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ATLANTIC BRIDGE. TWO PERSPECTIVES – POLISH AND MEXICAN¹

(Summary)

The aim of this paper is to examine the importance of the participation of Poland and Mexico, as medium-sized countries, in institutions of the Atlantic Bridge, viewed from their perspective. We conduct an interdisciplinary study into relationships of regional and transregional integration groupings and defence alliances. We analyse the possible geopolitical and geo-economic situation of Poland and Mexico in the event of weakening or disintegration of the EU, NAFTA, or NATO.

We present two extreme scenarios as possible results of Brexit and the electoral victory of Donald Trump. According to the first scenario, the EU and NAFTA will not survive. For Poland and Mexico this would mean a lack of external support for reforms and of the barriers protecting them from disintegration of their democratic states and liberal values. In the second scenario, both Brexit and Trumpism are seen as only turbulences, after which the systems will regain their stability. In this scenario, there would be a further decrease in the developmental differences between Poland and Mexico on one hand, and the EU and NAFTA on the other.

Keywords: EU; NAFTA; NATO; Poland; Mexico; Atlantic Bridge; economic integration

JEL classification: F15, F52, K33

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, the Atlantic is perceived as a bridge – an area connecting and combining one overarching civilization based on liberal democracy, human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and a market economy². The sources of such a perception can be found in the European cultural roots of the founders of the USA and Canada, creating a feedback loop between the formation of states on the North American continent and revolutionary processes in Europe, etc. The manifestation of these Atlantic ties were also reflected in the common victories in the world wars and the “cold war”. Nowadays, the security community created by states of the Atlantic region is considered to be a synonym of these ties.

The European pillar of the bridge is formed by the European Union, currently comprised of 28 states. However, the American pillar of the Atlantic bridge is often perceived as consisting solely of two elements, i.e. restricted subjectively to the relationships of the USA and, to a lesser degree Canada, with their European strategic partners (Great Britain, Germany, France and the remaining members of NATO and the EU). Thus, the significance of Mexico in shaping this pillar of the bridge is frequently omitted. The institution typically seen as combining both pillars of the Atlantic bridge is NATO, whereas the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) could become one.

Thus we deal with a divergent perception of this bridge. We can speak about a dual asymmetry of optics.

In the first dimension of this asymmetrical optics, expansion of the subjective coverage of the integration groupings in Europe and America is perceived differently. In relation to the European pillar, the impact of NATO and EU expansion on the potential of the groupings is recognized. In the perception of the American pillar, the fact of creating NAFTA – an integrated market³ comprising Mexico, the USA and Canada is not given much weight⁴. However, such

² **E. Czarny, J. Menkes**, *The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the International Security System*, in: **E. Czarny, A. Kuźnar, J. Menkes** (eds.), *The Impact of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on International Cooperation*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main 2017, pp. 15–30.

³ We speak here about the free trade area, which is the second, after the preferential trade agreements, stage of economic integration distinguished by **B. Balassa**, *The Theory of Economic Integration*, Routledge, London 1961.

⁴ See e.g. **S. Ülgen et al.**, *Collective Defence and Common Security: Twin Pillars of the Atlantic Alliance*, Carnegie Europe, 11 June 2014, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2014/06/11/collective-defense-and-common-security-twin-pillars-of-atlantic-alliance-pub-55902>; accessed on 10.03.2017.

a divergent perception of the EU and NAFTA from the perspective of the Atlantic Bridge has no justification. An example of the different significance attached by the main powers of the bridge to the expansion of its institutions was the diverse attitude of Poland (as well as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) and Mexico to their accession aspirations to the OECD. Mexico stood earlier as a candidate for membership and earlier fulfilled the criteria⁵. However, its accession did not take place at that time. An argument against its admission was the OECD's inability to accept new members. However, the necessity to provide assistance by the OECD to candidates from Central and Eastern Europe to enable them to become members of the European Community changed the organization's approach to the admission of new members. The states of the Visegrad Group, including Poland, joined the OECD in 1994, almost immediately after having fulfilled the membership requirements in terms of their collective admission, which had been initiated by Mexico⁶.

