

BOOK REVIEWS

RESILIENCE AND TERRITORY. A CONCEPTUAL OPERATIONALIZATION AND METHODOLOGICAL POINTS OF VIEW (IN ROMANIAN)

Reziliență și teritoriu. Operaționalizare conceptuală și perspective metodologice

ALEXANDRU BĂNICĂ, IONEL MUNTELE (eds.), Ed. TERRA NOSTRA, Iași, 2015,
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This book presents a bold approach of the new problems the society faces including a complex territorial analysis based on statistical data, information from Corine Land Cover and other auxiliary sources (such as the electric company of CEZ, Open Street Map), which add to its veracity.

The book is structured on 4 different parts and 10 chapters. The first part contains only one introductory chapter, while the second part has 4 chapters debating the problem of resilience in Romania on different fields of analysis. The third part also contains 4 chapters containing case studies based on Romania's urban areas and also on the urban environment of Iasi. In the last chapter the arguments and the usefulness of the study are presented.

Chapter 1, *Resilience – Conceptual landmarks*, begins with the characteristics of the studied phenomenon and also with its inferences of “absorbing some places and to regenerate afterwards”, exposing briefly the provenience of the concept but mostly explaining the ways of analysing that lie at the bottom of resilience. This includes the presentation of some additional concepts such as: sturdiness, absorptivity, adaptability or transferability, debated briefly through the opinions of some important scientific personalities. There are also being presented the different stages of the resilience system (transferability, the capacity to respond, the capacity of control and of monitoring), through which the phases undergone on different analysis scales of different administrative units are being reflected. It can be noticed that the resilience methodology contains different

points of view coming from different scientific fields such as the technical, the ecologic, or the psychological field. In this sense, the book includes the review of a series of well-argued analyses (the small farmers, the green streets from Oregon, Uganda's tropical forest), which evidence that this paper is based on a well-documented methodology.

The second chapter of the book presents a complex analysis of Romania's demography in a European context and also a methodology adapted to the concept of resilience. The study highlights the territorial context of the Romanian villages, through different cartograms representing the overall balance of the population, the share of population living abroad, the migratory balance, based on the censuses between 2002 and 2011. The relations between the different groups of ages during the same period are evidenced, resulting an overall useful analysis of the Romanian demographic system. Thus, one can state that the problem of Romania's vulnerability is given by the ageing of the population, and here are presented the importance of this phenomenon and its impact based on an adapted typology.

The third chapter brings into attention a very common problem nowadays, related to the process of development – the renewable resources, such as the aeolian energy, the photovoltaics, the biomass, hydraulicity. One can read here a study case based on the electric company of CEZ in Romania. There is a relative independence in the energetic field in Romania and there is an evident competition in this sphere, which brings multi-

ple perspectives in developing the renewable resources. There is also presented, through some cartograms, the disposition of investments in renewable energy at local level. The most prevalent resource seems to be the aeolian one; it can be found in the districts of Constanta, Tulcea, Caras Severin but also in some districts from the region of Moldavia. The development of this area is attributed to the grants offered for the electric energy through the green tax that each consumer has to pay. Green energy, especially developed as a replacement for the polluting and usually dangerous energies (for example the nuclear energy), has been intensely sustained by different organisations due to the growing awareness of global warming.

Chapter 4 debates the resilience of transport in Romania. The problems of this specific sphere are well-known and mainly based on the slow-paced way in which the highways and the railways are being built/restored. If this poor rhythm of developing the transport infrastructure will be maintained, the economy of the country will suffer from the growing discrepancies between the regions that no longer benefit from different investments. The study presents some specific methodological approach for the transport issue and also applicable strategies of development for the entire Romanian territory.

Chapter 5 analyses the classical and the vacuum sewerage system with their specific advantages and disadvantages. A relatively poorly debated aspect is being taken into account here, and that is the impact of the resilience on the environment. The waste problem is recognized by the European Union which has well established goals but it fails sometimes in implementing them because it takes time for the communities to acknowledge the threat.

