

SPATIAL PATTERN OF ROMANIA'S UNEVEN TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ioan IANOȘ*

Abstract: The heritage discrepancies, in the transitions countries from the centralized to the market economies, increased very much in the last years. The evolution model of the territorial decays individualizes some specific stages for transition countries: from a chaotic to a transitory politics, then to a deep economic restructuring and, finally, to accentuated discrepancies by differentiated economic growth policies. Key question is connected with the main factors involved in the increasing of the territorial discrepancies. The Romania case study demonstrates that it's about a multi-factors; geographical distance vis-à-vis of the European economic core has an important role in the increasing the discrepancies between West and Eastern part of Europe. Its role increases by overlapping of the heritage mentality in space organizing and preferential location of foreign investments. In Romania, a negative role in the balanced territorial development had the implementation an adequate regional development policy in the first 10 years, dominated by an obvious equal spirit approaching. The policy makers have ignored the importance of the major infrastructure in the territorial development, and not have understood the role of the differentiated capitalization of the European good practices in the local and regional development. For diminishing of the existing tendencies in accentuating of the uneven territorial development some action directions were defined.

Key words: spatial pattern, uneven territorial development, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Romania started promoting a genuine regional policy only after 1998 when a law was promulgated in the field. Therefore, from that date on, the institutional framework was set up for implementing and for developing projects. The achievements were more and more obvious from one stage to another even if they were contradictory sometimes – either due to the egalitarian mentality of the members of the local councils, or to the rather downsized maximal quantum of the projects versus the expected effects. The applications for the PHARE program via this institutional framework, and later on for SAPARD, were as many important experiences for developing an entrepreneurial culture at the level of the small businessmen. Even if reserved at the beginning, they have learned relatively quickly how to use all the opportunities that might appear in a market economy, the offer of unredeemable funds for regional development included.

* University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (C.I.C.A.D.I.T), Regina Elisabeta 4-12, Bucharest, e-mail: office@cicadit.ro

Is there a model of uneven development specific to Romania? We dare say yes: there exists a certain historical inheritance of the regional gaps and of their perpetuation, irrespective of the successive political regimes that kept following one another. Therefore, the attempts to implement policies able to smooth the development territorial differences had good results, although temporal: after the restrictions specific to the respective regimes had been eliminated, the negative effects were even more visible.

The present strategy of Romania's polycentric spatial development, also inspired by the decisions taken at the level of the United Europe, could be defined by concrete, sectorial, or global policies that, if implemented, contribute to the attenuation of the above gaps (Turcanasu and Rusu, 2007). If the new regional policy – an older one as a matter of fact (known from the 1960s and 1970s, but forgotten at the European level) – could be accompanied, or rather preceded by a policy of the major infrastructure development, able to connect the poles by a highway network, the results could be quite remarkable. If not, the attempt might be a failure since the interconnecting capacity of the respective poles and the connecting one with the growth centers ranked according to different levels remain very small.

To diminish the gaps among the country's great regions and inside them, a policy should be approached of producing temporal inequalities in the much lagged-behind spaces and of endorsing poles/centers able to play the role of genuine engines of territorial development (Ianoș and Heller, 2006). Even if the latest evolutions of the country's regions show a relative approach of their development levels, in absolute values they hide deepening gaps.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ROMANIA'S UNEVEN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Even before the First World War obvious differences existed between Romanian urban and rural spaces: the former were characterized by an industrialization process, based on the exploitation of natural resources (mainly oil); the latter, by traditional agricultural activities (Georgescu, 1941). That explains, for instance, the position of the Prahova County versus the other counties in the Old Kingdom.

Following the Great Union (1918) that gathered provinces once belonging to the ex Habsburg Empire (Austro-Hungarian in its last six decades) and to the Tsarist one, the regional gaps were obvious and they kept growing during the economic revitalization of 1934-1940 (Tufescu, 1974).

The centralist-planned society imposed after the Second World War focused the socialist development policies towards territorial egalitarianism, irrespective of costs. That explains the policies of extensive industrial development, in wide deeply rural spaces, the appearance of towns exclusively dependent on a great company, and industrial activities with no natural resources, no traditions, and no infrastructures in the respective spaces to decrease the production prices. The only source was the human one, having mediocre skills for which huge resources had been spent. The territorial system of industrial production worked with a minimum efficiency that lasted no longer than the network of center-directed relationships (Popescu, 2000).

