RURAL AREAS TYPOLOGY ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE OF INEQUALITY IN SOUTH MUNTENIA REGION

TIPOLOGIZAREA ZONELOR RURALE DUPĂ GRADUL DE INEGALITATE ÎN REGIUNEA SUD MUNTENIA

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Abstract: *The analysis of rural space in South Muntenia region has been achieved at the level of local administrative-territorial units, the lowest territorial level from which statistical information is collected and then published. The use of this territorial level is a positive premise for the obtainment of some results with high degree of fidelity. Regarding the regional analysis of circumscription of communes in clusters, I analysed the communes'distribution from South Muntenia region, identifying the similarities regarding the affiliation to a certain cluster. Romanian rural areas typology presents an obvious importance from the point of view of support of these areas with the help of community funds.*

Key words: *rural environment, cluster, economic dimension, territory equipment, rural areas typology*

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of rural space in South Muntenia region has been achieved at the level of local administrative-territorial units, the lowest territorial level from which statistical information is collected and then published. The use of this territorial level is a positive premise for the obtainment of some results with high degree of fidelity.

The rural environment of the region is composed of 509 communes from an administrative point of view. Being different from urban enviroment as regards the profile of economic activities, occupational structure and available resources, rural environment plays a special role in the economic and social life of the region through its development potential.

The selection criteria for the rural space typology were the following:

- *territory equipment*: this criteria provides information about the residence comfort; rural technical-municipal infrastructure as support of rural development – including of the business environment etc.;
- *demo-social dimension*: provides information about local demographic perspectives, the degree of disintegration of family values, the degree of attractiveness for living in the area and economic and social opportunities which are supposed to be possessed by the area etc.;
- *social infrastructure*: provides information regarding the educational and sanitary infrastructures and their degree of adaptation to community needs; potential accessibility to TIC, etc.;
- *economic dimension*: provides information about the chances to access a paid job and the degree of dependence of rural population on social and agricultural transfers, the degree of intensification of agricultural field exploitation, the degree of development of economic activities complementary to agriculture, promotion abilities of rural services complementary to agriculture;
- *investments*: reveal the projection upon the future development potential of rural community.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

From the point of view of criteria and indicators selected for the rural space typology, the communes from South Muntenia region are significantly different. The results of cluster analysis of data series regarding the rural economic-social inequality led to division of communes from South Muntenia region in three clusters, thus:

- cluster I: 98 communes, representing about 18,9%;
- cluster II: 195 communes, representing about 37,6%;
- cluster III: 226 communes, representing 43,5%.

Table 1. Distribution of communes per clusters, at national level and in South-Muntenia region

	National level		South-Muntenia region	
	Total	**%**	**Total**	**%**
TOTAL	**2860**	**100,0**	**519**	**100,0**
Cluster I	586	20,5	98	18,9
Cluster II	1164	40,7	195	37,6
Cluster III	1110	38,8	226	43,5

From the above table, we can notice a distribution of communes from South-Muntenia region per clusters which is similar enough with that registered at national level. The share of communes from South Muntenia region included in cluster I is very close to the share registered at national level (18,9% against 20,5%), differences being higher in case of clusters II (37,6% against 40,7%) and III (43,5% against 38,8%).

Even if at regional level we have a distribution of communes per clusters which is similar enough to that at the national level, there are some significant differences at the level of South-Muntenia region regarding the distribution per districts.

Table 2. Distribution of communes per clusters, per districts in South Muntenia region

Districts	Cluster I	Cluster II	Cluster III	TOTAL
Argeş	42	37	16	**95**
Călăraşi	1	15	34	**50**
Dâmbovița	19	33	30	**82**
Giurgiu	2	10	39	**51**
Ialomița	3	25	31	**59**
Prahova	30	38	22	**90**
Teleorman	1	37	54	**92**
TOTAL	**98**	**195**	**226**	**519**

At the level of South Muntenia region, we can observe the existence of an unbalance between rural areas between north districts (Argeş, Dâmbovița, Prahova) and south districts (Călăraşi, Giurgiu, Ialomița, Teleorman) regarding the circumscription per clusters.

