

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT METROPOLITAN AREAS. CASE STUDY ABOUT CONFIGURATION OF THE GALATI METROPOLITAN AREA

Florin Marian BUHOCIU

Professor PhD, Low Danube University of Galati
e-mail: florin.buhociu@ugal.ro

Adrian ZUGRAVU

Lecturer PhD, Low Danube University of Galati
e-mail: adrian.zugravu@ugal.ro

Abstract. Economic and social development of each locality and finally, of human communities that live here, depends increasingly on the ways of their internal organizing but also on becoming closer with social partners in the area(s) concerned. It is increasingly important that each locality (territorial administrative unit, TAU) solve multiple problems of ensuring development conditions through various strategies and policies of cooperation and association. These may represent a real support and vector for sustainable development of several TAU, capitalizing new forms of territorial development. Our paper aims to present some strategies that can capitalize the benefits of a territorial structure as the Metropolitan Area. We mention those of urban-rural partnership, the associative kind and those of cooperation between localities belonging to the same territorial structures/regions. These strategies have been customized by a study on setting up a possible Galati Metropolitan Area. Based on the analysis performed at the territorial scale proposals were made concerning its territorial delimitation, in two variants, the ring 1 and ring 2. A map of the county Galati was made, marking variants proposed to configure the Metropolitan Area.

Key words: Metropolitan Area, urban-rural partnership, cooperation and association, Intercommunity Development Association, development poles.

1. Introduction

Transformation of the national economy, and European lead to rethinking the role of cities in regional and national economy as growth engines for the areas around them and thus to a reconsideration of polarized system and the urban-rural hierarchy. At this point the position of cities in regional and international competition has become crucial and politicians have had to adopt an

entrepreneurial attitude in their government, focusing on promoting the image by attracting grants, improving competitive advantage, encouraging economic activities and providing support for existing firms to become more competitive, in a word, on performance.

Development of rural-urban relations problem has been the subject of research in

which the concept of *urban - rural* partnership is considered. The notion of partnership involves cooperation and coordination, the initiative to formulate, adapt and implement integrated policies in the regions economically interdependent.

Urban - rural partnerships tend to play an increasingly important role in balancing the urban structure, the development of public transport networks, the revitalization and diversification of rural economy, increase the quality of infrastructure, the development of recreational areas for urban population, protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage. In the process of reorganization of systems of territorial improvement in European countries, one of the important directions of action is aimed at decentralizing planning and transition of responsibilities from government to local and regional levels. In peri-urban areas in particular, the need for stronger regional level is reflected by recent organizational developments.

Moreover, strategies for implementation of projects completed for regions in Europe may be related to the following five major objectives of sustainable regional development:

- Balancing urban spatial structure;
- Improving quality of urban life;
- Maintaining regional identity: the revival of cultural heritage;
- Managing integration : cooperation between regional infrastructure networks;
- New partnerships in planning and implementation. (Constantin, 2010).

Principles of city management started to be forsaken in favor of the entrepreneurial concept of economy policies, both rural as well as urban, preferring *alliances* on facing competition *strategy*, as it happens in private

companies world. Making *cooperation-association*, in a polycentric model between big city and regional communities, if not formal, make the entire area to become "competitive", with value added especially for rural areas or urban periphery. It is a mutually beneficial partnership, thus the city being able to find such development opportunities outside, instead offering public services in poor communes. *Linking urban-rural / rural-urban* thus lead to the harmonization of interventions around the area (Pascariu, 2004).

Critical analysis of the studied areas in which peri-urban collaborative relationships develop, with polarization potential, is complex, so it is necessary to include an area with a large enough range of about 30-50 km., so that all aspects generating development can be watched. But limiting the study area does not mean that the impact of such combinations stops at local / county selected level, but can cover, as appropriate, a broader horizon, supralocal / regional, or even with implications (sequential) at national / territorial level.

The Metropolitan Area is defined by Law no. 351/2001 approving the National Plan for Territorial Improvement - Section IV - Network localities as "Area built through association based on voluntary partnership between major urban centers (capital of Romania and rank I cities) and urban and rural localities placed in the immediate area, at a distance of up to 30 km, between which have developed cooperative relationships on multiple levels". Article 7 of the same law suggests as motivation of the formation of metropolitan areas, the need for a balanced development of the territory around the capital and the 11

large cities (tier municipalities) with regional role and functions (Bacău, Braşov, Bucureşti, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, Craiova, Galaţi, Iaşi, Oradea, Ploieşti, Timişoara) and the possibility of adoption by them of a joint program of development the area, in consultation with the population.

But the law states that these areas formed as associations "work as independent entities without legal personality".

