

## BOOK REVIEWS

**PÉNZES, J. and RADICS, Z., (Editors), (2012), *Roma Population on the Peripheries of the Visegrad Countries. Integration Issues and Possible Solutions*, Kiadta a Didakt Kft. Debrecen, 220 pages, ISBN: 978-615-5212-10-9.**

This edited volume represents an important contribution in the current specialized literature concerning on the Roma population from the Visegrad countries. The book is structured in three distinct parts dedicated to the main problems of the Roma communities. The first part deals with the integration issues of the Roma communities around the social aspects of this ethnicity in different European countries as Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. The main topics are followed in separate case studies and reveal the living conditions, spatial segregation, education and employment related to the Roma population. The studies are empirically designed as illustrative case studies in the above mentioned countries. The second part of this work is dedicated to identity and advocacy related to the Roma communities. The first section figures out the cultural legacies of Roma in Poland, while the second deals with the ‘Gypsy’s identity’ and language in Hungary. This national approach using different countries as separate case studies is detailed through the lenses of urban settlements. In this regard, the case of Miskolk is chosen in order to analyze the impact of the local policies and the local institutional, educational and cultural programs in maintaining the Roma identity at this local scale. On the other hand, the Roma community of Miskolk is approached through participation, cooperation and interest representation of the local governments in order to support the actions made by the Roma actors. From this local scale the study is further conducted to a new regional level. In this respect, a separate chapter is conducted in order to analyze the Roma issues in the North Great Plains Region of Hungary. The third part of the book is dedicated to the possible solutions for the current problems of the Roma communities. Consequently, four studies are conducted here in order to provide a clear understanding on the possible solution provided in the local communities. The first study is concerned on some Hungarian municipalities, while the second



one is focused on the municipalities in the Slovak Republic. The global perspective of this actions juxtaposing on the regional scale is provided in a separate study, claiming the role of the regional development planning in diminishing deep poverty of Roma population. In conclusion, this book is an interesting work on the Roma population who live in peripheral areas.

PhD Lecturer Ioan Sebastian JUCU

**MÂNDRUȚ, O.**, (2012), *Geografia Uniunii Europene. Elemente geografice ale integrării europene (The Geography of the European Union. Geographical Issues of European Integration)*, Vasile Goldiș University Press, Arad, 228 pages, 58 figures, anexes, reference, ISBN: 978-973-664-549-5.

This work represents an important contribution focusing on the European Union as well as on the Romanian integration process in the European political and economic structures. It is based both on the theoretical research and on the research approaches grounded on the statistical data. The first chapter of the book deals with the geographic features of Europe, the author highlighting the geographic position of Europe and the main geographic features in order to understand the main environmental characteristics and its human. Considering this features there are designed a general background of this continent pointing out the contemporary geographies of Europe. The in-depth presentation is argued by the second chapter that reveals aspects of Romania's neighboring countries. In this regard the author deals with the neighboring countries of Romania as well as the proximity of other important spaces in terms of geographical units (the case of the Black Sea) and of other different European and non-European countries (the case of Russia, Turkey, Israel etc). The third chapter is addressed to the European Union as a whole. The author details the first historical premises of the European construction as well as its evolution considering two different scales as is for instance the spatial and temporal ingredients. The next section unveils the identity of the European Union and the geographical, political and economic issues of the EU. This content are further followed by the Romania's position within this European structure for the last section of this chapter to deal with the major contemporary problems in the EU. The fourth chapter discusses about the European countries following the regional approach (the central countries of Europe, the southern states, the western, northern and south-eastern countries). Detailing the main geographic features of the European states the author use a logic algorithm in order to point out the relevant spatial and functional characteristics of the national spaces of the states. The final chapter of the book comprises a geographical perspective of the Romania's integration in the European Union. In this respect the main sections of the chapter discuss about the major opportunities of the Romania's integration as well as the contemporary limits of this process. The author points out the main national and international projects dealing with the national territory of Romania. The discursive and descriptive manner is doubled by an over-statistical approach, using an important statistical

material in order to explain the main geographical features of all the topics included in the work. Furthermore, an important cartographic material is added in order to illustrate the contemporary European Union geographies. This work is an important documentary source for both the students and the actors involved in education. The book is also a reference tool for further research focusing on the European space whatever the topic could be. Finally, this recent and well-referenced book enrich the Romanian specialized literature concerned on the European Union, highlighting the geographical perspectives of this international political, economical and cultural structure.

PhD Lecturer Ioan Sebastian JUCU

**TOARCĂ, Ionelia**, (2012), *Comunitatea românească din estul Serbiei. Studiu geografic (The Romanian Community from the Eastern Part of Serbia. A Geographical Approach)*, „Semne” Publishing House, Bucharest, 282 pages, 99 photographs, 3 tables, 19 maps, glossary, reference, annexes, ISBN: 978-606-15-0155-7.

