

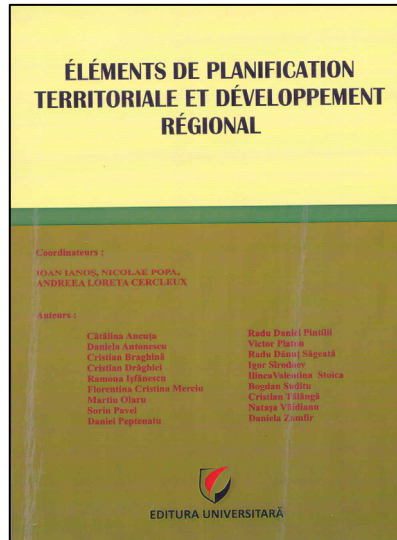
IANOȘ IOAN, POPA NICOLAE, CERCLEUX, ANDREEA-LORETA, coordinator (2011),
Éléments de planification territoriale et développement régional
[*Elements of Territorial Planning and Regional Development*],
University Publishing House, Bucharest, 282 p.

In 2011, a collection of studies of the Interdisciplinary Center for Territorial Dynamics Advanced Research (ICTDAR) from the University of Bucharest was published, being coordinated by Ioan Ianoș, Nicolae Popa and Andreea Loreta Cercleux. The collective work represents an homage paid to the French geographer Jean-Baptiste Humeau, professor at the University in Angers.

The book "*Éléments de planification territoriale et développement régional*" – "*Elements of Territorial*

Planning and Regional Development" gathers seventeen studies of Romanian geographers from the Universities of Bucharest and Timișoara and from research institutes of the Romanian Academy, such as the Institute of Geography, the Institute of National Economy and from the Institute of Ecology and Geography in Chișinău, therefore from a widespread territory covering the West, East and South of the country.

The studies are grouped into three broad themes. The first group, comprised under the title "*Territorial Planning and Multiscale Regional Development*" focuses on issues of territorial planning and regional development at different territorial levels: European, national, regional and punctual local, concentrating on the human settlement, which usually represents the development pole. In this chapter there are seven studies, having both a theoretical-



conceptual and a practical approach. The chapter begins with the study "*Territorial Planning in a European and National Context*", in which the authors Cristian Tălângă, Daniela Zamfir and Ilinca Valentina Stoica emphasise the conceptual and relational framework of the territorial planning undertaking. In this approach, the authors review the latest concepts of spatial territorial planning for sustainable development. Also, by means of a theoretical study – "*New Theoretical Perspectives on*

Economic Development at a Regional Level" – Daniela Antonescu presents in a clear, synthetic manner the theories concerning economic localisation in the triad technological innovation – expanding industry – geographical landscape, which led to such a differentiated economic development. The study ends with the presentation of the current trends regarding the theories of regional development.

Victor Platon in his study "*The Demand Estimation for the Regional Infrastructure of Environmental Protection*" refers to the necessity of implementing an integrated infrastructure at a regional level, for environmental protection, mentioning the investment application in this field for the eight development regions of Romania, while Nicolae Popa in "*Entrepreneurial Initiatives and Regional Development: Concepts and Models in Europe*" analyses the entrepre-

neurial initiative – regional development binomial. Often ignored in ex-communist countries, the entrepreneurial initiative is a first-line element for economic development, contributing to what we call the “business environment”, the author emphasising the conceptual and definition framework and then, indicating the models found in the European Union and in Romania.

An interesting study with specific reference to the development region of Oltenia – we confess that we favour, for various reasons, the geographical and historical name of the eight economic development regions of Romania – is the study of Daniel Pieptănatu and Cristian Braghină “*The Importance of Development Poles in the Demographic Evolution of Localities*”. After the succinct presentation of the theoretical concepts, the authors describe the work methodology applied to the development poles of different taxonomic levels in Oltenia for a long period of time. This allowed them to highlight the polycentric network of development poles in Oltenia, the rank evolution, as well as a number of conclusions for a territorial subdivision, the Coșuștea Hills.

