

BOOK REVIEWS

Theories of Development. Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives.
Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick. New York: Guilford Press, 2009, xii
and 324 pp, ISBN 978-1-60623-065-7 (pbk).

Reviewed by Alexandru Gavriș, The Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest,
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In a world in which political decisions seem more and more to be the result of some schools of scientific thinking, the authors R. Peet and E. Hartwick propose, in „Theories of Development”, to critically reflect upon the scientific theories of development. This demarche must be regarded in the historical, conceptual and partially spatially determined evolution of the respective theories, which tone the strong transformations during the last 20 years. Starting from the first edition, written in 1999, and based on the frame offered by Global Capitalism (1991), R. Peet critically presents the evolution of the development paradigm, being helped in the seventh chapter by E. Hartwick. The result is a new book which keeps only traces of the previous ones. The book is a history of development and understanding the different branches which the concept gained starting from the Illuminist stage of science development until present. The summing up of the development theories specific to occidental thinking represents the reason why each research which regards the implementing of decisions of economic improvement and restructuring must have in view this book.

Although we are warned since the beginning (pages 3-4) upon the complex, contradictory and disputable understanding, even at the level of the best aspirations of humans and mankind, the authors assume a risky position along the more than 300 pages of presentation and critics of the theory. They try to be impartial in the critical presentation of most of the theories, but they hit against what they underlined in the beginning: development is “*subject of the most intense manipulations*” (page 4).

Thus, it can be noticed a much accentuated critics of certain theories, especially of those neo-liberal and the partisan position towards others. Moreover, on the trajectory of the book, the idea of the necessity of a best alternative is more and more argumentatively inserted (out of all the worst – an underlining omitted or un-evaluated from most of the studies) – democracy (Aristotel, 2001). In the authors’ opinion, “*democracy, emancipation, development and progress are good principles of modernity [...] corrupted by the social form taken by modernity – capitalism*” (page 280). But without going deeply into the stages of the concept of development in the ancient thinking, considering it appeared only in the 18th century, and using only partially the works belonging to eastern-European and Asian thinking, the authors succeed to contour a unitary assembly for the analysed periods and spaces. Therefore, the open attitude and the limitation to the emergence of the paradigm in the occidental space facilitates the continuous discovery of the feelings of joy in reading the book with the purpose to understand the history of the concept of development, being stimulated by the critical perspective. As these elements can be noticed even since the beginning, from the introduction and preface, the book’s reading allows to use the text as a basis for critical analyses of detail, as a reflexive support of development and through them, we should be able to learn some of the techniques of modern critics.

The structure of the book regards 3 large parts, reflecting the frame of critics of the theories of development presented in the 7 corresponding chapters, plus the introductory

chapter. Each of these has got well integrated sub-chapters. Organised in this manner, the book also offers an excellent orientation side, each structure being followed from the evolution point of view and allowing the reflection upon the more difficult parts which the authors anticipate, too. The authors encourage *“reading and re-reading, reflexion and communication until you understand them”* (page 19).

Chapter 1 is dedicated to contending the main thesis of the present book. Development must not be bent to the interests of moment given by the subjective scientific approach of those who hold power (persons, groups of interests, international bodies etc). This must be critically approached by each person, only together being able to reach the goal mentioned by the authors: *“a better life for all of us”* (page 1).

Conventional theories represent the group of four chapters which form the first part of the book. Along the 3 chapters concentrated on classical and ne-classical theories, on the evolution of thinking starting with the Keynesian approach and up to neo-liberal approach, on the approach of development in terms of the modernisation phenomenon, the main theoretical marks are found. These are toned by the determinations which influenced them and which led to their present evolution, as an essential support of political decisions.

The second part moves the attention towards non-conventional theories of development. It is developed around the presentation of the Marxist and socialist theories, being the only one which is followed by the description of the exhibition space. Besides these, chapters 6 and 7 treat development, continuing a challenging approach in which presentation is followed by the detailed critics of their main objectors, and then the authors present their own opinion regarding the approached problems.

The last part, although includes a single chapter, reveals the method used along and which gives the title of this component: critical modernism. Thus, if until now it is possible to

lose sight of the used method, the authors remind it (see chapter 1) and also detail it, in order to understand the desire of critics and change of the perspective of the concept of development, the one which is considered to be, besides democracy, misused and even misunderstood.

