

THE ATTRACTION AREA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS OF TÂRGU MUREŞ

PÉTER KATONA¹, ZOLTÁN BUJDOSÓ²

ABSTRACT. – **The Attraction Area of the University of Arts of Târgu Mureş.** The fundament of the knowledge-based society is the culture of permanent learning/life long learning, which was mentioned as a goal by the signers of Bologna Declaration (1999). The development of education must be one of the fundamental segments of regional development, in the sense that it must look for solutions for the moderation of regional inequalities. The current educational policies cannot ignore these recommendations that are based on results of scientific research. The aim of this study is to dynamically analyse the attraction area of the University of Arts of Târgu Mureş between 1990 and 2013. It focuses on fundamental social and economical processes, going beyond analyzing the space-time dimension of higher education.

Keywords: *attraction area; attraction intensity coefficients; number of students; training programs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the 20th century and on the dawn of the 21st century the importance of human resources has grown next to that of raw material, work power and financial power and a new, knowledge-based social order has emerged. This newly emerging society is described by Machlup as knowledge society (Berenyi, 2003). Knowledge, information has become a fundamental economic factor and has led to social-regional differences which are seen mainly in economy. Through this process the processing and distribution of information and knowledge has favoured the growth and evolution of informational centers, further isolating the periphery. Knowledge-centres can be identified as institutions of higher education, since knowledge has always been connected to people and institutions. According to Berenyi (Berenyi, 2003) new information always emerges from a particular region and political, economical and religious centers have always coincided with knowledge centers. This observation is still valid today, since especially in the countries of the old communist block we are witnesses of the fact that the state executes its power through the control of knowledge and information, which translates in the control of the system of institutions of knowledge centers. Naturally this process of control is running under different social-economical

¹ PhD-aspirant, University of Debrecen, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development Planning, 4010-Debrecen, Hungary. E-mail: katona.peter1975@gmail.com.

² Lecturer, Károly Róbert University College – Gyöngyös, 3200-Gyöngyös, Hungary

circumstances since the falling of the communist regim. This kind of connection between the state and the institutions of higher education which constitute the peak of the educational system cannot be questioned as long as the financing of the educational system is the responsibility of the state and as long as it is aiming high quality education. The state has always aimed to control knowledge centers, but today in many cases the authonomy tendencies of the institutions of higher education go against the state's attempts to enforce its interests. In order to moderate regional differences the state can intervene on a regional level through multi-level strategies. One of these strategies is development of education.

The attraction areas are different types of functional areas which are determined by the function-related behaviour of social groups, thus they are the result of social interactions. In this case the interpretation of space can be understood in a relational and subject-centered and not in an absolute-substantial manner (Benedek, 2000). This type of region is the result of a positive-scientific regionalization and is determined by functional contacts that characterize the center and it's attraction area. These connections can be identified in relation to basic social functions. The number of attraction areas coincides with the number of central functions (Bodor-Pénzes, 2012).

The present study aims to analyse the contacts generated by the educational function, focusing on the higher education segment. According to Benedek (Benedek, 2000), functional regions are methodological formations, the characteristics, content and extention of which are determined by the statistical units and methods used in delimiting regions, but the empirical examination of these regions from it's inhabitants' point of view is also imperative.

2. EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

Quantitative expansion of higher education in the former communist countries, including Romania, unfolds in the years following the fall of the communist regim. The number of students in higher educational system reaches it's highest level in 2007-2008 (907353 students, according to NSI³).

The rise in the number of students in higher education can be correlated with the demografic potential, changes in the labour market conditions, changes in individual and social expectations toward the quality of higher education. Higher education, a general tendency in the more developed countries, has become more and more important in Romania also, similar to the growing importance of highschool education in the 1990's. This is due to the effect of many factors (labour market conditions, social demands).

On national level there has been a significant decline in the number of higher education students after 2007-2008, a tendency not seen locally. The decline of the number of higher education students can be attributed to educational policy factors (the gradual dissapareance of evening courses), demographic and economical factors (the decline of number of students attending private universities).

