THE FRONTIER – DEFINING THE URBAN INFLUENCE AREA

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ABSTRACT. – The Frontier – Defining the Urban Influence Area. In the following paper, we will take on the difficult issue of systemic relations between the concept of „frontier", viewed as an expansionary phenomenon, and the city. More exactly, what we intend to accomplish is to take the theoretical background of the frontier and its phenomena, as put forward by Frederick J. Turner, the American sociologist and historian who coined the concept, R.A. Billington, W.J. Eccles, R.V. Hine, I. Bădescu, D. Dungaciu, C. Degeratu, R. Săgeată and A. Cuşco, and project it into/onto the definition of the urban area of influence due to the fact that we consider the frontier and especially the "European (Euro-Atlantic) frontier" to be the fundamental element, the main pillar in defining the city and its area of influence. The European frontier started as an intricate network of urban centres that had the ability to dominate vast rural areas (peasants) and became „the sum of all expansion processes of the urban-capitalist world in large rural areas" (I. Bădescu, 1995). Therefore, throughout the paper, we will stress the ways in which this concept manifests itself upon the city, how its areas of influence are created by the frontier through different manners and the permanent deterministic relations that still are and always will be between the frontier and the city.

Key words: *frontier, ethno-frontier, urban influence area, influence generator, influence vector, urban function, confrontational space, systems of thought, logistical groups, elites, geopolitics, localization, nomenclature, integrated protection system, spirit of place*

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of human settlements registers the emergence of the city, within the geographical landscape, 10 000 years ago, when people began to live in states and towns/cities. This is the moment when „the frontiers were created" between tribal communities and civilizations (I. Bodley, 1990, taken from I. Bădescu, 1995). From this moment on, the city remained a crucial element in the geography of mankind, cultivating and strengthening its position within all the later geographical sociosystems. This dominance in all the historical sociosystems determined a lot of focus on the city (from a historical, religious, geographical, antropological point of view, etc.). The complete and definitive individualization of the geographical science concerning „...the study of the position of cities within the geographical space" (C. Vert, 2000) can be seen only in the 18th century, a moment that experienced a massive surge of opinions on this system, in isolated analyses or within other geographical systems.

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Going through geography`s views on the city, we see that they have complex methods, concepts and models, and within geography, the city was and still is studied intra and interdisciplinary, starting from an established series of concepts and views, with the help of which the city is defined (extremely difficult due to conceptual differences), through which it is „moulded", theoretically and conceptually structured and planned, with sustainable development in mind, etc.

From the moment when geography created its systemic view on the upper Earth cover and especially with the „structuralist-systemic" and „ecogeographical" points of view, the city`s definition, function, structure and position as a sociosystem requires new analysis perspectives, and also complex explanations. Therefore, in the following paper we will tackle the systemic relation between the concept of „frontier" and the city. More precisely, we will tackle the issue of the city`s influence area, projecting the theoretical background of the „*frontier*" into the definition of the urban influence area. The term „frontier" or „frontier phenomen" was coined by the American historian Frederick J. Turner in 1893. Later, in the works of historians, sociologists, geographers, but mainly geopoliticians, this concept was forever established despite several differences of „tone" which sometimes appeared, due to the synonymy between „frontier" and „border". However „...the decisive nuance which separates them lies in the dynamic tension implied by the term frontier" (D. Dungaciu, 1995), its usage being very extensive. So, we can speak of „cultural frontiers" but not of „cultural borders", of „religious frontiers" but not of „religious borders".

What is this term basically and what is its semantic consequence? We will use, from the many definitions, the one put forward by I. Bădescu in 1995, which is: "The frontier phenomenon expresses all the processes through which a historical expansion manifests itself, be it one of people, of a civilization, of a religion or ideology or, finally, of an empire". Consequently, we have the following question: if frontiers are expansive phenomena, which are the ways through which the frontier achieves its objectives? On the other hand, urban geography demonstrates that all frontiers used settlements in their expansion, more exactly they used cities. The frontiers created, developed and used cities in their expansion, without exception. And from the long series of frontiers (continental or universal), the best example in this matter is „the European frontier", which „...started as a network of urban centers capable of dominating vast rural areas (peasants)", and became the „the sum of all expansion processes of the urban-capitalist world in large rural areas" (I. Bădescu, 1995). This is the reason why we see the frontier as a fundamental element in defining the city and the urban influence area, and throughout the article we will emphasize the way in which this concept manifests itself upon the „city" and how its influence zones are frontier created through different ways and how between the frontier and the city there are permanent deterministic relations.

2. DEFINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTIER PHENOMENON AND URBAN INFLUENCE

In this chapter we will present the issues concerning the definition of urban influence starting from the concept of „frontier phenomenon". In this case, we must emphasize the fact that the frontier phenomenon has a geopolitical determination. Therefore, the whole conceptual and defining „construction" must start from the premise that the city was and still is part of systems created by frontiers, where it has several systemic positions, positions from which it builds and manifests its influences in its encompassing areas. The frontier geopolitics

will be the one to generate and determine the city`s position within the defining relations between the frontier and the city`s influence area. The city`s role, position and systemic function within the „frontier – urban influence area" can be: **a) influence vector**; **b) influence generator**; **c) influence vector and generator** and **d) confrontational space**.

From the **„city`s systemic localisation within the frontier`s influence space"** perspective**,** the city can have the following spatial and defining positions, both for the frontier`s influence as well as for the city`s role and influence area:

a) the city is situated inside the influence space of the „mother frontier" (I. Bădescu, C. Degeratu, 1995), inside the influence space of the frontier`s „central place" (of the generator city from a superior system); in this position, the city can have two functions: influence vector for the frontier and influence vector plus generator;

b) the city is situated outside the influence space of the generator (the central place of the upper system); it will have two systemic positions: „on programmed paths" (I. Bădescu, 1995), the strategic direction of the frontier`s expansion or *beach-head (launched)* inside the *influence space, targeted by the frontier*;

c) the city is in „the center" of the systemic influence space; in this case, the city in question is exclusively an influence generator for its space, where it helds „the central place";

d) the city is situated in the center of its own influence space, covered by the influence space of the hierarchical upper system.

These four positions will become defining in building the „pattern" (S.A. Levin, 1992.; O. Autsuguki, 2006; I. Mac, 2008), through which city X becomes a systemic element in the suprastructure configured by the „frontier phenomenon".

3. THE INFLUENCE RELATIONS BETWEEN CITY STRUCTURE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE TERRITORY, WITHIN THE FRONTIER

The geographical analysis of this prospective construction introduces two fundamental systemic categories: the city structure and territorial structure. As „the frontier phenomenon" is mainly a social one, the two structures will be considered sociostructures, and within the *frontier* the study directions overlap and interfere, for the synthesis of the prospective analysis, the geographical space on one hand and human activities on another. Thus it becomes „a socialised system" (I. Mac, 2008), which from the frontier geopolitics point of view will be considered by the local population to be a „primary territory", which the frontier phenomenon will try to transform through specific processes and instruments, into „secondary territory" or „public territory". Thus rises the following question: Why do frontiers try to transform the territory in which it expands into „secondary territory" and especially into a „public one"? The answer comes to light even from the most sophisticated coverups or theories on the territories` roles in the development of society.

Altman stated in 1975 that people are extremely attached to their territories (primary), which are important for their identity, for their defining national identity brand. This means that a phenomenon of a frontier, depending on its central, generator place, on its geopolitics, on its specific processes and instruments that can be used by it in the struggle to expand, will try to obtain, for the targeted geographical space and in which city X holds one of the geostrategic positions mentioned above (generator, vector or both), one of the territorial categories also mentioned above. Here comes into play the deterministic relation between the city structure and the structure of the adjacent territory. In this equation, the city`s structure will determine strategies and processes, dictating „proper intruments" so that the city`s territorial and spatial influence will be efficient and durable a possible. For example: if between the ethnic structure

of city X and the surrounding territory, there are balanced and directly proportional relations, the frontier will definitely „attack" the territory with ethnological (ethnic) instruments and processes, arrogating for a pressumed „territorial system" (I. Ianoş, 2005), the status of primary territory. If the ethno-demographical relations are stacked against it, it will aim for the status of secondary territory in order to modify the natural territorial system and make it for all (no matter the status some categories of population have in this system). In the last phase and especially if an „universal" or continental-imperial frontier is involved, then the final strategic target, for the „territoriality" of that targeted geographical space, is the „public territory" status. This thing is due to the fact that a „public territory" belongs to everybody and to no one at the same time, and no person, group or nation can claim rights over it.

