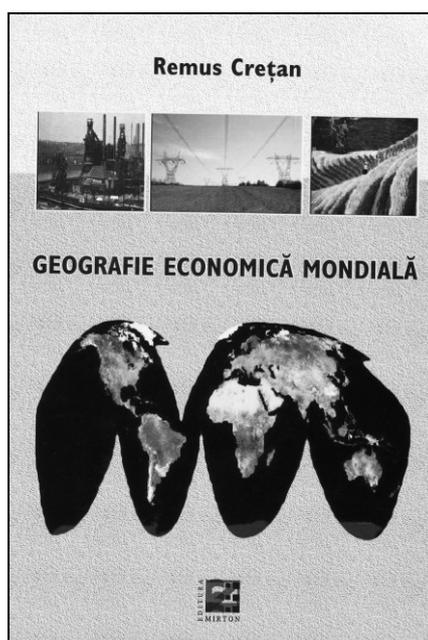


BOOK REVIEWS



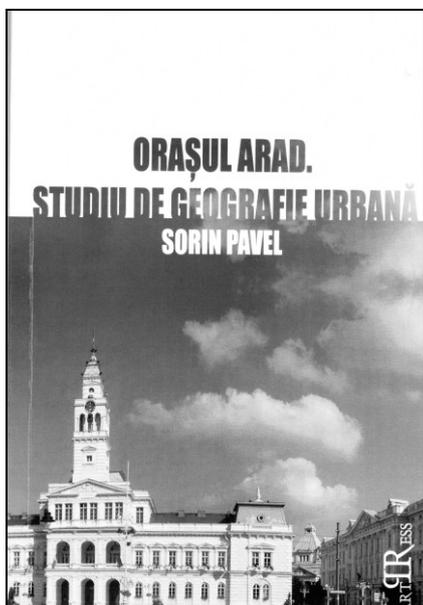
Remus CREȚAN, (2010), *Geografie economică mondială (World Economic Geography)*, Mirton Publishing House, Timișoara, 224 pages, 36 figures, 15 tables, reference, ISBN: 978-973-52-0851-6, price 10 €.

The current volume includes the most important and recent issues of Economic Geography at the worldwide scale. It is dedicated both to the all students, researches and scholars interested by the all problems of the world economy, being approached in a new manner that comprises the all current problems of the world economy. Being designed in a new vision the book deals with some major themes of the recent economic changes in order to reveal the contemporary dynamics of the economic sectors. The author presents some new themes with a worldwide interest both in educational activities and, of course, in the field of the geographical research. In this regard, we can mention topics as globalization, corporation, foreign direct investments, triadization, sustainable development and some new models of recent economic development. Because the most branches of geography become now more independent as the field of study, this volume deals only with the features from the field of the local economy in terms of contemporary globalization, industry, agriculture and services (this last one being focused especially on the field of transport and tourism). From this perspective, the tertiary problems are revealed in a synthetic view as an outcome of their major complexity that generates particular fields of the economic geography, as for instance the Geography of transports and circulation, the Geography of tourism, the Geography of international commerce and so on. The first section of the book presents the object of study proper for the economic geography, the author incorporating some new ideas for the concepts used in this geographical field.



