Homo Oeconomicus vs. Homo Academicus - a perspective on the globalization of higher education in the context of the economic crisis

- SUMMARY -

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IAŞI
2013
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THE TITLE OF THE PAPER

The research paper is called *Homo Oeconomicus vs. Homo Academicus - a perspective on the globalization of higher education in the context of the economic crisis*. Of course it is easy to see that the title refers to the desire to emphasize the links between economic and academic environment at macro scale, but in the context of the merger of two major processes: globalization and the current economic and financial crisis.

The first part of the title, "*Homo economicus versus Homo Academicus*" aimed at establishing the conceptual and pragmatic relations between the two typologies, relationship that will decide the primary reference point throughout the research.

The second part of the title, "*a perspective on globalization of higher education in economic crisis*" refers to determining the structural similarities or differences in the response of academic globalization in different periods of recession and the economic and financial analysis of the effects of the current crisis on the system higher education worldwide. It also captures a selection of the most representative tripartite body on ideas put forward by the literature, including an inventory of international regulations affecting the internationalization of higher education and identifying strategies necessary response to the crisis.

ARGUMENT

Having the opportunity to study during the master studies the issue in studies of globalization on higher education, the consistency, multiple valences and real phenomenology of globalization itself, all these made the starting point of a larger research, of course at a micro-scale, on some levels, the subject concerned (dissertation, in some studies and research collaboration in European projects subsumed themed higher education, etc.).

A basic heuristic principle requires any scientific research to begin with the presentation of the problem that is going into research. To understand the problem is legitimate, however, to point to the beginning context in which it was born.
The analysis of the relationship between *economicus* and *academicus*, the metamorphosis between globalization and internationalization of higher education always has in mind the correlation of the opinions of specialists, the vision of higher education as a global priority: changes in the XXI century education cannot compromise the horizon of synergistic trichotomy of regionalization and internationalization, trichotomy *sine qua non* grafted on economic realities. And the world current economic situation is marked by the most powerful economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression (1929) onwards, with implications quasi-general on all areas of activity. And the economic role of higher education is becoming more important during times of crisis when other sectors tend to contract. Education, especially higher education through its mobility of students, teachers and institutions (defining element of what is called internationalization of education), is now seen as part of a crisis solutions and answer to problems and is included as an element of maximum importance in economic recovery plans of the states, thus has become a market-driven process. Increasing employment opportunities and skills needed to compete in the global labor market are important reasons for the expansion of higher education.

Crisis can lead to reduced funding for education from all sources - government, private sector / regional and familiar. Many universities with investments in foreign banks have already lost investments, support systems, scholarships and student loans are severely affected. Some of the largest providers of student loans have lost a lot during the crisis, and some of them have proceeded to bankruptcy protection in 2008. The prolonged financial crisis could lead to a freeze recruitment and a reduction of programs. The crisis could also lead to reduced aid flows, thus to a decrease in mobility.

So there is an urgent need to review the policy for the promotion of higher education, the state is called upon to redefine its role in facilitating the internationalization of education through its own capital and quality assurance. Individuals must be willing to pay a higher price for cross-border education as investment in the training and new skills provided for a better life. Private agencies also want to invest in cross-border education as such an investment is profitable. The current financial crisis requires the need for public intervention to regulate market processes. The national and international strategies for
development of higher education should focus on the development of regulatory measures to promote equity and quality.

It is so easy to see that the relationship *economicus - academicus* acquires new connotations or resize the existing ones and, therefore, choosing the topic for the research paper is relevant. The *reasons* that I think are the clearly visible advantages are:

- **The innovative character of the subject** - and here I have in mind that the theoretical analysis of the association of the two types (homo economicus - homo academicus) does not exist in the literature, of course there are ample studies separately for each of the two profiles, however, an integrated approach in the current context is missing.

- **The application**: the present analysis, both in theory and in practice on the key relationship proposed by the research (economic -academic) may be a starting point for larger analysis, the re-definition of concepts or principles, developing strategies etc.

**THE OUTLINE OF THESIS STRUCTURE**

The research topic is obviously integrated in *educational- economical domain*, in a global context. Powerful reflexes, "inserts " of economics are highlighted by the *particularities* of time and space approaches by the insertion the body of work of the analysis of temporal perspective of economic cycles (Kondratieff cycles) and, obviously, the space , focus on the three major regions USA, Asia –Pacific and Europe .