In the second dimension, the asymmetry is based on perceiving the Atlantic bridge solely from the geopolitical perspective of the big actors, with no attempts to analyse it from the perspective of small and medium-sized countries. This results in failing to recognize the role of the bridge and the significance of the remaining institutional members of the bridge for the bridge itself (the EU, NAFTA and NATO).

This imbalance in the perception of the bridge, which is especially noticeable from the perspective of Poland and Mexico – middle-sized countries in the EU and NAFTA – encouraged us to conduct our study.

The aim of this paper is to examine the significance of the participation of middle-sized countries in integration groupings from their perspective. We also make an attempt to answer the question about the geopolitical and geo-economic situations of Poland and Mexico in the event of a weakening or disintegration of the institutional pillars of the Atlantic bridge (the EU and NAFTA as well as – in the case of Poland – NATO⁷). This question has come to the forefront

⁵ E. Czerwińska, H. Tylawska, *Polska w OECD*, Kancelaria Sejmu. Biuro Studiów i Ekspertyz, kwiecień 1996/406, pp. 7–11; Ch. Schricke, *Mexico, 25th member of the OECD*, The OECD Observer, June/July 1994/88.

⁶ The authors of this paper evaluate differently the backdrop to the accession of Poland and Mexico to OECD. In Mexico, there is a predominant view of a great success of the country, which became a new OECD member as the first country after 20 years, since the accession of New Zealand.

⁷ Mexico is not a member of NATO. This fact does not undermine its significance for the reality of the USA and Canada to ensure the security of the western hemisphere.

in light of the projected revision of NAFTA and the construction of a US-Mexican border wall announced by President Trump, his reservations towards NATO, and the possibility of EU disintegration as a result of Brexit, along with the activity of anti-European movements in the EU. We analyse the regional and interregional relations of both countries from the economic and political points of view, within the legal framework defined by the regional agreements.

Focusing on Poland and Mexico in an interdisciplinary (economic, legal and political) study of relations of regional and transregional integration groupings (the EU, NAFTA) is not only obvious, but also controversial. We justify our choice to present the similarities and differences between these countries in the context of their participation in regional integration against the background of factors shaping the regional and transregional order in the Atlantic area. Considerations of a legal and political nature are also based on economic reality, thus we analyse the economic indexes of Poland, Mexico, the EU and NAFTA in years 1999–2015. We divide this period into two subperiods: 1999–2008, i.e. from the introduction of full liberalization of Poland's trade with the EU within the framework of the Europe Agreement to the outbreak of the world economic crisis; and 2009–2015, i.e. to the last year for which full data are available. The caesura is neither the first year of Mexico's membership in NAFTA (1994), nor of Poland's membership in the EU (2004) since it would make it irrational to compare economic indexes concerning all the analysed subjects and make it difficult to draw conclusions in a scientifically correct way.

2. Factors shaping the regional order in Europe and North America

Nowadays, the main interdependent endogenic factors shaping the regional order in Europe and North America, as well as the transregional one in the Atlantic area, include: the substantial imbalance of economic and social potentials (including the military component) of the states in regions, as well as the superpowers' choice of the regional coordination and integration model as a tool for shaping regional and transregional relations, instead of the previously-applied imperial model and use of hard power⁸.

In the past, Germany, France and Great Britain on one side of the Atlantic, and the USA on the other, took advantage of their military power to delineate

⁸ J. Menkes, A. Wasilkowski, *Organizacje międzynarodowe. Prawo instytucjonalne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2017, pp. 51–53.

areas of influence⁹, striving to build an order based on subordination. After World War II, these states unanimously rejected the imperial *modus operandi* and military power in mutual relationships as a way of shaping and maintaining regional order and interregional relations. Instead, they chose to form a security community¹⁰. The USA, Great Britain, France and Germany based their external relations on the conviction that the source of welfare and safety is unfettered trade and free societies, benefiting from international institutions. This doctrine proved practical in the transatlantic cooperation, which led to regional integration with the frameworks of the EU and NAFTA as well as NATO, the basic institution for the Atlantic bridge. Obviously, the initiator and leader of this institutionalisation was the USA; however, smaller neighbours cooperated willingly to implement the presented model. Poland and Mexico, as well as other smaller countries of both regions, could take advantage of their close neighbourhood with the regional superpowers so as not to be afraid of expansionism. Having experienced aggression from their mighty neighbours, they willingly chose integrating cooperation.