The artificialness of such unsustainable policy was revealed following 1990, when the relatively new created companies in such areas could not adapt to the market economy and started being liquidated. Hence, high unemployment figures; drop in the standard of living; increase of international migration

(mainly after 2000). In comparison with the areas extensively industrialized during communism, in the developed regions, mainly in the central and western Romania, the rules of the market economy had a better impact. Likewise, they have been more attractive for investors; the work force is more stable there; and the unemployment very low.

This brief review of the territorial development major processes leads to the conclusion that spatial projection of the social-economic policies in the last two centuries has got a cyclic evolution of the territorial process development, with attenuation and growth intervals, respectively, of the gaps among Romania's big regions. Synthetically, these evolutions have the following succession:

- a quasi-uniform interval, perturbed by incipient industrialization processes focused on the exploitation of resources, when the Prahova and Hunedoara Counties stood out;
- an interval of uneven development deepened by the different evolution rates of the industrial activities when Bucharest, Transylvania and the Banat stuck out versus Moldavia, Southern Muntenia, Dobrogea, and Oltenia which kept on their rural character;
- an interval of territorial social-economic homogenization, obvious for about the four decades specific to the totalitarian period;
- a period of exacerbated territorial gaps, when the spatial model followed the same opposition between the country's west and east; in comparison with the inter-war period, the territorial actor having the greatest impact at a national level was Bucharest; at a given moment, it focused more than 60 % of the direct foreign investments; that period lasted until 2000 when the effects appeared of a new territorial development policy focused on implementing the regional development policy;
- after 2000, when regional gaps (although still growing) started being transferred to an inter-regional level. Concentrating this policy on the polycentric development process might be a premise in deepening the diffusion process of the spatial development and in diminishing the development differentiations.

FOUR STAGES IN THE RECENT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The evolution of the Romanian economy after 1990 has known contradictory periods and from a multitude of tendencies, the ones leading to a more competitive economy take shape. An analysis of the main economic changes in the latest 18 years has distinguished four main stages with certain characteristics (Ianos, 2007).

a) Stage 1990–1992 singles out by a state of general chaos, determined by lack of the policies and experiences necessary to pass from a super-centralized system to one dominated by market economy. The abrupt interruption of the relationships among enterprises, which were centrally-coordinated, and their "drift" in an unfavorable environment led to a very strong economic decline that was even more emphasized by the new land reform: that de-structured the great land properties and destroyed their infrastructure (irrigation systems, machine and tool bases, live stock infrastructure, etc.) by excessive division of the agricultural land.

Decrease of industrial activities, of the centralized services for companies, of some of the agricultural and commercial state activities led to a phenomenon unknown by the active generations: **unemployment**. Although it existed before as well, it was not visible and had no effects at an individual level. The rate of the

state investments for revamping part of the companies at least decreased rapidly and thus the re-use of the work force at the same level was no longer possible.

The social result of the economic processes was mirrored in the existence of social polarization tendencies. The first Romanian capitalists succeeded then in accumulating capital and in using it later to produce or attract new resources. The decrease of the living standard led to rapid ***extension of the poor class*** despite the relative recovery following the apparent agricultural revitalization.

b) Stage 1993–1996 was characterized by relative economic revival. Political stability started having effects on economy, even if the theories the latter relied on did not mean deep reorganization of the energy consuming industry. However, distribution of the national investment funds was improved. According to the then philosophy, the funds were directed to ***updating some industrial organizations before privatization***. Obviously, the process was supported by reorganization of the state enterprises that received new funds and had their debts waived. The main idea was that, if modernized, the companies were more attractive and the privatization price might have been higher.

Despite all this, the unemployment was huge (12 % at the beginning of the interval, and then about 10 % at a national level), reaching more than 30 % in Moldavia, some areas of Muntenia, Oltenia and Dobrogea. The most affected were the areas extensively industrialized during communism – deeply rural spaces before 1960. Therefore, the social polarization grew deeper: part of the Romanian employers strengthened their economic positions whereas others disappeared (the period was suggestively called “of the cardboard billionaires”).

