

Bianca Dumitrescu, *Orașele monoindustriale din România. Între industrializare forțată și declin economic* (One-industry towns in Romania. Between forcible industrialization and economic decline), Editura Universitară, București, 2008, 301 p., 149 fig., 11 tab., bibliogr.

One-industry towns represent a distinct component of the Romanian urban system. Special literature studies in this country have been dealing with individual situations, or with territorial groupings. As a distinctive functional entity, this category of towns has not benefited by a geographical work in any comprehensive approach. And that is precisely what this doctoral paper – *One-industry towns in Romania. Dynamics and perspectives (Orașele monoindustriale din România. Dinamică și perspective)* – intends to do, namely to provide a synthetic picture of their evolution in the 20th and 21st centuries. The topics discussed herein focus on the factors involved in the emergence, dynamics and type of towns specialised in a certain industrial branch, their workforce and economic basis. At the same time, the author tries to envisage solutions for revitalising the one-industry urban ecosystems destructured by the hardships of transition from a centralised economy to the market system.

The volume has a broad interdisciplinary profile, its elaboration relying on the study, analysis and synthesis of a large body of information found in works written by specialists in Geography, History, Economy, Statistics, Territorial Planning and Sociology. In addition, plenty of statistical data, gathered from reliable sources, are also used (the population and housing fund censuses from 1930, 1956, 1966, 1977, 1992 and 2002, statistical yearbooks and settlement records from the 1990–2003 period). Economic data (industrial production, turnover and net profit) were supplied by Romania's Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The theoretical approach presents some viewpoints on a town's function, international and domestic functional classifications and the place of one-industry towns assigned therens. Ideally, these classifications should rely on detailed statistical data, but such data, seldom quantified and published, are usually inaccessible for reasons of time and costs.

In order to make a complex, methodology-based geographical identification of a one-industry town sample (Chapter One), a number of indicators, operational throughout the urban system in 1930, 1966, 1977, 1992 and 2002, are resorted to, e.g. employed population structure by branch, proportion of employed population in one industrial branch/total employed population, value of production and turnover in one industrial branch per town total, index of localisation of industrial activities and index of specialisation per one branch. They will be used to simple out the town sample to be dealt within the next chapters.

The factors which influenced the emergence and dynamics of one-industry towns in Romania are dealt with in Chapter Two. One of the determinant factors is geographical location in relation with the natural environment, which is of greater consequence at local level, and its socio-economic constraints – available raw materials and their use, the state policy in the period of centralised economy, demographic potential, workforce and its qualification, development of communication routes, outlets, and economic milieu.

Assessing the dynamics of this category of towns in the 20th century and in the first years of the 21st century (Chapter Three) implies a brief analysis of urbanisation conditions in Romania, of industrialisation and urbanisation in the communist period and the social and economic framework of the post-1989 December Revolution. Urbanisation was a complex multidimensional and contradictory process, with interactions, constraints and causal determinations. Urbanisation under socialism was closely connected with industrialisation, the result being an industrial-type pattern, with town life gravitating towards industry. Insights into the emergence and development of one-industry towns implies looking at the town's functional dynamics in the post-war period.

The Chapter Four offers a comprehensive picture of the demographic characteristics of one-industry towns, pinpointing on their general demographic and labour potential in space: numerical dynamics of inhabitants and hierarchical urban rank, natural and migratory population movements – key factors of demographic fluctuation and of the population's regeneration potential, complex population structures (age and sex groups), active population dynamics and structure, employment and unemployment, rate of economic dependence, relationship between closure of the main industrial unit or lay-offs therefrom and the unemployment rate.

The economy of one-industry towns in connection with the primary and tertiary sectors is analysed in Chapter Five. Industry will be dealt with at large, while the other sectors will be discussed in terms of their future role in functional diversification. The elements underscoring the negative trend in this sector over the 1990-2002 period are. Current legislation (for the extractive and processing industries); dynamics of employees in the economy in general and in industry, in particular; relationship between employees in one-industry towns and those employed at county level; deindustrialisation; and industrial production and turnover in industry. A general analysis of the technical-urbanistic infrastructure will complete the economic picture. A series of aspects connected with the impact of production units on the environment are be tackled.