We believe that this is the main hidden reason behind numerous theories, which try to introduce into the geographical literature (mostly geopolitical) several concepts through which the meanings of „territory" and „territoriality" are lowered in the hierarchy used in geographical studies among others to bottom levels, similar to „plot of land" for example, thus trying „to empty" them of their semantic meaning and transfering the „territory" from national, sovereign, spatial categories, with *ehtnological territorialities,* to technical categories, similar to „land", „plot of land", „arrangement plan", „built up space", etc. This phenomen takes place especially in regional geography, human geography, territorial planning, etc. Hence, the assumption through which we state that between the *city structure* and *that of the surrounding territory* there are defining and configurative relations.

These relations will determine specific influences between the two systems, depending on the frontiers that are „battling" each other in the city`s space, on the frontiers geopolitics, on their action strategy, on the place`s spirit and on the importance of „territory" in the frontier`s geopolitics. Within the context of frontier phenomena`s actions, the city will play an offensive role, no matter if the frontier processes will have centripetal or centrifugal directions. The influences will be specific and numerous and can be classified in the following manner: *strong influences; weak influences; slow influences; fast influences; progressive influences; retrograde influences; beneficial influences; damaging influences; geopolitical influences; controllable reaction influences; uncontrollable reaction influences; global influences; national influences; ideological influences; ecological influences*, etc.

Indifferently of the expressions of the frontier`s phenomena, of the planned, projected, guided, controlled or objectively resulted influences, these will be efficient and more durable if the specific relation (necessary for the influence) between the two systems is close to optimum.

4. THE CITY – DEFINING CONFRONTATIONAL SPACE FOR THE INFLUENCE AREA

As a confrontational space, the city generates defining elements and relations that are determined, mostly, by the frontier`s main feature: expansion phenomenon, which acts on the city through „instruments" and manifests itself through „specific processes". As a result, within the *city-confrontational space* there will be the following relations: **1)** the external frontier will always face the ethno-frontier[3] in the new space; there is no space (urban, local, regional, national) without an ethno-frontier; **2)** the external frontier as well as the geolocal (demolocal) one are expansionary (in nature) and **3)** the expansion directions of the two frontiers can be:

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[3] We will use the term „ethno-frontier" with the following semantic meanings and values in mind: ethnic; national-ethnic; geolocal, generated by the place`s spirit („the feeling of space" – I. Bădescu, 1995)

a) in opposite directions (quasigeneral in the first stage of confrontation); b) in the same direction (when the frontiers` geopolitical interests overlap); c) in different directions in the contact stage and „reaction" and overturn of the frontier`s direction („axle") (when the external frontier, through specific processes, becomes a generator and expansive on the original space, of „the mother frontier").

5. CONFIGURING THE URBAN INFLUENCE AREA IN RELATION TO THE FRONTIER PHENOMENA

In contrast to the classical form of theoretical modelling, this configuration has a much more complex structure. „The city spreads its influence on areas of variable size compared to its own size, its rank and activities, its connection possibilities with the outside" (V. Surd, 2003). This basis proved to be well established in the classical form of theoretical modelling of urban influence.

Within the context of frontiers, the configuration and size of an urban influence zone depends nowadays on more complex factors such as*: a) geospatial position of the city; b) the city`s position within the holarchic uppersystem and its own influence system (position of generator and central place, position of vector, etc.); c) the city`s fame; d) the city resources` number, value, and most of all opportunity, resources that can be mobilised to sustain its functions and objectives; e) the size (quantity) of every deployable resource; f) the resources` strength (the ability to penetrate and expand in the geographical space); g) the specificity and quality of the vectors (instruments) that can be deployed by the city.*

That is why the analysis and definition of the urban influence zone related to „the frontier phenomenon" compels us to reanalyse and reconsider many elements that go into this equation. We will tackle only two which are: „the rank-size rule" şi „the relation between city size-distance-influence".