The conceptual construction that provides realistic and relevant operational framework in developing research, can be summarized in the *identified problem*: the current financial and economic crisis, circumscribed to the irreversible phenomenon of globalization, is generating discrepancies in cross-border mobility by discouraging financial support of universities and requires new strategies of the redefinition of internationalization of higher education.

To determine the causes of this problem and possible solutions to remedy the effects we need, first, a rigorous research literature in the field (general and fundamental research, but also the complementary role related) which will be to the starting point of the documentation, processing and interpretation of ideas ,
research "lab" that we undertake. Based on the literature and personal ideas, this paper is structured as follows:

CHAPTER I - Homo economicus vs. Homo Academicus - conceptual dilemmas and paradoxes

This chapter shall be subject to the presentation in a synthetic-analytic manner, based on the research literature, the main ideas of social typology of the two human models, pursuing an ongoing tripartite exposure: one chapter for each of the two analyzed typologies and one that will bring together the two concepts/realities. The analysis will try to capture the interferences, congruencies and associations at a pragmatic level, in terms of the actions of the two analyzed Humanities models.

CHAPTER II – The biography OEconomicus - Academicus - a diachronic metamorphosis from the perspectives of Kondratieff cycles

Expected to be a transit chapter in the texture of the present analysis, the necessity of this chapter lies in the fact that it will try to illustrate the comparison, to what extent, especially if there is or not a cyclic expression of the two areas-economic and academic. Is the symbiotic cohabitation necessary? Are there any discrepancies, differences of action in different situations and realities? The findings of this chapter (based on the analysis of the past and the complexity of the present) will provide necessary starting point in the construction and conceptual approach of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III - Mundus OEconomicus and Mundus Academicus – adaptation to globalization flows in the context of economic crisis

In this chapter we will focus on the central idea of the research: the new challenges and roles of higher education in a world where globalization is the "official religion" especially on the mutations of globalization (economic, in particular) due to crisis, new approaches and responses to the question of what kind of higher education, how and why? Of course, the crisis changes paradigms, reshapes traditional or alternative approaches of the public-private dialectic, reconfigurates the role of the states, regions giving new meanings on academic-economic relationship in terms of relevance, competitiveness and cooperation. Thus, this chapter will provide the ideational main points for the key element of the economic-academic relationship: the internationalization.

CHAPTER IV – The internationalization – the economic solution of Homo Academicus in the context of global academic competition
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This chapter will be dedicated to the macro analysis of the internationalization of higher education as a defining palpable and most relevant element of the economic-academic relationship. Issues such as funding, cooperation and international competitiveness for this funding allocation mechanisms of financing, cross-border mobility of resources and research, knowledge transfer shows that in the last ten to fifteen years all advanced countries have adopted strategies of internationalization of higher education, with assumed objectives and implications that go well beyond the education sector. Circumscribed analysis in this chapter aims to highlight the exact role of academic internationalization as a solution, a cost effective alternative to radical local-regional-global changes at economic, political, social, cultural level. The analysis will be conducted at the three global regional actors level (U.S., Europe, Asia-Pacific especially China and Japan), the corroborating data will provide relevant information about the state of the phenomenon and lead to the development of solutions for economic-academic links in this period.

CONCLUSIONS (main theoretical research ideas, the captured innovations, applied research proposals, etc.).

REFERENCES
Appendix (tables, graphs, charts, and other relevant data)

THE PURPOSE, GOALS AND IDEAS OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research is to establish a theoretical correlation between the economic and the academic levels and at a practical level between the effects of the financial and economic crisis in the internationalization of higher education and the need to adapt to new trends in rethinking options and appropriate strategies.

In order to achieve this goal it is necessary to fix some milestones in the form of what we call objectives but based on some research questions:

How far does the academic-economic convergence go? Are there any constraints or favorite elements in the relationship between Homo Economicus and Homo Academicus?

What is the expression of the academic globalization before the current recession? Are there any similarities or cyclicity of previous crises?

How did the economic crisis affect the internationalization of higher education within the three regions (U.S., Europe, Asia-Pacific)?
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To what extent the international regulations in the period 2000-2010 on cross-border mobility have affected the global employment and equitable access to education, quality, at a global level?

