandum09-02esp.pdf}, (2003-05-02)
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid. p. 6.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. p. 156.
There are two models of governance, multi-level and state-centric. In the first case, the multi-level governance, the policy-making authority is shared across the different levels of government: the supranational, national and sub national. There are domestic interests reflected in the policy-making. Subnational actors can operate at the national and supranational level. The share of power supports the interconnection of multi-levels and is against the separation of international and domestic politics. Member states have to accept the collective decision-making and implement the rules the EU sets or enforces even if it does not suit their necessities. 129

In the other model, state-centrists argue that the state is strengthened through the European integration. There are supranational actors that provide member states with information and aid them. 130 The state is the decision maker and the supranational institutions have limited power. The power of Member states will be reflected in the results of the negotiations. The supranational level has only a little effect on the results and unanimity is necessary when there is an important decision-making. That shows, from the state-centric perspective, that there can be an individual and collective control of the results.131

4.3 -De-centralized government - Spain-

According to different authors Spain can be seen as a unitary state with plenty of developments that make it be near federalism. There were regions with historic past and with ethnic nationalism that received autonomy before other regions in the country, when democracy was establishing.132

Federalism is also seen as the shared sovereignty of the central state and the regional governments, each one with their specific functions. 133 It is typical to see federalism in large countries (either in population or area) and when there is ethnic diversity (different language, culture and descent). Federations are not fortuitous creations; they emerge by agreement when a constitution is taking place. There are motives for creating a federation: for security, and for market or economic enlargement.134

131 Ibid, pp. 2-3.
A multi-level system has regional and provincial governments that work as intermediates with other levels. A characteristic of the territorial governance is that there are negotiations between the levels. The method used for distribution of power is devolution. Here the regional governments are given some decision-making autonomy in lower levels. The type of institutional organisation of Spain (as regional country) was created according to: a division of territories that had a cultural, linguistic and historical background. The legislative powers that regional authorities have vary from region to region. As regional country, the constitution defines the status and responsibilities of the regions and state. The central government tries to maintain involvement on many issues; municipalities have not many functions and are dependant on the regional-central governmental decisions. In Spain there was a decentralisation and transfer of responsibilities to the Autonomous Communities in many areas (including environmental protection). This transfer of responsibilities to lower levels of government gave them more self-management but in very few cases financial independence.

Spain can be seen as a de-centralized state too. We should notice that, according to Ferrán Requejo, federalism is not the same as decentralisation. He sees federation as a division of powers between different territorial levels. The de-centralized state has a political unit in which there is also a dispersation of powers, from the centre to other centres. It is possible to say that Spain is semi-federal because some of the minority groups are not politically content and would like more self-governing. It can also be a plural semi-federalism because there is will to establish institutions and procedures that will protect the minority from the decision of the majority. There are three characteristics that define plural federalism according to Ferrán Requejo: a constitutional regulation of the federalism, a regulation of symmetrical agreements for the self-governing and a recognition and self-government for minority national groups.

Tanja A. Börzel thinks that in Spain there was a competitive regionalism as a strategy to protect their autonomy when there was a centralization process. This has changed with the Europeanization process in which there was a greater cooperation and by the creation of ‘the

first institutional framework of multilateral cooperation in Spanish intergovernmental relations.
It brought joint decision-making and a big change in the territorial institutions. In Spain there are various national groups coexisting, sharing a specific identity and culture. In some cases there is even a historical tradition, a linguistic difference and a clear territorial division that distinguish them from others. All these factors created regionally de-centralized policies.

4.4 -Centralized government -Portugal-

Portugal is a centralized state and follows the model of unitary government. In this case subnational authorities can implement and make policies but they need the permission of the central government. There is continuous bargain between the levels of government. Portugal has many of the elements that could make it a perfect candidate to have a unitary government, according to Hague and Harrop. It had a history of emperors or monarchs, it is a small democracy and it had not ethnic division. They also suggest three ways in which power is moved to other levels: deconcentration, which affects the employees of the administration who will not be near the central departments; decentralization, when local authorities and other agencies have policy execution; devolution, when regional and local level acquire autonomy for decision making in some issues. Portugal is a ‘Napoleonic-style’ country that follows the French model and has the structure of a unitary state. A detailed legislation determines the tasks and responsibilities in order to have efficiency.

The relationships of the local governments with the central government differ. In a dual system we have staff moving horizontally from one authority to another, although there is a clear separation between central and local government. In a fused system we have staff moving vertically, here the local government forms part of a national uniform system of administration. In Portugal the government transferred responsibilities to local governments in areas like environmental issues. There has been a transfer of responsibilities (deconcentration) from central ministries to local offices, remaining part of the central government but becoming closer to the citizens.

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141 Ibid, p 212.
4.5 -Administration-

It seems necessary for the researcher to look at the way in which the governments and institutions of these two countries work. The differences among the levels of governance and the way in which institutions work should be understood, first, before starting the analysis.

4.5.1 -Administration in a decentralised state’s model: Spain-

Spain is a constitutional monarchy. The executive powers are given to the Council of Ministers and the legislative ones are given to the government. The autonomous regions have both legislative and executive powers (e.g. in environmental issues), which are exclusive or shared with the central government (through sectorial conferences with representatives of both levels). Coordination is needed for: the implementation of EU policies and actions, and for the management of the European structural funds.

The EU has power through: the implementation of EU’s law and the Commission that has regulatory powers in environment. There are seventeen autonomous regions in the country. Regional institutions are governed by their own statute of autonomy. Municipal institutions share their responsibilities with the regional government, but they are financially dependant on the central government. The responsibilities that the municipalities have depend on the size of their population.142

Civil society representatives are present in sectoral commissions (e.g. The Advisory Council for Environment) and in plenary commissions (like the National Water Council which is the highest advisory body on water issues). The consultative body has civil society representatives and the advisory Environmental Council includes: members of the regional government, environmental NGOs and environmentally specialised university departments. They meet every four months or when a third of its members request it. There is a bigger participation in the consultative body because municipalities try to encourage the public to participate in local environmental policies.143

4.5.2 -Administration in a centralised state’s model: Portugal-

The state has been changing the structure into a more balanced and decentralized structure. The central government is the highest public body; there are other government agencies and institutions that coordinate the local administrative bodies. At the regional and local level: a network of local commissions covers the country. There are in total 335 municipalities that

142 www.1upinfo.com/country-guide-study/spain/spain123.html
are divided into 18 districts. A governor appointed by the Minister of Internal Administration is the head of each district.\textsuperscript{144}

The self-governing political organs in Portugal are: the President, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, the Parliament and the Supreme Court. The organs that are not self-governing are the autonomous regions and the local authorities. The central government, the autonomous regions, local authorities and councils co-operate to promote the social and economic development so that there are no differences and insularity. The central government hears the regional ones when there are issues that worry them.\textsuperscript{145}

There are two autonomous regions, Azores and Madeira, which have their own governmental bodies and political and economic structures.

The government is the body that develops general policies. The President of the Republic is elected after a democratic election and he/she nominates the Prime Minister after listening to the Parliament and the election results. The Parliament is the representative assembly of Portuguese people.\textsuperscript{146}

Portuguese public administration is complex in both local and central level.\textsuperscript{147} The capacity, environment and morale that employees have in the administration can make the administration more effective and can erase the negative image that public officials had during the authoritarian rule and that society still remembers. Information about the position citizens have in Portuguese administration helps the modernisation process as they learn to exercise pressure and understand their role and rights. To achieve this there must be also a reform on the way administration works by for example: local levels getting managerial authority and getting a change in the finance of the managerial system.\textsuperscript{148}

\textbf{4.6 -EU Membership-}

This research will try to understand the role or influence of the EU in border cooperation. To understand the current influence of the EU it is necessary to see the development of the Iberian countries since they got the EU membership and the influence that they experienced in the past. The development of these two countries might show similarities or differences that could go on in the present; in both cases it seems necessary to study it.

\textsuperscript{144} \url{www.culturelink.org/culpol/portugal.html}, (2002-11-05)
\textsuperscript{145} \url{www.portugal.gov.pt/en/Political+System/Default.htm}, (2002-11-05)
\textsuperscript{146} \url{www.presidenterepublica.pt/en/republica/dados/}, (2002-11-05)
When these two countries entered the European Union (EU), most of the Western European countries had powerful governments that could intervene in the economy redistributing it. Nowadays this is different as governments work now coordinating and facilitating the way to other powerful actors in society.\(^\text{149}\)

Spain and Portugal joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986. Since then there have been many changes in both countries at all levels but they have kept their different political structures. To be able to understand the way this two regions work we have to look at the administrative, social and cultural perspectives.

The Spanish administration, in contrast with the Portuguese administration, faced the adaptation to the Community legislation in force at once. As a result there was a large policy overload. There were not enough mechanisms of cooperation, among the Autonomous Communities and the central-state, to manage the resources in the implementation process.\(^\text{150}\)

### 4.6.1 -Spain-

Spain underwent a deep social transformation and a spectacular economic development.\(^\text{151}\)

Federation developed step by step. There is still a dual identity (national and regional identity) that was the root of the federation process of the Autonomous Regions. Citizens accepted it and were loyal to the regional and state institutions. There is a characteristic of Spanish social life: it is complex and fragmented.

