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(Summary)

**GENDER INEQUALITIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-WEST REGION
OF ROMANIA. A FEMINIST GEOGRAPHY STUDY**

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KEY WORDS: *Feminist Geography; gender; perception; inequity; spatial statistics; North-West Region; PIGEM.*

INTRODUCTION

Feminist Geography, as part of Human Geography, is formed at the beginning of the 70s, during the transition from modern to postmodern society (also known as the *Radical Sixties* and based on the Hippie and Flower Power trends, the psychedelic music approaches, social street movements – students’ riots in USA, France, Germany, Anti-Apartheid protests, protest against war in Vietnam, Correa that contested the institutional organization, Fordist accumulation and democracy directives). Feminist geographical research is based on the gender differences in society and their influence on the geographical space. Scientific studies belonging to Feminist Geography are recently dated worldwide, being the result of the emergence of postmodernist aspirations that were already present in literature, painting (dadaism, surrealism). Given the context, the low number of Romanian feminist geographical studies is not that surprising

The main objective of this study is based on the analysis of the existing relations between territorial development level and perceptions on gender discrimination within the North-West Region. To achieve this goal, a set of secondary objectives is derived:

- (1) complex theoretical analysis of the existing approaches regarding gender inequalities through a geographical lens (the epistemology of the field);
- (2) inventory of methods and their evolution in the literature from the beginning of Feminist Geography to present days;
- (3) identification of development stages of the field based on the existing scientific studies published from 1975 to 2021;
- (4) describing the current level of scientific knowledge in Romania;
- (5) analysis of gender inequities implications in territorial development in Romania by describing the facets of patriarchy and feminism in communist and procommunist Romania.
- (6) development of some mixed instruments to quantitatively and qualitatively highlight relevant forms of gender discrimination.

1. GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

1.1. Contextual theoretical landmarks

The geographical knowledge of the last decades highlights an unprecedented dynamic regarding the diversification of research approaches, alongside with the assimilation of new methods of analysis and interpretation of the research subjects. The considerable multiplication of investigation styles, substantial conceptual renewal, exponential amplification of the methodological processes (by developing a set of precise, high-resolution techniques of analysis), increase of applicability of the research results etc., are just a few of the many recent significative changes that unequivocally indicate the substantial emancipation of the vision, discourse, method and purposefulness that define the geographical research currently.

Amongst the recent innovations in Geography, unexpectedly fertile and more and more consistent, are also the approaches defined by *Gender Geography* or *Feminist Geography*. The emergence and development of Gender Geography enforces specific conceptual, epistemological and methodological elements (Moss, 2002), which must be analyzed in the context of major changes within studies of social sciences noticed beginning with 1970-1980, and which have defined the favorable context for the development of *Radical Geography* (Barnes and Sheppard, 2019).

During the last decades, different points of view have been brought to attention regarding social relations, history, culture and (scientific) knowledge. Amongst these, the critical analysis of 'modernity' and 'modernism', frequently associated with the terms 'postmodernity' and 'postmodernism' indicate a substantial and increasing interest for geographers.

1.2. Modern knowledge and 'clichés' of modernity

The transition to the modern (European) society is marked by a series of diverse events: the Fall of Constantinople (1453), the bourgeois revolution in England (1688) (leading shortly afterwards to the emergence of the illuminist current and industrial revolution), French bourgeois revolution (1789) etc.; however, if one was to prioritize the decisive contributions to the progress of scientific knowledge, the event that marked the beginning of the modern science took place in 1687 when Newton, through his famous exhibit of the *Mathematical principles of*

the Philosophy of Nature, made known the theory of universal attraction and, therefore, founded the mechanistic physics (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984).

Conceptual basis of modern science

Modern science was formed based on an aggregate of concepts and discoveries that imposed a true doctrine defined by *faith in the universality of knowledge*, the certainty of the *predefined aspects of everything*, and, last but not least, the necessity of a *pragmatic spirit* in researching reality. Its philosophical foundation relies on the Cartesian *rationalism*, Baconian *empiricism*, *positivism*, *neopositivism* and *materialism*, a philosophical current that developed fast (at the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth century) from the mechanistic determinism (Laplacian) towards the captivating Marxist narrative regarding the dialectics of change. Materialism imposed itself as a foundation stone of the modern scientific knowledge, soon to become a major inspiration source for a series of (pseudo)scientific theories, social, economic and political constructs and experiments, usually remarkable through the logic arguments, woeful by its results.

Main presumptions and representations of modern science

The creating effervescence of scientific thinking from the Modern Age and its indisputable merits in maintaining the socio-economic and technological progress were soon to empower a series of ethical and moral presumptions and scientific representations whose undoubted certainty was aprioristic.

Modern science became the main instrument placed at the origin of the outstanding technological accomplishments at the beginning of the '60s, an unprecedented advocate of material prosperity in western society (*the golden sixties*). However, these also contributed to reaching the peak of force-derived systems, the emergence of atheism and, ultimately, at the end of the century, are identified as the main cause of establishment of the globalization process, in all its forms.

1.3. Defining hypostases of modern geographical science

Ever since Antiquity, Geography was defined by the pursuit for knowledge; however, its place amongst the *main sciences* (epistemologically founded and accredited in the academic community) was gained at the beginning of the Modern Era. The professional profile of the geographers was fundamentally changed by the intuition of the causal resorts (mechanistic and

thermodynamic) of the geographical reality: from *explorers*, they gained an authentic scientific status thanks to the ability to explain the mechanism through which one can understand the nature, water and air movements, soil living world dynamics. Gradually, modern Geography establishes its own conceptual and methodological system (principles, laws, categories, etc.) able to formulate an argument for the causal-explicative models and the compatibility between the explicative systems and the other sciences.

Towards the half of the XXth century and in the following decades, among geographical approaches emerged some neopositivist perceptions. Furthermore, the massive usage of quantitative methods, the development of a critical epistemological evaluation of scientific research contributed to the rehabilitation of Geography, both by the nature and quality of discourse (e.g.: the affirmation of spatial tradition in decades six-seven through the apogee of the neopositivism), and by the value and applicability of quantitative experimental research (in geomorphology, hydrology, climatology).

1.4. Postmodernism and geographical knowledge

Defining postmodernism is a redoubtable issue, there being numerous perspectives difficult to harmonize even by the connoisseurs of the phenomenon. An important aspect is that the term itself does not reflect a temporal aspect, as it does not represent the time frame following the previous time period (modern) through its novel containing elements. Much more frequent is the idea of a different way of looking at the world, of understanding the way scientific truth is discovered and validated. Through this lens, postmodernism is, according to many, a state of spirit that is remarkable due to a series of important achievements and a legitimate aspiration towards changing the standards for reflecting and managing reality in its different hypostasis: historical, cultural, social, etc., and, last but not least, for approaching (cognitive) knowledge.

The alteration of methodology used in Geography during this period, alongside with the disputes between positivists – neopositivists – postpositivist, led to a strong development of new research directions: postcolonial studies, Cultural and Social Geography, *Gender/Feminist Geography*.

1.5. Epistemology of gender studies in Geography

At the beginning of the '90s, social feminism critiques questioned the predetermined image and role of women within family and society, as well through the research domains and the dominant scientific discourse. The roots of Feminist Geography reside in other existing currents that criticized the thinking paradigms at the end of the XXth century, the objective of feminism being not only to understand the way the world functions, but also to change its paradigms (Moss, 2002).

The historiography of feminism separates the evolution of the phenomenon in *waves*, differentiated by political approaches regarding the explanation and understanding of women-felt experiences. *The first feminist wave* (at the end of XIXth century) is associated with social pressure for reforms and suffrage. *The second feminist wave* (1960-1970) is based on revendications for equitable pay, sexual freedom and awareness movements. *The third feminist wave* (during the '90s) draws attention upon discrepancies (social, human, economic, political) and marginalization, being posited against oppressive phenomena in society (Moss, 2002).

1.6. Methodological approaches in feminist geographical studies

Although feminist geographers continue to make use of quantitative methods in their research, there is a critical standpoint towards these techniques. One of these critiques refers to the usage of data sets that include pre-established socio-economic categories that mostly concern male activities. In this category are included especially the population census which consider, professionally, only aspects like employed/unemployed, omitting therefore the volume of unpaid housework performed by women in the private sphere (WSGS, 1997). A second critique involves the researcher's role (the claim of their objectivity and neutrality), while, finally, the last critique is based on the concept of *situated knowledge* (Haraway, 1988) advanced by the feminist current that highlights the necessity of data contextualization, analyzing them in the spatial-cultural context to which they belong, respectively, promoting therefore *thorough qualitative research* (WSGS, 1997). Thus, given the focus of feminist research on analysis of *differences* (between genders, but also between women in different socio-cultural contexts), emerges a debate on the methods and methodologies appropriate for studying these differences (Gregson and Lowe, 1994; Johnson, 1989; Valentine, 1993).

Feminist methodology creates a bond between *doing* and *knowing*, focusing on combating social relations built on gendered differences in an oppressive spirit. This kind of

methodology implies emancipation of those involved in the research process and places the main focus on dominating relations through understanding the significant differences between researchers and the researched (Katz, 1994). Consequently, *a feminist research method* is in agreement with the objective of feminism – that of respecting the conceptual context of research derived from the theoretical orientation of feminist inquiry (Dyck, 1993).

Employing feminist research involves all the defining aspects of the process of feminist research: methods used, methodology applied, and epistemology, contesting what is set to be *knowledge* (Kelly et al., 1994). The interconnection of these key terms arises from the way the use of one method is influenced by the methodological end epistemological perspective. Although there ere identified only four major characteristics of feminist geographical methodology (*knowing, asking, interpreting, writing*) and there is no disproof of the need for a variety of methods (WSGS, 1997), feminist research must remain gradual and dedicated to identifying and tackling discrepancies resulted from gendered social relations.

