The Regional Development Policy – The legal and Institutional Framework

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The Legal Background

As a candidate at joining the European Union, our country needed to adopt and implement the regional development policies. For that, it was necessary to create appropriate institutions and devices at the central and regional level. Consequently, a legal background was given to these institutions, through a legislation adapted to the European standards, according to the National Program of adopting the community standards.

In a relatively short time Romania has made important steps in the direction of establishing decentralized regional policies. On July 15th 1998 the Law no.151/1998, concerning the regional development in Romania, was passed. This law, together with the Government Decree No. 978/1998, sets the legal and institutional framework as well as the goals of regional development in Romania under the executive management of the National Agency for Regional Development (NARD).

The law gives /ensures the counties administrations, with the consent of the local councils that they contain, the right of free decision in the matter of associating with other neighboring counties, with which they have complementary socio-economic profiles, in order to create/constitute regions of development. In 1999 eight regions of development were created.

The regions have, in general, the authority in the matter of establishing the strategies for social and economic development on their territory, by the means of decisional and executive regional development institutions created in each one of them. Beside this, the regions of development represent basic regional units for programming and implementing regional policies.

In addition, because this new territorial structure was created to serve as a basis for the implementation of the types of programs that benefit from Structural Funds financing when Romania joins the European Union, their model closely emulates the European system of the statistical territorial units nomenclature (NUTS)?~NSTU. Accordingly, the regions make up NUTS II, the counties NUTS III and the towns /villages NUTS IV.

The following table presents the names of the regions, constituted according to the law, and the counties they contain.

Table 1. Regions of development in Romania.

Regions of development	The counties they contain
1. NORTH-EAST	Bacău, Botoşani, Iaşi, Suceava, Vaslui
2. SOUTH-EAST	Brăila, Buzău, Constanţa, Galaţi, Tulcea, Vrancea
3. SOUTH	Argeş, Călăraşi, Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa, Prahova, Teleorman
4. SOUTH-WEST	Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinţi, Olt, Vâlcea
5. WEST	Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara, Timiş
6. NORTH-WEST	Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureş, Sălaj, Satu-Mare
7. CENTRE	Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Sibiu, Mureş
8. BUCHAREST- ILFOV	Bucureşti, Ilfov

The legal framework on regional development is made consists of the fundamental law on regional development completed and sustained by a set of laws and government decrees:

- The Government Decree No. 634/1998 concerning the approval of The methodological norms for the application of Law 151/1998;
- The Government Decree No. 382/2000 on the organizing and functioning of the National Agency for Regional Development;
- The Government Decree No. 24/1999 on the ratification of the Financial Memorandum for the Phare National Program 1998;
- The Government's Emergency Decree No. 63/1999 concerning the management of non-refundable funds awarded to Romania by the European Commission and that of the co-financing funds;
- The Agreement Memorandum, between the Romanian Government and the European Commission, concerning the creation/making of the National Fund-1998;
- The Funding Agreement on the implementation of the Phare projects by means of the Implementation Agency 1998;
- The Government's Emergency Decree No. 118/1999 on public acquisition;
- The Law No.133/1999 concerning the stimulation of the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, amended by the Government's Emergency Decree No. 64/2000;
- The Law No. 69/1991 amended by the Law No. 24/1996 on public administration;
- The Government's Emergency Decree No. 24/1998 on disadvantaged areas;
- The Law No. 20/1999 concerning the approval of the Government's Emergency Decree No. 4/1998 on disadvantaged areas, modified by the Government's Emergency Decree No. 75/2000.

The Institutional Framework

Regarding the institutional structure, Romania has done some important steps in the direction of insuring of an adequate institutional structure for adopting and implementation of a coherent policy of regional development. In this direction, decision-making and executive organisms were established at the national and regional level.

The National Level

The National Council for Regional Development is at the moment the decision-making authority at national level, being responsible for the regional development policy in Romania. NCRD is presided by the First Minister and is made up of the presidents and the vice-presidents of the eight Councils for Regional Development, at equality with the ministers and the representatives of the main ministers and institutions involved in the regional development. 33 official members of the NCRD and 20 representatives of the invited institutions make up NCRD.

The law for regional development sets as its attributes, among other, the forwarding towards the Govern of proposals regarding the establishment of The National Fund for Regional Development (NFRD) and the approving of the criteria, the priorities, the procedures for allocating and using the allocated funds for the projects of regional development both from the national and international sources. In this context, NCRD approves (ratifies) the key documents, like The National Plan For Regional Development and The National Strategy for Regional Development.

The National Agency For Regional Development (NARD) is the governmental institution that represents the executive organ in the regional development policy and also for the coordination and implementation of regional policies.

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The main attributes of the NARD consist of insuring the financial and technical management for NFRD, including the elaboration of all criteria and procedures for the money allocation from this Fund.

The NARD acts as a national negotiator in the relations with the European Commission concerning the regional development and provides technical assistance for the Regional Development Councils, when this is necessary. In addition, it initiates and draws up in cooperation with the ministers and institutions involved, **law projects** in the regional development field and approves the proposals of the other institutions regarding this domain.

During May 2000, The Romanian Agency For Development and The National Agency For IMM merged through absorption with NARD as a result of the Emergency Governmental Decree No. 48 /2000, NARD being reorganized according to the Government Decree No. 382/2000.

As a result NARD is responsible for 5 important national policies:

1. the policies for regional development;
2. the policies for disadvantaged areas;
3. the policies for promoting foreign investments;
4. the policies for and post-privatization;
5. the policies for Small and Medium Seized Enterprises.

The Regional Level

The Councils For Regional Development (CRDs) are the decision-making organs established by each of the eight regions of development. CRDs are made up of the four representatives of each of the (compound) counties involved, meaning: the President of the County Council and the representatives of the Local Councils, one for each basic administrative unit (city, towns and villages) of every component county.

CRDs take strategically decisions regarding the projection and the implementation of the policies of regional development in their regions. CRDs approve the documents of regional programming, the utilization of the Regional Development Fund (RDF): criteria, priorities, recourses destination and the selection of the projects that get assistance through RDF. CRDs are also monitoring the correct use of the funds. (That the funds are used rightly/correctly).

The Regional Development Agencies are non-governmental organisms, non-profit for public usage organisms, with a judicial status. They *work* in the field of regional development, representing the executive organ of the Regional Development Councils.

Instruments for Implementing Regional Development Policies

The basic instruments used for the implementation of the objectives of the regional development policy are: the financial and the organizational instruments.

The organizational instruments:

- *The strategies at the national and regional level.* These are conceived on the basis of the diagnosis of the economical and social situation. The strategies contain the principles and the objectives/targets for medium and long periods establishing the priorities and the resources (human, material, financial and information resources) that can be used.
- *The plans* that are elaborated at the national level, for a period of one year or more. The plans are elaborated on the basis of the strategies and they contain a set of actions and measures that must be taken in order to achieve the proposed aims. The plans change into operational programs applied with the help of some projects.

- *The programs* elaborated at the national and regional level have annual and multi-annual coverage.
- *The projects* are concrete actions that are a coherent part of the elaborated programs.

The steps of the regional development policy in Romania can be summed up as in the following:

CONCEPT→STRATEGY→PLANS→PROGRAMS→PROJECTS

The financial instruments:
- The National Found For Regional Development, administered by the NARD.
- The Funds For Regional Development, administered by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).
- Instruments for pre-adherence (mainly Phare).

Beginning with the year 2000, the countries that expressed their will/wish of joining the European Union, including Romania, will receive financial assistance through (the means of) three funds of pre-adherence created after/according to the model of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion/Union Funds that are offered by the EU to the member states. These are: ISPA (for the road/traveling infrastructure and for the environment), SAPARD (for agriculture and rural development), PHARE (focused mainly on regional development).

