Regionalism, Regionalization and Regional Development

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Abstract

Sustained development is a concept associating other concepts, in its turn, in the EU practice, e.g. regionalism, regionalizing and afferent policies, here including structural policies. This below text, dedicated to integration concepts, will limit on the other hand to regionalizing, otherwise an aspect typical to Europe and to the EU. On the other hand, two aspects come up to strengthen this field of ideas, i.e. the region (al)-regionalism-(regional) development triplet has either its own history or precise individual outline of terms.

Key words

Development, regional development, sustainable development, types of regions, Euro-regions

JEL Codes: Q01

1. Introduction

Regions are either within country territories, or multicountry, but for both kinds and sizes aspects and facts that are common inside and specifc, as seen from outside are to be underlined. A science of regions did developed so far all over the world, but the European, i.e. the EU, case came to strengthen it. This paper does carry such a development in the literature, but equally regards econmic development, as sustained.

2. Literature review

Bibliography studdied in such an order comes from within the EU process research,as well as from outside it and more precisely the reach Romanian literature rather refers to the EU. As for the EU related literature, it certainly starts with Bela Balassa and Jacob Viner, in 40s and 60s, but references to regional development are rather delayed.

3. Methodology of research

There are here competing historical analysis and synthesis, semantic analysis and economics of development and cohesion, as face to face with the integration process of EU type analysis, here including specific institutional development.

4. History of regionalism

The ancient world’s States generally were enough centralised powers, except for what was the Ancient Greece in her specific period of life. Later on, the feudal State stopped
being quite able to monitor its afferent geographical territory and this was the historical moment in which the local jurisdictional competence and other related competences were given birth. There was the law and administrative gap between rural and urban areas doing the same. Cities were reaching some brand new priviledges on contractual bases as a kind of “liberation”, whereas concomitantly, rural areas were staying subordinated to the two authority institutions that were landlord and church; sometimes and in some regions with specific culture some local self-administration was historically noticed at that time.

Back to the feudal State, it was both concerned by its external boundaries, since previously by the ones of individual domains, and then preoccupied by delimiting inland counties and provinces. And back to rural areas, subservient to landlords and church interests, since law was further needing and calling for the financial dimension to work with so the State’s power, as centralised this time, was also coming back locally. Further on, in the 16th and 17th centuries primary formulas of national sovereignty appear as corroborated with monarchical absolutism tendencies specific to the Middle Ages. Then, they were cutting some of the previous contractual liberties and self-governing elements of cities. In the next 18th century this European social and political picture was getting filled by color, whereas in the next further 19th century impetus come for the pace of development, i.e. markets enlarged to national size, they modernized and helped national States’ formation. The new entrepreneurial social class appeared and strengthened and they dragged in a concept like the one of human rights. Nevertheless, such developments were equally giving space to other contrary or subversive ones. National States’ boundaries weren’t exactly following the ones of local communities, i.e. as a result ethnical and cultural shaping was getting uniformized sometimes as really frustrating for some of communities and their peoples.

The same 19th century was also the one of federalism, conceptually related to regionalism. Remember the German example for the whole Europe in which such a relationship was getting concrete.

5. Regionalism, regionalizing and afferent policies in the EU

Debating on regionalism is already a “theme gauge” face to ressenting some kinds of crises, e.g. regional and ethnic, that occured in 1910 and 1960 in Europe. But first it is important to make the proper difference between regionalism and regionalizing. Regionalizing is another territorial organising level for the State, regional institutions and corresponding transfer of competences (to this new level). Regionalizing is a political initiative for that State. And given the specific of the region, a certain authonomy results and regionalism might be human, cultural, linguistic etc. Regionalism is a political discourse which’s finality is federalism. The regionalism’s conceptual approaches are: (i) political and ideological, (ii) administrative and (iii) economic, and there are several categories of regionalism, as follows (W. Lang, 1982):
(1) in national framework, with subvariants: (a) „bottom-up” (federalism) and (b) transferring some prerogatives inside the territory (descentralizing);

(2) transnational, within culturally unitary geographical areas, as similiary to cooperation implementings of „euro-regions” type;

(3) international, i.e. organised structures like the Security and Cooperation Organisation in Europe (SCOE), ASEAN, Union of Western Europe and so on.

Of course, the EU claims either key concepts like desentralizing, regionalism, regionalizing, or reference documents like Comunitary Chart of Regionalising and European Chart of Local Autonomy. Besides, subsidiarity appears for its first time in 1989 and that was in a Comunitary chart-document regarding basic social rights of employees adopted by the European Council, then taken over by the Maästricht Treaty in 1992.

Subsidiarity is a fully political concept aiming the approach of political decision to individual citizens, i.e. the document comes up as opposite to the State and to its legislation harming them. Actually, despite the later concept’s appearence, the earlier Chart of Local Autonomy (1985) was mentioning something about, ... public responsibilities exercise... directed to those authorities closer to citizens’.