3. Economic potential of Poland and Mexico as well as the importance of trade within the EU and NAFTA in their international trade

Poland's GDP (USD 469 billion in 2015) represents a small share of the world's GDP (0.63%). The Mexican economy is almost 2.5 times larger (USD 1143 billion) and has a 1.53% share in the world's GDP (see: Table 1). However, in the examined period Poland experienced rapid economic growth (176%; 6.6% annual average) in comparison with both the mature economies of the EU-28 and NAFTA as well as Mexico (113%; 4.8% annually). In the first

⁹ On December 2, 1823, US President James Monroe, in annual message to Congress, divided the world into western (American) and eastern (European) spheres of influence. Recognizing these hemispheres as areas of exclusive interest, determined by their neighbourhood, excluded the political influence of states from outside the hemisphere (e.g., European colonisation and political influences on the American continent). It was the so-called 'Monroe doctrine' that in 1865 justified American aid to President Benito Juárez in the struggle with Emperor Maximilian, a candidate for the throne of Mexico – and the objection (in 1962) to the presence of Soviet soldiers and arms in Cuba (in framework of the doctrine, the USA also withdrew missile batteries from Turkey), <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23>; accessed on 10.02.2017.

¹⁰ K. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: international organization in the light of historical experience*, Princeton 1957, pp. 5–8.

subperiod, this growth was even faster (in 1999–2008 Polish GDP grew by 212%; 13.5% annually). However, in the second subperiod (2009–2015) a significant slowdown in the growth rate of Poland's GDP is noticeable (to 7%; 1.2% annually).

TABLE 1: *GDP, GDP growth rates, and shares of selected countries and their groups in the world's GDP in the years 1999–2015, in current prices (in billions USD) and %*

	GDP in billion USD			GDP's growth rates in %			Share in the world's GDP in %		
	1999	2008	2015	1999–2015	1999–2008	2009–2015	1999	2008	2015
World	32362	63262	74753	131	95	25	100.00	100.00	100.00
EU-28	9490	19034	16068	69	101	–6	29.33	30.09	21.49
NAFTA	10930	17456	20648	89	60	23	33.78	27.59	27.62
Mexico	537	1101	1143	113	105	28	1.66	1.74	1.53
Poland	170	530	469	176	212	7	0.52	0.84	0.63

Note: GDP's growth rate is calculated using the following formula: $g = \frac{\Delta Y}{Y} \times 100\%$.

Source: own elaboration based on <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/>; accessed on 07.03.2017.

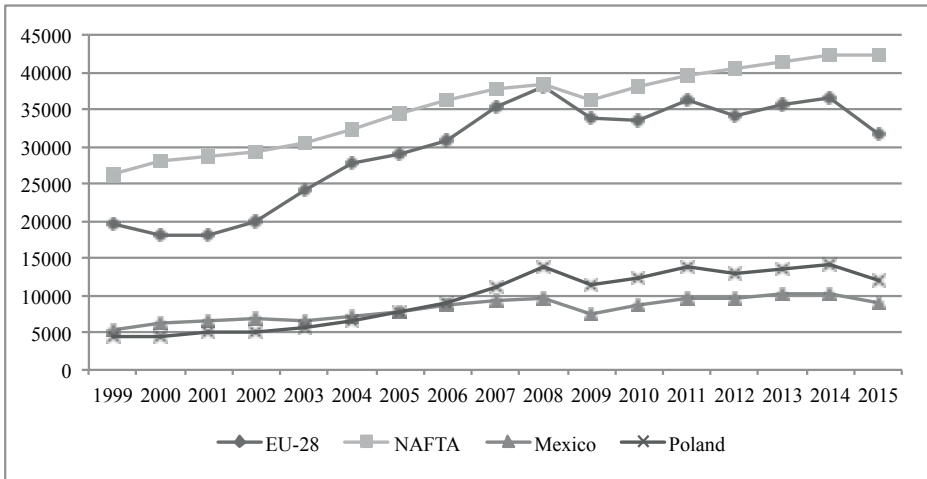
Both states, Poland and Mexico, are small countries compared to the integration groupings to which they belong. Although Poland's participation in the GDP of EU grew from 1.8 to 2.9% in years 1999–2015, it is nevertheless a small share. Mexico's position in NAFTA is relatively higher (with a 5.5% share in 2015), but it is also low.