The Phare National Program, now on the role, gives assistance for preparing the mechanisms of implementation of the pre-adherence instruments, with the purpose of creating the capacity of absorption for the granted funds. The main objective of the Phare funds is to help the aspiring countries prepare their union with the EU.

The 1998 Phare program, in which the regional institutes are involved, refers to both the institutional construction and with the stimulation of the investments. All the regions in Romania have open access to the program and this stimulated/encouraged the regions to make up their own strategic programs.

The funds granted to Romania by the EU, together with those representing the national co-financing are used for financing viable projects that will contribute to the increase of social and economic dynamic and to ensure quality European standards.

The components of the Phare program, regarding the industrial reconstruction and the development of human resources, refer both to the agents in the private sector and to those in the public sector.

The qualified projects are those that create jobs, implement new technologies, create new economic activities in the areas under economic decline, offer courses for professional training for the workers, respond to the regional needs and use local resources. The projects introduced in the disadvantaged areas will also benefit from the stimulation funds granted according to the law.

So far, auctions for projects were organized as part of some auctions for obtaining non-refundable financing. The projects were selected and validated at the regional level. The management of the whole process was ensured by the National Agency For Regional Development, which is responsible for signing the contracts for financing.

The National Development Plan – a Basic Instrument of the Regional Policies

The National Development Plan (NDP) is elaborated according to The National Program For Adherence of Romania to the EU (NPRA), to the requirements of the Law No.151/1998 regarding the regional development in Romania and to the European Union Regulation No.1266/1999

regarding the coordination of the financial assistance granted to the aspiring states, especially to the articles 4 (concentration) and 5 (the financing of the priorities).

Starting with the year 2000, the financial assistance granted to Romania by the EU for the pre-adherence period, is done on the basis of a schedule document called The National Development Plan.

The NARD coordinated and elaborated The National Development Plan for the period 2000-2006.

The general objective of the NDP is to realize a sustained economic development and create permanent jobs. An essential element for realizing this objective is the establishment of the priorities and, on their basis, the elaboration and implementation of the programs and projects that will materialize these priorities.

The National Development Plan is structured in four parts: the present situation, the development strategy, the implementation, the financial programming.

The Development Strategy is the fundamental element of the NDP. It sets the six national priorities on regional development and the three national priorities for sector development, meant to impulse the economic growth of the country. These priorities derive from the general objective of the NDP and respect the requirement that the regional priorities should be compatible with the national ones.

The NDP sets the priorities of the development of Romania for the period 2000-2002 and the appropriate measures. The financing of these measures is ensured by the state budget, the local budget and by the pre-adherence instruments like: PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD.

The Phare program will co-finance the measures that will contribute to the achievement of three types of objectives: the development of the activities in the productive sector, the development of human resources and the improvement of business infrastructure.

The priorities for the national development and the appropriate measures for the period 2000-2002 were set on the basis of the analysis made by NDP and of the strategies established by the Regional Development Plans prepared/completed by the eight regions of development.

The NDP sets six national priorities regarding the regional development and three national priorities regarding sector/zone development.

The priorities concerning the regional development and the appropriate measures for their accomplishment are as follows:

1. The development of the private sector and the stimulation of the investments through:
   - sustaining the private enterprises;
   - encouraging the productive investments;
   - investments in the adjacent public infrastructure.

2. The sustaining of the Small and Medium Seized Enterprises (SMSE) of the productive sector through:
   - the improvement of the finacial capacity for productive SMSE;
   - the improvement of consulting activities for SMSE;
   - the sustaining of the cooperation between the SMSE and the big enterprises;
   - the improvement of the SMSE management and of their organizing system;
   - the sustaining of the SMSE in market penetration;
   - the supplying of consulting services to the SME.

3. The improvement and development of regional and local infrastructure regarding:
   - the infrastructure adjacent to the economy;
   - the infrastructure in the fields of science, research, development and information technology;
   - the infrastructure needed for qualification, re-qualification and continuous studies;
   - the urban infrastructure;

- the investments in transport infrastructure.

4. The development of human resources through:
  - training programs for the employed;
  - effective measures for the ones threatened by the unemployment, are unemployed or are underemployed;
  - effective measures for improving work integration of the disadvantaged persons or of those with special needs.

6. The development of tourism through the making of:
  - investments in the private sector;
  - investments in the public sector;
  - services for tourism encouragement/sustaining.

7. The sustaining of the scientific research, technological development and innovation through:
  - support and assistance for research and development and for caring out of their results;
  - assistance for technology transfer;
  - the using of high qualified workers;
  - business encouragement/ sustaining;
  - the development of the information society, the using of telematics and of the services from this domain/field.

All these national priorities for regional development have as purpose to guide the economic agents to identify the interest areas for local development and to express the projects that contribute to this development.

The Phare assistance will be entirely concentrated on direct/straight ahead measures aimed at unemployment reduction and job creation by encouraging investments and by supporting/sustaining SMEs.

These measures will be realized through initiatives that aim to support innovation and technology development, to ensure an adequate qualification to human resources, according to market necessities.

The sector development priorities comprised in NDP are:
  1. The development of agriculture and rural space;
  2. The development of transport infrastructure;
  3. The protection and improvement of environment quality.

The priorities and measures set by the PND guide the economic agents towards identifying the domains of interest for local development and the shaping of the projects that contribute to this.

The ministers of Agriculture and Food/Nourishment, of Transport and of Water, Forest and Environmental Protection elaborated their own schedule/agenda documents for financial assistance offered through SAPARD and ISPA. The Minister of National Education, together with the Minister of Work/Employment and Social Protection elaborated The National Strategy for the Development of Human Resources. These documents can be found in the annex to/of the NDP.

The Romanian NDP represents a programming instrument necessary for reaching the complex objective of economic and social cohesion, which is a major objective for the EU, promoted especially through the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Funds.

The NDP is the result of the first democratic programming exercise done from bottom to top realized so far in the country. It materializes the efforts of Romania in adopting the European practices in the domain of regional development. The NDP is coherent and compatible with the planning and programming documents used in the member states of the EU.

The NDP is a complex national strategic document. It sets the strategic objectives for Romania for the period 2000-2006. It also sets the development priorities with their appropriate measures for the period between 2000-2002 and for which Romania asks for financial assistance from the EU, through Phare and SAPARD funds and also those priorities that will be financed through other sources than the EU ones.

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The NDP was sanctioned by the National Council For Regional Development and approved by the Romanian Govern in conformity with the existing legal procedures.

The NDP can still be improved and will be adjusted in accordance with the results of the implementation of the NDP as well as with the measures contained in the strategic plan of the National Development Strategy For Medium Period.

Regional and Comunitary Space

There is more in the fields of forces that structure the social space of transition than just persons with their specific status. At the level of local and regional communities, specific problems, speeds and styles of realization of market economy and of democracy are recorded. The community and regional characteristics intervene in the explanation of different attitudes, values and behaviours. In order to gain credibility, these explanations can also benefit from the reflection on the way of measuring the community-regional variables. What hides beneath the affirmation: "the community X is more developed than community Y"? Is it possible that a simple number, generated through an algorithm that got the bizarre name of QLIFE/UR, to explain the level of development of an area like a town or a village. Are the analyses in terms of regions good or "dangerous"? Which are the "true" regions? How close connected is the internal migration to the community-regional differences? All these questions describe the thematic space of the present chapter.

The themes concerning the regions are very frequent in the Romanian academic space. The questions discussed are numerous: what kind of role the historical regions and provinces still have; how were the eight regions of development constructed (from Bruxelles, from Bucharest or from an expertise conscious of the country with its "countries" and its problems); what role do they have in the regional development policy; which is the balance/relation between the local autonomy and regional development; what relation is there between the maintaining and constructing of the ethnical identities ,and reorganization; should the old counties be reinstated; should the statistical reports be made on regions or sub-regions of development; what legitimacy have the new territorial delimitations that came from the academic medium, like the cultural areas or agro-regions etc? It is only normal for the discussions on these themes to be very vivid. The communist years meant a total obstruction for these discussions. The overcoming of the confusions and the concordance between the hopes connected to the regional phenomena and processes and the effectiveness and the real possibilities can only be realized through discussions.

