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Book Review of "Planificarea teritoriala integratã a unui sistem montan complex. Microregiunea Bazinul Dornelor" [Integrated Territorial Planning of a Complex Mountain System. Dornelor Basin Microregion], authored by Daniela Antonescu, LUMEN Publishing, 2024

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Abstract: *The book titled "Planificarea teritoriala integrata a unui sistem montan complex. Microregiunea Bazinul Dornelor" [Integrated Territorial Planning of a Complex Mountain System. Dornelor Basin Microregion], published in April 2024, is the latest book by the author, Daniela Antonescu, scientific researcher II at the Mountain Economy Center of the Romanian Academy. With over 25 years of experience in academic research, the author follows the trajectory of the integrated territorial planning and development process in the Dornelor Basin Microregion, providing a complete, relevant and objective picture of the profile of this Romanian mountain area characterized by a special beauty and importance.*

Keywords: *book review; integrated territorial planning; complex mountain system; Dornelor basin microregion; Daniela Antonescu.*

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The book closely analyzes the aspects that characterize the economic and social evolution of the Dornel region, the changes and transformations that have taken place at the level of the 12 component UATs (the municipality of Vatra Dornei, the city of Broşteni and the localities: Cârlibaba, Ciocăneşti, Iacobeni, Dorna Arini, Crucea , Dorna Candrenilor, Coşna, Poiana Stampei, Panaci and Şaru Dornei). The transformations at the level of the Dornelor Basin were accompanied by a series of persistent phenomena, sometimes with increasing tendencies: inequalities, mentalities, traditions, depopulation, aging, multiple crises, etc. The modernization of the area itself was closely related to the development of local institutions and integrated planning decisions, adaptation to new requirements and conditions, which tried to support the new paradigm that eventually led to the emphasis of endogenous factors at the territorial level.

Considered a continuous and sustainable process, integrated territorial planning is based on interdependent elements, of a legislative and institutional nature, establishing new types of relationships between different component UATs, between sectors and fields of activity, between central, local and communities, in order to increase the standard of living and ensure the well-being of the inhabitants of the mountain area. In these conditions, the existing economic and social gaps between the different mountain localities are maintained, and sometimes they are accentuated under the impact of different factors.

Considering the complexity of the analyzed mountain area, the book offers a global picture of the integrated development process, of how inequalities have evolved in the Dornelor Basin micro-region and of the economic convergence process, under the impact of the current cohesion policy and the requirements for resilience and recovery at national and community level.

In support of the scientific approach that was the basis of its elaboration, the book proposes two types of approaches. A first approach aims at the theoretical-methodological aspects, aiming to analyze the entire range of territorial approaches from the perspective of integrated planning at the local level, techniques and models for analyzing the impact of local development strategies, conceptual approaches and critical analyses, opinions and contributions of urban specialists , economists, sociologists, etc., who influenced the evolution of the field. The second way of approach is a practical one, applied to the current realities present in the Dornelor Basin, which take into account the achievement of an integrated territorial cohesion, the reduction of economic and social inequalities at the level of the component mountain localities.

The specific objectives proposed and analyzed are consistent with the trajectory of the logic of the approach, as follows:

• presentation of the main theoretical elements of the integrated territorial planning process, of resilience and influencing factors;

• analysis of the economic and social profile of the BD bio area (demographic, social, cultural, agricultural, education, tourism, etc.);

• SWOT analyzes for each of the fields analyzed in the microregion profile;

• presentation of the main tools to support an integrated territorial planning;

• presentation of territorial planning tools necessary for sustainable development (regional operational programs, specific development strategies, etc.);

• proposing development directions for the integrated sustainable development of BD, in accordance with the requirements resulting from the main programmatic documents.

Throughout the 15 chapters (plus a chapter of conclusions), the book offers the reader, based on an appropriate conceptual-methodological framework, a balanced analysis of the integrated territorial planning process of a mountain area - the Dornelor Basin microregion - and from the perspective of the resilience of the upland areas in the context of a regional convergence in Romania and the European Union.