Starting from the geographic background of the authors, a spatial integration at graphic level of some of the elements presented would have been preferred. In the present text, they would have been really useful for simplifying the understanding and the reception of the material. The visual help would have been excellent in the conditions in which the book is already at the second edition. Also, the reading pleasure would have been higher in the conditions of providing more dense information regarding the development of the Asian space, where ideas like those of Muhammad Yunus allow a new orientation of development, either in countries from the inferior part of development – Bangladesh, or in those countries which regard the first position - China. This is only an example, possibly sensitive, in a world lacking trust in people.

The stages of extraordinary development recorded by some of the Asian countries on the basis of the own conceptual visions besides the adapting of western ones should claim more attention. The text would be this way complete, and the possibility of comparison would not be kept under the Occident's umbrella, a promoter of a democracy anyhow misunderstood.

The book does not address a certain discipline/ subject. This can be read equally by those who are at the beginning of their research, by those who want a better understanding of the world we live in, or by the researchers interested in the global catching of new perspectives highlighted by critical Geography. Thus, the reading of „Theories of Development” becomes essential for anyone who wants to contribute to the improvement of life by the understanding of development and this way its good applying, one of the most

widely used concepts, no matter the referential level.

In the end, I want to add that this book can be remembered by listening to the songs Handlebars and Rise of the Flobots.

References:

- Aristotel – *Politics*, Paideia Publishing House 2001
 Flobots – „*Handlebars*”, Fight with Tools, Universal, 2008
 Flobots – „*Rise*”, Fight with Tools, Universal, 2008

Territory and Development. Dilemmas of Regional Modernity.

Miroslava Czery, Arturo Vallejos Romero, James Park Key eds.

Warsaw: University Press, 2009, 281 pp, ISBN 978-83-235-0421-4

(some studies are elaborated in English, others in Spanish).

Reviewed by Cristina Merciu, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Territory and development. Dilemmas of Regional Modernity represents a recent study focused on the development of space and of the effects generated on geographic, economic, social, cultural scale, being a result of the efficient collaboration between the researchers of the Faculty of Geography and of the Centre for Regional Studies within the University from Warsaw and those of Centre for Local and Regional Development (CEDER), University of Los Lagos, Osorno, Chile. The book presents the results of some comparative case studies from Poland and Chile regarding the complexity of the process of urban development and at regional level.

The study is structured in four chapters, generous from the point of view of the text and of the multi-criteria approach of the concept of spatial development. On their turns, the chapters are divided into 20 articles (11 elaborated by the Polish researchers, 9 elaborated by Chilean authors)

In the first part of the book entitled “Thoughts on regional development”, the theme of local and regional development is treated from a theoretical perspective, and it is synthesised in 3 articles. The first article indicates the particular aspects of the Chilean state’s history, whose coordinates were under the influence of colonialism, for a long period of time. Although initially the study seemed to have a nostalgic note/ character as a result of

the author’s references to modern Chilean poetry, exactly selecting the artists whose poems treat Chilean society during post-colonialism, the references are not accidental, but they are meant to reflect the depth of the aspects poetically/ artistically treated, which also present political connotations regarding the modern Chilean cultural landscape and the necessity of retrieving local identity.

The second article treats a modern theme represented by the social vulnerability which is met at the crossroads of several disciplines of study (Sociology, Geography, Psychology). The term, also relatively recent, is also analysed from the Geographical perspective: how are the people affected by different hazards and disasters etc. In the author’s opinion, the analysis of the regions’ classification is based on their diversity, which is established depending on two extremely important aspects for the regional analysis, namely: the characteristics of natural environment and the level of economic development. The author situates these two criteria as being part of the category of “hard” factors, which were taken into consideration until now in the specialised literature, and have recently manifested themselves in the Geographic literature, too. To these factors the author adds a series of new “soft” factors as “live hood and social vulnerability” which tend to have a significant influence upon a territory’s development. The author has the

merit to draft the research “niche” specific to the field of Geography as regards the term of social vulnerability caused by natural extreme phenomena, the environment changes and also to emphasize the importance of the Geographic studies from this segment. Thus, the author establishes an important role of Geography as a science. The third article treats the new tendencies identified at the level of the studies regarding local development.

