

ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER CULTURAL CLUSTERS AT AN EXAMPLE OF EUROREGION CIESZYN SILESIA

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to evaluate the current trends for the development of Polish-Czech cultural clusters in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, based on the needs and capabilities of their potential participants. This paper contains recommendations in respect of actions conducive to the creation of clusters of this type, taking into account the expectations of their potential participants at both sides of the border, as well as objective factors. The proposals included in this paper constitute a voice in the discussion about the future shape and operating conditions, of the potential cross-border cultural clusters, which may be the next stage of development of territorial partnerships on the borders.

Key words: cross-border cooperation, cluster, euroregion, culture, network

Introduction

The intensification of European integration is particularly evident on the borders of neighboring countries and regions. Favored by, among others, historical relationship, the interpenetration of cultures and languages, common aspirations of neighboring communities to develop border areas, often treated as peripheral, and being at risk of marginalization. A strong impact on the integration processes has also progressive liberalization of movement of goods, services, capital and labor and structural policy of the European Union, including the non-refundable support from the European Regional Development Fund. Grants are awarded on various activities conducive to the development of borderlands, including cultural and natural heritage protection. The effects of these actions confirm that the border, which has often

been equated with formal dividing line (Sanguin 1993: 12), becomes an integrating and mobilizing factor to overcome barriers and restrictions in cooperation and establish bilateral and multilateral partnerships. Such processes are also developing in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, which is characterized by high cultural values. At this area, and within the institution of the Euroregion Poles and Czechs jointly develop essential elements of potential anthropogenic borderlands, including culture. This is reflected in the diverse and intense cultural activity, and the activity of all the outstanding cultural institutions, NGOs and other individuals and institutions related to the creation of culture and its sharing. Culture, both the one associated with history, tradition and heritage of past eras, as well as modern, active culture, close to both the public sphere, as well as commercial, is currently one of the most popular subjects for cross-border cooperation.

In modern, knowledge-based economy, the increasing tendency to the formation of clusters, networks, as well as the deepening of integration within the territorial partnerships, is also familiar for the stakeholders of Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. Considering the circumstances described above, the author made an analysis and an assessment of the level of interest in creating a cross-border cultural cluster, from the point of view of its potential members on Polish and Czech sides of the border, trying also to refer to other conditions of inter-organizational cooperation in the cultural sector in Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the current trends for the development of Polish-Czech cultural clusters in Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, based on the needs and expectations of their potential participants. The author's intention was also to formulate recommendations for actions conducive to the creation of this type of cluster. To achieve the objective of the paper the author used the demonstrative study, carried out in the framework of the project entitled "Cultural education and scientific initiative Together for the borderlands", funded by the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Slovak Republic 2007-2013 and the state budget, through Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. The author treats the conclusions of this paper, as a voice in the debate on future shape and operating conditions of potential cross-cultural clusters, hoping that all stakeholders of cultural goods and services market on the Czech-Polish border, especially in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, will take interest in this issue.

1. Clusters as an example of networking across borders

Network economy is characterized by, among others, increasing number of links and cooperation between organizations, based on synergistic benefits and optimization of use of available resources (Borowicz et al. 2009: 15).

A network embodies a set of relationships between different entities having the same interests (Hopej 2013: 167). It is sometimes referred to as a set of autonomous organizations with direct or indirect relationships arising from the agreements (alliances) between participants (Pachura 2009: 9). The network is a set of measures and rules that allows the entities that have access to them, making an implementation of joint projects (Brilman 2002: 432), among others by the conclusion of multilateral territorial partnerships, that are characteristic for example for borderlands or through clustering. Creating a network at local and regional level, through which a cooperation is developing and economic and cultural barriers and social concerns disappear in local communities, also concerns cross-border cooperation (Perkowski 2010: 12).

The essence of cross-border cooperation is an establishment of new social and economic relations, as well as expansion of previous contacts between borderland communities, through a series of actions that allow for achieving common goals, for example through the promotion of the region, attracting investors, the development of tourism, but also the creation of clusters. The partners themselves define the scope and objectives of the cooperation, according to their needs and in line with their expectations. Bilateral cooperation and networking, in various forms, can be carried on, among others, by the following entities at cross-border market (Szromnik 2010: 238, 248):

- governments at all levels,
- public utility companies, government entities,
- companies and holding companies,
- NGOs: associations, clubs, foundations, etc.,
- clusters.

