

should choose the most appropriate one in order to represent and interpret geographical data: *Data Handling and Representation; Mapping and Graphicacy; Using Statistics to Describe and Explore Data; An Introduction to Geostatistics; Using Geographical Information Systems; Statistical Analysis Using PASW (formerly SPSS); Coding Transcripts and Diaries; Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis; Analyzing Historical and Archival Sources and Analysing Cultural Texts.*

In order to help undergraduates present the results of their research, at the end of this text book, editors included two chapters: one on *Writing Essays, Reports and Dissertations* and the other one on *Understanding Assessment*. The latter is important for students to know which are the standards

for assessing their work and thus helps them to observe these standards in order to make progress.

At the end of the book, there is a helpful glossary (pp. 528-536) and an index.

We recommend this excellent, impressive, comprehensive, and up-to-date book, offering clear insights into the key methods of geographical research, both to beginners and experienced researchers, and also to geographers redesigning their academic courses on research methods.

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**Ion, Bold, Avram, Crăciun (2012), *Organizarea spațiului agricol. Concepte - Tradiții - Istorie (Organization Of Agricultural Space. Concepts - Traditions - History)*, Mirton Publishing House, Timișoara**

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The latest release of the book ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL SPACE - CONCEPTS - TRADITIONS - HISTORY, Mirton Publishing House, Timișoara, 2012, has been a scientific and editorial event of a particularly significant editorial novelty; the book belongs to PhD engineers, chief designers: Ion Bold and Avram Crăciun.

Scientifically and historically grounded, the book focuses attention on an activity and science to the benefit of which the authors spent 50 years of their life, materializing the interplay between humans and nature in the use of the territory and in the coordinated placement of various uses, facilities and equipment, taking into account the way in which territory and settlements are arranged (organized and planned).

It is a synthesis paper, the outcome of a long research and design process, following a trajectory from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract; using an integral thinking and an interdisciplinary

approach, the authors created a territorial organization system, aiming at the sustainable and harmonious development in the entirety of various territorial units.

Approaching the synthesis as a system and science of territorial organization – a premiere in terms of approach and substantiation – the book allows a more comprehensive understanding of the problems in their historical evolution, as well as the integration of the territory into a complex concept, intercalating various positive and negative factors in order to define economically, socially and physically optimal solutions in the field, by means of arrangement, restoration, planning, modeling, fitting and equipment. Issues are approached systematically, following a trajectory from the general to the particular, from the territorial and settlement planning to the arrangement of the territory among units (land agglomeration and borderline rectification) and the management of the territory within differ-

ent units (land exploitation, farms), respectively of various uses of land (arable land, trees and vineyards, grass land etc.).

The process requires the understanding – the association and dissociation of the evolutionary phenomenon – based on an original historic classification – because, although it is different at present, it can have a sequence of similar causes and effects, having as feature the continuity, confirming that territorial organization is simultaneously an old and a new activity – old due to the long human activity in territory exploitation, new due to the content it acquired in the modern and contemporary times, by permanently revealing the interplay between humans and nature.

In this context, concepts appear to be characterized by generality and universality, while differences are influenced by various historical moments and national and regional particularities, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of territorial organization issues.

This is the living proof that the authors were creative and action people, in their capacity as researchers, designers and teachers, contributing both to the accomplishment of agricultural and rural territorial organization in general, as well as to the substantiation and assertion of territorial organization as a scientific discipline.

Furthermore, by going beyond existing concepts, they created new understanding and action perspectives, synthesizing issues and making them general, starting from the idea that any activity must be found in the general, universal range of information in order to be known by the large public – this opens new doors in the confirmation of universally and generally acknowledged truths and laws in the evolution of the science of territorial organization.

Following the improvement they made in territorial organization and the generalization of the national system of territorial organization, the authors created new valences in agricultural and wood land organization, highlighting that the most important element is the rational use of the main

capital good – the land, as basis for the achievement of viable structures required for the exercise of execution functions of production and work, integrated in the balanced economic and social development of territory and settlements.

This is due to the fact that, basically, each production method is associated with a certain territorial, economic, social, technical and administrative structure – given that the production process is mainly a transformation process of nature (arrangement, planning, fitting, equipment) having regard to the level of society development, territorial organization being the only way to coordinate spatial elements with the envisaged development, becoming a global optimization tool for land use according to the present and future requirements of the society, closely connected to the entire natural, economic and social balance.

Logically structured, the book has 7 chapters: Territorial Organization – in the Spotlight; Objectives of the Main Activities of Territorial Organization; Landuse Fund – as a Production Method and Element of Territorial Organization; Territorial Organization – Generating Factor of the Coordinated Development of Rural Areas; Cadastre and Territorial Organization – a Continuous Relationship in Becoming Familiar with and Managing Land Resources; The Evolution of Agricultural Territorial Organization in Romania; Annexes: Plans and Sketches Regarding Agrarian Territorial Organization.

Through its content, the book speaks about Agricultural Territorial Organization as a complex technical and economic activity, whose role is to create economic agrarian structures through land agglomeration (eliminating dispersal, fragmentation, disintegration), through the placement of various usages in compact real estate complexes, within optimally located and adjusted exploitations and farms, with the surrounding land adequately organized respecting the natural conditions (relief, soil, hydrology, climate), according to the development techniques (hydrotechnical, biological, agrotechnical), water distribution in soil

(irrigation, draining), cultivable land systems (crop rotation, strip cropping, grassy strips, agroterraces), modification of biological soil conditions (soil amendment, fertilization), differentiated organization of each usage in units of optimal sizes and forms (fields in rotation, strip grounds, lots, roads), constantly ensuring the rational use and the conservation of natural resources, fittings and technical equipment.