In the first two chapters, a review is made of the characteristics of the mountainous area in Romania and the theoretical perspectives of integrated territorial planning. The specialized literature is analyzed regarding the role and importance of integrated territorial planning, of cohesion and convergence, of the main theories that tried to provide answers to a general and persistent question: why some areas develop faster than others or why some are areas more resilient than others? The answers to these questions came mainly from regional economic science, which was supported throughout its evolution by other sciences, such as mathematics, statistics, geography, sociology, etc. From the analyzes carried out, it was found that regional theories and policies have experienced important transformations in the last period of time, in their attempt to respond to the new challenges determined by the health and geopolitical crisis. Recently, there have been new approaches to an older concept - that of resilience - which brought into discussion the role that different endogenous factors can support or not the development of a locality in general, and a mountain locality in particular. From this perspective, recent regional policy trends have focused on important factors such as knowledge,

regional networks (clusters), research and innovation, without losing sight of the specificity and differences in development and potential of each area.

The following chapters (3-13) address the main aspects regarding the multi-dimensional state of the Dornelor Basin microregion. Demographic and social, economic aspects, infrastructure, agriculture, the role and importance of the Mountain Product and small farmer associations in the integrated development of the area, tourism, cultural elements and the specificity of each component locality, but also other elements that complete the overall picture are analyzed, of this wonderful mountain area.

Chapter 14 presents the Action Plan for the implementation of the Dornelor Basin Development Strategy, which includes a package of measures and projects necessary to support the communities of the 12 UATs, in order to achieve specific parameters that contribute to a higher standard of living of all the inhabitants of the mountainous area of the Basin. In order to have an integrated development, the necessary support must be provided by all the local authorities involved: local administrations – through the institution of the City Hall and the Local Council, which must guide its institutional development in order to provide complex logistic support necessary for the action plan; local communities – citizens and organizations, the main actors of local development, through attitude and active participation; the business environment – companies and financing institutions, as financial and logistical support (information and modern technologies). An important contribution to this process is also made by the Mountain Economy Center of the Romanian Academy, which, through its scientific, academic and practical research activity, constitutes an important benchmark for the development of the mountain areas in Romania. The local action plan includes the main measures/projects necessary to achieve sustainable development, so that, in the development process, the complexity of SEMT (social-economic-environmental-technological) factors can be continuously assessed through the selected sustainable development indicators (dimensions of sustainability) as relevant for the Dornelor Basin.

The development objectives of the Dornelor Basin bio-area must be consistent with both the possible development alternatives and those existing at the level of the component UATs. Long-term strategies must be evaluated according to the proposed objectives and the results that can be achieved, but also the occurrence of situations that cannot be foreseen, such as the pandemic crisis, the situation generated by the effects of the military crisis, etc.

Finally, a possible integrated, intelligent mountain development strategy is proposed, which takes into account the current conditions and

developments, but also the challenges given by globalization, sustainable development, extreme climate changes, social inclusion, migration, etc.

The methodology used is supported, mainly, by quantitative assessments (primary and derived indicators present in the official statistics of the INS, Eurostat, etc.), applied at the level of the mountain UAT, but also at the national level. Through the applied methods, territorial inequalities at the Basin level are identified.

By combining recent theoretical elements and spatial analysis models/techniques with statistical, legislative and institutional data and information, the book can contribute to a better understanding of the positive and negative aspects that characterize the evolution of a mountain area, its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and restrictions, as well as formulating directions and actions for the next programming period.

The book brings important theoretical and practical clarifications on how an integrated planning process of a complex mountain area proceeds. It also contributes to the process of sustainable development of the analyzed area through the three dimensions that characterize it: social inclusion, economic development and environmental protection. The integration of the three dimensions requires political commitment and the involvement of all stakeholders, who participate in this important process. We must not lose sight of the author's message, which regards territorial planning as a powerful decision-making mechanism that can ensure sustained and integrated economic growth, a social development based on the sustainability of decisions and the involvement of all those for whom the mountain area is a way of life and personal development. The message conveyed by the book refers to the fact that: Mountains are a constant reminder of who we are and what we can be.

Recommendations for the future (possibly a new edition). Deepening the issue of specificity and valuable traditions in the agro-zootechnical economy at the level of farms, small and medium-sized mountain households, with the selection of those with reproducible and sustainable value and some modernization elements that reduce physical effort and improve the state of hygiene at the level of shelters, feed – especially hay and milk and derivatives.

The selection of agricultural resources that can provide a chance for the differentiated capitalization of small and medium-sized mountain households, highlighting the elements of agricultural and complementary development that can contribute to the stability and sustainability of a mountain economic system focused on the quality and added value of agri-food "mountain products" , as the case may be, on complex activity based

especially on renewable local resources, included in a complex and specific mountain system, capable of preventing the phenomena of poverty, depopulation and agricultural abandonment, as a consequence, the food crisis being the most serious of the crises that threaten humanity.

References

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