

CLUJ-NAPOCA METROPOLITAN ZONE: BETWEEN A GROWTH POLE AND A DEPRIVED AREA

Daniel DRANCA

Abstract

The growth pole strategy has proved to be one of the main tools that the EU is using in its idealistic pursuit of economic and social cohesion across Europe. The objective behind this concept is reducing regional economic and social disparities by directing the investments towards a location presenting a growth pole potential, which will at its turn spread the development in the surrounding economical space. However, reducing the inter-regional disparities often claims an ironical, if not cynical, price to pay: the increase of intra-regional disparities, at least for a first stage.

In Romania's case, this price seems to be paid in vain, as neither the Government nor the metropolitan level appears to have correctly understood the purpose and the mechanism of the Regional Operational Program. A major confusion has been made between the potential of a growth pole and the existence of a growth pole, and as a consequence, investments designed for underdeveloped areas are now addressing developed areas. In the case of the Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Zone, the situation has worsened due to the contrasting economic and demographic profiles both within the rural part and as compared to the urban part. The spreading development potential is denied by the unfeasible and undemocratic associative structure of the Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Zone, which is leaving the rural zone no tool at all to protect itself, let alone follow its interest.

Keywords: growth poles, Regional Operational Program, regional disparities, Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Zone, integrated plan for urban development.

Daniel DRANCA

Cluj-Napoca City Hall, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Tel.: 0040-745-768.679

E-mail: daniel.dranca@gmail.com

“The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.”

Winston Churchill

Part I. Application of the growth pole concept in Romania

1. Introduction

The inter-regional and intra-regional disparities have made the object of different types and waves of economic strategies from the very creation of the EU. The struggle for reducing the disparities is framed within the European Commission’s efforts to create a Europe with a level of social and economic cohesion as unitary as possible.

The administrative level in which the EU Cohesion Policy is carrying out this engagement against the economic and social disparities is the region, acknowledged by the ever increasing role that the regions have been developing, not only at a national scale, but also within the global economy. The main tool that the European Cohesion Policy is using in its efforts to reduce the existing disparities among the EU regions is the growth pole.

Romania, as an EU member state, makes no exception from this rule, and the Regional Operational Program (ROP) allocates 30% of its total budget to ROP Priority Axis 1, *Support to sustainable development of urban growth poles* – Major Domain of Intervention 1.1, *Integrated Urban Development Plans* (ROP – MDI 1.1). The allocation within this priority axis is provided on the basis of an integrated development plan, which is elaborated and adopted at metropolitan level, and which should comprehend and guide all the development strategies within the geographic and economic area affected by the growth pole.

1.2. Purpose and methodology

While the importance that the EU is presently giving to the growth pole strategy might let us consider it efficient in any given situation, it is actually rather controversial. Its contesters are claiming that not only it does not diminish the existing inter-regional disparities, but it also deepens the intra-regional ones, or in the best situation it does provide higher rates of national economic growth with the expense of increasing the disparities within the regions.

Derived from this controversy, the present article will try to prove that the Romanian Government has failed to establish the national growth poles according to the vision of the European Cohesion Policy and that this situation, together with the current institutional framework of the Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Zone (CMZ), makes it impossible for the development to spread from the urban core to the surrounding areas. In order to prove that, the article will present an analysis of the consistency between the vision of the Regional Operational Program (ROP) and the criteria that the Romanian Government used in order to select the national growth poles. A similar comparison will be carried out between the investments accessed so far by CMZ and

the requirements of the ROP – MDI 1.1. In a similar context, the second part of the article will present a case study about the spreading degree of the development within the CMZ in the form of a detailed insight of the economic and demographic evolution since its creation.

2. Framing the discussion: the growth pole concept and the ROP

2.1. Growth poles strategy – pros and cons

Francois Perroux (1955) was the first to define the growth pole concept. According to his vision, “growth does not appear everywhere at the same time; it becomes manifest at points or growth poles with variable intensity; it spreads through different channels, with variable terminal effects, on the entire economy” (Perroux, 1955, p. 309). Although Perroux insisted on the fact that the growth pole is a concept specific to an abstract economic space, some authors (Boudeville, 1960; Hirschman, 1950) rushed to provide a geographical projection to this theory, finding it a very appropriate strategy for the political efforts to reduce the regional disparities. It soon became a very popular point of view, up to such an extent that in the early 1970s the growth pole became ‘the dominant characteristic of operational regional planning in both developed and developing countries’ (Richardson and Richardson, 1974, p. 163).

The theory, however, was not universally accepted as the perfect solution for reducing regional disparities. Some authors (Myrdal, 1953; Gravier, 1972) claimed that the growth pole strategy can infer positive impact in the near-by regions and markets (the spread effect) while at the same time can produce side effects in the peripheries by attracting their labor force and economic activities. The term used by Myrdal was *back-wash effect*, while Gravier was even more expressive in denouncing the massive concentration of resources and opportunities in Paris, as compared to the rest of the country: *Paris and the French desert*. In response to that, J.G. Williamson (1965) proved that disparities between regions are more emphatic at the early stage of national economic growth, while this regional dualism is softening at the mature stage. Williamson imagined an inverted-U curve between a horizontal axis of income per capita and a vertical axis of inter-regional income disparities. Williamson’s famous hypothesis, embraced as a pattern for regional development in the 1960s (Miyoshi, 1997, p. 13), is that ‘rising income inequalities and increasing North-South¹ dualism is typical of early development stages, while regional convergence and the disappearance of severe North-South problems are typical of more mature stages of national growth and development’ (Williamson, 1965, p. 179 *apud* Miyoshi, 1997, p. 13).