In 1995 and 1996, the statistics recorded economic growth: it was real, although built on artificial bases, namely the state was strongly involved in restructuring some of the industrial companies. However, the involvement was selective and could not lead to a sustainable development; that was why the political change in 1996 was a good one.

c) Stage 1997–2000 was dominated by deep restructuring of industrial activities. Within a vast process, the unprofitable mining exploitations were closed down. At the same time, industrial production decreased drastically when the state stopped supporting enterprises. Under those conditions, numerous industrialized areas during communism changed their profiles and turned to their rural activities and to services.

At a regional level, the first effects appeared, having direct impact on the long-distance domestic migration. The counties with a dominant mining-metallurgic profile – Hunedoara, Caraș-Severin and even Gorj – changed from attractive to repulsive spaces. The return fluxes of the work force in the counties of origin, mainly in Moldavia and Northern Transylvania, totalized tens of thousands people. They created direct and extremely intense pressure on the agricultural areas they came back to, thus generating family conflicts and leading then to work migration.

Following such processes, based on the reverse philosophy of the previous stage (“*first privatization, then modernization*”), the unemployment rate increased rapidly, having generalization tendencies at high values. At the same time, the inflation approached three figures and had a negative impact on the quality of life, mainly in urban areas. The privatization of the great companies started, in many cases with notable results on the national economy, mainly after 2000.

d) The after-2000 stage is defined by higher economic growth, endorsed by two essential processes: within a 6-year interval Romania was integrated in

the North-Atlantic structures (2001) and in the European Union (2007). Practically, the economic interest for Romania has increased explosively, thus leading to decrease of the unemployment rate to less than 5 %. The unemployment-determined differentiation has diminished between the counties in the west of the country and those in the east due to the international migration of the work force: the counties with the greatest contribution are those in the east of Romania. Consequently, the social pressure has decreased significantly in these counties, and the mirage of better paid working places has generated local crises of the work force in several sectors: building and industry.

The work force crisis has been felt at a national level and national programs have been created to attract the Romanian work force that has left for Italy and Spain (Muntele and Iașu, 2008). The main cause generating such a crisis is the growth of direct foreign investments: rises in salaries have determined a more and more exigent work force in analyzing the offer and selection of a working place.

The effects of the economic leap in 2001–2007 are mirrored by the standard of living and the increase of individual investments in long-term commodities. The reach of the 300-euro target for the average monthly salary in such a short time has led to increase of the consumption capacity, thus entailing an accelerated production directed to domestic consumption.

Spatially, the foreign investments have reached **saturation in the west of Romania** and have started migrating eastward and southward. The great disadvantage is the same lack of adequate infrastructure and delay in implementing the highway national program.

SPATIAL DIMENSION OF UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Despite the effort made to diminish the uneven development, it increases in absolute value. The most relevant indicator to mirror the territorial development levels is the use of GDP/inhabitant. Its value increased in 1994–2005 from \$1,324 to 4,574 at a national level, meaning a quantitative growth with \$3,250 (table 1). 92 % of this growth was recorded after 1999 and the highest values in the analyzed interval were met in Bucharest-Ilfov area, followed by the West and Center Regions. At the same time, North-East Region comes constantly the last.

Regional GDP variation by inhabitant (\$ US)

Table 1

Region	1994	1999	2005
North-East	1,130	1,172	3,128
South-East	1,276	1,470	3,991
South	1,266	1,321	3,744
South-West	1,246	1,423	3,590
West	1,398	1,830	5,135
North-West	1,326	1,522	4,341
Centre	1,383	1,695	4,700
Bucharest-Ilfov	1,729	2,706	9,722
Romania	1,324	1,585	4,574

Source: Computed data using the “National Report on Human Development”, PNUD, 1996, and “Romanian Statistical Yearbook”, 2007

Theoretically, starting with 1999, the effects should have appeared of implementing regional development policy. However, analysis of the statistical data shows that the effects were reverse: against the general background of

economic growth, GDP/inhabitant increases with a slightly higher rate in the developed regions than in the poor ones. With the exception of the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, with a much better infrastructure and a very high attractive potential, the comparative analysis considered the ratio between the yearly average growth rate recorded in the West and North-West Regions and the differences in absolute value. On the one hand, the average growth rate should have been higher in a poorer region, but that is not the case (North-East Region records a yearly rate of about 44.0 % whereas in the West Region it is almost 47.0 %). On the other hand, in 2005, a West-Region inhabitant versus a North-East-Region one was due \$2,007 more than in 1999, when the difference had been \$268 only. Or, in other words, by implementing regional development policy, the West-Region inhabitant was \$1,749 “richer” (the different starting level in 1999 was considered).