It is sure that the European Community wasn’t carying a quite clear idea on regional policy since its very beginning – i.e. the Treaty of Rome (1957) --, when member countries were rather proving uniformity of their individual economic development. Then, primary signs of a regional problematic get visible in 1961 inside the States’ Community area. Then, in 1965 the first report regarding regions was drawn by the European Commission. In 1967 the, General Direction for Regional Policy’ was founded as afferent to the Common Market, as its basic document literally expresses.

In 1969 regional policy is starting by primary concrete reforms proposed. In 1972, when a heads of States and Governments’ reunion both a common view on regional policy and basics of what even currently is the Fund of Regional Development were asserted. This organism was coming three years later, in 1975, joining other organisms of profile like the European Social Fund (ESF, founded in 1960) and the European Fund for Agricultural Orienting and Guaranteing (EFAOG, founded in 1962).

6. Regions and regional development

Comunitary Chart of Regionalizing defines the region as ,a territory that forms a territorial unit or an ensemble of territories as such with a specific to be preserved, a continuity of this and a corresponding popular mentality to maintain and exploit it for economic, social and cultural sakes’. Region is the second hierarchical level of administration, after the State’s central administrative level. In law terms region and regionalizing regard two different political and administrative realities, at least in the EU undestanding. Regionalizing could be:

(a) political or State level – e.g. in Spain and Italy;
(b) incorporated – where a unitary State results from other States’ unification and
those previously existing States prefer to keep their specific, e.g. the UK;
(c) diversified – on a given regional framework that might include, besides territorial
and political criteria, others like language spoken and/or cultural criterion – e.g. in
Belgium, previously of becoming a federal State;
(d) administrative (i.e. classical) – resulting from administrative decentralising that turn
geographical regions into local territorial communities that perform certain levels of
autonomy (administrative) – e.g. in France;
(e) functional, through deconcentration – State makes (delimitates) regions as
territorial circumscriptions for its proper administration – e.g. in Greece;
(f) through cooperation – regions resulted from cooperation between local collectivities
get equally institutionalized – e.g. in Romania (Popescu, 2006).
To be noted that none of the above individual procedures is perfect or perfectly
satisfying and so compromises between different procedural types arise as inevitable in
context. That is why, besides the above becoming criterium, the one of presentation
might also result into three types of regions:
(1) homogenous regions are likely to express in such a way through criteria like: the
economic criterion – e.g. similar individual incomes; one dominant economic sector –;
the geographical criterion – e.g. common natural resources exploited; similar climate,
topography; the social and political criteria – e.g. some „regional identity”, common
historical development. Differences within the region of this type are seen as less
significant;
(2) nodal regions – which are rather polarized and all interest for homogeneity or
uniformity is minimal; regional cohesion, when existing, comes from interaction of
internal flows, from also polarized relationships and interdependences around center
that is usually dominant;
(3) planning or programming regions – that claim a specific unity, but it results rather
from institutional and administrative framework and/or from some sustained
development policies previously applied.
The EU’s political bias for regional development consists in creation and perpetuity of
the European identity. Actually, the „sustained development policy” expression is
understood as a unitary set of measures addressed to distinct regions, be they
belonging to one country or a group of countries, proper to get adequately funded.
Several items here contribute, but including also candidate countries on this list of
regional policies is relative recent fact. Usually, developing countries are viewed
separately than the list of European and EU member countries. It was the European
Council of 22 June, 1993, in Copenhagen that has extended the Phare type
Programmes for candidate countries from national democratic institutions strengthening
(Directorate of Foreign Affairs was responsible for) to directly supporting the EU
extension and these countries joining it. Later on, in 1997 and 1999 these fundings
were even significantly increasing. The so called „Agenda 2000” became the turning point of making the Phare programmes focus on the whole institutional inventory of the EU joining by States. In other words, the EU itself was taking over the effort related to this strategy for the candidate countries. The last were going to restrict on procedural negotiations and on signing documents. These were called the, Copenhagen Criteria’, compiled in a document signed in 1997, i.e. „Agenda 2000”, with the reform of the EU’s policies together with EU joining strategies of the candidate countries. Of which policies, the ones regarding regional topic area were included in Annex 3.

7. Conclusions about Euroregions

This is an apart development of the EU’s regional policy. In 1998, at a meeting in Prague an EU Commission’s representative was expressing in such a sense, but significant was equally the circumstance of the Eastern European countries mobilized towards joining the EU. The Euro-region was coming to be defined as a transboder territory with two or more State administrations involved in, whereas unifying tradition and culture concomitantly evolving, sometimes together with cooperation of local authorities, as well. Look at the following Diagram for Romania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Euroregion</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>The other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Carpathica</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Dunărea-Criş-Mureş-Tisa</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Hungary, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Dunărea de Jos</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Moldova, Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Prutul de Sus</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Giurgiu-Ruse</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Dunărea de Sud</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Dunărea Inferioară</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Dunărea 21</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Danubius</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Siret-Prut-Nistru</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Dunărea de Mijloc-Portile de Fier</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Serbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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References


