

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **City in Sight. Dutch Dealings with Urban Change**

Jan Willem Duyvendak, Frank Hendriks, Mies van Niekerk (eds),

The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

Nicis Institute 2009, 309 pp,

ISBN 978-908-9641-69-4 (in English)

**Reviewed by** IRINA SAGHIN, University of Bucharest, Romania

This interesting book puts on the table the results of a research program (Urban Innovation Research Program- STIP) realized between 2005 and 2009 and integrates the vision of various researchers and scholars from different universities in the Netherlands in order to show the real problems that Dutch people are facing in terms of urban development and change. Their problems are not the typical ones related to urban topics, but they are a consequence of the "Dutch economical openness" that has led to the transformation of the country into a "new immigration society".

The Netherlands are first of all an example in terms of urban development, sometimes considered a real "laboratory of ideas", mainly due to the fact that the country is one of the most urbanized in the world (82% of the population lives in an urban environment). Also the 31 biggest Dutch cities are gathered in a framework (Big Cities Policy) and are called G31. The cities' problems are helping the policy makers to face the new urban challenges and find some solutions.

The book "*City in Sight. Dealing with Urban Changes*" is structured in three parts preceded by an introductory chapter, each one concerning a certain aspect of the immigration issues. Starting with "Urban Transformations and Local Setting" in the first part, the authors choose to discuss the "Urban Citizenship and Civic Life" in the second part and "Urban Governance and "Professional Politics" in the

third one. Every part is divided into four articles written by researchers in the fields of sociology, urban geography, social and political sciences. The book ends with a really interesting commentary article presented as a separate part of the book and written by John Mollenkopf, expert on urban issues.

In the first part, the main idea is centered on the concept of ethnocentrism and its consequences. The question that is raised is about how are the ethnics integrated in the Dutch everyday life and how are they affecting the life of the other residents? Starting from the social mix strategy (heavily criticized by the scientists) the authors of the four articles underline the fact that people communicate and interact more while being at work than in their neighborhoods. The workplaces have become more important to them than the geographical vicinity. This means that more investments are needed in the creation of job opportunities than in the policies concerning the socio-economical mix tried by the Dutch Government. Other issues that are discussed in this part are the "state-led gentrification strategy" viewed as successful renewal one, but put into practice only by those middle-class residents that come from idealistic reasons into the "worst neighborhoods" and the transformation of these neighborhoods into "open sites of leisure and consumption".

The second part tries to see the difference between local and international citizenship, the transnationalization as an opportunity or

a threat and also gives a new definition in terms of modern citizenship. What the authors try to say is that the new citizen, no matter if he or she is Dutch or immigrant, wants to be involved in the life of the neighborhood, wants to help raising the life standard in the area as an express of his/her individual rights. Also the integration of the disabled persons in the neighborhood community is discussed in the third part, having as a conclusion the idea that these persons would maybe belong better to an institutionalized environment.

Part III focuses more on the comparisons to other European and American cities and discusses about the precarious social positions of Moroccan migrant women, the difference between the policy governance and the front-line one, the involvement of the civic organizations in the improvement of the life in the neighborhoods. The third part concludes with an article that states the idea of "good spatial planning" through horizontal co-

productions of policy-making and the reinventing of the neighborhood.

The ending commentary article of John Mollenkopf criticizes the using of the comparative case studies that might not be the proper example for the immigrant problems that the Netherlands are facing. He is firmly convinced that the Dutch case is somehow unique and also the researches that are done should be as well.

In conclusion, this book has developed a new vision on what are the role and the place of the immigrants in the Dutch society and has raised an alarm about the urban policies that are being made. The real purpose of these articles seems to be the achievement of a change in the way local and national authorities are acting and a more focused intervention in terms of immigrants integration.

## **Elements of territorial planning and regional development**

Ioan Ianoş, Nicolae Popa, Andreea Loreta Cercleux (coord.),  
Bucharest: University Publishing House, 2011, 282 pp.,  
ISBN 978-606-591-285-4 (in French)

**Reviewed by** Mihaela Alina RISTEA, University of Bucharest, Romania

The results of the group of geographers and Romanian researchers gathered in this volume are dedicated as a tribute to Professor Jean-Baptiste Humeau from University of Angers, who has been awarded this year the high distinction of Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Bucharest.

