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Unequal Partners. Security and Identity at the Polish-German Border

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Abstract

The sovereignty of the European nation states in the realm of security politics is gradually eroding. At the same time the European integration to a large degree influences the level of direct bilateral police cooperation, since cross-border crime has come to be perceived not as only a national, but as a common problem for the European nation states. At the German-Polish border, “Europe’s Rio Grande“, these high expectations concerning security policy are put into practice. With Poland’s EU accession, Polish and German border guards are no longer spatially separated, but jointly control travellers. Joint patrols and contact points have already existed since 1998.

On the one hand the, enforced meeting of German and Polish border policemen may help dismantle mutual prejudices. On the other hand, other cleavages may appear, based on cultural, systemic and institutional factors, which hinder the development of mutual trust and reinforce the asymmetrical relationship between the Schengen-member Germany and the “junior partner” Poland.

Keywords: borders, security, police cooperation, Schengen, EU enlargement, Germany, Poland

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From the point of view of the nation state the national border is a sensitive area (for an overview on border studies s. Donnan/Wilson 1999). It serves as a filter to prevent the influx of crime into the state's territory. Border polices are the institutions in charge here. A border guard is the first representative of the nation state, and he therefore embodies the legitimate state order. He is the living symbol that one sovereign territory ends and another one begins. Police and border police as well are taken to be a "specialized body of people given the primary formal responsibility for legitimate force to safeguard security" (Reiner 2000: 7). The ones who take care of security inside a nation state should ideally be assigned to and trained for by that nation state exclusively.¹

The idea of international police cooperation is in conflict with this claim. European integration, the Schengen Agreements, and the creation of a new "security field" (cf. Bigo 2000) in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London, the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the migration pressure on Europe have brought the European nation states to increased police cooperation. This effort is based on the underlying assumption that freedom inside the community can only be accomplished and maintained through security. Freedom and security thus directly depend on the successful fight against cross-border crime (cf. Walter 2003). This new security field is necessarily of an expansionist nature, "because of pressure to present a common front to the outside world" (Anderson 2002: 39). In general, the tendency can be observed that internal and external security mechanisms are being shifted from the nation state to international organisations.² But even though there is a trend towards globalisation and Europeanisation of police activity, most cross-border cooperation takes place in bilateral agreements, and very often informally.

In the following I am going to examine the question why one nation state should grant insight into a part of its foremost domain, national security, to another nation state. I will ask what conditions have to be met for nation states to engage in police cooperation. Subsequently I will apply these theses to the German-Polish border police cooperation.

¹ In practice state security organs tend to be supplemented and substituted by private security services (cf. Johnston 2000).

² The Tampere and Hague Programmes have been a break-through for European security policy in this respect, since the Council recognized the necessity that internal and external security mechanism, civil and military instruments, need to be coordinated across the three EU pillars (Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 2004; 2005).

tion of Bundespolizei (BPOL)³ and Straż Graniczna (SG) and will show the specificity and problematic nature of this kind of cooperation on the organisational local meso level and on the micro level of personal interaction.⁴ In this case Germany and the Schengen countries face the “junior partner” Poland who does not yet apply entirely the Schengen acquis. Their relationship is marked by dependency and asymmetry.

Why police cooperation?

Nation states are rather reluctant to share their sovereignty in the realm of security. Police cooperation always entails insight into sensitive fields and data, data that nation states cannot be expected to disclose open-heartedly. The securing of the territory, the maintenance of public order, the fight against crime and the choice of appropriate means to accomplish these aims are first and foremost domains of the nation state. Last, but not least they serve as a means to self-preservation (cf. Weber 2005 [1921]: 660). Police cooperation is thus not only functional but reflects as well the countries' attitudes towards themselves and the world. This on the other hand corresponds to the widespread tendency that politics and citizens tend to place confidence rather in their own police (and their own judicial system) than in that of another nation state.

