Soc. Geogr. Discuss., 5, 97–116, 2009
www.soc-geogr-discuss.net/5/97/2009/
© Author(s) 2009. This work is distributed under
the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License.

Social
Geography
Discussions

Social Geography Discussions is the access reviewed discussion forum of *Social Geography*

The invented periphery: constructing Europe in debates about "Anglo hegemony" in geography

U. Best

TU Chemnitz, Institut für Europäische Studien, Chemnitz, Germany

Received: 4 March 2009 – Accepted: 5 March 2009 – Published: 12 March 2009

Correspondence to: U. Best (ulrich.best@phil.tu-chemnitz.de)

Published by Copernicus Publications.

Abstract

Seit einigen Jahren wird in englischsprachigen Zeitschriften über eine Hegemonie der englischen Sprache, englischsprachigen Zeitschriften und der Ansätze, die aus der angloamerikanischen Diskussion stammen, diskutiert. In vielen Beiträgen erscheinen dabei die anderen Sprachen (und die Geographen, die sie sprechen) unterdrückt, ausgeschlossen, gezwungen, sich der Anglo-Hegemonie unterzuordnen.

Doch was ist das für eine Hegemonie? Die Situation erscheint als eine quasikoloniale und daher sollte sie auch mit den Mitteln der postkolonialen Theorie untersucht werden. Aus dieser Perspektive gibt es auf der einen Seite einen orientalistischen Diskurs, in dem das Wissen des Kolonisatoren das einzig gültige ist. Diese Diskurse können auch von Eliten in den Kolonien eingesetzt werden. Auf der anderen Seite aber sind Debatten über die Unterdrückung des ”Eigenen” durch die Kolonisatoren oft Mittel von (anderen) Eliten, um ihre Macht zu festigen. Um einige dieser Prozesse aufzuzeigen, möchte ich die Debatte über Anglo-Hegemonie selbst untersuchen. Sie ist, so die These des Beitrags, eng verknüpft mit einer europäischen Elitenformation, einer Elite, die sich aber als transnational, multilingual, hybrid und antihegemonisch definiert.

1 Introduction

This issue of the journal is dedicated to the topic of translation, the transport of concepts across languages and the power relations embedded within the process of translating or working across language barriers. The issue of languages and the power relations associated with languages has also been an important thread in a debate in geography that has by now been going on for almost ten years: the debate about an “Anglo hegemony” in academia and publishing. The aim of this paper is – after a brief summary of the main points of the debate – to question the concept of hegemony employed in many contributions, and in a second step to look at a consequence of this lack

of theoretical analysis of power relations. When looking at the various contributions to this debate, it is clear that terms like hegemony, periphery and inequality are frequently used, and a considerable effort is made to empirically document these inequalities, but also that there is very little theoretical reflection about the very concepts used in the debate. Furthermore, as many contributions also draw on variations of postcolonial theory, I will attempt to introduce new concepts from this field and analyse the debate using postcolonial theory.

2 What hegemony?

"Is there an 'Anglo-American' domination in human geography? And, is it bad?" asks Andrés Rodríguez-Pose in an editorial in 2006 (Rodríguez-Pose, 2006:603). Rodríguez-Pose reacts to a still growing body of comments, editorials, and articles on the issue of an "Anglo hegemony". Generally, the idea of an Anglo hegemony in academic geography is taken to indicate an interrelated set of issues. First of all, it is a debate about publishing. In recent years, the idea of "international" journals has come under challenge, as the journals that are often considered to be international are mainly run by academics (and published by corporations) based in the UK or North America. The definition of "international" is therefore a very narrow one (Berg and Kearns, 1998; Gutiérrez and López-Nieva, 2001). Authors from other backgrounds have complained that they do not have access to these publications, or if so, then under very specific circumstances – as presenting a "locally relevant" case study, for example, but not an "international theory" (Gregson et al., 2003).

The second, interrelated issue is the issue of languages. This issue has been raised regarding conferences, where English is taken to be the lingua franca, and journals, where those published in English are taken to be international, and the others not. This is often understood as well to mean privileging native English speakers or authors from "Anglo-American" settings, as not only do authors from other settings have to translate their work into English for it to be considered "international", but even more important,

SGD
5, 97–116, 2009

CC BY

they have to translate their ideas into concepts familiar to the English-language academic discourse (Minca, 2000).