³ *National Statistics Institute*

THE ATTRACTION AREA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS OF TÂRGU MUREȘ

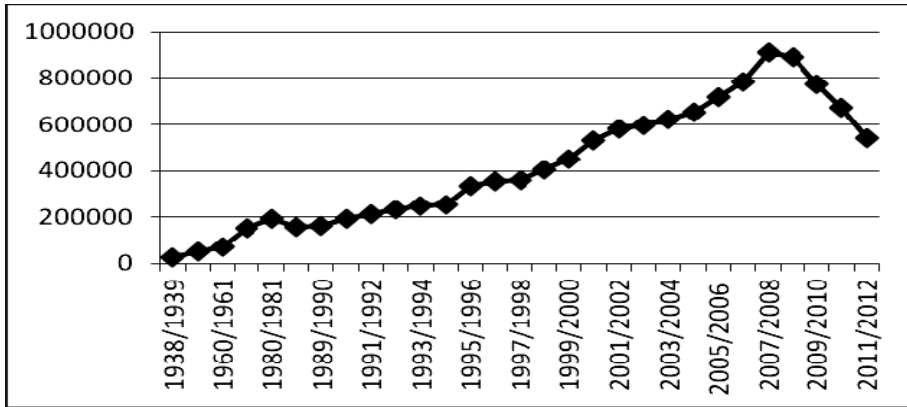


Fig. 1. Changes in the number of students in Romania for the period 1938 to 2012.
Source: NSI, edited by the authors.

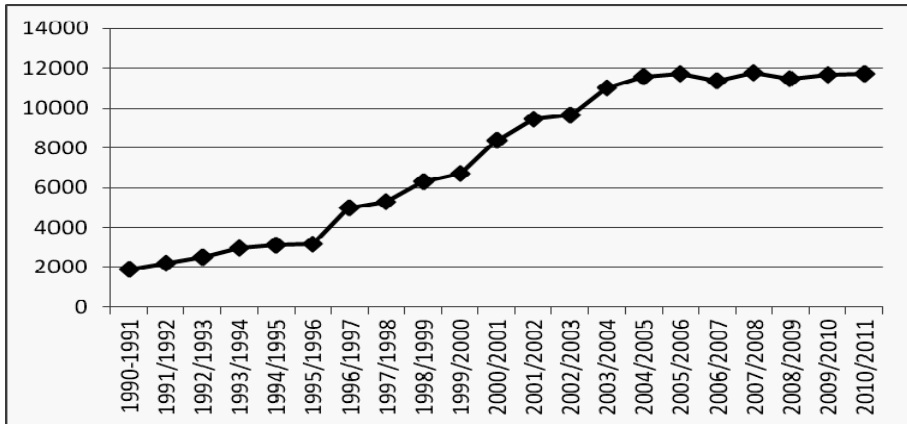


Fig. 2. Changes in the number of students in Târgu Mureș for the period 1990 to 2011.
Source: NSI, edited by the authors.

Private higher education institutes are present on local level. The Dimitrie Cantemir University was accredited in 2005. The city's oldest higher education institutions are the University of Medicine and Pharmacy (1945) and the University of Arts (1946). The first is the most important institution forming medical professionals in Transilvania, the second is a starter for later internationally known artists. The Petru Maior University of Târgu Mureș was founded in 1960 under the name of Institute of Pedagogy and has been reorganized several times. The Hungarian Sapientia University of Transilvania was founded in 2001, is financed by the Hungarian State and is run by a foundation. The Technical and Human Science Faculty in Târgu Mureș offers the possibility for specialists to be formed in Hungarian language. The Teacher and Organist Training College was founded in 1990 and the Reformed Assistant Training College was founded in 1992.

3. UNIVERSITY OF ARTS – TÂRGU MUREŞ

Founded in 1946 in Cluj-Napoca, the Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art is the predecessor of the existing higher education institutions in Târgu Mureş⁴. During the first eight years of its existence the institution has undergone many structural changes. As a result of these changes on the Hungarian branch the Szentgyorgyi Istvan Drama Institution is founded in Târgu Mureş in 1954. Since then the official name of the institution, as well as the educational content has been changed several times. Since 2009 the official name of the institution is the University of Arts - Tîrgu Mureş. As a result of the introduction of the Bologna system, the institution offers 3 level higher education training programs (BSc/MSc/PhD degree) since 2005. In the 2013-2014 academic year the University of Arts of Târgu Mureş offered several accredited training programs, such as theater, puppetry, directing, movement arts, teatrology, designer, audio-visual communication, multimedia, music teacher undergraduate. Master's degree programs are offered in: theater, puppetry, drama, teatrology, majoring in cultural management and directorys. Doctoral training program launched in theater arts.

4. METHODS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attraction area of this institution has undergone many changes in the last 20 years, which can be analyzed on 5 different time segments. In our research, the place of residence of all enrolled students was taken into account. The attraction intensity of commune is shown on the intensity map. The attraction intensity coefficients were calculated using the following formula:

$$A_i = \frac{S_n \times 1000}{P_c},$$

where: A_i - attraction intensity, S_n - number of students, P_c - population of commune.