The work represents a broad complex of original scientific contributions of the eighteen authors listed on the first page, and thematic coordinators, on a different approach and context but included in the issue of territorial planning and regional development.

The text begins with a brief overview of the contents in the preface, is structured in three main chapters containing in turn subheadings featured in case studies and articles, developed in 282 pages. At the end each study presents conclusions of the analysis made and the specific references.

The first chapter of this work, *Territorial planning and regional development on multi-scale*, is organized into seven themes of complex induced suggestive title. The concept of „territorial planning” receives more than one definition, both over time and space. It is used as a conclusion that has been praised as „a scientific discipline of contact with a practice and applicable character [...]”. An entire range of sciences is connected and makes it possible to design some principles as fundamental elements that lead to the formation of a vision about cohesion, competitiveness and sustainable development. In the context of economic development at regional level there are explored theoretical perspectives in the form of concise regional theories. Historical perspective has led many

economists to formulate certain concepts and theories that can explain the phenomenon. Theories regarding the localisation are numerous and varied and the theories of regional economic growth and development are based on successive changes, quantitative and qualitative, that contribute to obtaining a high standard of living. The profound changes taking place globally affect the perception and approach at regional level.

Thus, in the next communication a signal is pulled to the importance of assessing the demand for regional infrastructure of environmental protection required to ensure sustainable development at this level and the correct management of waste. There are five different aspects of the services offered by the infrastructure of environmental protection that define application investment. There is an analysis of the amounts allocated to the waste management and protection of the quality of the environment on the basis of the development regions.

Entrepreneurship is expressed in different ways, in different spheres of economic and social order to be able to create multiple organisational forms. The entrepreneurship and the regional development are the focus of meetings within the European Consortium „2H2S”.

For the entrepreneurial dynamism observed in practice in the different geographical regions, there have been observed main factors, grouped into four broad categories. Entrepreneurial initiative and regional development, two interrelated processes, are the result of the long-term trend of several values, starting from the individual and

collective level to the national level. Due to the dynamics of the report of a multitude of factors, conditions, criterias and motivations, developed over time in each geographical area, it reached the setting up of regional development models sociopolitical topics, but also structural and spatial models.

At regional level growth pole theory is an important feature of for the revitalization of municipalities, sparking into the sea in two sequences. Originally a village attracts many people from the surroundings through the availability of benefits, so that in the second sequence to be a diffusion of this concentration. Thus develops a balanced urban-centric system and a new urban-rural partnership, with the guarantee of equal access to knowledge and infrastructure, sustainable development, prudent management and protection of the environment and cultural heritage. Case study refers to the region of Southwest development in Romania, presents the working methodology of quantitative analysis (data presented in graphs) and qualitative data that led to conclusions on the flow of people.

Spatial planning and the division into administrative units of a territory had direct links with regional development. Case study presents an analysis of the statute of the Romanian administration during the time from the period between the two world wars to the present situation, where the counties are the basic unit. On the other hand, makes a correlation plot of historical provinces and counties, that are known from the past, what would have been included in the cartographic representations currently presented as a way to support the analysis.

There are universities that appeared thanks to regional needs and their subsequent multiplication based on growth in demand, under the conditions of a population who wants better education and better anchored in economical, social and cultural problems. It aims to achieve a strategy of integration into the regional communities, which submitted a plan, a synthetic methodology with the

following components: analysis of current situation, construction of tree-problem, the establishment of a strategic objective (increasing the integration of universities in regional communities) and the construction of tree-objective.

The study continues with the second chapter, *Regional development: case studies*, centred on five different topics in the context of the case studies.

The first case study for the area of Banat, refers to the meaning of the polisemantic term „border”. Detailed quantitative analysis presented in the charts, tables and maps, demonstrated entrepreneurial dynamism and economic development in the border area of Banat. Compare to the border with Hungary, the one with Serbia appears as a barrier rather than an element of amplification of entrepreneurial initiatives.

The following case study relate to the potential for development of tourist Semenic mountains, which analysed the potential both in terms of what it can offer and what is required in this area, followed by structured swot analysis for existing resorts. Graphical material is rich, cartographical material could produce a resultant of the analysis.