The third issue is that as a consequence of the first two points, concepts developed and discussed in the English-language debate have become agenda-setting also for those academics working in other contexts – and not necessarily because they are "better", but because they are considered to be international, supported by a large publishing apparatus and definitions of "excellence" in which journal rankings, impact factors and quotation indices favour these journals and the concepts discussed in them (Ramírez, 2004; Paasi, 2005).

Before pointing out a few open questions about the points listed here, let me point out some of the solutions that have been proposed to undo the "Anglo-hegemony". On the issue of publications, there have been calls for more international contributors and editorial boards. A different suggestion has been the creation of new journals – for example a "European" geography journal (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006). Regarding the issue of languages, there have been attempts to have more multi-lingual conferences (see Minca, 2003 on the mixed success of one such attempt) and multi-lingual journals. The journal ACME, for example, also accepts submissions in languages other than English. It should also be remarked that the issue of languages and publishing power is strongly connected to the international critical geography group, at whose conferences the issue of language was much debated, and out of which many of the key contributions to the debate have come. This issue was indeed one of the driving forces behind the establishment of ACME.

The final point – the agenda-setting power of English-language concepts – has recently been taken up in a number of more nuanced case studies and contributions analysing situated interactions between different "national geographies". However, as this final point is also the widest-ranging issue and encapsulates the "Anglo-hegemony" as it is often defined in the debate, I would like to use it to point out a number of critiques of the debate.

SGD

5, 97–116, 2009

3 Criticizing the hegemony-debate

One important term in the Anglo hegemony debate has been "periphery". In a 2000 editorial, Claudio Minca used the term with a certain hesitancy when he referred to "scholars representing (allow me the deliberately provocative term) 'peripheral' European geographies" (Minca, 2000:287). In 2003, this had changed, when the title of his new editorial was "critical peripheries". Vaiou (2003) also considers her contribution a "view from the periphery". Raju (2004) and also Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou (2003) write about centres and margins. In an editorial in Political Geography, O'Loughlin, Sidaway and Raento chose the term "relative peripheries" (2008:3). The first model used for the power relations in the international academic world is therefore one that draws on a centre-periphery-concept, where the centre is the seat of power (publications, the dominant language, origin of relevant concepts), and the periphery is dominated by this centre. One solution suggested by this model is that the centre must loosen its grip, that the peripheries need to be empowered – their contributions considered, their languages accepted, their representatives awarded the same rights as those in the centre.

A second model draws on modernisation theory. The above-quoted Rodríguez-Pose uses such a model, when he describes his personal move to the UK and compares the British and Spanish university systems. British academics are more productive (and Spanish ones less), he argues, due to the differences in the system. This difference in productivity is a reason for the perceived Anglo hegemony (which he considers to be decreasing). He writes:

> "In the UK system I found a combination of incentives, support, and pressure to conduct academic research that would have been difficult to replicate in a Spanish academic setting. The fact that these internal issues are rarely explored in the Anglo-American hegemony debate is telling. It is often easier to consider that some external force or power is preventing scholars from different traditions from fulfilling their true potential, when the root of the problem may be closer to home."

(Rodriguez-Pose, 2006:609)

The model employs the same boundaries as the centre-periphery model, but suggests different explanation (and solution). The boundary is between those in the centre (here: the UK) and those in the periphery (Spain, in this case), but this time the centre has earned its place. It sets the standard and is simply better than the periphery at achieving this standard. Those in the periphery are not excluded from the centre because of rules set by the centre, but because they fail to imitate the centre well enough. They need to change, to take their chances, like he did, when he gave up his "peripheral" position[1] and moved to the centre.

