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METHODOLOGY OF TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION IN THE STUDY OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN SERBIA

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Abstract: The typology of rural settlements is an actual issue that has been drawing the attention of Serbian scholars since the early 1900s, and which is slowly finding its place in practice and in creating the politics and strategies of rural development. The scientific approach and methods of conducting a typology have been significantly changed since the period when a distinction was made among rural settlements in Serbia for the first time. In this paper, the author chronologically and thematically guides us through this issue by giving an overview of the rural typologies in Serbian scholar literature, placing them in the recent rural studies in Serbia, emphasizing and following the evolution of the typological classification of rural settlements. The author starts with observations where the typology is treated as a method, and then develops an approach to typology as a scientific discipline and, in the end, as a tool for achieving adequate research goal and conclusions. This evolution path and thematic approach of rural typology are in the focus of the paper.

Keywords: typology; settlements; rural geography; Serbia

Introduction

The typological classification of settlements is one of the most interesting issues in geographical scholar literature, always an actual and important factor in regional geographic analyzes, a significant and complex problem of contemporary geography (Perko, Hrvatin, & Ciglić, 2015; Radovanović, 1965). It can be said that it is still an insufficiently developed scientific field (Župančić & First-Dilić, 1972) due to the differences in the set goals for which it is being conducted, the areas and context in which it is implemented, and the data on which it is based.

The reasons for the implementation of the typologies of the settlements are varied, but there is a consensus on the view that this procedure is "of capital importance and represents a fundamental research project" (Šušar, 1972, p. 140). It is evident that typology is a very important part of geography because it provides both understanding and displaying specific features of space and their comparison. The justified reasons for performing typologies are usually found in scientific curiosity, that is, in the "homogenization of inhomogeneity" and generalization, as well as in stimulating future research with a focus on spatial differences and similarities that lead to the formulation of developmental theories (Ilbery, 1981; Lukić, 2012).

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In this paper, the typology will be presented as a scientific method or a research tool in the case of the study of rural settlements in Serbia. In modern academic circles, a significant applicative contribution was found in the classification of rural areas and settlements due to the fact that our villages suffered significant modifications that should be described spatially and phenomenally. In this sense, typology is set as an indispensable instrument, actual in different scientific epochs, which is not only academically oriented but also forms the basis for taking certain political and socio-economic measures for the purpose of the actual direction of the development of the rural areas and their elements. In this regard, the paper is designed to familiarize the reader with the typology as a method and an instrument, with the reasons for its implementation, the application and the significance of the differentiation of Serbian rural areas and settlements, and to chronologically and thematically overview its representation in the Serbian academic circles, and with the vision for its possible implementation in similar foreign rural societies.

Typology as a method?

Although an established term, typology is not easy to define and designate. It is usually explained as a scientific discipline dealing with types (Mastilo, 2001; Todorović, 2002; Vujaklija, 1980) and it implies the grouping of studied subjects and phenomena of an area by the totality that is consistently different from each other according to qualitative characteristics. Nevertheless, it is most often treated as a method or instrument that leads to the desired conclusions (Cvijić, 1922; Radovanović, 1965; Stamenković & Bačević, 1992; Šušvar, 1972).

As a method, typology has wide application in geography. First, as a part of the multivariate analysis, it was used in psychology, and then in sociology from the 1920s to the 1930s in the United States, while in geography it was applied in the 1940s in the analysis of social differentiation of urban structures (Lukić, 2012). The typological classification method was innovative at that time as it demonstrated the exceptional wideness, flexibility and potential of the model concept (Harvey, 1969). Since the 1980s, its application has been found in the classification of geospatial structures (Harrington & O'Donoghue, 1998). The primary task of this method is to identify, simplify and compare the observed data so that they become comparable and to allow the reduction of complexity and variability to a few types in order to delimit space according to the rurality degree or socio-economic characteristics, indicative of expressing performance in rural areas (Copus, Psaltopoulos, Skuras, Terluin, & Weingarten, 2008; Župančić & First-Dilić, 1972).