Beyond the discussions accusing or defending the growth pole principle, there rests the certitude that it is an essentially delicate concept. The practice has only strengthened this belief, as Parr (1999) has latter shown. According to him, the first 30 years of the history of regional economic planning showed many examples around the world in which growth pole strategies either failed or were prematurely abandoned (Parr,

1 The North represents the developing region and the South the deprived one.

1999, p. 1196). According to the same author, the explanation for the failure of these strategies is the fact that the planners misunderstood Perroux's original assertion that the growth pole in geographic space is not necessarily and in any given situation a projection of the growth pole in economic space. On the contrary, their purpose should be the foundation of their choice on empiric assertions and suppositions and by taking into consideration 'the anticipated outcomes, in terms of inter-regional equity and balance', and the existing constraints (Parr, 1999, p. 1212).

In short, growth pole strategy is not to be considered a panacea for the regional planning efforts, not necessarily due to its limits but more likely because of the difficulties to adapt it to a certain geographic, economic and social space. Without a proper understanding of the concept beneath the strategy and the specificity of the target zone, an economic strategy based on the growth pole concept or on any other economic approach is designed to fail.

Before presenting the case study upon the application of the growth pole strategy in Romania in general and in CMZ in particular, a very brief presentation of the Romanian Operational Program would be necessary.

2.2. Regional Operational Program

The strategic document which serves as a reference for programming the structural and cohesion funds in Romania is the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), which is designed to create the links between the national development priorities, as set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013, and the priorities at European level – the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) on Cohesion 2007-2013 and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008². The NSRF is implemented through Operational Programs under Objectives 'Convergence' and 'European Territorial Cooperation'. The Operational Program in charge with the balanced territorial development strategy is the Regional Operational Program.

The Romanian Regional Operational Program (ROP) was approved by the European Commission Decision no. 3470 from 12 July 2007. Its annex contains a thorough analysis of the Romanian economic situation and a justification of the selected strategy, based on this analysis.

The strategic objective of the ROP is the reducing of the social and economic development disparities between Romania and other EU Member States, by increasing the GDP with 15% to 20% before 2015. The ROP will give priority to the regions lagging behind and at the same time, a special focus will be given to supporting urban growth poles, which can contribute to a polycentric development of the Romanian territory.

2.3. Priority Axis 1, Major Domain of Intervention 1.1, Integrated Urban Development Plans

The main purpose of this priority axis is life quality increase and job creation by rehabilitating the urban infrastructure, improvement of urban services, including so-

2 http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/press_releases/10_07_sinteza_csnopdf

cial services, and also by developing the mechanisms of sustaining business and entrepreneurship activities. The financial allocations are to be distributed to the cities designated as urban growth poles, on the basis of an integrated urban development plan, elaborated at metropolitan level and networking all the investments within its area of influence. The total allocation for this major domain of intervention is 30% out of the total ROP budget. The strategic objective of this priority axis and, at the same time, the starting point of the analysis within this article is the following statement:

'In order to contribute to a balanced territorial development of the country and to avoid the increasing internal disparities, investments will be concentrated in those cities which *act* (emphasis added) as regional and/or local growth poles and *spread the development into the surrounding areas, giving priority to growth poles located in regions and counties with lower level of development* (emphasis added) in terms of GDP and unemployment.' (Romanian Operational Program, p. 122)

3. Growth pole rationale: EU expectations and Romania's response

3.1. Introduction

The current section will try to provide an empirical insight into the way in which Romania in general and Cluj-Napoca Growth Pole in particular applied so far the Regional Operational Program and whether their action respected or not its requirements. Thus, the first part will study the legal framework in which the Romanian Government established the seven growth poles and the thirteen urban development poles, while the second will analyze the impact of the projects accessed so far by CMZ in terms of spreading development potential.

As already mentioned in the Regional Policy section, the ROP's vision is addressing especially the regions that suffer from the most serious infrastructural deficits and require special public support. At the same time, a special focus was given to the strategy of supporting the urban growth poles, which can contribute to a polycentric development of the Romanian territory, according to ROP.

The rationale for this approach is to be found in the annex of the European Commission Decision no. 3470 from 12 July 2007, through which the Romanian Regional Operational Program was approved. This act is the basis and the source of information for the case study from the current section.

The vision of the ROP is based upon a detailed ex-ante analysis, which addressed virtually all the domains of the daily life, conducted both at national and regional level. This analysis has revealed a strong and growing disparity level between Bucharest-Ilfov region and the other seven development regions on one hand, and between Western and Eastern region on the other hand. It has also pointed out the socio-economic decline of many regional urban centers and loss of urban functions of many small and medium towns, especially the mono-industrial ones. From a social point of view, a declining number of labor forces and an increasing phenomenon of population ageing was discovered, which triggered the increase of the dependency ratio.

Within this frame, the general justification provided by the EC Decision no. 3470/2007 for the ROP – MDI 1.1 addresses the significant economic changes that occurred in Romania after 1990, which have generated a deterioration of the urban life quality, especially in the case of small and medium sized cities. The situation was generally created by closing down one or more economic activities, which led to the emergence of social and economic disparities both at local and regional scale. According to the ROP, the strategy is willing to redeem the important role of the cities as places to work and live in, by supporting the investment in the physical regeneration of cities and the improvement of entrepreneurship and social service sectors.

The above mentioned objective should be achieved on the basis of the following key principles:

‘Priority of growth poles located in regions with lower level of development in terms of GDP and unemployment; priority of cities which have intense connections with and influence the surrounding rural areas; and priority of cities which fulfill a diversity of advanced and complex functions.’ (Romanian Operational Program, pp. 122-123)

The EC Decision no. 3470/2007 adopting the Regional Operational Program was transposed in the Romanian legislation by the Government Decision no. 998/2008. This decision also created a polycentric urban network aiming for a balanced territorial development and for the diminishment of inter-regional disparities.

Thus, the Government Decision no. 998/2008, modified and actualized by the Government Decision no. 1149/2008, nominates the national growth poles that would be eligible for the 695.58 million Euro allocated for this ROP 1.1 Major Intervention Domain (30% from the ROP total budget).

The seven Romanian growth poles (Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Constanța, Ploiești, Craiova, Timișoara and Brașov) were proposed by the Ministry of Tourism and Regional Development and approved by the National Committee for Coordination of Structural Funds.