Even though citizens have become familiar with transnational kinds of police activity especially in the field of criminal investigations, like Interpol and Europol, these are not a matter of course. If it is assumed that police and similar services are genuine institutions of nation states that claim and protect their sovereignty with high efforts, then these nation states will not be inclined to share this sovereignty and grant insight to foreign institutions: “Cooperation among public police institutions at an international level, therefore, seems to be inherently paradoxical to their nation-bound function, acutely posing the question of why police nonetheless cooperate across national boundaries” (Deflem 2000: 741). It appears therefore contradictory that police cooperation is most relevant in those fields which draw on the most intimate needs of the state and which should be most protected from outside influence. In particular the fight against terrorism in the 1970s showed that states are more willing to subordinate their sovereignty when they fear a threat towards the existence of the state and the social order. Although the fight against different kinds of terrorism has not always had a prominent place on the agenda of international police cooperation,⁵ there is still a consistent

³ The German Bundesgrenzschutz (BGS) was renamed Bundespolizei (Federal Police) on July 1st 2005 in order to express the extended field of activity. “Bundesgrenzschutz” in this text refers explicitly to events before the renaming. For current developments and scope of duties s. Möllers et al. 2003.

⁴ This article is based on fieldwork conducted at the German-Polish border in 2004/2005. Thanks to the permissions from both German and Polish border police headquarters I was able to do participant observation at several control posts, the “Green Border” and a German training centre, and to conduct in-depth interviews with Polish and German border policemen. I interviewed thirteen Polish and ten German border guards in their native languages, among them five women, a number which might even overrepresent the number of women in border police. Quotes without explicit reference are excerpts from my fieldwork. This paper is part of my PhD project and therefore it is work in progress; comments are of course welcome.

⁵ Interpol for a long time failed to deal with this topic adequately, and the Trevi group established in 1975 can be taken as a European answer to this failure (cf. Busch 1995, Ch. 5.3.2).

thread throughout history. While Busch argues that the debate on terrorism since the 1970s has strikingly resembled the discussion on anarchism and the subsequent beginning of police cooperation in the 19th century (Busch 1995: 285), the western community is now moving closer together in the face of Islamic bombers. While back then, police cooperation was viewed as an expression of solidarity it has come to be perceived as a means of self-defence. However, a stable and institutionalised European police cooperation could in the long run bring about a change in the role of the nation state in the field of European security (Anderson et al. 1995: 1). This tendency is not only visible in the field of international, but also border police cooperation.

German-Polish cooperation at the Odra

The German-Polish cooperation has taken on a role as a trailblazer for European border police cooperation.⁶ The German-Polish Agreement from 18th of February 2002 (Gesetz zu dem Abkommen vom 18. Februar 2002) fixed the basis of the cooperation which had already been established years before. These instructions are put into action on the subordinate levels of the organisations. On the German side these are the Bundespolizeiämter (BPOLA), with the subordinate Bundspolizeiinspektionen (BPOLI), on the Polish part the Oddział and Graniczna Placówka Kontroli (GPK) are in charge. Contact and cooperation are not mediated by an inter-state organisation on the European level, but work binationally and, on the meso level of BPOL-Ämter and SG-Oddziały, are negotiated by local experts. Qualified personnel cooperate whose impetus was not primarily binational or European, but was concerned with the securing of their own national border. German-Polish border police cooperation can roughly be divided into three steps:

In 1998 for the first time German-Polish border patrols were introduced. Since at the time the border was the last obstacle for illegal migrants from the East to enter the European Union, the patrols were held to be an adequate means to prevent that migration. The “joint arrest” is not only meant to facilitate the work of the border police, but it has an important signalling function for the common action of both Poles and Germans. Meanwhile even the carrying of arms has become possible during the patrols on the other side of the river, which from the point of view of sovereignty is an extraordinary achievement.

Likewise in 1998 the German-Polish contact point (Kota) at the city bridge in Frankfurt (Oder) was created. Here German and Polish border police coordinate joint actions and shortcut official channels. When earlier it took several weeks for the Germans to find out the owner of a Polish car, with the request going from Frankfurt (Oder) via Berlin to Warsaw and the same way back, it now takes them at most one hour to find out.