The Human Resources in Regional Development

Synthetic indicators with an extended social and economic significance are usually used when measuring the level of regional development. This is the case of the domestic gross product per inhabitant or per employed person or in the case of the unemployment. How much does a society produce and to what level does it use its available labor force are central elements in understanding the national and regional accomplishments at economic and social level. In the classification system characteristic for the EU, the underdeveloped and disadvantaged regions are recognized by a value of GDP per inhabitant smaller than 25 % of the average for the EU. In explaining the economic performances of the region, variables like the urbanization level, the development of the infrastructure, the level of centrality, the industrial structure, the level of human resources etc. (European Commission, 1995:47) are used.

The most important of these variables are considered the human resources and no matter how we define them, they are usually measured according to the level of education of the population. As

the investments for education grow so do the human resources. But the theoretical analyses admit that the development of human resources is done not only through education in school but also through professional training at work and through investments in the state of health. (Becker, 1997) Still, there is a pressure of the available data on the analytic efforts: as there are more measurements on human resources by means of education, research is mostly done based on these data.

No matter how we measure them, human resources are most important variables not only for the sector analyses on the incomes, fertility or social mobility, but they also play a special, explanatory and pragmatic role in regional analyses. For a society like the Romanian one of the last years, found in the constructing faze of the regional policies, the understanding of the human resources disparities may be extremely useful in the *guiding* of regional politics. The regional stocks of knowledge and abilities will function as the main resource of regional development. A proper indication of the educational disparities, of their causes and consequences may be relevant for constructing the regional policies. Regardless of the starting point and the ways they will be implemented, the regional policies will have to take into consideration the structure of the human resources in the territory, the advantages and disadvantages that derive from the educational profile in different regional units, for accomplishing their main objective of reducing the development disparities.

In Romania, the development regions as units of the regional policies were defined according to the functional criteria and the possibilities of cooperation between the counties. There were attempts of defining some development sub-regions based on the sub-units that are important for the development actions. The sub-regions may be groups of counties or   localities/places within the same region, alike in their characteristics and development problems.

The Green Charta, that specifies the principles of the regional development policies, mentions 14 sub-regions, dividing seven of the eight development regions into two (The Romanian Govern and The European Commission, 1997). A later analysis, made by the Phare program, which was the basis of the regional development project in Romania, establishes the *partition* of the country into sub-regions of development, making small amendments to the proposals in The Green Charta.

The variation of the regional development indicators at county level was the basis for the delimitation of these sub-regions. (…) Specific regional programs with precise aims need the delimitation of some regions according to indicators, that have a great precision, a lower degree aggregation, a greater transparency of the significance. The groups of territorial units – counties or localities - alike in their human resources can make up this type of sub-regions. Once established, they can be a guideline for different social-economic programs. The poverty or the richness in human resources have a great inertness in the territorial profile. Because of this reason, identifying how human resources vary by region may be useful in identifying some sub-regions of development of great importance and stability in time.

Measuring the Regional Human Resources

The regional stock of knowledge and abilities, with direct consequences on incomes and productivity may be directly measured through values of education and health status based on the available data. Measuring the stock of professional knowledge at regional level remains a desideratum. All the three components of the human resources – educational, professional and sanitary – function in close relationship with the regional medium of communication. The more open is this medium to the exterior of the region, the better the chances of increasing the human resources stock. In characterizing the regional medium of communication, can be relevant the number of TV-sets and telephones owned by the population and the intensity of the communication phenomena trough the postal system. Starting from these premises, the rate of regional human

resources development (HUMANREG) is built by the aggregation of some indicators dealing with the educational stock, the health status of the population and the intensity of the indirect communication phenomena (mass-media and post).

The educational stock is measured by the percentage of high-school, university or college graduates from the total of inhabitants of a certain county.

The child mortality is a negative indicator of the heath status. The higher the values of this indicator on a given territory the greater the possibilities of the medical knowledge stocks and the psychic-physical potential of action to be lower. The heath itself signifies a high potential of psychic-physical action, of conversion of the educational and professional resources into performing actions.

The stock of human resources in a county increases when the average level of education and of communication through the infrastructure channels grows higher and when the level of child mortality grows lower.

The Regional Distribution of Human Resources in Romania

The distribution of education in the territory is essential for the regional configuration of the entire human resources. The map of education and of human resources coincide in a great measure.

The education stock is minimum in exactly the same areas in which the human resources have the lowest values: in the East, in Vaslui and Botosani and in the South at the level of sub-region - Teleorman, Giurgiu, Ialomita and Calarasi. Sub-carphatic Moldavia is also characterized by a small educational stock, under the national average. This poverty in educational resources continues up North, in Transilvania with the counties Bistrita-Nasaud and Salaj and down South with the Buzau county.

The counties with a low educational stock are mostly found in the plain areas with a low degree of urbanization. The educational potential (EDUC) influences the health potential (measured through a rate equal with 1/child mortality) and the communication medium (COMUNIC) by the means of the *wealth* potential (estimated by the number of private cars per 100 inhabitants in the year 1994). The level of urbanization of the county (urban population per 1000 inhabitants in 1995) influences the *wealth* potential per household by the means of educational potential.

The health potential increases with the level of wealth potential per household and with the percentage plains in a county (measured by the percentage of cultivated areas from the total agricultural area). Obviously not the territory itself determines the health status but the structure of the population and the type of culture/crops associated with plains.

The human resources is maximum in the counties Timis, Arad, Brasov, Cluj and Sibiu, but only Timis, Cluj and Brasov also have a maximum educational potential. The maximum and minimum values have a linear distribution on territories that are in close vicinity. The major axis of human resources development crosses the territory of Timis, Hunedoara, Sibiu and Brasov counties. This axis has an important branch in Muntenia, in the counties Arges, Prahova and Bucuresti.

The model obtained shows the fact that the health potential is effected by the significant indirect effects of education, of urbanization, of location in Moldavia or in plains. All these indicators have a significant indirect effect upon the development of the communication medium.

Two other territory stripes with the human resources above average are located in the north and south. The Transylvanian stripe is made up of Alba, Mures, Harghita and Covasna. The

southern stripe is made up of Cras-Severin, Gorj, Valcea and Dambovita counties. The Cluj county appears as an island with strongly developed human resources , surrounded by counties with low levels of it.

On the whole, the configuration of the human resources distribution in the territory is closer to that of the sub-regions of development as they were defined in the Green Charta of the Romanian development policy(1997) and to the shape of the agro-regions (Sandu,1997) than that of the configuration of the historical regions. Transylvania appears as an extremely heterogeneous region from the point of view of the human resources. The differences between Sibiu, Brasov, Cluj on one hand, and Salaj, Bistrita-Nasaud , on the other hand, is very big. The same thing happens in Muntenia and Oltenia which have a more developed north and an underdeveloped south. The only historical region which is relatively homogenous , is Moldavia. With the exception of the Galati county, the others have their human resources under the national average.

Before the social restructuring that happened during the communist period through the means of industrialization, cooperativization of agriculture and through urbanization, the historical regions were still a significant stencil/pattern for the local disparities of the human resources/ capital. Later, as a result of the development of the mentioned processes and of the extension of the mass teaching, the borders of the historical regions became less and less significant for the regionalization of the human resources/capital. But areas strongly structured like Brasov-Sibiu, retain their high level of concentration of the human resources/capital for long periods of time. The western region is the most homogenous, and the southern one the most heterogeneous. The problem areas regarding the human resources are not reduced only to Botosani-Vaslui in the east and Calarasi-Ialomita-Giurgiu-Teleorman in the south. These are the most striking, with the maximum deficit. A bad situation is also found in the counties Neamt, Suceav, Vrancea , Olt and Mehedinti.