The rank-size rule, from the frontier phenomena point of view, remains valid, but without enclosing cities in proportional mathematic relations. The proportional relation between (P)-population and (n)-rank is modified by *ponderal variables*, which frequently intervene in the equation of this relation. The size is a very volatile variable when it comes to „frontier processes" (for example Hunedoara, Petroşani etc., whose size depended or depends on single resources). *The rank can be imposed or consecrated. For example:* a) *cities, that become administrative and territorial centres, get larger in size and advance in rank;* b) *the same cities, when new administrative-territorial regiopns are set up, will decrease in size and rank;* c) *„the central place`s" rank will be lost or limited to county centres that are part of „regions", while the rank and size of the regional centre will increase.*

Rank is mainly determined by the city`s functions, functions attract resources or generate them, while resources make the city grow (including from a numerical point of view). The estimative projection or prospecting the size of lower tier cities, starting from the present situation (Romanian cities for example – V. Surd, 2003) leads to the conclusion that these cities, mathematically prospected with the aid of the rank-size relation, suffer no changes in terms of position, rank or relation value. Only their size changes. Analysing the relation in the context of frontier phenomenon, we notice however that this relation receives new valences within the political geography, valences that introduce the issue of „centrality" in the influence`s equation and that of „alterity" in the relations between cities. Finally, this thing can create rivalry tendencies that can be speculated by some „local frontiers" and even „universal frontiers", that will intervene in this relation, intensifying it.

The relation between size-distance-influence, established within the context of the action of frontier phenomena, refutes the consecrated rule in the theoretical model of classic urban geography. In all geographical models it is said that the strongest bond between city and its surrounding area is the economic bond. The frontier geography emphasizes the contrary. The example of „lost historical cities", of those with strict economic (historical or contemporary) and industrial functions, but especially of „symbol cities", of „sacred places" (I. Bădescu; D. Dungaciu, 1995), like Jerusalim, Mecca, etc., whose influence area is larger and encompasses multiple areas, demonstrates that the power of influence in the area and its endurance is determined most of all by the „feeling of space", by the *place`s spirit*. This spirit is the most conservative and most *reactive* to frontier aggressions. However, we would like to emphasize a *model*, which in every theoretical construction on the way the city acts within a territory, for the configuration of the urban influence area, proved to be valid for all historical or contemporary frontiers. The model monopolizes the surrounding space through diffusion, similar to Konosuke Matsushita`s ALD theory (**A**ggregation through **L**imited **D**iffusion). In all the history of civilization, the city acted as a fractal when it came to its relation with the surrounding space.

6. THE CONFIGURATING ROLE FOR THE AREA OF INFLUENCE OF URBAN FUNCTIONS, WITHIIN THE CONTEXT OF FRONTIER PHENOMENA

It can be emphasized by using the conceptual and scientific accumulations from urban geography, urban planning, sociology and other related sciences. In this article, we present their role, projecting them into the frontier phenomena`s field of action and conducting research with the frontier`s study instruments.

We know that basic city functions appeared and began evolving with the emergence and development of ancient cities. However, their systematic study and classification begins rather late, in 1943, by Chauncy D. Harris, as a consequence of „Euroatlantic frontier" processes, whose pressure made the cities grow extremely fast. The basic functional classification, which we used in previous papers, encompasses the following functions: commercial, cultural, industrial and administrative-political. Their systemic analysis, within the context of the frontier, puts forward some defining relations that create the city`s influence area. So: 1) in „building" the influence area, the dominant function(s) will attract and favour specific frontier instruments (scientific and academic events – the cultural function; financial and commercial institutions – the commercial functions; political and administrative institutions – the administrative and political function, etc.); 2) the dominant frontier processes in the influence area will correspond to the city`s functions and to the frontier geopolitics (the development of cultural and educational institutions; the development of the commercial network and of banks; investments in the industrial sector; the development of the transport and communications system, etc.), but also to the „threshod moments" („functional rips"– I. Ianoş, 2005), to which we can add „the antropogeographical conflicts", as well as the waste of natural spaces, consumer mentalities, etc.3) between the frontier, city functions and influence area there will be an evolutionary „critical path", in the following manner: a) the city functions **create** influence areas; b) the influence areas **determine** the frontier`s targets; c) the frontier`s targets **impose** specific instruments; d) the instruments and targets **give rise** to frontier processes; e) the processes are the particular expression of frontiers in the influence area, putting pressure