In contemporary frames, typologies are of usually instrumental character and part of a pragmatic orientation in the process of researching and setting up uniform exploratory values, and are not used as theoretical conclusions, but rather as heuristics in the initial phase of research (Župančić & First-Dilić, 1972). Thus, typology is not an end in itself, but rather a tool that allows a meaningful analysis and comparison. This is a somewhat different and more contemporary concept of typology, which has been seen as a science or method, and more recently as an analytical mechanism for realizing and directing various aspects of development policies. The latest concepts of typology are based on sound methodologies built on robust data, which have high explicit power and communication value, and should be relevant for creating policy development and conclusions (Böhme, Hanell, Pflanz, Zillmer, & Niemi, 2009). In this case, rural typology is a quantitative-operational classification of rural areas, which requires a large volume of empirical data and statistical methods (Drobnjaković, 2019). In this regard, the definition of typology as a science, method or instrument in a research process is determined by the goal and context of the research.

Methodology and materials

The paper relies on previous research carried out in the domain of the implementation of types of rural settlements and rural areas in Serbia, as well as on the methods used to differentiate their transitional forms. By analyzing the collected material—scientific papers and strategic documents, a chronological and thematic review of the researches dealing with the typology of the village will be performed, as well as the distinction between the methods used and the selection of indicators, following their evolution from simple to complex, which led to the shift of theoretical and empirical frameworks in which these typologies are performed. For this purpose, a review of works in geographical and spatial planning literature and practice in this scientific domain has been made, which was available in the databases for search. The papers in which the authors perform the typologies of rural settlements are selected. The author has chosen a period from the beginning of the 20th century, when the first major scientific research of rural settlements was recorded in Serbia and when the typological classification was applied, to contemporary rural research with a different focus.

The paper will show how the focus in the typologies of rural settlements in Serbia has changed, but also how the degree of disaggregation of data for the purpose of rural typology has changed, depending on the current social and economic circumstances and needs. Academic papers were classified based on the used indicators on which the authors relied. By comparing the applied approach in the analyzed researches, five groups of rural typologies are distinguished: demographic, to which typologies are based exclusively on the population size of the settlement or demographic characteristics of the local population; urban-morphological, which points to the topographic elements and the morphological structure of the settlement; functional, based on the distinction of the settlement according to the functions in the settlement and the activities of the population; socio-economic, which refers to a broader overview of the importance of settlements in space, including several dimensions such as daily mobility, urbanization, social relations, etc.; and complex typologies carried out by a quantitative method modeled on European practice that provide an objective and complete picture of rural settlements and their relationships in a certain area.

The purpose for creating a typology of rural settlements and rural areas

Although the segment of the study of rural areas is somewhat neglected, it actually represents a profound scientific basis of many contemporary scientific disciplines. In some ways, the implementation of typologies in the domain of rural studies has led to the re-actualization of a number of rural issues. In the recent period, a focus in domestic and international scholar literature is set on the typology of rural areas, which is related to the application of adequate development measures and institutional support and innovation of solving the problem of rural areas.

The need for the constitution of the typology of rural areas first appeared in order to emphasize the difference with urban areas, and then partly from the need to define, identify, describe and compare rural ones, as spatial systems, and their spatial varieties (Copus et al., 2008; Openshaw, 1985; Troughton, 1983). Others, however, see the purpose for performing typologies in the need to explain causal and consequential connections of various elements in the evolution of the rural areas and, in general, to study its transformation (Šuvar, 1972). From these scientific and practical aspirations, two final goals for the implementation of typologies can be observed:

- enrichment of the methodological basis and stimulation of a systematic, continuous and representative scholar study of rural areas and settlements;
- application, through the creation of social and political actions, regional and locally oriented development measures on scientifically based facts in order to harmonize and plan the development of these areas with current social needs and real potentials.