Per whole, the regional human resources is relatively consistent: its educational professional and sanitary components tend to show the same values at the county level. The problem of the consistency of the human resources   is put in close connection with the relation between its educational and sanitary components. In Brasov, Sibiu and Cluj counties, the level of education and the health status/assistance have highly positive values. A high level of consistency characterizes their human resources. The consistency is also high at the other end of the counties with a reduced value of the human resources. For example, in Giurgiu, the education level is the smallest in the country and the child mortality is extremely high which is a sign of poor sanitary conditions.

We find maximum of inconsistency in the counties Constanta, Iasi and Hunedoara that have a much more developed educational level than the sanitary one. Constanta for example, ranks 39 on the education scale and only 2 on the health status scale. The question that rises is why in these cases the health does not follow the education.

The capacity of a county to produce or attract educational capital is found in the level of the material capital of the household : as the educational stock of a county rises , so does the number of the cars per one thousand inhabitants. This connection is still significant even if we control or discard through statistical procedures, the effect of other variables like: the urbanization level, the average age per county or historical region etc.

The educational capital/level is measured through the percentage of high-school, college or faculty graduates from the total of the population above the age of twelve at the 1992 census. The material/assets capital is estimated based on the number of cars per 1000 inhabitants in 1994.

Still left to analyse are the mechanisms through which this connection is made at the social level. These would be: the cumulative effects of the life style, of the way the development of the private sector is realized, the correlation between the distribution of rare resources in the society and of the education, etc. For now, the fact itself is relevant enough to be mentioned. Cases of

deviation from the tendency of association between the educational and material capital are also to be noticed. Iasi is a typical example of the counties in which the material capital is well below the expected one, comparing with the county's level of education. Viceversa, in Mures, the level of car owning is much higher than the level of the educational stock of the same county. The two extremes show the fact that territorial units have a different capacity in converting/changing the educational capital in material one. It is possible that the different rhythms and performances of the development of the private sector to be one of the essential factors in explaining the differences of the regional capacity of conversion of the educational capital into a material one.

Investments for Producing Human Resources

The human resources of a county are the more developed the more immigrants the respective county has attracted from beyond its borders and the more professionals in the fields of education and health it has at its disposal.

A greater number of people employed in these fields leads to a greater investment for achieving educational and sanitary capital and, at the same time, a better infrastructure for education and health. The migratory attraction or rejection of a county is significant for its capacity to maintain or develop human resources. As a principle, it is to be expected that there are situations when the regional human resources is high as a consequence of mechanisms of internal, intra-county production, or of attraction from the outside, from other counties, of the people with high values of educational, sanitary and professional capital. Cluj, for instance, represents the category of counties capable of developing from the inside very many stocks of human resources: its educational - sanitary infrastructure is among the best in the country, under the circumstances when its migratory attraction is relatively reduced. In the same sequence are the counties of Mureş, Prahova and Argeş. The predominantly external development of the human resources seems to be specific to the counties of Braşov, Timiş, Hunedoara and Constanța. These are characterized by relatively higher levels of immigration than those of sanitary – educational infrastructure.

Not only the development of the infrastructure for health and education, but also the migratory attraction has a significance of investment for the human resources. The arrival of an increased number of people in a county implies, firstly, the supplementary providence of new jobs and of new living spaces. In other words, immigration can be considered in terms of a series of investments for jobs and dwellings. Within the centralized system of the socialist economy, such investments had a state characteristic. After 1989, along with the development of the market economy, they are gradually transferred to the private sector. In this context, the counties of great immigration appear as environments favouring investments which stimulates the development of the human resources.

Irrespective of the migrating attraction and of the infrastructure for health and education, the age of county urbanization acts as a specific factor of favourizing the development of human resources. The more the population in the territory of reference has been exposed to the effects of urbanization throughout a longer period of time, the greater the possibility that its stock of human resources to be more developed.

Moldavia remains a disfavoured area as far as the development of human resources is concerned even when the migration effects of age of urbanization and of infrastructure for education and healthcare controlled or removed by statistical procedures. How exactly is such an influence exerted is a question that requires specific analyses. The standard answer in terms of regional culture is far from being satisfactory, given the very large range of culture.

Rural – Urban Differentiations

The human resources within the town environment is clearly superior to the rural one, as far as education, health conditions and the general stock of information broadcast through mass-media channels or mail - phone are concerned.

What differentiates historical regions is especially the human resources of rural environment: counties outside the Carpathian arch, from Moldavia, Muntenia, Dobrogea and Oltenia, differs from the inside of the Carpathian arch – Transylvania, Banat, Crişana – Maramureş, especially in the rural environment. The stock of human resources is superior mainly for the latter.

Beyond the picture that the data give at county level, a series of surprises are encountered. Constanța, for instance, appears as a very good situation if it is valued as a county, on the whole (rank 35 on a scale from the minimum human resources to the maximum human resources). The villages of Constanța are poorly situated as far as the human resources stock goes, comparative to Botoşani, but inferior to those in Tulcea or in Călăraşi and Ialomița.

Cultural Areas as Regions of Maximum Homogeneity

Regional social life evolves not only according to the distribution of human resources. The economic growth rate, the belief structures and the natural environment are also important coordinates that shape up large clusters of behaviours and opinions.

The cultural areas in Romania consist of socio-culturally similar county conglomerates that satisfy the requirement of top complexity and homogeneity. The cultural profile of a county may be identified according to the rural growth rate, the urban growth rate, the amount of orthodox-oriented population, the proportion of farming soil among the totality of county agricultural land   and the historical affiliation region (7 dichotomic variables, corresponding to historical regions other than Bucharest).

The main classifying hypothesis maintains that counties of the same historical region can resemble to one another the more as:

- the closer the values for the urban growth DEVURBJ indexes;

- the closer the values for the rural growth DEVCOMJ indexes;

- the greater the similitude of belief with the population;

- the more common the farming practice of the same areal;

The expected cultural areas result from combining certain indirect indicators of the cultural orientation. Their status resembles that of social relations, as defined by Max Weber (expected social interactions). The empirical profiles shaped around the 11 indicators appreciate the inner cultural profiles of the county conglomerates. Moreover, the expected area feature comes from the diffusion of the boundaries, matching the fuzzy multitude feature inherent to the subcomponents of a cultural area. In terms of population inhabiting the same areal there will be a higher cultural similitude than with individuals inhabiting different areals.

Consequent to using the classifying indicators, the cultural areas can be viewed as a result of overlapping five types of different maps, shaped around criteria such as historical region, farming region, rural growth, urban growth and confessional structure. Their prevailing cultural feature is conspicuous because 8 of the 11 constituent indicators (7 historical regions and the amount of orthodox population) are explicit cultural relevance indicators.

The Regional Development Policy – The legal and Institutional Framework

The farming regions, as natural frameworks of cultural areas, have distinct profiles not only by means of agricultural land usage – farming soils, pastures and hayfields, vineyards and orchards – but also by the land exploitation markers. In the Central Romanian Plateau, in 1996, over 45% of single-owned land was farmed by agricultural family associations or companies. A similar situation existed also in Dunărea de Jos farming region, where the percentage of leased land prevailed.

The most highly structured conglomerate in Muntenia is made of Teleorman – Giurgiu – Ialomița – Călăraşi. Those are poor farming counties, with an increased confessional homogeneity. The separation between Argeş – Dâmbovița – Prahova and Brăila – Buzău is made rather on bordering criteria, whereof the latter's rural growth is lagging behind that of the former.