A third model poses a direct challenge of the two first models and draws on postcolonial theory. While the centre-periphery model and the modernisation model stress boundaries and difference, they have also been criticized for their drawing of boundaries. Samers and Sidaway for example criticize the idea of a unified "Anglo-American"hegemony and the assumption of clear boundaries between different "national" geographies: "the apparent presumption of bounded national or linguistic spaces/states with their respective nationally or linguistically defined knowledge spheres." (Samers and Sidaway, 2000:664). To counter this assumption, they outline the "already hybrid character of this reputed 'Anglo-American' realm of geographical research", meaning that many of the theories relevant in English-language human geography today are derived from originally French, German, or other theorists and do not have a "pure" lineage (Samers and Sidaway, 2000:665). In his 2003 editorial, Minca takes this up and merges the idea of the periphery with the concept of hybridity, writing about "a peripheral or hybrid position with respect to the agenda-setting centres that produce and legitimise 'international' geographical knowledge" (Minca, 2003:165). Braun also reacts to this critique when he claims in the introduction to a set of editorials that "[the] contributors steadfastly refuse such simple binaries as West/East,

[1] Somehow contradicted by his two PhD degrees, the second one from the EU-"elite" institution EUI, and his large collection of other degrees and awards from various countries.

North/South, Anglo/non-Anglo, focusing instead on the complex negotiations that occur over the translation of concepts and theories across different intellectual, institutional, and political contexts." (Braun, 2003:131). The third model therefore draws on a concept derived from postcolonial theory in order to point to more complex interactions between academics, institutions and institutional settings. However, "hybridity" can also be interpreted as a quality of the periphery, as exemplified by Minca's equation of the two terms.

To sum up: there are generally three concepts used to describe the international power relations in academic geography. A centre-periphery-model and a model drawing on modernisation theory, both of which rely on relatively clear boundary drawings between centre and periphery. The hybridity-model attempts to challenge these boundary drawings. There remains a problem with the first two approaches that has been addressed by the third approach, but only in an unsystematic way: the relationship between international inequalities and national power relations. In centre-periphery and modernisation concepts, the "national discipline" seems to be a black box – all periphery or all centre, relatively undifferentiated. The discussions of hybridity call into question the "content" of these boxes – theories have always been the result of interactions, mixed, never "pure". However, this perspective leaves aside the internal institutional settings as well. It is, however, a strength of postcolonial theory that it allows an analysis of these power relations, as I will now try to show.

4 National elites and international power relations

Outside of geography, the modernisation concept is is also a popular model. When French President Nicolas Sarkozy tried to justify his proposed changes to the French university system in early 2009, he claimed that British academics publish 30–50% more than their French counterparts (which was shown to be incorrect), and that therefore there need to be more incentives for French professors to catch up and for France to be successful in the "battle for brains" (Sarkozy, 2009). In particular, the directors

of the universities need more power over the lecturers, in Sarkozy's view. Sarkozy did not say that there was an Anglo hegemony that needed to be challenged, but with his image of a battle he was not far from doing so. More importantly, the empirical data he refers to are the same as the data used in the Anglo hegemony debate. This example already highlights what is really at stake: the internal control of the university system – be it by the federal or the university administration, by networks of powerful professors, by a wider techno-/bureaucratic regime, or by private companies and business interests. It is not a question of British professors being given control over French professors. This is an internal struggle of the elites, and Sarkozy puts himself as a defender of the "nation" in the battle (for brains, see above), against those pictured as doing better – or as threats. Sarkozy wishes to better imitate the British model in order to overcome the supposed deficiencies of French academia. This situation is not quite a typical constellation that would be analysed by postcolonial theory, but it can be instructive to use a model derived from postcolonial theory. After all, Sarkozy talks about international inequalities.

In traditional colonial systems, formal knowledge was developed in the centre (or by representatives of the centre) and applied in the periphery. The main opportunity for "natives" to reach an elite position in the periphery was the emulation of the centre's knowledge, or the establishment of an intermediate position from which one could bring the knowledge of the centre to the periphery. Elite positions within the centre were associated with generalized, formal knowledge, including the incorporation of knowledge about peripheral areas into the knowledge of the centre. In the periphery, the centre was represented through people spreading the knowledge possessed by the centre or developing knowledge about the periphery. Postcolonial theory has provided concepts for an analysis in a framework departing from traditional colonialism. Fanon's work developed the idea of the "native intellectual" (1981). In a postcolonial situation – with remaining, but less formal unequal international relations – national elites can make a claim to power by claiming to speak for the nation. The "native intellectual" justifies his position by the creation or re-working of national myths and doing so, creating a

SGD
5, 97–116, 2009

tradition from which to derive his speaking position – as a representative of the people versus the former coloniser. This new elite position was further analysed by Amilcar Cabral (1974). He discussed the emergence of a pseudo-bourgeoisie which used nationalist discourse to maintain a position mediating between the former coloniser and the "nation", and maintaining their position of power. Partha Chatterjee (1986) added a final layer to this analysis when he described this process as a passive revolution, i.e. an elite-induced transformation, in which one elite (the colonial one) is replaced by another one (the national one).