2. GENDER GEOGRAPHY AND THE CURRENT STATE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The evolution of gender and feminist approaches in Geography from 1975 (year of reference placed in full decade of changes in social and humanist sciences described in the previous chapter) to the present days is remarkable.

The most addressed research themes until now are those referring to *Economy* (1132), *Migration/Refugees* (1004), *Mobility/Urban studies* (772) or *Reviews* (646) and theoretical approaches of *Feminist Geography* (491).

2.1. Themes, trends and representative contributions.

The distribution of the number of studies during the for decades analyzed, highlights three evolution stages for Feminist Geography in the international context (fig. 1): *the substantiation stage* (1975-1989) defined by a low number of scientific publications; *the diversification stage* (1990-2009) during which the number of studies fluctuates, noticing a tendency to promote novel aspects; *the 'Boom' stage* (2010-2021) characterized by a substantial multiplication of publications and, likewise, a considerable diversification of the research themes approached.

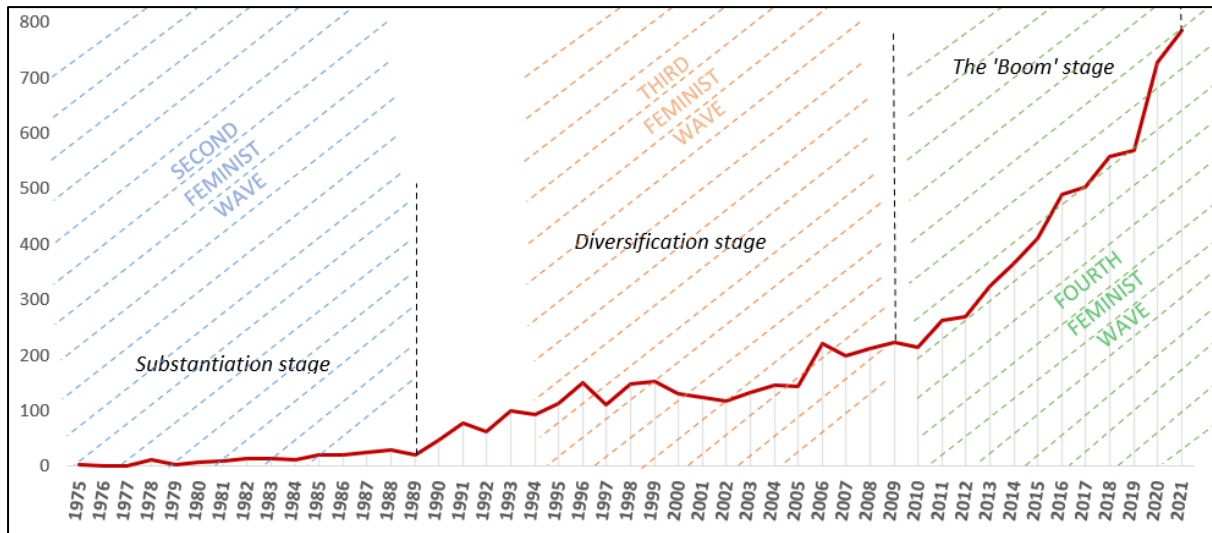


Figure 1. The evolution of the number of geographical publications approaching a feminist/gender theme from 1975 to 2021.

2.2. The current stage of scientific knowledge in Romania

Even though the number of Romanian studies is small (n. 10), Romania posits interest for a series of international feminist geographical studies, either by *migration* aspects (Mai, 2009; Meeus, 2017), *education* (Gaspar et al., 2016) or in studies of theoretical substantiation of Feminist Geography in ex-communist countries from Eastern Europe (Michalski and Wilskulski, 2018).

2.3. Conceptual aspects and methodological design

Methodology wise, qualitative and mixed methods prevail at the expense of quantitative techniques, the latter being shyly approached at the beginning of 2000s.

Regarding qualitative methods, those most frequent used are *interview*, *open survey*, *focus group*, *historical memory*, *researchers personal experience*, *ethnography*, *discourse analysis*. Amongst mixed approaches, these are accompanied by *statistical methods*, *GIS and spatial analysis*, *field research*, etc. Thus, the majority of existing studies are based on empirical research enhanced by primary data.

Feminist geographical studies pay special attention to the relation *researcher – researched* so as to include aspects such as *positionality* and *reflexivity* (England, 1994; Moser, 2008; Kunze and Padmanabhan, 2014) in the analysis, reflecting on the level of subjectivity of the author in their own research (attitude in the field, personal spiritual, social, moral standpoint towards the researched), in the *phenomenological* spirit.

The substantial increase of feminist geographical publications during 1975-2021 led to a diversification of the research themes approached, evolving from the standard ones, to some more radical (*sexuality, cycling, embodiment, empowerment, etc.*). Their interdisciplinarity leads to the inclusion of feminist geographical studies in a diversity of other domains, such as *Environment Science, Ecology, Economy, Physical Geography and Public Administration*. Spatially, the development of the field is remarkable as the number of countries with published feminist geographical studies continues to increase.

Concluding, one can notice the small number of Romanian feminist studies compared to the international context. This can be explained by the political context in Romania prior to 1990, the country's communist status limiting its access to international scientific literature. Therefore, there is a gap between the development of scientific domains (including Geography) in Romania and the evolution rhythm internationally wise. The existing sporadic studies are placed in a context of preferability for quantitative methods. However, they are based on the international 'popular' research themes, such as sexuality and migration. Thus, the traditional topics of study approached internationally must be advanced in the national studies, too. Amongst these, the historical, social, cultural and political context in Romania offers a solid base for feminist geographical research centered on socio-cultural discrepancies, socio-political perceptions, attitudes and behaviors in the educational dimension, etc. Attacking these topics from a feminist epistemological standpoint and by making use of qualitative (or mixed) research methods is an essential step towards aligning Romanian geographical research to the international scientific literature.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER INEQUITIES IN THE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANIA

3.1. The facets of Romanian patriarchy and feminism

The social inequities generated by gender are the result of some dichotomic constructions of *femininity* and *masculinity*, as they are perceived by the large population based on a time lasting socio-cultural context. The main effect of the existence of this social construct is the unequal and inequitable access to resources required for the development of a balanced lifestyle regarding the relation between the private and public (professional, social, political) spheres (Hurubean, 2015). Maintaining social patterns that dictate pre-established gendered

social roles favors the development and (re)adaptation of a patriarchal social network system, regardless of the scale of reference (private sphere – house, family, or public sphere – education, economy, politics).

The recoil of promoting gender equality in the post -communist Romanian society results from the differences of Romanian feminism from the Western one, based on the temporal gap induced by the instauration of socialist ideologies at the national level (Miroiu, 2004; Hurubean, 2013).

3.2. Gender inequities in communist and postcommunist Romania

3.1.1. The educational context

The evolution of the educational system in Romania is marked by long periods of unequal access to education. The delays in establishing free access to education without gendered restrictions at the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth century, followed by the structuring of education based on predetermined social roles for women and men during the communist regime, have outlined and maintained a patriarchal system (identified in the common knowledge and in the values transferred by means of informal education) that is hard to overcome once impregnated in the transgenerational culture of the population.

The effects of gender inequities on territorial development. The connection between early inclusion in education and the consequent economic professional segregation, as well as the inequitable access and representation in the political sphere (Anemțoaicei and Liapi, 2012), is unquestionable. A balanced territorial development requires the establishment of inclusive values, a process that needs an educational system whose first objective is to offer equal opportunities for professional specialization, personal autonomy and equitable access to representation positions. Educational segregation and feminization/masculinization of study fields will later be reflected in the working field, as well as in the parity level for political representation.

3.1.2. The economic context

Gendered occupational segregation. Social division of work is derived from both spatial work segregation and from the differences of class (Cater and Jones, 1989).

So as to tackle professional gendered bias, the European Commission identifies a series of aspects that decisively contribute to the professional segregation of population based on their gender (CE, 2009). Amongst these are included facets of the level of investments in education, comparative advantages, legislative and administrative blockages, as well as the patriarchal reminiscences transferred from modernism to postmodernism (predetermined roles in family and society, stereotypes and prejudices as social pressure) (Andronie and Făiniși, 2012).

Even though it maintains patriarchal traditions and discriminatory perceptions, the transition period in Romania also highlights a series of changes and inclusive trends, as the reduction of the gendered pay gap (Andronie and Făiniși, 2012), enhancement of female autonomy through economic liberalization and access in previously forbidden economic fields, gradual infusion of feminist ideologies from the western European societies.

Current state of gendered professional inequities. The male monopolization of management positions in the communist period was maintained after 1989, substantially delaying the reach of gender parity for the process of professional vertical advancement.

Vertical segregation and the glass ceiling resulted are based on the patriarchal way of thinking still present in Romanian society: 50.8% of men consider they are more capable to lead than women. On the other hand, the general public perception concerning masculinized economic fields are constructions (84.5%), heavy industry (81.1%) and the military (69%), while feminized fields include textile industry (60.7%), the other fields being considered appropriate for both sexes. (Barometrul de gen, 2018).

3.1.3. The politic context

The education – economy – politics nexus. Concepts like democratic citizenship, civic spirit and political culture in the Romanian feminine mentality have faced delays compared to the western spaces, due to socio-economic inequalities established over the years. Consequently, the first free election with the female right to vote took place in 20 May 1990, despite according universal suffrage by electoral law in 1939 (Voinea, 2017).