Comparison of the economic potentials of states requires analysing their GDP *per capita* (Figure 1). Obviously, the leaders are highly developed economies, with GDP *per capita* amounting to USD 42,300 in NAFTA and USD 31,700 in the EU-28 in 2015. GDP *per capita* in Poland equalled USD 12,200 in the last year of the analysis and was over USD 3,000 higher than in Mexico, and almost three times higher than in 1999. It is worth mentioning that until 2004 a statistical Mexican was still richer than a Pole. The difference of wealth ranged, then, from 40% in 2000 to 8% in 2004 in favour of Mexicans. Therefore, in terms of GDP *per capita*, for the many years since the beginning of its transformation¹¹ Poland has resembled Mexico

¹¹ Poland recorded a higher level of GDP *per capita* already in 1995, however, in years 1997–1999 both countries reached similar figures, and thereafter Mexico achieved definitely better economic outcomes. See: E. Czarny, K. Śledziwska, *Polska w handlu światowym*, PWE, Warszawa 2009, p. 111.

– a country which was often a synonym for a developing economy¹². Poland's EU membership overlapped with it overtaking Mexico at the level of development and decreasing the distance separating it from the remaining states of the EU and NAFTA.

FIGURE 1: *GDP per capita of selected countries and their groups in the years 1999–2015, in current prices (in USD)*



Source: own elaboration based on <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/>; accessed on 07.03.2017.

The collected data concerning the economic potential of Poland and Mexico indicate that these countries do not play a significant economic role in the integration groupings to which they belong. However, in their foreign trade the role of the EU and NAFTA states is extremely important.

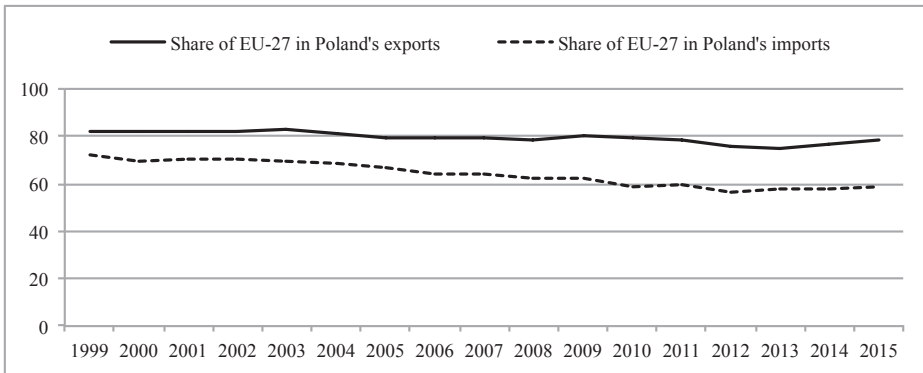
The EU states are the most significant trading partners for Poland. Their total share in exports in the years 1999–2015 remained stable at approximately 80%. In terms of imports, however, Poland's dependence on goods imported from the EU fell from 72% in 1999 to 59% in 2015 (see: Figure 2).

Poland's exports focus on several EU states. In 2015, the top five recipients of goods from Poland accounted for 50.6% of Polish exports, and Germany alone accounted for a 26.9% share in Poland's total exports. The remaining four significant partners in Polish exports were Great Britain, the Czech Republic, France and Italy. However, the degree of concentration of exports is decreasing – in 1999 the above-mentioned countries accounted for 55.5 % of the total Polish

¹² *Ibidem*.

exports (Germany – 9.3 percentage points more than in 2015). This is a positive trend reflecting a growth in the competitiveness of Polish goods, connected with its adjustment to EU standards.