Likewise, the contribution of the economic sectors to GDP was different between Romania’s rich and poor regions (table 2). The general trend is a decrease in the weight of the primary sector to GDP and a gradual increase of the tertiary one. In all the cases, the tertiary sector increased significantly in the interval 1995-1999 in comparison with the years to come, until 2005. In the richest regions (Bucharest and West), the secondary sector had a constant decreasing trend whereas in the others it regularly decreased in 1995-1999, but increased after that – meaning that the industrial activities were resumed after 2000 when foreign investments increased spectacularly.

Contribution of the main economic sectors in the GDP structure (1995–2005)

Table 2

Year	Economic Sector	Country Total	Region							
			NE	SE	S	SW	W	NW	Centre	B
1995	Primary	19.8	25.5	20.4	24.0	23.4	21.9	23.0	20.4	2.5
	Second.	39.5	36.3	39.1	42.3	41.7	37.4	35.7	41.9	40.0
	Tertiary	40.7	38.2	40.5	33.7	34.9	40.7	41.3	37.7	57.5
1999	Primary	13.3	19.2	17.1	18.4	17.1	13.0	14.5	12.0	1.2
	Second.	29.8	27.0	28.0	30.4	33.1	32.3	26.3	34.0	28.6
	Tertiary	56.9	53.8	54.9	51.2	49.8	54.7	59.2	52.0	70.2
2005	Primary	8.4	12.9	11.1	11.2	11.1	11.1	9.2	10.1	8.7
	Second.	31.0	28.0	30.8	35.6	35.6	31.8	29.9	35.3	26.4
	Tertiary	60.6	59.4	58.1	53.2	53.3	59.0	60.0	56.0	73.0

Source: Computed data using “*Romanian Statistical Yearbook*”, 2005

In comparison with the regional discrepancies, the county ones are more obvious and reveal differentiations that could not be grasped in the regional analysis. The row of GDP/inhabitant values at this level shows that Bucharest exceeded \$10,000, being followed by the Timiș and Constanța Counties with more than \$6,000 and the Cluj, Arad, Sibiu, Brașov and Argeș Counties with more than \$5,000/inhabitant. The last positions, with GDP/inhabitant less than \$3,000 were mainly held by the counties in Moldova (Botoșani and Vaslui) and in the south of Muntenia (Călărași, Giurgiu, Teleorman, and Ilt).

The differentiated development of the counties in the interval 1994–2005 led to a change in their ranks in line with the position occupied in the national hierarchy, according to the value of the GDP/inhabitant (fig. 1). There is a strong stability in the hierarchy lower segment versus the median one where very important changes take place (for instance, Tulcea and Ialomița counties, which win 16 and 12 positions, respectively; the opposite pole is occupied by such

counties as Hunedoara, Dâmbovița, Buzău and Gorj) which lose 10 and 8 positions, respectively).

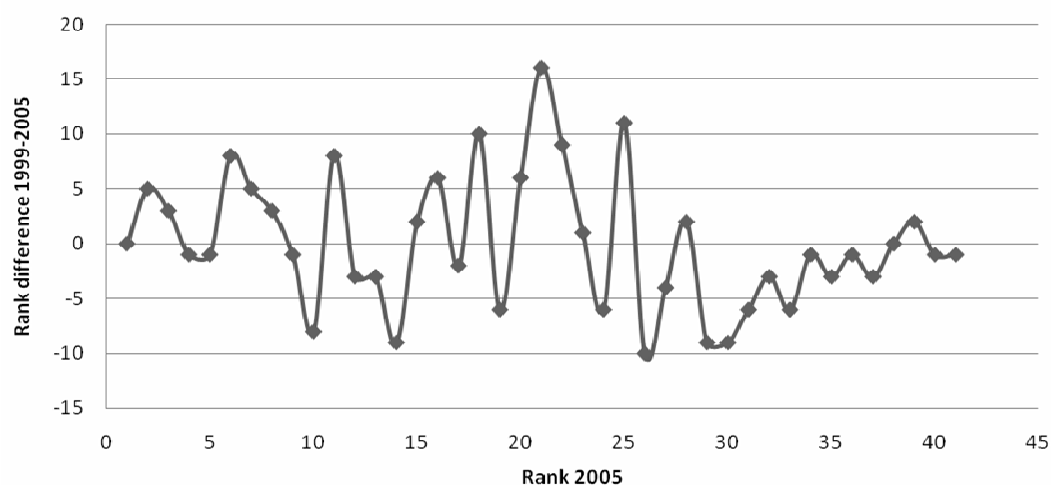


Fig. 1. Rank variation of the counties by GDP/inhabitant (1999-2005)