Another study in the field of tourism is made for the area of influence of the city of Râmnicu Vâlcea, where is emphasized the role of climatic spas for a relaxing travel. The area presents the perspectives of development of tourist activities (the National Park and National Park Cozia Buila-Vânturarița, the resources of the mineral waters of tourist resorts and objectives of the religious), notable on one hand and the increasing affordability of publicly available following the modernisation of existing infrastructure. Regional disparities are an increase in the gap recorded in territorial development, and also a stage of evolution of territorial expansion, in which case progress leads to deep cracks between functional developed regions and the underdeveloped regions. It achieved a development strategy based on policentrism

with the help of five indicators for the region of nord-east in Romania. Economic development in underprivileged areas requires deepening of development strategies based on growth poles, classified according to their ability to convey the characteristics of the development of the network of villages subordinated.

In the following case study, there are presented methods of projection of internal development, within an area naturally fragile. Danube Delta in Romania, is a unique ecosystem of international importance, declared cultural patrimony which has undergone major changes over time, analysed individually and in strictly economic terms of the components. An issue arises related to overfishing, this activity being the base of the inhabitants of this area. A strength that can bring prosperity is the development of ecotourism, in accordance with appropriate policies, a well developed legislative framework and the involvement of institutions interacting administrative responsibly.

The third chapter is dedicated to the relations which exist between urban planning and development, as set out in five studies. Development of romanian urban space is a discussion topic covered nowadays not only by political class. Post-Communist system image on cities brought elements of innovation, in particular those who are considered to be poles of growth. In many cities from Romania the traditional cityscape has disappeared completely, unlike places in Western Europe, where the old (past) coexist with the new (present). The absence of proximity to the problems of urban and periurban space, in the period of Comunism, made possible implementation solutions inadaptable to local realities.

The following two studies reflect features of Bucharest and its area of influence. Development and management of the metropolitan area of Bucharest has put issues over time, the 6 rural places near the capital, in the periphery, have been declared to the rank of towns since 2000, through this new status will lead to intensification of

administrative functions related to the services or specialized training in various industrial activities. Sustainable development requires the completion of a series of objectives in several areas, on certain heavily congested segments of Bucharest by the strengthening of cooperation and shared partnership, mobilization of relations between institutes and activity sectors.

Dynamics of residential area in the conurbation of Bucharest is accentuated in the post-Communist period, since 1989, under pressure following changes to the mobility of residents and social aspirations. The builded surfaces and the property market had reserved for a substantial increase in this period until 2009 when the economic crisis had diminished the dynamics of the construction sector. The cartographical support concerning constructed area or the number of new migrants can help interpretation of regional analysis.

Study and development relations planning on rural-urban interface in the city of Timișoara and surrounding areas has demonstrated sustained real economic pressure and following an increase as a development pole, appeared the necessity of regulating the processes of development. From 2008 Timișoara is regarded as a growing urban pole and it was initiated a new strategic planning process of the city and its surroundings. Under the strong regional and rural communes between poles nearby, the effort of integration will be significant in terms of the creation of the economical interrelationships and not a simple juxtaposition.

A case study on cities of the Republic of Moldova demonstrates that the process of urbanization has experienced an increase for a variable trajectory, stagnation or call-backs. There are three main stages, each characterized by visible changes. The first covers the period before the war, when the functions were the main administrative and commercial training in urban networks. In the period after the war the administrative factor helped the detection of many villages to be

developed as urban, the economic factor (industrialization) was as an engine of urbanization. On the basis of its settlements this villages were propelled to the rank of cities. The post-Soviet stage (after 1994), had significant effects in economic and social areas, services representing currently a motor for the administrative function as they became the main factor that fuels urbanisation.

The volume concludes with an explanatory text to readers, dedicated to a personality demonstrating a rigorously scientific and creative spirit, who understood the Romanian civilization and encouraged the development of cultural exchanges between the Romanian and French, thus creating active liaison decks – Jean-Baptiste Humeau. Having regarded the tribute brought up, the last rows portrays him as a teacher with wide-open knowledge, as a researcher but also as a friend of Romanians geographers.