In the debate about an Anglo-hegemony, there have been a number of contributions which have addressed the role of national elites and international inequality. Ramirez (2004) points out how the Mexican National Council of Science and Technology privileges some approaches over others, using as a criteria how closely Mexican approaches follow US models. This privileges some researchers in Mexico over others – those who have studied at the right universities, for example (many of which are in the US). In a way, this still resembles the traditional colonial model with an intermediate layer of mediators imitating and excelling at the criteria of the centre. "[W]e can assume that Anglo-American hegemony receives support from those at the top of educational policy making," Ramirez writes (2004:547). However, she does not take the road of a native intellectual by (for example) trying to develop "specifically Mexican" approaches, but rather pointing out how these unequal relations have also made possible the import of critical geography into Mexico. Regarding critical geography, she even adopts a modernisation model, when she writes that "[t]o accept theories from abroad might help us transform the backward state of critical geography in our country" (Ramirez, 2004:546). For the case of Germany, Belina, Best and Naumann (2009) describe a similar development, as does Judit Timár (2003) for Hungary. In the light of the above, it becomes clear that national elites employ specific strategies dealing with international relations – the nationalist strategy of "fighting for the nation", or taking the role of a representative of the "international" in their respective contexts. Postcolonial theory however can help not only to situate some of the observations that some participants

CC BY

of the debate make. It can also help to interpret some of the contributions themselves as strategies of an emerging elite.

5 Peripheralizing Europe

In an article on postcolonial political geography, Jenny Robinson discusses global inequalities. In contrast to much of the Anglo hegemony debate, the line she draws is not between "European" and "Anglo-American" geography. It is between the "EU-US heartland", or the "US-EU as a hegemonic zone of the production of knowledge", and most of the rest of the world (Robinson, 2003:648/650). In her view, the structure on which this hegemony rests is best described as "a 'Knowledge-Publishing complex', not unlike the Military-Industrial complexes which secure real-world geo-political power" (Robinson, 2003:648). Raju (2004) also criticizes "Anglo-Saxon or Euro-American-centred discourses", and Timár (2004) titles her editorial "More than 'Anglo-American', it is 'Western' [hegemony]". Considering the economic and political power of the EU (or even continental Europe without the UK), it seems indeed unusual that many of the contributors to the debate have chosen to describe "Europe" as a periphery, a margin, or an excluded Other. These descriptions, I would argue, can be interpreted, using postcolonial discourse, as strategies of an elite in formation.[2] Even Rodríguez-Pose, in most of his paper firmly positioned as a figure presenting the virtues of the centre to the periphery, is tempted to (and eventually does) imagine himself as excluded Other, and thereby forms a dual alliance, not only as a representative of the centre, but of the periphery at the same time: "If the debate is stuck [. . .], we will let the opportunities and the signs of change that seem to be appearing in recent years pass by and will have lost a unique opportunity to give the 'Other' a greater voice and a greater capacity

[2]That I interpret them as such does not necessarily mean that the strategies are indeed employed strategically in the cases that I analyse or – if they are employed strategically – that they are successful for every individual that employs them.

SGD

5, 97–116, 2009

to influence the agenda in human geography." (Rodríguez-Pose, 2006:609f). The "we" he refers to are those excluded Others.

In the following I will analyse four contributions to the "Anglo hegemony" debate which all construct specific versions of Europe. I will present them in chronological order, starting with Minca (2000), followed by Gregson et al. (2003), Amin (2004) and Aalbers and Rossi (2006).

