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From industrial to post industrial city.

Case study of Brașov municipality

Summary of thesis

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Key words

Braşov, industrial, post-industrial, socialism, morfo-functional areas, operational conversion, transport network, spatial organization, the center of polarization, urban image, industrial sites, sectors of activity, structure of the population, structures for intergartion, local authorities, urban network, Post-modern logic, internationalization

INTRODUCTION

The motivation for choosing this theme of research lies in the complexity of its issues, it presents the process of transition from an industrial to a postindustrial society, referring to the Romanian cities in general and the city of Braşov as case study.

This paper has some innovative elements of which are to be mentioned: analysis of current processes that have led to the transition of Brasov city from a heavily industrialized city to the postindustrial one, in order to frame as realistic as possible the city, both theoretically and practically in the hierarchy of Romanian urban settlements; another innovative element is represented by the cartographic material for the execution of

which I used modern techniques, working methods and information all of which gives this paper an increased importance especially on a local level but at a national level too.

The inter and trans disciplinary character of this paper is given by the research methods (the analysis on the field in order to know in great detail the aspects of the content elements and to be updated where they are inconsistent) and the use of GIS technology in the spatial analysis required by the geographic research methodology and for the realization of the analytical cartographic material on the Braşov city territory. For the drafting work of this paper I used the principle of the geographic location in order to express the direct connections of the social-economic facts with the physical geographic space and the historic principle which frames and follows the chronological evolution of the analyzed elements.

The main objectives of the thesis start from the decisions regarding the directions that cities chose on their way to development, decisions that the authorities of the two political regimes chose, the totalitarian and the post socialist regime.

The hypotheses that derive from the main theme are:

- the reaction of the city was different during the two political regimes
- the local authorities' power of decision was transferred from a centralized governance system to a more local one;
- the morphological and functional areas of the city have quickly adapted to various historic circumstances;
- the urban structure was strong enough so that it could not be affected by the historical accidents;
- the transport network contributed in an essential way to the development of the city and at its connections to the regional, national and international urban network;
- the city of Braşov has relatively quickly positioned itself on the post industrial coordinates after the fall of the communist regime.

The paper called "*From the industrial to post industrial city. Case study of Braşov municipality*" consists of four chapters.

The first chapter called “*From the industrial to the postindustrial city. Theoretical references*” introduces an analysis of the main theoretic principles which led to the evolution of the city during the two political periods. The analysis was started from the early stages of the Industrial Revolution as a period of which led to the industrialization, then it was made a correlation between this period and the urbanization.

The industrialization constituted the foundation of the modern globalization that allowed to the economic world to have the same objectives and the same general endings. The transition towards an industrial society was gradual, from simple to complex, from primary economic field to the secondary, tertiary and quaternary...for now. The transition from manufacturing to machinery and to mechanized production had as an interface the energetic field (from wood to coal and electricity), the domain of the industrial infrastructure (from units with a large number of employees, specialized on a small number of activities, to a production on a conveyor belt, automated and multiple qualifications which can be changed just by a quick programming. At the same time with this stages, there were some reactions from the society, the migration flows

raised the issue of the abundance of the labour force which the economy and the city were not ready to absorb quick enough. The city had to adjust, to change in order to ensure a life with as few malfunctions as possible.

In this chapter it was presented an analysis of the evolution of the city during the two political regimes, the socialist and the postsocialist ones and the chapter ends with emphasizing of the changes of the role of the cities and their impact within the spatial structure.

The second chapter called „*The role of industry in spatial structure of Braşov municipality*”, emphasizes the undisputed importance that the industry had on the spatial evolution of Braşov. The chronologic analysis of the stages when Braşov municipality had the most important evolutions from the spatial structure point of view, gives a clear image of the path that the city had over the years with an impact over the structure of the population.

The expansion of the urban space can be identified within certain limits over the theoretic models developed in the West, but it still is the result of the socialist projects and as a result there were the industrial platforms, around which „gravitated” the working territory with all that was necessary for

these communities to be integrated in a new space for most of them, limiting the movement outside the territory.