There are no formal barriers for clusters to operate in the areas including border regions of two or more States, as defined by Porter (2001: 246), they are geographic concentrations of interconnected business units, manufacturers, specialized suppliers, service providers, companies, operating in related sectors and associated institutions competing and cooperating with each other. Pavitt (1984: 343-373) distinguishes:

- knowledge-based clusters, using the results of research in their operations, especially conducive to the development of innovative companies, closely cooperating with the various types of research units,
- clusters based on a scale benefits, which are less likely to benefit from innovative solutions and implement any innovation in a systematic and planned way, that are based on external suppliers of technology (automotive, machine, food industries),

- vendor-dependent clusters – created by companies that are importing technologies in the form of semi-finished or finished products as a result of external innovation processes,
- clusters of specialized suppliers – concentrating suppliers, buyers, users, characterized by high intensity of R&D; these also stand out in product innovations targeted to complex production systems (e.g. software).

The degree of institutionalization of the clusters and the nature of their business is diverse. Entities participating in the cluster, regardless of its type, are characterized by spatial and sectorial concentration, networking – vertical and horizontal, the tendency to formalize and institutionalize partnerships (Fromhold-Eisebith, Eisebith 2005: 125), as well as the flow of knowledge and technology and innovation (Skawińska, Zalewski 2009: 173). Clusters are characterized by specialization in a particular sector or industry, a kinship of used technologies used and skills, cohesion of objectives and products or services offered on the market. These features of clusters have also a reference to the circumstances of their development in a cross-border environment.

The cluster is defined by the following key elements: members of the cluster and the relationships between them, generated knowledge and innovation, and economic impact of (TEI) cluster activities (Rialland 2009: 2). A necessary condition of the creation and development of the cluster is the emergence of a leader (e.g. trade association, chamber of commerce, a company, etc.), that is responsible for building a cooperation between the participants of the cluster. Leaders' activity is particularly important in the first stage of the operation of the cluster when its shape and dynamics of action are formed. At this point, the leader should recognize and develop emerging relations of cooperation in the community of an industry, despite many barriers hampering the process (Matusiak, Guliński 2012; Zdybański 2007):

- limited experience and lack of competence of potential animators of clusters,
- shortage of funds for the establishment of cooperation within the cluster and for joint ventures,
- lack of understanding of the concept and benefits of cluster cooperation,
- lack of mutual trust among the companies,
- weak interest of local governments in supporting cluster initiatives.

The process of establishing and developing of clusters on the borders is one of today's challenges for cross-border cooperation, because of the need to expand its scale and gradual shift from bilateral partnerships towards

networking. Such clusters have a chance to become effective, future-oriented form of cross-border cooperation, which will contribute to a better use of the potential of the entire borderlands, a more effective overcoming barriers in building relationships between neighboring communities, as well as a more dynamic development of the whole cross-border region. The functioning of cluster structures in the cross-border region contributes, among others, to overcoming negative peripheral location of border areas, the use of development opportunities arising from the proximity of neighboring country, the promotion of the idea of European unity and international cooperation, the penetration of social and cultural influences, the spread of innovation (Kurowska-Pysz 2014: 18).

2. Factors influencing the creation and development of cross-border cultural clusters

The perspectives for the development of cross-border cooperation in the form of a cluster are dependent on a number of factors that shape the potential of the cluster (endogenous factors) or are present in the natural environment of the borderlands (cross-border factors) or in the external environment (exogenous factors).

Figure 1. Factors influencing the creation and development of cross-border cultural clusters



The currently preferred and dominant model of bilateral cooperation in the field of culture, with a strong emphasis on partnerships involving local governments, seems to be actually quite effective, but also in this field a growing tendency to networking is revealed.

An important factor, which favored in the past and still favors the development of cross-border relations are joint projects funded by the European Union, which were carried out so far in the area in a number of few hundred,

often involving multiple of the same, proven partners (usually one on each side of the border). Changing the formula for the implementation of such projects (from bilateral to network) would probably contribute to widening the circle of partners of such cooperation. Another important role in perpetuating the bilateral model of cooperation between municipalities is conclusion of twinning agreements. This results in strengthening bilateral cooperation at the level of institutions subordinate to local governments, e.g. schools, community centers, etc., and does not serve the wider development of this cooperation.