We can say that there is majority nationalism (when there is a movement towards national assimilation) and minority nationalism (when sub-state communities desire political structures for self-government). Decentralized Spain has competitive actions between: the state and sub-state nationalism and regionalism but there is no need to eliminate any of them in that competition. Language, dialects, regional accents and territorial division are characteristics of Spanish regional identity. In some cases there are frictions between the different levels of governance and the coexistence of political institutions.\(^\text{152}\) None of the regions wants to be left behind but want to keep the claimed differences that some historical regions (Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia) claim to have. Regions that do not have that historical background want the same treatment and fair share of power.\(^\text{153}\) According to what the


\(^{152}\) Moreno, Luis.(2001) p. 86 and pp. 90-92

\(^{153}\) Ibid, p. 97
constitution states the three levels of public power must try to reach a balance in income, economic development and standards of living among the different regions. Europeanization led to the centralization of certain administrative and legal competences of the regions that before were protected by the Constitution. This created a change in the balance of the distribution of power; it was a lost for the regions. The information the regions got about the European affairs was through the central-state. Spanish regions were only lobbying activities on European funding (e.g. development, Cohesion Fund…) and, as an exception, influencing, in a way, the formulation of regulatory policies (e.g. Environment). Water management and many other issues are competence of the Ministry of Environment. Finally, the municipalities and regions have also powers in the environmental field. The lack of intergovernmental cooperation influenced the implementation of European policies in an ineffective way, creating additional costs to the central and regional administrations.

4.6.2 -Portugal-

European membership transformed the country from: closed, state-oriented, highly controlled and inward looking society to a democratic, citizen-oriented, open and outward looking society. Portugal acquired and developed a political role since it joined the European Community on 1986 and the Western European Union (WEU) in 1988. The development of Portugal’s official position in European issues has been directly related to changes in the position of the main political parties and the public opinion that has continually supported European integration. There were two phases in Portugal’s membership. The first one was characterized by a desire to get the greatest benefit in development from the membership and by a self-image of peripheral country in the EU. The second phase was characterized by the end of the restricted involvement on issues that were relevant to the interests of the country. Portugal got involved in issues of European integration, started to have European identity and got a big public support.

154 Ibid, p. 99
The globalisation of financial markets has reduced the control of the state over its economy. Portugal still has state-local relationships that are still in competition and politicised. Local authorities still suffer certain control from the central government and the social classes have still a notorious role in the political and institutional organization.\textsuperscript{161} As a state centric-model state it is still a crucial political actor but its role is based now in the coordination and union of private and public resources.\textsuperscript{162} The membership in the EU helped the economic growth with more trade ties and funds that helped to improve the infrastructure of the country. The economy of Portugal is based on traditional industries such as textiles, clothing, wood products, wine production... The country is promoting tourism and service as an interesting element in the economy of the country.\textsuperscript{163}

4.7 -Description of the Spanish and Portuguese border area in the Miño river-
The regions of study, the north of Portugal and the south of Galicia, have certain characteristics. These should be understood because they offer a good background for the analysis of the interviews. There is a connection, for the researcher, between the current situations of the regions (although it has nothing to do with the water management). The Spanish regions have different characteristics among them and the same happens with the Portuguese ones, for that reason the reader should have a more precise background.

4.7.1 -Region of the North of Portugal and Viana do Castelo - (Portugal)-
The region of north Portugal had a positive demographic growing, in the last decade, compared to the European standards. There has been a negative factor in the region, the migration but a positive one is that there is a high percentage of young population. The areas of employment are: the service sector, commerce, industry and agriculture. There is a high participation of women in jobs related to the agriculture and traditional industry, but women have lower salaries and difficulties to access to better-qualified jobs. There seems to be a bad organization and management of the businesses. Workers have low qualifications, which affect the labour market because there is a low output. Tourism and agriculture (wine production) have become important sectors in the economy of the region.

\textsuperscript{161} Pierre, Jon and Peters, Guy. (2000), p. 18
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, p.25.
Technology seems to be closer now to the citizens and to the administration. There has been a big investment for the modernisation of the local authorities of the north region. This is a mean of the common support that the municipalities have now on the management of the water, accountancy and public works. There is an important cultural heritage in the region and there is also a network of cultural equipment (e.g. libraries, museums…) but there is a lack of infrastructure and a bad management.\(^{164}\)

This region is one of the poorest of the EU (the 23rd poorer region), although there has been a lot of investment and a growth of the economy.

This region limits with the South of Galicia. The relations between these two regions are good and there is a specific area where there is a very high grade of economic, social and cultural relations; that is the Portuguese and Spanish border.

The region of Viana do Castelo is very rural and it has several problems. There is a lack of innovation and dynamism in the companies, difficulties when offering public services and a poor support for the local development.\(^{165}\)

The environmental infrastructures in the North region seem poor compare to the necessities that the region has. The level of water seems plentiful because the region has loads of rain and there are also rivers, but work should be done to get a better usage of the water. This region is within the areas of special protection and the European program Red Natura 2000.\(^{166}\)

\section*{4.7.2 -Galicia- (Spain)-}

The population is more concentrated along the coast. There is a high density of population in the big cities and less in the rural areas. The age pyramid is very similar to the European.\(^{167}\)

Galicia is a poor region compared to the Basque and Catalan regions. Farming takes form in small plots; the rural and village society is very strong in some areas.

There was an important number of Galicians emigrating to other countries and mainly to the American continent. The number of Galicians living in Latin America is higher than the number of those living in other regions in Spain.\(^{168}\) This is a difference with the other

\(^{164}\) Mostly in companies, in public and private administration.


\(^{166}\) Ibid.

\(^{167}\) www.igpe.es/castellano/pobla.htm, (2002-12-05)

\(^{168}\) www.igpe.es/castellano/galmun.htm, (2002/12/05)
historical nationalistic regions (Basque and Catalan region) that had immigration and not emigration.\textsuperscript{169}

The Galician nationalism was almost quiet compared to other regions (Basque and Catalan) when the autonomous regions got the power in 1981. The language survived in the rural areas for a long time and it was not very heard in the big cities. Parties on the left political spectrum used Galician in political forums and traditional parties usually used Castilian.\textsuperscript{170} The Galician nationalism was developed among intellectuals in its early stage. It moved from an intellectual activity to a political one. The culture, language and history of Galicia were addressed to the society, but it was explained and directed by an intellectual elite. This affected the results because it did not work as a political organisation. It did not have the support of neither the lower classes nor of the bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{171}

This region was a self-historical nation in the past as it was a kingdom and had its own language, all the elements that a region needs to develop a strong nationalistic identity. Nowadays Galician is an official language and more than four million people over the world speak it. It has much in common with the Portuguese and differs from the Spanish in the grammar. Galician and Portuguese people can understand each other almost completely. Galician language is an important subject in the educational system because it is compulsory.\textsuperscript{172}

In the Galician region, the statute of autonomy led to the creation of: a legislative body, the Parliament, and an executive body, Xunta de Galicia. The administrative function of the region is done by the Xunta, which has twelve ministries (Consellerias) and a president. There are delegations of the Xunta\textsuperscript{173} in the different capitals of the four provinces. There are three hundred and fifteen municipalities in Galicia.\textsuperscript{174}

\textbf{4.8 – Cooperation–}

There are other ways of cooperation apart from water management. These ways of cooperation are remarkable because they show that there is some kind of collaboration among the institutions and authorities. All these current ways of collaboration are programs that are supported by the EU.

\textsuperscript{169} Pérez-Diaz, (2000), p, 184.
\textsuperscript{170} \url{http://www.1upinfo.com/country-guide-study/spain/spain56.html}
\textsuperscript{172} \url{www.orbilat.com/Modern_Romance/Ibero-Romance/Galician/Galician.html}, (2002-11-05)
\textsuperscript{173} Which are the executive bodies, (Diputación Provincial)
\textsuperscript{174} \url{www.igape.es/castellano/gobier.htm}, (2002-12-05)

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4.8.1 -Current ways of cooperation among the countries-

The regions of North Portugal and Galicia are linked by many elements. Frontier areas are always in contact due to different reasons (commerce, movement of workers…). The two regions of our research have relations and cooperation with each other.