Chapter 6 is a complete analysis of the resilience of the urban areas of Romania, including the categories of resilience indicators structured during different study fields. The presentation of the intensified polarization of main Romanian cities together with the consequences felt by the more disadvantaged urban areas create a realistic image of the

socio-economic context of Romania.

The seventh analysis is based on the city of Iasi and it mainly debates issues of urban planning. Also, there is presented a methodology that is adapted to investigating resilience for this kind of study and also to the evolution in time of the given area. The communist and the post-communist periods are highlighted to emphasize the most important changes of the urban area. Therefore, the analysis evidences the territorial transformation of the historical centre of Iasi, from a resilient perspective.

The following chapter is well documented, representing a practical approach of the correlation between an analysis of the resilience in the context of sustainable development and the benefits of implementing such a project in the metropolitan area of Iasi. Supplementing green areas after running a feasibility test based on the fragmentation of the landscape, the soil, the distance towards a source of water, the type of property, the density of the population, the proximity, indicates a certain safety of the long term effects over the quality of life on the studied area. Therefore, this particular chapter deals with a well-known problem of Iasi, taking into account that the city is among the most polluted with suspension powder in Romania.

The study concludes with a last chapter considering resilience as an indicator in different circumstances.

Nowadays, the approach of understanding the resilience of territories is very significant in the context of local economies that are being rebuilt after a long time of economic drought. The carefully detailed analyses (which were offering at times new directions of research, highlighting the authors' perspective) lead to new thinking regarding territorial decisions and policy making.

An important idea derived from the book is the fact that every space can be resilient and also vulnerable when compared to a different, more developed system; in other words, a perfect geometry cannot be reached, as the territory is developing depending on a series of different

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factors inside the natural and the anthropic framework. of resilience is being synthesized under different implementation areas.

This particular paper can be considered a remarkable result of teamwork, exposed from an objective point of view, being dedicated to a better understanding of the problems and solutions wrapped around the indicator of resilience. The approach has its roots well anchored in the study field of each author in particular, resulting in well documented and well-argued case studies in which the indicator

As a conclusion, this study contains 12 tables, 29 figures and 34 maps, all of them contributing to creating a clear image of different territorial phenomena, in general, and of resilience, in particular. Approaching the research topic from different points of view and contexts, this book constitutes one of the most important bridges to studying resilience and the territory furthermore.

LA MÉTROPOLISATION EN QUESTION

By Cynthia Ghorra, Ed. Gobin, Paris, 2015, 116 pp.

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This book, part of the collection *La ville en débat*, analyses and explores the differentiations in character and functionality of the French and American metropolitan areas, as well as their role and impact in the urban landscape, social life and economy. Various related concepts are also explained throughout the book, concepts that define the two distinct approaches that the metropolisation had in France and the United States, respectively.

There are five sections in which the book is structured. It debuts with an introduction in which the material is being presented and it continues with three roughly equally sized chapters, ending with a short section that states the conclusions. While the second and third chapter discuss more punctual situations (metropolisation in France versus the one in the United States, respectively), the fourth chapter has a more abstract approach and it explores concepts and theories regarding a metropolis' character and influence in a territory.

The first chapter represents a short presentation of the context in which the two analysed countries developed their metropolitan areas and the way the metropolitan areas participate in the territorial dynamics shaped by the economic environment – more specifically, the capitalist system. It also introduces the two different approaches in which metropolisation is being experienced inside the territory. So that, there is the French territorial dynamics, in which a metropolitan area is viewed as a result of decentralization with an antagonism between the “France des flux” (“France of the fluxes”) and “France périphérique” (“France of the periphery”); and there is the American urban environment, in which a metropolis is seen as a defining actor

of mondialisation/globalisation and whose development is not linked to the centre – outskirts duality, but to the functional difference between the economic/residential spaces and the commercial/entertainment ones.