Preparation of the stakeholders of culture market in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, to the challenge that would be to work in a cluster, will require a shift in thinking about the effectiveness of partnerships, understanding the values associated with the abandonment of bilateral cooperation in favor of cluster cooperation, or to develop the broader networking regardless of bilateral agreements implemented.

The analysis of potential trends for the development of cross-cultural clusters can not ignore the specific nature of the cultural market, where it is difficult to find the signs of a classic, commercial process of exchange of goods and services. Consequently, the mechanism of formation of the cluster of culture and its goals do not coincide fully with the circumstances relating to the leading types of clusters of commercial nature. Cultural clusters are not focused solely on profitability and competitiveness, but are also focused, to a large extent, on ensuring adequate availability and quality of cultural goods and services that meet the expectations and needs of the public, for the price that is often not congruent to real costs or even free of charge.

Products of the cultural sphere can perform a number of functions, for example: aesthetic, communication, cognitive, integration, educational or therapeutic, and thus, they show a variety of motivations to take part in culture (Dab-Kuzioła 2003: 130-145). These motivations generate impulses for specific behaviors of both the cultural providers (the supply side), as well as its consumers (demand side). Among the key cultural market actors one can point (Sobocińska 2008: 19):

- consuments of culture,
- the entities planning the processes of the creation of cultural goods and services,
- the entities manufacturing cultural goods,
- the entities dealing with the distribution of cultural goods,
- the entities offering cultural services.

Wróblewski uses the following division of cultural institutions (2012: 12):

- public institutions of culture:
 - national cultural institutions, the list of which can be found in an appropriate Act,
 - local cultural institutions, which are created by local government authorities,
- private cultural institutions, created by other entities,
- institutions created jointly by public and private entities.

On the other hand, among the buyers of cultural services, he points (Wróblewski, 2007: 160):

- customers of artistic offer,
- local and regional community, that is within the impact of the institutions of culture,
- local and regional administration,
- donors voluntarily supporting the activity of cultural institutions in various forms (financial, property, services),
- professional advisors cooperating permanently or temporarily with a cultural institution,
- units cooperating with cultural institution,
- internal environment created by the staff of the institutions of culture: artists, administration, technical staff etc.

The endogenous factors shown at the Figure 1, that are shaping the development of cross-border cultural cluster, which is brought about in its strategy, relate to a significant extent to three key determinants of the effectiveness of integration trends.

1. Individual goals of each of the potential cluster members (among others relating to the statutory conditions for participation in the culture market, needs, expectations and behaviors of buyers of their offer, organizational and financial conditions for further business development), resulting, inter alia, of the level of their knowledge about the nature and benefits of cluster cooperation;
2. The nature and intensity of cooperation between actors of the supply side of the cultural goods and services market, including the possibility of the emergence of a leader around which the next cluster will be created;
3. The nature and intensity of competition between the actors of the supply side of the cultural goods and services market (the cluster will have good prospects for development only if the need for cooperation will prevail over the need for competition).

Despite the tendencies of cultural goods and services market participants to cooperate, there is a strong internal competition at that market. It is manifested by, among others, competition for scarce public funds for cultural activities, attracting buyers of cultural goods and services and maintaining their loyalty, providing oneself the highest share of the expenses allocated to meet the complementary or substitute needs concerning the sphere of culture.

Under the influence of exogenous and cross-border factors listed below, there is also the phenomenon of external competition. The exchange relationship between supply-side and demand-side of culture market depend, to a large extent, on the attractiveness of goods and service created by other markets, the consumption of which takes place in the leisure time, e.g. tourism. The importance of such understood competition is particularly evident in case of groups of people, whose free time budget is low. The cultural goods and services market has individual buyers and the institutional buyers e.g. companies, schools, NGOs, which forces the entities constituting the supply side of the market, varied competitive behaviors and varied and diverse forms of cooperation (Sobocińska, 2008: 32), but also the use of different strategies.