What options have national governments and international bodies in the post-crisis strategy to revive the internationalization of education?

Having made these interrogations we can detect the following research objectives:

- **O1**: To analyze the two human types and their impact on economic–academic relationship;
- **O2**: The diachronic analysis of economic–academic relationship in terms of economic cyclicality;
- **O3**: To determine the effects of the economic crisis on academic level from a global perspective;
- **O4**: To analyze the importance of the phenomenon of the internationalization of higher education;
- **O5**: To identify some strategic directions for diminishing the effects of the crisis at the internationalization level.

To provide an answer to the above questions we will try to outline some of the research ideas, ideas that will be developed as the preliminary stage of knowledge in each chapter. The option for this manner of presentation of the state of knowledge is justified by the fact that although the four chapters are constructed in a logical manner, they are distinct in terms of the thematic approach and the literature consulted is far too intricate to achieve satisfactory overall summary.

The starting point is the assertion that from previous crises, the current recession approaches behave more difficult to quantify, including its effects on higher education: because in the recent past market principles have penetrated in the academic globalization system. The growing demand of skills adjusted to the global labor market manifested only as a result of massification of higher education systems, *eo ipso*, has become a *sine qua non* for economic growth in a country / region. On the other hand, the trend of increasing cross-border mobility of academic institutions, teachers and students in the pre-crisis situation cannot be compared with previous crises. Facilities of this mobility have contributed to the emergence of new business concepts, university entrepreneurship and private academic competition was multibenefic. In the
same vein, the competition to attract brain (talent hunt) between poles created the world's great universities for academic research that have reshaped the map of the world. In this context, the current economic crisis manifested not only a land of disparate nationalities but across the board, in terms of academics. Therefore the implications and its effects today may suggest a larger inventory (on goods, services, capital, knowledge, human resources, financing mechanisms, the absorption rate in the labor market, etc.).

The **multiple funding options** (reducing subsidies, introducing cost recovery methods, formulas based on sponsored funding) were adopted early in the crisis, and some states have accepted the **policy of massive cuts in public spending on education** (Eastern Europe, Italy, some states in the U.S.), **policies to increase public funding** (Norway, Spain, Mexico), **policies to increase spending for science and technology** (Germany, UK, India, China), **policies to increase student support systems** (Mexico, Russian Federation), **policies to keep the system the same level of funding** (Switzerland, the Netherlands). Of course there will be able to outline specific or inter-institutional national corporate strategies (and the research will analyze their effectiveness) to expand higher education through several options: extending only through domestic public institutions, expanding the joint action of public and private domestic, extending the border domestic institutions, etc. The research will consider the adequacy of directions of internationalization of higher education in the post crisis by grounding solutions such as: restructuring of academic governance by creating new buffer-institutions, the active involvement of the state at both the direct regulatory targets of internationalization and level control (direct / remote), and reviving social partnerships.

**Formulation of hypotheses**

Given the above, we can find out to what extent the economic and financial crisis is affecting the internationalization of higher education, based on the following **assumptions**:

- The current financial and economic crisis is negatively affecting the beneficial prospects of internationalization (through academic mobility) of higher education, because it lowers the employment rate and the ability to invest in education (self-financing for universities, student loans).
• The need for active intervention of the state for financial regulation and the development of strategies to unlock the movement of goods, services, capital and people to revive the phenomenon of internationalization.

THE APPROACHES, STRATEGIES, METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

The approach will be mainly qualitative interpretative, the analysis taking into account the purpose and objectives early announced.

So, it addresses a **combined, inductive, longitudinal and qualitative** strategy:

- **Combined**, since it consists of qualitative and quantitative elements;
- **Inductive** because it involves a selection of specialists' opinions about the interactions between the two profiles and, in extenso, the two environments (economic and academic), the end point being the observance and analysis of the restrictive impact of financial and economic of the crisis on the phenomenon of internationalization through mobility and thus a shift from particular elements to general background;
- **Longitudinal** because it follows the time development of the interactions between the two profiles and backgrounds, especially in terms of business cycle analysis;
- **Qualitative**, as we proceed with the demarcation of the issues where the two profiles interact, areas where the economic downturn has its "legitimate" right to intervene, as we proposed in the objectives announced. A objective approach will be considered, but the selection of the presented views is very strong subjective influences, especially since the combination of the two types appears as a novelty of the research.