Comparative analysis of the maps showing GDP/inhabitant distribution in 1994 and 2005 reveals a very clear regionalization of the poor counties in the east and south of Romania. The dispersed areas in 1994 (fig. 2a) became more compact and extensive in the two regions of Romania (fig. 2b), thus demonstrating the need of adopting specific regional policies. In the east of the country, a polycentric regional policy could reach noteworthy results by turning to good account the complementariness of the regional resources and the favorable geographical position of certain growth poles having varied ranks: Bacău, Suceava, Piatra Neamț or even Botoșani, Vaslui, Roman, or Bârlad. In the territorial development policy specific to the south of Romania, Bucharest could be the engine that has not harnessed yet the diffusion potential of its spatial development. Only by shaping the metropolitan zone along with defining and implementing a medium- and long-term development policy, the territorial energies can be coupled to reach the target: increase of the standard living in this space.

If the analysis is continued at a communal level, taking regional averages as reference, deeply disadvantaged areas are individualized at the national level. These spaces gather at least three communes where the global development index shows values less than one third of its average at the level of each region. Therefore, the deeply disadvantaged areas individualized at the country level are only comparable among them at the level of the respective region (due to the change of the reference basis). At a national level, each development region is found to include such areas that are mainly concentrated in the spaces suffering deep restructuring processes (West Region – Valea Jiului, Hunedoara, and the Banat Mountains); in rural spaces (North-East Region – Tutova Hills, Jijia Plain; South Region – Plain at the south of the Bucharest parallel; North-West Region – Sălaj, Transylvania Plain); and in the dominant mountainous spaces (Center Region – Apuseni Mountains, some areas in the Southern Carpathians), etc.

