

Chapter 6

Clustering as an Innovative Approach to Revealing the Recreational and Touristic Potential of Rural Territories

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ABSTRACT

This chapter develops an innovative approach to revealing recreational and touristic potential of rural territories based on grouping, classification of types, and clustering. The study is completed on the case of southern parts of Russia as the most suitable areas in the country for the development of rural tourism. The authors elaborate an approach to classification of rural territories on four parameters in purpose to discover their social, economic, demographic, and recreational potential for the development of rural tourism. Application of the approach in the case of rural territories of Stavropol region allowed establishing the individual complexes of innovative measures aimed at the diversification of employment of rural population and promotion of tourism and recreation sectors.

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INTRODUCTION

Social and economic development of rural territories has its regional specifics due to the peculiarities of spatial distribution of rural population and rural economy over a wide area. Decrease in spatial differentiation creates more favorable conditions for effective development of the territories and leveraging their natural and economic advantages. One of the stages of development and implementation of the programs for sustainable rural development is classification of rural territories and identification of the types of districts or areas. Such a typology allows conducting a comprehensive analysis of social, economic, environmental, and institutional spheres of rural territories and elaborate specific complexes of measures for ensurance of sustainable development of various types of rural territories.

Typology is one of the approaches to studying a particular conjunction of objects or events which are somehow similar to each other or have a common basis. Some such common characteristics are used to sort the objects under study, while others allow their classification or grouping depending on the purposes of a study. Classifications conducted on particular characteristics are different from the entire array of the objects under study. Therefore, these aggregated objects may be investigated with an application of common approaches or other kinds of generalization (Antokhonova & Budazhanayeva, 2016). In territorial studies, according to Merzlov, Ovchintseva, and Popova (2012), typology is an indispensable element of any analysis of the arrays of similar (related) objects or events. It is also a stage of a study when the information about the events is sorted and grouped in different types. Rodimtsev, Rezvyakov, and Studennikova (2014) defined types as aggregations (groups, arrays, etc.) of phenomena, which have common distinctive qualitative features different from other objects. Such groups are common on their genesis and functions.

There have been many approaches to the typology of rural territories. The basis of allocation of rural areas includes strength, density, structure of employment, level of urbanization of the territory, and distance from the center of economic development. Mikhaylova, Budazhanayeva, Sarycheva, and Bakumenko (2015) suggested a hierarchical system of indicators used to develop a typology of regional rural areas, including aggregated typology criteria, including the level of economic potential, level of restrictions of the use of economic potential, and level of social and economic development. Beyazli, Aydemir, Oksuz, and Ozlu (2017) concluded that rural area planning approaches should deal with the physical and social dimensions of rural areas in a holistic manner based on principles of rural diversity, efficiency, and sustainability. Brezzi, Dijkstra, and Ruiz (2011) used the extended typology to compare the dynamics of population and labor markets. According to their results, remote rural regions demonstrate a stronger decline in population and a faster ageing process than rural regions close to a city. The remoteness of rural regions is a significant factor explaining regional outflows of working age population, confirming that this extended typology captures the economic distance from market and services. Van Eupen et al. (2011) developed a rural typology which incorporated two dimensions identified by statistical screening of a range of geographical and socioeconomic data related to the territorial variation of European rural land. The use of high-resolution raster data at 1 km² resolution allowed Van Eupen et al. (2011) receiving large flexibility for the construction of individual classifications with a variable number of classes for a variety of objectives.

In studying rural territories, one of the internationally accepted approaches to classification is the methodology of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It allows defining three types of rural territories (predominantly urban, intermediate, and predominantly rural). The territories are classified based on several criteria, including density of population, share of population

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