

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL BASED ON TERRITORIAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE. THE CASE OF ROMANIAN “ȚARA”/LANDS

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Abstract: Globalization and local territorial identity are two concepts placed in opposite "hemispheres", but the political social, economical and cultural reality shows close links between them. The need to identify a course for the territorial development which should be anchored in the two contradictory processes represents the success key to the contests in which the territories compete. In this context, the present study focuses on the issue of sustainable local development of the "țara" (land) type territories in Romania, by following a development model that should properly capitalize the identity feature of these rural areas. The working plan consists of three subpoints: the conceptualization of the territorial identity, the territorial identity capitalized in the local development process and the perspectives of shaping the local development based on the local identity distinctiveness. The conclusion is that, by being placed into a coherent process of local development, by appealing to "smart" types of territorial management tools, the distinctiveness of the "țara" type territories can be sustainably capitalized. The identity and local heritage represent central elements around which one must rethink their development and the community should reconfigure its relation with the territory.

Key words: territorial identity, heritage, local development model, "țara" type areas

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THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE TERRITORIAL IDENTITY

In the present context of the "economic crisis", the territorial identity is more and more debated, being placed at the junction between the processes of

regional development with the local ones. The search of alternatives to already existing models of development has triggered the working-out of development strategies differentiated depending on the territory potential, particularly based on the factors which can play a major part in achieving the goals of economic growth and territorial development. The territorial identity is more and more revealing itself as one of those major factors which re-shape the future development of a territory. Thus, this particular identity represented by the joint union of relations, norms and assets, constitutes itself as a "mirror" of the mental representation of the territorial collectivity, by "showing" both the development potential of that particular territory at a specific moment in its history, and its influence on the future behaviour of this collectivity regarding the regional development due to the "perceived" image (Pageon, 1990).

The region individualization, both through physical and human features, triggers the identity of the territorial entity represented by places and people. In this respect, Poche studied the local by starting from the social rendering of the space (Poche, 1978), which have a continuous innovation and transformation capacity determined by the collectivity. Thus, through this particular approach, the territory is considered as a process related with the "exterior", the relation system that a collectivity is maintaining with the exterior, thus forming its "territoriality". The space features form themselves within the production of various territories by the action of the human component which finally gives a certain identity to it (Pelegriano, 1982). For the community, the places where it spends its life will turn into territories of belonging, mental spaces. The sense of affiliation to a space is doubled by its positioning with regard to other spaces. In this context, Pelegriano had identified the "space of reference" which, in fact, represents the space of positive or negative shaping, of capitalization and de-capitalization of the space of belonging. The appetite for local identity also lies in the need for territoriality whose reasons are found in the sense of de-possession, respectively between the fight for identity and power (Barel, 1984). Thus, the region is a cut-out from the territory which is particularly disturbed by the contemporary transformations, represented by the constant movements of de-territorialization and re-territorialization. Michael Bassand and Silvio Guindani (1982) demonstrate that region is the result of a living process, an identity system subjected to various external pressures, where contradictory fights are born and ways which allow the preservation of the local "culture" as a tool of selfdevelopment. This represents the result of the impossibility to intervene on the global society, the social groups turning towards a search of identity, respectively a new territoriality, less subjected to national factors as opposed to local ones. In this respect, Bassand and Guindani consider identity as being "...an image created by regional actors" (Bassand and Guindani, 1982, p.11), and found at the junction between individual and group. Evidently, this construction is not the exclusive result of the internal social processes, of the social structures specific to a region, but also of the perceptions of the external groups which differ depending on the already existing relations among themselves, respectively dominance and dependancy. The regional identity, most of the times, appears as a defensive form, manifesting itself through an economic, social, political and cultural resistance and fight. This resistance, due to some projects and viable strategies, can induce a certain autonomy, the identity thus becoming offensive (figure 1).