on city functions. 4) the city`s dominant functions will determine, will attract and favour the frontier`s geopolitical objectives and viceversa, the frontier`s objectives and geopolitical targets exploiting and boosting the city`s functions; 5) between a dominant city function, the structure of the active population involved in this function, the ethnic structure of the influence area and the frontier`s geopolitics there are powerful determinations, resulting specific processes with massive impact on the influence area, leading to that tipology of influences that was presented before, at the analysis of the relation between the city`s structure and the structure of the influence area.

6.1. DEFINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTIER, THE COMMERCIAL FUNCTION AND THE URBAN INFLUENCE AREA

At the beginning of the article, we presented I. Bodley`s statement, which mentioned the first great frontier, that between tribal people and „civilization", represented by the city. Starting from this threshold and studying the history of the great civilization frontiers, in which the city was ubiquitous, we observe that the commercial function has always sustained the city, with few historical exceptions (religious cities). We also emphasize the fact that, in establishing the relation between city and its influence area, a specific element to all frontiers always intervened, that is the „means of transport".

In establishing the defining relation between city and its influence area, it is enough to use this frontier instrument and we will notice the evolution of the urban influence areas in relation to the commercial function, based on the means of transport. At the beginning, when travel was done on foot, the city`s influence area was under 10 km. In the second stage, which lasts until the 18th century, the consecrated influence area had a 30 km radius, due to travel by carts, coaches, horses, camels, etc. In the third period, that is the 19th century, the influence area spread to a 200 km radius, due to the railway „America was conquered by the railway" (P.V. de la Blache, 1950). The only exceptions are those that involve transport on water and caravans. The fourth period (20th-21st centuries), reprezentative for the European frontier, is characterised by the fact that the means of communications transformed the cities into „stations" on the communications network, creating and establishing the overlapping and interfering influence areas, in which „the universal European frontier" (I. Bădescu, 1995) found its consecration.

The fundamental role of the urban commercial function and the frontier expansion also emerges from the comparison of the scale relations in city development and their influence areas, depending on the frontiers character. For example, the frontiers that relied, in their expansion, on commercial instruments, like the Greek, Roman or European frontiers, created cities and were based on a network of cities with large influence areas. On the other hand, the imperial frontiers relied in their expansion on the „imperial form", creating small cities (fortresses), with small influence areas, with a slow evolution, with reactions of rejection, devastating confrontations, etc.

6.2. DEFINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTIER, THE INDUSTRIAL FUNCTION AND THE URBAN INFLUENCE AREA

Among the urban functions, the industrial function is one of the youngest and represents the exclusive expression of the European frontier. „Europe`s frontier took, starting from the 16th century, the form of the modern capitalist system or, using I. Wallerstein`s

expression, the form of modern world economy" (idem, 1995). In contrast to other historical types of world economies, the modern European one did not end up as an empire. Modern Europe gradually replaced the tributary systems used by empires with a system of accumulation, based on the global market. The new system started with a network of urban centers, capable of subduing large rural areas.

Consequently, modern Europe`s new frontier received a brand new meaning, ending up as ,,...the sum of all expansionary processes of the urban-capitalist world on vast rural areas" (idem, 1995). The character, manifestation and instruments of this frontier imposed the industrial function among the city`s dominant functions. Here we can bring into discussion the situation in the former USSR, which was a laboratory for the ,,modern urbanism"[4], where the network of urban systems built on ideological principles was industrial. Even though, in the rest of Europe and in the world (with the exception of the communist block) there were only industrialization phenomena, the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st brings into light an urban industrial function extremely dominant in the ,,basic" city sustainment and in the establishment of urban influence areas. Within the European frontier context, between the urban industrial function the influence area one can built a layout of the critical-evolutionary path, which emphasizes the defining relations between the frontier and the urban influence areas.

