

Transnationalism and europeanisation

Government



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Abstract

Transnationalism and Europeanisation is the concept of downloading the structures of the European Union (EU) to the domestic level. When implementing such structures, however, the changes that are made within State territories are extended to include shared beliefs, rules, discourses, identities and policies. This, in effect, seems to be a two way process which provides territorial States with greater control over the political geographies of their nation States. Although this affects the attainment of a fully integrated EU, the same structures are still being employed which demonstrates the overall impact Europeanisation has upon nation States. This study will examine the effect Transnationalism and Europeanisation has upon the political geographies of nation States and a demonstration as to how the political geographies of these States are transformed will be given.

Introduction

Transnationalism refers to the transborder relations and interactions that exist between individuals, firms, institutions and groups. In doing so, the cultural and political characteristics of nation States combine, which in turn leads to Europeanisation (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003). Europeanisation is defined as; " an incremental process of re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the extent that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy making" (Howell, 2002: 6). Overall, Europeanisation is the downloading, to the domestic level, of European Union (EU) regulations, directives, regulations and institutional structures. Transnationalism and

Europeanisation are therefore concerned with the inter-relationships between individuals, States and territories, which transforms the political geographies of nation-States. This study will demonstrate how Transnationalism and Europeanisation transforms the political geographies of nation-States by reviewing relevant academic literature within this area and providing applicable examples of how Transnationalism and Europeanisation transforms the boundaries, divisions and possession of States. The difficulties with attaining completing EU integration will also be discussed, followed by a review as to whether the current processes are effective or not.

Overview of how Transnationalism and Europeanisation are transforming the political geographies of territorial States

Political geographies of territorial States are defined by borders, despite the fact that the EU intends to establish a fully integrated system.

Transnationalism and Europeanisation impacts the political geographies of such States by making a distinction between State sovereignty and European integration and subsequently abrogating State sovereignty (Jacobsson et al; 2013: 70). The understanding of Transnationalism and Europeanisation has, nonetheless, been extremely complex for some time, although Europeanisation is generally considered a paradigm of Transnationalism (Maria, 2010: 1). Transnationalism and Europeanisation therefore describes the two way process of policy change that occurs between the EU and domestic governance structures. This is different from European integration, which relates to the one way process of the EU's impact upon Member States. Distinct structures of governance are thus created through <https://assignbuster.com/transnationalism-and-europeanisation/>

Europeanisation (Cowles et al, 2001: 1) and consist of “ formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, shared beliefs and norms” (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003: 30).

The development of these distinct structures of governance has, nonetheless, been considered to generate “ adaptational pressures” that are conditioned upon the ‘ goodness of fit’ between EU and national policies (Cowels et al; 2001: 2). Accordingly, Europeanisation is a process of change whereby domestic structures are influenced by the processes of the EU system of governance. These are then used to shape the policy outcomes of domestic actors (Dyson and Goetz, 2003, 20), which is said to remove the borders of geographical territories within the EU. Regardless, borders are still important in helping to develop territories that are divided by State boundaries and in analysing modern political geography (Nelles and Walther, 2011: 6). Boundaries also form part of an ideology and are effective in demonstrating the limits associated with territorial ownership and control (Herschel, 2011: 173). Borders are therefore necessary in distinguishing between territorial States. Since the Revolutions of 1989 overthrew the communist States, however, significant transformations have been made to the borders contained within the EU.

The concept of Europeanisation has had a significant effect upon nation States, though at the same time it has developed multifaceted contours. This is due to the fact that it is such a contested notion and is resultantly extremely difficult to define. It has, however, recently been described as a “ social act having politico-geographical motivations” (Marciacq, 2012: 1).

Whilst there are many different conceptions of Europeanisation, it cannot be <https://assignbuster.com/transnationalism-and-europeanisation/>

said that they are all equally sound. This causes controversy within the political geographies of territorial States and as argued by Driver (1991: 268); “ what was once considered a moribund backwater is now fertile ground for original research and lively debate.” Nevertheless, Europeanisation is the transnational flow of people, ideas, practices and customs across all EU borders (Ydesen, 2013: 172). Not only does Europeanisation have an effect upon Member States, but it is also has an effect upon Non-Member States. This occurs as a result of the EU’s co-operation with third countries and as expressed by neo-institutionalists; “ the analysis of the organisational field of the external dimension of EU migration policy reveals interorganisational dynamics that are likely to impact on the policy output in non-Member States and shape Europeanisation processes” (Wunderlich, 2009: 22).

Development of the Argument

Europeanisation has transformed the political geographies of many territorial States and has had a positive impact upon the conflicts that occur between Member and Non-Member States, through integration and close association (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003). Nevertheless, as Germany and Poland have failed to integrate fully, much confliction still exists between the two territories (Kratke, 2007: 1). The German side of the border is detrimentally affected, whilst the Polish side of the border has improved economically (Nelles and Walther, 2011: 6). One of the main objectives of Europeanisation was to ensure that States became fully integrated, yet many barriers still exist. This has been described as an “ unnatural and dysfunctional unit” (Ohmae, 1995: 42), though it is unclear whether such borders will ever be

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fully opened up (Mingus, 2006: 577). If the EU is to become fully integrated, this will be a necessary requisite although it is likely that many States will be reluctant to become borderless for fear that sovereignty will be undermined.