FIGURE 2: *Share of the EU-27 in foreign trade with Poland in years 1999–2015 (in %)*



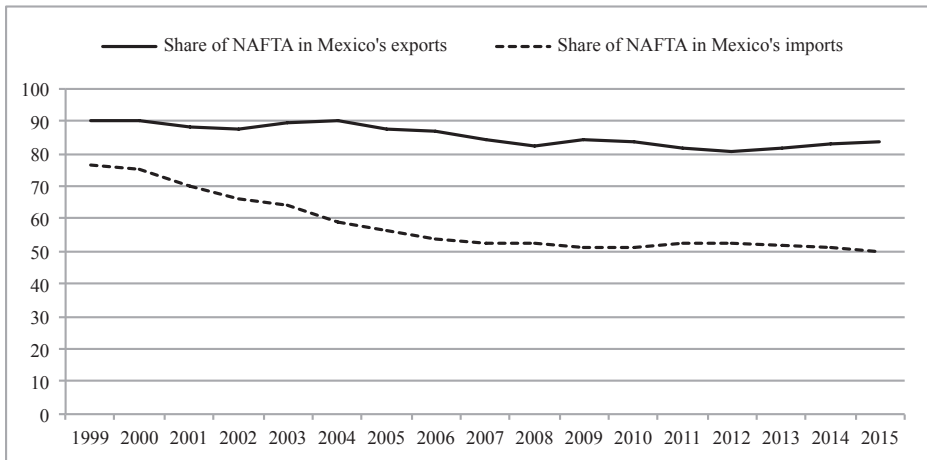
Note: The EU-27 includes all EU states except for Poland.

Source: own elaboration based on <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/>; accessed on 07.03.2017.

The main importer of goods from Poland is also Germany, with a share of 22.6% in 2015 (2.6 percentage points less than in 1999). The remaining four significant EU importers of goods from Poland accounted for 15.3% of Polish imports in 2015, compared to 24.5% in 1999.

Mexico's exports are much more concentrated than Poland's, with 84% of exported goods going to Mexico's two partners from NAFTA and almost the entire volume directed to the USA, which receives 81% of the Mexico's total exports. A different situation is observed in the case of imports, where Mexico's dependence on NAFTA, and in particular on the USA, is systematically decreasing (see: Figure 3). In 1999, 75% of imports came from NAFTA, whereas currently it is about 50%. American goods are being systematically displaced by imports from China. Latin American countries do not play a major role in either Mexican exports or imports.

FIGURE 3: NAFTA's share in Mexico's foreign trade in years 1999–2015 (in %)



Note: NAFTA embraces the USA and Canada.

Source: own elaboration based on SAT, SE, BANXICO, INEGI. Balanza Comercial de Mercancías de México. SNIEG. Información de Interés Nacional, <http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/bie/?idserPadre=11000330005003700130#D11000330005003700130>; accessed on 07.03.2017.

4. Similarities and differences between Poland and Mexico in the context of their participation in regional integration

Despite their geographical and ethnic distances, similarities between Poland and Mexico can be found in the sphere of social, political and economic culture. The similarities consist of not only a *prima facie* visible nationalism and folk Catholicism, with importance attached to the cult of Virgin Mary, but also in the weaknesses of the institutions of the state connected with the social demand for governance by a leader, and clientelism in the political and economic sphere¹³. Generally, the communities of Poland and Mexico can be classified as premodern¹⁴, while the communities of their strategic partners are postmodern ones¹⁵.

¹³ A. Antoszewski, R. Herbut, *Systemy polityczne współczesnego świata*, Arche, Gdańsk 2011, pp. 60–61.

¹⁴ S.N. Eisenstadt, *Spółczesność obywatelska i sfery publiczne w perspektywie porównawczej*, *Studia Socjologiczne* 2006/3, pp. 5–35.

¹⁵ Z. Baumann, *Płynna nowoczesność*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2007.