Important factors affecting the processes of development of cluster cooperation between the participants of culture market in Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia can include both the factors of development of integration processes at the *bordelands*, as well as the factors shaping the culture market in the cross-border dimension, including *inter alia*:

- directions of the development of cross-border cooperation arising, among others, from joint Polish-Czech border development strategy, individual strategies of cooperating counties, municipalities, institutions, etc.
- attractiveness, availability, quality and competitiveness of goods and services on the cross-border culture market in the context of needs and expectations of customers at both sides of the border, as well as, for example, tourist,
- the purchasing power of consumers of cultural goods and services in the border area,
- the intensity of the impact of barriers to cross-border cooperation,
- the level of interest of local authorities and institutions and entities working for the integration, in the development of cluster cooperation in the field of culture,
- the availability of funds for the development of cluster cooperation,
- the strength of attachment of cultural institutions at both sides of the border to bilateral cooperation – the level of awareness of the stakeholders of development of Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia on the

need to cultivate and develop the cultural identity of local, modern types of cultural goods and services.

The group of exogenous factors that affect the processes of creation and development of cross-border cultural clusters in the borderlands, but also the objective processes of development of culture market, and the processes of cluster development are:

- maintaining cultural identity of the society, the cultural heritage, development of new cultural goods and services,
- an increase in purchasing power of the society, favoring increased demand for goods of higher order,
- demographic and social changes, resulting in changes in customers' preferences,
- the growing importance of tourism, including cultural tourism in the context of the impact on the supply of certain cultural goods and services,
- an increase in the share of cultural goods and services in the structure of social consumption,
- the availability of competent human resources developing the market of cultural goods and services, that are open for the integration processes in the sector,
- state policy favoring cultural activities, both commercial as well as non-profit,
- state policy favoring inter-organizational integration processes, including supporting clusters,
- progressive evolution of organizational behaviors, moving away from the absolute competition for increased interest in cooperation, among others, in the form of clusters, – the processes of commercialization of culture, entailing increased competition for the recipient of this offer,
- education of the participants of the economic system, including the institutions acting at the cultural goods and services market in terms of the benefits of cluster cooperation, social capital building process and trust e.g. within the cluster.

3. Trends in the development of cross-border cultural cluster in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia – study conclusions

The Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia is an area strongly oriented towards cross-border cooperation, that is developing based on the values important for the residents of the borderlands, including culture. The process of cul-

ture development is shaped by numerous entities, institutions, organizations and informal groups operating primarily in the area. Culture is not only a unique value of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, but it is both an important resource and potential, based on which cross-border cooperation can continue to expand. Therefore, it seems that contemporary global trends for the development of network relations in many areas, can also find a reference to the further development of cross-border cooperation at the borderlands. With this research assumption in mind, the author has completed a study, which cognitive objective was to assess current trends in the development of Polish-Czech cultural clusters in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, based on a comparative analysis of needs and expectations of potential Polish and Czech participants. The application aim of this study was to formulate recommendations delimiting activities conducive to the formation of clusters of this type, which should be taken by the Polish and Czech governments, as well as others involved in the cultural field in Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. To achieve the objectives of study exploratory research was used, that had been done in 2014, using a questionnaire (auditorium and electronic survey). The study used a non-random selection of the sample, nominating the following as respondents: entities/institutions/NGOs from the cultural sector, acting on the Czech-Polish border, mainly in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. The study involved 20 entities from Polish and Czech part of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia.

Purposeful sampling resulted from the intention to pick for research the following entities/institutions/organizations, that:

- represent the largest segments of culture market (e.g. the organizational cells of local government units involved in the culture, community centers, libraries, cultural associations), – maintain cultural activities recognizable on at least local scale,
- have the potential to further develop its activity in the market culture, – have experience in cooperation with other players in the market culture, including experience in cross-border cooperation,
- potentially may be interested in further development of cultural activities in form of a cluster.

Due to the resulting number of 40 responses (20 from Polish and 20 from Czech organizations), the survey is to be regarded as illustrative in the scale of whole cultural sector on Czech-Polish border, however, in relation to a surveyed group of 40 respondents, the results are a reliable diagnosis of trends for the creation of Polish-Czech cultural cluster. Despite the inability to generalize, the results of this study may be relevant for local governments, that largely shape the cultural policy on Czech-Polish border, as well as for main actors and stakeholders of cultural development in the Eu-