The Decision no. 998/2008 was actualized by the Decision no. 1149/2008, according to which, in order to counter-balance the expected increase of the inter-regional disparities and to defend the social and economic cohesion, thirteen urban development poles were to be set up (Arad, Baia-Mare, Bacău, Brăila, Galați, Deva, Oradea, Pitești, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Satu-Mare, Sibiu, Suceava and Târgu-Mureș). They were supposed to attenuate and prevent the emergence of regional imbalances and to diminish the population flow towards the growth poles, contributing in this manner to the demographic, economic and spatial equilibrium of the region. At the same time, the urban development poles were designated to act as a linkage between the growth poles and a third category of towns, the urban centers (towns of 10,000 inhabitants and over, others than growth poles or development poles). The thirteen development urban poles were allocated 20% of the total allocation of the Major Domain of Intervention 1.1 (or 6% out of ROP). It should be reminded that the third layer of urban centers has

not been established so far and therefore no financial allocation from this priority axis was directed to them.

3.2. Analysis of consistency between ROP strategy and the choice of the seven national growth poles

In order to establish whether the Romanian Government respected or not the ROP vision in designating the seven national growth poles and the thirteen urban development poles, a comparison should be made between the Government decision's reasoning notes and the three ROP key principles presented above. It must be said at this point that the reasoning note no. 1149/2008 is not to be found on the official Romanian Government website or on other websites covering a similar area of interest.

Thus, according to the Government Decision Reasoning Note no. 998/2008, the seven growth poles and the thirteen urban development poles were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- the level of functional specialization;
- innovation capacity;
- existing business infrastructure;
- the level of diversity and intensity of the connections between regional and local actors; and
- accessibility and public services.

When looking back into the three ROP requirements, we might be tempted to believe that the main principle of ROP and Priority Axis 1, Major Domain of Intervention 1, for growth poles located in regions with lower level of development in terms of GDP and unemployment, was respected. The Romanian development regions and their 'capitals' are indeed placed on an inferior development level as compared to Bucharest-Ilfov region and Bucharest. However, it is questionable that the capital city should have been chosen the reference point without defining the 'lower level of development' because, after all, all the cities in Romania are less developed than Bucharest. Even more, the criteria laid out for choosing the seven growth poles, such as the existence of universities, excellence centers, technological parks, high-quality public services (Government Decision Reasoning Note no. 1149/2008, p. 2), are in high antithesis to measures *concentrating the investment in the city's physical regeneration and the improvement of entrepreneurship, environment and social service sectors* (ROP, pp. 122-123). At this point emerges a feeling that the Ministry of Tourism and Regional Development has failed to make the difference between *development* and *potential* of development. This affirmation will be further explained and argued in the following section, where we will see that the investments under the ROP – MDI 1.1 are addressing a completely different city profile than the one claimed by the Ministry of Regional Development.

Moreover, the financial allocation ratio of this major domain of intervention, 80% for the seven growth poles and 20% for the thirteen urban development poles, is against the principle of awarding priority to the areas lagging behind. ROP makes no

reference to the way in which the Government should split the investments between growth poles and development poles, and neither does the Government Decision no. 998/2008 or Government Decision no. 1149/2008. The fact that the third layer of urban centers was not yet established and therefore no financial distribution was directed towards them is as well against the lagging behind principle.

The second principle, according to which priority should be given to cities which have deep connections and inter-dependencies with the surrounding rural areas, is again vague enough to be fit to any city from the country. There is no reference to indicators of these inter-dependencies, neither in the ROP, nor in the Government decisions and in the reasoning note. These connections or communications channels are elementary for the growth poles strategy, as no matter how high the irradiating capacity of a growth pole might be, it's useless if it is located behind a bottleneck.

The third principle seems to be the only one that respects up to one point the ROP vision, but in a similar manner to the first objective. All the seven chosen cities are important centers of a wide range of functions. However, there is again no quantification about the extent of functional diversity (it is true that it is much more difficult to be quantified) that should or should not require this statute. However, such a clarification would have been necessary because, even at a lower rate, the thirteen urban development poles have as well a certain degree of multi-functional destinations.

Therefore, there seems to be a high degree of arbitrary in the decisions that the Romanian Government has made when establishing the national growth poles and the national development poles. Up to a certain point, this situation was fed by the fact that the ROP stipulations are often enough too general, but it is no excuse for the Romanian Government to take such vital decisions for the future of the country without any form of analysis or empirical evidence. The very low level of structural funds absorption for the first almost six years of the current budgetary cycle (21.10% for ROP in October 2012), could reside in this false start.

3.3. Analysis of the consistency between the projects accessed by CMZ and the rationale of Priority Axis 1, Major Domain of Intervention 1

The current section will confront the rationale and the principles of the MDI 1.1 *Integrated Plans for Urban Development* to the projects that Cluj-Napoca growth pole has implemented so far or is about to implement. The purpose of this comparison would be the consolidation of the argumentation presented in the previous section, where we could see that the growth pole concept was misunderstood and therefore misapplied.

3.3.1. Comparison between ROP justifications for Major Domain of Intervention 1.1 objectives and general situation of Cluj-Napoca Growth Pole

As previously shown, the tool for the application of ROP MDI 1.1 is the integrated urban development plan. In order for Cluj-Napoca growth pole to become eligible, in 2008 Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Association was created, while the Integrated Plan

for Urban Development (IPUD) was approved by its 19 members (17 villages, Cluj-Napoca municipality and Cluj County) during the year 2009.

This major domain of intervention is financing long term and medium term projects for city regeneration, based on the assumption that these integrated plans not only will directly contribute to the core city's revival, but they will also accelerate the development of the surrounding urban and rural areas.

Financial allocations were to be granted for the following groups of projects:

a. Rehabilitation of the urban infrastructure and improvement of urban services, including urban transportation

The rationale of this objective rests in the fact that a desolating physical shape creates low life conditions for its inhabitants and discourages the location of economic activities within the city. Consequently, abandoned or heavily degraded buildings, deteriorated public spaces and/or poor condition of basic infrastructure (streets, public lighting, parks etc.) is further increasing the city's repulsiveness for economic activities.