In an early contribution to the Anglo-hegemony debate, Claudio Minca used an editorial to reflect on a conference he had organised in Venice with the aim of bringing together European and American "postmodern" geographers. This is the editorial which was criticized by Samers and Sidaway, who claimed that Minca drew oversimplified boundaries along national or linguistic lines. However, Minca did not so much stress national lines – he stressed the Europeanness of the "periphery". In this editorial, Minca was still hesitant to label Europe a periphery, but drew clear boundaries. He spoke of "those of us who navigate only on the edges of the Anglo-American academic empire but are firmly emplaced within other geographical traditions" (Minca, 2000:285). These traditions he defined on the one hand as national, but on the other hand as quintessentially European. He used the location Venice as a starting point for his description of these Europeans. "Then there is Venezia, itself an urban theatre par excellence, and increasingly a sort of ideal, almost extra- territorial, space of/for global cultural experiments; an emergent 'European' place within which international institutions seem more at home than their local counterparts" (Minca, 2000:286). In this location "young geographers coming from all corners of Europe" converged (Minca, 2000:286)[3]. These young geographers made up a "virtual community", "well versed in the main themes of Anglo-American geographical debates but also firmly located within their own particular national and theoretical traditions" (Minca, 2000:286f). These people constantly mediate between "academic universes", "a condition of living in incessant and permanent translation between two or more cultural universes." (Minca, 2000:287). In this descrip-

[3]Minca notes however "a complete absence of geographers from the developing world, from the Southern Mediterranean and even from Central and Eastern Europe" (Minca, 2000:286).

tion, Minca already combines two models: on the one hand there is a clear delineation of "Anglo" centre and "Euro" periphery. On the other hand, the virtual community of European geographers is hybrid, multilingual, heterogeneous.[4] Minca positions himself on the side of the heterogeneous Europeanness which he presents (and represents) to the centre – in a way calling into being the "virtual community" that he speaks for.

After Minca's editorial, the debate gained considerable momentum. The 2002 ICGG conference in Békéscsaba (Hungary) was already strongly marked by the Anglo hegemony debate. At this point, the idea of an Anglo hegemony had become established as a point of reference. The following two contributions (as well as a theme issue of Geoforum, a collection of editorial statements in Society and Space and other contributions) are direct outcomes of this conference.

Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou directly address the debate. They analyse the contributions to two sets of journals – those that are considered "leading international journals" and those that label themselves "European". They argue that "these journal spaces are both constituted through a centre-margin imaginary (one which positions Britain, and the US, as the centre and others, depending on their degree of incorporation, as 'the margins') and, through what appears in their pages, constitutive of this power geometry" (Gregson et al., 2003:5). Their aim is to "critique dominant (Northern/Western) representations of contemporary Europe, to disrupt the lines of power that enable these, and to explore ways of writing Europe which reflect its cultural heterogeneity and which promote cross-cultural dialogic exchange" (Gregson et al., 2003:5f). The disruption they have in mind consists of "[p]roducing a European writing space [that] requires us, at least in part, to work together, collaborate together, and indeed to research and write together across Europe [and] to foreground dialogic and interlocutory relationships" (Gregson et al., 2003:13f).

[4]This description in itself, it should be noted, follows a traditional trait of colonialist literature, in which the periphery is described as heterogeneous and the centre as homogeneous – a trait taken up and inverted by postcolonial literature, where heterogeneity is valued over homogeneity. The periphery can thus be portrayed as more productive than the centre.

In most journals, Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou argue, “the only positions left for continental European geographers to occupy in British (and North American) writing spaces are either applications of British/North American takes on ‘theory’ or translator-cum-exotic, as Other.” (Gregson et al., 2003:9). Theory, claim Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou, is produced in Anglo-American geography and Europe can only be written about as a local case study, in “secondary” journals. This even applies to those journals that profess “European” ambitions “of crossing borders, being open to Europe, promoting exchange and so on” (Gregson et al., 2003:12).

Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou voice their disappointment with those journals claiming to be European but being caught in Anglo-American power geometries. However, they still put their hopes on a European writing space. One founding element of this writing space are EU-programmes like the academic exchange programme Erasmus: “This contributed to the creation of European academic networks, to a more regular and systematic ‘crossing of borders’ within Europe so to speak.” (Gregson et al., 2003:11). In this European writing space that Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou aim to develop, they “are involved in a constant process of translation between cultures” and “construct differentiated representations of Europe” (Gregson et al., 2003:15). Central to this undertaking is “working with place itself, in ways that might disrupt the power-geometries of centre-margin. So, in our own practices of working, if not so much writing, we have experimented not just with meeting and working outside academic and everyday domestic spaces but with doing so in different parts of Europe.” (Gregson et al., 2003:15).