Previous domestic and European rural typologies were generally one-dimensional, based on a course of administrative data that could not adequately define the diversity of the observed area. Typologies based on one criterion give limited opportunities for analyzing contemporary social and spatial transformations of rural areas. In this paper, it is only partially discussed about the socio-economic essence of the typology of the settlement, “based on the criteria that cannot faithfully depict and diversify their spatial or temporal development, transformation, variations in functional content, as well as the diversity of their transit forms” (Radovanović, 1965, p. 98).

Performing settlement typologies is a complex issue. It requires a multidimensional approach and the appreciation of the various attributes that describe rural varieties. Newer rural studies, inspired by the so-called post-rural approach, put the emphasis on the diversity and variability of rural areas, their dynamic component and transformations (Cloke, 1977; Marsden, 1998; Murdoch & Pratt, 1993; Woods, 2012). Extremely important was the production of synthetic and comprehensive typologies of rural settlements. It requires the formation of a set of criteria in order to obtain unquestionable scientific and practical values through the application of complex research and systemic approach, which seeks to include as many elements of the rural environment as a territorial, social and economic organism (Radovanović, 1965). The typology based on the new concept is difficult because the meaning of rurality varies depending on the context in which it is observed. Its creation implies recognition and synthesis of rural dimensions, and consists of relatively homogeneous units created for specific research objectives and development policies (Van Eupen et al., 2012).

Such comprehensive typologies determine new relationships among the assumed variables in order to facilitate the interpretation of the main features of the set being observed. In some cases, it can really be considered a science because it still involves the operationalization of a large data set, using different sophisticated statistical mathematical methods. However, due to the selection of the input variables, on which this typology is based, subjectivity is inevitable, and for each endeavor authors are constrained to refer to the specific rural space in particular time (Blunden, Pryce, & Dreyer, 1996; Cloke, 1977; Harrington & O'Donoghue, 1998), which should be carefully considered.

Typology of rural settlements in Serbia

In a more detailed study of rural settlements, scientists in Serbia dealt with the organization of rural areas and their typology, using more qualitative indicators. Precisely this tendency towards descriptive, and not exact indicators, made it difficult for their unique and unified definition and categorization.

The delimitation of the types of rural settlements was partly a result of the official dichotomous division, introduced by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. According to this methodology, rural settlements were presented as a category of *others*. Thus, the mosaic structure of a rural area is virtually annihilated, as in the case of statistical representations, the state of the indicators being monitored is generalized. In such circumstances, the term *rural* is residual to *urban*. In this sense, a critique is made in which urban and rural settlements are set up as two opposing

entities, two polar types of spatial continuum, two dichotomous lives, without a whole series of empirically transitional categories (Župančić & First-Dilić, 1972). Attempts to abolish this rigid division were made in the early postwar period since the beginning of the tendency to establish an adequate typology of rural settlements on scientific basis and experiential knowledge.

The research of rural areas and settlements in Serbia has a long tradition and rests on the literary materials of Vuk Karadžić (1827) and Vladimir Karić (1887), who grabbed the knowledge of the founders of rural disciplines: rural geography and anthropogeography – Jovan Cvijić (1922), rural sociologies – Sreten Vukosavljević (2012), *rumism* – Branislav Kojić (1958) and others. In this rural opus, as it enriched itself and multiplied, the approach to the study and treatment of this problem gradually evolved and complicated.

Jovan Cvijić methodologically and theoretically established the concept of rural study (Cvijić, 1922), which still has practical application in geographical and sociological research. The typology of rural settlements that he established was a novelty in the world's geographical science. He developed an activity in order to improve the scientific method by showing through his typologies "all the cognitive value of a typological approach to socio-cultural phenomena" (Mitrović, 1999, p. 47). It can rightly be noted that he is the initiator and creator of the methodological basis for the typological classification of rural settlements (Radovanović, 1965).

The shift of focus in scholar literature dealing with the rural issues, the evolution of approaches and methodology in the implementation of the typologies of rural settlements are presented further in the paper, with a difference in comparison to the previously summarized typological classification of settlements in these regions (Kojić & Simonović, 1975; Simonović & Ribar, 1993; Stamenković & Bačević, 1992), because typologies are divided according to groups of dominant indicators.