The second chapter deals with the metropolisation in the United States, a country where key concepts such as *global city-region*, *edge city* or *metropolitics* have originated in order to underline the way the city has restructured itself and its territory has contributed to the creation of a powerful metropolis. This chapter has two subsections – the first one details the concepts that are to be worked with during the analysis (ideas that originated in the mid-20th century), while the second one explores the manner in which politics and metropolisation are intertwined. There have been numerous works that thoroughly encouraged the institutional actors to become aware of the “metropolitan revolution” and emphasised their policies to the benefit of the metropolitan areas. This is mainly due to the fact that the metropolis has a certain advantage in the today's globalised world and that good policies applied on a metropolitan area can lead to strong intrametropolitan solidarity and intermunicipal cooperation. The importance of the capitalist system is emphasised, as the globalisation is said to have had a decisive role in the *deteritorialisation* and *reteritorialisation* of the space through the continuous fluxes of capitals, information, knowledge, and merchandise. The USA Bureau of Census has also played an important role in territorial relations, as it proposed the category of „micro-politan area” for cities inhabited by 10 000-50 000 people.

The third chapter moves on the other side of the Atlantic, exploring the facets of

metropolisation in France, and here the key word is *decentralisation*. This chapter is further divided in two parts – the first part discusses the late recognition of the metropolitan phenomenon in France, while the second one is a thorough presentation of “L’Acte III de la décentralisation”. This chapter underlines the different stages in which the metropolis has been acknowledged. It describes the progressive integration of the metropolis in the debate regarding decentralisation and its institutional passage into the territorial reforms. “L’Acte III” recognises for the first time a functional territory that before it hadn’t been formalised. Bruno Latour states that institutionalisation can equally be perceived as a mean of prolonging the suffering of the inhabitants. In his opinion, the people are lacking spatial landmarks, a problem further emphasised by the integration of global ideas in the daily life (metropolitan or not). The dynamics of reterritorialization explains this disorder, which can be remedied by the metropolitan institution if certain conditions are fulfilled. In Pierre Veltz’s vision, the only entity capable of facilitating important changes in the economic functionality of space in a globalised environment is the metropolis, a flexible organism of productive chains and private and public services. The territory is viewed as an economic resource in which proximity is perceived as an essential element of reducing uncertainty and it allows the involved parties to have access to information and to exploit an environment favourable to innovation.

The fourth chapter is also divided into halves. While the first half explores the old ideologies and the new inequalities, such as fragmentation, the theory of public choice and the spatial mismatch concepts, the second half puts emphasis on the unique character of a metropolis, with regard on its hybrid status and its solidary relation with the rest of the territory. It confirms the dominance of the metropolitan paradigm in the two traditional scientific approaches, approaches that are put into

perspective through a comparative exercise. The recognition of the metropolitan issue has triggered a critical position of the American researchers regarding the ideology of localism and the theory of public choices. It has fuelled the plea for spatial fairness and intrametropolitan solidarity. Furthermore, the arguments of this critical posture allow the seizing of the singularity of the metropolitan fact, the specific of a hybrid character that oscillates between the local and the global. The institutionalisation of the metropolis is expressed through a reorganisation of the national territory, a process that also modifies the competences of the state.

The final chapter represents the conclusions of the analysis and it states that the metropolitan issue is far from being a simple clash between the metropolitan and the non-metropolitan actors. The way the factors that shape the territory interact with space and with one another reveals itself as an act that requires inventiveness and courage. The collaboration with the Government/Parliament authorities is necessary, but only in a degree that helps the metropolis maintain their individuality and that propels them to maximise the efficiency of their own resources and environmental (natural, social, economic etc.) potential. Moreover, the metropolis plays such an important role, both to its inhabitants and to a particular region, that it is imperative to have a proper administration in order to ensure spatial coherence and prevent disruptions in the system’s fluxes. This is only because the metropolis plays an extremely powerful role that stretches beyond the national territory – it can lead to interregional/global networks of metropolis that can collaborate in order to shape the global society and trigger concrete changes in key issues that the world is facing, such as climate change. Not having to implement changes through third parties, a metropolis can direct its actions straight to its citizens, which makes it an extremely efficient tool in solving pressing issues.