Related to this approach, the second chapter is focused on the problem of globalization in terms of the main changes of the contemporary economy. For a proper understanding, this chapter deals with the concept of globalization pointing out not only some definitions but also, the main involved processes in this contemporary economic current. The author also reveals the outcomes of globalization, the main features of the capitalist economy, the peculiarities of the direct foreign investments and, certainly, the presence of the international and transnational corporations on the scene of the world economy. In order to understand the recent economic dynamics, the last part of this section includes three particular approaches focused on some different industrial branches. It is the case of the auto industry, the industry of textiles as well as the electronic industrial field, all these globalized branches having a higher impact on the national economy of the countries as a result of the current marketization. The third chapter is dedicated to the industry and on its particularities during the contemporary period. The used algorithm in this approach follows a structure that includes: the topic of resources in relation with industry - the energy and the industry of electric power, the heavy and wood industry and finally, the light industry (textiles and food). The current approach of the author ends with a special section focused on the spatial distribution of the industrial regions of the world. The descriptive manner is linked by a correlative viewpoint in order to understand the current industrial dynamics through the lens of the casual integration of these topics in terms of spatial and functional distribution. The fourth chapter deals with the sector of agriculture presenting the role of the natural and the socio-economic premises of the development of agriculture. Then, the author presents the types of agriculture starting with the old practices of the people and ending with the specialized agriculture typical for the contemporary advanced societies. As in the case of the industry, the author includes some problems concerning the location and spatiality issues. In the fifth chapter, we find out the current features of services as distinct part of the current international economy. In this regard there are presented particular problems as the case of the internationalization or the services focusing on two separate segments transports-circulation and tourism. The synthetic approach of the author on these economic branches is justified by their complexity that often generates new particular scientific fields. The volume ends with some conclusions concerning the dynamics of the current world economy the author considering that for a global geographic perspective on the world economy is important to know the industrial structures and their dynamics and functionality, the types of agriculture and of course the main characteristics of the services. The text is joined by relevant graphic materials in terms of representative maps that show the main problems concerning the distribution of the economic fields at the world scale. Furthermore, the analysis is based on the statistical research the features of this approach being presented in many tables inserted in the book. The importance of this volume is certainly increased by the fact that it is based on recent references from the field of the economic geography. This particular insights offer originality to the book it being an important tool and source for the all scholars, researchers and students. It is a real companion to the economic geography for all those interested to learn more about the current dynamics of the contemporary economy of the world.

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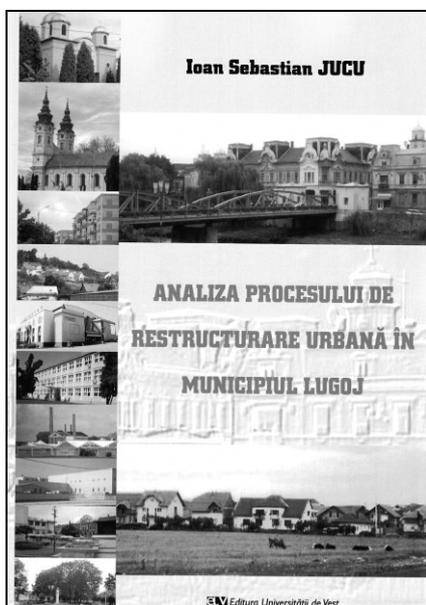


Sorin PAVEL, (2011), *Orașul Arad. Studiu de geografie urbană. Morfostructuri urbane și disparități demografice – funcții și relații teritoriale* (*The city of Arad. Study of Urban Geography. Urban morpho-structures and demographic disparities – functions and territorial relations*), Artpress Publishing House, Timișoara, 382 pages, 165 figures, 39 labels, reference, content, abstract, ISBN 978-973-108-379-7, price 10 €.

This book represents an important analysis focused on the Romanian urban space during transition as well as on the period that marked the integration of this country on the European political and economic structures. The study is oriented on the one of the most dynamics cities from the western part of Romania, Arad - a real gate to the western European countries. In this regard, the analysis overtakes both the historical dynamics of this city as well as its functionality and evolution in close connection with this opportunity assumed by the geographical position. The scientific content is based on a complex methodological flow that comprises both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to present objective and real the results of the research made by the author. The first chapter deals with the theoretical and methodological issues aiming a better understanding of the current approach focused on the complex evolution of the urban structures and functionalities of the city. The second one presents some problems of urban geography knowledge and the research history of the specialized literature of Arad City. These approaches are able to illustrate both the relevance of this study and the new trends of analysis of the urban space after two decades of post-socialism. The third chapter analyses the relationships of the urban settlement with the geographical space, taking into account the geographical position and its advantages and favorability for the urban development as well as the main physical-geographical features. Furthermore the author overtakes their influences on the local conditions for this habitat. Is the case of the geologic particularities, the geomorphologic conditions, the climate, water resources and bio-pedo-geographic features. All these ones are analyzed in close connection with the city's development during the last centuries. In the fourth section of the book the reader has the opportunity to find out the genesis and the urban evolution of Arad, the author pointing out the stages and the phases of the humanization of this settlement before the city's official attestation. Also the author presents the geo-historical context of the city's appearance and the stages of the