The five counties in North Muntenia - Argeş, Dâmbovița, Prahova, Buzău and Brăila - belong to a single cluster. Their separation into two conglomerates or different cultural areas makes for a quality – theory kind of option, supported by the bordering importance insofar as cultural phenomena. The inter-bordering counties of Buzău and Brăila are bumper areas for three historical regions. Each of them, however, bears strong specific marks that rightfully qualify them as socio-cultural unicates/exclusives. They form a sort of residual conglomerate within Muntenia, as 'rebel' cases with regard to Argeş – Dâmbovița – Prahova or Călăraşi – Ialomița – Giurgiu and Teleorman. Buzău county is closer to the first conglomerate in terms of profile, while Brăila is closer to the second one. As for its urban growth, Brăila takes to the northern rather than the southern conglomerate; in return, Buzău is closer to the northern one in terms of agricultural profile, while as rural growth closes in rather on the southern poverty. This dissimilitude proves that a cluster type of analysis cannot solve the regional distribution issue.

The socio-cultural regions are of an expected kind, with relatively vague boundaries; different research viewpoints may lead to different allotting solutions. The two counties belonging to the extreme North-East Muntenia, viewed here as one cultural area, will present a different regional identity when classified according to their farming features.

The separation of North and South Oltenia is rather geographic, the North being a high altitude area and the South predominantly a plain. Consequently, the cultural differences between the North and the South will rather emerge from the geographical conditions. Furthermore, the influence of Ardeal will be stronger in the North of Oltenia than in its South.

Transylvania is structured in cultural areas depending on the axis of confession and ethnicity and according to the growth factor. The best-developed conglomerates are Braşov – Sibiu and Cluj – Mureş, but their growth pattern is different. The urban growth is higher in Cluj – Mureş, while their rural growth is close to the national average. As a peculiarity, there is a large disparity between the very high urban growth of Cluj and its severe rural problems. In exchange, the growth rates are relatively comparably high both for urban and rural Braşov – Sibiu area, with the lowest rate for Alba and Hunedoara.

Because of their identification by means of a high measurement power set of indicators, with a strong time inertia, the cultural areas herein described may have a great temporal stability.

The cultural units hereby introduced, as cultural areas are the expected, diffuse boundary areas and their structural degree is different. Every historical region has at least one maximum structuring area. This happens with Teleorman – Giurgiu – Ialomița – Călăraşi in Muntenia, with Botoşani – Vaslui in Moldova, or Covasna – Harghita, Braşov – Sibiu and Sălaj – Bistrița - Năsăud in Transylvania. The research lines operating different stratifications from the ones implied by cultural areas should avoid the risk of ignoring the outstanding relevance of the afore-mentioned core – areas.

 As with any kind of conglomerate – type unit, by means of cluster analysis, the distribution of counties across cultural areas must be considered relative to values conditioned by classification

indicators, by the distance appreciation method and by the aggregation method. When modified, these conditioning parameters trigger relatively different configurations. Depending to the minor method variations, this instability of results account for the rather heuristic nature of the cultural areas. However, is is worth mentioning that core cultural areas are relatively independent of minor variations in distribution methods.

The four quantitative variables instrumental to cultural area county distribution – urban growth, rural growth, orthodox population proportion and available farmland – will secure a correct prediction of county allotment upon areas, to a degree of 75 % of cases. The most heterogeneous conglomerates, which are not 100 % predictable, consist in: Galați – Iaşi, Dolj – Olt – Mehedinți, Alba – Hunedoara, Bistrița - Năsăud – Sălaj, Maramureş – Satu - Mare, Arad – Bihor, Timiş – Caraş - Severin. If the historical region were to be included among the predictors, the error rate would drop below 25 %.

Intra-Carpathian counties are joined in a configuration of five conglomerates. As expected, when not restricted to preserve historical province boundaries, Timiş forms a unitary group with Arad; the Harghita – Covasna unit holds through; Hunedoara qualifies for the same similitude conglomerate as Braşov – Sibiu; Cluj and Mureş counties stick together, but are joined by the ones of Bihor, Sălaj and Satu - Mare.

The core – areas registered by classification with all the counties are preserved in the new analysis as well, with respect to extra-Carpathian counties only. The county of Olt adds to Ialomița – Călăraşi – Giurgiu – Teleorman; Buzău adds to Argeş – Dâmbovişa – Prahova and together will compose a highly compacted area in North Muntenia; Brăila appears to be closer to Galați, the southern Moldavian neighbour. This new classification highlights the peculiarity of Dolj County, which rather rallies with Galați and Brăila than with other counties in Oltenia.

The segment – oriented classification into intra - and extra - Carpathian provinces has the disadvantage of triggering conglomerates which, although homogenous on the inside, frequently blend within themselves non – bordering territorial units, situated considerably apart in terms of distance, wherein the area – different county contingency is fundamental to cultural analyses.

Poverty/Community Growth in Rural Areas

The poorest villages are the ones situated either away from a European road or too far from the nearest town. Obviously, isolation means poverty. The strongest impact of isolation can be noticed with the community human resources. Where the village are isolated the educational asset is lower and the labour force is more involved in agriculture.

Villages in Moldova and Oltenia are visibly poorer than the ones in Muntenia, even if control is attempted towards the outcome of demographic composition, the position near towns or the county growth level. Under similar circumstances, villages in Banat and Crişana – Maramureş are wealthier than the ones in Muntenia.

Remoteness to a town matters mostly to human resources. The closer to town the village is situated, the higher its availability of human resources. This is an ordinary consequence to the fact that, under such circumstances, the costs of education and medical assistance are lower due to increased urban accessibility.

The cultural areas defined in the previous subchapter have extremely conspicuous rural growth/poverty profiles. Maximum rural poverty is noticeable in the Botoşani – Vaslui area. The three cultural areas of Moldova are identified by the highest degree of poverty than in any conglomerate of any other historical region. Inside rural Moldova there is a clear break between the

maximum poverty eastern area and the western one. Oltenia is the country's second historical region to display the same homogeneity of rural poverty as Moldova. Viewed from the perspective of rural growth rates the province of Muntenia is the most heterogeneous one, with a developed North and a poor South – East. The highest rural growth levels are in Transylvania, Banat, Crişana, Maramureş and Ilfov. The largest of these regions, Transylvania, is far from being homogenous, as frequently and incorrectly one assumes.

The disparity between the Braşov – Sibiu area and the Sălaj – Bistriţa – Năsăud is extremely significant. Practically, it has an amplitude that follows immediately after the disparity between the cultural areas of Moldavia. The idea that Transylvania can be dealt with as a whole from the point of view of the growth level of its counties is a deceptive "guide", which leads either to prejudices, or recognition or dishonesty.

Approaching rural poverty on cultural areas also brings into the foreground inconsistent cases, pictures mostly different from the clichés that started functioning at the level of public image in relation to the maximum poverty areas. The cultural area of Southern Muntenia, consisting of the counties of Giurgiu, Teleorman, Ialomiţa and Călăraşi is well – known as one of maximum poverty, in the very neighbourhood of the situation of Moldavia. In fact, it is about an inconsistent poverty area. The counties of Southern Muntenia are very poor as far as the human resources is concerned. Their population has an extremely reduced stock of education and a very bad health condition. Otherwise, as far as the infrastructure and the quality of social – demographical life are concerned, things appear much better than in many other cultural areas of the country. From this latter point of view, Southern Muntenia is in a better situation than the Cluj – Mureş group from Transylvania, for instance. Another case of strong inconsistency of the regional growth status is registered in Northern Oltenia, in the counties of Gorj and Vîlcea. Here the level of the regional human resources is relatively high, in comparison to that of Cluj – Mureş or Arad – Bihor. The infrastructure of the two counties with a predominantly hilly - mountainous landscape is extremely bad.

