

SPATIAL PROFILE OF POVERTY. CASE STUDY: THE NORTH-EASTERN DEVELOPMENT REGION IN ROMANIA*

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Abstract

In the present study the authors try to emphasize the interdependent relations that are established between space and poverty, as well as the modalities through which poverty policies can be optimized and implemented at the territorial systems level in accordance to the polycentric development model.

The first goal of the study is to understand the way in which the complexity of the territory, in its structure and relations, influences in unequal ways the territorial pattern of poverty and development. The concept of territorial poverty that we use in the present study transcends the usual connotation of poverty as a simple lack of different kind of resources towards the incapacity of the system to offer a wide range of impulses and solutions to the encountered problems and thus induce a state of underdevelopment.

The second goal is to understand in which ways the polycentric development theory can play a role in reducing poverty. In this sense the authors created a poverty index, and based on this index a polycentric development model was created for the North-Eastern region. This polycentric development model has direct implications for policy makers, as it highlights the areas that require the most attention and the development pole that should influence its development. By taking into consideration the results of this study, the next logical step for policy makers is to implement the necessary measures by considering the relations between the development pole and the underdeveloped area that is under its influence area. In this respect tailor-fit policies and measures can be applied in the effort to reduce poverty levels.

Keywords: territorial management, poverty, polycentric development strategy, space-indifferent and space influenced, territorial disparities.

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1. Introduction

Poverty and underdevelopment are evidently a social phenomenon as human individuals are the essential part and the key element in its structure and relations. But this fact doesn't minimize the spatial aspect in the implication of poverty. In the last decades at EU level an ever more important focus has been put upon cohesion, generally, and on territorial cohesion, specifically, by reducing poverty (European Commission, 2010; 1999).

The Leipzig Charter (2007), the ESDP (1999) and the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 (2011) stipulate that the main method for achieving a balanced territorial development should be based upon a polycentric urban structure. This fact reflects the importance given to the territorial aspect in enhancing cohesion (indirectly said, this means also a reduction of poverty).

In this light an important aspect in the relation between territory and poverty is given by understanding the way in which the configuration of the territorial system, its structure and relations influence, in different ways, the territorial distribution of poverty. Knowing these types of relations and pattern is an essential condition for the optimization and implementation of antipoverty policies at a territorial level.

One of the first steps needed in order to link poverty and territory is to understand the way that poverty is conceptualized in relation to space. The attempt to analyze space as a structure enhancing or, on the contrary, blocking flows in the dissipation of various phenomena and processes is not ungrounded at all. Space may thus be interpreted as a dissipative structure (system) (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984) and as an optimally open thermodynamic system (Ianoş, 2000). Moreover, space has emerging properties (Kasinitz, 1999), more than the sum of the individual attributes of the people living there.

The present article tries to individualize the most pauper areas inside this region, revealing thus the priority areas for structural and functional regeneration as part of a polycentric development model.

The authors set a theoretical framework that we consider capable of integrating space as an important factor in generating poverty or enhancing cohesion. After that, a general quantification of poverty is made at EU level, revealing the most pauper regions in EU. As the indicator that sets the general frame is available only at regional level (NUTS 2) and at county level (NUTS 3) a more detailed index is elaborated in order to reveal the inside dynamics (at LAU 2¹, the lowest administrative unit possible). In the next section we compare the results from the poverty index with the theoretical polycentric development model (the poverty index, the polycentric index and model

1 In Eurostat terminology LAU means Local Administrative Units. LAU 2 is the smallest administrative unit in an EU country. In the case of Romania these are: communes, towns and municipalities. LAU 2 units put together form a LAU 1 unit, which is the County (the equivalent of the French Department or the German Kreiss).

are calculated based on our own methodology and statistical data). According to the principles behind the polycentric development, this is the necessary framework that induces balanced development. In the discussion section we underline the role and influence of space upon the territorial distribution of poverty. In the final section of the paper we summarize the main findings and draft some policy recommendations in this regard.

2. Conceptualizing space in relation to poverty and underdevelopment

Roughly, there are two distinct ways to perceive the involvement of space in various matters such as regional and economic development, or, in the particular case of the present study, to reduce poverty in relation to polycentric development. In this respect, two assumptions can serve as starting points:

- a) Space does not have an active role in the conceptualizations of socio-economic processes (Saunders, 1989).
- b) Space has an active role in the conceptualizations of socio-economic processes (Massey, 1984; Brenner, 1999; Harvey, 2009).