urban evolution starting with the medieval period and ending with the contemporary one. A special section is dedicated to the socio-economic conditionality on the evolution of the city. Based on the previous insights the fifth chapter is focused on the urban morpho-structure outlining the morphologic and functional individuality of the contemporary city and the topical problems in terms of urban planning which the city are facing out. The sixth chapter presents the geo-demographic and socio-geographic features being concerned on the following issues: population and the human resources of the city, the relation between the urban environment of the city and the urban behavior, the lifestyle and the life quality of the inhabitants of Arad City. The urban functionality is revealed in the seventh chapter, the author stating out the major functions of the city; this approach is made in a complex manner in order to illustrate the present intricacy of the city in terms of its spatial and functional perspectives. The last two chapters deal with the urban substructure as well as with the development of the Arad infrastructure. Furthermore the author paid a special attention to the problems focused on the territorial influence of the city. In this regard, the author determines the particular sphere of influence of the city. The study is based on a complex methodological design that includes a great variety of scientific methods both peculiar for geography and for other sciences generating in some cases interesting and objective interdisciplinary approaches. The book ends with some topics about the Arad City position in the Romanian urban system, the author considering that in 2020 this urban settlement could become a certain nucleus of a major metropolitan area. In the light of this scenario the metropolitan area of Arad City and Timișoara will be interconnected generating a bipolar conurbation with over 1 million inhabitants. The quality of this study is provided by an important graphic material (represented by different maps, diagrams, sketches and photos) in order to reveal the objective reality of this city. This new editorial document represents an important reference focused on the urban settlements both from Romanian Banat, from the western part of Romania and from the Romanian system of urban settlements. Furthermore it completes the geographical references focused on the cities and towns from this region joined to the other relevant scientific studies focused on other cities and towns as Timișoara, Lugoj, Anina, Reșița and so on. In the light of this consideration we can remark the utility of this book for all the interested scholars about the urban development from the cities from the western part of Romania.

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Ioan Sebastian JUCU, (2011), *Analiza procesului de restructurare urbană în Municipiul Lugoj*, (*The analysis of the process of urban restructuring in Lugoj Municipality*), West University of Timișoara Publishing House, Timișoara, 548 pages, 140 figures, 24 labels, 50 photos, reference, list of figures in English, content in English, abstract in English, ISBN 978-973-125-352-7, price 20 €.

The book deals with one of the most important process specific for the ex-communist countries in order to adjust to the political and economic mechanisms of the development societies. It is about the urban restructuring, a complex process peculiar for all cities and towns from Romania. The study analyses this process on the one of the most important urban settlements from Banat, the municipality of Lugoj, although it is not one of the biggest cities from demographic or spatial perspective. Its geographical significance rather occurs from its functionality as well as from its cultural identity, being in the past a town that assumed an important role in the historic, economic and cultural life from the region of the Romanian Banat. In the introduction the author motivate the relevance of this study, the town being studied by many scholars and researchers in the past or recently but not through the lens of the geographical approach. Indebt to the reality that the urban restructuring process represents a new theme of study in Romania and because it illustrates a great complexity, the first chapter is focused on the theoretical and methodological framework concerned on the process of urban restructuring. In the light of these assertions the author defines and explains the central concepts of the study, not referring only on the urban restructuring and its connected terms and notions but also to some new processes as the urban management and local development in separate contexts as the economic transition and political new integration of Romania. This introspection ends with the findings and assignations of the main factors that influence the urban restructuring in Romania as well as the main criteria that are able to offer a proper methodological design to touch this subject. To reveal both the need and the relevance of this study, the second chapter widely presents the history of the research of the town, this current step illustrating the absence of the scientific geographical studies on this town and the less the boarding of the urban restructuring process of the town. These introductive insights are able to show both the legitimacy and its demand in the Romanian geographical specialized literature. For understating the urban dynamics in terms of the town spatiality and functionality the third