The comparison between the two neighbouring areas, Braşov – Sibiu in Southern Transylvania and Argeş – Dîmboviţa – Prahova in Northern Muntenia, reveals other cases of inconsistency of the growth levels as well as the deceptive character of the unique growth indexes. If we exclude from the analysis Bucharest as a region with an exception status, the two counties in Southern Transylvania have the best situation in the country as far as the human resources and the physical infrastructure are concerned. The southern Muntenia region has got a rich stock of human resources just as the one in Southern Transylvania does. The differences between the two neighbours derive from their situation as far as the other two dimensions of the community – regional growth are concerned. The villages in Northern Moldavia have a very bad infrastructure but a good social – demographical situation. In exchange, the villages of Braşov – Sibiu are characterized by a good infrastructure but very low values of the quality index of the social – demographical life.

The maps of poverty/community growth, which are overlapped by cultural area outlines, indicate the fact that the diversity of the growth level of the cultural areas is more reduced than their diversity as far as the social - cultural profiles are concerned. The two areas of Eastern Moldavia – Botoşani – Vaslui and Iaşi – Galaţi are clear groups of poor communities. The towns of Eastern Moldavia (Iaşi, Botoşani, Vaslui, Dorohoi, Roman, Huşi, etc.) are islands with a reduced power of irradiation in great rural poverty. As we descend towards the Danube and the Black Sea Coast area, the power of irradiation of the Eastern towns increases: Galaţi and Constanţa are cities around which the village growth rate is higher. The poverty in Eastern Moldavia extends from the Siret to the Carpathians and mostly within Bacău county, this is like Iaşi an insular city exporting growth around itself.

The urban and rural communities social growth map, the first of its kind in Romanian, reveals that the main community poverty gaps lie in Eastern Moldavia, Dobrogea, South – West Oltenia and Bistriţa – Năsăud in Transylvania. The cultural area of Southern Muntenia – Teleorman, Giurgiu, Călăraşi and Ialomiţa is extremely obvious regarding rural poverty. The situation is different when considering the growth scales in terms of both urban and rural communities: Bucharest is not an insular city, but along with Ploieşti and Piteşti, will induce growth rays to large areas in Muntenia.

The cultural areas of this country evidentiate differences not only by means of growth profiles but also by causal conditioning structures associated with the specific growth rates of their villages.

Nationwide a village tends to be the more developed the larger the population, with a lower age average. Such growth is enabled by being located closer to European roads, close to the counties' centre, close to a large city, by intense animal husbandry and by being located in hilly – mountainous regions. The accessibility to highly circulated roads as well as a relatively younger population seem to be the most important factors, of the before – mentioned series, that foster growth. Thus the information regarding village growth can be stated.

There are considerable deviations from the dominant national model in terms of ecological growth conditioning with regard to cultural areas. On the one hand there are areas where community poverty does not depend on ecological factors or it does but to a lesser extent. Such is the case with the Arad – Bihor conglomerate and to a smaller degree with the Covasna – Harghita and Dobrogea areas. Dobrogea's deviation from the national model is easily explained given its exceptional location within the eco – system shaped by the Danube Delta and the Black Sea. Furthermore, Covasna and Harghita have a substantial growth profile mainly influenced by the large proportion of Hungarian ethnicity (75 % in Covasna and 85 % in Harghita) according to the 1992 population census. On the other hand, there are counties the growth profile of which, such as Southern Muntenia's cultural area is largely dependent on ecological factors. The poorest villages thereof are remote from large cities or county centres, inhabited by elderly people and rather agriculture – based than animal – husbandry oriented.

An interesting case outlining the poverty limit is represented by the impact of village location upon county borders. Remote villages tend to be poorer than others only in three cultural areas: Western Moldavia, Alba – Hunedoara, and Cluj – Mureş, all these areas have no boundaries to coincide with the national borders while their landscape is largely shaped by mountains or hills, which renders accessibility more difficult. The only area where the county boundary villages are wealthier is Southern Muntenia, where a location on county boundary frequently coincides with being closer to Bucharest or to the Danube, to growth fostering factors under certain circumstances.

Animal husbandry is a factor fostering village growth in every respect, especially across plain areas such as Botoşani – Vaslui, Iaşi – Galaţi and Southern Muntenia. There is only one region where global village growth and animal husbandry growth are negatively corroborated, such being the case with Sălaj and Bistriţa – Năsăud where in the poorest villages possess a large number of animals. The big number of emigrants is associated with the strong development of the village. This fact is visible especially in the hilly regions. For the plain areas like Southern Muntenia or Southern Oltenia, or Eastern Moldavia, the demographic growth of the village is not a factor that favours local development.

Migration as a Regional – Community Experience

The differences in living standards between communities and regions are far from being background aspects, or strata of social reality that matter only ultimately and in the long run. Status disparities are perceived radically, generating satisfaction – dissatisfaction experiences, life

expectations, migration decisions. Examining the internal migration patterns in Romania, after 1989, one can realise the impact that community and regional differentiations, along with the transition changes, will have on social behaviour. The present subchapter undertakes to explain post communist transition in Romania.

Stages

We are in possession of relatively detailed data with regard to the internal migration over the last 30 years or so (1968 – 1996). During this period the most obvious change has been in volume – which has been the number of the persons that have changed their residence or , more exactly, that of the migration events. Depending on the "break" points number in the annual series of the total migration figures, we can identify four periods: 1968 – 1972, 1973 – 1982, 1983 – 1989, 1989 – present days. The maximum intensity of the phenomenon was registered in the period 1973 – 1982, with an annual average of migration events of 337,000 and a total migration rate between 1.3% - 1.8%. Compulsive industrialization, accompanied by strong psychosocial effects, by social contamination represented the main factors supporting the population reshuffle in that period. In the whole Romanian internal migration history (except for the compulsive migration periods) there have been only two years in which the total volume of residence changes between localities exceeded 370,000 per year, respectively between the years 1973 – 1974.

After 1982, the whole period of the 80's was influenced by a strong decrease in the internal migration. The generalized crisis of the communist system fully resides in this reduction.

The annual average of residence changes was of 217,000 between the years 1983 – 1989. The phenomenon registered the lowest intensity in its history after 1950. The last year of the communist regime was also the year of the minimum of internal migration after 1950. In the first year after the chute of the communist regime, in 1990, the internal migration was almost four times greater than in the previous years. It was a natural recovery from the totalitary years. Things happened in a similar way as the recovery of the birth rate in the post - war years. Tens of thousands of commuters who lived in towns took the opportunity offered by the administrative liberalization which had taken place and settled into towns permanently. Immediately after the recovery, starting with 1991, the phenomenon registers an annual average volume of about 275,000 migration events, approximately 50,000 more than in the 80's. In the 90's, the phenomenon seems to have a rather oscillatory intensity, with relatively low amplitude between 1.1 % - 1.3 %.

Residential Environment

The changes in the internal migration volume took place differently from one stage to another. The sudden decrease that the phenomenon suffered between 1983 – 1989 as compared to the previous period of the 70's was not accompanied by any change into the major structures. The village - town fluctuation, with an approximate rate of 55 % of the total migration volume remained predominantly. The village – village as well as the town – town fluctuations also maintained very close rates in both stages. After 1990, a spectacular restructuring of the phenomenon was registered. The rural – urban migration suffers a sudden reduction, to the approximately one third of all residence change events.

The most relevant increase belongs to the town – village migration. Its rate is about three times higher than that of the previous 80's. The enhancement in urban unemployment as well as the restitution of agricultural lands by the law 18/1991 were the main factors that prompted the long-term trend change. In fact, it looks like a more general regularity of reactivation of the fluctuations

with a rural destination during the crises periods within modern societies. In the 80's, under circumstances of communist economic collapse, the rural – rural migration undergoes a major increase, both as a ratio of the total migration and definitely as a phenomenon. In exchange, the most important increase of the 90's took place in the town – village migration flow.

As a consequence of the reactivated flows with rural destination, in 1996 we witnessed a unique situation in the history of Romanian migration in the last 30 years: the four fluctuations structured with the urban and rural residential environments have a relatively equal ratio. The migration events field, defined as a consequence of the residential environments of origin and destination, undergoes a maximum dissipation.