Female political position in XXIst century. The majority of political representation seats occupied by men led to outlying a set of masculine values as reference for the entire political system. The qualitative standard in politics based on male qualities and abilities harden the female access to representation positions (Voinea, 2017). Furthermore, limiting women to the

private, maternal sphere and basing politics on aggressive, masculinized behaviors have favored an environment unsuitable for women.

The centralized politico-economic system, based on concrete objectives, deceitful targets and on a deficient ideology has produced victims within the entire political context, regardless of gender. From a personal perspective, this context was possible due to a profound crisis a value-generating systems, like education. Moreover, the lack of democratic political ideology even during the post-communist period allows the formation of personal opinions on the fundament that permitted the political ascension of both men and women on considerations that disregard a moral values system, but encourage a system based on personal interests and corruption.

4. GENDER INEQUITIES IN THE NORTH-WEST REGION

4.1. Study area: geographical and social-economic identity landmarks

Following the Law no. 151/1998 regarding territorial development in Romania, with subsequent additions and modifications (1999, 2003, 2004), the North-West Development Region was formed by the association of Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureș, Sălaj and Satu Mare counties. This is one of the eight development regions in Romania, occupying 14.3% of the national territory (32.160 square km.)

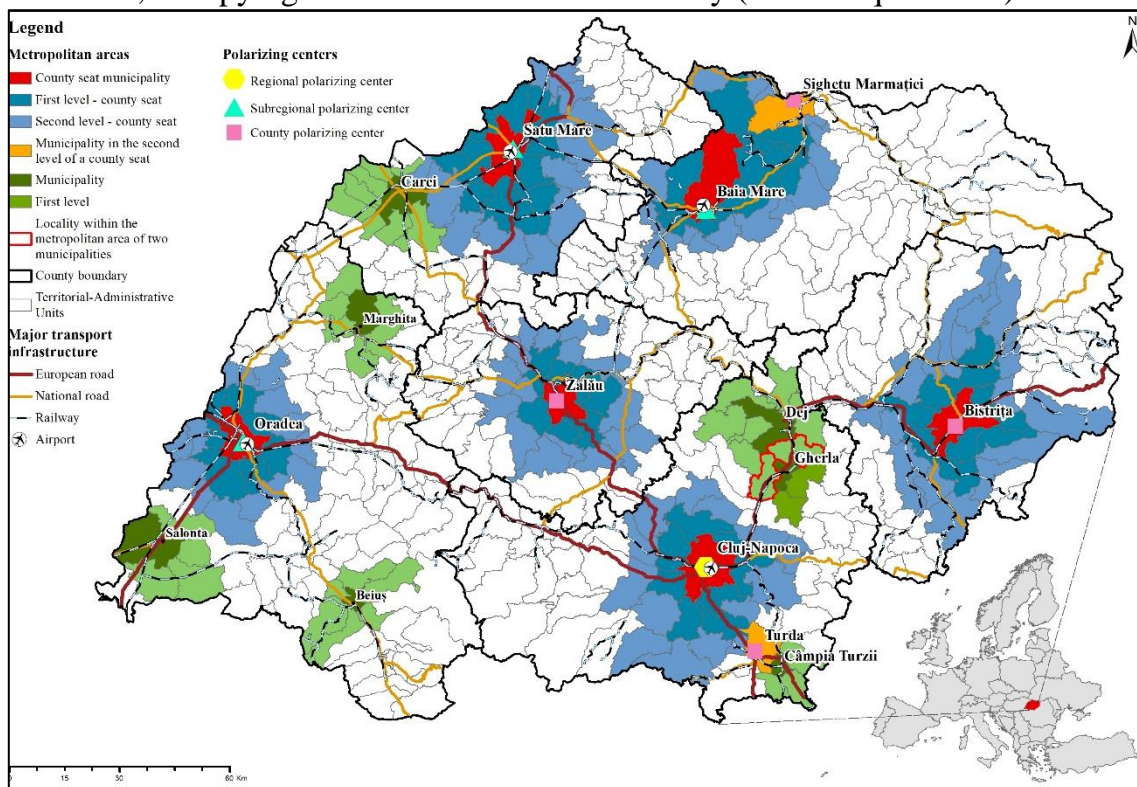


Figure 2. North-West Region: localization, territorial structure and transport infrastructure

The region is distinguished through the existence of an exceptional natural and human fund, having its origin in the obvious complementarity between geological and physico-geographic factors, respectively historical, social, economic, cultural and political ones. This interdependence is materialized in the individualization of a territorial system highly diversified regarding structural and spatial aspects and decidedly coherent in its functions.

4.2. Measuring gender inequality

Gender equality is not based exclusively on reaching a parity regarding the distribution of representation seats in all social, economic and political spheres.

Using quantitative indices for measuring the dimension of gender equality or inequality allows the identification of the effects of discriminatory pre-established factors, but does not significantly contribute to assessing the causality of these inequalities. Thus, for identifying larger social models it is required to accompany these indices with qualitative gender analysis able to detect *'the structural features of society that harden and perpetuate gender inequalities'* (Văileanu, Rusu and Cantarji, 2008).

The majority of world-wide used indices include in the analyzed dimensions aspects regarding education, economy and politics, harnessing appropriate indicators. Besides, a series of indices were developed to focus, beyond gender, on the relation between public institutions with gender aspects (SIGI), on female empowerment (GEM), female achievements (FemAI) and disadvantages (FemDI) compared to male performance levels. Moreover, although all of the existing indices are based on quantitative data, come of them recently published (FemAI, FemDI, BIGI) embrace a mixed methodology by including qualitative variables, like safety, security and confidence, perception of quality of life and general life satisfaction.

Table 1. Indices for measuring gender equality/inequality

INDEX	AUTHOR	DIMENSIONS	PURPOSE
<i>Gender-related Development Index (GDI)</i>	UNDP, 1995	Health and life expectancy	Measuring gender differences regarding health, education and the control over economic resources, linked with Human Development Index
		Education	
		Standard of living	
		Distribution on ministry seats	
		Economic participation rate	
		Maternal mortality rate	

<i>Gender Inequality Index (GII)</i>	UNDP, 2018	Adolescent natality rate	Measuring gendered disadvantages regarding reproductive health, empowerment and employment
		Population with minimal secondary studies	
		Distribution of parliament seats	
		Employment rate	
<i>Gender Gap Index (GGI)</i>	World Economic Forum, 2006	Health and life expectancy	Measuring gender discrepancy within four socio-economic fields
		Political empowerment	
		Economic participation and opportunity	
		Education	
<i>Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)</i>	OECD, 2019	Family-based discrimination	Analyzes gendered discrepancies regarding rights and opportunities (based and law), practices and attitudes
		Physical treat	
		Lack of access to financial and production resources	
<i>Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)</i>	UNDP, 1995	Distribution of parliament seats	Measuring economic and political gendered empowerment equality
		Administrative, professional, technical and managerial seats	
		Economic empowerment	
<i>European Gender Equality Index (EGEI)</i>	Bericat, 2012	Education	Measuring the relative degree of parity regarding the access to fundamental resources that determine the gendered social status
		Economic participation rate and income	
		Empowerment	
<i>Gender Equity Index (GEI)</i>	UNDP, 2004	Education	Measuring gendered inequity for countries in EU, according to own objectives
		Health and life expectancy	
		Housing and facilities	
		Socio-economic participation rate	
<i>Gender Development Measure-1 (GDM-1)</i>	UNDP, 2004	Education	Similar to GDI, while combining two distinct spheres: basic capacities and female empowerment
		Health and life expectancy	
		Housing and facilities	
		Socio-economic participation rate	

<i>Female Achievement Index (FemAI)</i>	EC, Regional and Urban Politics, 2021	Economic participation rate and income	Measuring the female achievements compared to the best regional female performance
		Education and knowledge	
		Free time	
		Empowerment	
		Health	
		Safety and trust	
		Quality of life	
<i>Female Disadvantage Index (FemDI)</i>	EC, Regional and Urban Politics, 2021	Economic participation rate and income	Sets the level of female disadvantage by measuring regional differences when female performance is lower than men.
		Education and knowledge	
		Free time	
		Empowerment	
		Health and life expectancy	
		Safety and trust	
		Quality of life	
<i>Basic Index of Gender Inequality (BIGI)</i>	Stoet și Geary, 2019	Childhood educational opportunities	Measuring gender inequality by analyzing aspects relevant for all humans, in all contexts.
		Health and life expectancy	
		General life satisfaction	
<i>Gender Disparity Index</i>	Bhatia, 2002	Time spent for primary, secondary and tertiary activities	Measuring gender inequality regarding the time dedicated for paid an unpaid activities
		Time spent for unpaid activities	

In Romania, aspects referring to perception and prejudice were interrogated only in *Barometrul de gen* (2018). However, the results of the study are mainly descriptive, lacking the possibility to spatialize the data and identify spatial clusters at a national level, comparable by the existing level of perception/prejudice of the population.

4.3. Perception Index of Gender Equity in Management [PIGEM]

The variety of existing quantitative indices for measuring gender equality highlights a reduced share in scientific research of *analyzing the perceptions* based on common sense and *measuring the level of prejudice* on both large scales and narrow spatial areas.

Considering the disproportionate distribution of domestic unpaid responsibilities between men and women (resulting in vertical occupational segregation), this study advanced the ***Perception Index of Gender Equity in Management (PIGEM)*** that, based on the perception of population on the role of women/men within five dimensions, is focused on highlighting the local level of bias in society, both generally and within the individual dimensions (shaping secondary objectives) regarding inequitable gendered opportunity for holding management or representation roles.