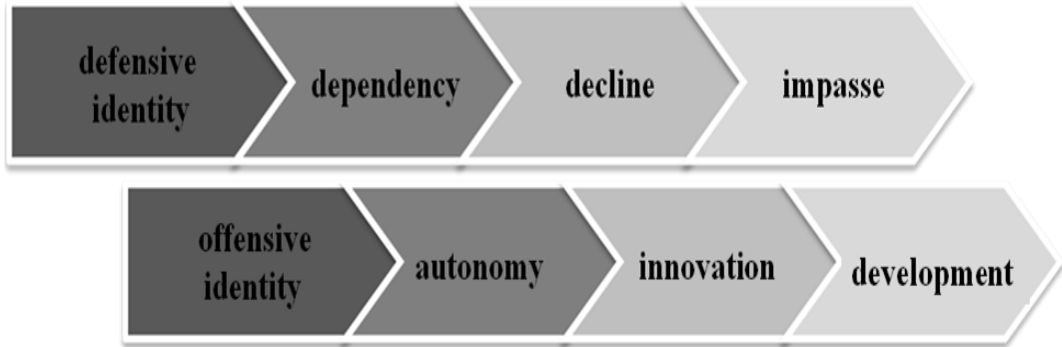


Figure 1. The identity evolution
(Source: Bassand and Guindani, 1982)

The autonomy, seen as a development exclusively based on local resources, cannot be obtained without an offensive identity, necessary to the boosting of the localities and regions in their process of adaptation and innovation. Thus, according to Bassand and Guindani, there cannot be a local or « endogenous » microregional development without an identity supported by an autonomy (Bassand and Guindani, 1982). The regional and local identity can be partially analyzed through collectivity representations, respectively through its imprint on the territory. The collective representations are necessary to the analysis of the local identity, thus representing the most important aspect. The population itself re-writes its identity in the spaces where it operates "valuable activities", significant to it (Rambaud, 1983a). The space representation, thus plays an important part in the affirmation of the identity of a regional and local territorial collectivity. Space and group representations, spatiality represent factors of unity and identity for the local collectivities (Rambaud, 1983a) and, also, factors of dispersion and alteration, the identity spaces equally building themselves through their difference from "others". The comparison with others represents a decisive feature of the identity, especially in its spatial delimitation. This identity is modifying in time, is evolving, by implying an ability to change and innovate due to its relations with the exterior.

THE TERRITORIAL IDENTITY CAPITALIZED IN THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In the local development process, the territorial identity defined as a modern, comunitary form of cultural, symbolic co-similitude, shared by a group of people who live on a particular territory and who organize themselves in order to defend the spiritual-identity assets they share (Flora, 2011), plays an increasing important part. Defining the territorial identity in this interpretation cannot be seen apart from the actions of the groups which act for the placement of the local resources into a heritage.

Bernard Pecqueur (2002, 2007) highlights the importance of the resources in the local development by giving it extra features, thus defining the notion of territorial resource. The very notion as envisioned by Pecqueur comprises both generic classical material resources and the humans and their activities, respectively the relations that define them as specific resources, material and immaterial (Pecqueur, 2007). These resources, either material or immaterial, latent or potential, can be capitalized through projects. The

territories exist due to the projects designed through the involvement of the resources (Lajarge and Roux, 2007).