I conclude by recommending this book to students, young researchers and other interested parties in the fields related to encompass the interests of development and territorial planning (architecture, urban development, economic sciences as management, marketing, economic statistics, finance; political science, legal, administrative and human sciences, history, geology and information systems, not least the geography that can cooperate in the realization and maps analysis of natural and anthropogenic factors for mediating the relationship of interdependence). I consider this volume a complex of ideas debated at various case studies or articles that contain informations extracted from the needed analysis, too. The book is significant, given the importance of both parts of analysis, descriptive-analytical ways and graphics and mapping ways, presenting new debated topics and their dynamic production.

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**Portugal in the Era of the Knowledge Society.** Demyan Belyaev, Zoran Roca. Portugal: Edições Universitárias Lusófonas, 2010, 419 pp, ISBN 978-972-88816-98-6 (in English)

**Reviewed by** Mădălina TEODOR, University of Bucharest, Romania

A great book, written by a group of experts from a wide range of the social sciences and humanities, it puts forward a range of perspectives on socio-economic change in contemporary Portugal and the challenges it faces, as an “ideal-typical” European peripheral country, on the road to integration into an international “knowledge - based” community. The contemporary debate on the importance of knowledge for economic development has focused on applied knowledge such as technology or human skills.

Portugal faces a number of economics, social and cultural problems typical of the periphery. Only in 1960's did Portugal begin to industrialize based on foreign investment attracted by low labour costs. The industry was mostly export-oriented, concentrated in the coastal cities and in recent decades has entered into significant decline due to the even lower labour costs available elsewhere. Portugal was also one of the last countries in Europe to attain widespread literacy and, even today it continues to return rather low figures in knowledge-related fields. Thus, Portugal may in a certain sense be seen as representative of the European periphery both in terms of socio-economic development and in the dimensions of advancement toward a “knowledge society”.

The book “*Portugal in the Era of the Knowledge Society*” is structured in four chapters, “Portugal: a knowledge-based economy?”, “Human capital for a knowledge society?”, “Social and cultural factors as assets for knowledge-based development?” and “Causes of (under) development: towards breaking up the enigma”. The chapters are divided into twelve articles, all elaborated in English by the Portuguese researchers and

professors from Lisbon, Porto and Aveiro. The author's wide documentation about the all aspects approached is reflected in the more than 500 references consulted.

In over 400 pages the number of schemas (41) and tables (19) are very limited, the maps and photographs are also missing. This characteristic reduces the attractiveness of this book but all articles are generous from the point of view of the text and of the multi-criteria approach of the concept of knowledge.

The first part of the book focuses on issues related to the Portuguese economy. *Luciano Amaral* offers an overview of Portugal evolution since the transition to democracy in 1974 and discusses possible scenarios for its future development. *Joana Chorincas* presents policies on fostering innovation clusters and analyses the factors critical to their success in Portugal. Clusters have attracted the attention of government and the business community in Portugal for a long time. *Jorge Ferreira* tracks the country's recent “crusade” to join the information society, which started with the government's “green paper” in the mid-1990's and culminated in the Magellan project, unique in its scale worldwide. According to the “e-readiness” indicator, Portugal occupies one of the last positions in Europe. Portugal's ambition is to quickly advance from an information society towards a knowledge-based society.

The second part includes theories of human capital place specific emphasis on the positive role of education, researcher mobility and attracting the highly skilled from abroad as powerful factors in the generation and application of knowledge. *Elsa Estrela* and *António Teodoro* analyze the evolution of secondary education politics in Portugal since

1970's in the different search for a balance between equity and excellence. *Tatiana Koryakina*, *Cláudia Sarrico* and *Pedro Teixeira* address the development of the Portuguese higher education system with a special attention to its role and effectiveness in producing science. *Ana Delicado* studies the international mobility of Portuguese researchers, identifying prevalent trends and analyzing policies pursued in this respect. She wanted to demonstrate that the scientific mobility of Portuguese researchers has played a significant role in transforming Portugal into a knowledge society. She concluded that the mobility seems to stimulate the propensity for international communication and collaboration. *José Marques* and *Pedro Góis* provide insights into the migration of highly skilled individuals to Portugal that has become noticeable in the last two decades. They offer a topology of these migrants based on the form of their inclusion into the Portuguese labour market and highlight the related challenges.