For data acquisition, a survey was employed, consisting of closed questions, one-answer question or grading scales. The survey has seven sections: one for demographic data collection, one for establishing the level of specific terminology level, and five dedicate to the analyzed dimensions: *education, economy, politics, private/familial sphere* and *security and quality of life*. Within each dimensions were included five affirmations used to set de level of bias based on the level of agreement or disagreement, on scale from 0 to 4, of the respondents.

Total disagreement – 0; Partial disagreement – 1; Neither – 2; Partial agreement – 3; Total agreement – 4.

The survey was applied by CATI technique at the level of territorial-administrative units (TAUs) from North-West Region, with a sample of 1007 respondents (with 10 minutes/interviewee) and a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$ for a confidence interval of 95%

Quantifying the collected responses is based on the scores awarded for the level of agreement/disagreement of respondents, resulting a general score of bias at TAU level, individual scores for each dimension, as well as sex-differentiated score, based on the following formula:

$$\text{PIGEM} = \sum_{i=1}^5 \left(\frac{D_i}{x} \right)$$

where D_i = dimension score for TAU and X = no of answers in TAU.

Given the large spatial extension of the study area (a total of 466 TAUs) and the selected sample, there is the need to proportionally assign PIGEM scores for the TAUs omitted from the original sample. This implied assigning values within the group of localities set in the

sample (categorized by total population) based on the existing values in said group, according to formula:

$$ND = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (PIGEM_i * x)}{y}$$

where ND = no data, x = no of responses in TAU within group, y = total no. of responses in group.

A similar formula was applied for the gendered scores, considering the total number of female and male responses in the sample group:

$$ND_f = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (PIGEM_i * x)}{y}$$

unde ND_f = no female data (F), x =no. of F responses in TAU within group, y = total no. of F responses within the group.

Similarly, the following PIGEM scores were derived: county level (by mean values of TAU scores) and NWR (by mean values of county scores), for each dimension, gender and total score. The level of the measured prejudice was derived by classifying the PIGEM scores in 5 classes, according to table 2.

Table 2. Level of prejudice based on the PIGEM scores

		No prejudice	Low level	Medium level	High level	Extreme level
PIGEM dimension	-	0.0 – 4.0 p	4.1 – 8.0 p	8.1 – 12.0 p	12.1 – 16.0 p	16.1 – 20.0 p
PIGEM total	-	0.0 – 20.0 p	20.1 – 40.0 p	40.1 – 60.0 p	60.1 – 80.0 p	80.1 – 100 p

Spatializing these scores allows a territorial representation of the bias level at local scales and, thus, spatially delimiting communities more or less subjective regarding the perception on gender and opportunity of having a management or representation role. The spatial highlight of TAUs with a high and extreme level of prejudice leads to identifying spatial clusters consisting of localities with biased gender perceptions, resulting in spatial patterns that have the potential of illustrating local effects on the level of territorial development.

4.4. PIGEM score in the North-West Region

4.4.1. Level of knowledge of specific terminology

In order to understand the context of the collected data, the survey included a section dedicated to investigating the level of knowledge regarding notions as *gender*, *gender differences*, *gender discrimination*.

Over 80% of respondents (both men and women) consider gender and biological sex to be having the same meaning. *Gender differences* are perceived the same, terminology knowledge being assimilated to the biological differences between men and women (over 70%). On the other hand, most of the respondents understand the correct meaning of *gender discrimination* – that of unequal opportunities for men and women (fig. 3).

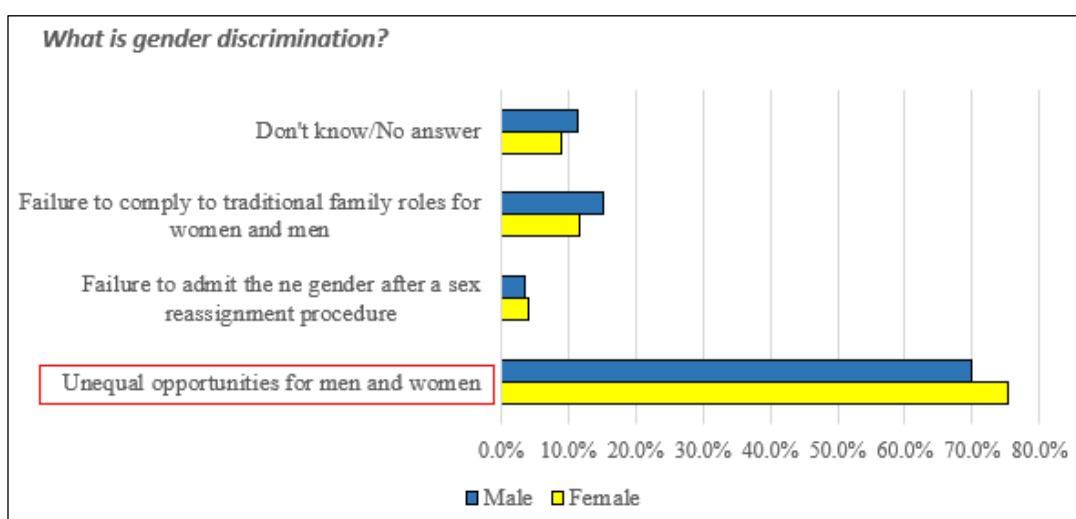


Figure 3. The understanding of the meaning of gender discrimination

The lack of clarity of gender-related terminology, alongside with the infusion of western European information regarding sexual and gender identity and sex reassigning procedures, lacking a set of coherent educative materials, leads to terminological confusions and thinking/speaking errors in Romanian society regarding the subject.

4.4.2. Prejudice level in the educational dimension

The results in the female and male sub-samples for the educational dimension suggest mostly similar perceptions for both sexes. However, there is a higher inclination towards a subjective gender perception among men, 22% of whom considering that in education should work mostly women, compared to only 15.8% of the female respondents.

4.4.3. Prejudice level in the economic dimension

Within the economic dimension, the perception discrepancies for the male-female sub-sample are wider, the same pattern being noticed and suggesting a high level of prejudice for the male population. The lowest values are based on gendered income differences, most of the respondents (77% male, 94% female) considering that the payment for the same level of work should not be gendered-based.

Geographically, the female and male levels of prejudice have different spatial extensions, scores and territorial contiguity.

PIGEM general score illustrates less discrepancies between urban and preurban spaces, without a clear spatial pattern. Substantial differences between the spatial extension of male bias compared to female prejudice suggest, within the economic dimension, an attitude inclined towards discrimination (sustained mostly by male respondents) regarding the authority and the socio-economic role of women (typical for patriarchy).

4.4.4. Prejudice level in the political dimension

Vertical occupational segregation is highlighted by the perception of population on gendered political representation roles, the highest level of bias being registered by the male population (37.6%) for the idea of a woman president (fig. 4). However, the patriarchal way of thinking is also sustained by female population, scoring a total of 30.1% for the same indicator

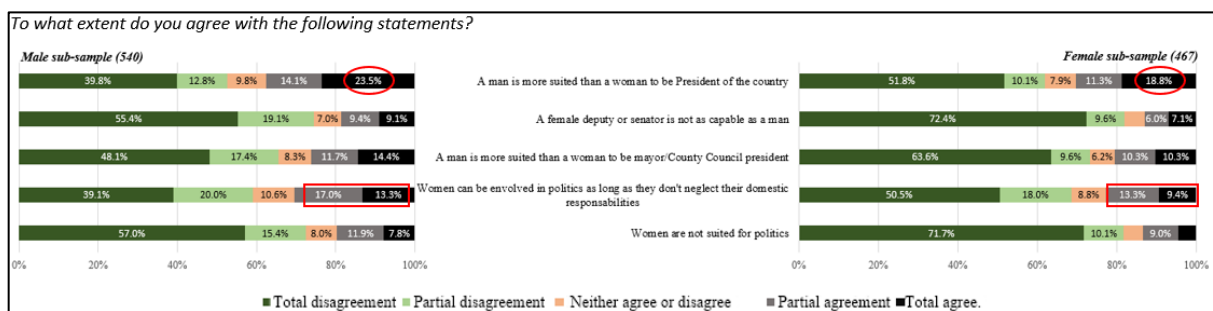


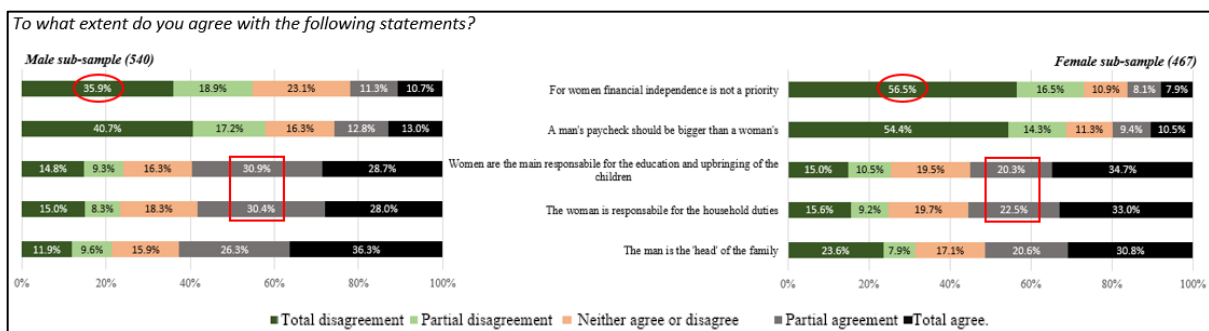
Figure 4. Sub-sample perceptions within the political dimension

Unlike previous results, the PIGEM scores for the political dimension also register extreme levels of prejudice (fig. 5). The general PIEGEM level shows contiguous clusters of high and extreme bias in the western part of the region (12.56% of total TAUs), concentrated in Bihor County. Cluj-Napoca municipality stands out again as the only county seat municipality lacking prejudice. The highest PIGEM scores are located in the proximity of urban areas (near Salonta, Beiuș, Marghita, Oradea, Baia Mare or Cluj-Napoca municipalities). Therefore, there are once again highlighted the discrepancies between the common mind of urban population and that in the rural areas. This can be explained by the level of local territorial development, education level, as well as the aging trend of rural population, resulting in a combination of factors favorable to perpetuating a patriarchal way of thinking.