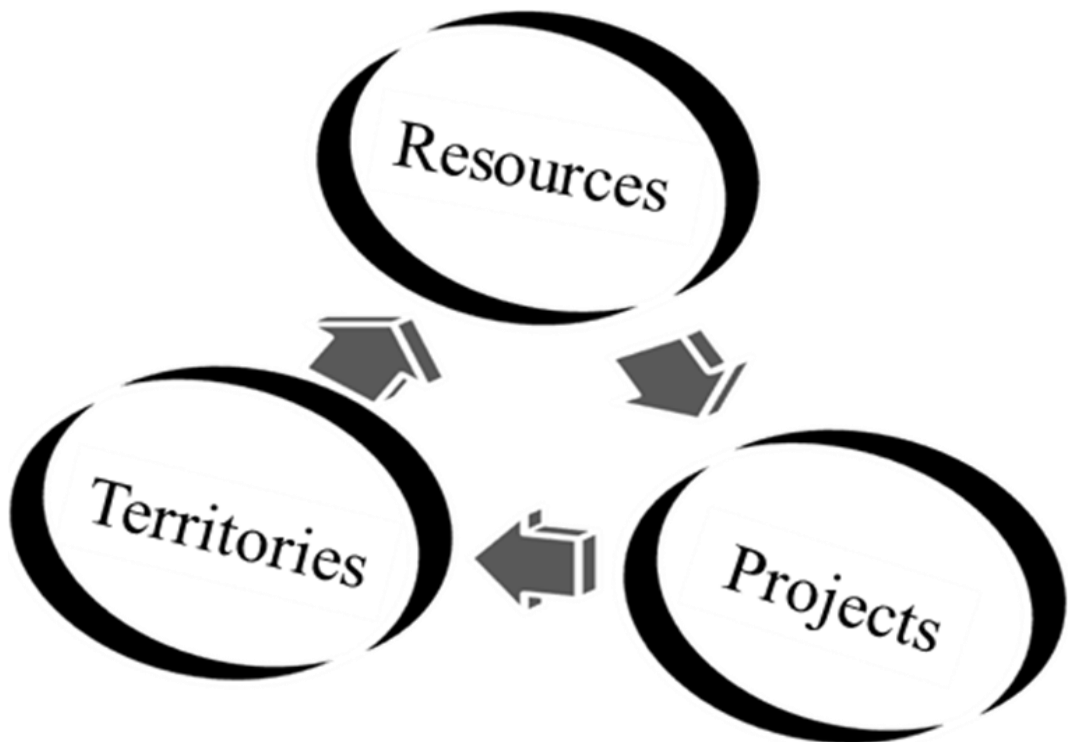


Figure 2. The virtuous circle. Resource/Project/Territory
(Source: Lajarge and Roux, 2007)

Within the territorial resources, the heritage plays an important part, being supported by the assets that it generates: economical, aesthetic, artistic, historical, cognitive and social (Greffé, 1990). The process of heritage formation can be thus decomposed into five stages, prone to generate various types of activities:

- the (re)discovery of the heritage, implies the highlighting of some objects, places savoir-faire, customs etc. In this stage starts the selection of the assets representative of the heritage;
- the certification of the heritage when, based on observations and agreement, the selected assets are replaced into a historical background;
- the preservation and restoration of the heritage;
- the display of the heritage, when it becomes public, being shown for the discovery and understanding of the large audience;
- the capitalization of the heritage is the maturity stage when heritage as resource is capitalized, both as a landmark, and as an activity-generating resource (Landel, 2007). In this sense, heritage was considered a common asset that helps communities to live on (Chevallier, 2002). The capitalization of these ideas in order to develop future innovative activities (Pecqueur, 2002) where heritage is a territorial resource, can be carried out only if one fulfills two terms: the association of the heritage with other products and a territorial management favorable to its capitalization

(Landel, 2007). Thus, the heritage becomes the support for territorial networks (table 1).

Table 1. The process of heritage integration into territorial construction
(Source: Landel, 2007)

Heritage as "territorial resource"	Heritage as "territorial landmark"	Heritage as "activity generator"	Heritage as "support for the network of actors"
Heritage (re)discovery	Research Documentation	Identification of the actors and projects which can support heritage capitalization	Identification of common heritage objects within territory or with other territories
Heritage attestation	Inventory Classification Labeling	Project placement in an intercession "coherent" for the territory	Inventory, studies, placement in a network, exchanges
Protection Restoration	Restoration Recomposition	Preservation chart, creation of craftsmen, insertion	Exchange of savoir-faire, formation, restoration project sites
Exhibition (Re)Interpretation	Symbolic tags, development of activities for locals	Exhibitions and museums, tourist activities development	Tourist circuits and theme routes, itinerant exhibitions
Heritage capitalization	Accommodation, services, development of cultural activities based on heritage: festivals, holidays	Accommodation, restaurants, tourist products, rentals, sales	Development of products in network: group tickets, sales of sojourns, capitalization of territorial products

The same authors identify three possible interpretations of the term of heritage: assessing (it implies the assessment of the economical value of the heritage through an analysis of the relation between the economical development of a territory and the heritage mobilization); institutional (heritage is no longer seen as a collection of objects, but as a social relation, thus being a combination between "to be" and "to own"); territorial (heritage is seen as an engine for territorial construction) (Landel and Senil, 2009).

In conclusion, the terms of local identity and heritage can be re-interpreted from the perspective of their transformation into resources for a sustainable local development and construction (Pecqueur, 2002, 2007; Landel, 2006; François et al., 2006; Landel și Senil, 2009). Their part in the territorial development lies in quality and innovation, as engine necessary to competitiveness in the context of generalized competition between territories: "linked to other elements, heritage gives them specific features which turns them into territorial resources [...] territorial innovation often targets new ways of articulation between actors of very different origins around the use and construction of these resources. Thus, by being part of the territorial dynamic, heritage has acquired a new status and force. In its turn, it lies at the foundation of territorial righthfulness" (Landel and Senil, 2009, p.2).