2. Material and Method

2.1. Connections town-rural area

The relations between the city and neighboring areas are diverse and are felt differently in the territory, some influences propagating at greater distances, other at smaller distances. In the literature, they are classified into three main types: *fundamental relationships, occasional, exceptional* (Beaujeau-Garnier, Chabot, 1971).

According to them, the area of influence of the city was divided into two or more parts, which bear very different denominations.

By their nature, they are distinguished:

- *economic relations* related to: industry (exploitation of various natural resource in the adjoining space and their use in industry; decongestion of the city of industrial units considered pollutants and their re-location in neighbour space); agriculture (supply the city with food products); transportation (direct transport lines between the city and nearby towns); trade (placement of large commercial complex in the city and neighboring areas and local citizens and village shops supply

directly from the city); tourism (tourism resources exploitation, development of recreation areas and recreation in the vicinity of the city, the existence of adequate tourism infrastructure);

- *demographic relations* (attractions of the city, professional structure of the population, daily commute to work, regular movements);
- *political - administrative relations* (coordination of various activities of the city, through specific institutions);
- *socio - cultural - relations* (related to: the presence of schools, hospitals, facilities and cultural activities in the city, with access and close to area residents, social and cultural activities developed in the territory, coordinated by the institutions of the urban settlement (Documentation Centre for Construction, Architecture, Urban Planning, 2002).

Also, one can follow the progress of *the influence zone of the city in relation to the time factor*, that is changing in size and features according to the economic, social, technical development of the age.

Pressure can be put on cities in terms of urban development, which can be grouped as follows:

- *external pressures* from processes accompanying the economic globalization, the building and expansion of the European Union, the growing importance of the economy based on knowledge, increased competition between regions, the phenomena of international migration;
- *internal pressures* resulting from processes related to transition, decentralization, regionalization

policies, imbalances and social and economic distortions, competition between cities, environmental problems.

The consequences of these pressures translate into relationships that unite and divide the city from the surrounding area, namely:

- Distortions in supply and demand of land for development
- Imbalances in economic development
- Degradation of housing and living conditions
- Lack of physical accessibility and equipping adequately to new requirements
- Low levels and lack of diversity of services
- Social destruction, lower living standards
- Degradation of the environment

Specialists consider that these problems need an approach to development at the metropolitan level. It seeks to take over and solve multiple pressures arising from changing economic system, planning and implementation of development, of distortions and different needs both in urban and rural areas adjacent, in view to structure a development pole in a coherent network at territorial scale (Jordan, 2003).

2.2 General Features of the Metropolitan Areas

Metropolitan areas, as shown above, are systems composed of a polarizing city (or more, if they are united space) and settlements surrounding territory strongly related to it. Be notified delimitation of **peri-urban areas**, outside city (Jordan, 1998) that do not include the element of social and economic concentration, that is just the polarizing, core, the city. Inside Metropolitan Areas can be achieved Intercommunity Development Associations that are designed to find common solutions to the same types of problems

that appear in several places.

There are several general statements set forth in the Manual of Intercommunity Development Associations (by MDRT 2011) when *the association* can be chosen as the beneficial solution, namely:

- There are similar and/or complex problems, requiring specialized human resources hiring, but local governments can not solve this goal individually;
- Responsibilities of public authorities can be solved efficiently (economic and administrative), if multiple resources of several public authorities gather together; by solving at larger scale, benefits can be generated;
- There are issues requiring coordination, because of geographical coverage (area development, economic development, land planning);
- It is necessary to make large investments that can generate benefits for multiple local communities.

Through *cooperation and partnership*, local communities involved, and the areas and regions to which they belong, will enjoy positive effects that can be enumerate as follows:

- A harmonious spatial development, promoting network locations;
- Reducing development gaps between different regions of the county, and between urban and rural areas, and between central and peripheral areas of the county, with diminishing effect on regional imbalances;
- Revitalization of disadvantaged areas through various regional policies;
- Reduction of the problem areas, thus preventing new imbalances in the area;

- Creating a permanent economic growth, improving competitiveness, resulting in a balanced development throughout the country;
- Economic and social progress of the area, through plans and programs regionally coordinated. *Cooperation / association* can be achieved (for socio-economic and sustainable territorial development) through planning and coordination of local public development policy and allocation of resources and costs (Pascariu, 2001).

The major goals of cooperation / association are:

- Providing public services to overcome the limitations and economic inefficiency in each community (*community services for public utilities*: water supply, sewerage and wastewater treatment; collection, sewerage and rainwater drainage; heating in a centralized system; local public transportation; public lighting; public services: social, health, educational, cultural, emergency situations; *common administrative functions*: financial, human resources, procurement, legal, planning, collection of local dues and local taxes.
- Coordination and planning of local public development policy and allocation of resources and costs over the local level (*joint development planning and spatial planning*, with large zonal scale, for projects of local or regional areas; *development of metropolitan or peri-urban areas* in which the sustainable development of the area can be ensured through

cooperation between the city and the TAU neighboring sites with infrastructure development and development objectives of common interest.

