

BOOK REVIEWS

Buza, M., Badea, L., Dragomirescu, Ș., (coordinators), 2009, *Dicționarul Geografic al României, Volumul II M-Z (Gazetteer of Romania Volume II M-Z)*, Romanian Academy, Institute of Geography, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1300 pages, abbreviations, selective bibliography, price 18€.

The publication, as part of a more elaborated work made by a prestigious group of Romanian authors, is a continuation of the first volume of the *Gazetteer of Romania* whose content stops on the point L. The sequel from this second volume which ends the entire list complete the all schedule of the Romanian geographical names. It is an important scientific resource for different types of further researches focussed on the Romanian space whether they are from the field of geography or from the other related sciences or not. Equally, the gazetteer represents a useful tool for further analyses centered on the study from the field of toponomastics and linguistics.

This book appears in complete form after 100 years from the first appearance of work titled *Marele Dicționar Geografic al României*¹. It is made in relation with the all recommendations of the *Experts Group of the United Nations for Geographical Names* (UNGEGN). As it appears in its complete form, the dictionary comprises more than 40, 000 geographical names, their description being based on the data of the last General Census of Population from 2002.

The presentation of the included names on the gazetteer is in a standardized form considering the foresights of *Gramatica Limbii Române*² as well as by *Dicționarul Ortografic, Ortoepic și Morfologic al Limbii Române*³. In this context, there have been respected some main criteria as: the articulation of the masculine appellatives, the articulation of the masculine toponyms followed by an adjective, the gender, the number and the case adjustment of the names of the geographical units and sub-units, the utilization of a single name, usually, of the one used on the maps, atlases and papers realized by the Institute of Geography or by the Faculties of Geography from Romania and the right of the local communities with minorities of more than 20% from the total population (registered in 2002) to burn and use the names in their maternal language.

As a concluding remark we recommend this notable publication both for the significant research activities and for didactic ones as well regarding the quality teaching and learning geography by the students, considering it a reference work for the Romanian

¹ In translation, *The Great Geographic Gazetteer of Romania*

² In translation, *The Romanian Language Grammar*

³ In translation, *The Ortographic, Ortoepic and Morphologic Dictionary of the Romanian Language*



geographic bibliography. We launch this account in connection with the considerations assumed by Academician professor dr. Dan Bălțeanu in the preface of this reviewed gazetteer (2008, p. XII: „*the correct utilization of the geographical names represents an essential element in communication of the global level bringing benefits for the local, national and international communities involved in commercial activities, in population census and national statistics, in the establishing process of the right on the property, in regional and urban planning, in environment management, in security strategies, in the evaluation of the natural and technological hazards, in the construction of the maps and atlases, in tourism and the means of mass-media communication.*”

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Voiculescu, Sorina (editor), Crețan, R., Ianăș, Ana, Satmari, Alina, (2009), *The Romanian Post-socialist City: Urban renewal and Gentrification*, Publishing House of The West University of Timișoara, Timișoara, 184 pages, 88 figures, 26 photos, bibliography.

The book represents an original research work which reflects the Romanian urban settlements both from a general and an in-depth perspective. The in-depth analysis focuses on several case studies centered on some towns and cities in the western part of Romania. Moreover, the high resolution of the analyzed space is assured by the detailed approach of the main representative structures of the settlements.

The volume starts with an expressive *Preface* focussed on the Romanian communism filtered through the subjective perception of the editor. She emphasizes the negative aspects of the past political system and its influences on the recent cultural landscapes of the cities and towns.

Designed and structured in five chapters, the first one entitled *Ethnicity, cultures and the cities in Western Romania* signed by Remus Crețan and Sorina Voiculescu, illustrates the main relations between the studied geographical space and the clash of cultures as well as the influence of colonization on the western Romanian settlements. The last part of the section, actually very interesting and also original is focussed on the city of Timișoara and the culture of water. This approach shows the relevance of this environmental feature in the evolution of the town, in its structure and functionality, emphasizing both the positive and negative consequences. As shown, beyond the assertive valences water is a risk factor of the urban communities of western Romania.

The second chapter headed *Geografii ale orașelor și Geografie imobiliară. Caracteristici ale orașelor din România*⁴ explains the new trends in the analysis of the urban dynamics. In relation with the Romanian real estate market as well as the new contemporary perspectives of the living environment and housing the analysis illustrates the

⁴ Approximate translation: *Geographies of Cities and Housing Geography. Some Features of the Romanian cities*

recent structures of the urban settlements in terms of new models of housing and the way in which this dynamic component labels the contemporary urban landscapes of the Romanian cities and towns. Together with these assessments in the second part of the chapter, Ana Ianas, presents the types of Romanian housing in different periods of time.

Through an original scientific framework, the section *Romanian Post-socialist city* is revealing the socialist impulse of the communist government induced in the dynamics of the urban settlements of Romania. The same impulse influenced the state monopolist control, as well as the evolution of the urban settlements, the standardized living structures as well as the urban spatial and functional contrasts. The authors suggest the presence of the rural in the urban environment as an outcome of the lack of interventions of the communist administration in the planned evolution of the urban communities.

In this way, the ruralization of the Romanian cities and towns represents a certain reality for many Romanian cities inherited from the communist period and maintained until today. These particular aspects are analyzed in the same chapter which also shows the main features of the Romanian city during the post-socialist period connected to the new challenges of transition and the market economy.

The new political framework, as well as the new social and economic conditions generate new types of decisions in terms of urban planning, new ways of life and new values and perceptions regarding the Romanian housing and its valences in the contemporary design of the cities and towns. From this perspective, the author emphasizes the role of the types of property in the process of urban restructuring as well as the main trends in which the settlements were shaped according to the new policies at the national level. The general background of the study is completed, and argued using several case studies in order to get a sense of the urban dynamics in the post-socialist period. The case studies focus on the municipalities of Timișoara, Oradea and Anina.