4.4.5. Prejudice level in the private/familial sphere

Besides from the laws and coherent educational system, gender bias results from common sense long-lasting in time, from one generation to the other, by informal education that forms perceptions and mentalities in the private and familial spheres of the society.

Financial independence, as a priority for women, is argued for by 35.9% of the male respondents and 65.6% of women. Similar values are registered also for the equal revenue for men and women living together (40.7% men, 54.4% women). However, indicators referring to household and familial responsibilities, alongside with authority within a family highlight high levels of prejudice within the sample, both women (55%) and men (49.6%) hold women



responsible for raising the children.

Figure 6. Sub-sample perceptions within the private and familial sphere

Spatially, both men and women have low levels (fig. 7) of bias in the north and west of Cluj County, as well as in the north and south of Bistrița-Năsăud County. Medium levels for both sexes are spatially contiguous in the east and north of Sălaj County and in the eastern half of Bihor County.

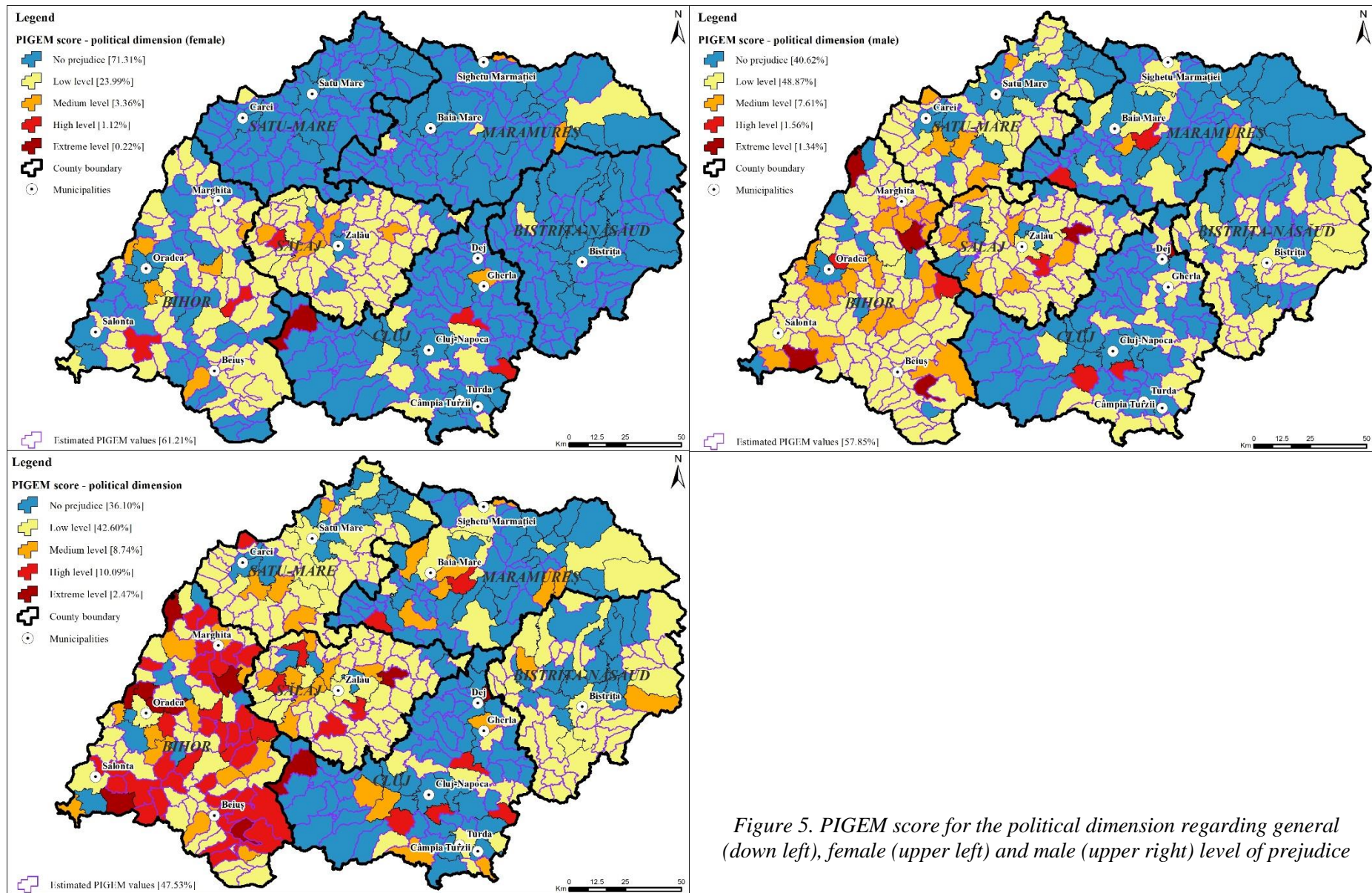


Figure 5. PIGEM score for the political dimension regarding general (down left), female (upper left) and male (upper right) level of prejudice

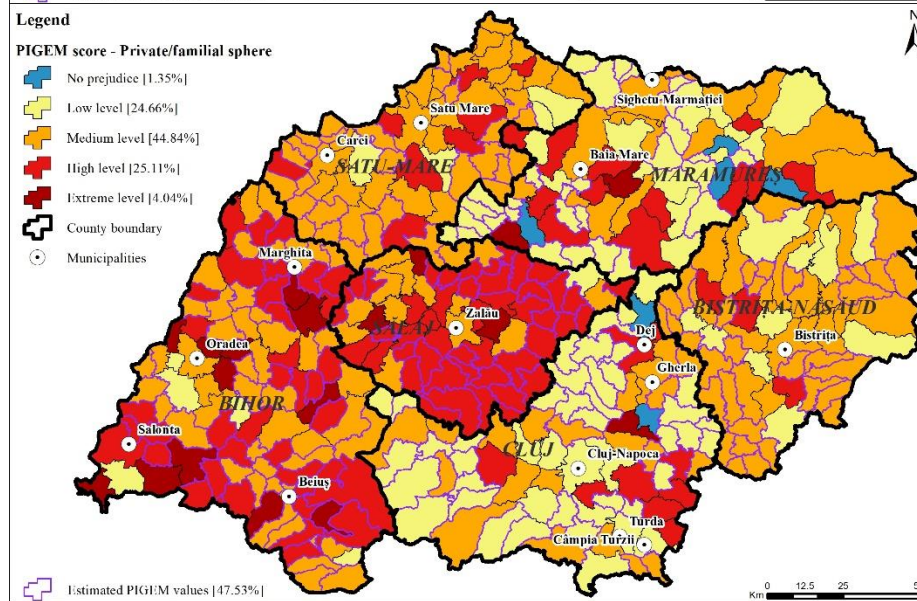
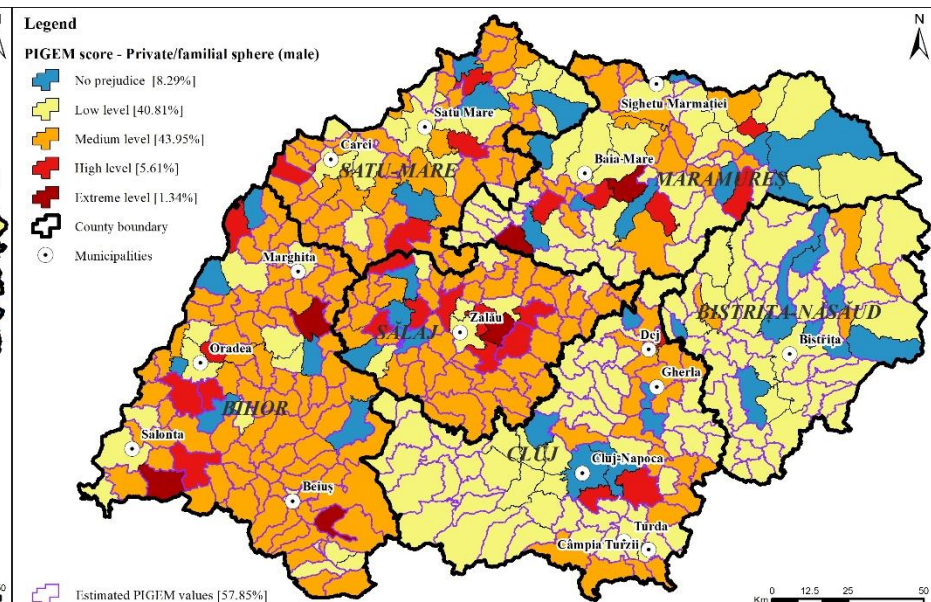
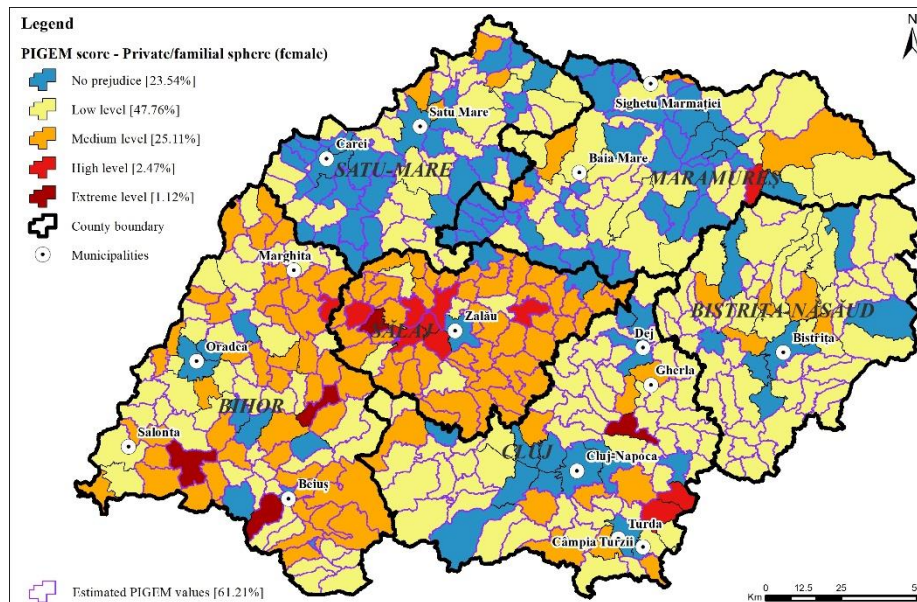