Radu Dănuț Săgeată addresses as a theme the relationship between territory arrangement and the territorial administrative division of Romania. In the first part of his study, “*Territory Arrangement and the Administrative Division. The Case of Romania*”, the author presents the successive territorial administrative divisions of Romania, starting with 1919 up to the present (with the exception of the one in 1938, the division of “regions”, which was an interesting one in terms of the associated spaces’ complementarity, but whose functionality could not be put to the test of time because it operated only between 1938-1940), with a sufficiently synthetic commentary on them. After presenting the shortcomings of the current territorial administrative division, the author suggests, based on solid arguments, a new territorial administrative division, mainly stalled on the geographical historical provinces.

Ioan Ianoși approaches to a very current theme for Romania in the context of the explosive growth of higher education, namely the strategy of inserting universities within the Romanian regions, “*The Strategy of Inserting Universities within the Regional Environments of Romania*”. After proving by arguments the assertion that “the university is the product of a territory with a number of features [...], that it is the result and it bears the imprint of a region”, the author presents the logical steps of the strategy of inserting universities in the regional ensembles within the logic of their development. In tackling the matter concerning the insertion degree of universities according to the regional development, the author uses two “work tools”: “*the tree of problems*” and “*the tree of goals*”, these two, being in fact, logical ascertaining and applying steps.

The second part of the work – “*Regional Development: - Case Studies*”, includes five case studies. Thus, Ramona Ișfănescu addresses the thoroughly discussed issue regarding the border viewed as a limit or an enhancer of the entrepreneurial initiatives, analysing the border of the Romanian region of Banat. In the study “*The Border: Barrier or Amplification Element of the Entrepreneurial Initiatives? Case Study: The Border Area of the Romanian Region of Banat*”, the author took into account the demo-economic development of the 32 administrative-territorial units near the border (villages and towns) in the period 1996-2006, concluding that the Hungarian border operates as a “*marginal area*” despite its important economic potential, while the Serbian one operates in a totally different manner, as a “*barrier*”!

A solid research into the tourism developed in the Mountains of Semenic is undertaken by Martin Olaru in the study “*Tourism in the Mountains of Semenic, Romania. Touristic Potential and Development*”, insisting on the area’s touristic potential and on the level of development of regional tourism,

highlighting the variety and quality of the transport infrastructure, accommodation and restoration as tourist attraction factors. In the same vein, is the study of Cristian Constantin Drăghici *"The Role of Touristic Activities in Regional Development. Case Study: The Area of Influence of Râmnicu Vâlcea Town"*. As it is well known, the residence town of Vâlcea County is close to a touristic area with rich thermal mineral springs, many monasteries, mountain landscapes, engineering works, which make the area extremely attractive, the author emphasising the need to continue the efforts in modernising the transport, lodging, restoration and balneation infrastructure.

Radu Daniel Pintilii is concerned with alleviating the regional disparities, which he addresses in the work *"The Alleviation of Regional Disparities through the Strategy of Polycentric Development. Case Study: The North-Eastern Region"*. After presenting the conceptual framework, the author directly starts presenting and analysing the development index from the North-Eastern Region, which is perfectly stalled on the urban network of polycentric development, between which he then identifies the structuring axes of development. In his opinion, the polycentric development can be an alleviating factor of the local disparities. In the same vein, Natașa Văidianu launches the question *"Which Are the Projections of Territory Development in a Sensitive Area? The Danube Delta in Romania"*, making reference to the sensitive area of the Danube Delta. A sensitive area due to many causes, mainly geodemographic and ecological, regarding which the author identified the components of potential development (ecotourism), as well as the ones "in crisis" (fishing).

The last part, the third one, with the theme *"Development and Urban Planning"*, includes five interesting case studies on post-communist urban development. Thus, in the study *"Ways to Urban Development in the Romanian Post-communist City"*, Sorin Pavel creates an interesting study on the

post-communist evolution of ten Romanian cities, highlighting their demographic decline, the decay and abandonment of some neighbourhoods, as well as the difficulties of remodeling the historic centers, which actually are identity neighbourhoods that need to be saved!