2.3 Setting up Intercommunity Development Associations

Intercommunity Development Association

- according to article 1, paragraph 2, letter c) of the Law on Local Public Administration no. 215/2001, as amended and supplemented, is a cooperative structure with legal personality under private law, established, under the law, by the administrative-territorial units, *for the joint development of projects of regional or local interest or joint provision of public services.*

According to Article 2 letter a) of Law nr. 51/2006 on community services of public utilities, as amended and supplemented, *Intercommunity Development Association with the object of public utility services* represents the Intercommunity Development Association as defined according to Law on Local Public Administration no. 215/2001, republished, with the objective of establishment, organization, regulation, financing, operation, monitoring and sharing management of public utility services of competent jurisdiction of the administrative - territorial member units, and joint execution of public investment projects of area or regional interest for setting up, modernization and / or development, where appropriate, public utility systems for these services.

In the last 6-7 years in Romania were established metropolitan areas/ associations of metropolitan areas in most of the 11 municipalities of rank I, based on these very cursory regulatory

elements. Among the first association of metropolitan areas have counted the cities of Iași, Oradea, Baia Mare, starting from 2004-2005, followed by Bacău, Brașov. In 2008-2010 there were established associations of the metropolitan areas Cluj-Napoca, Tîrgu-Mureș, Craiova, Ploiești, Timisoara, Constanța; there are under construction: Bucharest and Suceava. Setting up a good part of them was rushed to opportunity of using funds through the European Structural Funds amid the Operational Regional Programme - REGIO 2007-2013. Under the program, through the "Priority Axis 1 - Support the Sustainable Development of Cities - Urban Growth Poles" - was allocated an amount of approx. 500 million Eur. for financing urban development of the seven national growth poles appointed by GD 998 of 27.08.2008 (Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Craiova, Iași, Ploiești and Timișoara). *National growth poles*, which receive programs with community national funding, have been defined by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme as territories that include both large city and several villages and towns in his area of influence. To benefit from European funding, *the seven major cities have had to make strategies for the surrounding area as well, which is why it was necessary creation of intercommunity development associations with other neighboring territorial administrative units.*

3. Results and Discussions

Case study on setting Galati Metropolitan Area

The object of this study is to highlight and to ground (provided major challenge for European territorial development policies) opportunity to set up a peri-urban area of the city of Galati, that can serve as territorial-administrative support for

achieving a metropolitan area, through a cooperation-association of intercommunity type, with effects of economic growth both on several villages in the county, and on the city of Galati.

Determination of the limits of Galați metropolitan area and an assessment of the impact of the implementation of the project on the population in the area, as they result from research on the 27 localities (communes) of the Galați region located at a distance up to 50 km from the city. It can be seen that in this group of growth poles lacks the so-called urban system Brăila-Galați. In his case, as in the case of Bucharest efforts in previous years to create metropolitan areas have not been successful due to disagreements in the political factor.

By GD no. 1149 of 18.09.2008, the cities of Arad, Baia Mare, Bacău, Brăila, Galați, Deva, Oradea, Pitesti, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Suceava, Târgu Mureș, have been designated as *poles of urban development*, in which the priority is given to *investments* in "priority axis no. 1 - Support the sustainable development of cities - urban growth poles" and from the *national funding programs*.

Galati county enroll in peri - Carpathian counties area, Danubian, and is located relatively close to the Black Sea, at the confluence of three major running rivers - the Danube, Siret, Prut and the crossing of major trade routes.

We remind the proximity of Galați county, pointing to the three major running rivers (Danube, Siret, Prut) and from the Black Sea. In order to capitalize on these strengths of the county it is required to have projects with finality in improving transport conditions on the rivers Siret, Prut, Danube River, with improved navigation conditions on the

Danube - Black Sea and implementing IT systems for efficient shipping and avoiding risks of accidental pollution.

Currently, in terms of administrative organization in the county exist:

- 2 municipalities - Galați and Tecuci
- 2 cities - Berești and Târgu Bujor
- 61 common
- 180 villages (of which 2 villages belonging to cities and towns).

With a population of 614,449 inhabitants on 1 July 2007, Galați ranks third in the country with a population density of 137.6 inhabitants/km². Of the total population, 347,301 live in urban areas and 267,148 in rural areas.