Internal Migration – Age and Sex

Youth between 20 and 30 years of age represent the most mobile population segments as far as the residential aspect is concerned. Age migration rates have maximum indexes for this interval. The maximum intensity period of population flows, between 1973 and 1982 started with 54 % migration rates for the 20 – 24 age group. At the end of the 80's that rate is reduced to half. On a long term, it becomes conspicuous that the migration phenomenon tends to affect the older age groups. Thus, it is significant that the 15 – 19 years old youth's propensity towards migration decreased to 22 % in 1968 and to 6.4% in 1989. A slight enhancement in the intensity of the phenomenon was noticed after 1990. The tendency can be related to the increase in the average schooling period, permanent migration being specific to the beginning of youth's involvement in life. Until 1988, migration rates for 20 – 24 years old youth were higher than the rates for the upper 25 – 29 years of age group. At the end of the 80's and throughout the 90's, the two segments of youth population came to have relatively equal migration rates. Irrespective of the migration stage, of the intensity of the phenomenon on the whole, the propensity for residence change stays steadier for the 30 – 34 years of age group.

The maximum female migration rate for village-to-village migrants was registered in 1996. This type of migration revealed a female ratio of 60 %. The most balanced sex-based ratios are particular to the urban – rural flows, with equal male and female rates.

The variation in female migration on flow types is indicative of the dominant motivation. Thus, the best example is the 76 % female ratio of the inter–village migrants, for the 15 – 24 years of age group. The marital connotation of the residence change is clearly outlined. Moreover, persistence can be noticed inside the cultural model regarding the establishment of the new couple in the bridegroom's village and not in the bride's.

The migrant segment with the highest male ratio (58 %) is registered in 1996 and it belongs to the 45 – 54 years old persons who came from town into village. This finding could represent a good reason for the hypothesis that the village returning migration affected mainly the male population at the middle stage of their active life.

The link between the family life cycle and migration is the most easily perceived as far as the village – town residence changes are concerned. On the whole, the female ratio represents 54 % of the migration flow. However, its age subgroups are strongly differentiated.

The female ratio is 66 % for the group with the maximum propensity towards marriage. The subsequent age groups, up to 54 years of age, are dominated by males. After 55 years of age, at retirement age, and in conjunction with the increase of the number of widows due to the death of aged males, the female ratio of the village - town migrants grows again up to 60 %.

Migration Distances

Distance as measure of the transport cost, continues to be an important compulsory impediment in the way of migration: transports out of the urban are made on longer distances than those out of the rural; the maximum propensity towards long distance transports is identified within the 25 – 34 age group.

After 1990, the tendency to reduce migration distances has increased considerably. In 1990, 47% of all residence changes were signalled within the same county. Consequently, year-by-year, the respective ratio enhanced up to 59% of all migrants in 1996. This enhancement is especially achieved because of the reduction of migration between historical regions.

Historical Regions

Over 20 years ago, at the 1977 census, in terms of migration lifespan, Muntenia, Moldavia and Oltenia were the historical provinces registering a negative balance, a greater number of ins than outs. The same migratory balance characterized these provinces in mid 90's. Net migration, signifying a maximum power of residential rejection, was registered in Moldavia. The Banat, with a maximum capacity of attraction, was at the other pole. Bucureşti and Dobrogea remain important centres of attraction. For these regions, however, emigration and immigration have close values. They are regions with an intense in and out migratory circuit. Surprisingly, at first sight, the most significant emigration rates are identified for Bucharest and Dobrogea, greater than for the traditionally poor regions (Moldavia, Oltenia, Muntenia). The interpretative hypothesis that can explain these figures is that of a returning migration of considerable intensity. Anyway, as it is noticeable from the following paragraphs, at least in the case of Bucharest, there are solid arguments supporting this statement.

Inter-County Flows

The configuration of the inter-county migration flows between 1995 – 1996 greatly reflects the structure of the inter-county migration from the 70's and 80's. Bucharest continues to be, by far, the country's most important migration centre. The map of the migratory trends for 1995 – 1996 indicates clearly that the capital – city is also the main centre of attraction of Muntenia. Bucharest stands out as a centre of social – economic convergence for all the counties of this historical region. Bucharest's attraction is so great that not only all Moldavia's counties gravitates around it, but also two counties from southern Moldavia – Galați and Vrancea – and a county from Dobrogea (Constanța).

Oltenia appears as a region with relatively closed migratory circuits: the main migrant flows cover the circuit Olt – Dolj – Gorj – Mehedinți – Dolj. Only Vîlcea seems to gravitate more towards Sibiu than towards Oltenia. Actually, it has always been a cultural confluence county at the communication crossroads between Ardeal, Oltenia and Muntenia. The contrast between Moldavia's and Muntenia's migration patterns is to be taken into account. The first province is characterized by a relatively closed circuit migration between the counties it consists of. In exchange, Muntenia appears clearly as a unipolar migration network, with Bucharest as a network leader.

Timiş continues to be an important immigration centre. Its attraction capacity is exerted not only over the neighbouring counties – Caraş – Severin and Hunedoara. This is also the place where long distance migrants, from Suceava and Maramureş, settle.

SURD, BENGA, ZOTIC and ERCHEDI

On the whole, Moldavia remains an emigration region, with flows leaving from Iaşi to Constanţa, from Suceava to Timiş and from Galaţi and Bacău to Bucharest. Iaşi stands out as the main attraction centre only for Vaslui and Neamţ.

In mid 90's, Romanian inter-county migration follows an almost classical pattern: most of the departures take place in the low developed counties, having a big agricultural population ratio, towards the developed counties. The longer the distance between origin and destination, the lower the flow's volume.

Return to Poor Counties

Urban – rural return migration seems to have reached the maximum for the Central Romanian Plain counties – Teleorman, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa şi Călăraşi. All four flows leaving from Bucharest towards the respective counties had each of them a great volume of over 1400 migration events for the period 1995 – 1996. We are talking about migration trends that clearly swerve the rule *destination is more developed than origin.* Or, such a swerving cannot be explained but through the existence of a context favourable to urban – rural returning migration. Generally speaking, the country's poorest counties have received mostly immigrants from much more developed counties. In 1995, for instance, Botoşani county registered the lowest value of *the development index* of all the country's counties. Between 1995 – 1996, the total number of the immigrants coming from other counties to Botoşani was 6027. Of these, 96.2 % arrived from counties much more developed than Botoşani and only 3.8 % from counties with a development level close to that of Botoşani.

All 5 counties situated at the maximum poverty limit – Botoşani, Vaslui, Teleorman, Giurgiu and Călăraşi – have received migrants mostly from developed counties. Immigration mostly from developed countries towards poor counties can only be explained by residence return. Although we do not know the return migration ratio, the hypothesis of a direct proportionality relation between this type of flow and that of movement from developed counties towards less developed counties seems reasonable.

An exception of the rule "poor county – immigration mostly from developed counties" is valid for two counties of Transylvania – Sălaj and Bistriţa – Năsăud. Their development level is average - medium, but the immigration ratio from richer counties is over 60%, as is the case with the very poor counties. An overall county examination allows the hypothesis that the urban – rural return migration was extremely intense in the poor counties situated in the neighbourhood of three big urban centres – Bucureşti, Cluj and Iaşi. The phenomenon can be considered as being part of a more general process of reorganizing the centre – outskirts relation under the transition circumstances of post – communist Romania. In the convergence areas of these three big cities maximum fostering conditions are to be found for the return migration: traditional centres of urban attraction enter a job offer crisis and the rejection effect is primarily exerted upon newly arrived migrants coming from nearby poor villages with a predominantly agricultural profile. The urban – rural return migration can be defined indirectly by examining population flows from developed counties to the underdeveloped ones, with regional particularities. The distance is minimum for underdeveloped counties in the South closing in on Bucharest and minimum for the underdeveloped counties in Moldavia.