The second part of the book is centred, as suggestively indicated its name - “Development and the environment” – upon the impact of natural environment on development. Although we are used to regard the process of development from the perspective of its impact upon natural environment, in the present book the analysis of this sensitive issue is regarded from a very special perspective, considering the natural environment as a whole, as an economic resource which could indicate varied forms of using the territory, ensuring at the same time its entire integrity, representing an instrument for education, too, as it is stated in the first chapter included in this section. The philosophy of this chapter is based on the idea that environment could represent an essential component of education and its identification as a paradigm with the purpose of diminishing the unbalances between regions. The second article included in this section indicates from the title the solution of sustainable development of a territory, starting from the natural factor (forestry, respectively the conservation and exploitation of original forests as an alternative solution of the sylvan-pastoral activity which could generate unbalances for the natural environment).

The third study exposes the context and pressure over natural resources that generates socio environmental conflicts focused on some case studies in Chile and Latin America.

The third section of the book draws attention on the relationships established between culture and the process of development, as

well as on the impact upon identity. The articles selected for this part of the study refer to inter-culture as an effect of globalisation and there implicitly appear questions related to the conservation of local identity. Globalisation may create a series of influences upon the anthropo-central system, too, which can be located several times by the “borrowing” of social behaviour. One of the characteristics of global culture is connected to the subordination of the market’s instruments, being placed in the context of the relationship which establishes between goods and buyers. Also, within this part of the study it is raised the problem of the relationship between people and the space which presents a series of differentiations compared to the periods from the past, especially due to the apparition of some new spaces (the Internet makes possible that most of the locations wanted are handy). From the cultural point of view, globalisation supposes a large mobility of the people which may concentrate in important migratory flows, usually release basins (emergent countries) and receiving basins (developed countries) being contoured. They are usually accomplished with the purpose of finding a better paid job.

The last part of the book is dedicated to the relationships which establish between the social-economic aspects and the territories governance. Within this section of the study there are discussed the models of territorial innovation or the applying of some projects of development included in the category of instruments of implementing the territories’ governance.

The space and the socio-economic development represent the present themes of scientific researches which are also found at the level of articles published in this magazine and they are meant to illustrate, by their large number, the interest for a balanced development. The complexity of the relationship between space and economy needs a re-thinking of the entire economic-social system which could ensure, by innovative marketing models, viable solutions which may contribute both to the territories’

development, but also to the conservation of their identity.

Depending on these innovative models, territories differentiate and become attractive from different points of view: economic, cultural, social, touristic, ecological etc. This aspect also generates a competition between territories which could be gained by a coherent governance of the territories and appealing to the principles of sustainable development. The authors of this book succeed in catching different aspects of the complex process of

regional development under its multiple sides from the perspective of some different states from geographic and cultural point of views.

As it can be noticed, both countries established identical objectives: a balanced development of territories, which, under the influence of the factors of economic pressure (globalisation), social pressure (life quality) or by the exposure to a series of natural risks, could project a lineal ascendant trajectory.

Large Urban Habitats in Bucharest. Alexandru Gavriş. Bucharest: University Press, 2011, 205 pp, ISBN 978-606-591-177-2 (in Romanian)

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Specialised literature imposed since the years 1979, by the Gaia theory, elaborated by James Lovelock (1979), an approach according to which the planet we live on is a huge body, and our immediate life environment is a part of this body. Although many people admit that urban settlements are ecological systems, approaches still differ, depending on the spatial scale. These differences determine different methodologies of investigating the problems connected to human habitat.

The work of Alexandru Gavriş may be placed in the context of the methodologies of human habitats' analysis. This option is for an ecological type approach, in the sense of the approach by a systemic perspective (in the sense in which phenomena emphasized at the level of the subsystem represented by large habitats are correlated to the situation which is characteristic for Bucharest's integrating system), of the analogies with ecological systems and in an inter-and trans-disciplinary context, but also by the ways of research, in particular the analysis and interpretation of the results of the questionnaires by the reference to urban

population of different regions and the assembly.

In the first part, the author looks over the theoretical fundamentals and the analytical works, the last being applied in an ample case study of Romania's capital – an interesting case by its placing in a historical context, which it completes by updating. The analysis is very objective and scientifically underlain, starting from explaining some largely used concepts, but perhaps not very well known: habitation, settlements assembly, district or habitat. It is analysed at several spatial scales, in a historical context and crossing Bucharest's borders in a European and even international context, the evolution of habitation, related to theoretical models described by specialised literature.