Like Minca in the above quoted editorial, Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou align “Europe” with heterogeneity, translation, and the margins. The centre is domination, homogeneity, and power. The “marginal Europe” is associated with the EU and official EU programmes. This Europe comes into being by participating in these programmes and travelling across Europe for meetings. Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou do not (in this paper) differentiate between their European writing space and the EU as a project of governance. These programmes are then presented as “disrupting” British/North American power geometries.

At the same conference in Békéscsaba, an introductory lecture was given by Ash Amin (published in 2004). He likewise sought a positive reference to "Europe". This Europe that Amin discerned was not the Europe of national boundaries or of racism, but a Europe that "acknowledges cultural difference [...] and one that is also able to forge a new commons based on values and principles that resonate across Europe's diverse communities" (Amin, 2004:3). The opponents in Amin's vision are "ethno-nationalists and xenophobes" (Amin, 2004:4), what needs to be overcome is "the fiction of homeland cultural identities in Europe" (ibid). Amin's envisioned Europe is a highly theorized one – one that "happens to dig deep into a Socratic (European) definition of freedom as the product of dialogue and engagement rather than the product of pre-given orders of worth. Such a starting point suggests that empathy/engagement with the stranger could become the essence of what it is to be 'European'" (Amin, 2004:3). Considering EU border policies and the racist riots that have erupted in numerous EU countries, it seems an odd idea to think that Europe is about empathy with the stranger. Amin's paper also contains a reference to a critique of the discourse on hybridity, in which the promoters of hybridity are described as a "restricted cultural elite – 'post-colonial border-crossers' such as poets, artists and intellectuals" (Amin, 2004:9). Nevertheless, he takes this road. His vision is one for the future – a "becoming European" (Amin, 2004:4/18). Amin is aware of "of exclusions of varying intensity in the name of cultural difference" (Amin, 2004:12f), but hopes for "a Europe of 'minor politics', following Gilles Deleuze's distinction between minority and minor politics." (Amin, 2004:18).

Amin's paper is discussed here in the debate about an "Anglo hegemony" because this was the context of his talk and his paper also served as a reference for later contributions. However, in the paper, there is a different virtual community of Europeans: it is present in the very selection of references, where Amin quotes numerous "continental" philosophers which have been incorporated into the English-language debate. It is also present in the strict avoidance of any greater consideration of the EU from the perspective of economic or political inequalities. Amin's article could be interpreted as the development of a formal, culturalist utopian discourse on Europe, an abstract and

CC BY

general discourse about values, about what "Europeans" should do. Amin's paper was published in a journal that considers itself as "cutting edge" and "leading international". Insofar, it could be interpreted as the type of writing that Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou associate with the "hegemony" – only that the hegemony seems to write in much the same terms as they do, without their relatively applied perspective.

Finally, I would like to look at a paper which is also directly connected to the Anglo hegemony debate and develops some of the ideas of Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou. Aalbers and Rossi pick up the idea of "European journals" and the existing EU programmes. They refer to an existing community of European researchers and to an Anglo hegemony in academic journals. They wish to challenge this hegemony with a European geography journal and echo Gregson, Simonsen and Vaiou, when they declare as their aim "a more cross-cultural and post-national research and writing space in Europe" (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:141). Rossi and Aalbers start off with a definition of Europe directly building on Amin:

"Europe is considered here as a distinctively multifaceted geographical entity, not only because of more recent multiethnic transformations of European societies (see Amin, 2004), but also because the historical constitution of 'Europeanness' as a collective sense of belonging has drawn on a multiplicity of identities, religions and cultures, particularly encompassing the contribution of a-national and territorially dispersed religious and ethnic minorities (such as the Jews and the gypsy communities [...])" (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:142)

Europe is pictured as a place of multiplicity and a collectivity[5]. Amin's theoretical framework originally does not claim to represent "reality", it represents (in my interpretation) a formal utopian discourse. For Rossi and Aalbers, however, it has already become real: Europe *is* multiplicity, multiculturalism etc: "an ideal space for the building of a post-national community of scholars." (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:142, similarly also

[5]That Jews and Roma are picked as evidence of this existing utopia is particularly questionable, considering not only the history of the 20th century, but also the neofascist riots in Germany in the 1990s and the recent riots against Roma and Romanians in Italy.

on page 138 and 145).