Town – Village Returns

According to an agricultural poll made 1996 (Şandu, 1997) comprising a hundred and twenty villages in Romania, around 6 % of the adult village inhabitants had lived for a while in towns before 1989. The number of those who had given up commuting was higher before1989, about 14 % of

the village adults. This evidentiates the fact that the shock of post - communist economic restructuring had repercussions mainly on oscillatory migration. The increased unemployment in the urban state sector, firstly affected the commuters, the rural labour force that worked in town. The returning coasts were smaller for those who had been commuting than for the rural who were already living in towns. Consequently, the intensity of the return was higher for the commuters than for the former village – town migrants. The ones who had given up commuting after 1989 were aged 47 on the average in 1996, but the ones who changed their urban residence going back to villages were much younger with 42 on the average. Men formed the majority (66 % of the returning migrants and 73 % of the commuters who gave up working in towns).

The comparison between non-migrant village adult population and the former migrants leads to the idea that the return migration was more intense among young males whose education was relatively high within the rural context). The phenomenon took place in villages around towns situated in underdeveloped counties because the economic declined of urban industry was primarily felt here. The urban rejection forces favourable to the return migration were thus stronger in these counties. A second feature regards the economic status whence the migration was made. For instance, the villages of Vaslui and Botoşani have been a privileged reservoir for the rural – urban migration, consequently the return probability was higher here because more persons have left from here. The land area in return households was not a significant factor for a village return incentive.

Conclusions

The entire chapter is a sort of "regional dialogue" in Romania: historical regions, development regions and subregions, farming regions and cultural areas. There were also ethnical identity regions, sometimes consistently overlapping cultural areas. All these make for essential items in this debate, to the process of local – regional   identity reconstruction, in the attempt to identify the best carvings for development. The presentation showed that from different perspectives one may get different regionalisations. Which are, then, the best regions? There is a simple answer: there are no such criteria as to identify such regions. What one may call region is nothing but an aggregation of elementary territorial units, (either places, or counties as a whole) with a function of knowledge or social – human action. The way of regionalisation, of defining the regions, is directly dependent on the function or object implicitly or explicitly pursued.

In the semi – official acceptation, stated by the governmental document known as The green charta of Regional growth policy in Romania, the development regions are made up of counties and places subsidiary to them, with the facilitating function of regional development policies. They were thus defined by experts, accepted by politicians and public clerks, in order to allow for the implementation of policies to diminish the growth differences and to maximise the competitiveness of the regions. Because of the remarkable speed with which such ideas were disseminated one must not conclude that only the eight regions are at stake, since as such, any region or group may be targeted as development region, according to the development objectives. Currently, counties represent the maximum relevance territories for regional development policies, but also for understanding the social life regional variables. By definition, development regions are territorial configurations with pragmatic functions to organise certain actions. To change them into effective regional development mechanisms will take much more time.

The opposing viewpoint of such definitional pragmatism stands for a compulsively natural conglomeration, historically constituted or for a high degree of similitude components. Certain mental ethnicity constructs will follow such a line of thinking. Alas, this is not the case with too many public debates. Evaluations must be made with care and scientifically, according to each individual case. The regions and their regionalisations under the public scrutiny still have something sacred

from which one must take distance… The political discourse on regional issues has a rather poor link with the regional analysis discourse.

In most cases, however, there is a mere level confusion. A useful territorial carving, for an ethnic or religious identity construction   will not necessarily be useful to development actions. Of course, it takes time, and serious research, including public debates in order to overcome the general context still tributary to majority and – equally – minority intolerance.

The cultural areas that we identify are maximum economic, social and cultural homogeneity regions, within the historical regions. Defining them according to a reduced number of variables (as mentioned earlier) gives them an analysis viability of higher proportion. They worked excellently serving for poll samples, in demographic and sociological analysis. Between cultural areas, with regions and sub-regions, there are considerable overlappings.

In the initial presentation version, cultural areas appeared as modernity regions. The classification criteria for counties highlight a set of three factors: democultural modernity, social modernity and plain culture complex. The reviewed polling data unmistakably confirm that among criteria such as objective and subjective cultural area delineation there are strong associations. Particularly, the community or liberal population's ideologies seem to have cultural area identity. A maximum level of liberal individualistic orientation is to be noticed in Brasov and Sibiu counties, where the social and demographic modernities are high. The strongest rejection of such liberal ideology is noticeable in South Moldova and North Oltenia, where these values turn to conservatorism.

This is to say that the intervention of a maximal state is largely embraced by people of slow religious inclination but with strong disbelief in its mechanisms, with a considerable distance from western values of integration and a maximum deference towards the state as the ultimate.

If a comparison is to be made only among Moldova's cultural areas, a clear polarity arises between community conservationsim of Botoşani and Vaslui, and individualistic liberalism in Western Moldova (Suceava, Neamţ, Bacău, Vrancea). The Galaţi – Iaşi area has quite a low ideological profile. Inside Muntenia there is an obvious opposal between conservatory South and liberal North, where the liberal individualism of Southern Transylvania pervades the Northern Muntenia.

The two cultural areas of Oltenia are relatively homogenous from the ideological profile viewpoint. Between North and South Oltenia there are no marked differences of liberal or community ideology. In case of a largely considered Transylvania, with Banat and Crişana – Maramureş included, differentiated profiles are also to be distinguished. The pragmatic or liberal individualism is at its highest in Covasna and Harghita. Community – oriented pragmatism is specific to Banat. The Alba – Hunedoara region is identified by the rejection of individualistic liberalism in favour of community liberalism as well as of individualistic conservatorism. In Sibiu and Braşov, dominant is the individualist liberalism, but of a less intense type than in Covasna and Harghita. The Cluj – Mureş area is one of the most balanced, with very close percentages of followers for each of the six types of ideological orientations. The Maramureş – Satu-Mare area seems to be dominated by the liberal or conservative type community ideologies.

The historical regions continue to manifest themselves like cultural matrixes of great depth. Their relevance for the regional development policies is considerably conditioned by the great variety of growth levels of the constitutive territorial units. One cannot assert that sometimes they are not relevant to such policies. However, lately, they are in a serious competition against two "partners" – the development regions as well as the cultural areas. The development regions tend to gradually take over the function that historical regions used to have as a significant term within the development policies. The cultural areas are becoming a necessary correlative for the scientific analysis of the country's social – regional space. Agricultural regions have proved their efficiency in

the analysis of the rural – agricultural growth processes and phenomena. One of the factors that explain the long-term relevance of the historical regions is the conjunction of their cultural profile with the natural one of the agricultural regions.

Behind many of the region patterns with which we operate in sociology or in social topics-based debates there are actually strong proofs of the distribution of human resources at regional level. The differences in the type and level of education represent the foundation of the whole theory of regional social differences. There is powerful empirical evidence indicating the fact that the stocks of educational capital guide most of the regional health and material capitals.

The great number of regional concepts promoted in this work might seem excessive at some point. Why is there a need for "historical regions", "cultural areas", "development regions", "development sub-regions", as well as "agricultural regions"? Certainly, reality has various aspects, and must be pictured in the most appropriate patterns. Are the regional concepts promoted in this work such appropriate patterns? A satisfactory proof that could prompt a „yes" answer is given by the manner in which they work towards the greater knowledge of community poverty phenomena. Cultural areas and development sub-regions prove to be extremely efficient from this point of view. Within the frame of the proposed conceptual structure we stress a whole series of particularities of rural community poverty, impossible to notice "with the naked eye". One comes to conclude with a higher degree of certainty that "the road" and "the young man" are too vital components of rural development. An important addition to these factors is represented by animal husbandry activities. The variation inside the ecological equations of the rural development from one area to another is extremely loaded with social meanings.