# Two Modes of Regionalisation in Scholarly Communication: The Perspective of Polish and Danish Researchers

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September 9, 2026
ECPR conference, Kraków, Poland

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# Origins of This Study

Analysis of interviews with **Polish historians** (more information later)

Many mentioned **top-down constraints on regional collaboration** and research

Institutional and national **policies** (which are also grounded in EU policies)
were seen as opposed to grassroots **practices** and disciplinary **traditions**

In turn, later interviews with **Danish game scholars** showed
a kind of regionalisation that was perceived as **almost natural**

# Whom We Study: Two Interviewee Examples

Adrian, Danish game scholar – the Nordic countries and naturalised regionalisation

- "Many collaborations" with scholars from other Nordic countries
- "Travels to conferences and workshops and whatnot"
- All this within "the Nordic commuting landscape"

Wojciech, Polish historian – Central and Eastern Europe and constrained regionalisation

- Studies the contemporary history of Eastern Europe, especially Ukraine
- Submits his articles to Polish journals, but also to journals published "abroad, in the East"
- "The new list of journals [released in 2019] has discouraged us entirely from publishing in the East"

(The interviewees' names are pseudonyms. Citations from Wojciech are given in our translation)

# Research Focus

Many higher education scholars have studied **regions** (supranational spaces), such as the EU

M. Lorenzo (2022), “The Study of Regionalism in Higher Education Research”
S. Robertson (2018), “Global Higher Education and Variegated Regionalisms”

Some have studied **regionalisation** (social construction of regions), including **bottom-up regionalisation**

J. Knight (2024), “Higher Education Cooperation at the Regional Level”
M.-H. Chou, J. Huisman, & M. P. Lorenzo (2024), “Regional Cooperation in Higher Education”

Our contribution here concerns **the perspective of individual researchers** involved in bottom-up regionalisation

# Research Focus

→ Regions

→ Regionalisation (intentional or unintentional)

→ Bottom-up regionalisation

→ **RESEARCH FOCUS:** Perspective of individuals involved in bottom-up regionalisation

# Methodology: Comparing Denmark and Poland

Juxtapositional comparison of Danish and Polish regionalisation

Schaffer, F. C. (2021), “Two Ways to Compare”

Similarities between Denmark and Poland, especially in scholarly communication and higher education:

1. Influence of EU regional policy
2. Non-Anglophone languages traditionally used in academia, now challenged by English
3. Political, economic, & scholarly importance in the Nordic region / in Central and Eastern Europe
4. Impact of the German academic system, in particular the Humboldtian tradition
5. Strong regional dimension both in Danish game studies and in Polish historical research

# Methodology: Data from Two Research Projects

Project 1: Source of interviews with Polish historians

- Five-year research project “Evaluation Game in Academia” (PI: Emanuel Kulczycki)
- Funded by the National Science Centre in Poland under grant UMO-2017/26/E/HS2/00019
- 123 interviews (carried out in 2018–2020) with historians, philosophers, economists, and legal scholars
- This study draws from 30 interviews with historians – 15 discussed regional scholarly communication
- The main focus of the interviews was the reforms of the Polish academic system (not regional matters)

Project 2: Source of interviews with Danish game scholars

- Participants employed at various universities and departments in Denmark
- 5 interviews (carried out in 2024–2025 by Stanisław Krawczyk), focus on regional communication

# Methodology: Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Qualitative content analysis with four main codes (we will discuss the first two):

- Orientation toward the centre
- Grassroots practices
- National structures
- Regional aspects of the discipline

# Orientation Toward the Centre

> So I think there's a kind of sort of **silently operating hierarchy**… I mean, the Nordic countries are more or less, you know, **our back garden or our porch** or whatever. It's sort of part of **our broader region** in a sense.

> In terms of what do you need in order to be sort of **truly international:** you have to **transcend not just the borders** [of any particular nation-state]… the US would be the option, not really the Nordic countries… [they're] just **a sort of virtual extension** of the Danish slash Nordic community of universities.

Danish game studies, *Adrian*

# Orientation Toward the Centre

Denmark (Game Studies)

- English language selected for international reach.
- Research environment ‘internationalised’ for decades.
- More comfortable to read/speak in Danish, then English, then – less practice in other Scandinavian languages.

Poland (History)

- English as the policy-preferred language, especially in internationalisation policy.
- Anglophone journals on Central and Eastern Europe are more prestigious.
- Institutional support provided for professional editing for submitting to prestigious English-language journals.

*Why researchers orient themselves towards the centre is motivated by distinct rationales – internal tradition vs. institutional pressures.*

# Grassroots Practices

> My ambition is to publish something in one of **the most prestigious Western journals** that deal with Eastern Europe, so *Slavic Review*… or *The Slavonic and East European Review*.

> The new list of journals has discouraged us entirely from publishing in the East… There is no Ukrainian journal, no Belarusian or Lithuanian ones, maybe with some exceptions… **I am on one editorial board [there], we also have a few friendly [research] centers** [in the East], and they encourage me to write something for them.
> And I have to refuse with regret, or publish there from time to time, but knowing… that **it does not contribute to my academic career in any way.**

Polish history, *Wojciech*

# Grassroots Practices

Denmark (Game Studies)

- "The Backyard Effect" – implicit Nordic collaboration.
- Nordic regionalisation appears as a practical extension of everyday research activity.

Poland (History)

- Regionalisation constructed through Central and Eastern European (CEE) scholarly networks.
- Regionalisation from below is often constrained by top-down institutional (dis)incentives.

*In both cases regionalisation is not acknowledged/perceived as 'real' internationalisation but for different reasons.*

# Conclusion: Two Modes of Regionalisation

| Ideal types<br>(country + discipline) | Polish history:<br>Constrained regionalisation | Danish game studies:<br>Naturalised regionalisation |
|---|---|---|
| Geographic relationships | Policy-driven fragmentation | Historical integration |
| Internationalisation policy | Not supportive of “CEE-oriented” regionalisation | Supportive of “Nordic” regionalisation |
| English-language scholarship | Imposed, sometimes resisted | Voluntary |

# References


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