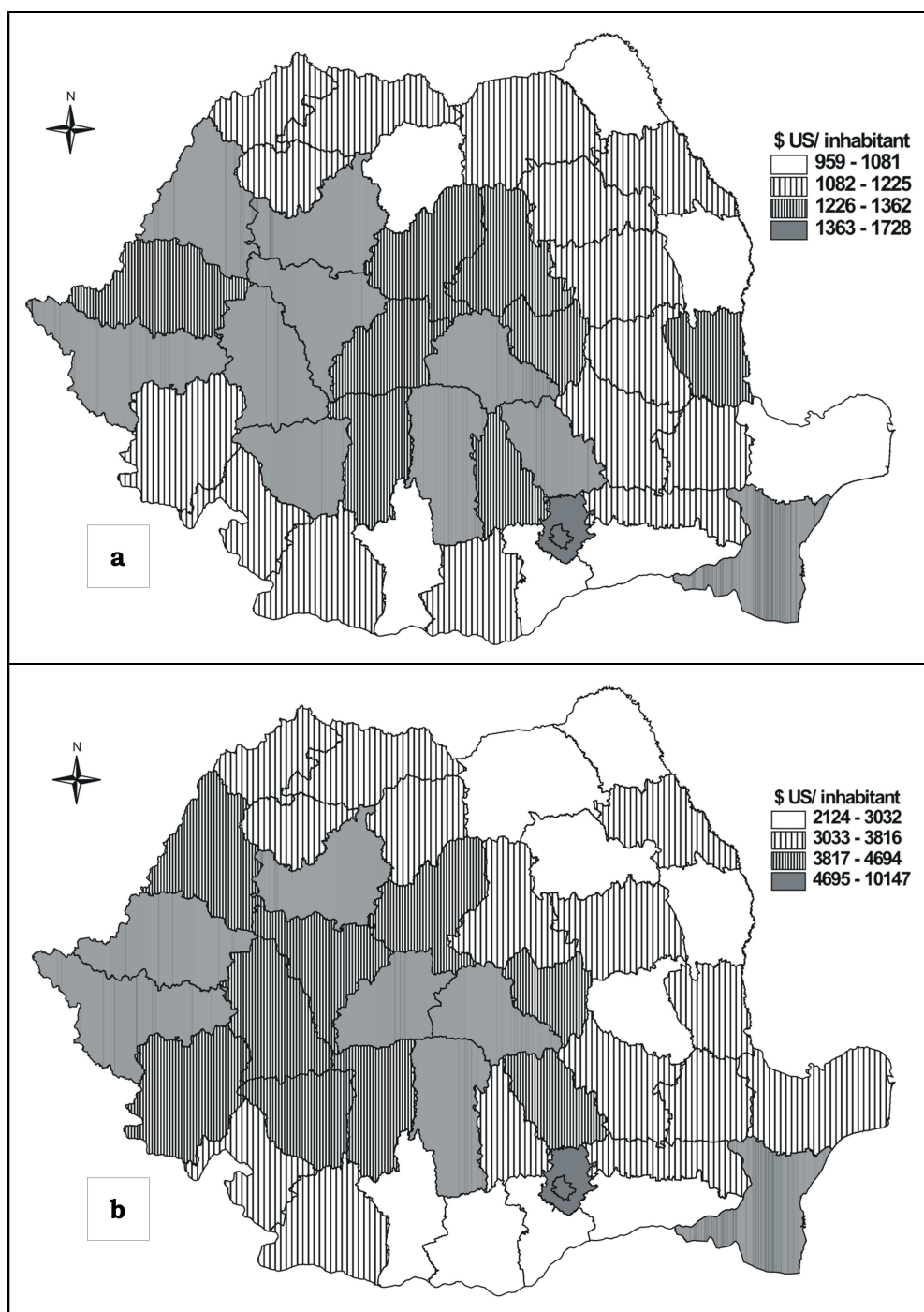


Fig. 2. Distribution of the GDP/inhabitant by counties, 1994 (a) and 2005 (b)

A zoom in the North-East Region shows that more than half of it is very poorly developed, with deeply disadvantaged areas (Fig. 3). The economic situation, much weaker than in the other regions, is even worse because of the

ex-socialist industrial companies that were shut down and because of the exaggerated division of the farm land. The infrastructure is precarious and the development diffusion from other growth poles is highly improbable since those poles themselves are still deficient (Ungureanu et al., 2002).

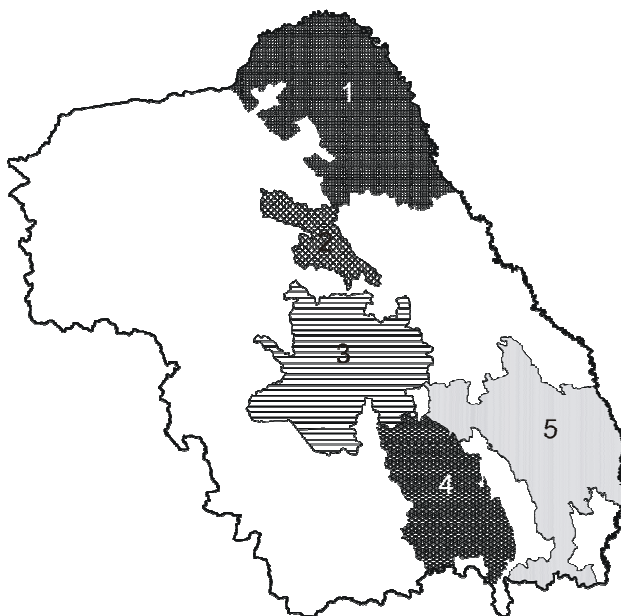


Fig. 3. Territorial distribution of the most disadvantaged areas in the North-East Region
1 – Botosani area, 2 – Harlau area, 3 - Central Moldavian Plateau, 4 – Tutova Hills, 5 – Negresti-Murgeni area

Obviously, under such circumstances, the border between the North-East Region, as Romania's eastern boundary, and the districts in the Republic of Moldova cannot be a development factor. Punctually, it is only Iași that could be a growth pole for the space at the east of the Prut River, but only when it has strengthened its position by cooperation and development of the deeply disadvantaged areas surrounding it. However, for the time being the turn of that border into the European Union eastern border drops to minimum the possibility of profitable trans-border cooperation able to take advantage of what the two neighboring countries can offer.