The individualization of Bucharest's large urban habitats is based on a multi-criteria analysis, which takes into account architectural-urbanistic and sociological models. The emphasized habitats are analysed depending on their homogeneity, internal structuring on the basis of economic activities, dynamics and finally their integration

within the macro-structure of the Capital. In this context, a special attention is given to the flows of population, capital, raw materials and products, transportation and information, but also to the elements of urban image, defined by the contouring of the image of the entire city, its reflecting in large habitats and its impact upon the Capital's structuring.

The study continues with the identifying of the existent dis-functionalities, revealed by a SWOT analysis of large urban habitats and the identifying of the possibilities for their adjustment. This demarche is part of the recent historical context, marked by the dis-industrialisation period and the impacts of this process, by the effects of the policies of urban development and of large habitats' restructuring, their effects upon the revitalisation of large habitats being introduced by the dilemma "challenge or failure".

Which are the lessons learnt from Mr Gavriş' work? Theoretically, the analyses done prove that an eco-systemic approach, in which towns are optimal-open systems which are far away from being balanced, is not a challenge, but it can be achieved, and in this respect the author contours a research methodology. In Bucharest's case, such a study raises important problems, generated by the existence of some incomplete, fragmented data, whose systemic analysis raises correlation problems. Also, the undertaken research proved the importance of some analyses concentrated on the human component and on the effects of the activity unfolded by humans. In the context of a systemic analysis, these results prove, once more, the fact that the dynamic of ecological systems strongly anthropised is determined by socio-economic and political activities.

From a pragmatic perspective, the results indicate the role of homogeneity in emphasizing the processes of segregation and isolation at the town's level, underlining the necessity of some interventions. There must be underlined these conclusions' importance, in the context in which a new administrative organisation of the Capital is intensely

debated, and in this respect the author proposes a solution – treating large habitats as districts or even as sectors, having in view their homogeneity, the dis-functionalities identified and their role of buffer between the centre and new areas integrated within the urban environment. The proposed solution resembles the solution resulted following a geographical approach of the historical evolution of the Capital (Suditu, 2011). In the same context, the author underlines the importance of collaboration both at the level of institutions and especially at the level of inhabitants, getting beyond the borders generated by political interests, vanities and interests.

One of the limitations of research is due to – as in the case of many other towns – different territorial partitions, which lead to discrepancies between administrative divisions, censuses divisions and the divisions which have an image identity. From this reason, the work is not a final point, but a starting point. As the author shows, although discussed in a European context, the analysis is not also finished at this scale. The concept of polycentrism opens the way towards such approaches, admitting the different importance, depending on the spatial scale of approaching different urban centres. An analysis at a more intimate scale is possible, too, based on the internal structuring of large residential assemblies.

The author also underlines the directions of research for the future analyses, regarding the extension of spatial scales for the identification of the optimal one, of the indicators used with the purpose of selecting a representative set and the identification of densification processes, but also practical aspects, related to the cooperation of the actors implied and to the urban image of Bucharest.

By its inter- and trans-disciplinary character, but also by the theoretical and practical value of the results, Mr Gavriş' work addresses a very large palette of specialists, from those from the field of education and research to practitioners and specialists from public

administration, having a diverse specialised preparation (for example, Urbanism, Geography, Sociology, Ecology, Economy) which may be the basis for other studies unfolded according to the recommended directions, but also for a development strategy or a Capital's law.

References

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Territorial Insertion of the Universities from Romania. Ioan Ianoş (coord.). Bucharest: University Publishing House, 2010, 342 pp., ISBN 978-973-749-973-8 (in Romanian, summary in English 13 p.)

Reviewed by Igor Sîrodoev, The Academy of Sciences of Moldavia, Chişinău, The Republic of Moldavia

The work coordinated by Ioan Ianoş is one of the works which approach a classical problem, but from a less orthodox angle. Although the problem of higher education was debated in a multitude of works, approaching a variety of aspects and features at different levels (world, continental, regional, national, local) the relationship of universities with the environment where they were localised has been and remains a rarely discussed theme. The present work seems to have succeeded in its attempt to cover this blank space.

Moreover, the book is not an analytical-descriptive work. By its message, structure and content, the study promotes an active position which universities should adopt in regard to realities from their insertion environment. As the coordinator mentions in the preface, "the main message of this study is to imply more the universities in the process of attenuating territorial unbalances, as regards development and participation in solving some acute problems of urban agglomerations".