The point of view expressed by Saunders and his followers (1989), stating that space is a stage, a framework, where various phenomena and socio-economic processes unfold, produces **space-indifferent** theories and conceptualizations. On the opposite side, those who believe that space is an agent, part of the system, which contributes to those phenomena and socio-economic processes, produce **space-influenced** theories and conceptualizations.

The differences between the two approaches are very important as, in the former view, space is outside the system, and it does not directly interfere in the relations between the components. In the latter view, space is a component of the system, interacting, more or less vigorously, with the other components, bringing its contribution to the emergence of a new status-quo, of new structures, relations and functions.

However, there are also sociologists who acknowledge the importance of space, its dynamic role in structuring society, as well as the role of space in the dynamics of social and economic processes. In this respect, a special attention is given to the role of public policies concerning the territorial systems' dynamics. A series of actions, like decentralization, regionalization and the reduction of political influences in the administrative system, are considered solutions for the optimization of territorial systems' functionality (Mora and Țiclău, 2012).

If the space-influenced conceptualization is considered as the best-suited approach to the goal pursued, the result of this conceptualization is to understand space as a complex, dissipative, discontinuous structure, discretionary and heterogeneous in the reactions it has with the phenomena and processes that act upon it. One may consider that these few elements presented are conclusive in order to enable a conceptualization of space as an important agent in the genesis, dynamics, perpetuation or reduction of poverty.

3. Defining poverty (processes that generate poverty and underdevelopment)

Poverty has been – and still is – measured in countless ways so that the definition of poverty may be unequivocally considered arbitrary (O’Boyle, 1999; Unwin, 2007). In relating space and poverty, the scientific literature also mentions the term of place poverty (Powell, 2001), but the author of that concept only endows it with the meaning of absence of public and community services, so that this concept doesn’t fit the purpose of the present study.

Postmodernist scientists understand poverty, and its emergence, as a social form induced by the processes of economic development (Yapa, 1996; Kay, 2009). This perspective is highlighted also by economists, who attribute an ideological side to it: poverty is a consequence of the absence of economic growth, of free trade and a free market and therefore of the absence of democracy. Sachs (2005) considers that the most important effects of modern economic growth have been the rise of living standards and a bigger gap between the rich and the poor. In other words, economic growth failed to unlock poverty off its path-dependency.

The same conclusion was reached by a team of researchers led by Lobao, who, at the end of a study meant to show whether macro-level policies and theories in the United States during 1970-1990 managed to cut down inequities at the local level. The authors draw the conclusion that inequities at local level and their social determinants modified little despite the Ford-inspired reorganization (Lobao, Rulli and Brown, 1999).

The current situation of under-developed regions is not exclusively the result of these spaces not being in geographic proximity (Torre and Rallet, 2005) of economic concentration centers, but also the result of the fact that these territories were produced as distant (removed) from centers of power. Furthermore, even the central spaces are not homogenous, as they feature severe discontinuities in the large-scale distribution of income levels (Rigg *et al.*, 2009).

Another important aspect is that the tools elaborated to tackle such specific problems, like master plans and territorial development strategies (National Spatial Planning Strategy, County Spatial Planning Strategy, General Urban Plan, Zonal Urban Plan and other master plans) only enhance ambiguity and reduce the impact of decisions assumed by planners, policy-makers and the community. In this regard Dragoș, Neamțu and Cobârzan (2012) consider that the implementation level could be enhanced by including a general procedural administrative law.

Authors such as Harvey (2009), Gotham (2003), Unwin (2007), Rigg *et al.* (2009), Yapa (1996), Shrestha (1997) see the problem of reducing poverty or leveling social inequities by cutting down territorial disparities, by means of a configuration of the space so that administrative and economic relations avoid path dependency and lock-in.

One of the main ideas that stand out from the 2009 World Development Report (WDR) is that a proper territorial configuration can improve efficiency, lower the

costs of transactions and thus stimulate economic growth (World Bank, 2009). It is the view that comes closest to taking into consideration the importance of space in the matter of poverty and underdevelopment. According to ESPON 1.1.1, ESPON GROSSE and other official EU strategies (Leipzig, ESDP, Territorial Agenda of EU 2020, Europe 2020 Strategy), the polycentric development model can be one of the proper territorial configurations mentioned in the WDR report.

