Ioan Sebastian JUCU (2011),
ANALIZA PROCESULUI DE RESTRUCTURARE URBANĂ ÎN MUNICIPIUL LUGOJ
type B5, 140 figures, 24 tables, 50 photos, reference, abstract in English, content, conclusions

This new book that deals with relevant topics from the contemporary urban geography in close connection with the new political context developed after 1990 in Romania. It presents a detailed analysis of the urban dynamics of the municipality of Lugoj during the post-socialist period closely related by the urban heritage generated by the past layers of time, started with the medieval stage and ending with the communist one. On such a spatial and functional background this study presents the main changes and the real outcomes of the new evolution of the town during transition to the market economy as well as in the new created conditions favored by the integration of the Romanian space within the international economic and political structures. This scientific project has been designed as a doctoral thesis presented within the Doctoral School from the University of Oradea in 2010, being coordinated by Prof. univ. dr. Alexandru Ilieș and official refereed by Prof. univ. dr. Ioan Ianoș (University of Bucharest), Conf. univ. dr. Sorina Voiculescu (West University of Timișoara) and by Prof. univ. dr. Martin Olaru (associate professor at the University of Oradea). This volume represents a novelty in the field of the Romanian urban geography through its central analyzed topic focused on the structural, spatial and functional adjustment of the town to the requirements of the market economy. In this regard, processes as industrialization, deindustrialization, reindustrialization and tertiarization are all approached through the lens of their new particular actions that reframed both the urban landscape of the town as well as its spatial structure. Related by this general background the first chapter is oriented to the theoretical and methodological framework, in order to define and find out the main used concepts as well as their connected problems with the urban restructuring operates. In the light of this theoretical introduction, to illustrate the relevance of this study, the next section of the book points out the history of the researches made on the municipality of Lugoj. The review of it shows up the absence both of the geographical studies on this urban settlement as well as the new approaches in terms of the examination of the urban post-socialist dynamics. In this regard, the current boarding becomes mandatory. The third chapter is consecrated to the geographical position of the town as well as to the analysis of the environmental features, in order to outline their favorability for the current urban development. All these ones are boarded with a design to show the opportunities of the natural background for the new actions developed after 1990. For a real understanding of the present urban changes as well as the further trends of it, in the next section of the book the author actualize the ways of life of this community starting with the old historical stages (from the rural behavior of this settlement) to the communist period and furthermore to the post-socialist stage that brings a new particular comportment as outcome of the new contacts with the worldwide developed societies. This approach is able to make us understand the new regeneration processes linked by the old traditions and customs of the town, in terms of its social, economic, politic and cultural functionalities. Because the human capital is considered the major component of the urban settlements the fifth chapter deals with the demographic problems revealing both classical themes and new ones specific for the post-socialist communities. Is the case of the unemployment, international migration for work, the current demographic social problems, the renewal of the local human capital, and so on. A special attention is paid by the author to the economic activities, the heartier section of the book, focused on the dynamics of the local economy accenting the most important spatial and functional changes from the field of the local economy. The first part of the
chapter analyzes the industry as a major feature and critical factor in the process of urban restructuring. In this regard, it is examined through the lens of the inherited structures as well as of its diachronic heritage. From this perspective the author explains the manner in which the old structures are integrated into the new ones and therewith the spatial and functional restructuring of the local industry. The approach is filtered by particular processes as deindustrialization, reindustrialization and the foreign direct investments in the new condition of the market economy. The general findings of the study are proven by some particular case studies oriented to the industrial units and areas of the town. The second section of the chapter deals with the services strained by the process of tertiarization. In this context, the author analyzes the restructuring of the commercial sector, of the educational system, of the medical field, of the religious space and so on. The conclusion leads to the objective idea that the post-socialist period reflects a high degree of tertiarization within the urban space. Finally, the last section of the chapter is focused on the local agriculture as urban practice used both for subsistence and for supplying the agri-food local market. These activities generate an increased trend of ruralization of the urban landscapes in some areas. In order to reveal the current urban quality of life the author dedicates the next chapter to the local housing, showing the real outcomes of the new properties status in the condition of the social and economic capitalization. It is well known the reality according to this the property of the real estate goods on the communism belongs to the state. The new trends of privatization generate many changes in both in the quality of living as well as in the way of living of the urban inhabitants. In connection with the local development the eighth chapter examines the dynamics of the urban infrastructure and the main changes of this urban feature during the post-socialist period. The dynamics of all these features and processes marked both the landscape and the general pattern of the town. In the light of this idea the ninth chapter deals with the urban image and with the spatial restructuring, in terms of spatial organization. This introspection reveals the current attractive, repulsive and neutral spaces and furthermore the present spatial distribution of the functional areas of the town. Linked by these problems the next chapter examines the dynamics of the function of the town being obvious the fact that some urban functions are maintained (industrial, commercial), other ones have disappeared (the function of borough, the political function) while new ones have recently sprung (the educational function). Because the new changes as well as the urban components of the town are not shield by the hazards, the next chapter deals with the urban risks and urban vulnerability, the current status of the town from this perspective, being illustrated by the matrix of the urban vulnerability. The applied dimension of this study in terms of applied geography individualize the twelve chapter in which the author molds some new methods in order to reveal the urban dynamics of the municipality of Lugoj including SWOT Analysis, LFA Method, Chorematic Model, the urban competitiveness etc. The analysis manner filtered by these scientific approaches reflects both originality and realism in the made introspections of the author. Finally, based on this section, the final chapter comes to offer some new proposals for spatial optimization, initiative that points out also originality and objectivity aiming the further development of the municipality of Lugoj. In this regard, the study is also an important tool for the future decisions of the local authorities in terms of the local urban management. Through this, the book is a useful and valuable geographical work and represents an important study focused on the urban settlements from the Romanian Banat as well as on the most relevant process that characterize the Romanian urban settlements. Accordingly, we warmly recommend this book to all ones interested both by the new specific socio-economic processes within the urban settlements from Romania as well as by the urban dynamics from this country. Not least, we consider that this study could represent a real scientific model in approaching the urban restructuring process peculiar for other medium-sized towns from Romania and from different other parts from the former communist Europe.

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