Part three shows us that knowing is in the first place a social and cultural process. *Zoran Roca* presents a new approach to understanding the nexus between local identity and regional development. *Filipe Murraças* discusses how culture can serve as a driver of competitiveness. *Eduardo Marques* share his vast experience in the world of non-profit grassroots associations in Portugal and links these to the cultivation of civic culture. The last article in this chapter is written by *José Oliva*: "The housing problem and the evolution homeownership culture: from "clandestine" neighborhoods to second homes". The author takes the evolution homeownership culture as a reflection of social transformations in Portugal during the last few decades. He concluded that "one of the relevant aspects of cultural knowledge in Portugal, has been the ability to downplay the legal rules as a means of offsetting the inefficiency of the state's (ir) responsibility in this sphere of life".

The fourth and last part concludes the present book and is dedicated to the wider topic of causes of (under) development and strives to take a few steps towards breaking up the enigma behind socio-economic progress. This last part consists is a single, longer chapter is written by *Demyan Belyaev*. This chapter sets out a critical discussion of what can be or should be considered development as well as a comparative analyses of the four main hypotheses about the nature of impediments to the latter economic, educational, social and cultural. Special attention is dedicated to theories of social capital and cross-cultural differences. Sine social and cultural structure are usually bound to places, this bound produces socio-cultural spatial contexts that may lead to a significant extent account for the varying outcomes of similar developmental efforts.

By concluding, I underline that this book has sought the developmental challenges the Portugal is facing at the present phase in global history. Portugal needs strong investment in education at all levels. On the higher education level, the investment per capita is still far from European average. On the current global economic situation, policy-makers recognize the importance of higher education and its contribution to the knowledge-based economy. The European integration and the globalization process have provided excellent opportunities for Portugal to catch up economically and culture may well be the way for it to go even further, so that is can complete in a global knowledge-based economy.

Taking into account the quality of work "Portugal in the Era of the Knowledge Society", I recommend it as an excellent reference book in confronting and offering solutions to the problem of integration into an international "knowledge society".

**Management of functionally-reorganized spaces. Regeneration of industrial spaces in the Petrosani Depression through the development of tourist ventures, Merciu Florentina-Cristina,**  
Bucharest: University Publishing House, 2011, 262 pp.,  
ISBN 978-606-591-180-2 (in Romanian, Conclusions in English 5 p.)

**Reviewed by** Andreea-Loreta CERCLEUX, University of Bucharest, Romania

The problem of management of functionally-reorganized spaces is included among the current concerns and challenges of the geographic scientific community, even more so in Romania, a country that is still fighting the effects of the processes and phenomena that going through economic transition triggered more than two decades ago.

This work, which can be deemed credit-worthy for its authenticity, and a pathfinder for further research in the field, is organized into nine chapters that tackle, as part of an extremely thorough analysis, the current situation of regeneration of industrial spaces in the Petrosani Depression in conjunction with the natural, demographic and economic factors, while seeking for an answer to the question: how should one design a strategy to develop tourism in the area?

In the first chapter, the author covers in a most accurate manner various tourism-analysis matters in defining the borders of the tourism area of the Petrosani Depression, and the arguments submitted include original contributions in interpreting the limits from both a conceptual point of view and in the field. Touristic homogeneity, traffic routes or the diversity of the tourist offer are captured and explained by the author from the perspective of their relevance in the ascension of tourism in the area.

Presenting the economic situation of the Petrosani Depression is assigned a place apart in the study, as the author places its analysis in a temporal context backed by linking it to the defining aftermath of each step in economic evolution. Emphasis is placed on

the analysis of the economic effects of the industrial reorganization process launched in 1990, which led to a sizeable drop in production, with the mining sector being the most vulnerable and as a result severely impacted by those economic mutations. The scale of the phenomenon was immediately reflected into a drop of the employed workforce, and layoffs not phased were the source for the emergence of social effects across the community.