In addition to the idea of Europe, Rossi and Aalbers take as their second starting point the existing international collaborations in academia. They link the rise of these collaborations with EU programmes (to the point of almost replicating the terminology of these programmes, as with the concept of the "integrated research area"): these collaborations have developed "thanks primarily to the role played by EU-funded programmes and initiatives in stimulating the constitution of a more integrated research area in Europe." (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:138).

Aalbers and Rossi acknowledge that this process of internationalisation "has been vigorously enforced by international organisations and, in many countries, also by national governments from the late 1980s onwards" (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:138), but their only critique is that this internationalisation suffers from the effects of Anglo hegemony and from the Europeans "persisting limited willingness to embark on cross-cultural collaborative research" (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:138). The point of view Aalbers and Rossi take here is again that of the enforcers of international cooperation. In spite of the fact that this project is clearly a top-down project run by governments, they call for a "bottom up" process: "the process of Europeanising human geography should be sustained 'from the bottom-up' by scholars mobilising around the goal of a more international and cohesive geographical research space at the European level." (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:138). Aalbers and Rossi suggest that these scholars should mobilise under the roof of the Eugeo initiative of European geographers.

Aalbers and Rossi's paper presents a further perspective on power relations in geography: they take the role of speaking for an emerging centre – "European geography" – and formulate the demands this centre will make of its (partly unwilling) subjects. Since they take this perspective of a translator of the demands of the "European integrated research area" for geographers, it makes sense that in the end they cease positioning themselves in the periphery, when they write that eventually, there will only be a "unified European" geography:

"Taking account of this historical development of the discipline, then, demonstrates how the now customary divide between an 'Anglo-American geography' and a 'continental European geography' is in many respects not very significant over the long run. On the contrary, there are many arguments that can be made about the existence of a unified geographical discipline in Europe: or of a 'European geography', to put it more simply." (Aalbers and Rossi, 2006:140).

6 Conclusion: the strategies of an emerging elite

The Anglo hegemony debate which has been going on for more than ten years has become an important point of reference for many geographers. In this paper, I have tried to apply a theoretical framework to the debate itself. My particular interest was in the idea of Europe that underlay many of the contributions. I have tried to show the emerging outlines of an elite formation[6] – an elite that makes specific reference to international inequalities in academia and builds its claims on its position towards these inequalities, that is, towards the relation between international, Anglo-American, European and national. As the whole debate revolves around centre and periphery and every position in the debate is formulated in relation to centre or periphery, it has been unavoidable to use these terms here. However, as pointed out above, depending on the respective framework, centre and periphery mean different things. In one framework, the centre is simply the seat of power and the periphery the Other. In a modernisation framework, the centre is better at being the centre, and the periphery should better imitate the centre to become more like it and catch up. In a third perspective, the periphery is often defined as in the first model, but at the same time valued more highly than the centre – as representing heterogeneity and difference.

[6]Although I have used specific texts by specific authors, this does not necessarily mean that the authors themselves consciously aspire to be an EU elite or strategically employ their specific discourse – indeed, in other texts, the same authors can take different positions.

Different strategies for positions from the periphery emerge. The first strategy is that of an ascension to the centre and an imitation of the discourse of the centre. This discourse can also be presented or translated to the periphery, establishing an elite positions towards the periphery. A second strategy takes its departure from an embrace of the qualities of the perceived periphery. Here, I have discussed a number of different elements of this strategy. First of all, Europe is constructed as the site of difference, transnationalism, multiplicity and heterogeneity. Second, and connected with this, EU academia (minus the UK) is considered a peripheral counter-position to Anglo hegemony. Third, European geographers are constructed as a community for which to speak to the centre and for whom to formulate demands (or establish journals). Fourth, EU-programmes are celebrated as helping this community come into being and thus being disruptive of the Anglo hegemony. Travelling across Europe, participating in EU programmes and forming EU-European associations is portrayed as an anti-hegemonic practice.

I like to travel across Europe and meet other people. Nevertheless, I would argue that there are some problems with presenting this as a political strategy. First of all, the EU is not a utopian place of difference but an entity very much resembling an imperialist association of states. EU programmes furthering international exchange aim at the creation of a European elite, supplementing the existing national elites. A reference to an idealised "Europe" – however anti-essentialist this conception might be – must always exclude everything that is "not European" and often stands in crass contradiction with real politics.