As described before, the lack of any imposed limit for the 'infrastructure poorness' allows a very wide range of eligible cities under this objective. From this point of view, it is questionable whether Cluj-Napoca has achieved such a high degree of physical repulsiveness that the economic activities themselves are jeopardized. At the same time, the condition of the basic infrastructure (streets or public utilities) is at least decent; the best argument in this sense is that no project concerning this aspect was proposed.

b. Development of sustainable business environment

This second objective is in deep connection with the first one. While the first objective is aiming at creating a physical frame for the city to become attractive, including economic activities, the second one is trying to directly stimulate the revival of existing activities or for locating new ones. More specific, the objective is to support the entrepreneurial activities and the competitiveness and diversity of local business.

Again, in the same context of lack of any concrete limitations, there arises a legitimate doubt about the opportunity of this measure in a town like Cluj-Napoca. For example, according to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2008 in Cluj-Napoca there were 25,794 economic actors, while, as a comparison, in the surrounding area (the rest of metropolitan zone) there were only 1,482.

c. Rehabilitation of social infrastructure, including social housing and the improvement of social services

The justification of this objective is the poor condition and/or shortage of multi-family housing. According to ROP, in Romania, most of these houses were built during the 1970s and the 1980s and are currently in such a severe degradation that even the health of the inhabitants is affected. Consequently, there is a clear need of intervention in this sector, and, according to the ROP, this intervention should respect the stipulations of the Commission regulation no. 1828/2006 (art. 47). This regulation

finally provides a clear vision about the issues that this major intervention domain was designed to address.

Art. 47 of Commission regulation no. 1828/2006:

‘The areas selected for housing operations referred to in point (a) of Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) no. 1080/2006 shall comply with at least three of the following criteria, two of which must fall within those listed under points (a) to (h) (emphasis added):

- (a) a high level of poverty and exclusion;
- (b) a high level of long-term unemployment;
- (c) precarious demographic trends;
- (d) a low level of education, significant skills deficiencies and high dropout rates from school;
- (e) a high level of criminality and delinquency;
- (f) a particularly rundown environment;
- (g) a low level of economic activity;
- (h) a high number of immigrants, ethnic and minority groups, or refugees;
- (i) a comparatively low level of housing value;
- (j) a low level of energy performance in buildings.’

The a-h criteria, two of which being compulsory, are offering us an essential view about the frame in which the European Commission has conceived the growth pole strategy. We observe words like poverty, unemployment, precarious, low education level, low level economic activity, and at this point we remember about the universities, research centers, innovation centers and technological parks from the Government Decision Reasoning Note no. 998/2008. There has certainly been a misunderstanding, and not surprisingly, the similar confusion is to be found at metropolitan level. According to the Integrated Plan for Urban Development (IPUD), the criteria that are entitling CMZ to receive the local growth pole statute are very similar to the ones used by the Government when establishing the seven national growth poles (IPUD, pp. 220-221):

- high level of economic diversity and functional specialization;
- innovation and research capacity;
- existing financial and business infrastructure; and
- highly qualified labor force.

3.3.2. *Projects accessed so far by Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Zone and their spreading development capacity*

The complete image of this confusion and consequently policy inefficiency is given by the analysis of the spreading potential of the IPUD projects that North-West Regional Development Agency has signed so far on the ROP Major Domain of Intervention 1.1. ‘Integrated Plans for Urban Development’. The projects are the following:

- a. Rehabilitation of Urban Infrastructure:
 - The rehabilitation of the tramway line;
 - The rehabilitation of the Central Park and Casino Building;
 - Modernization and extension of public transport network in CMZ – first phase Cluj-Napoca, Apahida, Baci, Chinteni, Florești; and
 - Self-service stations for bicycle renting (50 stations).
- b. Development of Sustainable Business Environment
 - The treasure City – promoting tourism in Cluj-Napoca; and
 - Regional center for creative industries.
- c. Rehabilitation of Social Infrastructure
 - Quality social housing – Albac 21 (24 social apartments);
 - Integrated social houses for the community – Iuliu Coroianu Street; and
 - Multifunctional center for integrated social services ‘Wonderland’.

The above mentioned projects do not seem to overlap with their specific local importance, except maybe the modernization and extension of public transport in CMZ, which seems at a first glance to have a metropolitan dimension. In reality, just like tramway line rehabilitation, it's fundamentally an urban investment, as it targets the rehabilitation of 47 bus stations in Cluj-Napoca, with an obscure perspective of extension in the surrounding villages, again like in the tramway case. A similar situation is represented by the self-service stations for bicycle renting: out of the 50 proposed stations, 43 will be built in Cluj-Napoca and seven in other two villages. The other projects are solely and clearly addressing only the Cluj-Napoca municipality.

The Regional Excellence Centre for Creative Industries project remains the one that may have a metropolitan or maybe regional dimension. The target group for this investment consists in a group of 26 companies from Cluj-Napoca, with innovative potential, which will be provided a space where they will have the possibility to follow their activities.

As a matter of fact, those four projects are the only from the ones selected on Major Domain of Intervention 1.1 that at least have a small metropolitan dimension, even though obscure as a term and indefinite as strategy and results. The tramway line is supposed to be extended to Florești and Apahida (no sooner than 2015, as the previous Cluj-Napoca Mayor has declared) (Silea, 2012), while the other project, extension of public transport system, is as well supposed to reach Apahida, Florești, Chinteni and Baci in an equally indefinite period of time. No IPUD project with a clear target for the surrounding villages is proposed to be financed from the ROP. In fact, all the objectives that address the rural part of CMZ (IPUD, pp. 242-302), except one project, are to be financed from National Program for Rural Development, which is a clear indicator about the extent of the high heterogeneity that affects the CMZ. In this respect, the accusations from the rural members of CMZ that the metropolitan construction is in fact a political tool addressing mainly the urban interest seems more and more legitimate. For example, it is worth mentioning that Feleacu village has initially chosen

to leave the association, arguing that only Cluj-Napoca obtains advantages from it. However, possibly also as a result of the Cluj County Prefect pressures, Feleacu re-joined the association in September 2011 (Ziua de Cluj, 2009).