The last important step towards closer cooperation occurred with Poland’s admission to the European Union. Since 1st of May 2004 the border policemen have no longer been the sole masters of their control boxes. In the course of a more efficient fight against crime and traffic jams the “One-Stop-Control” was introduced. Poles and

⁶ Joint patrols at the German-Czech border only started in 2003 with explicit reference to the good experience gained at the German-Polish border (cf. Bundesministerium des Innern 2004: 14).

Germans no longer stand separately from each other but work together in one control box and jointly control travel documents. Bilateral agreements explicitly fixed the mode of the control. Thus it is clearly regulated that also in the One-Stop-Control the leaving country controls prior to the entering country. The basic structure of the control as well as the duties in the case of arrest have not changed. The achievements of the One-Stop-Control are most obvious in the reduction of traffic jams at the border, making the crossing of the border more comfortable to the traveller. However, full cooperation has not yet been accomplished since the institutional structures are still strictly separated. The different computer systems might serve as an example how little the actual work has in common. Employees of BPOL use the German search system INPOL and the Schengen Information System SIS, Poland on the other hand has only the Polish national search system at its disposal. This strict division will only diminish when Poland will fully implement the Schengen Agreement.

Border Police Cooperation

Police cooperation, in particular in the field of information exchange, has taken place since the end of the 19th century (cf. Busch 1995: ch. 5.1.1.; Deflem 1996). Transnational police cooperation can be divided into two types: (1) national or subnational institutions cooperating with the respective organisations of other nation states. This kind of cooperation is genuinely cross-border and most widespread. However, it might be asked if this kind of international cooperation can indeed be considered transnational; (2) police activity through genuinely supranational institutions which differ from the former as “they have tended to engage in the collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence rather than in operational policing proper” (Johnston 2000: 22). Examples might be Interpol, Europol or the Trevi-Group. This is accompanied by the division into strategic “knowledge workers” (Sheptycki 2002) and proactive police work on the one hand and reactive “street cops” on the other hand.

In contrast to organisations like Europol and Interpol, the level of border police cooperation of different countries is not supranational, but, in most cases, bilateral and set down in international treaties. Direct cooperation appears to be the most efficient way in order not to complicate actions and in order to make use of local experts' experience.

Secondly, the cooperation does not rest on specially educated and skilled “knowledge workers” who in “intelligence units”⁷ almost exclusively engage in strategic international police work. In the case at issue the opposite way is chosen and the operative field of activity of national police is expanded by an international dimension. Another difference is that cross-border bilateral cooperation in most cases arises from and reflects the specific situation of the border region itself: “The problems which the various police agencies seek to address in these circumstances are a reflection of the cross-border life of certain regions [...]. Such police problems that there are in these

⁷ “Intelligence-led policing [...] can be roughly defined as a collection of investigation techniques, which allows the pro-active or preventive search for cues, eventually culminating in a synthesised picture of a crime to be committed. As such, ‘intelligence’ can be contrasted with reactive or repressive information-gathering, which is usually performed after a crime has already been perpetrated” (Den Boer 2002: 151).

regions are restricted to specific zones, there is no ‘strategic depth’ to this police activity” (Bigo 2000: 69). Border police certainly has to deal with phenomena of transnational crime, but their operative measures are restricted to the local level. Border police in general is occupied with “cross-border crimes”, crime across one or more borders. This is to be distinguished from “border crimes”, crime that is organised along national borders and that profits from their existence, like drug-dealing in border towns, but which does not entail a border crossing per se (cf. Anderson et al. 1995: 13f). Even though BPOL can take up police activity in the border region, “border crimes” in the first place are left to the local police.