The three north districts comprise about 92,9% from communes included in cluster I (91 communes), most (42 communes) being located in Argeş district (42,9% from the total of communes of the region are included in cluster I, respectively 44,2% from the total of communes of Argeş district are included in cluster I). In its turn, Prahova district comprises 30 communes included in cluster I (30,6% from the total of communes of the region included in cluster I, respectively 33,3% from the total of communes of the district).

At the opposite pole, districts from the region with a preponderantly agricultural economy have a reduced number of communes included in cluster I: Călăraşi (1 commune), Giurgiu (2 communes), Ialomița (3 communes) and Teleorman (1 commune). In exchange, within this group of districts prevail the communes situated in cluster III, most (54 communes), being situated in Teleorman district (23,9% from the total of communes included in cluster III, respectively 58,7% from the total of communes of the district) and in Giurgiu district (39 de communes, 76,5% from the total of communes of the district).

Table 3. Share of communes per clusters and share of each cluster at district level in South Muntenia region

Districts	Cluster I		Cluster II		Cluster III		TOTAL
	% total cluster	% total communes	% total cluster	% total communes	% total cluster	% total communes	
Argeş	42,9	*44,2*	19,0	*38,9*	7,1	*16,9*	***100,0***
Călăraşi	1,0	*2,0*	7,7	*30,0*	15,0	*68,0*	***100,0***
Dâmbovița	19,4	*23,2*	16,9	*40,2*	13,3	*36,6*	***100,0***
Giurgiu	2,0	*3,9*	5,1	*19,6*	17,6	*76,5*	***100,0***
Ialomița	3,1	*5,1*	12,8	*42,4*	13,7	*52,5*	***100,0***
Prahova	30,6	*33,3*	19,5	*42,2*	9,7	*24,5*	***100,0***
Teleorman	1,0	*1,1*	19,0	*40,2*	23,9	*58,7*	***100,0***
TOTAL	**100,0**	**-**	**100,0**	**-**	**100,0**	**-**	-

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Regarding the regional analysis of circumscription of communes in clusters, at the level of South Muntenia region, we shall analyse the distribution of communes trying to identify similarities regarding the affiliation to a certain cluster.

We saw that at the level of South Muntenia region, we can speak about a differentiation of north districts from other districts. In these three districts (Argeş, Prahova and Dâmbovița) the share of communes included in cluster I is very big. The distribution in territory of these communes allows us to define more types of areas in which are situated communes included in cluster I.

In the first place, there is a group of communes included in cluster I which are *near big cities and especially localities with economic potential* (Piteşti, Mioveni, Câmpulung, Târgovişte, Fieni, Pucioasa, Ploieşti, Câmpina). Cities have represented and continue to represent development poles and polarization centers for new industrial activities besides the existent traditional ones and for foreign investments and attract population from nearby communes, encouraging them to develop. The proximity to the city offers inhabitants of communes employment opportunities and therefore additional and sure income sources, an adequate infrastructure, better social services and even increased opportunities for investments, including public investments. We can find in this group very developed communes as for example Mărăcineni, Bradu, Albota, Poiana Lacului, Budeasa (in Argeş district), Ulmi, Doiceşti, Aninoasa (in Dâmbovița district) or Blejoi, Bucov, Plopu, Bărcăneşti (in Prahova district).

We can identify another group of communes which are included in cluster I *down the important roadways*. Transport infrastructure and implicitly its state constitutes an important and determining factor regarding the quality of life, playing at the same time a key role for the removal of some obstacles within the development process of regional communities. Infrastructure favours accessibility through which it supports the business development and growth of occupation level. South Muntenia region is crossed over by important roadways, as for example the European road E60 (DN1), which makes the connection between Bucharest and Braşov (down this road there are communes which are included in cluster I, as for example Floreşti, Băneşti, Poiana Câmpina, Bărcăneşti – all in Prahova district), European road E574 (DN73), which links the Piteşti and Braşov cities (communes as Stâlpeni, Schitu Goleşti, Boteni, all in Argeş district, belong to cluster I and are found on this roadway), DN1B, between Ploieşti and Buzău, which comprises down its road communes included in cluster I (Valea Călugărească, Albeşti Paleologu, Ceptura in Prahova district).