Andreea Loreta Cercleux and Florentina Cristina Merciu in the study *"Reflections on the Development and Management of Bucharest and its Metropolitan Area"*, share with us their reflections on the management of the development of Bucharest and its metropolitan area, this city which was beautifully developed by our predecessors in such a way that it was unanimously recognised in Europe as the "Little Paris"! How beautiful its development perspectives were..., but... the researchers insist on presenting the current difficulties, especially concerning the legislation which is not uniform, as well as the small real estate interests which negatively affect the development of this city that becomes more Balkan every day. Among interventions, the authors believe as timely solutions the social development and harmonisation, the development of transport infrastructure, the economic development, the proper management of resources and waste, the protection and capitalisation of the natural and architectural heritage.

An interesting study *"The Territorial Impact of the Residential Mobility in the Peri-Urban Area of Bucharest"* is undertaken by Bogdan Suditu, who approaches the matter in the context of the liberalisation of the real estate market, as well as of the enhancement of the polarisation function of Bucharest. Through a series of indicators such as the number of construction certificates issued, the number of housing units built, the number of newcomers, the dynamic of the newly built surface, the author manages to capture the unprecedented development of the peri-urban area of Bucharest. It would have been interesting to correlate these with the transport and territory equipment

infrastructure, which is insufficiently developed and does not precede the peri-urban development as it normally should.

"The Urban-Rural Relationships and Their Approach in the Territorial Planning of the Post-Communist Romania. Case Study: The Municipality of Timișoara" is the study of Cătălina Ancuța. After some theoretical and bibliographic considerations concerning the urban area and the urban-rural relationships, the author particularises the specificity of the urban development of Banat's capital, Timișoara, in a national context; we are of the opinion that it would have been more useful for the highlighting of the city's perspectives, if it had been studied in a regional context because Timișoara is the "capital" of a region and nowadays is the time of a regional Europe! Next the author captures in a professional manner the specificity of Timișoara's development, respectively the stages of its development, with emphasis on the stage following 1990, when Banat's metropolis retrieves and enhances its functions so beautifully rendered by the maps (A, B, C, D). Using seventeen indicators, the socio-economic disparities between Timișoara and its peri-urban area are emphasised, which makes their harmonisation objectives from PIDU (Integrated Development Plan of Growth Pole Timișoara) to be lengthy. Moreover, the author presents with accuracy the objectives of the development strategies of the growth pole Timișoara.

Igor Sîrodov from Chișinău wrote a beautiful and succinct study entitled "The Stages of Development of the Cities from the Republic of Moldavia". After classifying the 65 Bessarabian cities according to the size of the population and shortly presenting the seven urban agglomerations, the author divides in stages the development of the cities, identifying the prewar period 1812-1940, the period 1940-1944, the period after the war (1944-1994) and the Post-Soviet period,

after 1994. The division of the development of these Romanian cities in stages is debatable, it would have been more interesting to present the elements that led to this division. I was surprised that the Romanian period of those towns with their forthcoming potential was not covered; are we really abandoning the Bugeac completely? At least in our studies we should not abandon the unity of our Romanian ancestry, language and customs, to look around and pay attention to what others do!

The collection of studies ends with a "Postface" in which the coordinators of the volume pay tribute to Professor Jean-Baptiste Humeau from the University in Angers, for his passion in supporting the development of cultural and scientific bonds between French and Romanian geographers. The authors consider him to be someone who continues the tradition of the special cognitive-affective bonds which existed between the French geographers Emmanuel de Martonne, Robert Ficheux, Georges Chabot and Violette Rey and the Romanian cultural space, in the greater context of assuming, sharing and dispersing the perennial values of francophony.

The work, developed on 282 pages, having numerous illustrations, diagrams, maps, images, synthetic tables, an updated bibliography, includes advanced studies in the matter of territorial planning and regional development, being useful to both geographers, territory planners, urbanists, decision factors and to the enthusiasts of this field to whom we recommend it warmly.

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