The research method for this line of research is to study the documents and benchmarking.

The technique chosen is a literature review, and the process is selecting the most representative arguments circumscribed to the objectives, namely fixing the directions of proposed limit state intervention in "economy" internationalization of the crisis. The instruments used are: monographs, treaties, dictionaries, encyclopedias, reviews, journals, articles, studies and other specialized publications (reports and periodic summaries of international institutions).
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The conceptual framework of this paper tries to outline (as a general idea) the profiles of two types in terms of how they have been shaped, sized, interpreted and re-interpreted, from the most illustrious scholars of the economy to the critics of modern sociology and behavioral psychology. We have seen that economic thinking sometimes consistent, sometimes opposites has designed the main subject of its study - the homo economicus and his actions - in a wide range of analysis, as a representative of a community led by economic principles that coexist on a evolving mix of classic to neo-classical utilitarianism of marginalism and the radicalism of metaphysical realism, objectivity and logical positivism to ethical egoism, metaphysical libertarianism and consequentivism.

Producing and consuming, homo economicus has been the workhorse in the history of political economy since its introduction in the area of doctrine by Adam Smith. In today's times, the profile was supplemented with quasi-psychic faculties, monadic vehicle capable of advanced utility calculations can be improved by them, stripped of all historical contamination, emptied of all material specifications and so abstract and general that invariably can be applicable everywhere, for everyone and at all times.

Homo economicus is the mundus acrobat economicus, an acrobat who performs acrobatics favorite - demand and supply - the trapezius econometrics, and is not always sure that the safety net of welfare, wealth of nations, can provide the comfort of rational choice, because can ignore the inclinations, dispositions, preferences: it is driven by the theory of Moral Sentiments, it is a paradox and a dilemma, it becomes an abstract and idea, caricature and contingent reality.

The process of simplification and the focus of attention on the quintessence of economic behavior provided opportunities to achieve analytic the human economic behavior with all his feelings at individual or collective manifestations. He is now more present in behavioral economics. Imperceptibly, he turned into a selfish but rational actor, driven by a natural desire to acquire at any cost as much and what began as a theoretical model was completed in a true economical, anthropological, sociological, psychological vision: **homo economicus became a complete man.**
His colleague from our analysis, homo academicus has not experienced the same tumultuous journey, although the idealized image of humanistic philosophy until today was doomed to experts a dilemma bearable: it manifests in a profession, belongs to a statistical inventory or administrative jobs, or ontology of ad mission by vocation?

As I pointed out, the Humboldtian vision, or that of Cardinal Newman have almost bipolarized the diachronic approach the profile of this human type, although these concepts postulates have provided an in-depth or complete imagine. The portrait took shape through the perspective of sociological considerations, and these considerations we have proved that homo academicus is a higher man is providing solutions to all others, is primus inter pares.

The emerging paradigms developed in higher level educational phenomenon have occurred episodically, but always related to the social, and especially economics. Downturns in the Kondratieff cycles analyzed in Chapter II of the paper reveals that it becomes easy to determine the moments of occurrence of those changes or turning points in the evolutionary process of reforms in higher education in the last 200 years, especially for western capitalism. The correspondent cycles analyzed all reforms in education (vocational pathways appearance, technical, professional, progressive pedagogy and transforming of the common school, the "scientification" of the curriculum, pedagogy behaviorist, massification of higher education through mobility, the fordist institutional organization, educational equality, the neo -liberal market approach, the decentralization and post- Fordism, constructivist pedagogy, globalization through internationalization) were invariably circumscribed to the values of Mann, Humboldt and Cardinal Newman, Dewey's progressivism, scientism statist era and finally constructivism neo -liberal free market. Each phase had its own pedagogy, curriculum, organization and style of educational models delivered.

The issue discussed in Chapter II of this paper provided sufficient arguments to claim that the two areas, mundus economicus and mundus academicus, mark their coexistence without any circumvention of the system that I wanted to illustrate, based on a rich literature as one whose limits interrelate symbiotic unequivocally.

