

or by Central Europe, and that Romanians are a people who have easily accepted and assimilated the influences exerted by one civilization or another.

We salute the editors' decision to publish a book devoted to this topic and we can only recommend that a Romanian translation be also published.



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MIHAI PASCARU

**Habitatul risipit de globalizare:
Impactul psiho-social și rezidențial
al proiectului Roșia Montană**

(The habitat scattered by globalization:
The psycho-social and residential impact
of the Roșia Montană project)
Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2007

ONE AREA of particular scientific interest for Professor Mihai Pascaru of 1 December 1918 University of Alba Iulia are the changes that local communities in the rural space are facing, under the pressures of the contemporary socio-economic factors. The professor has managed to involve in his work many specialists, assistants and university students. Their efforts have resulted in numerous articles, papers and books on sociology, works which greatly enhance our knowledge of the rich and diverse rural space of the Western Carpathians.

The book *Habitatul risipit de globalizare* (The habitat scattered by globalization) draws primarily on results obtained between 2000 and 2005 through field research surveys, which are compared to the findings of some unpublished research studies from the 1970s, undertaken by a

team of researchers from the city of Cluj-Napoca under of leadership of renowned sociologist Ion Aluș.

In his work, the author attempts to identify, on the one hand, the formation of a local mentality development causal chain—as an outcome of the process of transition from communist autarchy towards capitalist globalization—and, on the other, to pay the long due tribute to a lesser known previous research effort. As a matter of fact, although separated by more than three decades of social evolution and by a political regime change, the treatment of local communities by the gold mining interests in the area (the communist state in the past and the private Roșia Montană Gold Corporation in the present), does not look that different.

The Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) project is presented as being a representative example of the globalization processes affecting the contemporary world. In terms of references to current sociological works, the author subscribes to the theories of Martha Van Der Bly, Ulrike Schuerkens and of others who believe that the sociologists of today have to identify the trends in the contemporary globalization processes, in the same way the early pioneers of sociology were called upon to decipher the mechanisms of constructing national societies.

Thus, in the first chapter (“Globalization and Localization—The Case of Roșia Montană”), among other things, Professor Pascaru retains the observations of Ulrike Schuerkens on the issue of the two series of social processes that intertwine to the point of losing their identities. On the one hand, we are facing unifying processes of modernization and globalization, typically of Western origin, and, on the other, we

are seeing local life-conserving tendencies, attempting to preserve the authenticity of specific cultures. The interaction between these processes, argued Schuerkens, leads to various forms of implantation of and adaptation to the modernity of Western culture, to various mixtures and hybrids of modernity and tradition, to various forms of reaction and resistance to the Western model, and even to various forms of dilution and destruction of traditional life.

Among the globalization attitude and the value-driven reference markers, the author finds particular significance in those identified by the Nigerian Law Professor Yusufu Bala Usman who, after a critical analysis of the globalization concept, comes to question the intentions behind it, wondering if it is not just a myth created by those who want to impose their goods and services, their capital investments, and their whole lifestyle on the poor, seeking to gain profit at the expense of the resources and the needs of poor countries and achieve their political, economic and mental subjugation.

“Corna—The Village with No Tomorrow” is the subtitle under which the second chapter presents the opinions of the inhabitants of the two villages at risk of being erased from the map and replaced by a future decantation pond, the villages of Corna and Bunta.

The author assigns generous space to the presentation of the commune of Roșia Montană, a community of 5,000 inhabitants scattered throughout 16 villages, in an area well known for its ancient tradition of mining activities traceable all the way back to the Iron Age. In the course of time, progress was made in the mining process, notably though the employment of gun powder. From one century to another the

quantity of processed gold has increased, being extracted from underground tunnels in the beginning and surface quarries later on.