E.g.: *the machine* created industry/*industry* created trade/*trade* concentrated money/ *money* concentrated people/*people* concentrated large cities/*cities* concentrated the ways of communication/ the ways of communication concentrated spaces and enlarged the influence areas.

Such a ,,concentrationary economic system" invests the industrial function with the feature of ,,basic external function", which cannot be denied. In conclusion, this function will weigh heavily in the configuration of the city`s influence area.

6.3. DEFINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTIER, THE CULTURAL FUNCTION AND THE URBAN INFLUNCE AREA

In previous onsets on the city`s influence in the territory, we structured its analysis by adopting the analysis model of urban geography that has been consecrated for the last 100 years. The structure of the same analysis, starting this time from the ,,*concept of frontier*", emphasizes a scale difference similar to a comparison between a primary geodesic triangulation network and another that is local. The conceptual space, the geographic space in territorial projection, put forward by the frontier concept, is larger than that put forward by classic methods. We emphasize this because the cultural function represents, for every theoretical construction necessary to define urban influence in the geographical space, the catalyst without which this construction will not last and will not remain properly structured.

The defining relations between the city`s cultural function and its influence area, within the the context of frontier phenomena, have such a powerful and complex manifestation that ,,the inversion of the mother frontier`s axel" comes into view most clearly (I. Bădescu, 1984; 1995) and the *perenity* of a city`s influence in its influence area is created. The inversion of the frontier`s axel takes place when the city, from vector, becomes influence generator.

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[4] We express our reticence on the concept of ,,modern urbanism" and we choose not to judge the reasons behind such a term. Therefore, we will just mention it.

„The cultural frontier" generated by a city creates and consecrates a cultural influence area, that can be immensely enlarged. And because we made previous references to „Sincronism european şi cultură critică românească", we will further use the statements of the same author, taken from the *Romanian cultural frontier*. The city of Blaj is the symbol of the westward expansion of the ethno-Romanian frontier, by recovering the real „the Roman age" of Romanian culture and language. Nothing of the Romanian ethno-national frontier is more evocative for disclosing the defining relation between the frontier, city and influence area. „The discovery of the long Roman time of our history made a fool out of the imperialist and civilizing demands of the Hungarian state...One cannot pretend to civilize a people...when you are 1000 year younger" (idem, 1995). This blow given by the Romanian cultural frontier through the „Şcoala Ardeleană din Blaj" was so powerful that it caused „the Hungarian inferiority complex of age" and that of „nativeness". So, this is the role and nomenclature of the city`s cultural function in establishing its influence area, „reduced" to a proper scale, offred by the frontier.

We would like to mention that, through the above mentioned theoretical construction, we do not try to exclude or change the classic model in which today`s geography tackles the issue of urban influence area and in which the city is part of an urban and cultural model comprising of: *university cities, museum cities, events cities (festivals, meetings, conventions, etc.).* At the level of a lower tier „triangulation", the construction remains true. The same issue, but on another scale, gives us the possibility to observe and analyze a larger geographical space. Furthermore, the cultural frontier is not a physical „izobar". Its forms of manifestation, its opportunities, its area of diffusion, are so complex that the expansive character of a phenomenon belonging to a cultural frontier can manifest itself in a very active and durable manner, with a city as its central place, the same character being able to manifest itself *in pulsating way* or reappearing after a long period of inactivity, like a precious „seed" waiting for the right moment to sprout. However, this fact depends very much on a reprezentative process of every cultural frontier, process also tackled in previous works (B. Păcurar, 2009[5]) that is *the process of creation, formation and circulation of the cultural elite* in the city, the most capable of generating that geolocal (demolocal) frontier, that will configure and define the city`s influence area in the most durable way.

If we stay with the assumption made in another study, through which we stated that „...there is no city without an influence space, and this is determined by the city`s ability to create it" (idem, 2009), projecting the issue in the history of urban geography as a domain, we will come to the conclusion that all frontiers relied on cities, which in turn established instruments, according to the age, through which they created frontier processes, decisive in the configuration of influence areas. The cities represented those „bacteria" (I. Ianoş, 2005), generators of civilization, which, through their frontier abilities, bought up by means of aggregation (K. Matsushita, taken from I. Ianoş, 2005) larger and larger space (influence areas), depending on the frontier`s character, instruments and *spirit of place*.