Demographic typology of rural settlements

Demographic characteristics of the settlement represent the necessary basis for their differentiation. In Serbia, the most attention is paid to these features, and often their combining with other characteristics is done to deepen the image of the phenomenon being explored.

Table 1
Overview of demographic typologies of rural settlements

Year	Author	Adm. unit	Indicators	Types
1954	Macura	settlement	population, share of non-agricult. p.	3 (urban, mixed and other)
1970	Ban	settlement	population	systematization by population size
1984	Djere	settlement	population	systematization by population size
1985	Stamenković	settlement	population	systematization by population size
1992	Stamenković, Bačević	settlement	population	systematization by population size
1993	Simonović, Ribar	settlement	population	small, medium and large;
1997	Penev	settlement	age structure	6 types (aging stages)
1999	Tošić	settlement	migration, natural increase	8 types

Note. non-agricul. = non-agricultural; p. = population; education struct. = education structure.

Most demographic typologies are based on the population size of the settlement (Ban, 1970; Stamenković, 1985; Tošić, 1999). This indicator, however, provides an incomplete picture of the demographic structure of the settlements being observed. More precise typologies based on demographic indicators include more features that are being linked. Such is, for example, the classification of settlements based on the population change affected by the biological and migratory components (Tošić, 1999), typology according to the stages of population aging (Penev, 1997), etc., which provide a comprehensive picture of demographic trends in the settlement (Table 1).

Urban-morphological typology of rural settlements

Consideration of differences in the urban-morphological structure of the settlement implies a somewhat more contemporary approach to this issue, but with the roots in the traditional morphological and genetic typology of the settlement (Table 2).

Table 2
Overview of the urban-morphological typologies of rural settlements

Year	Author	Adm. unit	Indicators	Types
1922	Cvijić	settlement	7 groups, morphological	7 types
1929	Milojević	settlement	position	4 (line, compact, scattered, hamlets)
1929	Popović	settlement	architecture	8 (Šumadijski, hilly, Macedonian, "ušoreni", line, other rural, new settl., rural "varošice")
1955	Bukurov, Nikolić, Vranešević	settlement	—	—
1961	Kostić	settlement	structure	according to morphological el.
1973	Kojić	settlement	urban-morphological	4 (hamlet, primary village, center of rural community, rural "varošica")
1973	Radovanović, Nikolić	settlement	dispersion	according to spatial organization
1975	Kojić, Simonović	settlement	urban-morphological structure, genesis	Compact, scattered, semi-scattered; spontaneous and planned
1976	Simonović	settlement	population density	according to spatial organization, agrarian and general pop. density
1978	Kostić	settlement	5 groups	—
1984	Rakić	settlement	geomorphol.	according to position
1987	Čurčić	settlement	structure	—
1988	Jovanović	settlement	position	—
1992	Stamenković, Bačević	settlement	micro-position, genesis	—
1993	Simonović, Ribar	settlement	genesis, structure	planned, <i>ušorena</i> , spontaneous; scattered and compact
2003	Stojanović	settlement	pop. density	6 types

Note. geomorphol. = geomorphological; pop. = population.

Cvijić's classification of settlements (Cvijić, 1922), as one of the oldest typologies of rural settlements in Serbia, can just be classified into this group of typologies. Its basis is morphological or topographic elements, because it treats the layout, plan, dispersion or organization of the

settlement. It was a model of many subsequent attempts of this kind. Recent urban-morphological typologies are based on derived indicators, most often on land use and the scope of built-up area, as well as the factors that indirectly influenced the differences in the way of land use (concentration of population and position).

Functional typology of rural settlements

The functional typology of the geospace has found great application in our professional and scholar literature. To distinguish rural and urban areas, many authors consider these criteria as a primary, although they cannot be the only determining factor in the establishment of typologies (Župančić & First-Dilić, 1972). These functional typologies are based on different indicators, but some problems are expressed in the continuous statistical monitoring or availability in Serbia.