A further similarity relates to the way both countries perceive their neighbours and are perceived by them, and the actual reality. In Poland there is a strong self-perception as being part of the West in its relations with neighbours from the East and South, and in Mexico as part of the North in its relations with its Latin neighbours. This picture only partially reflects the reality. Simultaneously, the feeling of superiority towards the East/South is accompanied by a feeling of inferiority towards the West/North. The responses of the West to Poland's aspirations to move closer to it, and of the North to Mexico's aspirations to be a part of it, can be differentiated. In the western perception of Poland, there is still a strong recognition of differences between Poland and (old) Europe. In turn, for many Americans, the Rio Grande is still a dividing line between two civilizations. At the same time, the countries' strategic neighbours, i.e. Germany-France in the case of Poland and the USA in the case of Mexico – being aware of the differences between the self-perception and reality – support the transformation of their eastern and southern neighbours (respectively), which are aiming at the adoption and internationalization of common values.

Perhaps paradoxically, the way of treating geographical neighbours – as strategic partners – is once again an issue which connects Poland and Mexico. Poland does not accept the position of a weaker partner in its relations with Germany and in the Weimar Triangle, while Mexico would like to be recognized as an equal member of NAFTA. Obviously, these aspirations do not have a real basis, however Poland, unlike Mexico, has a complementary option, which is supporting the Atlantic bridge and the policy recognizing the EU as its European pillar, which is connected with advocating for the same values in framework of the Weimar cooperation¹⁶. Mexico, however, does not have an alternative option towards its North American orientation, and cannot even balance the attraction of this pole.

This is a key difference between the two countries. It can be simplified to the role and rank of the transatlantic relationship assigned by these countries. Poland treats the transatlantic relationship as a foundation of its security and defence policy and does not neglect its importance for the economy. Polish foreign policy unanimously supports connecting security with membership in NATO.

¹⁶ Poland was invited to join the French and German cooperation not only with regard to the willingness to revise the French and German reconciliation and awareness of the significance of the historical reconciliation for European integration, but also because of a striving to shape a triangle of French and German relations. However, it is not in the strategic interest of Poland to playing the role of a rotatable country, always joining the majority in exchange for benefits.

The differences between the mainstream parties concern – at most – the role assigned to EU cooperation with regard to Poland’s military security. In the framework of this consensus, the idea of a NATO – EU ‘competition’ is rejected. Poland often and willingly highlights its pro-Americanism, articulating, in a naive way, dreams about building a relationship with the USA similar to that between the USA and Great Britain.

Mexico, on the other hand, is still faced with the choice between northern and southern integration (a comprehensive pan-Americanism is not really a potential option). In this regard an attractive alternative could be – connected with the American *pivot to Asia* – Mexican cooperation with the Pacific region¹⁷. Cooperation with the USA in the sphere of security is not perceived as an element of a larger whole, i.e. the security of the western hemisphere. Nor are closer ties with Europe treated as a potential alternative (or even an important supplement) with respect to Mexico’s cooperation with the USA and Canada¹⁸.

A number of factors determine such an attitude. A relatively new factor is a feeling that Europe has come to disregard/abandon South America after the “European spring of nations” in 1989. The European Community, previously interested in strengthening the states and institutions of South America, starkly reoriented its policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, which was reflected both in the volume of financial transfers (see: Table 2) and a reduction of interest in restructuring the social, political and economic relations in Latin America.

¹⁷ Although Mexico relatively late (in 2012) joined the TTP negotiations, from the very beginning it took notice of the opportunity of export diversification (access to the markets of Singapore, Australia and New Zealand), as well as attracting FDI. See: **F.L. de Rosenzweig Medialdua**, *México y su ingreso al Acuerdo de Asociación Transpacífico*, “Revista de Derecho Económico Internacional”, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), 2012/3/1, pp. 89–94, http://dei.itam.mx/archivos/revistadiciembre2012/REVISTA_DICIEMBRE.pdf; accessed on 13.03.2017.

¹⁸ Despite the fact that Mexico – like other Latin American countries – attached a great importance to the cooperation with Europe, perceiving it as a chance for a partial sustainability of US influences, the EU (but not its separate states) is not treated as an alternative or complementary strategic partner. The will to tighten political, economic and cultural bonds with Europe was reflected in the Mexico’s National Development Plan in the years 1994–2000. It assumed the supplementation of the bilateral cooperation with traditional partners (Spain, Germany, France, Italy) within the EU cooperation. As a result, the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement came into force (in 2000). This Agreement replaced the Framework Cooperation Agreement from 1991 (for more, see: **J. Chen Charpentier**, *Las relaciones entre México y Europa hoy*, “Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior”, México y la Unión Europea, Instituto Matías Romero, SRE 1996/49, pp. 149–158, <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/images/stories/numeros/n49/chen.pdf>; accessed on 13.03.2017).