The demographic potential of the area is discussed in the third chapter, and the author offers several very suggestive remarks on the depression's man-made transformation in time and on the work-related morbidity among mining employees. The quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the local workforce, too, emphasizes the importance the author assigns to the implementation of a land regeneration process wherein the active population is the foundation for the conduct of future economic ventures, possibly in tourism.

The main problems approached in the fourth chapter include an interpretation of the evolution of human settlements in the depression in relation with the predominant economic function in time (military, agricultural, industrial, services) and, of course, with the limitations enforced by the natural framework.

Fifth chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the natural touristic potential and it stands out because of the precision of the detailed description of the extremely varied range of the attractive natural factors, in each distinct category: geology, landforms, water systems,

climate, bio and pedology, wildlife, natural reserves. The relevant examples highlighted serve as potential tourist attractions that can generate or incense various types and forms of tourism in the area.

Man-made touristic potential is the topics of analysis of the next chapter, whose interpretation is meant to – and eventually it achieves that goal – be successfully understood from the perspective of certain attributes that the author comments on, relying on the meanings offered by the material and immaterial patrimony of the region. The significance of both the assets part of the material patrimony (archeological monuments, civilian city buildings, museums and collections, religious establishments), and the immaterial patrimony (traditional households, folk costumes or local traditions) is highlighted in the spirit of its contribution to shaping local identity (mention should be made of the attention the author also pays to an analysis of the customs and lifestyle of the momarlan civilization). An important space in chapter six is allocated to industrial facilities with tourist functions, as the mining culture assets in the area are imbued with historical, social and technical connotations, which the author considers as indispensable in their touristic capitalization. The author suggests that the many sides of mining culture ought to be transposed into technical museums, as the foundation for their establishment has already been laid by the completed projects to convert several coal mines. In addition to the production facilities, some of these assets are part of industrial archeology, capitalizing on the railway patrimony might be another form of boosting the evolution of tourism in the Petrosani Depression, as they are associated with coal-mining operations, as well as to the beginnings of the machine-manufacturing industry in Romania. Commemorative monuments also mark the importance of mining operations in the depression.

Chapter seven details the types and forms of tourism, predominantly mountain and rural tourism, which currently are the main types of tourism. Special attention is also paid to other

types of tourism, i.e. urban tourism and industrial tourism. Considered a particular form of tourism, whose comprehension has to be achieved by integrating it into the phenomenon of patrimonialization, industrial tourism is an alternative in the process of functional reorganization of the area. Ecomuseums are appreciated as a reaction in the process of seeking means to preserve and at the same time capitalize on local culture. The author analyzes ecomuseums from the point of view of their role in designing strategies for territorial development. The final purpose from the perspective of promoting the local patrimony is designed with a view to organizing a travel circuit across the area, that would bring together ecomuseums, information centers, local museums, industrial archaeology buildings and sites, alongside artificial and natural landscapes. Unfortunately, the tourist accommodation structure (analyzed in chapter eight) currently does not lend support to publicizing and materializing the new actions to valorize the inherited local cultural specificities, at least from the point of view of their distribution across the area, and occasionally in terms of the failure to comply with land management norms.

The last chapter of the work (chapter nine) suggests the starting points and the approaches of the strategy for the development of the Petrosani Depression tourist area. The author's detailed knowledge and capacity to integrate the strengths and weaknesses of the area into an unbiased analysis allowed to advance several plausible scenarios for the touristic evolution of the area. Thus, the author suggests four categories of challenges for the economic future of the depression: a transformation into a tourist destination of national importance, the development of mountain tourism, implementation of rural tourism and establishment of the Jiu Valley Geomineral Park with a view to supporting the growth of industrial tourism.

The successful application of several models of analysis (such as the morpho-structural

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model of distribution of the touristic resources or the distribution of tourist accommodation facilities in areas with distinct degrees of sensitivity) and the approach of an original analysis that conveys across, in a clear, rigorous and unbiased form, the genuine situation faced by a region in search for an economic reorganization are the basic elements that justify my considering this a very valuable work in the extant body of works.

Mrs. Cristina Merciu's book addresses a wide range of specialists (geographers, urban planners, economists, sociologists) and it deserves to be used as genuine scientific support, useful in creating spatial planning policies with a view to tourist regeneration of industrial spaces and at the same time the development of branches that are compatible and complementary to that.