A strong point of the book is represented by its own coordinator, who knows the Romanian higher education system from the two points of

view partially opposed, that of a professor and that of a servant of central public authorities of resort. The book crowns a three-year time research work of an interdisciplinary team. Despite the fact that on the first page there are twenty authors, the work is not an amalgam of essays weakly connected between them, but it has a well defined logical structure, subordinated to an elaborated and explicitly formulated idea. The authors, who are aware of the multitude of aspects of the territorial implication of universities, deliberately limit themselves to "underlining some pertinent elements in the field of urban restructuring and regional development", emphasizing, at the same time, the role of university in the "knowledge production".

The work starts with the introduction in the theme, by the brief presentation of the Romanian higher education system and the theory of interactions between the university and the insertion environment. A chapter dedicated to the characterisation of the essential features of national economy after the collapse of the totalitarian regime from 1989 follows, with an accent on the territorial effects of the restructurings from this period.

The following chapter synthesises the general characteristics of the environment in which universities are inserted, urban restructuring and intra-regional disparities being seen as main challenges for these territorial actors.

The urban-regional issue to which universities should answer is presented by the introduction to the concept of “needs” at the respective level (chapter 4). In case of regional needs, it is also presented a detailed analysis of these needs per the eight development regions, with the spatial individualising of the main categories. The presentation of the university offer is done at national level per the fifteen fundamental fields, taking also into account the forms of property of the universities (the first part of chapter 5), and the second part of the respective chapter is dedicated to its regional aspect.

The analysis of the university offer, reaching the problems of concentration and diffusion of the respective services, is based on territorial inter-relations at national, regional level, as well as at the level of the recruitment basins in case of some universities taken as case studies. This is continued with two short chapters approaching regional differentiations in infrastructure and scientific research in universities.

The last chapter constitutes an attempt (successful, as a matter of fact) to build something new from what has been presented and detailed in the previous chapters. Therefore, it is synthesised and conceptualised the role of universities in solving the problems at urban and regional level specified in chapter 4; also, a typology of these institutions of higher education is done, by the level of involvement in the processes of urban restructuring and regional development.

Despite all its positive parts and its incontestable strong points, we cannot avoid mentioning some deficiencies. Thus, the book leaves the impression of a work done in conditions of deadlines’ pressure: here and there are repetitions and deficiencies in the construction of phrase which could have been

easily avoided/ eliminated, at a closer look. Perhaps this pressure also explains why the concept of “needs”, a main concept for this study, even if suggestive, is summarily presented, the authors passing rapidly to the territorial differentiations of the needs. In our opinion, a sub-chapter based on the methodology of emphasizing the needs characteristic to each type of space would have been welcomed.

It is salutary the proper and safe use of the graphic material, which is not to be surprising, as most of the authors team is made of geographers. Nevertheless, we would have expected a more strict accuracy from the part of geographers in conceiving, drafting and presenting this illustrative material, especially maps.

In the end, as a conclusion following the book’s reading and from my general experience, I allow myself to contradict the coordinator of the book. In the preface, Professor Ianoş also proposes the idea of a university “as an emergency service”, partly compromising the spirit of another idea promoted by this book, according to which university is “a factory of producing knowledge”. I wonder if knowledge generated by university is not able to anticipate and forecast crisis situations. Is this “intelligence reservoir” only good for answering the calls, when it is asked to do so? The answer to this question seems to be positive, in my opinion. Consequently, I consider it is more important to emphasize the idea according to which universities must be prepared to answer without being asked, to provide solutions to problems which might appear in the region. As a matter of fact, the book itself is in accordance with this idea.

By concluding, I underline that the work “*Territorial insertion of the universities from Romania*” aims to stimulate the cooperation between the decision factors at regional and local level and universities. With its strong and weak points, the study elaborated at macro-scale level and based on the relationship town – university – region has as a purpose to stimulate the interest “for detailed

researches at inferior levels”.

Thus, taking into consideration the quality of the work, I recommend it both to scientific community, as an excellent reference book in guiding the efforts to discover, analyse and

contribute to the optimising of the way of insertion of universities in particular/ private regional and urban spaces, and to local and regional decision factors in order to facilitate the foundation of development policies of the communities it covers.

Post-socialist Transition and Urban Vulnerability in Bucharest.

Samuel Rufat, Bucharest: University Publishing House, 2011, 326 pp, ISBN 978-973-737-932-0 (in French, summary in Romanian).