Table 3
Overview of functional typologies of rural settlements

Year	Author	Adm. unit	Indicators	Types
1954	Macura	settlement	population, share of non-agricul. pop.	3 (urban, mixed, rural) 12 (lonely livestock, agrarian-livestock, on agricul.-ind. properties, with processing industry, suburban with specialized agricul., workers', mining, forest, spas, resorts, former <i>varošice</i> , centers of rural community)
1965	Radovanović	settlement	morphological, functional	4 (traditional, mixed, socialistic, non-agricultural)
1991	Čirić	settlement	economical	—
1992	Stamenković, Bačević	settlement	basic and specific func.	9 (primary, with the center, and the centers of rural community, touristic and spas, regional, municipal center and periurban)
1993	Simonović, Ribar	settlement	functional	—
1995	Veljković, Jovanović, Tošić	settlement	active pop. by economy sectors	9 types
1999	Grčić	settlement	active pop. by economy sectors	9 types
1999	Tošić	settlement	active pop. by economy sectors	9 (agrarian, secondary and tertiary with sub-types)
2006	Grčić, Ratkaj	settlement	employees	—
2015	Miletić, Drobnjaković	settlement	active pop., daily migrants	according to functions

Note. non-agricul. = non-agricultural; pop. = population.

From Cvijić's typology till nowadays, the occupation of the population was an important starting point for determining the type and evolution of the settlement. Thus, some of the first typologies that emerged from the framework of the observation of the morphological features of the settlements were precisely based on their functions (Djurić, 1966; Macura, 1954; Radovanović, 1965).

The most frequently used indicators of the development of the function of work and the significance of the centers of work in our geographical and spatial planning literature are: active population engaged in occupation by sectors of activity (Jovanović, 1988; Tošić, 1999; Veljković, Jovanović, & Tošić, 1995), the share of the agricultural population (Ćirić, 1991; Jačimović, 1984; Jovanović, 1988), employment in the industry/tertiary sector (Djere, 1984; Grčić, 1990, 1999), concentration of functions/institutions (Krunić, 2012; Tošić, 1999); and some authors (Simonović & Ribar, 1993; Stamenković & Bačević, 1992) distinguish basic and specific functions, which determine the type of settlement and its development (Table 3).

Functional typologies were performed by different methods, most often by the model of the tenancy diagram (Grčić, 1999; Tošić, 1999; Veljković et al., 1995) and functional dependence of the settlement (Grčić, 1999; Matijević, 2009), while more complex ones are based on the factor method (Grčić, 1990), shift-share analysis (Grčić & Ratkaj, 2006), etc., and can be followed by the author's efforts to methodologically modernize and conceptually improve typologies based on the settlements' functions.

Socio-economic typology of rural settlements

Typologies based on derived socio-economic indicators are very useful and current. They establish the difference between the observed spatial units according to the clearly defined rules or in the ranges of the values of the selected indicators. Some of them are based only on one or two indicators, while in others they are included in a set of indicators. Contemporary trends in geography increasingly move toward the use of comprehensive typologies, and socio-economic ones are a one step towards them.

In domestic and foreign literature these applied typologies are numerous. Most importantly, as a basic indicator, they take a segment related to daily mobility (Grčić, 1999; Jovanović, 1988; Stamenković & Gatarić, 2005; Tošić, 1999), which is an important instrument in shaping functional geospatial units, because they indicate the degree of transformation of rural settlements, but also the strength and influence of the work center (Tošić, Krunić, & Petrić, 2009; Tošić & Nevenić, 2007). In this group, typologies are based on different approaches: 1) sociological (Ćirić, 1991; Pantić, 2016; Šuvar & Puljiz, 1972; Vukosavljević, 1983); 2) spatial-planning, using differentiation models based on socio-economic indicators and the concept for the determination of urbanization degree (Šećerov, Nevenić, & Tošić, 2009; Tošić, 1999); 3) typologies according to the achieved centrality level, which are used in a simple form in national strategic documents, but rarely found in literature due to their complexity (Jovanović, 1988) (Table 4).