The model of endogenous development suggested by Tolón-Becerra and Lastra-Bravo (2009) suggests a balanced approach, which integrates information, indicators and over local strategies, on the other hand. Local collaboration, local partnerships and initiatives of local development mean opportunities which, through capitalization, give the territory a high degree of competitiveness in comparison with other territories. The commitment of the local community in the design of its own development creates a solidly anchored system in the local potential, which also capitalizes external opportunities.

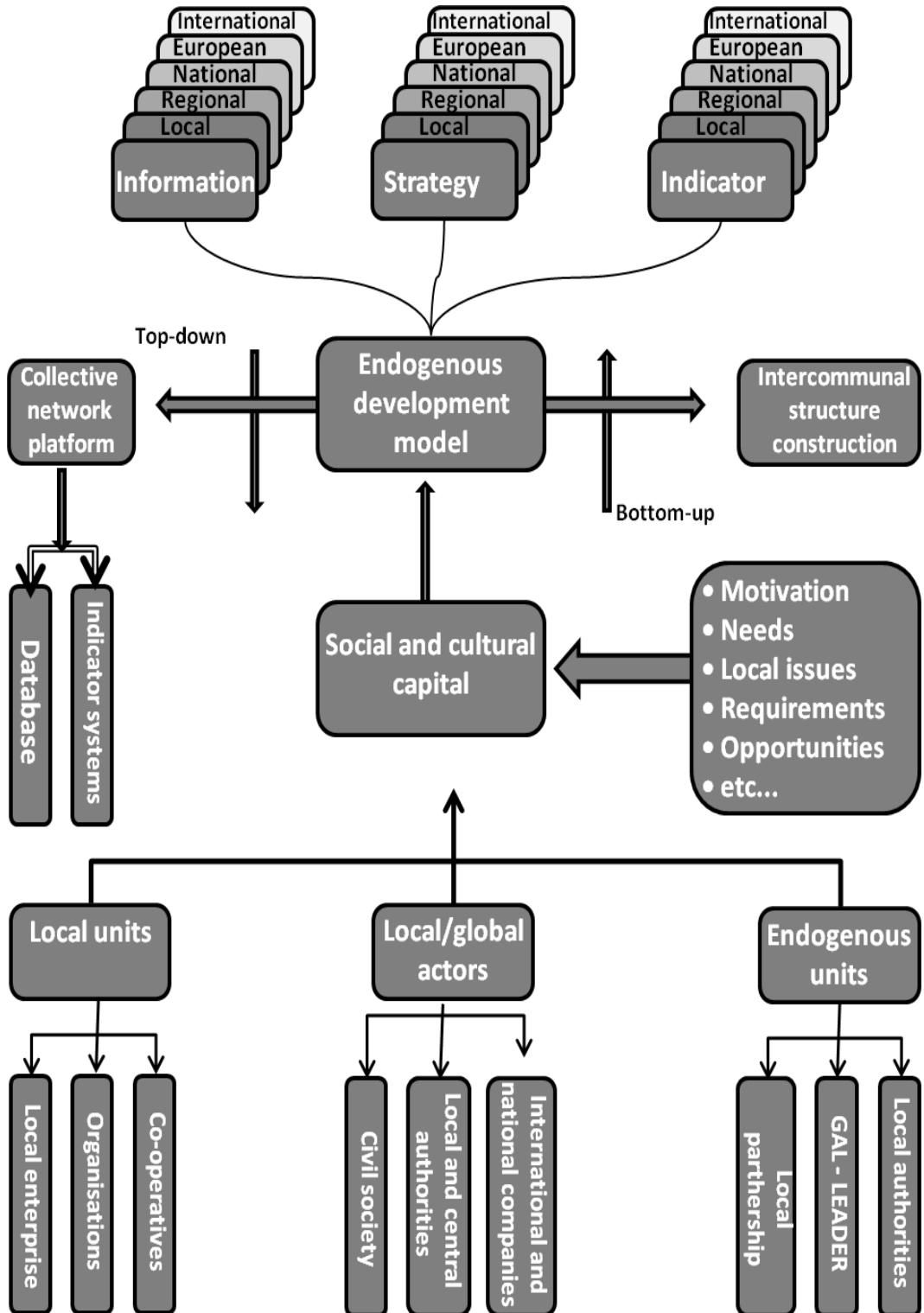


Figure 3. Endogenous development model
(Source: Tolón-Becerra and Lastra-Bravo, 2009)