Figure 7. PIGEM score for the private/familial sphere regarding general (down left), female (upper left) and male (upper right) level of prejudice

4.4.6. Prejudice level regarding safety and quality of life

Within this dimension, the analysis focuses on aspects regarding perception on safety in public places, as well as stress, freedom, respect and time-spending issues in order to evaluate the general perception on the quality of life.

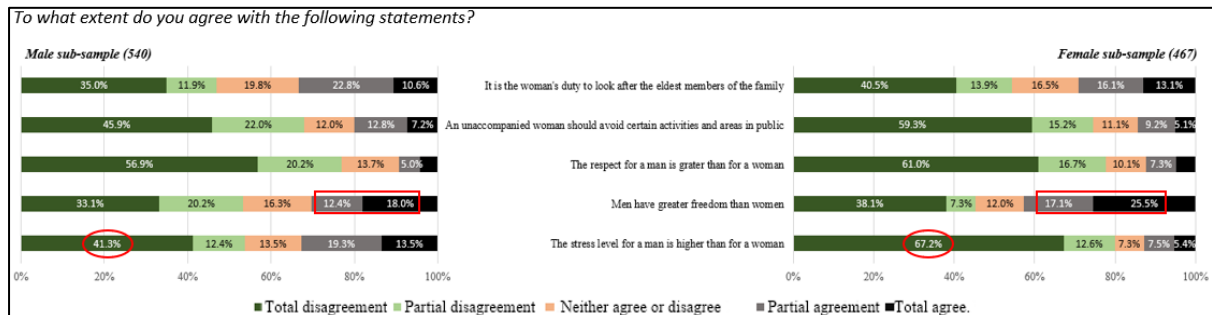


Figure 8. Sub-sample perceptions on safety and quality of life

For the female perceptions, the scores delimit a compact spatial cluster in Sălaj County with a majority of medium level of prejudice scores and high levels in its metropolitan area. A low level of prejudice is spatially contiguous in Cluj and Bistrița-Năsăud County. Besides these, the female PIGEM scores show a random spatial distribution within the region.

Spatializing the general PIGEM scores highlights differences between counties, with a total of only 18.71% of total TAU number lacking gender prejudice (most of them located within Maramureș County).

4.4.7. General prejudice level

The aggregation of PIGEM scores for each dimension returns the general level of prejudice for the North-West Region. Spatially (fig. 9), the territorial expansion characterized by the lack of gender bias decreases from the female scores (67.93% of TAUs) to the male ones (36.77%), the lowest being registered for the general PIGEM score (12.56% of TAUs), without extreme level of prejudice within the region.

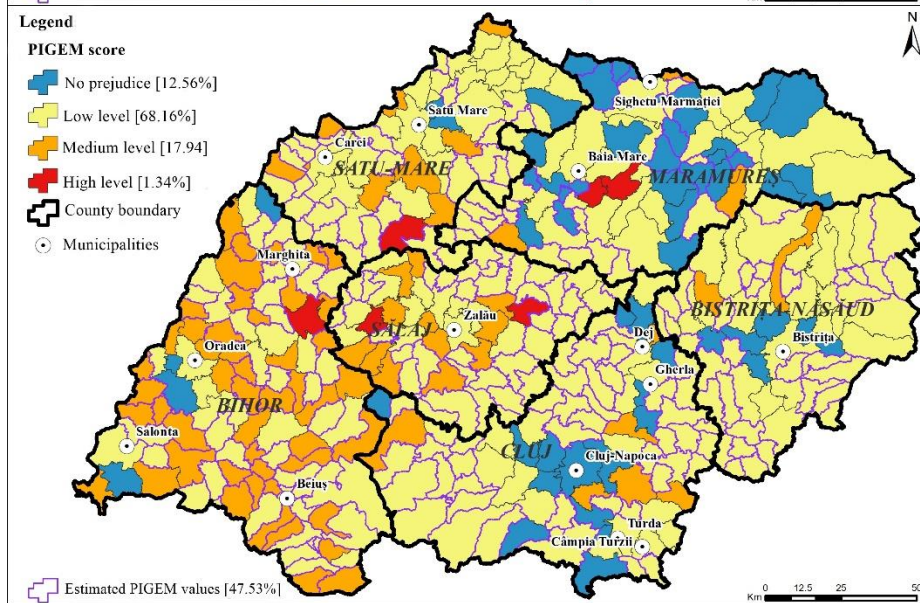
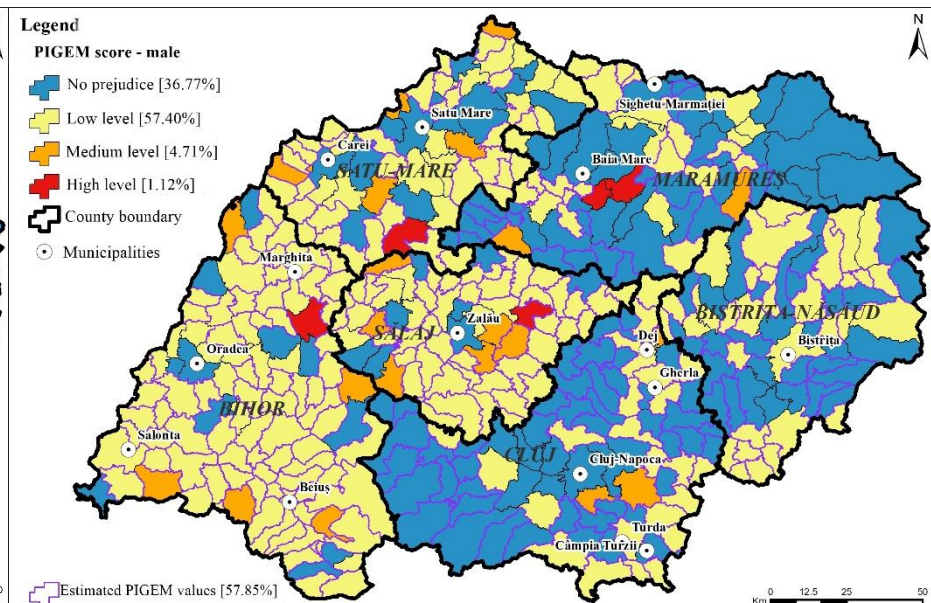
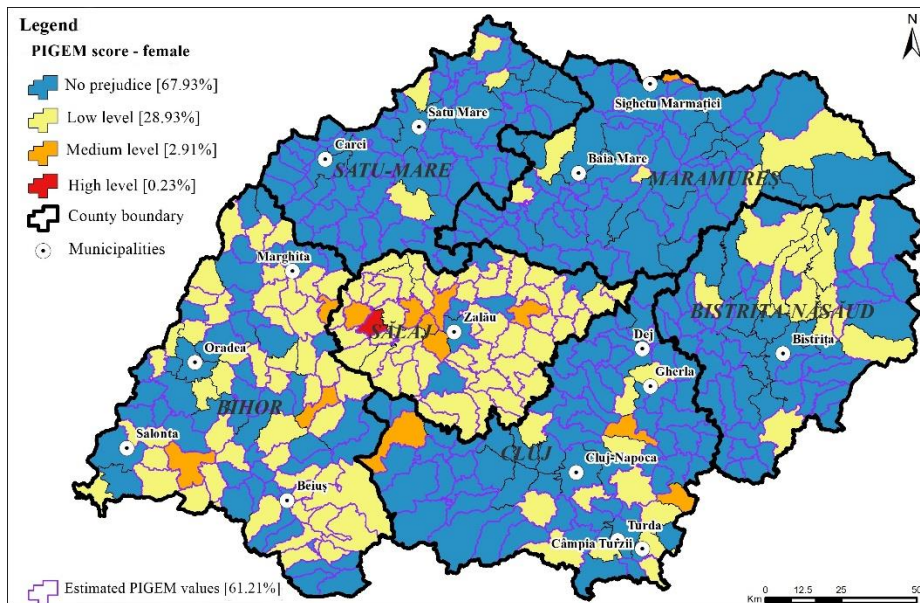


Figure 9. General PIGEM score regarding general (down left), female (upper left) and male (upper right) level of prejudice