However, we must eventually mention the words of de Castro (1977), who reached the conclusion that poverty is a universal phenomenon, unbound either by space or by time. Although poverty is universal, it acts with discrimination, ‘favoring’ the most vulnerable areas. The North-Eastern Development Region in Romania is such an area that proves the precariousness of regional development policies in a space where the relations deepening the state of poverty grow increasingly strong.

In order to assess the intensity of the poverty phenomenon, the present study began with an analysis of indicators at EU scale, in order to frame the phenomenon of poverty into context and in order to realize that this phenomenon tends to expand and cover an increasing number of regions. One of the most relevant indicators (distribution of GDP per capita) ranks North-East Moldova region among the most backward in Europe (Figure 1).

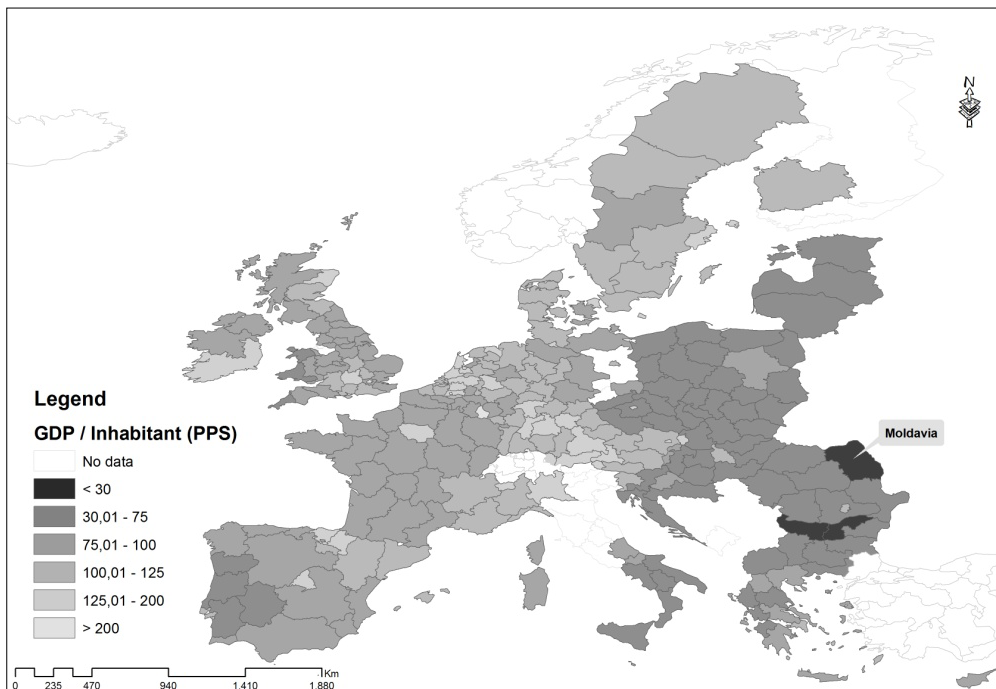


Figure 1: European GDP per Inhabitant 2009 (PPS/inhabitant), percentage of EU 27 average **Source:** Eurostat

The simple analysis of EUROSTAT data reveals the fact that the North-Eastern Development Region (Romania) registers the second lowest GDP per capita (compared to the EU 27 average) distribution values in the entire European Union. Similar

low values are found in the two regions of the neighboring state, Bulgaria, a country that joined the European Union the same year as Romania did.

4. Methodology

Once that the theoretical frame is set, the focus is shifted upon measuring poverty and modeling a polycentric frame that should optimize and enhance territorial cohesion (this implies also reducing poverty).

Why is it important to highlight intra-regional disparities? Because seen from a mezzo-scale (the regional level in this case), the region is seen through average values and the extreme situations remain hidden under this value. Going deeper, at micro-scale (LAU 2 level), a heterogeneous dynamic is revealed, with very strong disparities. This fact is essential since the territorial drivers of development have to be individualized as well as the lagging territorial units. The central idea of the polycentric approach is to transfer development from the development pole to the underdeveloped territories. This is why, it is important to reveal the heterogeneous dynamics existing at LAU 2 level.

North-Eastern development region will be analyzed by developing a poverty index in order to reveal the detailed dynamic of poverty at a lower territorial level (LAU 2). The first hypothesis is that poverty is not homogeneously distributed inside the North-Eastern Development Region, territorial disparities are very strong inside the region and thus poverty levels fluctuate widely, with significant differences between different counties but also between rural and urban areas. The second hypothesis is that there is a strong correlation between the poorest areas inside the region and the polycentric network; this fact means that territories (mostly rural) outside the big cities' influence area are less developed.