There are only a few exceptions which allow police officers, and border police, to act on the territory of another nation state. A police officer normally cannot officially take action on the territory of another country if the latter has not given its consent beforehand. Otherwise he would be perceived as violating this state’s sovereignty and might trigger diplomatic disputes (cf. Brammertz 1999: 2). In order to gather information relevant for investigation the police in general are dependent on time-consuming assistance in law enforcement. Likewise, carrying the service weapon on foreign territory is normally not permitted. The cooperation, however, provides an important means to these juridical and institutional obstacles in order to simplify the procedures, since “cross-border crimes” have come to be perceived as not only a national, but a common problem for the European area of freedom, security and justice.

Conditions and Motives for Cooperation

For successful police cooperation more than goodwill and a political resolution are needed. To clarify the basis required I want to draw on Mathieu Deflem who has provided a detailed account of the historic origins of international police cooperation. With reference to Max Weber’s theory on bureaucracy he designs a model of international police cooperation which differentiates between structural conditions and operational motives (cf. Deflem 2000; Weber 2005 [1921]).

(1) Structural conditions enable national polices to become active outside the borders of their national legislation. Therefore they have to be specialised bureaucracies that have reached a sufficient degree of independence from their respective governments. This allows them to act semi-autonomously: “policing takes forms which go beyond explicit government instructions” (Anderson et al. 1995: 4). Moreover, only similar structural positions inside the state between polices of different countries create the basis for cooperation, “as the police recognize one another as fellow professionals, rather than as diverse nationals” (Deflem 2002: 457). The opportunity of semi-autonomous action does not only appear in cooperation, it often is the prerequisite for its creation. As Deflem points out, successful police cooperation has always been initiated by local experts from the respective institutions before it was legally fixed.⁸

(2) International police cooperation, however, can only function properly when additional motives come into play, and when police institutions share a “system of

⁸ Cf. Sheptycki 2002, ch. 1 for a detailed account on the development of police cooperation in the Channel region. Local networks and informal contacts became institutionalised and formalised with growing interest from the part of the national governments.

knowledge” about international crime. Professional interest in the control and the fight of international crime is needed on the part of all sides involved. Here Deflem refers to Meyer and Rowan (1977), who perceive operational rules in bureaucratic organisations as “myths” that define problems and accompanying solutions in concepts framed for and by the bureaucracy. Together with the efficiency of the organisation these myths influence the organisation’s legitimacy, activity and resources while minimising external insight and control. In this way the institution gains legitimacy by showing that its own rules and practices are the sole answer to a problem it itself has formulated (cf. Douglas 1986). Even under favourable structural conditions police cooperation will not be successful if no common myth, the image of crime to be fought, is shared (Deflem 2000: 746).

Structural Conditions – Germany and Poland

Poland’s integration into Europe and the Atlantic security system has been going on since the systemic transformation in 1990. The fall of the Iron Curtain has not only extended the field of activities for cross-border crime in, to and from Eastern Europe, but also new possibilities for cooperation of executive institutions in East and West have arisen (Anderson et al. 1995: 156).

Due to the systemic antagonisms, the structural conditions for police cooperation between East and West, the FRG and state-socialist Poland did not exist before the system transformation. Because of the political circumstances which were similar in Poland, the communist satellite states and the Soviet Union itself, the predecessor of the SG⁹ could not reach institutional independence which would have allowed for autonomous international action (cf. Deflem 2002: 472). Secondly, border police cooperation could not take place because the countries shared no international border.

Border guards from GDR and state-socialist Poland, however, cultivated an intense exchange both socially and officially, as they regularly held joint exercises. The climate between the Polish border troops and the soviet Red Army then stationed at the border was, however, less favourable but instead characterized by deep mistrust. Hence, ideological proximity does not automatically entail successful cooperation.