THE PERSPECTIVE OF SHAPING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TERRITORIAL IDENTITY

In the context of globalization and competitiveness, seen as a goal for territorial development, numerous rural areas have become obsolete, not being able to compete with "the global cities". After a period of decline and search of alternatives appropriate for these areas, solutions seem to come from the field of local development, being more and more visible the initiatives directed towards an integrated local development, seen through a neo-endogenous perspective.

The concept of endogenous development is positioned in the middle of the global-local model where the social and cultural capital are considered the main forces of the development of a territory (Cabus and Vanhaverbeke, 2003). The proper capitalization of the local resources and of identity landmarks act as a trigger for the mechanism of economical development and creates a favorable circumstance for the development of a local productive system (Pecqueur, 2002). The local positive results, coming from experimental initiatives can be seen as examples and capitalized in the real local development. This perspective can be best capitalized through the exploration of the interface between top-down (exogenous) and bottom-up (endogenous) processes (Ray, 2003). The local communities can be easily involved in this process due to a closely linked economy – local feature and, especially, due to an easy adaptability to the opportunities offered by the territory, which, are already capitalized, at an individual level. The understanding of the importance of collaboration and part-taking in the process of local development implies a local action targeted towards the capitalization of local potential within a more complex framework and, yet, around common objectives. The importance of a collaboration between local actors is rounded by the necessity to assume a long-term commitment. The capitalization of the local identity distinctiveness must be performed within a regional context which should comprise the directions, on a superior level, and define the pillars around which the development should be built.

The adjustment of the local policies to the superior territorial directives and the preservation of the local uniqueness represent for the "țara" type areas, at the same time, an alternative development opportunity and a challenge. The 18 "țara" type areas in Romania have a series of common features which place them on top of the areas with endogenous potential of development. Their common features are: the historical value in the local old autonomies from the Middle Ages (Cocean, David, 2013), the morphology of intra- or peri-Carpathian depressions, the ethnic and confessional unity, the deeply rural characteristic, the archaic accents of the everyday life and a living authentic folk culture (Filimon, 2012). To these features we should add the quality of mental spaces sequentially expressed through unity, behavioural solidarity, the sense of affiliation to collectivity and living area, born, in time, from the relations formed between man and his living area, all these contributing to the achievement of an evident regional coherence. This regional coherence has set the "țara" type areas as elemental functional cells of the Romanian space, the best keepers of the national authentic identity distinctiveness. Thus, a benefit singles out through the comparison of the "țara" type areas with others, which is totally uncanceled, in a Europe of globalization and unification, whose development goal is the social, economical and territorial cohesion from which these spaces benefit (Cocean, Filimon, 2012).