First, there is proximity in the language and the geography. Then we have the ‘Eurorregion’. This is an association of the provinces in Galicia and north Portugal. There are twelve collaborating and they have a significant cultural, economical and social relation. There are more than six million people in this Eurorregion in a territory of fifty one thousand squared kilometres. The Eurorregion has, on one hand, an area that is industrialized, the north of Portugal, mainly the area of Porto; and on the other hand, we have Galicia that is more dependant on the agricultural sector. In the Eurorregion, the companies are usually connected to commerce and catering businesses. Industry is connected to employment and trade. The markets have opened themselves to the international ones and the regional economies are doing well. They complement each other and together, they become a strong competitive territory in the growing international and global economy.\(^{175}\)

There is also another fact that links these two regions, EURES. This is a program from the European Employment Services, created by the Commission, which offers information and advises workers and businessmen on the working market. Inside this program there is also another service that works on transborder information for workers and businessmen. There are around eighteen EURES in Europe and two are in the region North of Portugal-Galicia. There are several offices in both regions and the euro-advisers give information about the living conditions, legislation and advice on the ways to find jobs. This offices work on young and adult unemployed workers, on businessmen, youngsters or students that try to find their first job and on workers that want to change jobs. These offices were created with the collaboration of associations and institutions on both sides of the border. There are sixteen Portuguese councils and forty-nine Spanish councils.\(^{176}\)

There are programs like the EU Interregional Programme (Interreg) that works on cross-border projects. These programmes were created to improve the access to the regions, to stimulate the development, to promote interregional trade and to develop the water potential of the region. The main projects were related to: the development of the road network, the

\(^{175}\) www.galicia-nortept.org, La Eurorregion Galicia – Norte de Portugal. (2002-09-25)

\(^{176}\) Information from a brochure of EURES and from: www.eures-norteportugal-galicia.org, (2002-12-05)

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agricultural and industrial development, the promotion of tourism, crafts, local heritage, and the export of hydroelectricity.\textsuperscript{177} The program that is running now is called Interreg III. ‘Interreg III programme’ is an initiative of the EU for the co-operation of the authorities at the national, regional and local level. It is designed to strengthen social and economic cohesion by co-operation (trans-national, interregional and cross-border co-operation). It works for a better territorial integration, so that a sustained and balanced development is achieved. Regions that have no joint borders can work together developing networks of communication and common projects. In this way the regional development policies and initiatives become more effective. The program is part of the Structural funds and the partners of the national projects co-finance it. It will run from 2002-2006.\textsuperscript{178} Another fact that makes them be related is that both are members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).\textsuperscript{179} It seems significant to see the different current ways of cooperation before looking to the analysis as they prove, on one hand, that relation and cooperation have been developed and, on the other, that the EU appears supporting these current ways of cooperation.

\textsuperscript{177} Magone (1997) pp. 151-152 and European Commission, 1994b, pp. 32-33 in Magone.
\textsuperscript{179} www.oecd.org, The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2002-12-05)
5 - Analysis of the Data –

In this chapter data (the interviews) are analyzed to understand how institutions and actors affect cooperation. The researcher relies on a choice of institutional theories that seem appropriate to understand the development of cooperative relations on the Spanish-Portuguese border. Data is organized according to the topics of the interviews and the results are organised after those topics.

5.1 - Relation - Cooperation-

Cooperation is an interesting element for analysis in the case of Spain. There has been a change in the implications of the term since Spain joined the EU. The analysis of the data will offer the chance to study the way historical institutionalism affects cooperation that is to see if structures matter. For the researcher actors are part of the institutions, elite and society. The connection between actors and policy-making or cooperation is very strong.

Studying cooperation means looking at the way groups or people work together to achieve a final and shared aim. There is something involved in the process; to achieve cooperation there must be prior relation among the actors. It is also important to understand how that relation starts and what it involves.

Cooperation means different things to different people and there might be different ways of looking at the process. There are many ways to analyze how organisations or institutions cooperate.

According to what it was explained before, the no cooperation culture among the CCAA might affect cooperation with the Portuguese side. It is assumed that there must be a relation between different actors to be able to cooperate. There are elements that affect them like cross border shared problems or interests.

Interviewee G sees relation between the two countries or regions in a certain way:

‘I tried to create more relations because the Miño was for many people a separating thing but for me it is something that unifies both nations and town halls. We have good relations with our neighbours in Caminha and have permanent relations culturally, even at national and regional level...We have a great relation and, instead of having problems that separate us, we have things that get us closer.’

The relations created by the state or institutions try to control or influence other states or institutions. A path of relations is created to improve in most of the cases the economy and the

180 Interviewee G, 03.09.2002.
status of an institution or politician. A connection is created, the river becomes a link instead of a border, and therefore the concept of border is changed. The international sphere, in which institutions adapt themselves to changes in order to survive, can influence this, although they might keep certain previous patterns of behaviour.

5.2 -The concept of Cooperation-

The EU has often financed specific projects that promote cooperation. Cooperation has developed in two ways: from the central political level to the regional one and from the nation state to the European Union. Cooperation should be developed because society supports it and there is membership in both countries and regions. The elite seem to decide what should be done and develops the institutional procedures.

According to interviewee A: a reason why there should be cooperation is because rivers and dams are shared, therefore responsibility should be shared. Water appears as a linking element. The progress of cooperation and concern about environment are very recent in the region and as this interviewee says: ‘...One municipality has to be responsible as its actions affect other municipalities, and in the case of the Miño river, other countries.’

Interviewee B explained that ‘...in general, in Spain people are not used to associate. They are very individualist’. This might affect the way cooperation takes place between actors. Political systems are dependant on society, according to Peters, and policies are shaped by ideas. Cooperation in a society that is individualist becomes part of the adaptation to new situations. The idea of cooperation in policy is developed by the influence of a strong economical and political actor, the EU.

Immergut, Ellem believes that the preferences that citizens develop are shaped by collective actors and institutions. The structure of political opportunities, institutions, authorities and culture play an important role in the organization and definition of interests.

For interviewee F ‘All the problems of management of the Minho river should have an intervention of all the municipalities that would be represented by entities or bodies... in an integrated way and in cooperation with the Portuguese and Spanish authorities.’

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184 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002.
185 Interviewee B, 09.09.2002.
bodies that would represent the municipalities will affect the result of negotiations. The municipalities that participate in regional bodies will influence the procedures and the final outcomes. There is a connection between the needs and worries of each municipality and the final outcome. Changes appear predictable when previous actions or decisions did not achieve the aimed results.\(^\text{189}\)

Cooperation can take place at different levels. There are different actors that affect the process in each level because of their previous experiences or because of the rules and procedures that they carry. Governments (either regional or local) influence and get influenced by other governments.\(^\text{190}\)

One interviewee made it clear:

‘It is necessary to coordinate certain services on the Portuguese and Spanish region because sometimes we do not cooperate with the town hall or the region next to us, which would be good for programs; then the Xunta de Galicia and also the government of the North of Portugal should have meetings and make the town halls participate in decisions that affect all of us.’\(^\text{191}\) The reasons why this interviewee sees convenience in cooperation are: first, because they can apply for programs and, second, because the regional institutions take decisions that affect the municipalities. Programs appear as a resource that can be obtained if the requirements that the EU sets are accomplished. The goal is to get a program or funds because individuals are “utility maximizers”. Institutions are for that reason influenced by the will of individuals.\(^\text{192}\) The fact that regional institutions or governments do not count on the municipal ones can be seen as a strategy to keep the power that these institutions have. The lack of cooperation at local or regional level could be a tool to keep the institutions as they were before. This is a clear example of institutions trying to keep a “path dependency” on society and policy making.

Steinmo and Thelen affirm that institutions define how political actors define their interests and the relations to other groups.\(^\text{193}\) Interests are very often created by the awareness of a problem or by a necessity that an institution finds profitable. The problems that are found in the region are connected to economy and environment. Interviewee O said:

‘There should be cooperation in all levels because we are living in an area without borders and the problems in frontier areas are common to all at economical and environmental level.'


\(^{191}\) Interviewee H, 04.09.2002.


Cooperation is necessary as there are areas that share water. Cooperation and information about the problems should be very close among the frontier areas."\(^{194}\)

Information and water issues become a tool for networking. This is a fact: frontier areas are involved in cooperation and regional governments do not sometimes create a change in behaviours. ‘We are living in an area without borders’ is a statement that can be formulated because both countries are in the EU and are participants of the Shengen Agreement. This initiative of the EU was started in 1985 and Spain and Portugal joined it in 2000. There is no control on persons at internal borders in the countries that signed the Shengen Agreement.\(^{195}\)

The idea of no borders is also connected to commerce and freedom of movement of workers. A new idea is introduced in the discussion when interviewee I talks about the cooperation in the region\(^ {196}\) in a global context. Networking and sharing information becomes important for the official that aims to develop a global project. Projects can be developed at the regional and local level. Regional level in Portugal is different to the Spanish one. By regional it is understood the municipalities that are near or in the area. As interviewee I says:

‘I think that we have to think in global, helping the neighbour villages. The region should work in this spirit. If there were conversation and dialogue on these projects, then there should be a unique global project for the region.... The regions and town halls in the region should give information of their projects so that they can cooperate. The policy of cooperation among town halls is crucial...’\(^ {197}\)

Cooperation becomes an aim and a crucial part of the policy of the town halls. If there was no cooperation before and cooperation is seen now as an aim for the municipalities and region, the researcher should try to understand the reasons why there is such a change. It is possible to think that it is because institutions have adjusted and adapted themselves to new necessities, that there is an external actor influencing the process of policy making or that actors have realized that by cooperation it is possible to reach funds that were not offered before.