Only the fall of the Iron Curtain and the prospect of Poland’s accession to the European Union provided the framework for German-Polish border police cooperation to emerge. This cooperation did not only begin long before Poland joined the EU, but it even then had a pioneering position. On the basis of favourable structural conditions (relative independence, Poland’s EU integration) experts from inside the organisations had initiated the cooperation on the level of Bundesgrenzschutzämter (BGSA) and SG-Oddziały before it became legally fixed. The idea of joint patrols was first proposed by the BGSA Frankfurt (Oder); they were started and put to the test on the basis of local agreements with Polish Oddziały, before the German-Polish agreement on the cooperation of police and border police created a generally binding legal basis. Brammertz (1999: 4) has argued for the police cooperation in the Euregio Maas-Rhein that the existing legal basis did not match the new realities, and that their interpretation often led

⁹ ”Wojska Ochrony Pogranicza“ (WOP)

the police to operate in legal grey areas. Anderson et al. (1995: 75) also mention that German senior officers fear that the necessary formalization of agreements for police cooperation in the course of the Schengen implementation process might endanger efficient informal arrangements which are essential for cooperation in the border regions.

Border police cooperation generally takes place below the sphere of politics. As semi-autonomous institutions the border police organizations remain untouched by any tensions in German-Polish relations, hence political differences between governments are subordinate to police-professional forms and derived concepts (Busch 1995: 258). Cooperation only becomes problematic when agreements are to be made on the political level on which local experts can exert few influence.

Operational Motives

German-Polish cooperation is motivated by the joint interest to prevent cross-border crime. The common myth, or enemy, is trafficking in human beings, illegal entry, theft and forgery of documents. The institutions involved share a “system of knowledge” on these crimes and are aware that these can be fought much more efficiently in team work than only in the national frame.

It is part of this myth that a virtually natural connection between the degree of intensity of the border regime and crime statistics is assumed. Judging from the present internal Schengen borders, the dismantling of the internal stationary border controls did not necessarily entail a decline in police activity.¹⁰ A connection between the relaxation of borders and a growth in crime could not yet be proven (cf. Anderson et al. 1995: 16ff; Walker 1998: 172). Police and other security services on the contrary took the opportunity to extend their mandate, resources and equipment. The powers of police and border police and the technical means in terms of equipment and innovations like the biometric passport are constantly growing (cf. Council of the European Union 2004b).¹¹

In this sense European police cooperation on the one hand is an example for the discourse on “functional spillover”, the necessity that one intervention into a policy sector requires adjustments in neighbouring policy fields: “The argument about the need for security measures to compensate for the opening of internal frontiers [...] serves to demonstrate how the logic of functionalism is generally favourable to enhanced police co-operation” (Walker 1998: 171). Police measures are quickly at hand to compensate for dysfunctions in another sector. One side effect is the possibility of limited civil rights. The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union and the hype on increased criminal networks is just one example where in the eyes of scared citizens, border controls and police cooperation are to repair what politics created. Complex political problems are being reduced to an alleged security deficit that is eagerly believed. On the

¹⁰ Even the first plans for the relaxation of border controls in the Saarbrücken Agreement of 13.7.1984 contained precautionary compensation measures as it was presumed that the relaxation of the border controls and their transfer to the external border would entail a rise in crime (cf. Busch 1995: 24f).

¹¹ For development and importance of technological progress in international police cooperation (s. Delem 2002).

other hand this development entails far-reaching implications for the construction of a common “European home”, an issue that will be addressed in the following section.

The foremost interest in the fight of crime can be differentiated for the nation states involved. The national factor should not be disregarded. Police activity on an international level has to be connected to the national context to gain legitimacy: “international police duties are mostly conceived as explicit components of the national function of police to enforce the ‘*laws of the land*’” (Deflem 2004: 94 [emphasis in original]). As polices embody the state monopoly, force actions on international police level are always subordinated to the national interests and shall not contradict them.

Operational Motives –Germany and the Schengen countries

Germany has played a major role in the preparations for the Schengen Agreements and Europol and massively supported the extension of police powers. This on the one hand can be explained by Germany’s central position inside Europe, and on the other hand many authors see these efforts rooted in German mentality: “it also flows from the general rejection within German police culture of amateurism and *ad hoc* arrangements for fighting crime” (cf. Anderson et al. 1995: 48 [emphasis in original]).