Roșia Montană Gold Corporation intends not only to exploit the gold deposits in the area, but to do so on a scale unprecedented in Europe; its plan is to develop several open pit mining areas which would not only remove large chunks of the mountain peaks, but would also require the irreversible displacement of the local population. The sociological instrument used by the author to capture some of the effects on the local population is the community matrix. The community matrix is defined by the author as “the unity among the inter-knowledge dimensions, communication and common actions at the community level, out of which emerges the whole of the manifestations and elements of daily life” (p. 75). Professor Pascaru constructs an indicator for the community matrix which follows the three dimensions (knowledge, communication and common action), thus managing to reveal the position and opinion groups within the examined community. In terms of the proposed and described methodological instrumentation, the work brings real benefits for those interested in researching social groups (whether communitarianly integrated or not).

Aside from mining, animal husbandry (especially milk cows) has been and still is an important occupation and source of income for the local inhabitants. For that reason, the author dedicates a whole chapter to the problem of cattle breeding, giving it a suggestive name that loosely translates as “The Globalization and the Milch Cow.” Data acquired during the experiments conducted by the author for the

European project *Eugenia-Observatoire Interrégional de Diagnostic et d'Action Territoriale* (2001–2003) is also used. The experiments were targeted at the understanding of the resources and of the psycho-sociological barriers to cow husbandry in the Roşia Montană–Almaşu Mare–Zlatna microregion. In that sense, the research goes in tandem with similar studies, like that of Dumitru Sandu, whose preoccupations are the “social space of transition” and the types of adaptation to market transition conditions which “precipitate” into entrepreneurial rationality. This section suggests that the psycho-social barriers at work in the area originate in the trust deficit created by the careless treatment the inhabitants (mostly cattle breeders) have been subjected to by the old institutions and by the overall poor support strategy of the authorities.

The most relevant resources are considered to be the motivation of the inhabitants to raise milk production and their perseverance in acquiring continuous knowledge of animal husbandry. The openness towards free markets and productive forms of association, as well as the willingness to contribute to the development of a milk processing facility were considered as additional good resources that could lead to an increase in the number of cows. Among the barriers encountered one can mention the relatively small number of families that wished their children would remain in the villages and continue the traditional animal husbandry activity, the relatively large number of villagers reliant on social financial support, and some opposition to the idea of association; this latter obstacle being typically manifest with those displaying a lack of interest in profit-making out of small farming.

The core of this chapter refers to the results of a qualitative research study undertaken in the Roşia Montană area, back in 2004. The issues of interest were as follows: 1) the level of satisfaction with the number of milk cows in each household; 2) the level of satisfaction with the size and utilization of milk production; 3) the perceived influence of the mining project and its impact on the area, and 4) the prospects of continuing animal husbandry in the new locations after the dislocation of the population.

Anticipating and to some extent accepting the mining development prospects in the area, the inhabitants' views were that “Agriculture in the community would only start once the mining work has ceased; that is when the only sources of income left are animal farming, mushroom picking, forestry and maybe tourism—that is, *never*, in my opinion,” as one of the locals remarked. “As long as the mining activity continues, there will only be problems with cattle breeding, animal farming in general, the environment will keep degrading, and the people that will try to stick around will have little chance of holding on” (p. 125).

In a scientific and authentic manner Mihai Pascaru avoids making value judgments on the object of study, but he manages to provoke the reader to an intriguing thought: to what extent will the traditional Romanian communities manage to survive globalization, and who will we, the members of these communities, be in the post globalization age? Inviting us to ponder upon these questions, the study also offers the reader a fascinating electronic album with 35 pictures of the studied area, as a lingering memento.

The reading of *The Habitat Scattered by Globalization* transposes us, regardless of

our background, into a charmingly simple world which is facing the stress not only of change, but possibly even that of complete dissolution. Nevertheless, his intent is not to turn us into fervent activists, but to supply us with reliable scientific data and provoke us to reflect with lucidity over not only the question on whether the benefits

of globalization outweigh its costs, but over the more subtle one on whether the trade the community of Roşia Montană is considering is worth the *qualitative* loss in their humble but proven way of life.

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