The opinions of the interviewees create an image that supports the idea of cooperation. To be able to understand the phenomenon in the region it is essential to have to look how cooperation is developed nowadays in water management.

\(^{194}\)Interviewee O, 11.09.2002.


\(^{196}\)(it should be noticed that here region means North Portugal)

\(^{197}\)Interviewee I, 10.09.2002.
5.3 - Water management -

Most of the funds that the EU gives and has given to the region are related to water management. The fulfilment of the directives forces municipalities to improve services, to put purifying plants and to improve the sewage. New procedures and requirements have been introduced at the local level changing how things were done before and affecting policymaking. Plans like Interreg I created cooperation among actors that did not work together before. The structural perspective influences less than the actors’ perspective here because the dependency path is abandoned and actors realise that they can gain from change. As an official explained:

‘...management was before badly organized for many years. The frame of the central and municipal institutional responsibilities’ did not have the administrative organization and competent technical frame or leaders to manage the public and municipal systems of water and sewage. This was not a priority in the municipalities. The administrative organization of the town halls was not prepared to work in this sector that needed development in the last years.’

Institutional adaptation can also explain the changes that institutions suffered. A strong external political actor like the EU could change the path dependency created before and could affect institutions at the national, regional and local level. The decision of joining the EU had consequences and developed another path dependency where institutions have a stronger contact and relation among them.

The political culture of no cooperation seems to be still working in many cases because cooperation mainly develops when there is a gaining. In that case, the actor perspective affects people, institutions and ideas behind policy making and cooperation. There appears a development of cooperation but in an early stage. The frontier area feels affected by the influence of the EU because institutions can have access to projects and funds. Cooperation does not seem natural among actors now if there is no revenue, but it might develop in the future because a path dependency will be created.

‘...It seems that sometimes we are in that route in the management of the Minho river with separated actions from Galicia and Spain. That bad management has being assumed not in a joint way but in a separated one. We need to face the problems and those issues of development in a bilateral way and on border issues. It does not exist, from our point of view,

199 Only in the case of Spain because there is no regional government in Portugal.
a mentality that allows acquiring those objectives, and it continues to think on bad designs…\textsuperscript{201}

As one official from the Spanish governmental institution dealing with water explained: water management is not well developed if there is a bad coordination among the different institutions: national, regional, municipal or when people act individually.\textsuperscript{202} The culture of no cooperation affects water management at all levels.

Institutions create boundaries like the regulations that citizens and companies must fulfil. If there was not water there would be no industry, population or investment; for that reason development is connected to water. The regulation that institutions establish on water has effects on other very different areas. This region needs investment for its development, but finds problems when regulation must be followed. Elite become a political and economic actor that influences individual behavior. It gives the path to follow, which is the regulation and procedures, to get the licenses. Formal and informal structures try to create a rational decision or development.

‘It will be difficult to develop industries since they will need to have an industrial and urban planning. Water is a prior necessity and this will influence the development of the villages, urban, industrial and recreational areas. The development of the region will be dependant on the water.’\textsuperscript{203}

5.4-Current ways of Cooperation-

There are different ways of cooperation that are currently working in the Portuguese-Spanish area. First, there is an association of large municipalities that share infrastructures and plans to develop the region. ‘Leixo Atlântico of the Northeast of the Peninsula. There is an association of municipalities of the Eurorregion; there are something like 18 town halls in the region Galicia and the North of Portugal…they discuss different topics, have debates and present projects and plans that will contribute to the development of the Eurorregion, mainly to the urban development of the region…the elaboration of a plan of Infrastructures of the Euro-region…which has all the future infrastructure actions that will be necessary for its future…This is a document that was agreed and that has been transferred to the different statal and autonomous institutions both on the Portuguese and Spanish side and also to the EU, so that it will apply for financing in the areas described in it…the organization tries to

\textsuperscript{201} Interviewee F, 11.09.2002
\textsuperscript{202} Interviewee E, 09.09.2002
\textsuperscript{203} Interviewee E, 09.09.2002
solve problems that can affect the countries... The cooperation in the Leixo Atlántico is based on the management of services and on the necessities that the municipalities have to share things when they need to.  

Cooperation or policy networks, as Verdier sees it, could be seen as a tool to ease insecurity and a way to manipulate social preferences. Infrastructures make easier the development of a city or region. The Eurorregion is not a region that was created by the governments in the past. It is an instrument to develop industry, infrastructures and to be able to apply for funding or financing for plans and projects. The institutions, on the Spanish side, that do not have a culture of regional cooperation now are developing cooperation with the north region of Portugal. There is a game situation here in which although actors have different interest, they accept to agree on the main ones so that their outcomes are maximized.

Rules become an important factor in politics. When institutions agree to cooperate there are certain established rules that have to be followed and that affect the way negotiations are made. When countries agree to work together applying for certain funds, there are always requirements and procedures. When cooperation has been developed before, past experiences affect and customs are continued. There is a major change if there is a new way of cooperation in which institutions have to adapt themselves to new rules, requirements and procedures. An institution that has not been in the game before establishes rules, requirements and procedures when cooperation develops to apply for European funds. The EU appears with strong rules, high-developed plans and social norms. The ways of doing things that are not the typical ones from the countries involved in the cooperation. Adaptation appears as a condition for institutions. The dependency path has to be forgotten and adaptation to new situations is profitable because in that way institutions will gain status and funds. The structures appear to be less important than the actors. Actors understand the price they have to pay when they adapt themselves to the requirements that an institution like the EU sets. As Elster understands it, a cooperative game like this (similar in all EU’s countries) can have different outcomes, depending on the rules.

An interviewee from the largest council in the region of Galicia explained that:

‘We have little relation with Portugal; the relations have taken place in the Leixo Atlántico and in European programs of environment, but related to the natural world, forests. Now in the Interreg funds, we are trying to have collaboration... we will try to get to the part of the

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204 Interviewee J, 09.09.2002.
Interreg, so that there are no frontiers and we can adapt ourselves to the European standards.  

European standards are requirements, social norms and ways of doing things. The informal institutions appear influencing again structures and actors. Structures change to adapt themselves to the new requirement and actors acquire other customs. The path dependency does not appear so strong when there is revenue. Cooperation between the two regions is starting. It is an important moment for the regions and for a research on these issues. The way cooperation is made now might affect the way it will be done in the future. The means of cooperation may stay and the pattern created will affect future cooperation and policies if structures do matter. Another interviewee from the same council, but this time a non-official stated:  

‘…cooperation is made lately through European funds, trying to enter the Interreg program of interregional funds. I know that there have been proposals; I have some copies of proposals that have been presented to try to protect and improve not only the water issues but also the environmental one in the North of Portugal and South of Galicia. I know that they are starting although there has not been cooperation.

Relations among institutions also create a path or structure. If networking has not been strong before and information has been kept for official purposes, it is difficult to break this path. There is no profit from change when talking about non-official institutions. Although the EU tries to keep information open to everyone, it seems from the statement of interviewee A that information does not always get to lower the levels. The different programs that the EU has developed and develops nowadays work on different areas. Institutions have to adapt new means of cooperation when programs change. The ways can be similar to the previous ones but the fields in which the programs are working now can affect the means or reasons for cooperation. Here we have taken for granted that the means of cooperation are not economic but when the amounts of money offered to the town halls are high the maximizing behind cooperation gets also high. Another interviewee explained that:  

‘We had an Interreg devoted to the draining and water supply with investments from 1991 until 1996 of 3.000.000 Euros and it was devoted to those works. Now we are with programs,'  

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208 Interviewee P, 05.09.2002.
210 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002.
the new Interreg III with the town hall of Monçao, Salvatierra do Miño and Las Nieves. This program is devoted to culture and tourism, which has nothing to do with the previous one. \(^{211}\)

The way these municipalities had cooperated before will affect the way they will do it in the future. There might be the possibility, according to the structural perspective, that if cooperation worked out before it might do the same in the future and funds will be again distributed between the municipalities. The municipalities that are situated along the Miño river are small and have no industry. Tourism becomes an industry and in most of the cities, there is an important cultural heritage that could be exploited by the town halls.

An example of continuance of cooperation is seen when town halls have different projects working currently and plans for future projects. There are links that are not only cultural but also physical. The international bridges appear as an example of cooperation because before they are built they need to apply to the EU for funds to build them and after, as the communications are developed better, there is more commerce and tourism in the area. The closeness that the town halls have is sometimes smaller than a kilometer and this helps town halls work on projects as if they were one. The fact that projects are presented in Brussels and that there are different ones working on shows that there is a high level of cooperation among some municipalities. This is a different cooperation than the one developed among bigger municipalities (e.g. Leixo Atlántico). Plans are developed according to the projects that the EU creates not according to the infrastructural necessities that bigger councils will have in the future. In that way cooperation, in small councils or institutions, adapts to projects. Actors are more influential when there are many municipalities involved in the cooperation. The less number of councils involved create a lower influence of actors.