Yes, it is true: economicus and academics have emerged as independent systems and have no common historical roots and both were rooted to the
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societies where they have appeared, maintaining key elements of historical patterns that have evolved over many centuries. But these models have been redefined, reinterpreted, so that their historical two areas became dependent on the convergences that resulted in their historical becoming and developed interdependent.

Not at all a zero-sum game, both globalization and internationalization, through the flows that have been imposed on the evolution of the two media, show that are winners and losers, that it is an asymmetric process. And in the process, interdependencies of the factors that contribute to the structuring of global processes become relevant. These factors very often are variables to global economy, some variables more or less quantifiable, but all having an impact on the individual (which must become global citizens), economic environment (which must be based on knowledge and metamorphose global benefits), academia (which must provide the basic knowledge economy), governments and nation states (which should act as arbiters and guarantors of social welfare).

This massive re-privatization of the public sphere and commitment to a deregulated financial capitalism, unable to produce the necessary revenue to maximize profit and pleasure meet personal interest of each homo economicus, irreversibly altered identities that prevail in the labor market and higher education. The entrepreneurial culture promoted by the new homo economicus was, in fact, a new crusade to redefine the economic nature of humanity. A firmly anchored in economic discourses cannot ignore the psycho-sociology, power and political discourse in any approach either on economic growth or recession.

In the last two decades of the last century, mundus economicus experienced as never the idea that the market self-adjusts, creating a opaque and impenetrable financial system. But the idea was in total disagreement with the economic reality of modern economic theories which demonstrated that when the economy has a total employment and the quasi-markets were competitive, the probability that resources are not allocated inefficiently doesn’t disappear.

Thus it has become necessary to reposition the balance between the role of the state and the free market in response to the crisis. The matching (matching function) roles of the two actors of mundus economicus, paradoxically is created by the causes and effects of the recession. And the main question - what should be done to restructure the economy and to restore the balance? – has no answers in a register of the most guilty finding situation. Why? Because the pre-crisis
realities, one during and one belonged to the end of recession, show quite clearly that:

- the markets are imperfect, but the same can be said about state government. There are no scientific basis for the assumption that the markets are totally effective and infallible, as there is no basis for the argument that because the state sometimes fails it should not interfere in the functioning of markets when they fail;

- the markets degenerate but governments failures are at least as serious;

- the markets may generate social inequality, but the state has generated much higher inequities;

- the markets are inefficient, but governments and the actions states are not without collapse.

From the phenomenological background of solutions crisis emerged more visible a favorable global trend for financial regulation and supervision, the need for stricter rules to prevent new disturbance and generating major imbalances in financial markets. So the social market economy rebounded strongly, without much conceptualization that the fundamental axiom is decreasing role of the market and increasing the role of the state.

Restructuring of the economy will not be ens a se, the national governments must play a clear role as the crisis has shown that markets do not work well enough to automatically and are not self-correcting.

The greatest challenge as a lesson learned during the Great Depression is the answer to the question: to what extent the state can intervene in the market to make it more effective, the time you discover vulnerabilities and to regulate them satisfactory? The basic premise is the annihilation of asymmetry information, or in different contexts, all the talk of freedom/ regulation, private enterprise/ public control, market/ state, become artificial, sterile, ineffective and without results. But it seems that the Keynesian doctrine is, at least in the medium term, the only antibiotic able to stall a strong recurrence recessionary virus.

There are more and more influential the values of a social and commercial instrumentalism generated by interdependence and cooperation with academic institutions and actors in economic, social, cultural and political world. The permeability nature of homo academicus increased under the influence of these
factors, especially the effect of indeterminate dependencies, so that the mechanisms and principles of the market economy turned homo academicus irreversible. The new ontology is marked by interaction science -push / market -pull, the innovation-marketing synergy can coexist only in terms of competitiveness, not only in the flow of innovation and forms of collaboration, particularly as the resource flows capable of producing innovation.

The arena of activity of homo academicus expanded exponentially. The talent hunting promoted has spurred the creation of new links between economic and academic networks, consortia and hybrid communities. Importing exogenous academic rules and practices generated new institutional roles and functions for homo academicus, in which the combination of academic and research qualifications and the business environment becomes absolutely necessary to manage the new and expanding phenomenon of uncertainty, massification, diversification and internationalization. We believe that following integrated approaches, linked and developed in a logical sequence in the four chapters of the work, it becomes more palpable our assumption, namely that homo academicus provides solutions and homo economicus implements them, the first being visibly involved in mundus economicus, while the second activates the whole mundus academicus. Of course, the bi-directionality of this process imprints for both types interdependent rhythms and realities, responses rhythms that act as counterpoint during various historical eras; responses that are perpetual shaped by the academicus-economicus conglomerate (the man and world), a conglomerate which, although conceptually seems paradoxical is obvious and clear interdependent in practice: education fuels the economy and shapes society.