Reviewed by Gabriel Pascariu, “Ion Mincu” University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest, Romania

The work is the result of an ample theoretical and applicative research undertaken on a period of 4 years, between 2005 and 2008, followed by a period of processing the information and the material collected. The scope of the theoretical research was the knowledge and profound study of the concepts and methods of investigation and evaluation regarding risks and vulnerabilities. Applicative research in case of Bucharest supposed a double approach: one of documentary research, regarding Bucharest’s history and evolution, and another concrete approach, of direct knowledge of reality in the field of the institutions, decision-makers, specialists involved in the process of urban development, and last but not least even of the town’s inhabitants, by means of a sociological inquiry. This is a difficult subject, due to the relative novelty of the problem and also to the fact that for the chosen case the obtaining of relevant data and information proved to be an extremely complicated action in the conditions of a lack of a consistent and accessible urban database.

The work edited in French, with a summary in Romanian, is organised in 5 parts, one of them being dedicated to the urbanistic evolution of Bucharest and other 4 parts dedicated to the issue of vulnerability, which constitutes the main theme of the book, which also comprises a series of annexes, as well as a vast bibliography. In over 300 pages it is to be noticed the impressive number of schemas, maps, tables, photographs and reproductions

of documentary materials. Besides, the rich graphic – more than 100 maps, cartograms and photographic images – is one of the characteristics which increases the attractiveness of this book, emphasizing an essential aspect followed by the author: “... territory is the main explanatory factor in representing risks” (p.284).

The bibliography includes more than 400 titles and it is structured on 6 categories with 27 subcategories. It is to be particularly noticed the selection of works with reference to transition, sorted by 4 criteria – the escape from socialism and the “transition”, Romania in “transition”, capitals and metropolises in “transition” and Bucharest in the “transition” period – as well as those regarding risk representation, sorted by 6 criteria: general and synthesis works, the representation of risk in Geography, Psychology, Anthropology and cultural studies, in Sociology and finally the representation of risk in France and in Europe. The author’s wide documentation about all the aspects approached is also reflected in the more than 900 footnotes, from among which many present extremely interesting comments and details, and they can be a parallel reading of another work. Last but not least, it must be underlined the careful and exact use of some research methods, specific for each analysed aspect or situation, either it is about historical, statistical, spatial, sociological or of another nature analysis. The methods used are explained as many times as needed, the rigorousness study being proved, among

others, by the listing of the 33 interviews unfolded in over 20 institutions and organisations, by indicating the date, duration and the way of registering.

The choosing of the theme and study place were determined, on the one hand, by the hypotheses formulated in the '70s by a group of American geographers coordinated by Gilbert White, according to which transition periods increase the vulnerability of societies to risks, and on the other hand by the notion of risk "container" given to large towns by the J.K. Mitchell's study published in 1999. The choosing of Bucharest as a proper place for verifying the hypotheses formulated by researchers with regard to the relationship of risk, vulnerability, transition and metropolis, is also justified by the fact the town is not only one of the biggest towns of Central and Eastern-European countries which broke through communism, but it is also a town which suffered as a result of natural catastrophes and brutal interventions from the period of Ceaușescu's regime. By this choice, the author also confesses the objective of the research, namely that of verifying, on a concrete and relevant basis, a series of theoretical hypotheses and methodological elements regarding urban vulnerability.

The first part of the paper represents an ingression in Bucharest's history, as a result of which the author places the present transition period into a long succession of crises and catastrophes, characterized, especially in the last 150-200 years, by a continuous starting and giving up to large urban projects. There were different causes, from natural or anthropic catastrophes to changes of political regime. Thus, there are mentioned fires, earthquakes, wars, political characters which influenced the town's history in the good or bad sense, the main moments when there were initiated certain projects of modernization or by the contrary of vulnerability of the urban structure, the analysis inclining with a higher attention upon the last communist decades as

well as upon post-communist phase. The analysis of recent period stops upon legislative, procedural and institutional aspects, too. The author's conclusion is the last 20 years affected the capital's vulnerability due to the weak capacity of administration to manage the town's development, uncontrolled expansion, the viability of peripheral areas and due to the fact that urbanization is captive to real estate and private initiative's manipulation. Despite the existence of some projects and plans of development promoted in different moments, the author notices certain incapacity of the authorities for assuming and promoting an urban project. Transition seems to be a permanent state for Bucharest, as it is permanently situated under the sign of a perpetual reconstruction. A city of an ephemeral urbanism as it was already seen decades ago by G.M.Cantacuzino¹⁾.