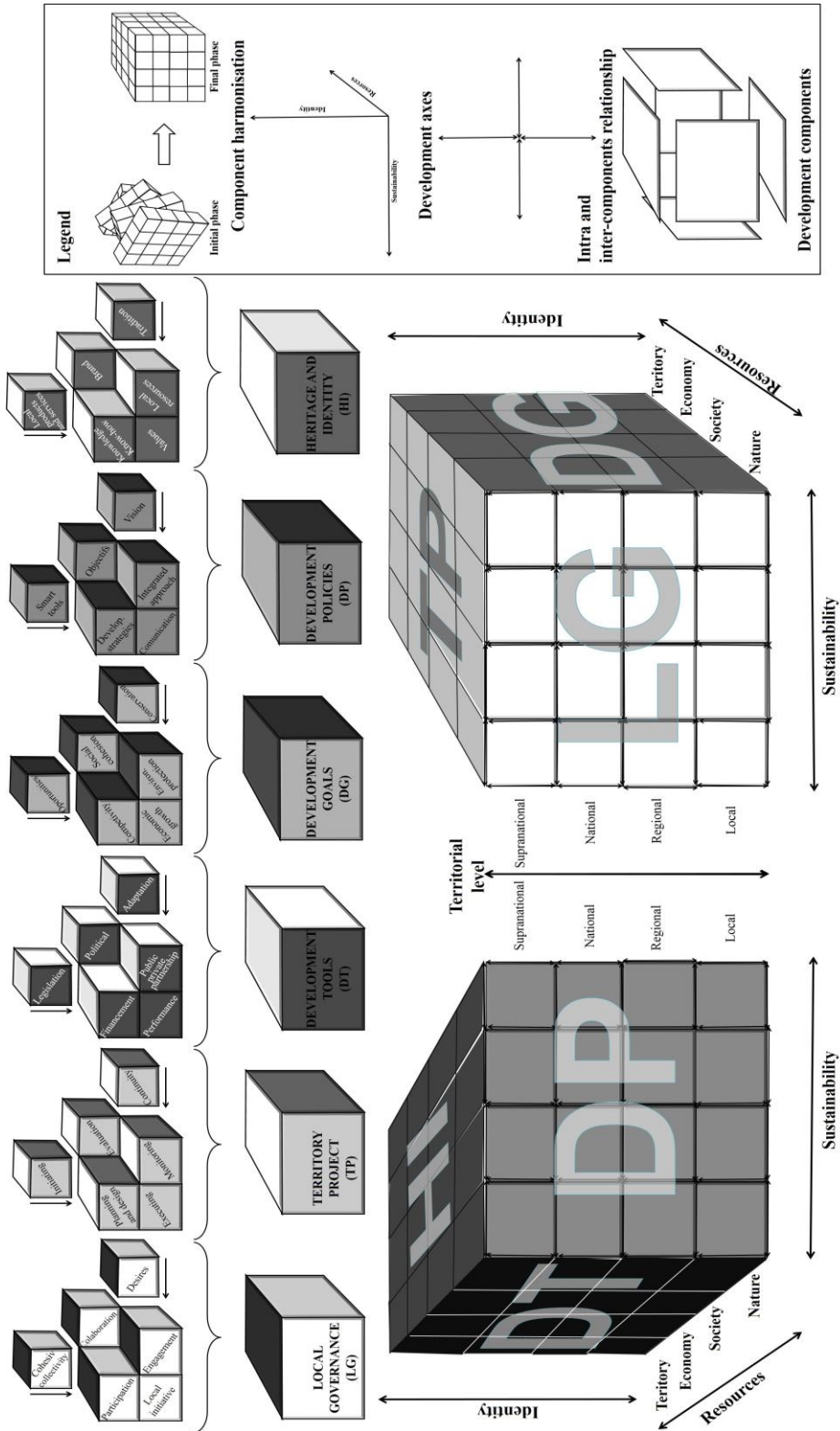


Figure 4. Local development model based on territorial identity and heritage

In the context of an increasing development which can be reduced to competition, the only thing able to ensure the existence and continuity of the "lands" is their deep originality and the heritage features which have become an important source able to ensure, through a rational, proper and inspired exploitation, the progress of the local communities which identify themselves with the respective territory (Cocean, 2012). Starting from these realities, we consider that the "țara" type areas in Romania represent a certain potential of turning into "project territories". The project territory (Landel, 2006, Landel and Senil, 2009) fit to their needs "builds" itself around a model of local sustainable development based on identity and heritage.

Thus, for the sustainable local development of the "țara" type areas (and of other rural authentic spaces, with a good territorial coherence and with innovative elements and local distinctiveness), we propose *the local development model based on territorial identity and heritage* (fig. 4). We think that identity and heritage represent exactly "the dowry" of the "land" type areas, with aspects that are slightly different from a territory to another. This particular model has to focus on the neo-endogenous type of development, based on the local distinctiveness, where the decisional factors and communities must collaborate for the development and the joint promotion of their living space.