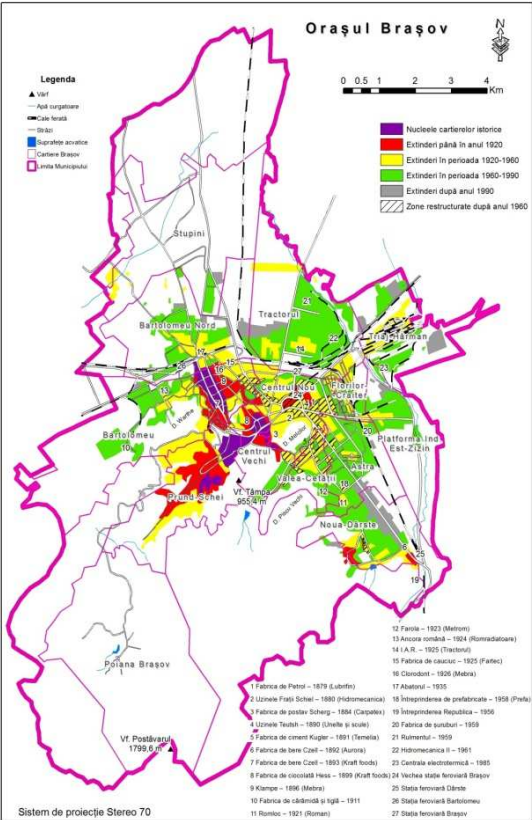


Fig.1. The spatial territorial evolution of Braşov municipaliy
(by A. Niță)

The city had the same pace of the industry, reaching its peak in the 80's when the industry drew new inhabitants, the public transport network reached all the neighborhoods, a tramway route was operational, which reached all the important industrial platforms, new territories with modern units for the working class were built, both at the outskirts and inside of the city.

After the fall of the communist regime and the occurrence of the industrial disaster, that could have been reduced, Braşov municipality was oriented towards a post-industrial city, the attention focused on the inside of the city, the classic functional areas are difficult to identify, the old factories were demolished and thus a re-urbanization of the economic activities occurred and they were moved from the exterior industrial platforms to the inside of the city and the industrial platforms that surrounded the city were demolished and replaced by commercial areas.

The third chapter called „*The role of transport network in relationship with the spatial accesibility degree and their spatial distribution*” emphasizes the importance of transport network for Brasov municipality with reference to the city's integration within the national urban network, to ensure the

necessary connections required for the operation of the city as a node in the national network of the cities and as an attractive pole for the activities that could provide a development and a quick integration in the urban settlements.

Another aspect analysed during this chapter also refers to the spatial integration of the neighborhoods and of the functional areas through transport, the way in which they have transformed and the directions which these areas follow with the help of some aspects that concern urban transport: accessibility, connectivity between different areas of the city, the polarizing role that they have, territorial integration.

It was proven that the relief had an important role for the evolution of the public transport network and thus for the mobility of the citizens and also for the functionality of the city, if at the early stages of the city it had an important role by the fact that it provided a high degree of defence against the armed enemies, during the industrial period the relief became an obstacle for the mobility of the population towards certain areas and also for the selection by the industrial units of a favorable position in the urban space.

The post-decembrist period brought new changes of the public transport network, there were a few cancelled routes

including the tramway one, new lines were opened, the accent was on the improvement of the accessibility of the city, of the mobility of the inhabitants, changes that were made in close relation with the change of the streetscape in order to have as a result the improvement of the traffic flow. Once the changes were made, the urban functional areas were completed.

On the national level, Braşov was only partially interconnected with the rest of the cities, mostly with the eastern and south-eastern ones (where a large number of citizens come from) and less with the rest of the country. At an international level, the city is not linked with other cities, the lack of an international airport is an important factor for the ensurance of the connection with other European cities, which will surely lead to an increase of the development of the city. This drawback is about to be solved when, according to the local authorities, in 2014 the international airport Braşov-Ghimbav will be operational, which will reorganize the ballance on the local market and will offer a high degree of the accessibility of the population both from the Braşov county and from the neighbouring counties.

