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Les défis de développement pour les villes et les régions dans une Europe en mutation

## Place-based academic excellence and regional performance in Europe

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### Référence à la session / reference to the session

### Résumé / Summary

#### Introduction

Cities and regions are facing headwinds and substantial risks due to the rapidly changing European landscape. Living in a time when knowledge is ever more vital to our societies and economies, in a world of rapidly circulating capital and people and revolutionary communication technologies, universities play an active role in promoting regional growth and emerge as central actors in the knowledge-based economy (Mueller, 2006). As a result university attracts attention as the source of the most valuable assets for the economy, by providing educated, skilled people and new ideas.

In recent years universities rankings become very popular in policymakers and institutional leaders. Annual rankings of world universities are published by QS for the Times Higher Education Supplement (Times higher education), the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the Higher Education and Accreditation Council of Taiwan and rankings based on Web visibility by the Cybermetrics Lab at CSIC (Ranking web of universities).

Previous studies have shown the university's role in economic development, but no empirical study has analyzed the extent to which university rank defines the development prospects of the region it is based. It is quite interesting though for regional science to investigate the relation between university rankings and the regional development of the region the university is based.

#### Objective of the paper

University rankings should present among others university's rank according to the results and the prosperity it offers in the region, it is based, but how the available rankings and the indicators used, reflect the contribution of university in innovation and growth?

The overall purpose of the present paper is to investigate possible correlations between university rankings and regional growth.

- Is academic ranking of universities, according to the indicators used, defines regions ranking, according to their development prospects?
- If yes, in what extend is this possible and under which circumstances?
- Under closer investigation of EU academic institutes in which countries or regions is this fact obvious?
- Is there a geographical dimension to these correlations?

## Methodology

In order to test the hypothesis of possible correlations between university rankings and regional development a theoretical model is proposed to achieve our research objectives, based on the institutional economics and the endogenous growth approaches.

We built a rich database, collecting information from different sources such as "Webometrics Ranking of World Universities", which is an initiative of the Cyber metrics Lab and University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP) Research Laboratory that was established at Informatics Institute of Middle East Technical University (University rankings by academic performance), the Eurostat's regional statistics by NUTS, the university's websites, and the EU regional competitiveness index. With a sample of 23892 universities located in 270 NUTS II of 27 European countries, we tested the proposed model using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Unit of analysis in the present study is the region, and all variables are measured on the regional level (NUTS 2).

## Originality of the subject

It is quite interesting to review the available literature, on university rankings and go one step further, introducing possible methods of presenting more objective results and results that would also provide us with valuable information to foster development in weak regions.

The present research is highly innovative, faces a critical and lingering problem and has significant added value in the design of the strategy of regional universities, and on the level of applying the appropriate public development policies. Higher education plays a fundamental role in creating competitive advantage in a market environment, consequently performance matters.

To conclude the subject of the paper has a high ranking regarding the significance of its contribution to scientific knowledge, the interest in both national and European level, but also its innovative character.

## Keywords

University, Regions, University ranking, Regional development

## **Bibliographie / Bibliography**

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