TABLE 2: *Financial transfers, EU-Poland's budget since May 1, 2004 (as at the end of January 2017) in million EUR*

Position	Total
I. Transfers from the EU to Poland	134 896
II. Contributions to the EU budget	43 854
III. Reimbursements to the EU budget	152
IV. Balance of settlements Poland – EU (I – II – III)	90 890

S o u r c e: Ministry of Finance 2017.

Thus abandoned, South America again had to turn to the USA to build its societies after the collapse of the bloody dictatorships established with the support of the USA.

5. New poles of geopolitics and geo-economics

Not only disintegration but also weakening of the institutions of the bridge have an impact on the formation of new poles in the transatlantic area. Abdications of power tempt the challengers (Russia, China) to replace the leaders and create a new shape of geopolitics and geo-economics. Not only the turbulences, but also the emerging new powers (with their aspirations to hegemony) pose an existential threat to small and medium-sized countries. This threat embraces all dimensions of security. Each disruption of gravity in the transatlantic area automatically has an impact on increasing the security costs in the region (and in the world).

These disruptions also result in economic losses connected with losing the advantages of integration not only with big countries, but also with small- and medium-sized ones. Obviously, it is difficult to compare the costs/benefits arising from the regional integration of states, such as on the one hand Germany or France and the USA; and on the other Poland and Mexico. These are determined by a number of factors resulting, in fact, from the available alternatives. Regional superpowers faced a choice of one out of three fundamental strategies, namely building: 1) imperial spheres of influence in the neighbourhood area, with the use of power instruments; 2) autarkic independence, and 3) interdependence in a form of integrating cooperation. Small- and medium-sized countries could choose only integrating partnership or – in defending their independence

– autarkic functioning in a scorpion strategy¹⁹. In the regional integration of NAFTA and the EU, in which both regional superpowers and small- and medium-sized countries participate, we are dealing with a positive-sum game – a choice of the strategy based on integrating cooperation. Using comparative advantages makes it possible to account for the costs and benefits for the parties involved.

In the analysed period, all participants of integration were taking advantage of cooperation. At first glance, Poland benefited the most from integration, which resulted in its transition from the period when one could only find vinegar on the grocery shelves (i.e. in the conditions of real socialism) to the developmental level of an average EU member. Mexico's balance of the costs and benefits of integration is influenced by the cost of the war on drugs, which are (directly) independent of NAFTA. Joining this (American) war resulted in increased organized crime, which has presented a major challenge to the country²⁰. In the case of Poland, the biggest financial and material expenses were met by the USA and Germany – the guarantors and payors of transformation as well as Poland's security after the “cold war”.

Nevertheless, the challenges faced by the two integration groupings under consideration, and in fact one transatlantic project, create an existential choice: “to be or not to be”. This challenge is not based on social or economic roots, but political ones. Euroseptics draw on chauvinisms and myths, analogically to the proponents of separating the USA from Mexico with a border wall and the destruction of NAFTA. These proposals involve a blind forgetting about the sources of prosperity (the peace dividend), forgetting that the areas embraced by integration were already previously divided by borders, which resulted in millions of victims of war and suffering. Integration (like democracy) is not an academic choice, but a political reply to the experiences related to functioning in divided areas²¹.

¹⁹ According to the scorpion strategy the costs of victory incurred by the aggressor (while destroying the victim) cannot be accepted by the aggressor – such as in the case of the Soviet-Finnish war.

²⁰ Such a result, analogical to “prohibition” was, obviously, as predictable as impossible to avoid, since aliberalism with regard to human behaviour is an element of religious roots in the American value system, a *sui generis* messianism in social life.

²¹ In reference to integration a famous Churchill saying is apropos: “Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. . . (11 November 1947)”, <https://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/quotes/the-worst-form-of-government/>; accessed on 28.11.2017.