section of this volume is focused both on the geographical position as well as on the natural components of it and on their importance on the urban evolution during the historical periods as well as during the last two decades of the Romanian post-socialism. In the light of this approach, the chapter reveals the favorability both of the geographical location and of the natural features in terms of resources and environment. The natural components and the position of the town permanently competed for the urban development in terms of cultural, social, economic and political assertion. In order to find out the current changes from this town and for understanding the contemporary spatial and functional dynamics the fourth chapter presents the urban space as outcome of different types of societies that generated particular models both in the structure and functionality of the town as well as in the cultural landscape. This section is able to point out the major impact of the all layers of times that marked the urban space of the Lugoj municipality. Furthermore this approach enhanced some ideas according to them the current transformations has proper integrated the cultural and historical heritage in the contemporary trends of transformations. On the other hand, the current urban dynamics cross the inherited structures and the new forms of adjustment to the evolved societies. The human capital represents the most important urban component that generates changes in the town and which need the changes for a proper lifestyle. In the light of this attribute, the next chapter is entirely dedicated to the demographic component. The items are approached in a particular manner from the classical themes and problems to the new post-socialist characteristics as the renewal of the human capital, the unemployment, the demographic stress on the urban space, inter- and multiculturalism, the international migration for work and so on. The sixth chapter, more extended, present in a complex approach the economic activities filtered by the particular and connected processes with the urban restructuring as deindustrialization, re-industrialization, tertiarization and marketization. To these problems there are added other specific topics as foreign direct investments, the entrepreneurial perspective, the recent economic crisis and its impact on the urban evolution etc. A global perspective on the analysis of the author shows the preservation of some traditional activities and the appearance of new others filtered by the globalization trend. On the other hand, is important to note that the cultural and historical heritage of the town has had a relevant role in the adjustment processes of the urban activities to the market economy, being a significant factor that continuous stimulated the post-socialist urban dynamics. The seventh chapter is focused on the urban housing, another interesting and outstanding feature of the town that points out both the communist characteristics and its outcomes on the standards of living and the post-socialist dimension of the local housing. Connected to these features, urban infrastructure plays an important role in the quality of living as well as in the economic activities of the town. Its opportunities and limits are presented in the eighth chapter for then, in the next section of this volume the author's attention being focused on the analysis of the urban image and local urban planning. In the light of this approach there are individualized the attractive, repulsive and indifferent spaces of the town as outcome of the post-socialist urban restructuring actions. In the same chapter it is also shown the dynamics of the urban structure in terms of functional areas approached in a comparative manner. Thus, the author presents the distribution of the functional areas in close connection with the trends of the urban management applied after 1990. The 10th Chapter deals with the dynamics of the urban functions revealing both the inherited function as well as the new ones generated by the post-socialist economy. It is obvious that Lugoj preserves the industrial and commercial function and develops new others as is the case of the

educational one as outcome of the appearance of the high education in town. The next chapter is focused on an important theme less presented in the contemporary specialized Romanian literature. It is about the urban risks and urban vulnerability. To present more clearly this topic and for a correct introspection the author designs two relevant matrixes - one of the natural risks and one of the anthropic hazards. These models could be in important tool for further urban decisions in terms of urban management of the local decisional actors. The next chapter is oriented to the problems of the local urban development the made analyses being filtered by the lens of some particular and modern methods. It is talking about the SWOT analysis on the urban restructuring process, on the LFA Method, on the chorem model as well as on the study of the urban competitiveness. Based on these peculiar approaches and aiming the further development of the town the last chapter deals with the spatial optimization proposals in order to design some apposite recommendations to the local administration. These ones are grounded by scientific results of the current research and could inspire the future actions concerned on the next urban development in terms of efficiency, functionality and sustainability. The book becomes in this way a study of applied geography designed to be not only a simple research but at the same time a real document that could be used by the local authorities in the further planning decisions. Its complexity occurs from the intricacy of the used methods, the findings and results being expressed not only discursive but more of that through the graphical material conceived in maps, diagrams, sketches, chorems, statistical tables and photos. All these ones resulted from the research on terrain come to justify the objectivity of the reality peculiar for this town. The book is also a legitimate completion for the specialized literature focused on the urban settlements from Banat. This valuable research is able to be a model for further studies focused on the urban restructuring process from the post-socialist cities of Romania and particularly for the medium-sized towns of the ex-communist regions of Europe.

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