The structures of academia are currently changing in many countries. One element of this change is the formation of a European elite. Further elements are – depending on the country – the privatisation of elements of higher education and the increasing role of private businesses, the further "precarisation" of university staff, the introduction of more and more "competitive" elements aiming at a differentiation of "excellent" and average universities, the abolition of critical schools of thought from entire university systems. These processes – taking place at the national level, but not unrelated to

CC BY

the European level – also go along with power struggles between old and new elites. “Europe”, in this struggle, is not part of the solution, but part of the problem.

References

Aalbers, M. B. and Rossi, R.: Beyond the Anglo-American hegemony in human geography: a European perspective, GeoJournal, 67, 137–147, 2006.

Amin, A.: Multi-Ethnicity and the Idea of Europe, Theory Culture Society 21(2), 1–24 , 2004.

Berg, L. D. and Kearns, R. A.: America unlimited, Environ. Plann. D, 16(2), 128–132, 1998.

Braun, B.: Introduction: tracking the power geometries of international critical geography, Environ. Plann. D, 21, 131–33, 2003.

Cabral, A: Die Revolution der Verdammten: der Befreiungskampf in Guinea-Bissao, Rotbuch Verlag, Berlin, 1974.

Chatterjee, P.: Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?, University of Minnesota Press, London, 1986.

Fanon, F.: Die Verdammten dieser Erde, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1981.

Garcia-Ramon, M. D.: The spaces of critical geography: an introduction, Geoforum, 35, 523–524, 2004.

Gregson, N., Simonson, K., and Vaiou, D.: Writing (across) Europe: on writing spaces and writing practices, Eur. Urban Reg. Stud., 10, 5–22, 2003.

Gutiérrez, J. and López-Nieva, P.: Are international journals of human geography really international?, Prog. Hum. Geog., 25(1), 53–69, 2001.

Minca, C.: Venetian geographical praxis, Environ.Plann. D, 18, 285–289, 2000.

Minca, C.: Critical peripheries, Environ. Plann. D, 21, 160–168, 2003.

O'Loughlin, J., Raento, P., and Sidaway, J.D.: Editorial: Where the tradition meets its challengers, Polit. Geogr., 27, 1, 1–4, 2008.

Paasi, A. :Globalisation, academic capitalism, and the uneven geographies of international journal publishing spaces, Environ. Plann. A, 37, 769–789, 2008.

Raju, S.: Contextualizing critical geography in India: emerging research and praxis, Geoforum, 35(5), 539–544, 2004.

Ramírez, B.: The non spaces of critical geography in Mexico, Geoforum, 35(5), 545–548, 2004.

Robinson, J.: Political geography in a postcolonial context, Polit. Geogr., 22, 647–651, 2003.

Rodríguez-Pose, A.: Is there an 'Anglo-American' domination in human geography? And, is it bad?, Environ. Plann. A, 38, 603–610, 2006.
Samers, M. and Sidaway, J. D.: Exclusions, inclusions, and occlusions in 'Anglo-American geography': reflections on Minca's 'Venetian geographical praxis', Environ. Plann. D, 18, 663–66, 2000.
Sarkozy, N.: A l'occasion du lancement de la réflexion pour une stratégie nationale de recherche et d'innovation Palais de l'Élysée - Jeudi 22 janvier 2009. http://www.elysee.fr/download/?mode=press&filename=22.01_Recherche_et_Innovation.pdf, 2009.
Timár, J.: More than 'Anglo-American', it is 'Western': hegemony in geography from a Hungarian perspective, Geoforum, 35(5), 533–538, 2004.
Timár, J.: Soft critical geography in Hungary, with hard issues, Environ. Plann. D, 21(2), 154–160, 2003.
Timár, J.: More than 'Anglo-American', it is 'Western': hegemony in geography from a Hungarian perspective, Geoforum, 35(5), 533–538, 2004.
Vaiou, D.: Radical debate between local and international: a view from the periphery, Environ. Plann. D, 21(2), 133–137, 2003.

SGD

5, 97–116, 2009

Constructing Europe in debates about "Anglo hegemony" in geography

U. Best