Another field, in which the city`s cultural function really shines, by relating its influence to the frontier, is that of „institutional logistics" (I. Bădescu, 1995).

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[5] „Funcţia universitară a municipiului Cluj-Napoca în contextul frontierei euroatlantice"
  (The university function of the city of Cluj-Napoca in the context of the Euro-Atlantic frontier) –
  The International Geography Convention, Zalău, June 2009

We saw that, in a city, through the expansion of a frontier, especially the Euroatlantic frontier, the social space that grows the most is the one that manifests itself through: a) *the numerical growth of the city`s population;* b) *the growth of the anthropic landscape;* c) *agglomeration of the city`s aspect;* d) *the complication of structural relations;* e) *the numerical growth and rise in value of infrastructural capacities (becoming more persuasive for the other geographical spaces);* f) *the evolution of city functions (they spread, shrink, gain new specializations, strengthen, change, etc.).*

Within „the pattern" of this social space, through its position in the system of the cultural function, „the groups" (idem, 1995) stand out. These are being configured in the systemic field: frontier-city-geographical space, as vehicles and generators, cultivators and conservators of relations between the parts of the new space, built by the expanding frontier. These so called „logistical groups" (idem, 1995) have this name due to the essential relation they have with the frontier and its processes. These logistical groups can integrate or desintegrate a geographical influence space through attraction, attack on local logistical groups, replacing the local groups, etc.

Through the „logistical groups" instrument, any institution created within the frontier processes has the meaning of „system of thought and system of action" (idem, 1984; 1995) meant to control bigger and bigger spaces, generated by the frontier advance. The frontier advance associates phenomena such as the growth of „groups" in the city, the expansion of the urban social space, growth of city institutions and the logistical growth of frontier institutions.

We will also mention the emergence of systemic relations between the rank of a city, the size of a city and the influence area. *For example*: the frontier of global systems creates world institutions like banks, corporations, transnational organizations, pan-ideas, religions, empires (economic, ideological, cultural, etc.), without borders, extremely mobile, „virtual" and uncontrolable. Consequently, in the evolution of „systems of thought", the cultural functions will configure defining relations between frontier-city-influence area, in the following manner: a) in the systems of world frontiers, the cities receive more active roles; b) the cities become *thee logistical base* of cultural institutions (spiritual culture, scientific and technical cultures, material culture, etc.; c) the institutions appear objectively, but also in a programmed manner; d) the city`s institutions grow normally or pathologically; e) the cities must adapt and take roles and functions from the sometimes overwhelmed state, but also to think, through its logistical groups, the new institutional relation with the state like the control and administration of its own influence area on one hand, and on the other how to refit in an *integrated protection system* when confronted with the agression of the „global institutionalism". This is where the cultural function of a city comes into play, being created and established through „institutional logistics" and „logistical groups". The cities elites will be those who will win or lose „the systems of thought war". Hence, the city`s influence area will be the space in which the „logistical groups" will manifest and establish their value, in the context of this „systems of thought war".

6.4. DEFINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRONTIER, THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL FUNCTION AND THE URBAN INFLUENCE AREA

Recalling a previous statement, we return and reinforce that all of humanities great frontiers relied in their advance on cities. However, these cities became *consecrated vectors of the frontier* from the moment they were invested with administrative and political

functions. Between the two functions (administrative and political) there were and still are formal or objective boundaries, but never complete or dichotomic boundaries. It is very difficult to separate the administrative and political functions of a city, especially at specific levels of the analysis. That is why we consider that, besides some explicitly specialised and technical studies, it is more appropriate for the administrative and political roles of a city, when the city is invested with them, to be integrated in the administrative-political function.

