Title:

Measuring the cross-border integration level through the cross-border cultural powers. The case studies of the Basque, Flemish, and Upper Rhine cross-border regions in the EU

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Abstract

In the last decades, huge emphasis from the EU towards having functional European integration, especially in the Cross-Border Regions (CBRs) after the de-bordering that took place. Although several cooperation initiatives run at the CBRs, still the CBRs face many obstacles, one of the most are the cultural barriers and weak level of cultural networks across national borders. To go further with the functional integration at the CBRs, the level of cultural integration and acceptance between the cross-border residents should be understood as the first step before any ambitious economic or innovative interactions across the border can take place. This paper addresses cultural integration through the lens of the cultural power index. The analysis of the cultural power index is a multi-layered analysis that is based on both 1) the cultural networks across the borders taking place between cultural infrastructures and human social behaviours towards these cultural infrastructures, and 2) the territorial perspective where the critical masses of the event's participants were considered. This analysis is based on a new innovative model of Territorial and Network analysis (TaN) that combines quantitative and qualitative elements. The analysis focuses on three CBRs in the EU: 1) the Upper Rhine region between Germany, France and Switzerland, 2) the Flemish region between Belgium and the Netherlands, and 3) the Basque region between Spain and France. Each of these cases has certain socio-cultural characteristics. Using this cultural power index, several cultural city types and regional cultural typologies can be identified representing different cultural integration levels.

Keywords:

Cross-border regions, Cultural power index, Cultural integration, Cultural networks, Border obstacles