The fight against cross-border crime, hence, does not only serve the internal protection but embodies the national idea, the concept of a community of people who share a feeling of belonging¹², and who have understood the “rules of the game” (Heyman 1999: 619), in the first place laws, and abide by them. This discourse now does not only refer to the national state but extends to the member states of the European Union, especially to those of the Schengen Agreements. While on the one hand, the discussion on the desperate search for a European Identity focuses mostly on the democratic deficit of the EU and the alienation of citizens from the EU, on the other hand a clear connection between the discourse on European Identity, home security and increased cooperation in the realm of justice and home affairs can be observed (cf. Walker 1998).

The search for European commonalities revolves around ideal constructions of a presumed common ground of values for all European nations (“Core Values”): Jewish-Christian heritage, Enlightenment, the French Revolution, in short, a list that could be arbitrarily continued and that recurs to some alleged superiority of the “West” (cf. Davies 1996; Hedetoft 1997; Delanty 1999). On the other hand the concept of Europe has always been most concise where it was not defined out of itself, but in contrast to something else. After the end of the Cold War old enemies could not be used anymore to construct a (West-)European identity, “after 1989 Europe was open to new definitions” (Delanty 1995: 142). Europe as a security community has a much more tangible meaning and finds much larger support than the so far anaemic concept of a cultural identity.

It is much easier to define what Europe is not. It is not Asia, and it is not the Islamic world. Above all it is not the poor neighbours who come to the West for happiness and welfare, and whose intrusion has to be prevented in order to preserve economic prosperity. The cherished antagonism of East and West has outlived its usefulness and has been replaced by a new external threat: “mass immigration, organized crime, and

¹² Cf. Benedict Anderson’s (1998) concept of “Imagined Communities”.

imported terrorism, the penetration of which would, like the old threat, lead to the destabilization of 'well-balanced' western societies" (Anderson et al. 1995: 165).

Illegality in this sense is an external phenomenon, and its intrusion into the community has to be prevented: "Interdiction is the quintessential expression of the national idea; drawing a strict limit around the body politic, it characterizes goods and people arriving at the border as potential contaminants to be kept out or inspected and allowed in under certain conditions" (Heyman 1999: 621). Migrants and asylum-seekers are redefined as security problems for the European nation states. Coloured migrants in particular face prejudices that associate them with drugs, fraud of social welfare benefits and deviance while occupying the workplaces of the locals, having a much too high birth rate and generally bankrupting the whole welfare system.

The possibility to see migrants as victims withers in favour of the drug-dealing "black man": "In the end we are left with a distorted *bricolage* masquerading as realism" (Bigo 2000: 93 [emphasis in original]). The perception of these threats and the increased policing efforts are "not a reflection of an increase in the threats facing modern society. Rather it is a lowering of the threshold of threat acceptance maintained by social controllers in tandem with the upsurge in the use of police methods themselves" (Bigo 2000: 83).

Sheptycki here uses the notion of the "folk devils", the construction of a diffuse bogeyman who stirs up fears among the population and makes the police work appear natural, necessary and honourable. "Folk devils" might be socially constructed, but they are neither irrational nor mythical but rather "the product of definitional choice and institutional thinking" (Sheptycki 2002: 114). Severe border controls to keep out unwanted intruders become the condition sine qua non for the preservation of an imagined European community: "For its part, the politics of border controls are located precisely at the point of intersection between issues of security and identity" (Walker 1998: 170).

The European community is maybe not a cultural but a security community, weld together in the face of an external, and maybe already internal, threat. Especially in the context of the Eastern enlargement and Poland's expected admission to the Schengen area the question of the balance of freedom and security continues to be pressing within the framework of the European project.