IS THE DISTANCE FROM THE WESTERN EUROPE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GAP BETWEEN ROMANIA'S WEST AND EAST?

All the studies made on the regional development at the level of Romania emphasize the gap between the country's west and east. The phenomenon is not specific to Romania only and it can be found in other countries in the Central-Western Europe as well (Ianoș, 1998). The reality can be simply proved by drawing up a hypothetical profile of the variation in the development level versus distance, on a W-E direction, from Austria to the Republic of Moldova: in all the countries intersected, the west is more developed than the east (Fig. 4). The situation is similar if the profile is moved northward: the western regions of Germany, Poland, and Belarus are more developed than the eastern ones.

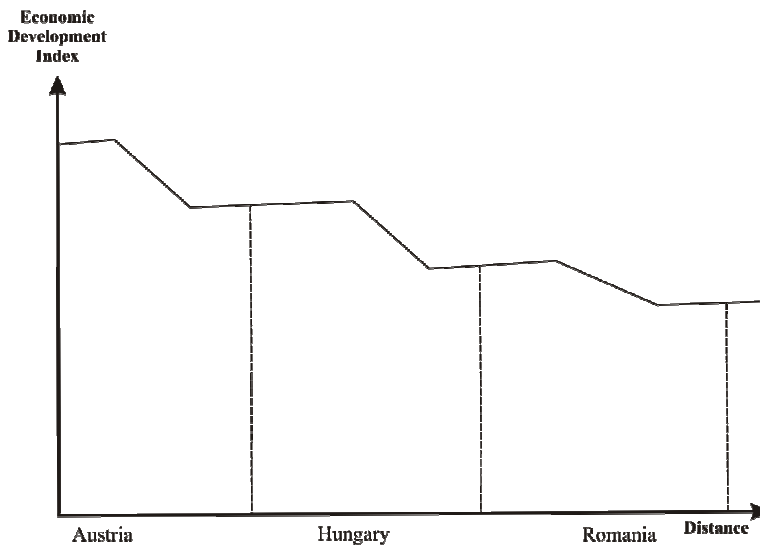


Fig. 4. A profile of the economic development gradient by some central and Eastern Europe countries

The main perturbations of the model are determined by the capital cities – genuine territorial anomalies by: the concentration level of resources, population, and economic activities. It happens in Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, and even Chisinau; in Berlin, Warsaw, and Minsk, respectively. In the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the situation seems somehow reversed, related to the above profile. An analysis of the statistical data, and not only, shows that the East seems more developed, leading thus to the idea that the great power European centers exert their influences: on the one hand, Western Europe, and on the other, Moscow. They both generate “development”, obviously of different types.

Under such conditions, the development level seems to propagate from the west of the continent to its eastern regions; its intensity decreases with distance; and at a national level, the western regions are more favored, since they are closer to the great economic and political centers at a continental scale. Has distance remained a determining factor in the national-level differentiation? Or is it just an overlapping of historical development processes in which the distance plays its well-delimited role, as well!

The differentiation processes caused by the **individual historical past** are also met with the countries situated at the present EU eastern border. Thus, the western parts of both Romania and Poland belonged to empires or states having a much higher level of economic development. In opposition, their eastern regions were occupied or strongly influenced by empires that left them without resources and that did not invest/encourage them almost at all in their development. However, the same gaps can be met in other states that had a special position or were integrant part in the rule of the great empires. For instance, Hungary, a co-partner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire has the same gap between its western and eastern regions. A similar case is met in Germany, even if its eastern part was occupied or directly influenced by the ex-USSR for 45 years and experienced a different structure and development rhythm.

In Romania, besides the differentiated inheritance, present both in economy and mentality, the distance, after 1990 at least, played an important part. Because of the precarious road infrastructure, the big problems in the telecommunication system, low capacity of the air transport and infrastructure of the airports, the distance from the western border, with Hungary respectively, has become essential. From Arad, Oradea or Timișoara, Vienna can be reached in five hours, whereas Bucharest, at an almost similar distance, in 12 hours. The locations of the foreign companies at a national level emphasize once more how important the accessibility to Western Europe or to the maritime transportation routes is (namely, Constanța with the same evolution) (Guran-Nica, 2001).