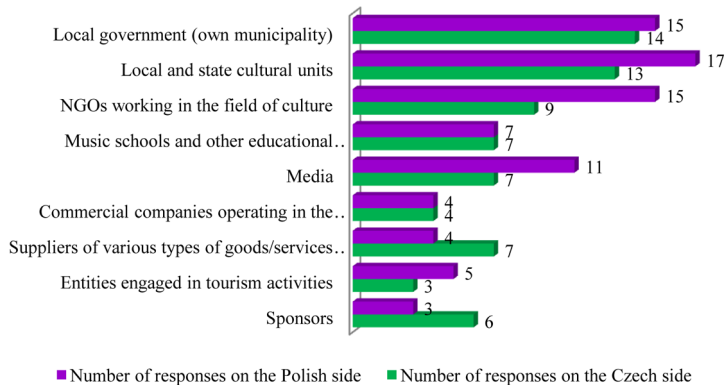
roregion Cieszyn Silesia. The results indicate trends in further development of cross-border cooperation in terms of transformation into a cooperation cluster in selected areas.

The study focused on the assessment of selected aspects of cross-border cooperation in the field of culture in Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, such as:

- the subjective structure of cooperation in the field of culture on both sides of the border, – current nature of cooperation with the entities from the neighbouring country,
- interest in strengthening the cooperation within the cluster,
- key benefits of the current shape of cooperation in relation to potential benefits of cluster cooperation in the field of culture,
- potential barriers for cluster cooperation.

The above-mentioned research areas relate to specific factors influencing the trends in the development of cross-cultural clusters at the example of Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. The first problem analyzed was economic cooperation in the field of culture on both sides of the border. The subjective structure of the cluster largely influences its future activities. Regarding the cluster of culture, according to the author, a cluster of specialized suppliers is to be considered as the most appropriate of the above mentioned types of clusters.

Figure 2. The subjective structure of cooperation in the field of culture on both sides of the border



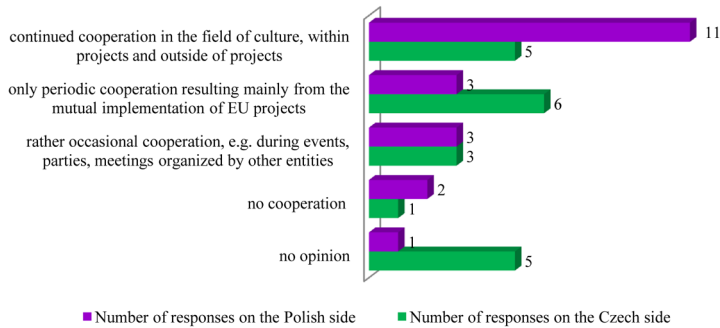
Polish and Czech respondents, as potential participants of the future cluster of culture, spoke on the cooperation undertaken in the field of culture with other entities (Figure 2). On both sides of the border dominates the cooperation with local governments (15 indications on the Polish side and 14 on the Czech side) and the local government and national units (respectively 17 and 13 responses). Certainly it is a result of legal regulations

on implementing cultural activities (e.g. own tasks of the municipalities) as well as the activity of units, for which the development of culture is a statutory objective, which means that they spend certain financial resources on such activities (e.g. museums, houses of culture, theaters, etc.). Higher tendency of respondents to cooperate with NGOs working in the field of culture can be observed rather at the Polish side (15 responses) than the Czech (9). It is difficult to define clearly the reasons that affect this. This might include varied number of cultural organizations on both sides of the border, their formal and legal status, adopted customs and traditions concerning the relations between governments and the so-called „third sector“. Also, at the Polish side cultural market participants have stronger contacts with the media (11 indications at the Polish side of the border, 7 responses from the Czech side). Such cooperation is a proof of relaying cultural information to borderlands' general public, focusing on the quality of cultural communication, as well as the ability of cross-sectoral cooperation with the editorial offices, the vast majority of which, are commercial entities. An interest in working with other players in the market culture is maintained on both sides of the border at a similar level. The analysis of the responses received to this question indicates that:

- the majority of respondents already at the current stage of development of culture market in the borderlands, maintains partnerships with a number of institutions and entities that could potentially be interested in further strengthening cooperation, among others, in the cluster,
- natural tendencies to cooperate are manifested primarily in dealing with local governments and culture units based on self-government or public financing, which confirms that not every dimension of culture can be commercialized; hence, public institutions in the cluster will seek to promote the culture rather than marketing improvement of it, as a product, in terms of market competition,
- analysis of current subjective structure of cooperation in the field of culture on both sides of the border, in the face of the objectives and conditioning of cluster activity indicates, that the commercial companies, public/local government entities and non-profit organizations working in the cultural sector, as well as suppliers of various types of products that are necessary for cultural activities, and entities engaged in cultural tourism, are a group of stakeholders that are potentially most interested in creating a cluster; in the background, there are – as entities supporting the cluster – local governments, educational institutions and the media,

- the current scale of cooperation between respondents bodes well for the further development of relations within the cluster.