We further identify another group of communes which are included in cluster I in s*ub-Carpathian area* of those three districts from the north of South Muntenia region. The fruit-growing and viticultural production of the region is significant, the areas corresponding to these cultures having a great share in the regional agricultural surface. Also, pastures and hay lands have a great share, the sub-Carpathian area having among others a valuable tradition and real potential for zootechnical sector. In this group, we include

communes as Tigveni, Mălureni, Pietroşani, Bogaţi or Priboeni (in Argeş district), Măneşti, Tătărani, Malu cu Flori (in Dâmboviţa district), Ştefeşti, Vărbilău, Dumbrăveşti, Cărbuneşti, Doftana (in Prahova district).

Another group of communes included in cluster I is identified in *mountain and sub-mountain areas* representing important destinations for tourism, especially for rural tourism and its form, agricultural tourism. Rural tourism disposes of a considerable potential in the north of the region, because of favourable natural conditions, picturesque landscape and existent historical and cultural traditions. The communes which fall into this category are: Arefu, Corbeni, Brăduleţ, Nucşoara, Lereşti (in Argeş district), Moroeni, Runcu, Pietroşiţa, Buciumeni (in Dâmboviţa district), Măneciu or Poseşti (in Prahova district).

In other four districts of the region, very little communes are included in cluster I: in Călăraşi district, only a commune (Dragalina), in Giurgiu district two communes (Găişeni and Greaca), in Ialomiţa district three communes (Borăneşti, Giurgeni, Mihail Kogălniceanu), and in Teleorman district, a single commune (Poeni).

Most communes of South Muntenia region are included in cluster III. Plain districts of the region (Giurgiu, Teleorman, Ialomiţa and Călăraşi), as well as the south of Dâmboviţa and Argeş districts have many communes which are included in cluster III. These communes have an eminently agricultural profile and are focused on plant culture. At present, we can state that there is no competitive and efficient agricultural productivity, this aspect being determined not only by inadequate technical equipment but also by the way of exploitation practised, fact which determines these communes to have a low development level. Many of the regional communes included in this cluster are far enough from developed urban areas (especially those from Argeş, Teleorman or Dâmboviţa), and this thing has a negative impact upon physical and social infrastructure and upon public investments. Also, the communes situated in plain area have a lower potential for rural tourism practice than communes from Carpathian or sub-Carpathian areas, as well as lower development opportunities of other economic sectors than agriculture.

Regarding the communes included in cluster II, at the level of South Muntenia region, they are presented in all areas and are extremely scattered. Most communes are in sub-Carpathian areas from Argeş, Dâmboviţa and

Prahova districts, but also in Teleorman district there are many communes situated in plain area which are included in cluster II.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the regional analysis of circumscription of communes in clusters, I analysed the communes'distribution from South Muntenia region, identifying the similarities regarding the affiliation to a certain cluster.

There is a group of communes included in cluster I which are *near big cities and especially localities with economic potential*. The proximity to the city offers inhabitants of communes employment opportunities and therefore additional and sure income sources, an adequate infrastructure, better social services and even increased opportunities for investments, including public investments.

We can identify another group of communes which are included in cluster I *down the important roadways*. This aspect is more visible in South Muntenia region. Transport infrastructure and implicitly its state constitutes an important and determining factor regarding the quality of life, playing at the same time a key role for the removal of some obstacles within the development process of regional communities. Infrastructure favours accessibility through which it supports the business development and growth of occupation level.

We further identify another group of communes which are included in cluster I in s*ub-Carpathian area*. The fruit-growing and viticultural production of the region is significant, the areas corresponding to these cultures having a great share in the regional agricultural surface. Also, pastures and hay lands have a great share, the sub-Carpathian area having among others a valuable tradition and real potential for zootechnical sector.

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Plain districts of those two analysed regions have many communes which are included in cluster III. These communes have an eminently agricultural profile and are focused on plant culture. At present, we can state that there is no competitive and efficient agricultural productivity, this

aspect being determined not only by inadequate technical equipment but also by the way of exploitation practised, fact which determines these communes to have a low development level.

Romanian rural areas typology presents an obvious importance from the point of view of support of these areas with the help of community funds and for achievement of some development strategies of rural areas.

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