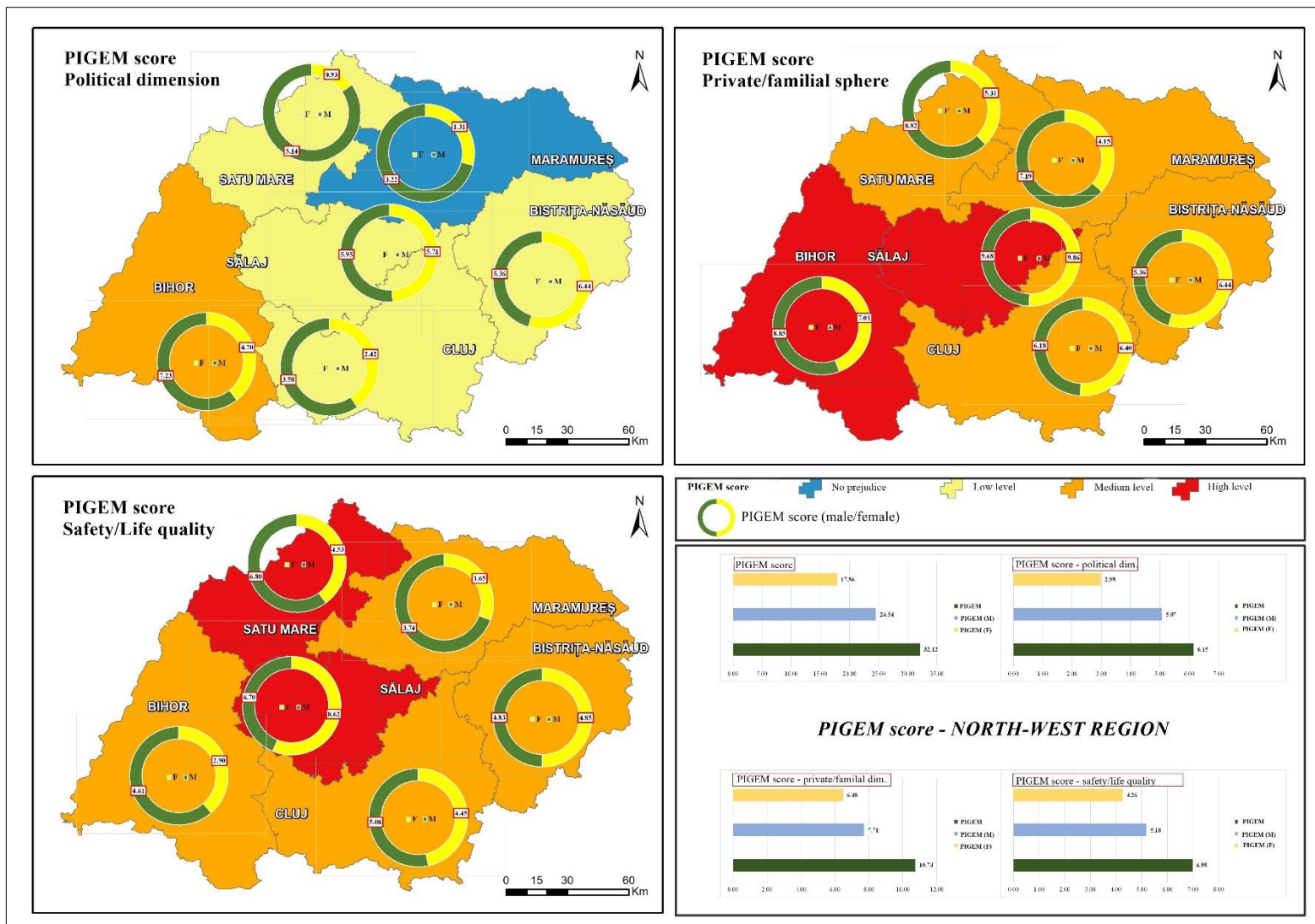


Figure 104. County-level PIGEM score for political dimension (upper left), private/familial sphere (upper right) and safety and quality of life (down left)

The results of the Perception Index of Gender Equity in Management allow the identification and analysis of population's level of prejudice at a local level, highlighting patterns of individuals' mentality regarding equitable gender opportunities for seizure of management or representation positions.

4.5. Analysis of existing perceptions among human communities

The analysis of the perception of population can outline correlations with the level of local territorial development, the socio-economic inequalities status in the area, for example. Differently put, the purpose of this section is to identify the way the identified and measured gender perception can be explained by a series of indicators that outline, on one hand, the level of local development and the real status of gender inequality, on the other.

4.5.1. Data and methodology

For each dimension, a set of indicators was selected. The data associated with these indicators expresses the area's actual state of social, economic and political inequities, the level of local territorial development, alongside with data collected through the survey in Appendix 1. Geographical Weighted Regression (GWR) shows the way PIGEM scores (dependent variable) can be explained by data regarding the status of development in the area (explicative variables). GWR creates an equation for each explicative variable analyzed, resulting varied spatial distribution for each of the included data.

4.5.2. Multivariate Clustering

Multivariate clustering was used as a tool to validate the analysis flow-chart (fig.11). The results highlight four statistical groups for each dimension; these groups consist of TAUs with similar values within the data set, without restrictions for spatial contiguity (Bîrsănuț, 2022b). Thus, the resulting statistical groups can be either for spatial clusters or can randomly distribute TAUs with similar values within the region.

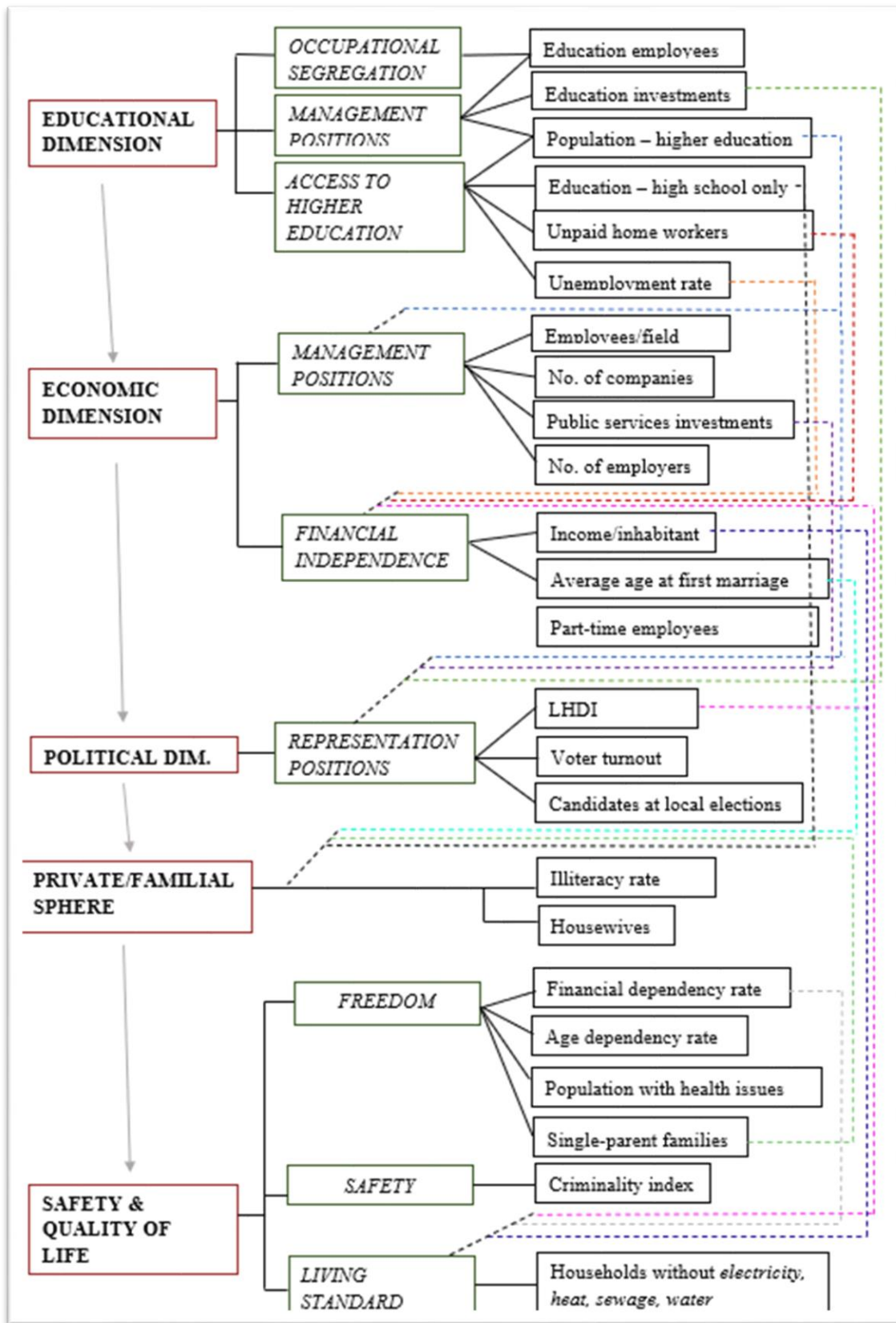


Figure 11. Territorial diagnosis flow-chart regarding five main dimensions

The way socio-economic aspects are interconnected is demonstrated by the dynamism of the five analyzed dimensions. The diagnosis tool suggested can identify spatial patterns within the region, delimiting therefore local communities based on socio-economic profile, political behavior and local human development level. The results of multivariate clustering can, therefore, establish the real level of development and existing gender inequalities, based on a complex set of indicators. Because these indicators refer to people, the results must be linked to the population gender perception measured by PIGEM.