Of the students attending the institutions' courses in 1990, only the first year students started their studies after the fall of the communist regime. The other students were admitted before the political changes in 1989, in accordance with the directive plan instructions specific to the communist regime. The number of students admitted to the institution was limited, as shown on the map. Of the 54 students admitted only one student was resident of a rural area, the rest of the students were residents of cities, especially cities which a strong cultural background. No students from foreign countries applied in this period of time.

In the 1998-1999 academic year students were no longer limited in their choices, their number tripled, and 10 students came from Ukraine. The number of students with rural origins is still low (13), the dominance of students coming from cities goes on. The Hungarian faculty presents a strong attraction in parts of the country predominantly populated by Hungarians. Since 1995 the institution offers courses in teatrology, a new domain.

⁴ http://www.uat.ro/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/CARTA_UARTE_TG_MURESnov.pdf

THE ATTRACTION AREA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS OF TÂRGU MUREȘ

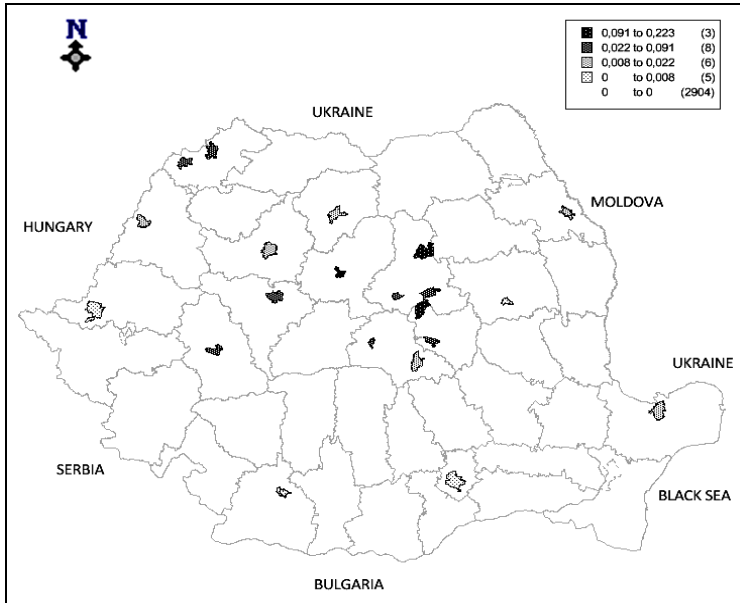


Fig. 3. The Attraction Area of University of Arts-Târgu Mureș (1990-1991 academic year).
Source: institutional data, edited by the authors.

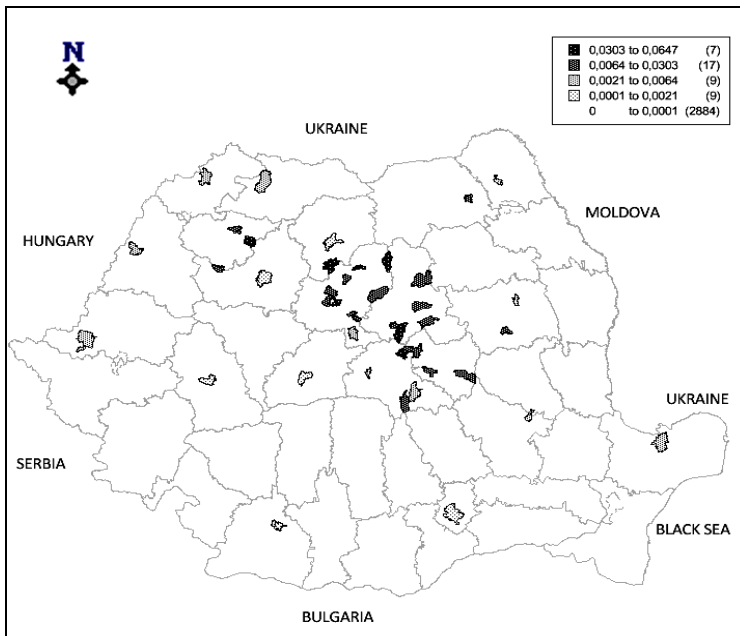


Fig. 4. The Attraction Area of University of Arts-Târgu Mureș (1998-1999 academic year).
Source: institutional data, edited by the authors.

The situation is similar in the 2002-2003 academic year, when of the 154 students admitted, 12 students were residents of rural areas and 2 students came from abroad (Hungary). Starting with 2001 a new course, puppetry is added to the institution's training program.