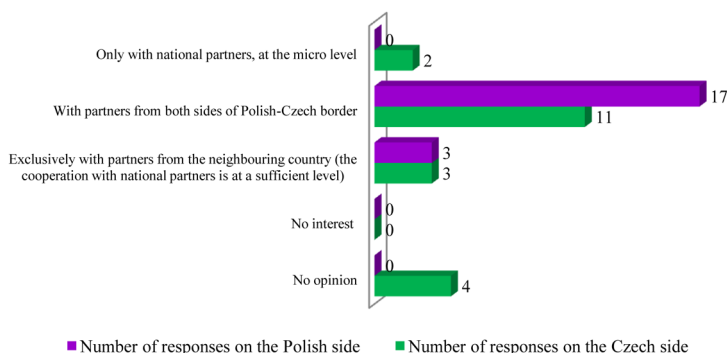
Figure 3. Current nature of cooperation with the entities from the neighbouring country



When it comes to current nature of cooperation with entities of the neighboring country (Figure 3), a significant difference between Polish and Czech respondents was revealed in this case, indicating a greater interest in making ongoing cooperation by Polish side (11 responses) rather than the Czech side (5 responses). In the context of the studied group, as potential participants of the cluster, it may mean that improved outlook for sustained engagement in the activities of the cluster is present on the Polish side, where periodic cooperation in the form of projects is preferred only by 3 respondents, while in the Czech Republic – up to 6. It is also worth noting that up to 5 respondents in the Czech Republic have no opinion on the nature of cooperation with Polish partners. The overall picture of cross-border cooperation emerging from the analysis of the responses, indicates that the Polish side is now a stronger pole of this cooperation.

This thesis is also confirmed by the analysis of the responses given to the question about an interest in further strengthening the cooperation in the field of culture at the Czech-Polish border (Figure 4). In this case, as many as 17 Polish respondents declared that they want to develop cooperation with partners from both sides of the border, while similar response was obtained in the Czech Republic only 11 times. Also in this case up to 4 Czech respondents did not express their opinion on the matter.

Figure 4. Interest in strengthening the cooperation in the field of culture at Czech-Polish border



The analysis of these results in the context of the analysis of conditions conducive to the formation of clusters, leads to a conclusion that such an aim to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the field of culture, should be linked with getting more support of the Czech side for the idea of further integration. One of the principles of cooperation within the cluster is the equivalence of its participants' interests, and their joint participation in ongoing projects, based on the awareness of the benefits they may gain. In order to determine the tendency for the formation of a future cluster of culture, a degree of awareness of its potential members for the purpose and relevance of further deepening cultural cooperation should, most certainly, be taken into consideration. The diversity of legal and formal status of individual members of the cluster, and their diverse business objectives associated with different segments of the culture, should also be taken into account.

The assessment of trends for the development of cross border cultural clusters should take into account, inter alia, an analysis of the motivators that can encourage Polish and Czech entities to undertake such cooperation as well as barriers for the cooperation. One can pull out an argument that the transformation of current, mostly bilateral cross-border cooperation into a cluster should bring an increase in the benefits of this kind of cooperation for its participants. To verify this assumption, a comparative analysis of the benefits arising from the current shape of Polish-Czech cooperation in the field of culture, with an assessments of the potential benefits of cluster cooperation that the respondents pointed on both sides of the border, has been made. It was a multiple choice question. The selection of response variants addresses key benefits relating to both the currently dominant model of cooperation, as well as to cluster cooperation. As it can be seen at Table 1, there were differences in the assessment of the benefits of cooperation

between Polish and Czech respondents, both in relation to its current shape, as well as in relation to cluster cooperation.