In contrast to the other categories of urban functions, the administrative-political one is also representative through a well thought determination, after some complex analyses that do not lack disputes and rivalries, but more or less objectively eliminate the spontaneous emergence (V. Surd, 2009). This consideration exceeds the level of assumption, being consecrated as result theoretical and practical accumulations that prove the idea. Corroborating this idea with the one previously put forward through which we can state that the frontier`s geopolitics determines the city`s position in configuring the influence area, we can make another assumption that *the administrative-political function* of the city configurates the influence area firstly through „the organisation of the geographical space", through "institutional constructions" (R. Săgeată, 2003) which serve a geographical space, many times larger than at other functions. All depends on the city`s nomenclature in geospatial (sociogeospatial), national, continental-regional and international structures and suprastructures.

In relation to a frontier geopolitics, a city can gain administrative-political functions with larger or smaller influences in the geographical space, influences that, through overlapping, will configure the urban influence area. We also have to take into consideration another important element in the equation of this analisys, that is a city with administrative-political functions will always be a part of a system of cities. This system will become a basis network, in which the cities, depending on their de rank and role in the frontiers` field of action, will be *„triangulation points" in the mathematic base of „surveying"* every frontier. In this way, related to the holarchic level of the frontier phenomenon, a city with the help of its „institutional constructions" will exercise its influence on a geographical space, which it will *configure by overlapping geosocial spaces (*„social spaces"* - F. Ipatiov, 1996) and which it will define in its own influence area. For example, in the field of the Romanian ethno-national frontier, starting in 1968, the national territory was divided into 41 counties and the city of Bucureşti. In each of these territorial divisions, a county and geographical space is being built, consecrated as an „influence area" for each chief city. This is primarily due to the administrative-political function won by every city through official investment. At a lower level, we have the „communal centres" whose influence area results from the administrative division of the county. Above county centres, there is „the capital city", whose influence area, from an administrative point of view, is the entire national territory. But with Romania`s efforts to be integrated in the European Union, a new administrative and geographical category appeared in Romania`s geographical space: „the development region". All eight development regions of Romania each have a „development centre", a function carried out by eight cities.

By looking back on Romania`s history of administrative and territorial geography of the last 100 years, we will notice that the county centres were and still are administrative and political expressions of the frontier phenomena, that took place in the Romanian geographical space (ethno-national: 1918-1950; kominternist: 1950-1968; ethno-national: 1968-1989; European: 1990-the present day).

Surpassing this taxonomical level and switching to overstructures, we register, in international geographical spaces, cities with administrative-political functions, reprezentative for the European frontier and for other global frontiers. Europe contains, within its geographical space, „capitals" of several socio-geosystems such as *The Brussels-Strasbourg-Luxembourg Urban System*, the „capitals" of the European Union; Brussels, „the capital" of NATO; Vienna, the city that hosts the headquarters of OPEC, etc. On the American continent we find Washington D.C., not only the capital of the United States of America, but also „the capital" of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, etc. Retrospectively, it is revealed that the great historical frontiers had their own over-statal capitals (Rome, Istanbul, Vienna, Moscow, etc.).

In conclusion, even without a complete and thorough approach of the issue, we can still say that all the frontiers expand through cities, each frontier having its specificity, while the geographical space registers urban evolutions where some of the cities are awarded administrative-political functions. The city`s area of influence is defined by overlapping the „socio-geospaces" that were generated by the frontier phenomenon in the territory „allocated" (officially or semi-officially) to a city, by national and international deeds, decrees, ratified treaties and so on.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Configuring and defining the urban area of influence, starting from the concept of frontier, is not a „simple expansion", by difusing the city`s features into a „geographical area", but instead it is a „complex expansion" (F. Ipatiov, 1996). The frontier phenomenon, as a „complete social phenomenon" (I. Bădescu, 1995), gradually monopolizes the geographical space doing so on specialise spaces, among which the social space occupies an important place. The city, within this „socio-geosystem", holds the central place through its structure, qualities and functions. This phenomenon has been visible ever since the city began to „live off" the hinterland.

Therefore, defining the urban area of influence, in the context of the frontier phenomena`s actions, must always be made starting from the analysis of relations that intervene and establish themselves between the frontier phenomena, city and the specific geographical space which is configured by confronting and relating the first two elements of this complex systemic relation. This area will have a personality defined by the synthesis of the structural elements of the geolocal system, with the frontiers` features, resulting a new systemic organization of the geographical space.

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