It is interesting that small municipalities work at the European or international level. Brussels does not seem so far away from the small municipalities and the policy network created stresses the power of the politicians. The benefits that these projects bring to society are used as a reward for the policy making and voters will remember this in the next elections. \(^{212}\)

Personal interests (e.g. a good campaign for future elections) become part of the institution when projects are used to get a good political image.

An additional interviewee explained that:

‘In general we cooperate quite a lot with the town hall of Monçao, which is Portuguese, and we are linked by an international bridge. The buildings of the town halls are next to the river we can say that they are both “a same town hall”. They have 23.000 inhabitants and we have

\(^{211}\) Interviewee H, 04.09.2002.  
8,000, and in total are around 31,000. We are making projects together at an international level that will be presented in Brussels and among them, there is one of environment, one of the exploitation of the beds of the river and we are thinking of doing one for the water but at the moment they have their own supply and we have ours...We have not presented projects of water together but this is possible to happen between these town halls soon in the future.\textsuperscript{213}

The directives that the EU established on sewage and water supply contributed to make cooperation develop. The treatment that the rivers needed and the purifying plants became considered necessary for town halls. Many infrastructures were developed with European funding. Interreg I was devoted to draining and water supply. Many of the councils that are in the area got funds because: ‘….now there is a directive that obliges town halls of more than 10,000 inhabitants to have a purifying plant’.\textsuperscript{214} For that reason the draining or cleaning of water became a responsibility not an option that town halls had to fulfil. Funds became a source that helped to accomplish the requirements.

Cooperation is also created through international bridges. Town halls understand and see the convenience of these bridges. The fact that they are called “international” involves that there is in fact a border for some actors. The councils are responsible of the parishes around them. Theses parishes participate in cooperation only when they are represented by the city hall. Relation is for some municipalities a synonym of collaboration when they are planning an international bridge. The idea of getting connected physically brings advantages, from the perspective of the actor. This is what interviewee M explains:

‘We always had a lot of relation with Portugal and mainly with Vilanova de Cerveira, and we had interviews because of the sewages more than because of the water. We are trying to organize ourselves so that the Miño has the right treatment of sewage on both sides ....We are working on the International Bridge of Goyan (parish of this town hall), and Vilanova de Cerveira, with it we will have bigger relation and it will also mean better connections...This bridge will increase the relations with Portugal.’\textsuperscript{215}

The two biggest frontier cities (on the Portuguese and Spanish side) are connected by two bridges. The international bridges play an influential part in the creation of businesses and profits. The concept of relation is linked to an economic and tourist expansion.

The town halls work together to gain from cooperation, the actor’s perspective works here. A project developed to bring together the two cities as a bigger and more interesting tourist

\textsuperscript{213} Interviewee L, 04.09.2002.
\textsuperscript{214} Interviewee B, 09.09.2002.
\textsuperscript{215} Interviewee M, 06.09.2002.
offer. Here not only bridges connect but fuse municipalities. They cooperate at a higher level where the two town halls fuse the historical and artistic heritage. 216 Cooperation to blend two cities (even if it is at a level of tourist offer) seems new. The structural perspective does not appear strong in this case. Cooperation appears not as a move for adaptation but as a choice to create a more interesting tourist offer.

‘There is a project, Tui-Valença world’s heritage. To achieve this, we need them to be in good environmental conditions (water supply and sewage is crucial). We started working on this project four years ago…. We are in permanent contact with Valença, and we have a very good relation with them, in commerce and tourism. We are one of the few town halls that have two bridges that get us together and the river does not separate us, as there are river activities and sports… Cooperation is in general with Valença and the Mancomunidad del Baixo Miño and the ones that limit with us. We try to help each other.’ 217

Cooperation does not only take place at the level of town halls, there is also cooperation with other “institutions”, the associations of municipalities. The networking connections widen and the members introduce new rules and influence in the procedure.

There is another level of cooperation when companies or institutions, involved in water management, are working (for the state or town halls) in cooperation. Interviewee E explained: ‘We have periodical meetings, every two months, to exchange the analysis and samples of water and those that are regulated by the international agreement of borders that are usually having meetings in Spain or Portugal alternatively.’ 218

Cooperation has become here something regular. There is a stronger influence of the structures in the way cooperation takes place. Other institutions that deal with international water and border issues establish the rules. The meetings are settled every other time in one country or the other. This contributes to make the meetings neutral so that there is a better fulfillment of the requirements of the agreement.

5.5 -The role of the EU-

The EU has an important role at all levels of governance. The countries in the EU feel its influence at the same time that society, companies, governments and institutions influence them. An element that these two regions recognize as significant is the European funds. The

216 It is important to stress that one of the cities was capital of kingdom in the past and has a wide range of monuments and history in itself.
217 Interviewee Q, 03-09-2002.
218 Interviewee E, 09.09.2002.
funds help and develop programs that are presented to their national governments and to Brussels. Funds became important in water management in the north of Portugal and the South of Galicia because they helped to insert new improvements in machinery and water management. ‘Everything that has been done in Galicia in water receptions, dams, drainage and sewage, like the done here, was achieved by the European funds. Here it was vital to make the rivers and the sea have the water in perfect conditions.’

The institution that coordinates the funds that come from the EU and distributes them among the different municipalities, town halls and administrations in Galicia is called Aguas de Galicia.

The path created has produced a real dependency as the institutions and town halls are used to have these funds to finance projects and to work out the problems they have. This dependency might have underdeveloped the capabilities that municipalities had to address their own projects. European funds are offered now to fifteen member states but there will be soon an enlargement, which will make more difficult to get them as candidate countries have also necessities and projects to present. ‘We apply for European projects like the Interreg 3, (a plan to supply and drain water) we have applied for it before and will apply for it in the future’. European funds develop and help to achieve a better water service and control of waste. The dependency on them is big in some cases because the services that some municipalities offer are big as they give water to other municipalities. It seems that the structural and actors perspective influence the final outcomes.

According to Interviewee Q, without funds it would not be possible to have both water supply and drainage. That town hall supplies other councils with water supply because they have an important purifying plant. They have achieved high levels of efficiency: 80% of supply and 60-70% drainage and without the help from the EU it would have been difficult to have these levels.

The EU may appear to some municipalities as an institution that mainly offers funds and promotes cooperation to present projects. Actors seem to be interested in it because they can

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219 Interviewee G, 03.09.2002.
220(funds related to water management, water supply, sewage, etc.)
221 Interviewee G, 03.09.2002.
222 Interviewee Q, 03.09.2002.
223 Interviewee Q, 03.09.2002.
get profits. The bargaining has an aim that is to achieve funds. Cooperation is firstly developed to be able to reach them. ‘It has influenced in a certain way so that they sent help for the modernization of the water management, but at the legal level, at the level of the legal instrument, I think that there is no great influence.’

The soft institutions of the EU have influence because they are necessary to propose projects or to apply for funds. There is legislation and directives that Member States have to acquire and fulfil. When interviewee P was asked if the EU had had some influence the answer was that the European legislation forced them to follow the rules. Funds helped to fulfil the requirements and to defend the river mouth. The water control got more severe as purifiers treated all the water.

The fulfilment of the rules of the EU on water and nature protection has become an interesting issue in town halls and in policy-making. Interests may change in a frontier area but:

‘…we have common goals and the Communitarian Directives have to be applied by all Member States and when there are common hydrographical zones that are shared by two countries this is important for both and there is cooperation and interest. The Communitarian Directives were a positive and qualitative leap forward for the frontier areas. A professional should keep the information of the water management in the areas that share hydrographical zones…This company was created as a national strategy and was presented to the EU, therefore I think that it is not only a national strategy but also at the level of other countries of the EU.’

There is a company on the Portuguese side that manages water in the north part of Portugal that is divided by the rivers Minho and Lima. The company Aguas do Minho e Lima, created in 2000, is private but with public capital. This company was created as a strategy and did not follow the previous models. Portugal as a centralised government has not a culture of association and cooperation among municipalities. The influence that the EU has created is evident but the development of cooperation is not from the structural perspective but from the actor one. Actors seem to have learnt that funds are offered to “those” that joint to create projects and to apply for funds in the programs that the EU offers. The behaviour developed here cannot only affect this frontier area but any other area where there is need of money.

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224 Interviewee N, 03.09.2002
225 Interviewee P, 05.09.2002.
227 Interviewee O, 11.09.2002
‘… as we are in the EU, there is a bigger support for integrated projects, not of a municipality but of a region. There are some projects on work, in that sense, on water collection, purifying, treatment of waste and that will be in an association of town halls... the town halls get together in a common project for the development of the region.... I think that if we are together we become stronger and then there are more interesting projects...’