4. Conclusions

The current situation of the growth pole policy in Romania is raising at least two important discussion points. The first one is related to the approach of the European Commission concerning the way in which Romania has chosen to implement the European Regional Policy. We all know that EC can be very restrictive and rigid in terms of legal constraints, when it considers so. It is obvious that, by choosing not to impose clear limits and indicators for Romania to establish its own growth pole strategy, EC has tacitly empowered the Romanian Government to choose the solution that would best fit the local specificity. This is actually a noble and fair thing to do, as it respects the principles of decentralization and devolution. The question, however, that EC should have asked itself, is whether the Romanian political class *can* choose the best solution. And if it can, does it *want* to? Because the general impression created by the analysis above is that the growth pole policy was used in Romania as a tool for the political class to attain and maintain the control upon the most important cities in the country, probably relied on the false assumption that the European funds are an infinite and unconditioned assistance. In this view, a completely different approach would be necessary, one that should aim at maximizing the effects of every investment from EU allocation, or in another way of saying, to perceive every Euro received from the EU as the last one. As in the current international economic framework, this last Euro gets closer every day.

The second issue to be discussed is the spreading development concept, and this will be deeper addressed in the second part of this article, the case study upon CMZ. The study will not take into consideration the fact that the IPUD projects presented above do not have a real metropolitan or regional extent, rather it will try to find out which is the relationship between the economic, social and economic profile of the area under the influence of the growth pole and the capacity of the development to spread within it. This analysis will also help us discover why and where is the development more likely to spread and also to understand the negative effects of the growth pole upon the demographic, economic and spatial profile of the metropolitan zone.

Part II. Spreading the development within CMZ

1. Introduction and purposes

As the spreading development concept is not defined by the ROP, the current analysis will rely on the assumption that, in order to be possible, this phenomenon requires a certain degree of economic and social homogeneity between the core and the periphery, on one hand, and within the periphery, on the other hand.

From this point of view, the analysis will try to create the economic and demographic profile of the CMZ by comparing the urban zone, the 'core' of the growth pole

in our case, to the rest of the metropolitan zone. More specific, it will try to prove that there is a high degree of demographic heterogeneity between the urban zone and the rural zone, on one hand, and within the rural zone, on the other hand, which creates different necessities and therefore requires different approaches in terms of strategies for economic development/revival.

2. Demographic profile

CMZ is covering a 30 kilometers radius around Cluj-Napoca and represents 23% of the surface and 55% of the population of Cluj County. The total population of the CMZ in the founding year, 2008, was of 379,705 inhabitants, of which 70,367 were living in the rural area. The urban-rural share of population was 81/19, while the rural zone was covering 88% of the total metropolitan surface.

During the last 10 to 12 years, the population profile of the CMZ is characterized by a significant population migration phenomenon (Table 1) towards the layer of villages positioned in the proximity of the urban core. The interesting part is, as shown in Table 2, that the total population within the CMZ has remained more or less constant in the observed period, which takes us to the conclusion that the migration phenomenon has taken place inside the borders of the metropolitan zone.

Table 1: CMZ evolution of population density, on rings

	Locality	Evolution at 1.01.2008 compared to 2002 (%)	Evolution at 1.07.2010 compared to 2002 (%)	Evolution at 1.07.2010 compared to 2008 (%)
	Cluj-Napoca	-2.71	-4.03	-1.21
First ring	Apahida	8.65	13.94	6.49
	Baciu	4.18	12.03	8.35
	Bontida	7.03	8.11	1.65
	Florești	19.85	46.47	35.84
	Gilau	5.48	8.37	3.35
	Jucu	1.25	3.15	1.94
	Total	7.74	15.35	9.61
Second Ring	Chinteni	-0.72	2.25	2.95
	Ciurila	-3.84	-0.6	3.27
	Cojocna	1.71	-0.05	-1.76
	Feleacu	-5.25	-4.64	0.85
	Total	-2.02	-0.76	1.33
Third Ring	Aiton	-7.62	-15.74	-6.92
	Borsa	-14.05	-24.09	-6.65
	Caianu	-3.78	-5.59	-1.6
	Garbau	-0.68	-1.92	-1.23
	Petrestii de Jos	-7.99	-14.26	-5.14
	Tureni	-2.82	-4.78	-1.82
	Vultureni	-8.29	-8.59	0.42
Total	-6.46	-10.71	-3.28	

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

Table 2: CMZ total population and urban/rural ratio

	Total pop. 2002	% from total CMZ pop. 2002	Total pop. 2008	% from total CMZ pop. 2008	Total pop. 2010	% from total CMZ pop. 2010
Cluj-Napoca	317,953	82	309,338	81	305,636	80
Rural CMZ	68,006	18	70,367	19	76,971	20
Total CMZ	385,959		379,705		382,607	

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

This migration trend has major implications, especially in terms of spatial effects, as it will be detailed in the conclusive remarks. Indeed, when we consult Table 3, we observe that each of the three villages that have accommodated the largest parts of urban population present major differences between the percentages of active population and unemployed population. The most probable explanation for this fact is that the largest part of the urban population that migrated from the urban zone to the surrounding villages has maintained their activity in Cluj-Napoca.