Chapter Six makes a comparative approach to one-industry towns in Europe and in Romania based on case-studies from countries with different types of economy: free, neoliberal (Manchester in the UK; Ruhr Basin in Germany; Santa Croce industrial district in Italy); partly planned (the Lorraine Basin) and socialist planned (Silesia Basin).

The last chapter is devoted to the SWOT analysis of development and revigoration chances, it is basically a synthesis of the geographical elements capable to balance the economy and social life of these towns, finding concrete solutions in terms of the measures taken for other urban territorial microsystems in crises (unbalanced) situations. Possible solutions would be to develop the services sector, tourism in particular, to diversify the range of occupations, to declare some zones disadvantaged, to create industrial, scientific and technological parks.

Comparisons between one-industry towns found in this volume offer reliable information to the government, companies, authorities and the inhabitants themselves concerning the problems facing this category of towns, possibly leading to policy changes. The information refer to aspects of economic planning in the 20th-century, and the beginning of the 3rd millennium, infrastructure, short-and-medium-term management options, achievements, and decline in the transition period. The strategies dealing with industrial decline and restructuring ought to be integrated into the communities' own plans.

George Erdeli

Irena Mocanu, *Șomajul din România: Dinamică și diferențieri geografice* (Unemployment in Romania: Dynamics and geographical differences), Editura Universitară, București, 2008, 347 p., ISBN 978-973-749-357-6.

Unemployment is a socioeconomic phenomenon that has occurred in Romania with the onset of the transition period towards a market economy and which has started to gain a strong interest in different academic/research fields. This book is one of the first that approaches this topic from a geographical perspective and together with other works from the economics and social sciences, contributes to investigations of a present-day subject, relevant for decision-making factors. Throughout the book, the author answers a set of essential research questions: What are the main spatial patterns of unemployment? Which are the evolution trends of unemployment within the context of the current economic and social policies? Which are the driving and maintaining factors of unemployment in Romania? A.s.o.

Six chapters structure the book. The first includes concepts, theories and types of unemployment, all of them being connected with issues of labor market functionality in particular and of economy, in general. Aspects of applied methodology, the advantages and disadvantages of the methods, as well as the limits imposed by the statistic data at different territorial levels are completing the theoretical part. The second chapter is a comprehensive study of the labor market in Romania, which particularly analyzes the labor market dynamic, potential, structure, disparities and the relationship between job offer and demand. This analysis is done based on a series of synthetic and specific indicators, and explained within the context of the Romanian economy structure over its various phases and territorial variations, without eluding the black market labour force, which is also a relevant aspect of unemployment. The next two chapters rigorously tackle the spatial analysis of the unemployment phenomena, the author integrating the results within the economic context of Romania. There are identified the representative areas of unemployment, rural and urban, as well as the regional disparities which are viewed on the temporal scale, as well, not only spatially. The cause-effect principle lies at the bottom of the explanations of the resulted patterns, which are subsequently associated with the political and economic decisions taken in each economic phase. The next chapter is connected with the spatial results of the unemployment, being examined from the point of view of governance policies and strategies. It is the labour force occupancy and the social and economic measures implemented in different economic phases with the purpose of supporting the available labour force and/or the layoffs that are primarily discussed. This chapter is not only a plain list of the main characteristics of the policies and programmes referring to the labor force occupancy, but it is a sound and critic examination of the effects of these policies on the distribution and magnitude of the unemployment phenomenon in Romania. The last chapter includes two case-studies which might be taken as examples of analysis of unemployment at large geographical scales. The purpose of this part is to capture the local characteristics, particularly those regarding the economy and labour market, and to analyze them within the specific physical and socioeconomic context, specifically referring to natural resource availability and main demographic characteristics. Subsequently, discussions on the implication of these aspects on favouring the occurrence and increase of the unemployment phenomenon are completing this chapter. The two case-studies, least favored mining zones and the Buzău County, are two representative areas that offer evidence for explaining the mechanisms of occurrence, increase, and where is the case, decrease of unemployment, highlighting its driving forces.