Associations develop on both sides of the river among municipalities and institutions but there seem to be no cooperation among the associations. One case where there was a dialogue and regular meetings was when the Portuguese water company (Aguas do Minho e Lima) and the Spanish state institution\(^\text{229}\) (Confederación Hidrográfica del Norte) get together.\(^\text{230}\)

The influence that the EU has created analysed from a perspective in which it has created changes at all levels. The institutions have learned to gain from cooperation, and water management got a general improvement in the area. The results can be very different according to the way funds were used and the institutions worked. Talking again about if the EU had influenced interviewee I explained:

‘Nowadays I don’t think so. They did investment in the systems of quality of the water and projects to renovate with European funds. These funds of cooperation influenced the quality of water management, institutions and management itself. So, in that respect I think that it was fundamental. It was as much of participation than of investment.’\(^\text{231}\)

The EU has different types of Community Legislation. There are regulations that have to enter in force on a specific date, that are applicable to all Member States and that have to enter in the national legal system. The directives differ from the regulations because they can be addressed to any Member State and they are not for all. They are biding but Member States choose the form and methods to achieve the end. Directives are a good way to harmonize the laws within a certain area.\(^\text{232}\)

Some directives that the EU established helped the development of purifying plants, the improvement of water management and helped to protect rivers, seas and environment. Information about the state of the water in rivers or sea must be made public and this makes town halls work harder on issues that were not their priority before. There is an external pressure when information becomes public. The quality of water is associated with the good

\(^228\) Interviewee I, 10.09.2002

\(^229\) It manages water that goes through more than one region.

\(^230\) The researcher talks about the area of study and this statement is made from the study of data.

\(^231\) Interviewee I, 10.09.2002

or bad water management that a council makes, therefore policy is questioned and analysed. As another interviewee remarked:

‘Yes, the issue of the purifying plants is fundamental and I think that without the European directives we would have never introduced them so fast and we go slowly but there is a pressure. We are going better in the depuration, I believe, and the public informs of the EU, saying that the quality of the water of the rivers is not good, hurt the municipalities and help to promote means of conservation. Here it is crucial because there is no personal concern, so there is a need of an external pressure to make things work.’

The external pressure that the EU creates, works for municipalities, regions and central states. Society gets more information of the activities done and of the way environmental problems are addressed. Actors again get an important role as they can study what benefits them. The elite was considered the strong group in politics but with the EU creating external pressure there is a better balance. Citizens feel that they are heard and that they are offered information about what those that represent society do in politics. The EU seems to be filling the gap created between elite and society. The citizens get also representation in interest groups that have representation at the European level. Interests groups are becoming important because they inform of the environmental impact of political decisions or measures that a local, regional or national government takes. ‘In a certain way there has been another place to go to make some pressure if the institution here does not listen to the organizations, it would be good to have even more so that there are more possibilities of being listened.’

5.6 – Need of funds-

The Structural Funds that the EU offered to Spain were distributed in relation to certain main objectives. There were priorities in the objectives like: the protection and improvement of the natural environment or the protection of environment via urban and industrial waste processing among many others more. Spain became also the main beneficiary of the Cohesion Fund, which was established in 1993 under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty. The country has been an important receiver of funds. This could influence actors’ perspective at the level of the regional and local administration.

Multilevel governance in Spain creates certain economic problems that affect all levels of governance. An economic deficit influences the way municipalities work and limit them.

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233 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002
234 Interviewee C, 03.09.2002
Municipalities have to find new ways to get funding because there is not enough with what the central and regional government provide them. There is sometimes a long distant between the town halls and some parishes. The area that belongs to the town halls in Galicia is also big. This creates a problem when services like water management and transport are offered. They become very expensive. Interviewee G explained that there is an important economic deficit in the municipal administration because town halls give many services at the same time that they get little money. The local administrations seem the poor sisters of the Spanish administration. Local governments plan to negotiate with the central state and the autonomous governments for a much better financiering. It is remarkable that town halls on the Portuguese side can triplicate the budget of the Spanish and have only five thousand inhabitants more. They seem to have more budgetary endowment.236

The institutional structure affects policymaking in the most needed areas. Mayors get an important role in cooperation and they have to network at many different levels in order to obtain the needed funds.

‘...we pay attention to the subsidies that other institutions concede. Why? Because the government gives us a quantity for every inhabitant that compared with other countries is quite small, then to attend to the necessities of the residents we turn to the central government, to the county council or to the Xunta (Council) of Galicia. This means that a mayor in Spain has to devote a lot of time asking for it, to have interviews with other politicians, like the president of the county council or the counsellors of the Xunta or maybe with a politician in Madrid; then the list is very long...’237

Bargaining takes many different ways when officials and mayors need to contact other political levels. The gaining game becomes more difficult when different levels of bargain participate. It is easier to gain at a municipal level (e.g. cooperation among Portuguese and Spanish municipalities). The fact that mayors negotiate with elite from other levels is an interesting element for analysis. The political network created becomes bigger than in centralized countries, but the economic problems of the multilevel system limit the work that mayors can do.

Town halls offer many services and need money. The regional office, the Xunta, offers then help plans according to the number of inhabitants and the extension on the surface. 238

236 Interviewee G, 03.09.2002.
237 Interviewee L, 04.09.2002
238 Interviewee Q, 03.09.2002.
seem to be little investment in the region and this is an important factor that affects the
development.239

Frontier areas offer good economical possibilities for investment and commerce because of
the place they are settled. The strategic location, on the border, with another country, offers
the possibility of permanent relations and cooperation as a result of proximity and contact.
Actors become more aware of the benefits that cooperation and bargaining brings:
‘Valença as you can imagine has a strategic localization, very important and decisive for its
development. We have the high way from Valença and we border with Galicia, which gives us
a privileged contact. Valença has some factors that help to its development: tourism and local
commerce. The mayor says that Valença is the biggest supermarket of Europe to be
discovered.’240

The problem of economic deficit for town halls is also a problem on the Portuguese side.
Centralized governments have important work to do on this and the lower levels feel affected
by the central government and the national economical problems although there are maybe
better levels of endowments on than on the Spanish regions.
‘There is a fact, Portugal is one of the poorest countries of Europe, this and the other town
halls do not have great financial support to make the most of its capacities and potentialities
of development. That is why the lack of financial capacity is a great difficulty for the
development of this and other town halls.’241

Funds may perhaps appear as an aid to perform a better service and cooperation as the mean
to achieve it. Actors learn to gain from bargaining and cooperation. They get affected by the
structural perspective because there is a dependency path that will make them return to
projects and funds to solve financial problems. The previous procedures and means of
cooperation will affect the way things will be done in the future. The fact that cooperation
takes place between municipalities that are in close proximity to them will also limit other
ways of cooperation.

5.7 -Environmental and political culture-

The EU is very concerned about the involvement of the citizens in policy making. The fact
that individuals feel out of the process because of lack of knowledge is seen as a problem.
Information tries to get to all levels and institutions and individuals influence preferences

240 Interviewee N, 03.09.2002
241 Interviewee N, 03.09.2002
then. The Spanish environmental culture is very recent and the EU has stressed the
importance of environment. There was not an exclusive political representation like a minister
or counsellor of environment until recently. Public participation, which is enforced by the EU,
affects institutions and policy making. The procedures and mechanisms to follow when
dealing with institutions are sometimes unknown to the citizens. According to interviewee A,
the Environmental Ministry at the state level was created in 1996, around six years ago and
the Regional Environmental council (Concelleria) is more recent. In the biggest city of the
region, Vigo, the Environmental Counsellor was created two years ago. It should be noticed
that environment is becoming something important. It is now not another competence lost
between many others in a council or ministry. There is a lack of information of the
mechanisms of public participation and about how people can participate. Environmental
groups and associations are the ones who know them. Individuals do not know in general that
there are these mechanisms. There should be a stress in the education. Environmental
education and a better knowledge of the procedures and mechanisms are fundamental because
it is the way to gain power and influence in policy making.

‘Yes, the directives from the EU get to the user; the administration knows the problems of the
water and the quality of water. We can see that the summit Conference of the Earth is very
worried about problems of the water and that we have to find a solution listening to the
European directives that show us the way to follow.’

Directives are available on the Internet and by other means. The easier it comes to the public
to understand them the better it will be for the development of networks of information.
Public participation becomes important from the actors’ perspective because there is then a
control of policymaking and a better knowledge of the regulation. Individuals can influence
preferences in that way although they cannot influence procedures and structures. According
to what interviewee F declared: the Spanish institutions seem to be closer to the citizens as a
bigger and stronger civil society has developed while in Portugal it is smaller and weaker.

‘There is the fact that there is a poor tradition of participation in the public affairs. We see
that there is a great apathy in the Portuguese society … the participation and voluntaries that
are suffering a big decrease and what happens is that the residents and the individuals
participate in these issues only when they are directly affected… The civil society could have
a more active role but they have the illusion that the political class will solve all the problems.
We find differences with Galicia where there is a more direct civil participation and other

242 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002
243 Interviewee H, 04.09.2002
structures like the management of the mountains that does not exist in the Portuguese area. There is maybe a bigger tradition of the participation of the population in the representation and participation in these structures.