Table 3: CMZ comparison among employees, active population and unemployment rate

2010	Total population	Active population	Employees (%) of active population	Unemployment rate
Florești	13,955	9,667	3,217 (33%)	4.38%
Apahida	10,208	6,635	1,831 (27%)	3.36%
Baciu	9,525	7,048	1,200 (17%)	2.57%

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

At the same time, we observe in Table 1 that Florești, Apahida and Baciu are not the only villages within CMZ that have experienced an increase of population density. Bonțida, Gilău and Jucu have also increased their density, while there is a group of villages that have on the contrary decreased the number of population. In fact, based on the presented migration trends, it is possible to propose a new classification of the CMZ villages, as shown in Table 1. Moreover, if compared to the CMZ physical map, all the villages from the first 'ring' are placed on the East-West axis, corresponding to the European Road 58, except Baciu, which is similarly positioned within accessible location comparatively to Cluj-Napoca. On the contrary, the other two layers consist either in villages from the very nearby of Cluj-Napoca, but on less accessible roads (such as Feleacu, Ciurila and Chinteni), or in villages positioned at the peripheries (such as Gârbău, Aiton, Căianu). We can therefore make the assumption that the transportation system is facilitating the migration phenomenon.

Concerning the future trends of population migrations, Table 4 is presenting an estimation of population for 2015 and 2020, created using the method of linear projection and based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The results are clearly showing that the massive migration phenomenon that took place between 2005 and 2010 is no longer expected to occur between 2010 and 2020. Another important remark is that there is an obvious decrease of the total population, similar as pattern of evolution both within the three rural rings and the urban zone.

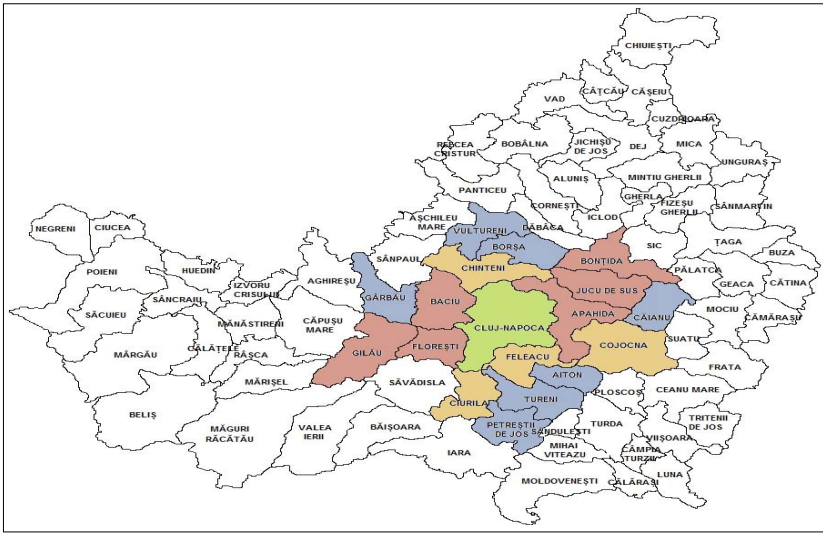


Figure 1: Evolution of population density – localization of villages

Table 4: CMZ evolution of population size, on rings, between 2005 and 2020

	2005 Pop.	2010 Pop.	2015 Projected Pop.	2020 Projected Pop.	Difference 2010- 2005	Difference 2015- 2010	Difference 2020- 2010	Difference 2020- 2005
Urban	310,194	305,636	304,521	299,055	-4,558	-1,115	-6,581	-11,139
Ring 1	42,385	51,352	51,392	51,029	8967	40	-323	8,644
Ring 2	12,370	12,365	11,672	10,970	-5	-693	-1,395	-1,400
Ring 3	13,914	13,254	11,880	11,114	-660	-1,374	-2,140	-2,800
Total CMZ	378,863	382,607	379,465	372,168	3,744	-3,142	-10,439	-6,695

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

The complete view of the migration effects upon the spatial structure of the CMZ is given by the data from Table 5, presenting the population predictions on age groups. The population flow towards the first ring of the CMZ is expected to create a varied range of difficulties in terms of accommodation of the new-comers and functionality of the hosting residential areas. As the first effects of this phenomenon are already noticeable, such as the pressure upon the traffic limits, the worse is yet to come. The population needs in terms of green spaces, leisure places and transportation are expected to increase as the population of 30 to 50 years will almost double in the following years. In a similar manner, the important percent of fertile population out of the total population will increase the demand for schools, public safety and other related services, while the elder people will need a more consistent system of healthcare, and so on. The second ring is presenting a similar profile, but on a lower scale, while on the contrary, the urban zone and the third ring are experiencing a different nature of demographic problem, having to deal with issues related to constant decreasing and aging of population. This situation is a clear indicator that the demographic profile of the CMZ is highly heterogeneous, with poles apart problems and therefore requiring poles apart approaches.

Table 5*: CMZ first ring population projection. Urban Zone and First Ring

Urban Zone					First Ring			
2005	2010	2015	2020		2005	2010	2015	2020
11,246	14,645	17,424	14,432	0-4 years	2,051	3,157	3,010	2,807
10645	11,037	14,614	17,387	5-9 years	2,339	2,367	3,150	3,004
13,518	10,434	11,020	14,592	10-14 years	2,429	2,655	2,363	3,146
27,723	16,373	10,416	11,002	15-19 years	3,239	2,953	2,650	2,359
34,587	29,300	16,312	10,378	20-24 years	2,977	4,118	2,942	2,641
28,360	27,298	29,154	16,231	25-29 years	3,588	4,832	4,097	2,927
24,465	28,219	27,153	28,999	30-34 years	3,683	5,096	4,806	4,076
24,872	24,036	28,007	26,950	35-39 years	3,434	4,537	5,058	4,770
19,475	24,217	23,748	27,671	40-44 years	2,320	3,894	4,483	4,997
24,761	18,860	23,708	23,249	45-49 years	2,595	2,618	3,812	4,388
23,810	23,529	18,130	22,791	50-54 years	2,780	2,866	2,517	3,665
17,417	22,381	22,094	17,024	55-59 years	2,616	2,958	2,691	2,363
13,365	16,179	20,443	20,180	60-64 years	2,179	2,628	2,702	2,458
12,771	12,116	14,291	18,057	65-69 years	2,022	2,060	2,321	2,387
9,853	11,024	10,157	11,980	70-74 years	1,784	1,828	1,727	1,946
7,162	7,954	8,529	7,858	75-79 years	1,306	1,465	1,414	1,336
4,161	5,010	5,433	5,826	80-84 years	755	872	1,001	966
2,003	3,024	3,887	4,447	85 years	288	448	647	793
310,194	305,636	304,521	299,055		42,385	51,352	51,392	51,029

* bright grey – decreasing trends; dark grey – increasing trends

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

3. Economic profile

This section presents a similar analysis addressing this time the economic profile of CMZ. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the economy within the CMZ presents or not a unitary profile and in this way to estimate the chances of the development to spread within its borders. This approach is based on the assumption that, in order for the development to spread, the levels of the development across the CMZ should be similar, or at least to follow a descendent trend from the core towards the peripherals.