Operational Motives – Poland

With EU membership, Poland has taken the first step towards full integration. In the case of the German-Polish border Poland rather fears the flow of crime through its territory than the influx. Poland's status is that of a "gatekeeper". The successful accomplishment of this assignment will be decisive for full membership among the Schengen countries. The members of the Schengen Agreements are under obligation to standardise their visa regulations, to take part in the computerised Schengen Information System, and to improve the police and juridical cooperation between the member states. Thus Poland is anxious to meet the demands until the expected date in 2007. The Polish Eastern border, the new external border of the EU, is decisive here as it is rated by the EU as a particularly sensitive area (cf. Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 2002). Polish border police emphasise their increased responsibility as it is no longer

limited to Polish home security but with EU accession has extended to the whole of Europe (Straż Graniczna n.d.): “The quality of control at the future EU external borders will be thus decisive in maintaining a high level of internal security” (Vitorino 2002: 13). Before Poland’s EU accession it was assumed that the new member states would be enthusiastic about the “return to Europe” and could be “expected to bring with them an intense commitment to making the EU work, as their best hope for overcoming their unhappy histories of marginalisation and oppression by dominant Great Power, socio-economic stagnation, recurrent national tensions and political stability” (Amato 2002: 9). This euphoria has been replaced by disillusionment, as especially in the new member states euro-sceptic and populist parties play a role that was not foreseen. Poland, in the first place, is not lacking in self-confidence and is not willing to be reduced to an enthusiastic junior partner. Poland’s claim to a leading role among the Eastern European states is strongly connected to that point.

In order to be prepared for the full implementation of the Schengen *acquis* adjustment processes between the organisations are required. Processes of institutionalisation, like the standardisation of European security measures, have far-reaching homogenising effects that likewise influence organisational practices on the actors’ level (cf. DiMaggio/Powell 1983). The progress of Poland’s integration into Europe, however, demands much more effort from the Polish than from the German side, since Poland has to equal a European standard that Germany, albeit with some exceptions like digital radio, has already achieved. The construction and adjustment of Polish border police buildings and equipment are to a large degree financed by the European Union. At the same time exchange and further vocational training measures take place under the overall control of Western Europe and the USA (cf. Schmitt 2003).¹³

From the viewpoint of the Schengen members Poland has to prove its capability to be a “good European”. The Polish efforts to meet these expectations are less derived from a desire to please the West but from the claim to become a full member in the Schengen area, to bear full responsibility and to operate at eye level with the “old” member states.

Cooperation on the micro level

The creation of a European security field calls for the frank cooperation of the countries involved. Trust is the basis for all police cooperation. The admission of the Eastern European countries into the EU is even more sensitive since they bear increased responsibility for European internal security as the European external frontier has moved eastwards (for trust and police cooperation s. Anderson 2002; Walker 2002).

Trust plays a major role also in border police cooperation. In earlier times European border security served not only to beat back criminal subjects but to protect the national territory from violation and observation by the potentially hostile neighbour country. Especially the latter function has changed in meaning due to the European in-

¹³ This asymmetrical relationship to a greater degree exists in the US-Mexican police cooperation: “United States law enforcement agencies are the dominant players in every instituted bilateral initiative with Mexico, even leading to the control of the organization of Mexican policing through training and logistic support” (Deflem 2004: 111).

tegration process; however there is a psychological factor in the sharing of responsibilities for the security of one's own state that proves relevant on the micro level. This begins with the literal speechlessness during patrols on foreign territory, with possible implications for one's own safety in dangerous situations, and ends with the fear to get in trouble because of a corruptible cooperator. German and Polish senior officers report that it was not easy to make the border policemen cooperate. The relationship was marked by mistrust and prejudices (for German-Polish stereotyping cf. Dąbrowska 1999). In the course of the Eastern enlargement German border police officers felt demoted to "puppets on a string", as they often say, as they no longer had the possibility to turn back Poles at the border. It seemed to them as if Poland tried to sneak from the "out-group" of the poor neighbours into the "in-group", into the exclusive club of the EU. Polish border policemen on the other hand found themselves bluntly confronted with the Polish-German prosperity gap.

Mistrust and prejudices, however, could be reduced by personal contact, the common identification by professional identity and the binding myth of the fight against crime. With the introduction of the joint control Germans and Poles together prevent the influx of crime; after all the poor neighbour has moved farther eastwards and now comes from Russia or the Ukraine to the German-Polish border.