The book represents an important and valuable contribution on the Romanian human geography, focusing on the Romanian community from the eastern part of Serbia. Such studies, often peripheral in the Romanian geographic studies, highlight the Romanian culture in the neighboring countries of the Romanian space. The work starts with a literature review on the earliest studies conducted on this topic pointing out the legitimacy of this research in a contemporary multi-cultural world. Designed as a geographical study, the book includes in its second chapter considerations on the regional environment from the eastern Serbia in order to argue the favorability of this area for the Romanians who live in this European space. Furthermore, a historical background is designed revealing the main phases of population in the region, showing the main cultural features of the ancient communities. A special section is dedicated to the local monasteries built up by the Romanians. It is a feature that shows the peculiarities of the cultural landscape with Romanian influences in a south-Slavic space. In order to justify the Romanian culture, the author paid a special attention on the toponymic issues, analyzing a set of important names from eastern Serbia. The fourth chapter includes problems concerned with the demographic features of this region. Providing a complete image of the local population, the author emphasizes the ancient population process as well as the evolution of demographical growth in the region. On such scene, there are set the Romanian demography - a section providing a clear overview on the Romanians evolution as well as on their origins in this region. These demographic issues are completed by some cultural features in terms of the main ethnographic groups from eastern Serbia and on the main local dialects spoken by the local inhabitants from here. The next chapter deals with the human settlements of the Romanians in Serbia. In this respect the author paid a special attention on the main characteristics of these habitats focusing on the appearance of the old settlements, on their local and regional network,

on the main economic activities as well as on the household typology. The cultural perspective in studying these issues is based on the local analysis of the local customs and traditions. A special attention is accorded to the cemeteries that hosts important cultural Romanian values. The cultural dimension of the study is enriched by the next section dealing with the toponymy from this region. The complexity of this topic is argued by different sets of the local and regional toponyms differentiated according to the main historical stages. The last chapter of the book is dedicated to other cultural problems peculiar for the Romanians from the eastern Serbia. Consequently, the author analyses the main customs, traditions and other cultural values of the Romanians from Serbia. It is an important approach on the main cultural values from this Serbian region. The in-depth analysis on the cultural life of the Romanian inhabitants is focused on the cultural beliefs of the local people as well as of their way of living in terms of the everyday life. Popular culture, traditional clothes and local customs are several themes on which the author is focused in order to make sense of the cultural landscape of this region. The study is developed on both quantitative and qualitative research. The geographical analysis is grounded on a varied and well-used graphic material, figuring out the local findings through the lenses of a great and expressive number of photographs and maps. Being a well-referenced study as well as a valuable empirical research, this book could further inspire future researches, remaining as an important contribution both on the human and cultural geography of the Romanian communities from different European countries.

PhD Lecturer Ioan Sebastian JUCU

**ANTON, Lazăr**, (2011), *Religie și dezvoltare în Munții Banatului (Religion and development in the Banat Mountains: a study in the geography of religion)*, ,Risoprint' Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 407 pages, 142 figures, 69 tables, 70 photographs, 1 annex, ISBN: 978-973-53-0496-6.

The study “*Religion and development in the Banat Mountains: a study in the geography of religion*”, elaborated by Prof. Lazăr Anton, represents a scientific approach on religion topic and its involvement in the real life, especially on the human communities life from the Banat Mountains. The diversity of this issue was presented by the author in the four parts of the present study, trying to better highlight the relationship between religion and local development. **The first part** of the study is structured in two chapters aimed to define the local community from the perspective of religion geography taking into consideration the principles and research methods, the social doctrines promoted by religious groups and religious systems in Romania. A particular attention was attributed to the types of religious communities in the Banat Mountains. Religious systems assessment has allowed the identification of every religion and denomination potential, the decision factors being able to create the framework within this potential being transformed into local development resources in economic, educational, cultural, administrative,

informational, political, social areas. **The second part** of the present paper is structured in four chapters analysing the following issues: evolution of religious structure of the population in the Banat Mountains, geographical distribution of the hagionyms (religious place-names) and religious customs, religious migrations role in the development of local communities and religious sites from the Banat Mountains. All these highlight the role of the church for the territorial unit process, for the development of some architectural styles and even for the development of the settlements in the Banat mountain area. The strong relationship that has always existed between ethnicity, religion and politics was clearly expressed by the author in **the third part** of the paper. Elements such as: relations between ethnic and religious groups, attitudes and religious conceptions of the population, the religion role in education process, led to the local and regional development. Moreover, Banat Mountains have a very rich and diversified religious tourism potential that favored the religious tourism development and human settlements in the mountain area, aspect presented in an exemplary manner by the author in **the fourth part of the paper**. He has also developed spatial patterns of sacred and religious sites through tourism activity and even an analysis of the ecological behavior was implemented, basing on ethical and religious principles to encourage the local and regional development. Finally, the interfaith dialogue, missionary and the connection between science and religion, have proven basics for the future development in the studied area.

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