These secular activities have been performed by means of a constantly improved and developed system, especially over the past 50 years, after the creation within the Ministry of Agriculture of the Institute for Agricultural Studies and Design – ISPOTA (HCM 1240/1953) and the Institute of Geodesy, Photogrammetry, Cartography and Territorial Organization – IGFCOT (HCM 87/1971 and Decree 207/1973), dealing with research, technological engineering and design, whereas at the level of counties – the Office of Cadastre and Agricultural Territorial Organization – OCOTA.

IGFCOT and OCOTA efficiently used a unitary system of measurements, land registration plans and maps on different scales, meeting all the requirements of the national economy, of the geodesic and cartographic data bank, of the cadastral data bank, as well as a unitary system for territorial organization.

All this activity, having its own executive structure for terrestrial measurements, cadastre and territorial organization, created and equipped by the Ministry of Agriculture, has been transferred under the area of competence of the Ministry of Administration and Home Affairs (at the request of an unprofessional minister of agriculture, priest Ilie Sârbu, so that he should avoid being asked questions regarding the enforcement of law 18/1991). Considering the diversity of the property forms and the land use, this activity should have been by all means subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture. Furthermore, ignoring the provisions of Chapter VII of Law 18/1991 - Law on land fund, Territorial organization and planning have been abusively dissolved as an activity.

Consequently, the Ministry of Agriculture has been deprived of its main technical instrument which used to make possible the systematic and permanent familiarity with the land fund - from a quantitative, qualitative and legal point of view, respectively surface, use and owners, as well as of those bodies in charge with the creation of viable agrarian structures based on territorial organization and planning. As a result, some of the negative effects were: no inventory of land, no statistics of owners, uncultivated land and irrational use of land, the uncoordinated placement of investments, the lack of designing activities for the organization of viable exploitations through agglomeration, association, farming and the implementation of rational agricultural systems which are recommended by the field of scientific research, failure to use EU funds, failure to have a real tax and duty basis etc., failure to achieve a coordinated development of rural areas.

It is worth mentioning that the lack of territorial order, the dispersal and fragmentation (47 millions of lots compared to 22 millions of lots before the war) had the following consequences: 1/3 of the agricultural land is not cultivated, the impossibility to ensure the increase of the agricultural production resulting in the import of agricultural and food products.

As a matter of fact, with a view to accelerating the process of general cadastre, Law 7/1996 – Law on cadastre, established the National Department for Cadastre, Geodesy and Cartography which, via a number of other laws (Law 590/2001 on the organization and functioning of the National Department for Cadastre, Geodesy and Cartography, GEO no. 70/2001 regarding the replacement of the general cadastre with the agricultural cadastre, Law 308/2001 on the transfer of the national cadastre body under the competence of the Ministry of Administration and Domestic Affairs, GO no. 41/2004 regarding the amendment and supplement of the law on cadastre no. 7/1996, Law 499/2004 on the establishment of the National Agency of Cadastre

and Real Estate Advertising, GD no. 1210/2004 on the organization and functioning of the National Agency of Cadastre and Real Estate Advertising etc., which was transferred at the end of the year 2011 under the competence of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism) generated the dissolution of agricultural territorial organization, the development of some extremely convenient structures to the benefit of cadastre, turning an activity to be performed in the field into an activity to be performed in an office - mostly focusing on the legal circulation of land and real estate goods. It is striking that the institution in charge with this activity (a now autonomous institution - "state within state") has failed over the past 15 years to perform the cadastre in any of the communes in Romania, even though this was its main lawfully established activity. We highlight that this complex Agency has only been concerned to deal with the urban cadastre in city and town areas and to obtain direct material advantages in its relations with the citizens regarding the legal circulation of land and real estate assets; at the same time, the rural area (95% of the territory of Romania) is dominated by chaos; there is a deficiency of information concerning the land fund and territorial agglomeration and organization, in the context of property forms diversification.

Under the circumstances, the only viable solution has in view the transfer of this activity (cadastre) from the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism back to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and its reorganization as General Direction (instead of Agency) in order to be efficiently coordinated and controlled. It is also of great importance to go back to the former structure (OCOTA + IGFCOT), also covering agricultural territorial organization, thus bringing back into existence the main body in charge with the inventory and rational use of land, the establishment of a viable agrarian structure with agglomerated and organized lots of land, with a view to implementing rational agricultural sys-

tems which are recommended by the field of scientific research.

This necessary reorganization, whose main objective is to revive the activity in the field of Cadastre and Territorial Organization, has a double effect: carrying out the technical, economic and legal evidence (respectively the identification, description and entry into cadastral documents of all buildings - land with or without constructions - existing in the entire country, regardless of their destination and owner, with a view to registering them in the Land Register), as well as the accomplishment of agricultural territorial organization and planning, arrangement of agricultural exploitations without which agriculture cannot fulfill its functions because it requires the existence of economically viable agrarian structures, having a territorial stability - as basis for the implementation of rational agricultural systems which are recommended by the field of scientific research.

As a conclusion, we underline that we have had many occasions to talk to the authors of this book, appreciating the passion, the methodical, rational and balanced spirit, as well as the capacity to analyze, correlate and synthesize of these people with tireless minds and generous hearts, endowed with dignity and devoted to real values and the general welfare.

Consequently, the book fills out an empty place in the specialized literature and supplements the concepts already developed, being one of the most valuable informative and documentary works in this field of activity; it also brings joy to those who have always showed interest and preoccupation for territorial organization, whereas it makes decision-making factors aware of the fact that the future of the Romanian agriculture depends on territorial organization.

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