The culture of no cooperation differs from the culture of public participation. The Portuguese society seems to be very influenced by the structural perspective on these issues. Actors have not seen that getting involved in the policy making through public participation offers a greater chance of achieving influence and power. The level of participation on the Spanish side appears to be higher and ‘a bigger tradition of the participation of the population’ seems to have an effect. Actors in this case have learned that participation comes fused to influence on the political actors and on the policymaking. On both cases the structural perspective influences the future and creates a path. In one case the actors have started to influence institutions and policymaking and in the other case the institutions are the ones that influence actors. So, on the Spanish area, we have a two-sided power relation and, on the Portuguese area, a one side power relation. Institutions, as seen before in cross-national comparison, affect the way citizens and legislators relate. The path dependency created is difficult to break because the political culture then plays an important role. In this case study it seems that there is no connection between the no cooperation culture and the participation of society.

In Portugal it seems that the culture of no cooperation is also important. The influence that certain structures or institutions have developed during years has established a certain way to do things. Interviewee made it clear when he explained that:

‘We consider that there are all the necessary elements for that cooperation to exist at inter-municipal level but we consider that the main obstacle is the issue of environmental and cultural mentality that puts obstacles to some projects that need license for all that region…and there is not enough democratic culture that democratizes the information. I insist on the mentality that tries to hide information. It is important to evaluate in total the situation and the problems. That information is usually hided…’

The authorities and officials are the ones that do water management and there is a poor participation of the citizens. There is a need to involve society in the plans that the institutions develop. Cooperation is about participation at all levels: individuals, associations, legislators, officials, politicians, etc. on relevant issues. The relations between legislators and citizens are usually top to bottom. The process is difficult to change and as interviewee F explained it has a negative influence on water management.

244 Interviewee F, 11.09.2002
245 Interviewee F, 11.09.2002
'The cooperation at the level of water management is crucial for the participation in that management and cooperation; it is needed a bigger number of local forces and agents; very often for the success that a plan of water management it has to call the population to participate in that management in a responsible way. It is always sad that the population does not feel that the things are theirs, they always have a too passive and neutralized role.'

Political, economic and social actors try to maximize their interests within certain limits. Actors strategize how can their surrounding be best develop so that they can improve their future chances. In this way their interests and identities are developed. The future actions that actors might develop will be affected by their choices too.

Society becomes important as an actor because participation is connected to improvement. The awareness of the importance of participation and consciousness is a step forward for development. Education plays an important role and the EU has stressed the importance of environmental protection. Getting involved in environmental plans and projects is becoming more natural among certain parts of society. This participation might lead to a bigger participation on other important issues like policy making. If actors get regularly involved the development of a dependency path will have more influence on the results. Interviewee L explained the development of participation:

‘Environment is important and in the last years people are getting involved because it is not the present situation but what we are leaving for the future generations. Until ten years ago we were playing with the environment and things were not correct. Nowadays people are conscious that to take care of the environment is to take care of the personal health. People take care of the environment here and in Spain. We are working better but slowly, we are as conscious as in other countries. Children have environmental workshops, the day of the water or the water in the municipalities, it is important to work with the children as environment is connected to their health. This is also seen in green areas and parks in the municipalities, people are learning and here we are getting better.’

Another interviewee, on the other hand, explained that as people were not conscious of the lack of water in general they did not take care about it. This is a problem because the fact that there is water does not mean that it is good water. Education becomes essential, as there must be an awareness of what society needs to work on, protect and change. Cooperation among actors and legislators needs to be improved and developed at all levels: policymaking,

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246 Interviewee F, 11.09.2002
248 Interviewee L, 04.09.2002
protection of the environment, water management and participation of legislators and individuals.

‘For me, the main factors are cooperation, the education and consciousness of the pollution and the no pollution of the resources. What is happening here is that people are not conscious that this (water) is a scarce resource because here in Galicia, it rains a lot and everything renovates. The resource is scarce in quantity and quality. Education is important.’

Education can be a key to the change of the political culture of no cooperation. Cooperation is influenced by the past and the present; the structural perspective explain the reasons why there is such a strong tendency to do things as they were before. Institutions have to learn that changes are necessary and that cooperation offer positive developments. The European funds are a goal for institutions but they should not be a mean to cooperate. The EU needs to promote public participation among the formal institutions so that plans and projects are more efficient. Public participation is another way of cooperation since the goal is to improve the results of policy making and to develop collaboration; that is a new path dependency.

The changes that institutions have developed like the cooperation among town halls on the different sides of the border are not a strategy or an institutional mechanism. Cooperation appears as an interesting way to get funds. Actors maximize more from cooperation than from no cooperation and learn that the rules that they have to follow are part of the process. The informal institutions do not only influence procedures but also influence the institutions themselves. Cooperation also means bargaining and there are elements that have to be adapted to the new situations. The EU has played a crucial role in the cooperation process. The way it has done it can be seen as “naïve” because it is used, in some cases, just to get funds but it might develop a dependency path that will continue with further ways of cooperation. If actors have learnt that by cooperation costs are lower and that there is an improvement of the results, then they will influence preferences.

The EU is a new institutional element that gives a path to follow, that offers the right models of cooperation and that, as a strong political actor, is able to break with previous path dependencies and to develop new behaviors among institutions. Cooperation is for small institutions a mean to get funds, but for the EU it seems to be a way to make those dependencies disappear and to show that cross-border, regional or municipal cooperation is crucial in the development of the Member States.

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249 Interviewee A, 05.09.2002
Rational Choice has offered an explanation, to the break of continuance. Cooperation developed and authorities got involved not only on water management but also on other issues. Smaller institutions (e.g. town halls) maximize their benefits with cooperation and work like actors when they present projects to the EU.
6 - Findings-

The region north Portugal-south Galicia has been an interesting case to study. The fact that cooperation has become an aspiration and that municipalities on both sides are cooperating is relevant because before there was a culture of no cooperation among the regions. The different political organization, which structure these two frontier areas have not been a problem because cooperation has developed at the municipal level. Municipalities have become more important because there has been a promotion of cooperation at this level. Programs and funds are offered to municipalities that need support to develop or improve services, environment and heritage. These funds have become vital in the municipal economy.

The EU as an external actor has had a huge influence and has broken the previous path dependency of no cooperation. The influence that the EU has in frontier cooperation has been essential. First, it gave certain rules of how cooperation should be developed. Institutions like municipalities had to adapt themselves to the EU’s requirements, the regulations and to a new way of doing things. Second, as an important political and economic actor, the EU influenced the process and developed pressure when the requirements were not accomplished. Third, projects (e.g. international bridges) have been created by municipalities and presented to national and European authorities to obtain European funds.

The reasons to cooperate have been based on a maximizing rationale. Municipalities have realized that there has been a change in the world of politics. Institutions have to adapt themselves to the necessities that the current political atmosphere brings. Actors outside the institutions affect them more than before. The influence they are gaining can be explained by a growing public participation and the fact that there is more pressure or interest groups. The structural perspective affects actors inside the institutions but they have also learnt that with cooperation the maximizing is bigger. The changes that institutions have to make are part of the bargaining.

There is frontier cooperation because there is a reward that can be obtained at the end. The reward is: first, the funds and the financing the EU offers to certain actors and second, the advantages that municipalities get from collaborating. The region of this study can be an example of what other border regions could gain and achieve and of how cooperation could be done.

250 Here regions are the ones in their own country. In the case of Portugal as there are no regions the researcher means that there is usually no cooperation among various municipalities in the same area.
The cooperation developed in the area of the Miño river, has been at the level of the municipalities. Mayors have played an important role and the previous relations of these councils are now stronger due to new ways of cooperation. Meetings and projects have been developed to fulfil the requirement and to present the necessary information that the EU requires.

Cooperation is in its early stage; it would have been very difficult to break that dependency without the EU and the projects and funds that it offers, mostly because there would be nothing obvious to gain. Once Spain and Portugal joined the EU and became Member States, they started to enjoy the benefits and possibilities that were involved in the membership. The actors in this case study saw and understood that getting into the game of cooperation was appropriate. The competition among the municipalities when applying for granting changes completed when they deal with the EU. In this case it is not the neighbour that can get the funds but also an unknown competitor. The atmosphere of cooperation develops even more because a unification of municipalities in a project makes them also more attractive.

The research has tried to understand a reality and analyse it. From the structural perspective there has been a change because cooperation was not part of the political culture of these regions, but it is now. It is perceived as a helpful and an interesting way to offer better services at a lower price. Cooperation at frontier level changes the way things are done and makes town halls participate in European programs. It does not appear as a result of path dependency but as a result of what the actors have learnt. Actors become the centre of the process because they affect the preferences that the institution have and influence future actions and choices. Municipalities enter a new game in which bargaining appears as a crucial part of the cooperation. There is bargaining when municipalities have to adapt their necessities to the programs that the EU sets or to what the other town hall finds as priority. Finally there are also cases when municipalities have to fulfill the requirements that the EU establishes prior cooperation.

The EU creates new procedures and changes in the way cooperation takes place. The regulation and directives that Member States have to introduce in their legislation affects not only institutions but also actors. Actors learn to change; they learn to see change as positive and necessary. Institutions can develop a higher degree of change because of the influence that the EU has on them. Informal institutions also feel the effect of the Europeanization process in the way contacts are made. The levels of networking get wider and information is

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251 (at the level of institution and of individual)
shared better when cooperation takes place. Municipalities accept the price of adapting themselves to what the EU establishes and although they are limited by new requirements and rules, the final profit makes change worthwhile. The models of cooperation that the EU establishes are reinforced when the requirements of the municipalities are met and the funds are given.