The pillars which support the model of sustainable local development, based on identity and heritage, are four, being represented by: *the development goals, development policies, development tools, territory project, territorial identity and heritage, respectively the governance*. They are the general parameters which express themselves differently on the territorial level, depending on the local distinctiveness. On a higher level, the development goals are represented by the economical growth and territorial cohesion. Evidently, depending on the territorial distinctiveness, they can decline as lower rank goals (preservation, environment protection etc.). The development policies are represented by the discovery, for each particular "țara", of the opportunities and the most "adequate" formula in the dosage of the bottom-up and top-down directions. Moreover, are important the tools which accompany these policies. The development tools (political, financial, relational...) used in an efficient manner contribute at the armonisation of the development process. The integration of the project territories as component of the sustainable local development, in the spirit of the strategic thinking of territorial development, would allow the valorisation through preservation of the local characteristics. The heritage and territorial identity, as important variables of the development model, must integrate components such as: resources (generic and specific), knowledge and local know-how, products and local services, customs and assets. All these can be transposed as local brands, as a collectively assumed image of the combination. At the same time, brand can represent a "smart" type tool for the territorial management. Governance can also be declined in various stages differing from one "țara" to another, with the awareness of the collective wishes and aspirations, by the local communities and authorities which should assume this responsibility, involvement, local initiatives, part-taking, collaboration and partnership between the civil society and local administration, commitment etc. The local actors must put themselves into motion for the development of the social and cultural capital, through promotion of an increased "governance" and co-operation on various territorial levels (horizontally and vertically) based on a continuous system of negotiation between public and private actors (Bache and Flinders, 2004).

The model renders the multiple possibilities of combination between the six variables for a greater likeness to the perfect Rubik's cube model. "Perfection" in this particular case is given by the sustainable development, as a challenge difficult to reach. Furthermore, this model suggests that, in order to solve the cube, one needs a strategy, the random twists not being able to lead to the expected results. So, the model renders both the complexity of the territory, with multiple declinations, depending on the local distinctiveness, and multiple combinations between the four variables, thus revealing the necessity to integrate strategic thinking into the actions which target the territorial development.

Moreover, the suggested model equally integrates the duality of the ratios between the internal environment (which focuses on the mobilization of the local collectivities around the heritage and sustainable capitalization of common assets and symbols) and the external one (towards which is rendered the idea of distinctiveness, uniqueness and a certain image of local Romanian authentic label). This image transmitted to the exterior as local label (territorial brand) targets both capitalization through the increase of amenity, but, at the same time, the increase of the degree of competition of this type of areas.

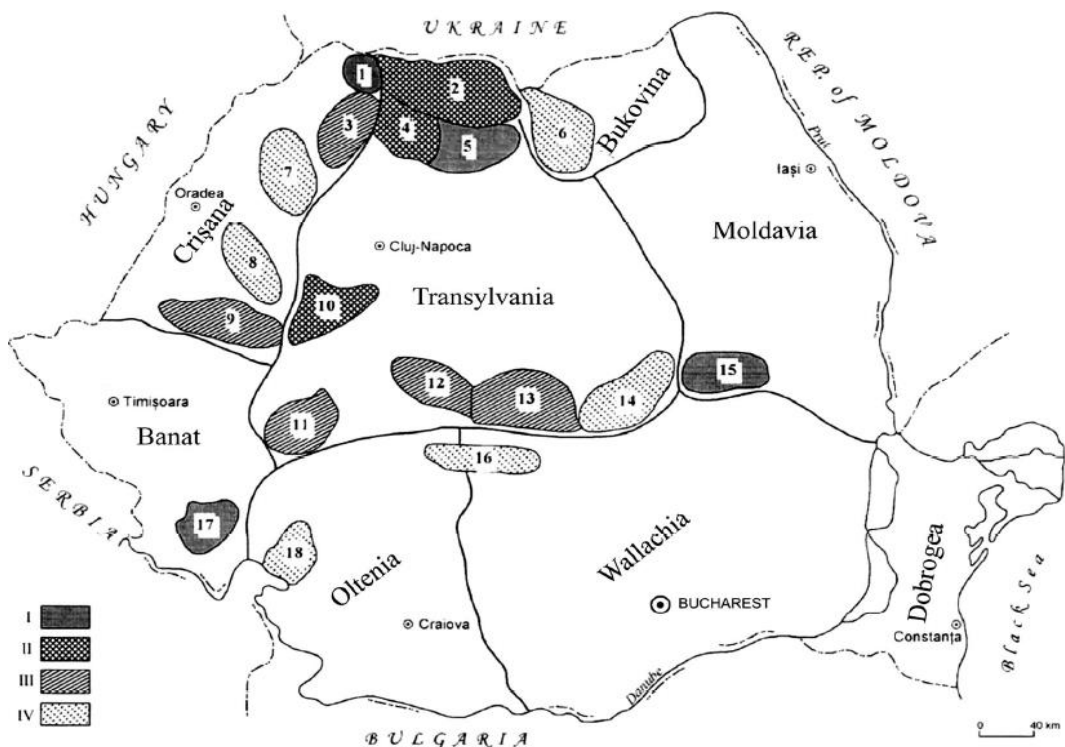


Figure 5. The brands of the Romanian "lands".