The second part includes conceptual and methodological aspects regarding the notions of risk and vulnerability and the way of evaluating them. There are identified the main moments which generated the recent approaches from the last 3-4 decades, the significant evolutions and orientations, permanently maintaining a critical position towards these. The author focuses on the concept of vulnerability promoted in the '90s, on the relationship vulnerability-resilience, but especially on the way vulnerability can be "translated" by territoriality and on the influence of the dynamic of large cities and the metropolis-transforming processes could have.

The third part of the work analyses Bucharest's risks and vulnerabilities. The data of the censuses from 1992 and 2002 regarding population, settlements, socio-cultural equipments lead to the establishing of some socio-economic and functional vulnerability classes which are then correlated to the distribution of natural (hydrological, seismic, Seveso sites) and technological risks within intra-urban territory. In order to achieve a spatial transposing of statistical information,

1) Arch. Cantacuzino, G.M., (1944), *On Man and Town or Efemerial Urbanism*, in the magazine "Simetria".

the author built a Geographic Information System (GIS) for Bucharest, which would enable him the data processing and their graphic representation, at the level of the 150 census circumscriptions. By grouping different variables, the author experiences an original method of analysis and evaluation of urban vulnerability, based on creating profiles or "spectres" of the territorial units and which he names "vulnerability spectroscopy". The final selection of 15 variables out of the 35 variables identified leads to the identification of 5 classes of socio-economic or physical vulnerability compared to the exposure to seismic, hydrological risks, Seveso sites and which shows that over 25% of the town's territory and population are exposed to a high vulnerability. Although transition seems to have favoured a high exposure to natural and technological risks, it is underlined that an important part of the determinant factors belonged to previous stages.

The fourth part is dedicated to organisational vulnerability, with a careful approach of risk management, norms and practices in the field. It is analysed the relationship between the regulatory frame, apparently excessive and the way in which it is applied and used by the decision-makers and also by specialists. The description of the instruments of the urban development's planning occupies an important place, the superficial treatment of the problem of risks and vulnerabilities being underlined. The author subtly notices derogatory interpretations or actions at the limit of the law and he concludes that despite of the excess of normative papers, in reality it can be spoken about a de-regulation in managing urban development and risk, in general. The chapter is mainly the result of some meetings between 2004 and 2007, of the field research and last but not least of a careful monitoring of the written media. The analysis of the discourse and of the practice of urban actors emphasizes, in the author's opinion, a strictly reactive attitude compared to the management of risk in the sense of reparatory actions in

case of a catastrophe. Preventive action and the relationship with the processes of spatial planning are lacking, and risks and vulnerabilities do not seem to be acknowledged (p.198).

The last part of the work, which is the most developed, is consecrated to the perception which inhabitants have regarding the notion of risk. The research of the perception is suggested mainly by the works of the same Gilbert White and it represents the occasion for the author to make an ingression in the area of social sciences and cultural paradigms. An ample questionnaire with closed and open questions was the basis for an inquiry on a representative social and territorial sample, realised in September 2007 on a number of over 600 persons. The results of the survey are optimally used by the applying of some advanced methods of processing, as the analysis of the multiple correspondences and the tests of independence. The author could finally underline a general attitude of risk awareness, marked by the tendencies of risk negation or minimising. Bucharest inhabitant's profile results, namely a "captive" one, who knows the risk, but diminishes its possible effects, as a measure of self-defence and resistance in compensation to the lack of concrete preventive actions of the authorities. Open questions also offered new perspectives upon risks, the population perceiving elements as pollution, circulation or criminality as important risk factors. Risks of traffic and pollution are mentioned by Vintilă Mihăilescu, since 1978 in his study on Bucharest published in 2003 only.²⁾ Seismicity remains the biggest problem of the town's inhabitant, whereas technological/ industrial risks are considered minor on the background of deindustrialization.

The work hypotheses are mainly confirmed: Bucharest, a metropolis in transition is a "container" of risks, and its vulnerability (in the sense of fragility in comparison with catastrophic events) is increasing in the last

2) Mihăilescu, V. (2003), *The Geographical Evolution of a City - Bucharest*, Ed. Paideia, București. (in Romanian)

two decades, despite the creation of a new regulatory and institutional frame. A series of practices, attitudes and mentalities rooted in the collective mind, as well as some situations inherited from the past regime seem to represent a handicap which is hard to surmount, even in the conditions in which European directives in the domain are adopted and new instruments of risk management are created.