With this book, the author demonstrates the weight of the spatial analyses for the socioeconomic phenomena, in this case the unemployment. As it is mentioned in the book, the study is a complex analysis concerning the territorial aspects of the unemployment. The territorial disparities are explained through the driving forces of the territorial differences, through the connections with the economic evolution patterns, as well as from the point of view of the implications of the governance policies, particularly the social policies, on the spatial differences of the unemployment. Therefore, apart from being a detailed, comprehensive and complex study on unemployment, the book could be an example for the analyses of the socioeconomic phenomena undertaken from a geographic perspective.

Diana Dogaru

Monica Ștefania Dumitrașcu, *Les modifications du paysage dans la Plaine de l'Oltenie*, Ed. Universitară București, 2006, 215 pages, 169 Figs/*Modificări ale peisajului în Câmpia Olteniei*, Editura Academiei Române, 2006 (revised and updated Romanian edition).

This work – *Landscape changes in the Oltenia Plain*, represents the author's Ph.D thesis presented in 2005, and elaborated under the joint supervision of Professors Maria Pătroescu, University of Bucharest (Romania) and Anick Douguédroit, University of Aix-en-Provence (France).

It is a five-chapter study in which two main aspects are being outlined: first, the history of the term geographical landscape and the development of a landscape science in various countries with highlight on renowned schools (German, Russian, Anglo-Saxon, French and American), and second, the state-of the-art in the Oltenia Plain itself. The indicators and methods used led the author to identify, hierarchise and classify the landscape types and assess their current condition. A comprehensive set of climate, cartographic and land use data completes the theoretical and documentary material interpreted by ISG /GIS methods.

Chapter One, *The landscape concept, temporal evolution and geographical schools*, makes an overview of the term 'landscape', conceived and interpreted by Al. von Humboldt in the 18th century, to the present day, from the time the landscape was almost unaltered to its current condition of severe, sometimes irreversible, degradation by human activity.

Beside discussing the foreign schools, the author also recalls the contributions made by Romanian geographers like Simion Mehedinți and George Vâlsan, as well as by the great many researchers of the latter half of the 20th century, among whom Dr. Monica Dumitrașcu herself, whose works have been promoting a Romanian School of Regional Geography of the Environment.

Chapter Two, *Criteria of identifying landscape types in the Oltenia Plain*, reviews several categories of criteria formulated by a number of authors, with the analysis focusing on the ecological potential governed by lithology/substrate, relief, climate, water, vegetation, soil and the socio-human factor. Of special interest are the man-induced changes and the phenomenon of dryness, ever more present over the past few decades in the Oltenia Plain.

Chapter Three, *Environmental changes materialised in landscape dynamics*. The analysis of Specht's and Satmari's maps, of Lambert's and Gauss-Grüger's projections and the satellite images of the year 2000 has led the author to drawing some interesting conclusions.

Chapter Four, *The vulnerability of landscapes*, synthesises the consequences of the changes discussed in the previous chapters, and the complex problems ensuing thereof, with focus on those elements that make landscapes vulnerable, e.g. erosion, floods, saltiness and dryness, and their impact on the current state of landscapes in the Oltenia Plain.

Chapter Five, *The landscapes and sustainable development*, offers a socio-economic projection by proceeding from the present situation in the study-area and the implementation of some regional development programmes in line with the European Convention on Landscapes, Florence 2000 to which Romania is a party since 2002.

These programmes are to define landscape policies and management in the Oltenia Plain.

The topics dealt with in all the chapters of this work place its author, Dr. Monica Dumitrașcu, in the ranks of the Romanian geographers keen on furthering the preoccupations of the School of Environmental Geography.

Petre Gâștescu