Table 4
Overview of socio-economic typologies of rural settlements

Year	Author	Adm. unit	Indicators	Types
1953	Vukosavljević	settlement	tradition, housing, function, and structure	—
1972	Šušar, Puljiz	settlement	5 groups, 50 indicators	rural sociological types
1988	Jovanović	municipality	daily mobility, centrality	—
1991	Ćirić	settlement	social organization	—
1995	Todorović	municipality	education structure	10 types
1999	Grčić	settlement	daily mobility	3 types according to dependence level
1999	Tošić	settlement	urban pop., non- agric. households	4 types
2007	Tošić, Nevenić	settlement	daily mobility	5 groups towards achieved influence
2009	Šećerov, Nevenić, Tošić	municipality	urban and non- agricul. population	4 types towards urbanity
2009	Matijević	settlement	daily mobility	3 types towards independence
2010	The law on the Spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020	region	urbanization level	3 types (integrated successful, central and remote, weak rural areas)
2016	Pantić	settlement	7 categories	triangular division

Note. pop. = population, non-agric. = non-agricultural.

Comprehensive typologies of rural settlements

Complex multivariate analyzes actually represent the current trend of rural typology and studies in the world and the goal of researchers in the field of geography and related disciplines. They are a novelty in our scholarly sphere, and we can record only a few bold attempts of a comprehensive multivariate typology of rural settlements in our country. The authors who make them follow the current rural typologies of European countries (Ballas, Kalogeresis, & Labrianidis, 2003; Blunden et al., 1996; Böhme et al., 2009; Cloke, 1977; Copus et al., 2008), both by systemic and interdisciplinary approach, and by the sophisticated method. The tendency toward the establishment of such typologies is justified given that it provides a complete picture of rural settlements with respect to all the dimensions of rurality.

Table 5
Overview of multicriteria typologies of rural areas and settlements

Year	Author	Adm. unit	Indicators	Types
1958	Kojić	settlement	organization, function, agriculture, pop. density, infrastructure	—
1988	Jovanović	municipality	function, population, pop. density, influence, centrality	—
1996	Tošić	settlement	—	—
1999	Stamenković	settlement	spatial organization, influence	10 (primary villages, eco-village, ethno-village, small rural centers, transitional, developed rural centers, periurban settlements agricult., urban and mixed type, informal periurban settlements, temporary settlements)
1999	Radmanović	settlement	demographical, employment on agricul. holding	6 (highly, middle and poor rurality, rural-urbanized, rural-urban and urban-rural)
2006	Meredith	municipality	39	6 (multifunctional, periurban, demographic, industrial, dominant agricultural, poor infrastructure)
2006	Zakić, Stojanović	municipality	—	—
2006	Nikolić, Živanović	municipality	7	towards rank
2007	Bogdanov	municipality	41	3 (area of highly productive agricult. and integrated economy, small urban area with intensively used labor in agricul., area with economy oriented towards natural resources utilization)
2008	Bogdanov, Meredith, Efstratoglou	municipality	41	6 (multifunctional, periurban, demographic, industrial, dominant agricultural, poor infrastructure)
2008	Njegovan, Pejanović, Petrović	municipality	12	favorability for rural development
2011	National program for rural development of the Republic of Serbia	region	41	3 types
2014	Cartwright, Drobnjaković	settlement	23	5 according to the level of endangerment of abandoning agricultural land
2015	Martinović, Ratkaj	municipality	—	towards analyzed factors
2015	Mitrović	settlement	—	5 (abandoned, despairing, sustainable, prosperous, prominent)
2019	Drobnjaković	settlement	35	5 (periurban, progressive, sustainable, endangered, depopulated)

Rare attempts by domestic authors suggest that it is still difficult to quantify some input data, that the available indicator basis is still limited, that rich scientific background for coordination and cognitive experiences intersection of different disciplines are necessary, and that we only established a connection to a contemporary approach to the study of rural areas. Thus, in our literature, the methodological classification of rural settlements gradually shifted from a one-sided and simple, to a significantly more complex, systematic and applied one, in order to finally the multivariate approach (Bogdanov, Meredith, & Efstratoglou, 2008; Cartwright & Drobnjaković, 2014; Drobnjaković, 2019; Martinović & Ratkaj, 2015; Meredith, 2006, National Programme for Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia, 2011; Njegovan, Pejanović, & Petrović, 2008; Zakić & Stojanović, 2006) to look at the typology of rural settlements (Table 5).