From economic point of view, the main advantages of Galați county are the access to the main European corridors of communication (by river to the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal that links the North Sea to the Black Sea ; by rail to ensure transfer from the European gauge to that used by the former Soviet countries), multicultural vocation of the area, with tourism potential, dynamic business environment and skilled labor force.

To those listed above it must be shown that Galați county shows a high natural potential, holding a number of *protected areas* whose recovery will facilitate tourism development and reduction of environmental pollution. As specific projects may be mentioned those in the Protected Natural Area Garboavele Forest, the National Park in the Lower Prut Meadow, the Arboretum Park Tecuci. It can be created even trails or tours, well organized, which includes visiting all these natural objects.

The main weaknesses of the Galați county as economic environment,

identified by Galați County Development Strategy in 2010 are: infrastructure, low economic growth, high level of taxes and lack of investment.

To conclude, it can be shown that the Galați county shows major developments on the direction of the main ways of communication, i.e. the direction Galați-Tecuci-Galați and Galați-Tg. Bujor. To comparatively analyze primary data throughout the territory in case, it was considered necessary a third direction, the median between the two mentioned above, namely Galați - Valea Mărului, to Corod. Also, by distance between communities and the city of Galați, we propose three rings of analysis (ring 1 = ring at about 30 km and ring 2 = ring at about 50 km).

Because of the natural "barriers" (Danube, Siret, Prut, Lake Brateș) Galați Municipality has naturally a predominantly development to the north and west, the increased development trend of geo-morphological compliance of the land in this area.

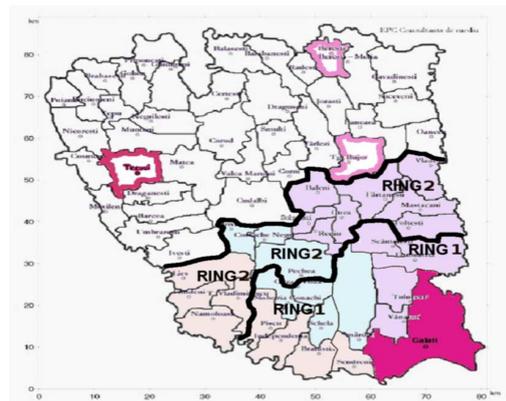


Fig. 1. Galați county with two variants for Metropolitan Area (ring 1 and ring 2)

For the purposes of the above, the following table was prepared with raw data of the communes in the county of Galați, located up to 50 km from the city, as follows: Table 1.

Table 1. Structure of variants for Matropolitan Area

Direction Ring	Galați- Tecuci	Galați-Valea Mărului	Galați-Tg. Bujor
Ring 1	Șendreni Branăștea Independența Piscu	Smârdan Schela Slobozia- Conachi Cuza-Vodă	Vanători Tulucești Frumușița Scânteiești
Ring 2	T. Vladimirescu Nămolosa Fundeni Liești	Pechea Costachi - Negri Grivița	Rediu Suhurlui Cuca Băleni Foltești Măstăcani Fărtănești Vlădești

4. Conclusions

It can be appreciated that a Galați Metropolitan Area can be achieved with its area of influence as follows:

- On the one hand, Galați has the power to structure a coherent and viable area of influence, given several factors: population size, favorable demographic indicators, economic behavior;
- On the other hand, the current diffusion of urban character and the of the relations of growth pole-surrounding villages are quite modest, which, added to the lack of inter-municipal cooperation tradition, warrant option to shape a less extensive area of influence, as first step towards a future territorial structure metropolitan type, more suitable to the role to be played by development pole.

From the administrative-territorial point of view, its area of influence can be composed of 27 rural administrative - territorial units, although through its complex functions,

Galați urban center polarize but a much more extensive territory.

REFERENCES

- Beaujeau - Gamier J., Chabot G. (1971), *Urban Geography*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest
- Constantin D. L. (2010) - *Regional Economy. Theories, Models, Policies*. ASE Publishing House, Bucharest, ISBN 978-606-505-306-9
- Documentation Centre for Construction, Architecture, Urban Planning (2002), *Documentation on Comparative Assessment of Metropolitan Areas Development in Europe*, - Contract 711/2002, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing, Bucharest,
- Jordan I (1998), *Les categories taxonomiques suburbaine areas, périurbaine areas, metropditan areas*, - Romanian - Polish Geographical Seminar, Bucharest)
- Jordan I (2003), *Regiondisation. How? When? Administrative-territorial structure in Romania*, CD Publishing Press, Bucharest
- Pascariu G. (2004), *Planning and Spatial Development Course*, Bucharest University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Postgraduate Courses
- Pascariu G. (Coord.) (2001), *Galați City - Space Reconversion Strategies*, in: Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, *Urban Terminology Guide*, Program ANIRANS2001.