The authors choose to develop a poverty index because the poverty rate used by EUROSTAT has no available data at LAU 2 level. At European level statistical data and indicators from the Statistical Office of the European Commission (EUROSTAT) were studied and used. This poverty index is not commonly used at the lowest level of administrative units.

This index was calculated by means of four criteria that group several relative indicators, which describe demographic, economic, infrastructure and living standards matters in the analyzed area.

Among the demographic indicators, we used the ratio of population with stable residence, the ratio of high school graduates, as well as the ratio of the population aged 65 and over. The economic criterion is comprised by the ratio of industry workers of the overall number of employees, the ratio of unemployed in the overall active population, as well as the ratio of people employed in agriculture of the overall active population. The infrastructure criterion incorporates the indicators that concern the ratio of pharmaceutical establishments as well as television subscriptions per 1,000 inhabitants. The living-standard indicators groups: the ratio of the habitable area matched against the overall number of inhabitants, in order to highlight the number

of sqm per inhabitant, the number of patients per physician and the ratio of arrivals and departures in a particular territory compared to its overall population. The indicators were aggregated using the following formula (Ianoş, 1997, pp. 103-110):

$$GDI = 50 + 14(I_1 + I_2 + I_3 + \dots + I_{n-1} - I_n) / n;$$

where, GDI = the value of the general poverty index,

I_1, \dots, I_n = the indicators used in the analysis,

n = the overall number of the indicators analyzed.

We also conducted an analysis of the intensity of the connections between the system of settlements' components, using five criteria: size and demographic attractiveness, economic power and competitiveness, polarization capacity by means of higher-tertiary sector services, the number of lower-rank towns within the area of influence, territorial representativeness and the outlooks for supporting the consolidation of the regional system of settlements. Aggregating these indicators resulted in a polarization capacity index (for the whole table see Annex 1), which was then used to rank the development poles of the North-Eastern Development Region.

Table 1: Polarization capacity index of the main cities of the region

Development Poles	County	Polarization Capacity Index	Category
IAŞI	IAŞI	53.83	National Development Pole
BACĂU	BACĂU	52.29	Regional Development Pole
SUCEAVA	SUCEAVA	52.27	Regional Development Pole
VASLUI	VASLUI	51.93	Regional Development Pole
PIATRA NEAMŢ	NEAMŢ	51.81	Regional Development Pole
BOTOŞANI	BOTOŞANI	51.72	Regional Development Pole

A polycentric system was designed, depending on the polarization capacity index. This system comprises development poles and directions of polarization. Based upon this frame, a territorial management mechanism can be created in order to increase the level of development by transmitting indispensable information required by the system.

The cartographic representations in the present study were created using the ArcGIS 9.3.1 platform, which used the statistical data supplied by local, regional, national and supra-national statistics bureaus (National Statistics Bureau and Eurostat).

5. Main findings

The changes in the political regime in Romania, in late 1989, brought about an amplification of the inter- and intra-county imbalances, upon the emergence of ever more obvious territorial disparities between cities and their surrounding rural areas. These territorial disparities are, for the most part, brought about by certain decisions of a political, economic and social nature. Although the economic decline was quite obvious in certain regions of the country, several economic decisions were made and passed down from central authority, with the goal of raising the number of workers

in industry. This excessive industrialization process gradually led to a deterioration of the rural space.

The North-Eastern Development Region territory coincides (mostly) with that of the ancient historical province of Moldavia, consisting of six counties (Suceava, Botoșani, Bacău, Iași, Neamț and Vaslui). The county seats of the six counties making up the region are among the biggest cities in the development region, which earned over time the status of regional development poles (see Table 1).

