

ACADEMIA – FACTOR OF A PERMANENT REGIONALIZATION

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Abstract

The article deals with the concept of regionalization generated by an unspecific factor of spatial organisation that is „academia”. The paper content is structured as a gradual presentation of the principal stages of university’s action into European space. Two major aspects are pointed out – the permanent dynamics of academic power centres and the reality process of regionalization made by university even move invisible. The conclusion set a prospective view about the reconsidered position of the university as a powerful regional factor.

1. Introduction

The criteria of geographical divisions (“cutting-ups”) of space cover a range almost equal to the typology of the geographical objects it includes, be it natural or human phenomena. Using all these criteria has become almost axiomatic, especially in the cases of some major examples:

- political, historical and administrative aggregate levels of tradition, which generate, among other things, the nation-state, instrument of work and analysis for any discourse in the last 200 years, and which is gradually replaced by the super and infra national levels;
- the economic criterion, also aggregate and synthesizer of a multitude of entirely economic elements, in accordance with which a space includes “center” and “periphery”, developed and underdeveloped areas, growing or fluctuating GDP, etc;
- the physico-geographical natural criterion which organizes the most stable “cut-ups” – natural regions.

The most unique and dynamic regions derive from the human action diversity, be it concrete substantially or informational-energetic.

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2. University - a *sui generis* criterion

As an element of “territorializing”, arranging and finally organizing a space, the university /academia has exerted its force of structuring, initiating and often imposing formal or informal configurations, sometimes taken over, and confirmed by the other participants of the society organization.

It is natural to look at the main stages of the University’s interference as the aim of this article is precisely that of emphasizing the way in which university frames the contemporary European space. A brief history of its territorial function outlines a few distinctive steps University has played in the European space.

Medieval University

The roots and origin of this institution in the Middle Ages are neither common nor unique. Two types of universities can be distinguished by the way they were created and by their structure: Bologna and Paris. In their turn, these models will generate some “hybrids” in other remote regions.

The Bolognese type - a corporatist student only association - spreads and develops South of the Alps, in many Italian cities, in Central and Northern Europe, but it will be also taken over by some French Universities (Toulouse, Orleans, and Angers).

The Parisian type, found only in one French University, Caen, will perfectly match the English¹ and Dutch pattern, being a monopole of the clergy - “universitas magistrorum”. They are the old Episcopal Church, under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Therefore, we have a first “puzzle” generated by the University, two worlds functioning by different rules and in parallel and simultaneously with the other spatial-political configurations. For reasons of space, we cannot look into the revealed aspect too deeply, (my fellow historians can deal with it more competently), but we can ask this question - is this university “territorial” segregation one of the germs of the later

¹ Oxford University is of Parisian inspiration, but without copying it entirely, and without succeeding in attracting continental students.

differences between the systems – a conservative close one, as opposed to a liberal, open one?



Informal regionalization by Parisian and Bolognese universities

Without contradicting ourselves, we can add that this territorial division is formally supported by a network, made possible by the singularity of Latin, “universal” validity of the academic titles, the right of the students to “travel” between one university and another and choose to

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listen to classes of some famous teachers. This époque can be considered “the first Erasmus wave”, even though the paradigmatic scholar would be born two centuries later, when “the network university” had already begun to fall.

The classical period of Europe (the 15th through 17th century) was paradoxically characterized by a decline and fall of universities ideal and of the unified theory for the teaching system, and European interest in academic activities or their cultural legacy being gradually blurred.

The political-administrative environment of the era, the rise of the national monarchies, the assertion and consolidation of some nation or of the independence of some cities determined a fraction of the “European university network”. The nodal segments enter a phase of island-like isolation, each state, region or monarchy creating and maintaining an ever more isolated academic institution, according to the latest policies and trends.

This academic division corresponds to a consolidated political stage. University has no longer the strength to gather Europe in contiguous subspaces activities. Thus, there are large spaces that do not know the intellectual supremacy of such an institution (the Romanian Countries, for example).

Universities of Germany and of the rest of Central Europe (Heidelberg, Prague, Krakow, Budapest, and Bratislava) did not have the same impact abroad as Paris and Bologna did, although many of them are creations of lay princes or of urban communities.



...the fraction of the European university

The Enlightenment (the end of the 17th and the 18th century) and then the academic reforms at the end of the 19th century will connect and reopen the cultural spreading towards East. Paris, Vienna, Prague and Berlin will become attractive areas in a reconstruction network, where the political context begins to play a more and more dominant role. This is the “second Erasmus wave” when the students begin to circulate between European recognized universities. Together with them, scientific information, demeanor pattern and political message started to circulate in a feed-back way making impossible revealing of the primordial cause

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impossible in the cutting ups which come into being. They usually double those political and administrative messages.

A new cultural cut up is generated by the trends of those times, promoted by Universities: the Polish humanism, the Russian and Greek orthodoxies, the English Puritanism and the French Cartesians.

The Romanian space gravitates around Kiev and succeeds in marking on the European academic map several prestigious universities: Bucharest, Iasi, Alba-Iulia, Cluj (royal academies or Jesuit universities). Young graduates of royal schools complete their studies abroad in cities like Lwov, Rome Vienna, Constantinople, famous cultural and political centers, corresponding to regimes which made history - the Ottoman power, the Russian and Habsburg imperialism, Prussia or Poland.

The 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century range among the same pattern of coexistence of some "areas" and "network".

3. The University of the 20th century between Versailles and Berlin

Two factual realities result from the 20th century Europe by combining the historical temporal scale with the geographical spatial scale.

- re-strengthening of University's national identity, which is ranked, in the happiest cases, as *school*, a *way of life* or *cultural area*- the French school, the Russian/Soviet, the German or Anglo-Saxon way of life, etc;

- a huge "puzzle" divided between East and West where the academic ways used to cross each other accidentally, but coming and especially making for different directions;

Paradigms and ideologies, currents and trends put forward by the academics changed Europe from the Atlantic to the Caspian Sea in an "enriching" mosaic beyond the double colour political background Berlin used to impose on people.

Universities began to strikingly stand out as a super system with connections in the environment it is created, but with elitist outlets by means of which generalized connections are made.

Following 1990, the European university space is re-mapped by programs like Tempus, Erasmus and Leonardo and in the last years the framework program (FP6, FP7) reaching its goals by a new regionalization of the academic partners.

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Facing a new challenge, especially after the last 200 years have made the universities accumulate and reconsider, also after the industrial, agricultural, demographical and ethical revolution, a revolution in attitude adjusting requiring an answer to the dilemma: science or profession?

Connections, bilateral agreements and networks have been already created depending on the answer of the universities and on the adjustments to be done.



„...schools, ways of life, or cultural areas...”

The network-university returns in various forms after more than 1,000 years: regional corporations, transnational extensions, long distance education, NTIC.

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Thus, the university program really becomes a workshop center of territorialization by its influence, polarizing definite areas. It also becomes, sometimes purposely, a center of arranging territory and in so doing equipping organizing the space in terms of wave and network.

The "university" system becomes a doubling confirming and initiating structure for other elements of territorializing and a motive of indirect and direct arranging by means of private funds, new programs and mobility of its members, etc.

The phenomenon is verifiable at the level of medium sized universities, which really succeed in reconfiguring the regional wave, the economic initiative. The origins of this way of action are also Western, but the increasing number of connections North-South, West-East connections will standardize this phenomenon and will provide a new configuration of the regions generated by the university.

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fulfilling their emergency missions to provide society with reasoned analyses of optimum policy judgments.

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