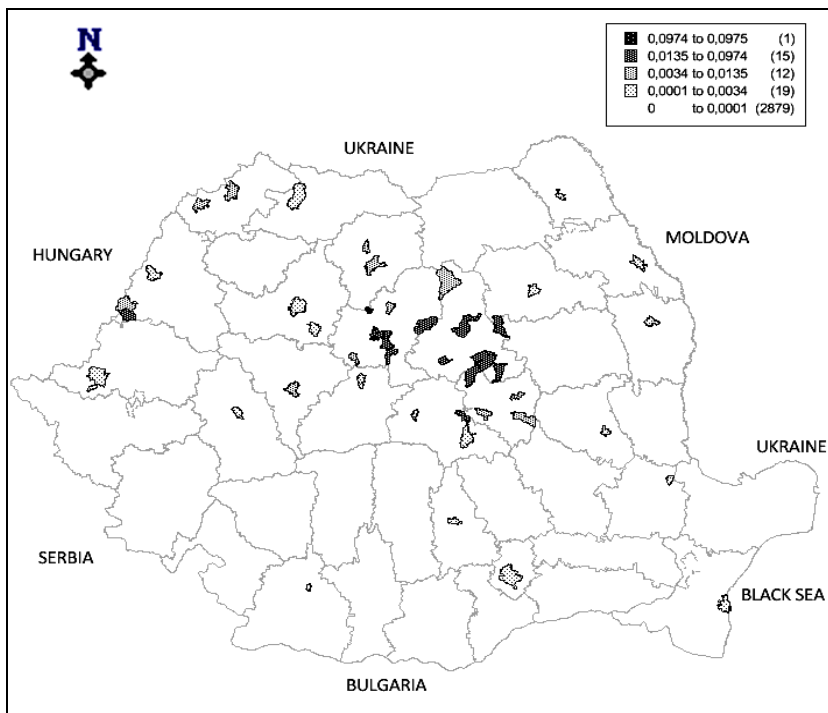


Fig. 5. The Attraction Area of University of Arts-Târgu Mureș (2002-2003 academic year).
Source: institutional data, edited by the authors.

The number of students doubled in the 2007-2008 academic year due to expansion, rising to 305. Ten students came from abroad (Hungary, Moldova and Ukraine). These changes were the result of institutional differentiation (two faculties starting with 2005: music and theater pedagogy), diversity of educational programs (music pedagogy starting with 2004).

According to official data the number of students decreased in the 2012-2013 academic year. 5 students of a total of 195 are from abroad (Hungary, Scotland).

There is a compact area forming around Târgu Mureș, which is already seen on the 2008 map. These special changes can be attributed to the introduction of music pedagogy courses in the training program. The dominance of students with urban residence is ongoing. Starting with 2011 there are two arts faculties offering courses within the university (in Romanian and Hungarian language), teaching theater arts, music arts, visual arts and communication to students wishing to continue their studies.

THE ATTRACTION AREA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS OF TÂRGU MUREȘ

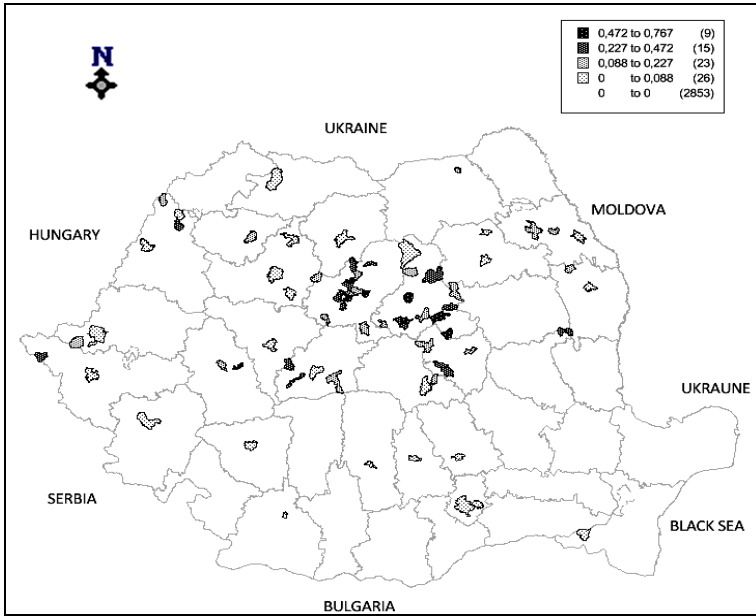


Fig. 6. The Attraction Area of University of Arts – Târgu Mureș (2007-2008 academic year).
Source: institutional data, edited by the authors.