However, successful cooperation on the level of the nation states and organisations does not automatically entail success on the level of personal interaction. If such different countries cooperate, then differences come into sight which cannot be simply reduced to equipment, but which are expressed in the organisational hierarchical structure, the institutional legacies, social and income cleavages, and not at least in communication problems. But such a combination of circumstances can also reinforce prejudices and asymmetries. I would like to illustrate this with an extract from my field diary:

We are on a Polish-German patrol on the "Green Border". Two Poles, two Germans and I drive around all day on the Polish side of the Odra. All of them have met before, for two of them it is their fifth patrol together. But actually it would be too much to say that they know each other, since none of them is able to speak the other's language. All of them are happy to discover that I speak both German and Polish; hence they take advantage of me translating for them. The border police at the Green Border have virtually no contact with the other side apart from the patrols, so they are eager to learn about the others' working and living conditions. Of course, the salaries have to be discussed. The Germans try to oppose the stereotype of them being well off by talking about high rents and gasoline and supermarket prices, but they are topped by the Polish enumeration. The whole conversation reveals much more differences than the Germans would have suspected, and for the Poles it is a depressing confirmation of what they had assumed: "Before the cooperation we were quite sure that they earn much more than we do. But now we know that it is six times more. This knowledge really doesn't make things any better." The conversation switches to working conditions. The Germans are happy to find a common feature, as both Germans and

Poles sometimes patrol along the river by bike. But the suspected common ground quickly disappears when both sides give a closer description of their respective bike patrols. While the Germans got new cool mountain bikes, the Poles are ordered to ride some old ladies' bikes, with the local population laughing their heads off when they see them passing by. (Field diary, 25 October 2004)

Adjustments and structural reforms are necessary from both sides in anticipation of the full implementation of the Schengen acquis, but the way is longer for Poland than for Germany. The efforts to achieve the required standard are decisive for the interaction of border police from both countries. Even if both sides show good will, social, cultural, institutional and economic difference can impede understanding and revive supposedly overcome prejudices as “political and economic hierarchies also go hand in hand with continuing cultural asymmetries of superiority feelings and inferiority complexes and related ethno-national stereotypes” (Spohn 2002: 2).

Prospects

The nationally differentiated motives that surpass the overarching motif of the fight against cross-border crime and the securing of the European borders do not contradict but supplement each other. The positions of the border police organisations inside their nation states as well as the EU as a framework have created the structural conditions for cooperation. Moreover, an organisational myth binding for both border polices has been developed which acts as motivating basis around which cooperation crystallises. Thus the above-mentioned conditions for successful international cooperation are met.

These observations, however, can only indicate why cooperation can work. If, however, the analysis remains on the macro level, it cannot give an account of likely complications in daily practice of Polish and German border guards. Financial and technical imbalances relevant on the meso level are as much determining factors for interaction as the prevailing social, cultural and work-ethical differences. The cooperation is characterised by dependency and inequality as almost all important impulses, financial means and instructions emanate from the Schengen countries.

On the micro level social differences have to be diminished and the development of mutual trust has to be fostered in the first place. Stable and institutionalised cooperation can only occur if the cooperation takes place on the same level. While this aim is pursued on the level of senior officers, bonds of trust among the lower ranks are deliberately prevented in order to hinder the development of stable groups.

Furthermore the European integration is a relevant factor for a reflection on the level of international and national cooperation beyond the status quo. Besides efforts to increase European border police cooperation, like the installation of a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Council of the European Union 2004a) in Warsaw, in this case Poland's expected full implementation of the Schengen acquis is of importance. Poland is not only in a state of transformation itself, with far-reaching implications for the cooperation, but the border police work itself is in a state of transition and will undergo reorientation with the Schengen acces-

sion. From that moment on stationary border controls will be rendered obsolete and the securing of the border will be based solely on mobile controls.¹⁴ In the long run German-Polish border police cooperation in its present form is preparing its own abolition.

¹⁴ In special cases, like the 2006 football world championship in Germany, or demonstrations, where public order or national security might be endangered, the member states can decide to temporarily resume border controls.

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