- I. Folklore: 1. Oaş Land; 5. Năsăud Land; 17. Almăj Land; 15. Vrancea Land; II. Architecture: 2. Maramureș Land; 4. Lăpuș Land; 10. Moți Land; III. Symbolic (historical): 3. Chioar Land, 9. Zărand Land; 11. Hațeg Land; 12. Amlaș Land; 13. Făgăraș Land; IV. Cultural (ethnographic): 6. Dorna Land; 7. Sylvania Land; 8. Beiuș Land; 14. Bârsa Land; 16. Lovișteea Land; 18. Severin Land

(Source: Cocean, 2012)

Depending on their distinctiveness (Cocean, 2011; Cocean, 2012), distinguishes between four categories of brand specific to "land" type areas, such

as: folk, architectural, symbolic (historical) and cultural (ethnographic) brand. We dare to bring this reasoning forward, by considering that, on a higher integrative level, the term of "țara" is itself a "brand", through the symbol of identity and heritage elements, authenticity and national distinctiveness expressed by its facets (historical, cultural, ethnographic etc.), manifested with various intensities in the 18 areas of this type.

Evidently, the brand implies a message and a logo. The message of the "land" brands in Romania could be represented by the phrase "our dowery" (seen as a heritage inherited from the parents and forefathers, as a starting point on the road of building their own future, thus integrating the idea of endurance, authenticity and preservation).

Evidently, the implementation of this model can only be done from the perspective of a "smart" type of territorial management. For the territorial management, the economic globalization is a challenge that confuses the local economy. The preservation of regional economic activities depends on its adaptability to the new realities. So, the management of the local territorial communities must take into account the efficiency, equity, endurance and territorial creativity criteria. An efficient integrative tool of the territorial management and local policies is the strategy of sustainable local development. The inclusion of the identity elements and the setting-out of the development goals around the capitalization of the local distinctiveness, position the public actors and local communities on their path to assert their competitiveness. The territorial identity can be integrated in all the stages and principles that are necessary to the process of sustainable territorial management. The inclusion of *branding* in the strategy of territorial development gives a higher visibility both internally and externally.

The design of the direction of development through the capitalization of the territorial identity landmarks in briefs of formal and non-formal planning, represents the key to differentiate and, implicitly, to stimulate the territorial appeal. The elaboration of the territorial brand, as an assumed symbol of the combination between identity elements, triggers the increase of the degree of internal community cohesion and, at the same time, the chance for individualization within a global system. Thus, the definition of the identity "assets", both material and immaterial, is the foundation for the identity model of local development. The "land" type areas benefit from a capital of deep *knowledge*, where authentic customs and particular know-how have been preserved. Under this label of authenticity represented by the "țara" type areas, the local services and products can compete with modern innovative services and products, always having the advantage of uniqueness, authenticity and tradition.

CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of the rural areas in the global competition can be activated through the use of tools of "smart" type territorial management, articulated within an integrated strategy of local development.

We consider that the local development model based on territorial identity and heritage suggested by the present study can represent such a tool, a sustainable "alternative" to the "productive" type of development, which cannot be sustained by the less developed rural areas.

Territorial identity and heritage represent main elements, around which we must rethink the entire development of the areas with strong coherence, by

sustainably capitalizing the "motivational capital", inestimably represented by them.

In order to implement this model in Romania, there are missing a lot of elements, but some are more important: financial and legislative mechanisms to mobilize these identity elements and heritage in the territorial (re)construction, mechanisms to involve the local administration in the increase of local territorial amenity, tools of part-taking and commitment of the local communities to their own future.

We consider that, despite the aforementioned drawbacks, in the present territorial reality of Romania, the "țara" type areas represent a true "brand" of the Romanian rural area, which integrates our heritage. The sustainable capitalization of their authenticity, with all its material and immaterial facets, shall contribute to the integration of the Romanian villages into the European space, in compliance with its real potential.

Aknowlegments

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