Achieved objectives - personal contributions

Following the methodological approach of the research undertaken in this paper, given the theoretical and practical aspects highlighted in the general conclusions above, we can say that we managed to implement, free of syncope and may not exhaustive approach, a correlation between the objectives that we have proposed and personal contributions.
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Thus, a schematic approach, we present below the main personal contributions in relationship with each general objective set at the beginning of the paper:

In the **O1 (The analysis of the two human types and their impact on economic–academic relationship)**, I did:

- the identification of the origin of the two types denominative phrases analyzed (homo economicus and homo academicus) including substitutes used in the literature;
- to identify the main features of concepts belonging to each of the two homines, as they are found in the literature;
- the systematization and analysis of these features in the proposed register of declared intention: conceptual dilemmas and paradoxes;
- to achieve a comparative positioning of nature x versus y profiles of the two human types;
- the synthesizing and building a summa Oeconomica demonstration in support of the idea that homo economicus is a complete man;
- to establish links between traditional concepts, archetypal images, anthropology sociological assessments and criticisms of researchers and personal opinions, with results that homo academicus statuary cannot belong exclusively to statistical or administrative inventory of crafts, being a model that requires the vocation and mission so he is a superior man.

In the **O2 (The diachronic analysis of economic - academic perspective economic cyclicality)**, inventory personal contributions include:

- to identify and systematize the main elements of the nature of a diachronic approach;
- to identify the main characteristics of the two media analyzed, as they are found in the literature;
- the systematization and analysis of these features in the proposed register of intent announced: diachronic approach between historical reality and theoretical background;
- to achieving a synoptic picture of the two environments (economic and academic) by stages long cycles (Kondratieff);
- an analysis of the specificity of the two media, designed to determine the relational position: dependence, independence or interdependence?
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- the identification of interdependencies between the two environments, setting the optimal approaches: the mundus economic and academic academicus's mundus economicus, so we built this approach on three levels: the ivory tower to entrepreneurial multiversity, from peregrinatio academic brain drain, lex mercatoria or about access to higher education and funding regulation.

In the **O3 (Determining the effects of the economic crisis on global academic perspective)**, the main ideas that have shaped the individual contributions are:

- to identify and systematize the main elements of the theory of globalization flows;
- to create charts dependencies and interdependencies of factors determining flows of globalization, all subsumed under the concept of globalization for all;
- an analysis of the phenomenology of synthetic financial crisis in the context of economic efficiency and pragmatism vs questioning, social protection or excessive state interventionism against the market?
- to make it a position of therapeutic mundus academicus between Keynesian and creative destruction, given the crisis and responses necessary academic function by matching (matching function);

In the **O4 (The significance analysis of the phenomenon of the internationalization of higher education)** and **O5 (To identify some strategic directions for diminishing the effects of the crisis at the internationalization level)** specific to the final chapter of the thesis, we developed and endorsed the idea that globalization is both optimal response of mundus academicus to the effects of the financial crisis and economic solution that can provide context for homo academicus global academic competition by:

- identifying, structuring and organizing traditional concepts of internationalization structural relationship with globalization, as shown in the literature;
- identifying factors that have competed in multidimensional modeling of mundus academicus globalization processes, internationalization, Europeanization and fixing of matches required.
• establishment and analysis of a matrix register why - when - who - how the phenomenon of internationalization and correspondences in terms of economic globalization flows through the statutory three major forms: internationalization, expansion/diversification, internationalization/internationalization, mobility;

• internationalization geography analysis by setting the three spaces - USA, Asia-Pacific, Europe - as poly important academic and behavior in the economic crisis

• identify key elements of internationalization policies and strategies (which, although not new they proved major effects) by analyzing the know-how and their impact on the recession and dropping them as sine qua non elements in a process of rethinking the post-crisis strategies.

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