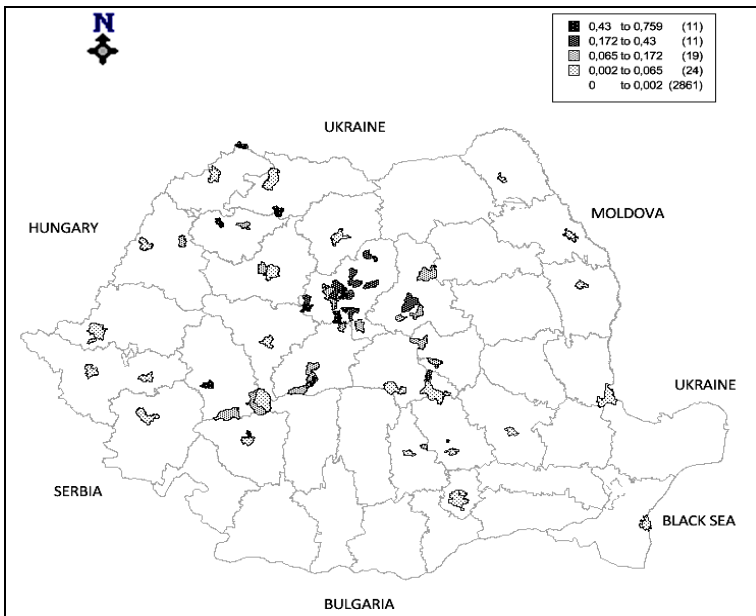


Fig. 7. The Attraction Area of University of Arts-Târgu Mureș (2012-2013 academic year).
Source: institutional data, edited by the authors.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The University of Arts - Târgu Mures has gone through significant changes during the past 20 years, a process similar to that of the institutions of higher education in other countries in the former communist block. This model of development is a transition from the planning system model to the European modern university model.

The institutional differentiation and the growing diversity of educational programs led to significant increase in the number of students, following the national trend in the expansion of higher education.

Students applying to this institution mainly come from cities, especially cities with a strong cultural background. The significant increase in the number of Hungarian students can be attributed to bilingual education system.

In the near future the number of students could be maintained or even increased by launching of new training programs and infrastructural development.

REFERENCES

1. *A bolognai folyamat Közép-Európában (szerk. Kozma T. – Rébay M.)*. Oktatás és társadalom 2. Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2008. 368 p.
2. Benedek, J. (2000): *A társadalom térbelisége és térszervezése*. Risoprint, Kolozsvár. 152 p.
3. Berényi, I. (2003): *A funkcionális tér szociálgeográfia elemzése*. Földrajzi tanulmányok 23. MTA, Budapest. 182 p.
4. Bodor, N. – Péntes, J. (2012): *Eger komplex vonzáskörzetének dinamikai vizsgálata*. In: Tér és társadalom/Space and society. 26. évf., 3. szám. pp. 30-47.
5. Bujdosó, Z. (2009): *A megyehatár hatása a városok vonzáskörzetére Hajdú-Bihar megye példáján*. Studia Geographica 24. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen. 211p.
6. Cicea C. – Dobrin C. (2005): *Contribuția educației la dezvoltarea economică*. Economia seria Management, anul VIII. Nr. 1. pp. 44-53.
7. Katona, P. (2008): *The Attraction zone of Secondary Education of Târgu Mureș* – In: Studia UBB Geographia, 1. pp. 169-174.
8. Keeling, R. (2006): *The Bologna Process and the Lisbon Research Agenda: the European Commission's expanding role in higher education discourse*. In: European Journal of Education, Vol. 41, No. 2. pp. 203-223.
9. Kozma, T. (2004): *Kié az egyetem? A felsőoktatás nevelésszociológiája*. Új Mandátum Felsőoktatási Kutatóintézet, Budapest. 202 p.
10. Teperics, K. (2002): *A Hajdú-Bihar megyei diplomások munkaerőpiaci helyzetének vizsgálata (A Debreceni Egyetem hatása a humán erőforrásokra)*. Studia Geographica 10, Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen. 159 p.
11. Tonk, S. (2000): *A magyar nyelvű felsőfokú oktatás Romániában*. – In: Educatio folyóirat 2000/II szám - Kisebbségek Közép-Európában (szerk. Kozma Tamás, Radics Imre), pp. 406-412.
12. <http://www.uat.ro/despre-universitate/istoric-documente-de-infiintare.html/2013.06.18>.