In addition, borders are now being used in order to resolve many underlying issues that arise within the EU, such as immigration, crime and environmental problems. As a result, borders are being recognised as having significant importance and although it is important that the EU becomes fully integrated, it is also necessary for effective controls to exist (Gabbe, 2010). Cross-border co-operation will be capable of allowing for “ the discovery and furtherance of common interests and the acknowledgement of differences” (O’Dowd, 2010: 32). Arguably, it is clear that divides continue to exist within the EU and it is questionable whether these can be overcome given the cultural and political differences that exist within territorial States. Provided that States co-operate with each other, effective Europeanisation will be ascertained; “ cross-border co-operation helps lessen the disadvantages of the border, overcome the periphery status of the border regions and improve the living standards of people in the area” (Gronau, 2011: 3). Therefore, if territorial States, such as Poland and Germany, co-operate with each other and embrace the changes that are being created by Europeanisation, the problems that currently exist will be overcome.

Cross-border boundaries produce many difficulties for the attainment of a fully integrated EU, yet it has been suggested that boundaries are actually “ fading away in the post-modern, globalized world” (Passi, 2010: 678).

Therefore, although Transnationalism and Europeanisation are transforming the political geographies of territorial States and establishing an integrated

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EU, territoriality still exists. It remains to be seen whether this will ever be any different given that boundaries are a symbol of sovereignty.

Furthermore, because Europeanisation still has an impact upon Member and Non-Member States alike, it is questionable whether a borderless world is in fact needed since the structures of the EU are still being adopted regardless (Gabbe, 2010: 3). Consequently, it appears in view of this that closed borders are primarily required to tackle immigration, crime and environmental problems and that as a result of Europeanisation, territorial States are adopting the structures of the EU regardless as to whether the borders are open or closed. Therefore, whilst a fully integrated EU would be advantageous, it cannot be said whether the drive for this exists as a real entity or a mere political entity.

Transnationalism and Europeanisation have evidently transformed the management of borders both inside and outside the EU by striving for integration and co-operation. However, many believe that the 'Fortress Europe' notion still exists (Willem, 2006: 13). Since the Schengen Agreement was entered into in 1995, however, the EU has become even more integrated. This has been considered one of the "greatest achievements of the EU" (European Commission, 2013: 1). The Schengen Agreement provided the EU with an area that exists without internal borders, which provides individuals with the ability to circulate freely without being subjected to border checks. Whilst this makes it easier for citizens within the internal borders, tighter controls are placed upon the external borders to ensure the protection of those within the Schengen area (Alscher, 2005: 126). This effectively creates a Fortress Europe on the external borders

whilst creating a free Europe on the internal ones. Whilst Europeanisation transforms the political geographies of nation States, it is internalised differently and depends entirely upon the territorial States willingness to change.

Therefore, whilst Europeanisation does strongly influence integration, it has been pointed out that the process is “ uneven at both the domestic and regional level” (Anastasakis, 2005: 77). This is because at the regional level differentiation and diversity continues to persist amongst countries and at the domestic level there is a constant battle between reform and reaction. Europeanisation is simply a process that territorial States are to adopt in order to achieve economic integration and create a set of ideals that are being conformed to by all EU Member States. Yet, the workability of this will depend entirely upon the willingness of territorial States. Co-operation amongst States should therefore be encouraged in order to overcome any problems that arise with regards to cross-border relations and to provide adequate protection to citizens. It is unlikely that this will be achieved with ease given the lack of co-operation that currently exists in territories such as Germany and Poland, yet provided that nation States have a common set of goals, any sensitivity that exists will be dealt with accordingly.

Conclusion

Overall, Transnationalism and Europeanisation transforms the political geographies of nation-States by establishing common goals and desires that are to be adopted by all States within the EU. Whilst Europeanisation generally seeks to achieve an integrated Europe, territorial States are still

being defined by borders. However, in spite of this Transnationalism and Europeanisation still impacts the political geographies of nation States by distinguishing between State sovereignty and European integration. Borders of geographical territories are said to be removed by Europeanisation, yet many borders still exist in order to maintain control and securitization. Europeanisation has, nevertheless, transformed the political geographies of many territorial States by positively impacting the conflicts that transpire between Member and Non-Member States. This is achieved through integration and close association, yet not all States have successfully integrated. This is due to the reluctance of States to abrogate sovereignty. As a result, divides continue to exist within the EU, despite the attempts that have been made to the adoption of Europeanisation. Hence, it is questionable whether these divides can be rectified given the cultural and political differences that exist within territorial States. The attainment of a fully integrated EU seems to be affected as a result of this, yet the same structures of Europeanisation are still being incorporated regardless of the fact that cross-border boundaries are still being maintained by some States. Thus, because Europeanisation still impacts upon Member and Non-Member States, it is unclear whether a borderless world is needed given that borders help to tackle immigration, crime and environmental problems. Still, it is manifest that Transnationalism and Europeanisation does transform the political geographies of nation-States as a whole.

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