The greatest diversity of information relates to conducting cultural promotion and cultural offer. Currently, the benefits of such cooperation are being seen by as many as 12 Polish and only 5 Czech respondents. This tendency is also maintained in case of evaluation of cluster cooperation, where such benefits are indicated by 11 Polish entities and 6 Czech entities. The ability to raise funds for the development of cultural activities is currently assessed as a benefit by only 4 Polish respondents and 7 Czech ones. In a variant of cluster activities such benefits are pointed out by as much as 10 Polish respondents and only 5 Czechs. Organizational assistance in conducting cultural activities is now shown as a benefit of cross-border cooperation for 8 Polish entities and 7 Czech ones, and in case of the cooperation in the cluster such benefits are being seen by 9 Polish respondents and only 5 respondents of the Czech Republic. When it comes to partnership in cultural projects – currently the benefit from this kind of cooperation are being seen by 9 Polish respondents and 12 Czech entities, while in a variant of cluster cooperation – 11 Polish respondents and 12 Czech ones. Sharing of resources for cultural activity at the moments is considered as a benefit by 7 Polish entities 4 ones from the Czech Republic, while in case of the cooperation in the cluster it is perceived as a benefit by 8 Polish respondents and 4 Czech ones. Joint improvement of human resources and standards of the organizations is currently indicates as a benefit by 3 Polish respondents and 4 Czech ones, and in a cluster cooperation variant, respectively 7 and 4 respondents.

Table 1. Key benefits of the current shape of cooperation and potential benefits of cluster cooperation in the field of culture

Type of benefit	An assessment of benefits of the current shape of Polish-Czech cooperation in the field of culture		Assessment of the potential benefits of Polish-Czech cluster cooperation in the field of culture	
	Number of responses on the Polish side	Number of responses on the Czech side	Number of responses on the Polish side	Number of responses on the Czech side
Conducting common information and promotion of cultural offer for customers	12	5	11	6
exchange of information and experience and know-how to facilitate cultural activities	9	9	7	8

reaching new groups of recipients of cultural offer	8	8	7	8
synchronization of cultural activities	6	5	8	10
raising funds for the development of cultural activities	4	7	10	5
organizational assistance in conducting cultural activities	8	7	9	5
preparation of cultural projects in partnership, cost optimization	9	12	11	12
sharing of resources for cultural activity	7	4	8	4
joint improvement of human resources and standards of the organization	3	4	7	4
diversification of cultural offer	3	3	1	3
cost optimization of cultural business activity	0	0	3	3

Relatively similar assessments in both variants of cooperation were received by such factors as:

- an exchange of information, experience and know-how to facilitate cultural activities,
- reaching new groups of recipients of cultural offer,
- synchronization of cultural activities,
- diversification of cultural offer.

At the state of cooperation no respondent considered the cost optimization of cultural business activity a benefit, in the cluster cooperation variant 3 respondents from both sides of the border indicated it as a benefit.

The analysis of the benefits indicated by respondents in relation to both forms of cross-border cooperation does not support the thesis that the transformation of bilateral cooperation into a cluster will increase the benefits of such cooperation for the participants of the cluster. This may be, due to several reasons:

- the variants of answers proposed were not fully adequate in relation to the nature of business of all entities involved in the study,
- the entities that took part in the survey did not have sufficient knowledge about the nature of cluster cooperation, which resulted in noticeable caution in formulating the opinion of the benefits from cluster cooperation,
- respondents do not have an experience in cluster cooperation, and that is causing a difficulty in defining their role in the cluster,
- proposed evolution of bilateral forms of cooperation into cluster cooperation, as an innovative change, is associated with uncertainty.

inty and risk, and lesser influence of individual surveyed entities at the shape of cross-border cooperation, in comparison with currently dominant bilateral cooperation,

- adopted research methodology was based on the summation of the number of indications for individual variants of responses on both sides of the border; an analysis of individual responses would require further, in-depth studies, particularly in relation to the assessment of the benefits attributed to a greater extent to bilateral cooperation rather than the cluster.

It is also worth looking at the assessment of barriers for cluster cooperation that were indicated by respondents from both sides of the border (Figure 5). In response to the multiple-choice question about potential barriers for cluster cooperation, three dominant barriers were unanimously pointed out by both Polish and Czech respondents:

- lack of funds for projects within the cluster (16 and 13 indications),
- differences in the activities of the partners (13 and 11 responses),
- lack of real commitment of the partners in cluster activity (11 and 9 indications).