In relation to the urban regeneration filtered by the new policies of the urban housing, chapter IV *Gentrification and urban renewal* starts by exposing the theoretical framework as well as the conditions that favored its occurrence in Romanian. The higher degree of resolution of the author's research is provided by the case-studies revealing two particular districts, one in Timișoara (Elisabetin) and one in Oradea (Ioșia). Several maps represent the final outcome of the analysis. Beyond the living environment the chapter deals with other particular problems such as urban security and tertiarization (as a specific process of the post-socialist urban dynamics).

The last part of the book reflects another particular case study centered on the town of Anina. By its *stories* Alina Satmari makes an interesting analysis of the living conditions in Anina, the decline of the settlement induced by the involution of the economy and deindustrialization after 1990 and, thus the poverty of its inhabitants.

The book intends to apply new methods of analysis such as housing geography to the Romanian cities and towns, and reveals the post-socialist urban reality in Romania. For the first time in the Romanian geographic literature, this volume shows an in-depth research of the real estate market in Romania, the analysis being done through the lens of transition from the state control to the private properties, the privatization and its outcomes to the urban landscapes, the revival of the urban functionality, new decisions in urban planning, the urban renewal from general trends to particular cases of gentrification, the impact of the process as deindustrialization and tertiarization on the local communities etc.

The book, as a product of an extensive process of scientific research, interconnects with a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methods both in geography and other

related scientific fields (as the bibliographic study, the critical analysis of different texts and discourses, the cross-field examination, the mapping filtered through GIS programs, the questionnaires practices processed by particular statistical programs etc). It is the methodological framework that gives originality and quality to the study,. Maps and photos, charts and graphics, historical documents offer visual proof and delight to the reader.

Finally, we consider this volume a relevant study which adds new insights to the specialized Romanian bibliography on the urban settlements, and a model for present and future research centered on the post-socialist dynamics of the settlements. It can be both an open source for further investigations and a scientific resource in terms of methodological framework. Also, this analysis provides proper opportunities regarding the real and objective understanding of the urban dynamics in Romania. The city and its post-socialist becoming still reveal the old communist policies, traces, outcomes and consequences which shape and re-shape the contemporary urban landscapes.

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Săgeată, R., (2009), *Globalizare culturală și cultură globală. Global și local în Geografia culturală (Cultural globalization and global culture. Global and local in Cultural Geography* The University Publishing House, Bucharest, 256 pages, bibliography, annex, summary, 32 figures.

Structured on four separate parts, each of them treating very interesting problems for the contemporary world, the book signed by dr. Radu Săgeată represents a novelty in the Romanian geographic literature and a rightful publication in the field of Cultural Geography. The first part headed *Globalizarea localului (The globalization of the local)* treats the concept of globalization as well as the appearance, evolution, definition and other connected processes used in the specialized literature of the Cultural Geography. This introduction continue by an exhaustive analysis of the globalization phenomenon, the author showing the main characteristics of globalization, the centers and areas of it, as well as, the vectors and the main features of globalization.

The 3rd Chapter *Globalizarea culturală și conexiunile sale (The cultural globalization and its connections)* presents the theoretical framework of two key concepts as *culture* and *civilization*, the author highlighting also the products of the global culture. He talks in this section about the globalization from the economic and financial field, as well as in the other ones as, for instance, politics, ethnicity and religion. In the last part of the chapter, the attention is paid on the relation between globalization and media. The 4th Chapter regards the closed connections set between globalization and human settlements systems illustrating the reflection of the global features on their landscapes, structures and functionalities.

The second part of the volume titled *Localizarea globalului (The localization of the global)*, exposes the regions and the re-orientated processes of the globalizing fluxes. In this regard there are distinguished the types of the cultural regions, the relation between

regions and the national territories as well as the interregional cooperation and national homogeneity. A special attention is paid on the cross-border cooperation as a feature which favors and sustains the globalization. This approach is finalized with the display demarche of the geo-cultural spaces of the world.

Chapter 6th highlights the culture as a product of religion. The higher resolution of this perspective is assured by a particular and extensive case study focussed on the analysis of the Islamic space. In connection with this boarding, the next chapter reveals the culture as ideological product. In this regard, the author resorts for a better understanding on another special case study oriented to the analysis of the ex-communist spaces. From this perspective the author presents the main characteristics of the socialist dynamics of the countries governed for a long time by the communist politics.

The 3rd part of the work presents the risks of globalization whether it is talking about some particular spaces or about the level of the entire world. Regardless of the different types of approach, this section illustrates the main sorts of the international conflicts whether they are about the identity status, economic supremacies, weaknesses or based on the problems concerned on the ideological or cultural systems. The in-depth analysis goes on by treating the alimentary risks at the world scale and, last but not least, the risks generated by terrorism (so actual in the contemporary period for all nations).

The last part of the book exposes and explains the main features of Romanian spaces in close connection with the processes of globalization. The particular approach of this section is due to another case study based on the most important city from Romania, Bucharest. The detailed and successive analysis shows the main important changes on the Romanian capital city in terms of landscapes, structures and functionality as real outcomes of the globalizing processes.

The originality of this editorial appearance objectified on this present volume occurs itself from the particular approach of the analyzed problems and, moreover, from the expressive case studies and in-depth analyses chosen by the author. The theoretical discourse is accompanied by a suggestive graphic component or by statistic data which are designed for a better understanding of the related topics. The book is more than useful for the scientific research from the field of cultural geography and not only but also a welcoming tool for the study of Cultural geography on the Romanian academic school. It successfully fills up the specialized literature from the field of the Romanian human geography enriching also the particular references of Cultural geography from Romania.

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