The qualities of the work are clearly related to the novelty of the subject and to the profound control of some diverse and sophisticated methods of analysis in multiple fields. The way the author approaches the town, not only in its physical and historical components, but also in its existential aspects, life style, relationships, shows a special sensitiveness for the built environment and for the integrated, multi-disciplinary approach of its issues. Urban risks and vulnerabilities can be fully understood and approached only as the territory and its inhabitants' characteristics are known and interpreted objectively, this is one of the important messages of the work. From the methodological point of view, this

represents a summing of the previous preoccupations and experiments done by the author on other cases as Lyon and Mexico City. The work is significant by the importance given to spatial representations, urban vulnerability territorialisation, as well as by the connections with the instruments of spatial planning. This last aspect is relevant for the present context of urban development from Romania, characterised by a certain inconsistency and by weaknesses of these instruments. It is also to be noticed the author's contribution to the amendment of legislation in the field by including some provisions related to risks. Finally, for Bucharest, the work opens the road to some integrated researches regarding risks and vulnerabilities, the approaches up to now being few and sectoral and mainly related to the aspects of social and socio-economic nature. A serious subject that should also attract the attention of specialists and decision factors, but also of the towns' inhabitants asking for concrete actions and pro-active attitudes, without which Bucharest risks to remain a "capital of a tragic place, where everything often ends comically"³⁾.

Innovation and Regional Transformation. From Clusters to New Combinations. Martin Henning, Jerker Moodysson, Magnus Nilsson, Translation from Swedish by Amesto Translations AB, Malmö: Elanders Press, 2010, 214 pp., ISBN 978-91-633-6185-2 (in English).

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In the last period it can be noticed an increase of the importance given to research and especially innovation, one of its main components. Innovation may ensure a long term economic growth, and projects based on innovation are useful both for the researchers from different fields, as well as especially for local authorities, confronted with the challenge to elaborate long term decisions, by means of the best ideas and in a relatively short time.

The work "*Innovation and Regional Transformation. From Clusters to New Combinations*" comes to support the ideas previously elaborated, being a critical material upon the elaboration of public policies, coming to support the creation and development of regional clusters based on innovation. The work is based on the importance of elaborating development policies, which exploit the advantages of regional specialisations. The most relevant examples have as a subject the

3) Morand, P. (1935), *Bucarest*, Paris, Plon.

Region Skåne, situated in the southern part of Sweden, where an analysis at regional level of industry and of the conditions of elaborating regional policies is done.

In the first chapter there are presented introductory notions related to clusters and their specific terminology, as innovation systems and economic transformations, with application for Skåne region.

The initial subject of the book and the parts which treat in detail the clusters' issue start in the second chapter. This chapter starts with an introduction upon the clusters' theory and treats problems related to economic transformations, innovation and regional development. The third chapter details certain aspects related to clusters and profile sectors from the Region Skåne.

In the fourth chapter (Transformations and growth: economy in the industrial space) there are presented certain aspects related to Skåne's regional economy and it introduces a new analysis method which measures the way in which different types of industry are interconnected as regards knowledge and knowledge transfer, entitled Revealed Skill Relatedness, a method which the authors mention to be developed and largely described by Neffke and Swensson Henning in the year 2009.

The fifth chapter is theoretical and it introduces aspects related to the last methods of analysis

in the initiatives of regional policies upon innovation and transformations.

In the penultimate chapter, 5 economic sectors implemented in the Region Skåne are presented, being often named „cluster initiatives”, too. These were implemented either in the food sector, or in life science sectors, ICT, moving media and clean-tech. First, a brief description of each sector and of the number of central actors involved was done. The method introduced in the fourth chapter comes to illustrate the cross-sectoral knowledge networks of each sector. Then, the analytical frame from chapter 5 is also used. This is used in order to analyse the initiative of sectoral development. By combining the analysis of problems, activities and functions of the initiatives with the analysis of sectoral knowledge, in terms of functional limitation, it is shown how sectoral analyses of these initiatives are well reached.

The seventh chapter reviews and concludes the previously presented aspects, tracing certain recommendations for the future activities connected to the policies of regional innovation. This chapter also includes a summary of the entire book, starting with theoretical aspects and ending with the conclusions.

An aspect of a real interest, as the authors also state, this work offers a consistent bibliographical list, useful for those who wish to complement their specialised literature.