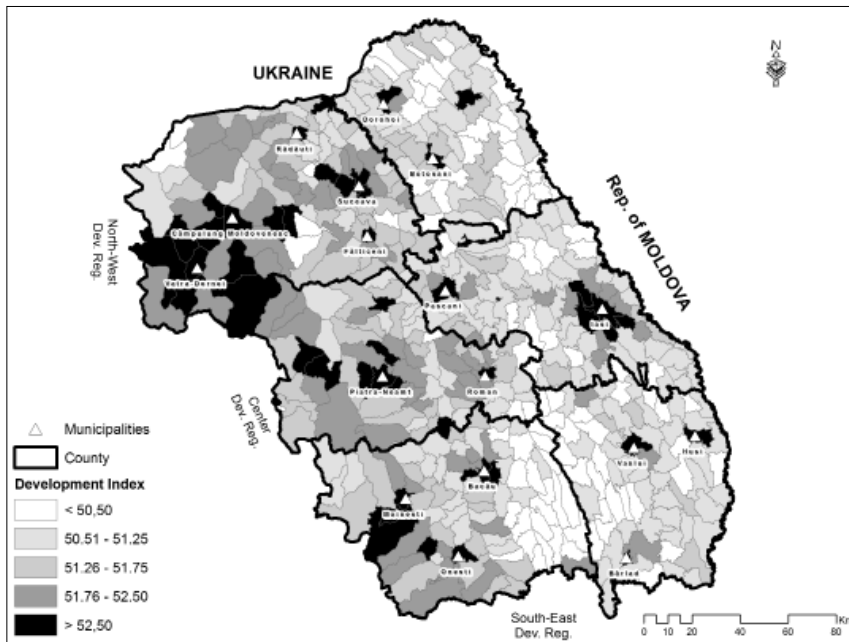


Figure 2: Territorial distribution of the poverty index in NE Development Region

In Figure 2 we can easily see the role that urban settlements play in developing this region. Cities and municipalities are the economical drivers of the process of development, but this development is severely localized, it is not a generalized one. This is because the effects of development, with very small exceptions, stop at the first ring of surrounding territorial administrative units. Also, we have to emphasize the fact that Siret valley acts as a major dividing axis between development and underdevelopment. More than 80% of the least developed administrative units are eastwards from this axis.

Taking into consideration the criteria that created the polycentric index, the city of Iași is the main polarization pole of the region, being a strong higher education, cultural and industrial centre in the region. For several centuries, it was the capital of the province. Nowadays, in Romania’s polycentric development strategy, it is a hub of national importance.

Even though Iași is the main development pole and economic engine of this region, its direct territorial influence upon the development of its surrounding rural

area is limited to the second, and in some cases, third line of communes surrounding it. Because of its fragile economy (severe decline of industry that triggered rural exodus and from there international migration), Iași is not capable to firmly structure the other territorial administrative units and induce them development. The role of Pașcani city in inducing development is limited and discontinuous (more developed communes stand together with the most poor ones). This mixture of more developed and poor communes, so close to a development pole, is a clear indicator of the lack of territorial cohesion and malfunctioning of what should have been polycentric development.

The city of Bacău is an important industrial centre, a centre that stands out by its capacity to win over the most numerous foreign investments. As a development pole, and first rank city, it is included in the inter-regional category. Just like in the case of Iași city, Bacău manages to offer development impulses only on limited distance (the first ring of communes). The city is not capable of inducing generalized development across Siret valley.

Suceava and Piatra Neamț, two county seats stand out, in particular, because of the touristic function they developed over time, as genuine points of departure towards natural and cultural tourist attractions. The two cities induce a more generalized development into their influence areas, but still, the distribution of developed and less developed administrative units reflect a small polarizing capacity.

The cities of Botoșani and Vaslui developed predominantly along agricultural and trade lines. In terms of intraregional development, they are important light industry, textile industry and processing industry centers. These two cities have very limited capabilities to transfer development to their surroundings; in fact, they struggle to keep their local economies in a functioning state.

The above-mentioned urban areas, relatively better developed and with relatively higher living standards, stand in strong contrast with the rural areas, which feature higher poverty-index values (see Figure 2).

Using the polarization capacity index, a model for polycentric development was created, which comprises those territorial systems that should be capable, thanks to their functional complexity, to dissipate development into the subordinated territorial systems.

A hierarchical polycentric network spanning the North-Eastern Development Region was designed, centered on the city of Iași, a city of the magnitude of a national development centre, a genuine driving engine for that region. The value of the polycentric index of the city of Iași is 53.83 (see Table 1), followed at big distance by the 5 regional development poles, with values ranging from 51.72 to 52.29 (Bacău, Suceava, Piatra Neamț, Botoșani and Vaslui), and the additional intraregional development poles, with values ranging from 51.55 to 51.58 (Vatra Dornei, Rădăuți, Dorohoi, Fălticeni, Hârlău, Pașcani, Tg. Neamț, Bicaz, Moinești, Comănești, Onești, Roman, Buhuși, Bârlad). The polycentric network is rounded up by a significant number of growth poles and growth centers (Table 1 and Figure 3).