The encouragement (of the EU) with subsidies is one of the reasons why cooperation started. The economical necessities that municipalities have are great. Actors feel influenced by the fact that there is an additional help to improve their services. Cooperation is then often associated with possible funding and the bargaining has to be maximized. The internal alteration that institutions have when they adapt themselves to other procedures is not too big if the gaining is important and if other municipalities do the same. The reason why there are improvements in the municipality is because this will help the political local power to have a positive image in the future campaigns. The local political elite are an important actor and by cooperating with other cross-border municipalities they can maximize its profits and popularity. Mayors are therefore one of the main actors in cooperation and their political aspirations also affect the path dependency.

Another element that appears in the results of the analysis is that there might emerge an economical dependency on European funds. Municipalities may feel that the possibilities of getting grants are bigger if they have been rewarded before. They might try to get new funding because there will be a dependency on it to develop projects. It would be very negative if municipalities started to need European funding on a regular basis. This dependency might develop another dependency in which cooperation becomes a natural way of work for municipalities in frontier areas. Cooperation should be cheaper than no cooperation. Starting it can cost and that can the EU help with, but then it must gain partners. It is not that the EU would give money as long at it takes place, as it would be understood from the above. The more cooperation is developed, the more natural it will seem to go on with it. Once municipalities enter in a path dependency in which cooperation seems to be needed, and then it will become part of the political culture of the region.

Public participation influences cooperation as well. The relations among the different levels have been developed in the Spanish and Portuguese region since the EU membership. There is a bigger tradition of public participation on the Spanish side. Individuals become an influential actor when there is a profit for society. The maximizing idea of rational choice explains European membership as a necessary element in the European world of politics. Being a Member State is positive and supported by society. Individuals understand the
benefits they and their national, regional, and local government can have. Taking part in a European project and getting European funds makes them a part of the Union. Therefore if cooperation is needed to get funds, it will be supported by society. In that way actors, from a rational point of view, influence institutional preferences and decisions at all levels. Preferences finally appear to be influenced by: the way things were done before (path dependency), the pressure of new external political actors and the participation and interests of actors at the level of government, associations and individuals (rational choice).

This study has helped to understand that cooperation involves many different elements. The region of study offers an example for other possible researches as there are border regions in all countries and there is always a need of additional funding in the municipalities. The theories used have helped to look at the reality of this region from an interesting perspective because of the way they offered to analyze and understand the data and results.

The case study on the Miño river offers an example of how natural resources, like rivers, demand a higher level of understanding. A river becomes a border for some actors and for others just a link. International bridges connect what it is not naturally connected and bring a higher level of identification with the other side (of the bridge). Actors see the benefits that communications bring. Cooperation at a frontier level becomes more natural when there is a physical connection like a bridge.

The Europeanization process shows that countries with different administrative cultures can cooperate in a new way when there is a rational thinking; progress and development is seen as part of the current necessities.

The purpose of this case study was to analyse cooperation mainly on issues related to water management in the area along the Miño river. The findings show that cooperation has developed not only in water management but at other levels. The EU has affected the region of research with funds and programs that have started new ways of cooperation.

It seems that the three questions set at the beginning can be answered with the analysis and findings. The two countries can work together and cooperate without problem because they are developing cooperation at municipal level. The reasons for cooperation seem various but the main one seems to be the chance to get into European funds that will enable them to offer a better service. Finally the EU seems to have been a decisive element in this emergence of cooperation in the cross border area of the Miño river.
6.1 –Conclusions-

This research has demonstrated that Historical Institutionalism cannot explain the development of cooperation in the region of North Portugal and South Galicia. The “path dependency” that this theory supports started to break when Spain and Portugal joined the EU. The EU played an important role, as an external actor, influencing governments, institutions and elite. Rational Choice explains actors’ behaviour and why the path dependency was broken.

The researcher tried to discover the way in which institutions affected cooperation. It was proved that, in a way, institutions affected actors and that actors affected institutions. There were other elements that could influence cooperation like the EU. The EU appeared as a key element that influenced the cooperation process with funds, programs...

The researcher tried to study a problem, if cooperation between countries with different administrative cultures and with a culture of no cooperation among the Spanish regions could be developed. The administrative differences, of Spain and Portugal, are not so significant because cooperation develops at the local level and because the EU influences and establishes the procedures.

6.1 -Future improvements and research areas -

This study could be improved if there were more interviews on both sides of the border and if there were publications and more information on the region. Interviews (with local authorities and Environmental groups) have had an important role in this research. It could be interesting to have access to other levels of governance and to the opinion of experts on the subject.

Access to official documents and proposals of projects could wide the perspective and explain how cooperation takes place.

The fact that the EU is studied but that there are no interviews at the European level impedes a broader study and another perspective of the issue.

It might be appealing to use other theories from The Seven Strings of Institutionalism. For example sociological institutionalism because institutions like the Spanish and Portuguese town halls affect individuals or actors due to their interests and culture. Each country has a different institutional culture and different levels of governance. The influence that this creates might also affect the means of relation and cooperation among the actors. This research could also be done in other countries that are in a similar situation.

It may be remarkable to see how cooperation is developed in other frontier areas of Spain and Portugal and to compare the way water management has influenced the process. It may as
well be interesting to study the same area in a future when the cooperation culture is part of the political culture. The reasons why cooperation is later developed might have changed. It might come into view that cooperation is no longer taking place or that there are new ways of cooperation not only at a local level but also at a regional one.

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Appendix 1-

-Questions for the Interviews-

-Introduction-

What is your role in the municipality?

What is your role in water management?

Which forms of earlier co-operation with Spain/Portugal have you been involved in?

-Political and administrative organization-

1. Can you give a short description of how your municipality is politically organised?

2. Can you name the politicians in your municipality, in the region, and outside the region that YOU often work with or get in touch with.

3. Can you give a short description of your municipality’s administrative organisation?

-Development-

4. What are the most important factors that enable development in your municipality?

5. What are the most important factors that prevent development in your municipality?

6. Is co-operation with other municipalities important for development in your municipality? If so, how?

-Water Management-

7. Can you give a short description of how water management is managed in your municipality?

8. Who, in your opinion, are the most important actors in water management in your municipality – this includes politicians, administrators, interest groups, private businesses etc.

9. Can you name the actors in the water management sector in your municipality, in the region, and outside the region that YOU often work with or get in touch with?

10. What are the most important factors that enable good water management in your municipality? And the ones that prevent it?
11. What are the most important factors that prevent good water management in your municipality?

-Prerequisite for co-operation-

12. What are the reasons there should be co-operation in the region? (Political, Economical, Administrative, Environmental) What problems should be solved through co-operation?

13. Has the EU influenced water management plans?

-Problems-

14. What are the main problems connected with water in the region?

15. What do you consider to be the main environmental problems in the region? Which are the causes?

-Network-

16. Who are most important actors for co-operation in the water management region? (Political, Economical, Administrative, Organisations, NGO’s) Why? With whom have you most contact?

17. What kind of information do you receive from these actors? And what kind of information do you give to these actors?

18. How does co-operation on water management influence the overall development of the region?

19. How is water management implemented in the region?

20. How would you describe the role of the media in the water management region?

-Public participation in environmental issues-

21. Is the public involved in environmental-related decision making (on national, regional, local level) and how?

22. Is public participation and access to information regulated by law?
Appendix 2-

List of Interviewees:

On the Spanish Side:

Interviewee A - Adega – Environmental NGO in Vigo – (President of the association) (www.adegagaliza.org.)

Interviewee C - Anabam – Environmental NGO in La Guardia – (Person in charge of the cultural area) (www.anabam.org.)

Interviewee B - Amigos de la Tierra – Environmental NGO in Orense – (Member of the association)

Interviewee D - Asociación Cultural Ecologista – Environmental NGO in Rivadavia - (Secretary of the association)

Interviewee E - Confederación Hidrográfica del Norte – Office in Orense – (Chief of services)

Interviewee G - La Guardia – (Mayor of the Municipality)

Interviewee H - Las Nieves – (Mayor of the Municipality)

Interviewee J - Orense – (The Councillor of Infrastructures and an official from the Press Cabinet)

Interviewee K - Rivadavia – (Councillor of Environment, Communications, Services)

Interviewee L - Salvatierra do Miño – (Mayor of the Municipality)

Interviewee M - Tomiño – (Mayor of the Municipality)

Interviewee P - Vigo – (Councillor of Environment and Infrastructures)

Interviewee Q - Tui – (Mayor of the Municipality)

On the Portuguese Side:

Interviewee F - Corema – Environmental NGO in Caminha – (President of the association)

Interviewee I - Monção – (Ingeneer in the Municipality)

Interviewee N - Valença – (Deputy-Mayor)

Interviewee O - Viana do Castelo – (Ingeneer in Aguas de Minho-Lima)