6. Conclusions

Brexit and the electoral victory of Donald Trump create the possibility that the presented paper might prove to be a closing balance sheet. Several scenarios are possible. We present two extreme ones.

According to the first scenario, the EU and NAFTA will not survive. For Poland, and similarly for Mexico, this would mean a lack of external support for social, political and economic reforms, and the removal of barriers aimed at protecting democratic states and liberal values from destruction. In turn, Germany and the USA, in both the short and long term, will on one hand recognize the benefits from decreasing their financial bailouts for their neighbours, while on the other hand equally quickly lose the peace dividend. The security costs (in all dimensions) of Germany and the USA will grow rapidly. And the security in the world, which is not stable in any case, will decrease substantially.

In the second scenario, both Brexit and the political philosophy of President Trump²² are only turbulences, following which the system will regain stability. The EU, NATO and NAFTA will, after corrections, retain their places as entities. Great Britain and the EU will create a bypass, which will take over the functions of membership, and the European members of NATO will perform their financial commitments, i.e. allocate 2% of domestic budgets to defence, while Mexico will protect its borders and the USA from illegal emigration more effectively. In such a case, it can be assumed that over the medium-term there will be a further decrease in the developmental differences between Poland and Mexico on the one hand, and the EU and NAFTA on the other, which will result in a decrease in net financial contributions made by Germany and the USA to the budgets of Poland and Mexico.

The key to the forecast of stability lies in the past, namely the answer to the questions whether Poland (and other states of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe) are one geopolitical and geo-economic continent together with the Europe of Germany-France-Great Britain, and whether Mexico (and Latin American countries) are one geopolitical, geo-economic continent together with the USA (and Canada). In Europe, the line dividing the continent overlaps with the coverage of reformation, and differences on both sides of the border are of a substantial nature. The division of the American continent is equally strong and of a similar nature. Poland (and the post-communist countries in general) experienced

²² This philosophy (a mix of populism, nationalism and militarism) is labelled *Trumpism*; <http://www.dictionary.com/meaning/trumpism>; accessed on 28.11.2017.

violence and has witnessed the demonstrated superiority on the part of its Western neighbours, just like Mexico and Latin American countries have with respect to the North. It was “old Europe” and North America that created the norms constituting the social, political and economic system which must be accepted for admission to the institutional cooperation projects. Thus, initially integration within the institutions of the EU and NAFTA is not a cooperation between equals. However, a quiz with a question – one or two Europes/Americas? – does not necessarily test one’s knowledge about the future, but is “a forecast from the past” with a fundamental question: Which elements of tradition will create the current identity and political will in the future? The long-term answer will be given by civil societies, whereas politicians and political parties will reveal only short-term trends.

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MOST ATLANTYCKI. DWIE PERSPEKTYWY – POLSKA I MEKSYKAŃSKA

(Streszczenie)

Celem artykułu jest zbadanie wagi uczestnictwa Polski i Meksyku, a więc państw średniej wielkości w instytucjach mostu atlantyckiego z ich perspektywy. Prowadzimy interdyscyplinarne badanie relacji regionalnych i transregionalnych ugrupowań integracyjnych i sojuszu obronnego. Szukamy odpowiedzi na pytanie o możliwą sytuację geopolityczną i geoeconomiczną Polski i Meksyku w przypadku osłabienia bądź rozpadu UE, NAFTA i NATO.

Przedstawiamy dwa skrajne scenariusze skutków Brexitu i wyborczego zwycięstwa D. Trumpa. Według pierwszego UE i NAFTA nie przetrwają. Dla Polski i Meksyku oznaczać to będzie brak zewnętrznego wsparcia dla reform społeczno-polityczno-gospodarczych i barier przed destrukcją państwa demokratycznego i wartości liberalnych. W drugim scenariuszu zarówno Brexit, jak i trumpizm są jedynie turbulencjami, po których układ odzyska stabilność. Będzie następować dalsze zmniejszanie różnic rozwojowych między Polską i Meksykiem z jednej strony a państwami UE i NAFTA z drugiej.

Słowa kluczowe: UE; NAFTA; NATO; Polska; Meksyk; most atlantycki; integracja gospodarcza