4.5.3 Geographical Weighted Regression (GWR)

The cause-effect relationship between the level of prejudice and the existing factors in the field is argued for by the correlations for the two. Thus, GWR was applied to identify how the prejudice levels can be explained by socio-economic and political indicators within the analyzed dimensions and by gender.

PIGEM results were validated by GWR. Therefore, over 93% of TAUs in North-West Region include a general level of gender prejudice explained with a confidence level of over 60%, based on the statistical association of at least one dimension (fig. 12). Baia Mare Municipality and its metropolitan area is highlighted as being the only urban area with a PIGEM score explained by a Local R-Squared higher than 0.6 within three dimensions simultaneously. Similar overlaps are located at the administrative boundary of Bihor and Cluj counties, in the west of Sălaj County and the south of Satu Mare County, aggregating a total of 10% of the analyzed TAUs. On the other hand, a series of perceptions are explained by the GWR results based on only one dimension (68.56% of TAUs), concentrated in large areas from Bistrița-Năsăud, Satu Mare and Cluj counties, and locally in the rest of the area.

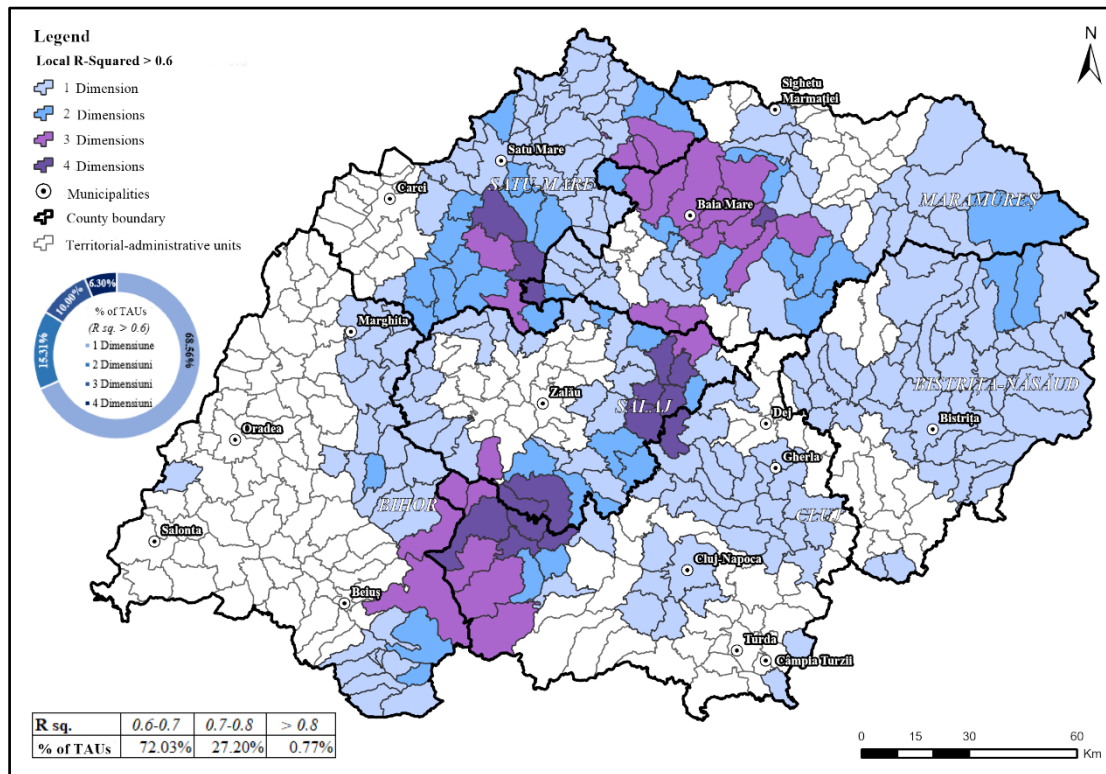


Figure 12. Spatial distribution of TAUs with $R^2 \geq 0.6$ (total) for at least one dimension

Similar-thinking communities are noticed at the periphery of the counties. Moreover, administrative boundaries do not interfere in the grouping of localities with similar perceptions, located at the border of Sălaj - Bihor counties, Bihor - Cluj counties, and Maramureș - Bistrița-Năsăud counties. This kind of spatial patterns are omitted in national or local analysis, giving once again an argument for researching at a level region in order to comparatively study local communities and their possible similarities.

This approach confirms the utility of the selected indicators for validating the results of the Perception Index of Gender Equity in Management, giving robust results for the link between level of prejudice and the level of social, economic and political local development level. Furthermore, based on data availability, a series of other socio-economic relevant indicators can be included in order to best describe these relations, to highlight spatial patterns and particular characteristics of small communities.

CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of Feminist Geography is an integral part of the ample wave of change after the '70s that modified essential aspects of society in all its forms: art, culture, social practice, politics and knowledge – scientific implicitly. This short, still ongoing, period is frequently considered one of transition from 'modern' to 'postmodern' society.

Feminist Geography is based on the emergence of radical, Marxist and humanist postmodern critiques, by contributions that highlight the anachronism of determinist (especially physico-geographical) approaches, as well as patterns and clichés of pre-established thinking paradigms.

The international reputation of Feminist Geography is attested by the increasing number of scientific publications from 1975 until present days, outlining a *substantiation stage* (1975-1989), followed by the *diversification stage* (1990-2009) and culminating with the '*Boom*' stage (2010-2021), stages that this study highlighted after a thorough review of the existing studies in Romania and internationally. The topics of study approached in feminist geographical research in this timeframe are consistent with socio-economic and political aspects in society, with the feminist waves, respectively, that favored the needed context for exploring extremely diverse issues. Nationally, approaching gender in Geography is still surprisingly scarce. This is one of the reasons behind choosing this research topic. The aim of this paper is to follow a clear set of objectives in order to answer the original hypothesis: *Is there real gender discrimination in North-West Region, and, if there is, what are the parameters that define the amplitude and spatial distribution of the phenomenon?*

An index for identifying and measuring these variables was put forward, suited for small scale analysis and capable of outlining specificity of the territory and the spatial relations between the variables. The main argument for such an index is made by the impossibility of combating patriarchy solely by formal measures and the need to identify its triggering factors in a society (informal education, common mind quiddity, behaviors in the private sphere, etc.) that might have further effects on the territorial development process.

Thus, to the three main needful dimensions (educational, economic and political) are added the private/familial sphere (the main channel of transmitting perceptions and attitudes from one generation to the other) and the safety and quality of life dimension (that identifies the gendered way of perceiving its components). Data acquisition relied on a three-sectioned survey that

provided answers from 1007 respondents. Based on these data the levels of prejudice for TAUs, county and the region were computed.

Identifying the way varied indicators (economic, educational, political, poverty or safety-related) spatially interact and overlap allows a territorial diagnosis of communities.

PIGEM results highlight the private/familial sphere as being the environment with the highest level of bias for both sexes, followed by the political dimension and perception of safety and quality of life. Thus, the private sphere is confirmed to be the most auspicious milieu for maintaining and expand patriarchal perceptions, bot for men and women.

Multidimensional representativity of PIGEM results was tested by spatial statistical techniques that allow (1) identifying correlations between perceptions and the level of local development, as well as (2) analyzing the spatial relations of the variables in order to outline spatial patterns. The methodological approach permits the spatial analysis of the dynamism of perceptions based on the existing gender inequalities in the area, resulting, therefore, a series of complex spatial distributions, appropriate for both women and men, as well as for the general level of bias.

The spatial variability of PIGEM results reflects the way traditional ethnographic spaces preserve and harness customary perceptions and behaviors in spite of rational ones (noticed in Țara Chioarului, Țara Silvaniei, Țara Năsăudului, Țara Beiușului). Also, the results highlight a high level of prejudice in continuous rural areas, while urban population is less inclined towards a gendered biased way of thinking. A gradual increase of the level of prejudice from east to west is noticed; regardless of the analyzed dimension, Sălaj County stands out with a constant presence of gender preconceptions on different levels. The exception from the east-west axis is the PIGEM score regarding safety and quality of life: male, with a north-west – south-east distribution; female, with a cluster of preconceptions in the center and the eastern part of the region. A similar spatial distribution is noticed for the PIGEM scores correlation with the territorial development level, with values for Local R-Squared grater than 0.6 in Sălaj County (or in its neighborhood) and within localities situated at the counties' administrative boundary.

Gender preconceptions at county level highlight lower PIGEM values as a consequence of the data aggregation. However, all six counties in the region generally register a low level of bias, but medium and high levels for the political dimension, private/familial sphere, and security and quality of life, outlining the public and private aspects which are favorable for patriarchy (political positions, domestic responsibilities inequity, gendered freedom/safety in public spaces, etc.).

Based on these conclusions, a series of measures can be employed in order to decrease the patriarchal mentalities in the region. Moreover, the analysis tool suggested can be applied in either of the Romanian regions and, if adapted, in other international regions. Besides the resources needed for data acquisition, the biggest impediment in internationally extrapolating the index is the need of adjusting it to the specificity of the local common mind in order to inquire the particular patriarchal valences of the analyzed region. Furthermore, a restrictive aspect of this kind of an approach is based on the availability of fresh data regarding the existing inequalities in society, the main data source being limited to the national censuses.

The results of this study unequivocally demonstrate the importance of informal education and the need for equitable, non-gendered distribution of domestic and familial responsibilities so as to reduce gender inequalities and outline a society within which each member has equal opportunities for holding a management or representation seat, without restrictions resulted from stereotypes, mentality, time resources and biased attitudes. Territorial development level, level of education, poverty rate, access to basic infrastructure, social and political behaviors are defining elements for any type of human settlement, with a direct influence on the way both men and women relate to gender equity and their social roles.

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