Conclusion

Serbia is a mainly rural country, and research, adequate treatment and the development of rural areas can be set as the primary developmental goal. On this path from the realization to the development action in the rural area, typology represents an indispensable segment, and since the beginning of the 20th century, many of Serbian authors have placed typology in the focus of their scientific attention. In just over a century, some shifts have been made regarding this issue, more in the domain of science, and significantly less applied through strategic documents and developmental measures.

In our scholar literature many papers can be found that dealing with the typology of rural settlements. In the focus of some research in Serbia, there was the heterogeneity of the characteristics of rural areas and settlements, their demographic, socio-economic, cultural, morphological, ecological and functional transformation, which took place through different dynamics in some parts of Serbia, and recognition of certain laws in their evolution. First, the classifications of rural settlements were based on their basic features, most often the population size and the morphology of the settlement. With the development of practice and the established need to monitor and harmonize the change of the rural area with contemporary development trends, the authors nevertheless found that it is necessary to combine the mentioned with other aspects of the settlement, in order to get a comprehensive picture of the area being studied. In this regard, the method used in the implementation of typologies has been developed, and it has been applied to more complex typologies according to contemporary concepts and current methods of the identification of rural areas in Serbia and abroad. Depending on the research need for which the input data is assessed, the level of spatial units whose typology is performed is also different. Policies and development measures are maintained at the level of the municipality and the region, with a significant degree of generalization of the problems and potentials of rural areas, while science deals with detailed and sophisticated research of rural settlements.

A fruitful scientific period in this domain can be tied to the late 50s to the 70s of the 20th century, when certain political structures took over the restoration of the villages devastated by war and the raising of the quality of life in rural areas. In the first place, it was necessary to identify the state of a Serbian village and the variety that may exist in different parts of the country in order to proceed in an adequate way toward its development. The typologies carried out in that period are still significant, because they have really pointed out the distinction between the settlements of the rural area of Serbia, with the gradual observation of the different dimensions of rural society and space. Nevertheless, the development of the industry since the 1970s and rapid urbanization

resulted in the marginalization of the village and moved the focus on urban areas and their peri-urban belt. New problems and phenomena occupied the professional and scientific attention, and the village was left to spontaneous development or decay. The typologies in that period were only a reflection of the previously established ones. Thus, in the postwar period, the domination of the typologies of the urban-morphological type is evident, but in the period of industrialization the focus shifted to functions. That period, from 1970s to 1990s, was marked by the typologies based on functional, as well as demographic and socio-economic indicators, in accordance with the development of the related current phenomena. Such a rather one-sided focus could not contribute to the development of rural areas and concrete solutions to certain problems that had already become intense in that period, and the marginalization of this segment in scientific research has led to the stagnation of disciplines dealing with rural issues.

In the recent period, the expansion of rural typologies has been promoted by the re-activation of rural issues. In this respect, quantitative, complex, multivariate rural typologies are more representative of countries where rural studies are much more developed and rural areas are adequately represented in all the development policies. In Serbia, it has just started to keep pace with these tendencies but delayed considering the results of the processes that caused the devastation of rural areas. Nevertheless, significant academic attempts have been made to carry out adequate and comprehensive typologies of rural areas, in order to record problems and potentials in different parts of the country first, and then to provide a basis for further research projects.

What has been imposed as the primary conclusion during the evolution of the typological method and the study of rural settlements is that a systematic approach in treating and planning the development of rural areas is necessary, in which the typology of rural settlements should be the basis for adequate rural development, not as a method, but a reflection of the current situation and an instrument for making concrete decisions and goals of development, as well as achieving a balanced regional development based on the ranking performance of rural areas.

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