The structure of the development pole network is the result of the industrialization process, dominant before 1990, and of the post-1990 development of certain functions, such as the university function, which pushed certain cities ahead (Suceava).

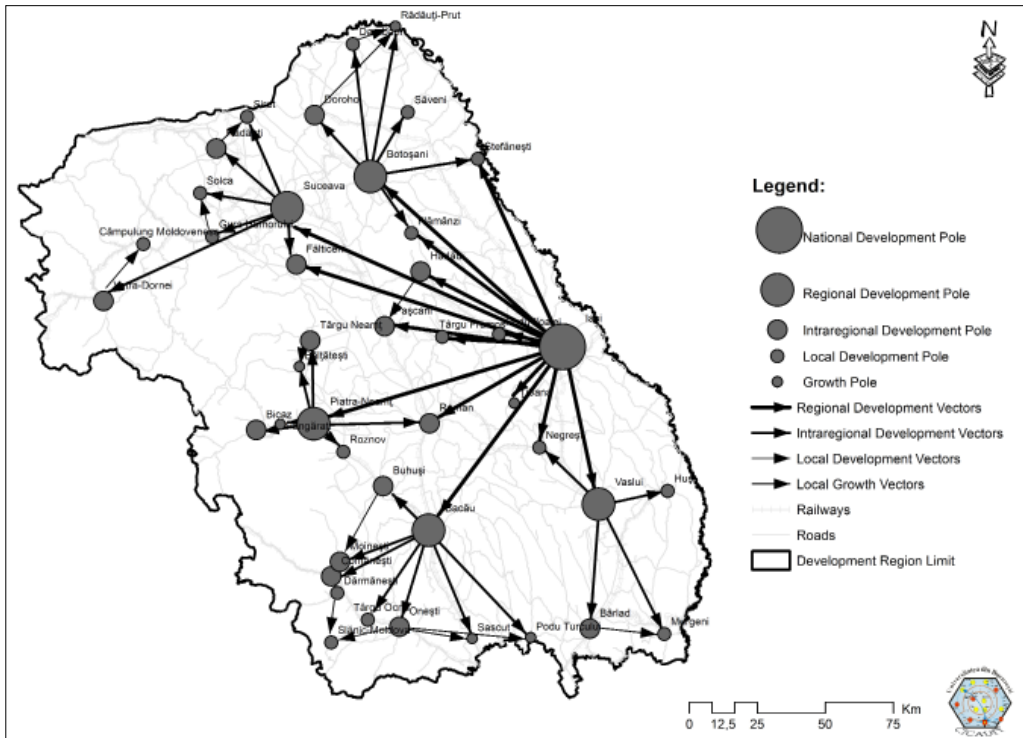


Figure 3: Model of polycentric network in North East Development Region

The detailed analysis of the polarization capacity of towns in the North-Eastern Region highlights the intensity and directions of the relations between the components of the polycentric network, as well as the way one could intervene with a view to developing those relations, by means of a spatial projection of the process of decentralization.

The functioning of the polycentric network in this region is conditioned by the creation of an institutional network, a means to convey information from the level of supra-territorial systems to the local level, ensuring the reconfiguration of decision-making impulses at the level of each decision-making authority, so that it would endow development strategies with specificity.

The economic rehabilitation of pauper territories is also conditioned by the status and functionality of the development poles correlated with a national development strategy. A special economic status of the development poles in the proximity, or inside these problematic territories, contributes to an increase of informational impulses towards the emerging surrounding areas and this action leads to a development process together with the development pole (although the rates of development are

not equal between the pole and the emerging area). Studies showed that there is a direct connection between the economic dynamics of the development pole and the surrounding area lagging behind (Peptenatu *et al.*, 2012).

6. Discussions

Poverty is not evenly distributed inside the North-East Development Region; strong territorial disparities are present in one of the poorest European regions, so this means that some areas inside this region are even more underdeveloped than the regional average. This is an important aspect because it is an evidence of the lack of efficiency in the present development policies and strategies. More importantly than this, the urban system of the region doesn't work as a polycentric network, as conceptualized in the European Spatial Development Perspective (European Commission, 1999).