To do that, the analysis was conducted on the structure of the three distinct 'rings' that have emerged from the density analysis. This proved to be a legitimate approach, as the analysis of the unemployment rate evolution has respected rather the same patterns (Table 6).

The urban zone and the first two rings have experienced a very similar evolution, with an abrupt decrease of unemployment rate from 2005 to 2007, when a peak was reached. As a disparity level, the unemployment rate in the periphery (third and second ring) has always been double as related to the inner side of CMZ (first ring and urban zone). Therefore, from this point of view the CMZ can be split in only two distinct areas, with the outer one being twice as underdeveloped as the central one.

Table 6: Unemployment rate in CMZ, on rings

		2005 (%)	2007 (%)	2010 (%)
	Cluj-Napoca	1	0.8	1.97
First ring	Apahida	2.5	1	3.36
	Baciu	2.1	0.9	2.57
	Bontida	6	2.5	3.49
	Florești	4.3	2.9	4.38
	Gilau	2.7	2.3	3.34
	Jucu	1	0.2	0.38
	Mean unemploy.	3.1	1.63	2.92
	Second ring	Chinteni	2.6	3.1
Ciurila		14.5	5	12.12
Cojocna		5.5	3.1	5.61
Feleacu		1.8	0.9	2.04
Mean unemploy.		6.1	3.03	5.78
Third ring	Aiton	4.5	0.9	5.76
	Borsa	1.6	1.2	1.2
	Caianu	3.1	2.7	5.12
	Garbau	3.7	2.9	6.25
	Petrestii de Jos	12.2	7.4	9.9
	Tureni	7.6	1.9	6.36
	Vultureni	9.2	6.2	9.36
	Mean unemploy.	5.99	3.31	6.28

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

The second economic indicator used to establish the economic homogeneity within the CMZ is the level of economic diversity, which was calculated using the location quotient of 19 economic activities, as classified by the National Institute of Statistics. The calculation presented in Table 7 has also shown the development levels of the surveyed activities across the CMZ, and the results were very interesting: only services are at similar rates across the CMZ, from the 19 economic activities studied. None of the rest of 17 economic activities presents a linear evolution across the three rural rings. At the same time, the double unemployment rate of the second and third ring is explained by the bright grey zones from the upper part of the location quotient grill.

However, this spreading phenomenon from core to peripheries is expected to be possible not only on similar levels of development, but also on decreasing levels, if started from the core. From this point of view, activities like construction, wholesale and retail, transport, hotels, information, finance and real estate could be addressed a metropolitan-sized strategy. This view is confirmed by the location quotient calculated at national reference, in which virtually the same activities present the same characteristics.

Even more, the fact that the agriculture, for example, presents lower values in the urban zone than in the surrounding rural zone does not mean that the development within Cluj-Napoca cannot spread in the agriculture field. On the contrary, the presence of a 300.000 person market in the immediate near-by is, or should be, a real

Table 7: Location quotients in CMZ rural and urban zone, on rings

	Economic Activity	Employees' nr. Cluj County	Cluj-Napoca LQ	Ring 1 LQ	Ring 2 LQ	Ring 3 LQ
1	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,462	0.46	4.19	2.15	4.50
2	Industry - Mining and Quarrying	1,212	0.16	1.27	0.00	1.21
3	Industry - Manufacturing	38,529	0.82	1.85	0.44	0.13
4	Electricity, Gas, Steam and air conditioning production and supply	2,211	1.04	0.62	0.00	0.00
5	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and decontamination activities	3,915	1.08	0.27	0.00	0.00
6	Construction	13,038	0.94	0.80	0.84	0.30
7	Wholesale and retail, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	33,976	1.12	0.96	1.01	0.66
8	Transport and storage	10,961	0.91	1.06	1.24	0.80
9	Hotels and restaurants	4,101	0.90	1.15	2.36	0.36
10	Information and communication	6,590	1.29	0.82	0.56	0.00
11	Financial facilities and insurance	4,690	1.26	0.26	0.06	0.21
12	Real estate activities	1,335	1.10	0.51	1.18	0.00
13	Professional scientific and technical activities	5,757	1.18	0.82	0.27	0.00
14	Activities of administrative services and of support services	6,617	1.07	1.09	1.15	3.05
15	Public administration and defense, social insurance of public sector	5,359	0.91	0.56	2.59	4.59
16	Education	18,381	1.08	0.40	1.57	1.64
17	Health and social systems	16,372	1.00	0.48	1.36	3.02
18	Shows, culture and recreational activities	2,806	1.23	0.12	1.49	0.43
19	Other service activities	1,337	1.10	0.48	5.10	2.37
	Total employees	178,649	123512	9777	684	736
		SCALE:	0-0.25	0.25-0.75	0.75-1.00	1.00->

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

competitive advantage for the rural zone, when properly exploited. Just the same, the low levels of manufacturing industry within the urban zone does not annihilate the overall advantage that Cluj-Napoca offers for the location of companies within the surrounding zone.

As a consequence, we can affirm that, beyond the existing or predicted demographic and economic disparities, there still exists a real potential for spreading development from the CMZ urban zone to the peripheries. The question is, then, why doesn't it spread? A possible explanation will be provided in the final section of the article, which will analyze the legal framework in which the CMZ, as a community association, is functioning.

