

Global Change Atlas. Einzugsgebiet Obere Donau (Global Change Atlas. Upper Danube Drainage Basin), edited by the GLOWA-Danube project (coord. Wolfram Mauser), München, Germany, 2009, 4th edition, ISBN 978-3-00-026548-8.

The *Global Change Atlas. Upper Danube Drainage Basin* was conceived and developed first in 2004, in the framework of the GLOWA-Danube project. The GLOWA-project is a collective project having as a main target the study of regional effects of global change on water resources within some selected basins, in order to define the best options for a sustainable development under these global change conditions.

The GLOWA-Danube project, as a part of the collective one, develops and applies the Global Change integrative decision-support system DANUBIA. The latter one, being a system of coupled models, puts into relation the natural and social processes with the use of river basin water resources. Therefore, it can simulate different environmental aspects (in relation to water) and verify the sustainability of several proposed scenarios. The objective of the GLOWA-Danube project is to identify some sustainable strategies for water use, through the involvement of natural science, engineering and socio-economic disciplines.

The pilot research basin is that of the Upper Danube, which can be regarded as a meso-scale study area. The impact of global changes upon different activity sectors, is investigated in the frame of some partial projects of GLOWA-Danube. Moreover, through the developed Global Change integrative decision-support system DANUBIA, simulations of consequences in the future are conducted, based on supposed scenarios. These simulations offer the possibility to test, as realistically as possible, different decision alternatives developed by decision makers and stakeholders. An additional task of DANUBIA is also the rendering of simulation results in a form which can be valued by the involved stakeholders.

The aim of the presented atlas is to disseminate some sectorial and integrative results of the project and to offer a base of discussion for stakeholders and decision makers. The published form is an open one and therefore it can be permanently improved, completed and extended, in case new scenarios are proposed or new knowledge on future trends becomes available.

The content is structured in three chapters, each including maps produced by the different scientific groups involved in the project and texts explaining the meaning and creation of the represented data.

The first chapter presents the natural and social conditions of the Upper Danube pilot drainage basin, which at the same time constitute the input datasets for the model simulations. The second chapter represents the collection of output maps resulted from the application of the several partial models of DANUBIA. The last part offers a view on the simulation results from various evolution scenarios covering the next tens of years. This chapter is meant to be dynamically developed in the future, as a consequence of discussion processes to take place with decision makers and stakeholders.

The work *Global Change Atlas. Upper Danube Drainage Basin*, unlike a classical atlas, is desired to be a dynamical instrument for supporting further discussion processes.

Marta Jurchescu

Radu Săgeată, *Globalizare culturală și cultură globală. Global și local în geografia culturală* (Cultural globalisation and global culture. Global and local in cultural geography), Editura Universitară, București, 256 p., 32 figs., annex.

The current configuration of the World, its functionality and stability are the outcome of two, seemingly contradictory, but quasi-permanent processes: globalisation and fragmentation. All along history, these two processes took on very different forms and evolved at different rates, with relevant alternations of the aggregation and dissolution of state entities, with periods of global stability and global or regional instability. An increasing process of globalisation, which has been developing over the past few decades, is based on economic, political and cultural considerations. Despite these trends stimulated by transnational economic activities, by transition to a multi-polar world and an American-type cultural expansion, regional or local feelings are getting momentum inside national states, under the general globalisation umbrella. So, the question is whether the global and regional settlement systems are affected by the two contradictory processes, or not? Whether settlements are merely the static support of such processes, or on the contrary, they continue to be the main spatial actors. Looking at the latest evolutions of mankind, one would be tempted to consider that it is globalisation fluxes in themselves, rather than the sites they originate from and are localised in, that focus the scientists' concerns. Such a shift of focus might belittle preoccupations for a concrete study of the effects of globalisation, for an analysis of its impact on the main forms of the anthropisation process represented by the human settlements themselves.

The apparently low interdependence relationship between globalisation and the settlement system is nevertheless a highly topical problem, given that the human communities are the main actors of the globalisation process. It is quite an obsession that multi-national companies are actually the elements most deeply involved in the process of globalisation, but their actions materialise mainly at the level of the populated centres. Many towns, which generate globalising fluxes are the

ones that affect and are affected by the generalised effects of some local actions. It is smaller towns that are more affected by the local milieu than by the global one, with some exceptions due to geographical position and the innovating spirit of the respective urban communities. For example, some small towns do make a remarkable contribution to the intensity of globalising fluxes; it is the case of the so-called world “technopoles”, or towns discharging dominantly academic functions. The information yielded by these centres is the driving-force behind globalisation; besides, it is in these very centres that the means of diffusion and access to information for as many citizens of the Planet as possible are improved and the information society development strategies are being developed.

The great many studies dealing with the process of globalisation have in view the political, socio-economic and cultural aspects of mankind, or of some groups of states. This kind of studies were stimulated by the meetings organised under the aegis of international institutions e.g. the UN, or the World Bank, meetings of the heads of states on sustainable development and environmental issues, and meetings of the heads of developed states (G7, G8). As a matter of fact, there are few studies tackling the significance of globalisation for the Planetary system and for the regional settlement systems. Despite life on Earth being intimately related to the individual dynamics of human settlements, the complex relationships among them and the efficient management of the area they are located in are seldom dealt with. The present study makes an introductory approach, attempting to underpin a few elements that should necessarily become part of globalisation studies in general.

Romania, a country situated in one of Europe’s hot-beds, appears to be a spectator to the ongoing processes of globalisation and fragmentation, more or less indifferent to their potential effects. And yet, both processes, coupled with the idea of security, might be quite beneficial for Romania, provided some specific “filtre-systems”, which take into account its territorial-cultural particularities, are being used. As decentralisation gets momentum, globalisation and fragmentation may have concrete effects on the national settlement system by increasing regional power centres. Decentralisation is not viewed as possible fragmentation, but rather as higher resistance to globalisation, or better said, to its excesses.

However surprising it may seem, under the new conditions of contemporary globalisation, Europe strives to find new internal solidarity links, new ways and means of increasing its spatial cohesion. Europe’s unity of culture and action may stimulate the contribution of the Old Continent to accelerating the process of globalisation in the conditions of maintaining the local and regional specific. Europe’s experience in the cultural-ethnic diversity as source of Continental synergy could be extremely useful for the Planet in finding some solutions to attenuating the toxic effects occurring in the process of globalisation. A knowledge of potentially conflictual states is particularly important both for elaborating macro-scale strategies and modelling urban national, continental and super-continental systems. An urban system lying in a conflict zone will always offer a distorted picture of reality. Some urban centres have an oversized, or on the contrary, an undersized influence in the light of their polarising areas.

The exponential force of globalisation, which some human communities can only temporarily cope with, acquires a variety of penetration forms, and the growing number of relocation centres puts such pressure that any organisation based on local or regional dominance is demolished. In this context, a series of questions obviously arise: Is there any real support for mankind’s progress through globalisation? What are the limits of globalisation, if any? Is not the structure of the globalising fluxes conducive to a hypertrophy of the services and the financial-banking systems, causing an implosion of the society? How much can mankind lose as individual progress is limited by uniformity of options for people’s development? These are but a few questions which the author of this book tries to answer.

Ioan Ianoş