Territorial cohesion is very weak and this will generate significant social and economic tensions (this fact is already evidenced by the high international migration rate). Comparing the polycentric network and the poverty index map reveals a correlation, in the sense that the poorest regions are peripheral and away of the influence of big cities. Some exceptions are present, but can be explained if specific geographical aspects are taken into consideration (the poor accessibility in Tutovei Hills and Central Moldavian Plateau).

Still, the results show that the cities, and especially the county residence cities, are not capable to polarize the territory by inducing them development. In many cases their development influence stops at the first round of administrative territorial units that surrounds them.

Regarding policy implications, the confirmation of the second hypothesis emphasizes the need to enlarge the urban system of the region, but this can only be achieved through developing local economies. New urban centers have to emerge, but this should be done based upon their economic profile and not thorough administrative appointments. Polycentric development requires also strong relations between the composing cities and equitable distribution of national funds and investments. Strong concentrations of capital, only in already developed centers, will increase the territorial disparities and will decrease its territorial cohesion.

The configuration of space by creating geographical proximities and organized proximities (Torre and Rallet, 2005) and by defining peripheral and central spaces, in terms of the distance from both economic power centers and from political power centers (Rigg *et al.*, 2009), structures poverty territorially. Many times it is associated with the periphery, but poverty manages to find a place to manifest in centers, too (near Iași and Bacău). As Cojanu *et al.*, (2011) proved, compared to the national context, counties deemed to be developed at the level of the North-Eastern Region (such as Iași and Bacău) rank at the end of the national classification according to the index created by the above-mentioned authors. One may assert that poverty is more strongly attracted by certain spaces than by others, acting with discrimination.

7. Conclusions

The added-value of the present study is given by the fact that it offers decisional support to policy makers by revealing detailed profiles of developed and underdeveloped areas. This study offers policy makers a scientific tool to base their decisions upon. The results of this study points out to policy-makers that they should take into consideration that development and poverty are heterogeneously scattered across the region. Also, territorial specificities should be taken into account when trying to manage the relations between development poles and underdeveloped areas.

The methodology of individualizing poverty and linking it to a polycentric development model can be extrapolated and applied to the other development regions in Romania, and not only. But policy and decision-making should be strictly tailored to the local and regional particularities of the territorial systems. All present conclusions and recommendations are derived only from the present case study. All extrapolations to other cases (other development regions) should be handled with caution and only after understanding the particularities of the relations, structure and functioning of that particular territorial system.

This study establishes a conceptual framework that can be used when viewing poverty from a geographical perspective in relation with the territory. The conducted analysis revealed that it is not advisable to conceptualize and regard space as a stage where economic and social processes unfold. On the contrary, it was demonstrated that the best way to regard space is more as an active component of the system. The concept of poverty may be approached from several angles but, in the present study, only those approaches were reviewed that were considered the most important in highlighting the evolutions within a region considered relatively homogeneous.

As far as the uneven development of the various regions of the country is concerned, the industrial development policy during the time of centralized-economy gradually led to an accentuation of economic fractures, especially those between rural and the urban areas. Despite the noticeable overall rise of the gross domestic product value and quality of life, compared with the number of inhabitants inside the North-Eastern Development Region and compared to the other development regions in Romania, the level of poverty remains the highest in the country and even in the European Union, in close competition with a region in Bulgaria.

The adaptive capacity of territorial poverty, in the North-Eastern Region, remained, at best, at a constant level compared to the other regions of the country. The lock-ins within the system are severe enough that, no matter the policies enforced, be they during the centralized economy, or during the transition-type economy, the territorial poverty of the North-Eastern Development Region steadily remained at highest levels.

Territorial poverty in this area is in an advanced state of path-dependence, which is fuelled by decisions taken over time, concerning the overall territorial development policies that only deepened the development gap inside the region and in comparison to other regions.

The analyzed territorial system managed to reach a level where it proves capable to remain inert to development policies that try to interfere with that state of path-dependence in which it finds itself. In other words, the relations between the components of the system reinforce each other (positive feedback), keeping the region locked into a stability zone characterized by high levels of territorial poverty.

From the present study as well as from the World Development Report 2009 the authors can conclude that the existing disparities and the state of poverty is an effect of the economic development process that acts discriminately. As long as territorial systems that manage such problems regarding poverty and disparities don't succeed in applying laws, rules and good practices in an equal and equitable manner, those territorial disparities and the territorial poverty will deepen further. The positive feedbacks will cumulate becoming a circular causality (Myrdal, 1957) leading the territorial system into lock-in. As the authors pointed out throughout this study, North-East Development Region shows the signs of deepening in a state from which it cannot break despite all the territorial development policies that underwent since the 60s.