Figure 5. Potential barriers for cluster cooperation



According to the survey, the respondents on both sides of the border have demonstrated a high compliance of opinions when it comes to identifying the key factors hindering the development of cluster cooperation. Other potential barriers were also evaluated at relatively similar levels. Number of indications relating to particular types of barriers proves that, in practice, there are a number of factors that hinder the evolution of bilateral cooperation into the cluster one. What is important, the first two factors can be considered as independent of the very respondents, resulting from wider determinants of their business activity. Only the barrier relating to lack of

real commitment of the partners in cluster activity can be overcome in the future thanks to their direct involvement. The assessment of the potential barriers for cluster cooperation should also be referred to the comparative analysis of the benefits of bilateral and cluster cooperation that was made above. It is hard to resist the impression that the difficulties in defining clear benefits of cluster cooperation are a result of, among others, an awareness of the occurrence of certain barriers and differences that hinder cross-border culture market integration, such as business goals, different legal systems and different financial systems, or lack of knowledge about cluster cooperation.

Conclusions

The author has set herself as the goal of this paper to evaluate the current trends for the development of Polish-Czech cultural clusters in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia. The analysis of the research problem has been based on the diagnosis of endogenous, cross-border and exogenous factors shaping the trends for the formation and development of cross-border cultural clusters. The author took into account the results of an exploratory own research, which consisted of 40 Polish and Czech entities, selected as a group of potential participants of the future cluster.

As is clear from the foregoing, the unique nature of the market of cultural goods and services, also analyzed in a cross-border aspect, does not allow the application of typical mechanisms of the creation and development of clusters to the integration processes between the participants. This is due to the special nature of the product offered on the market, as well as non-competitive relationships between some of its participants. Nevertheless, the currently dominant bilateral relations on the cultural Polish-Czech market, also strengthened due to the high activity of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, in time should be transformed into a network of relationships. As the results of research carried out among the institutions operating in the borderlands' culture market indicate, there is a great need for further strengthening of cooperation, but also its current forms are positively evaluated. The subjective system of the participants of culture market on both sides of the border does not fit the classic examples of development of cluster initiatives. The essence of such relations is to change the competition into cooperation. However, in most cases the entities, around which the forms of cross-border cooperation in the field of culture develop, are local governments. Due to their legal and formal system they are in competition with each other only to a limited extent. Although this situation apparently favors the development of cooperation, there is lack of knowledge about the possibilities

of cluster cooperation, and probably also lack of will to create new structures of cooperation, while moving away from proven bilateral partners.

Without a doubt, a motivator to further strengthen cross-border cooperation, among others in the form of a cluster, would be the benefits that could be obtained by the participants of cultural market. However, according to research, Polish and Czech respondents do not see a significant difference in benefits between current cooperation with regard to potential cluster cooperation. Therefore, it seems that because of the numerous barriers to further integration in the field of culture on the border, as well as the necessity for a number of factors of varying impact strength (endogenous cross exogenous) to occur – it would be difficult to build a cross-border Polish-Czech cultural cluster relations at this stage. Nevertheless, it is desirable to develop any type of network relationships, which may become an indirect form of integration, and ultimately even lead to the creation of the cluster. In author's opinion, connecting Polish and Czech culture market players with uniform business objectives and customers (such as: NGOs, cinemas, culture centres etc.) into a network of cooperation could also be possible. This way it would be possible to overcome a significant barrier impeding integration, that was, *inter alia*, the difference in the activities of the parties. An important element affecting the quality and the intensity and effectiveness of the integration processes of the participants of culture market, are the abovementioned factors (endogenous, cross-border, exogenous). Equally important, however, is the emergence of a leader who will be able to realize the vision of further integration of Polish and Czech actors of the culture market, which might normally be followed by the creation of a cluster initiative in the future, and will foster better communication between cooperating organizations at an earlier stage, building mutual trust, finding a common area of interest. As other factors which, in the opinion of the author, can play a key role in the transformation of current forms of cross-border cooperation in network cooperation and even a cluster are:

- an appropriate targeting of strategies of individual culture market participants in the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia (including the goals to be achieved, and the real need for cooperation),
- development of cross-border non-project relations,
- effective education of cultural market stakeholders on the benefits of networking and clustering,
- development of the demand side of the cultural goods and services market, increased in demand for culture,
- intensification of competition between the participants of the culture market, leading to searching for the possibilities to build a common competitive advantages.

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