2. CMZ as an associative body

2.1. Purpose

The CMZ is a voluntary based association consisting, as shown before, of Cluj-Napoca municipality and 17 surrounding villages. The rules establishing the institutions and the system of governing are included in the Statute of CMZ Association

(SCMZA). According to it, the association was created in order to stimulate the prosperity and the welfare of all the comprising inhabitants, by exploiting the advantages of Cluj-Napoca being a national growth pole.

While the previous chapter has analyzed the current profile of the territorial and economic cohesion, the current will try to establish whether the current associative form makes it possible for *regional interest group projects* (SCMZA, p. 2) to be implemented, as these projects, according to the SCMZA, are the tool for achieving the sustainable development of the CMZ.

2.2. Decision-making system

The CMZ decision-making body is the General Assembly of CMZ (GACMZ), representing the communities based on a proportional rule. Each member corresponds to 10,000 inhabitants, excepting Cluj County, which is entitled to four members.

Table 8: Members of GACMZ

	Locality	Total Population	Members
		01.01.2008	
1	Aiton	1,236	1
2	Apahida	9,545	1
3	Baciu	8,479	1
4	Bonșida	5,054	1
5	Borșa	1,603	1
6	Căianu	2,470	1
7	Chinteni	2,766	1
8	Ciurila	1,451	1
9	Cojocna	4,451	1
10	Feleacu	3,610	1
11	Florești	8,953	1
12	Gârbău	2,630	1
13	Gilău	8,292	1
14	Jucu	4,137	1
15	Petreștii de Jos	1,740	1
16	Tureni	2,512	1
17	Vultureni	1,438	1
18	Cluj-Napoca	309,338	30
19	Cluj County	692,021	4
20	Rural	70,367	17
21	Total CMZ	378,359	51

Source: Author's own calculations, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

The first issue to be discussed is the proportional system used for representation. As shown before, the urban-rural ratio population was in 2008 81% to 19%, which at a first glance may legitimate the choice. But at the same time the total urban surface of CMZ is 179.5 km² out of 1.510 km² which corresponds to an urban-rural ratio of 12% to 88%. This situation represents a discrimination of the rural zone, which is given no tool to protect itself from the eventual abuse from the spreading urban zone.

A second discussion point concerns the criteria used for the County Council to be represented by four members, as this number does not respect the population proportion criteria used in the case of Cluj-Napoca and the rural members.

A possible explanation could be provided by the analysis of the decision-making mechanism used by GACMZ. According to the statute, the decisions, in order to be approved, must be accepted by 2/3 of the total members. The same ratio is required for the quorum as well. For a total number of 51 members, 2/3 corresponds to 34 members, required both for the meeting to be legal and for the decision to be approved. This means that the representatives of Cluj-Napoca needed exactly the four votes provided by the County Council to meet and adopt decisions, with no legal tool for the rural zone to resist. The problem is that this mechanism is functioning only in the circumstances when Cluj-Napoca City Council and Cluj County Council share the same political color or the same strategic vision. In other situations, the decision-making system would be blocked, as it is very unlikely that a village would dare to join Cluj-Napoca in a metropolitan coalition that would affect its relation to the County Council. At the same time the rural zone and the Cluj County cannot meet the quorum without Cluj-Napoca municipality, situation which will also give birth to an institutional blockage. It would not be, however, the first time when in Romania the legal or even the constitutional framework is created to meet the existing political balance and to be feasible only for as long the latter is.

While this eventual 'urban conspiracy' is rather an assumption, the disproportionate repartition of power is a vivid reality. One might say that the statute did provide the rural zone a tool for resisting the urban possible abuse, that is, the veto right. However, this tool can be used only in matters regarding exclusively the members' territory, in other words no member can control a harmful decision made by a neighbor, if the 'harm' is located in the neighbor's territory. This issue is closer to 'the tragedy of the commons' concept than to the cooperation and common interest principles stated in the SCMZA purpose and objectives.

2.3. Financial contribution and distribution

The Romanian legal framework is assigning no specific funds to metropolitan or other types of community allocation, leaving this issue to their interest and capability. In the case of CMZ Association, the financial sources would be the initial contribution and the annual contributions of the members. The former, in amount of 600 lei, has remained the only one so far, as until now no member has provided even the mandatory 0.5 lei/inhabitant imposed by the SMCZA to cover the administrative purposes. The association may, however, attract extra-institutional funding, and we have seen in the first part of this article how many of the ROP MDI 1.1 projects were in fact 'regional interest group projects'.

Unless the expected Regionalization Act will not transfer or create concrete decision and fiscal attributions for the metropolitan associations, the efficiency of these community organizations would rest in the trust level among its members and in their ability to find a consensus.

Final conclusions

The lack of measurable limits set by the ROP in choosing the national growth poles and urban development poles allowed the Romanian Government to make these choices arbitrarily, based on no empiric research. At metropolitan level, despite the Cluj-Napoca Growth Pole's polarization potential, the level and the types of disparities between the urban and the rural zone, together with an unrealistic Urban Developed Plan and unfeasible Association Statute, made the "spreading of the development" within the CMZ impossible at this stage.

However interesting, it is necessary to say that these results do not hold the ultimate truth concerning the growth pole application in Romania so far. Rather than that, the current article tried to show how vital decisions concerning the accession and allocation of one of the most important EU financial support were made on arbitrary basis, without the slightest effort to understand the tool's mechanism or the target communities' economic and demographic profile. Unfortunately, these arbitrary decisions will soon turn back against us, during the negotiation for the next budget of the European Union. It will only be then when some of the politicians will understand that we do not have to prove what benefits a certain ROP MDI 1.1. project has brought to the growth pole *per se*, but to the metropolitan zone and to the region within its influence. Even though it is still too soon to predict the results of these negotiations, the effect of this approach is certain: in the following budgetary period Romania will have to do a lot more with a lot less.

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