The approach of disparities and poverty that emerge at the level of territorial systems requires an integrated, interdisciplinary view in order to elaborate territorial management strategies capable of dealing with challenges imposed by the proliferation of poverty, environmental degradations, pollution and economic restructuring (Braghină *et al.*, 2010; 2011; Peptenatu *et al.*, 2010; 2012; Peptenatu, Pintilii and Drăghici, 2011; Peptenatu, Merciu and Drăghici, 2012).

As stated before, the study is based upon using a multi-criteria poverty index that includes all the development perspectives: economic, social, environmental and infrastructural. Using this integrative poverty index, a clear image at the basic territorial units' level is unfolded, thus making it simpler to policy makers to take a decision based upon scientific evidence.

Conceptualizing space as a factor that influences the territorial impact of policies and based upon the identification of underdeveloped areas at micro-scale, policy makers have the scientific tool to take the necessary measures and implement regional development policies. This can be done by taking into consideration the relations between the development pole and the underdeveloped area that should be under its influence.

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Annex 1

Polarization capacity index

Table 2: Ranking of different types of growth poles in NE Development Region

Development Poles	County	Polarization Capacity Index	Category
IAȘI	IAȘI	53.83	National Development Pole
BACĂU	BACĂU	52.29	Regional Development Pole
SUCEAVA	SUCEAVA	52.27	Regional Development Pole
VASLUI	VASLUI	51.93	Regional Development Pole
PIATRA NEAMȚ	NEAMȚ	51.81	Regional Development Pole
BOTOȘANI	BOTOȘANI	51.72	Regional Development Pole
TÂRGU NEAMȚ	NEAMȚ	51.58	Intraregional development pole
FĂLTICENI	SUCEAVA	51.57	Intraregional development pole
RĂDĂUȚI	SUCEAVA	51.57	Intraregional development pole
VATRA DORNEI	SUCEAVA	51.57	Intraregional development pole
PAȘCANI	IAȘI	51.57	Intraregional development pole
ONEȘTI	BACĂU	51.57	Intraregional development pole
ROMAN	NEAMȚ	51.57	Intraregional development pole
DOROHOI	BOTOȘANI	51.56	Intraregional development pole
HÂRLĂU	IAȘI	51.56	Intraregional development pole
BUHUȘI	BACĂU	51.56	Intraregional development pole
BÎRLAD	VASLUI	51.56	Intraregional development pole
BICAZ	NEAMȚ	51.55	Intraregional development pole
COMĂNEȘTI	BACĂU	51.55	Intraregional development pole
MOINEȘTI	BACĂU	51.55	Intraregional development pole
HUȘI	VASLUI	51.50	Local Development Pole
GURA HUMORULUI	SUCEAVA	51.39	Local Development Pole
TÂRGU OCNA	BACĂU	51.38	Local Development Pole
SLĂNIC MOLDOVA	BACĂU	51.36	Local Development Pole
SOLCA	SUCEAVA	51.32	Local Development Pole
NEGREȘTI	VASLUI	51.30	Local Development Pole
PODU ILOAIEI	IAȘI	51.28	Local Development Pole
MURGENI	VASLUI	51.25	Local Development Pole
DARABANI	BOTOȘANI	51.25	Local Development Pole
CÂMPULUNG MOLDOVENESC	SUCEAVA	51.21	Local Development Pole
DĂRMĂNEȘTI	BACĂU	51.20	Local Development Pole
SĂVENI	BOTOȘANI	51.16	Local Development Pole
ROZNOV	NEAMȚ	51.13	Local Development Pole
SIRET	SUCEAVA	51.00	Local Development Pole
ȘTEFĂNEȘTI	BOTOȘANI	50.95	Local Development Pole
FLĂMÂNZI	BOTOȘANI	50.94	Local Development Pole
TÂRGU FRUMOS	IAȘI	50.94	Local Development Pole
SASCUT	BACĂU	50.89	Growth Pole
TIBANA	IAȘI	50.82	Growth Pole
PÂNGĂRAȚI	NEAMȚ	50.81	Growth Pole
BĂLTĂTEȘTI	NEAMȚ	50.80	Growth Pole
PODU TURCULUI	BACĂU	50.75	Growth Pole
RĂDĂUȚI-PRUT	BOTOȘANI	50.74	Growth Pole