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE FOR DIMINISHING THE UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT TENDENCIES?

Therefore, despite the implementation of a regional development policy, the discrepancies among Romania's regions and counties have actually increased in ten years. Following accelerated economic growth, the unemployment rate has decreased and some regions have an important deficit of work force, a fact also determined by the high rate of the work trips abroad that have practically exhausted local and even regional resources.

The main contributors to the international work migrations are the poorest regions and, within them, the deeply disadvantaged areas. That is the reason why even if the foreign investments tend to extend eastward, the **quantity and quality of the labor resources** are seriously questionable. However, mention should be made that the work force migration is not equal in all the sectors; it has affected mainly professional and skilled work, thus diminishing the attractiveness of old and low-trained spaces.

Thus, who is responsible for this situation? Although hard to individualize, a plausible answer can only be found if several aspects are considered. First, although implemented for ten years, the regional development policy was *not adequate for the territorial realities*. Therefore, the way of allotting funds within the PHARE and SAPARD programs, together with the contributions paid by the Romanian Government might have been a big mistake. A fixed maximal value of about € 60,000 for each project (so that a greater number of entrepreneurs could benefit!!!) resulted in the dissipation of funds with no multiplying effects at a regional level. Such sums of money only increased the entrepreneurs' small properties and more often than not they turned into strictly individual incomes. The local effects were insignificant, to say nothing of the long "expected" regional effects.

The second great mistake: *the role of major infrastructure in diminishing regional gaps was neglected*. The investments directed to the so-called updating and rehabilitation of the national roads could not substitute the effects the implementation of a development policy of the national highway network could have had on the territorial development. Unfortunately, in one way or another, all the governments in function after 1996 promoted an "anti-highway" policy thus suffocating the national economy; the development was concentrated punctually, with no real chance of territorial dissipation. The narrow vision of correlating the need for highway building with a certain level of the intensity of fluxes, at a given moment, has extremely harmful effects because it does not anticipate development. Or it was exactly the strategic vision that the officials

lacked in relation to the major infrastructure. The same thing happened with the revamping program of the railway (high-speed trains), air and fluvial-maritime infrastructures.

Thirdly, a possible explanation could be the *great difference between the ways in which the development regions* (through the Regional Councils of Regional Development) *capitalized the good European practices*. Owing to the persistence of old mentalities in those councils – “equitable distribution of projects per counties” irrespective of their quality – the money allotted by EU and by the Romanian Government were spent on irrelevant projects for the territorial development. A concrete dialogue at a European level and a better involvement of the experienced professionals with good ideas and vision on territorial development would have had better effects on the outcomes.

Fourthly, *the geographical distance from the European developed countries*, under the conditions of an extremely poor infrastructure, may have increased the gap between Romania’s western and southern or eastern regions.

Several directions of action should be followed to diminish the territorial inequalities growing even more deeply:

- defining and improving the present regional development strategies and achieving spatial social-economic cohesion;
- increasing the officials’ responsibility for the targeted use of the existing funds allotted through spatial cohesion programs, financed by EU or by the Romanian Government;
- adapting the present legislation in the field of regional development and correlating it with the European one. Also, Romania’s characteristics in the field of regional development should be taken into account in the essence of legislative papers so that they could be a real support in the territorial development process;
- developing and implementing the new and old spatial cohesion concepts on the theory of poles and growing centers, on the network- or cluster-type-development;
- involving specialists in drawing up territorial strategies and policies; monitoring the implementation process;
- identifying the best locations in implementing local and regional investments so that the amplified effects could really diminish the uneven development process;
- learning from the mistakes made by the developed countries in the territorial development process.

Enumerating some of the actions connected with a better implementation of local and regional development process can rectify the so-called taboo procedures and achieve a performing territorial management.

CONCLUSIONS

Practically, Romania does not have a management model of uneven development. The discussion on drawing up the national strategy of spatial development has reached its final stage, but it has engaged only a part of the specialists involved in territorial analysis and management.

The main way for reducing territorial discrepancies seems to be a polycentric development. We expressed this idea publicly when Romania’s regional development policy was being defined, but it was marginalized. Today, when Europe promotes such an idea, it has been embraced with no comments.

However, Romania could have had good results up to now if the concept of polycentric spatial development had been implemented as far back as mid 1990s.

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