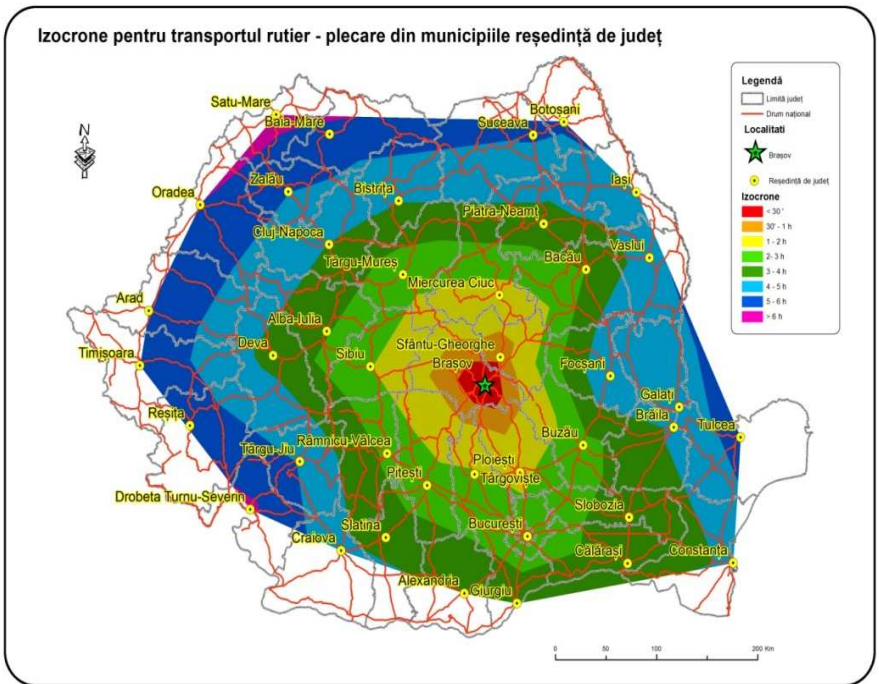


Fig.2. The map of the road accessibility for Brașov municipality in 2013

The fourth chapter called „*The postindustrial evolution of Brașov municipality*” represents the most elaborate analysis of postindustrial city of Brașov in this thesis, analysis which included state institutions, industrial parks, foreign and national

investments and a study of Braşov's image in virtual environment.



Fig.3. Tractorul industrial platform: past – 70's (album Eleonor Bădicu)(left) and present (right).

Very soon after the fall of the communism, Braşov looked for a way to enter the post-modern logic by means of various slogans, modern and brief, to be projected on the exterior level, to be integrated in the national and international urban network in order to become a city connected mostly at the international level rather than at the national one.

As for the image that Braşov wishes to display to the world, the city aims to create an urban image, fortunately the travel image, the collective imaginary, managed to balance the image of the city, deeply industrial, of a „red” city, because

the citizens had different landmarks (The Golden Stag Festival, which offered the city a different glow than the one offered by the Tractorul factory for example).

The thesis also includes tables, maps, charts, photographs and annexes.

Conclusions

The industrialization represented the foundation of modern globalization which allowed the economic world to have the same objectives and the same conclusions. The transition towards an industrial society was gradual, in stages, from simple to complex, from primary sector of economy to secondary one, tertiary and quaternary. The transition from manufacturing to mechanization and to the development of the mechanized production had as an interface the energetic field (from wood to coal and then to electricity), the field of industrial infrastructure (from units with many employees qualified for limited activities, to a production on conveyor belt, automated and multiple qualifications that could have been changed

through a simple set-up. Concurrent with these stages there were some reactions from the public society, the migration flows raised the issue of the workforce abundance which the economy and the city were not ready to absorb quick enough. The city had to adapt, to change so that it had as few issues as possible.

As early as the Feudal period, the city of Braşov was known for its craftsmanship and commercial and cultural centers, at a regional and national level. Its future development maintained the city among one of the most important urban settlements in the country , especially during the post-war period, when the most important changes of urban areas took place.

The expansion of the urban space can be analyzed within certain theoretical models developed in the West but it remains the result of the socialist projects, resulting extended industrial platforms surrounded by the working-class buildings with everything that was needed for these communities to integrate in a new environment for many of its inhabitants, limiting the displacements outside the area.

The city had the development rate of the industry, reaching a maximum in the 80's when the industry drew more people into the city, the routes of the public transport reached

every areas of the city, there was a tramway route that connected the most important industrial platforms, new buildings were raised both on the outskirts and inside of the city. After the fall of the communist regime and the occurrence of the industrial disaster that could have been reduced, Braşov was oriented to a post industrial city, the attention was on the inner city, the classic functional areas could hardly be identified, the old factories were demolished and this way there was a re-urbanization of the economic activities which moved from the industrial platforms to the more central areas and the industrial platforms that bordered the city were demolished and replaced by commercial centers.

Specifics city developed on a Medieval centre well outlined in a natural space that restricted the major human interventions, the building of functional areas placed on the outskirts of the city after the Second World War, with a few modifications during the previous periods , the solidity of the hystoric centre, they all represented the premises that facilitated the adaptation of the city after 90's in order for it to integrate in the progressive frame descibed by the characteristics of the of the post-industrial society:

- the redesccovery of the urban identity by the rehabilitation of the hystoric centre (well individualized and kept in the collective imaginary) and by the revival of the turistic character;
- the advanced integration by the rehabilitation of the public transport network, of the collective areas into an urban construction which diversified the classic rezidential function (the diffusion of the proximity services, the reurbanization of the economic activities);
- the transformation or the relatively easy conversion of the industrial sites into post-industrial activities and commercial services without creating discontinuities of the urban space;

The fact that Braşov lies in the center of the country offers it a strong geostrategic position with a strong impact on the direction, level and intensity of the development and of its connections with other cities which will help it to integrate into the national urban system. It was proven that the relief had an important role on the evolution of the urban public transport network and thus for the mobility of the population as well for

the functionality of the city, if at the early stages of the formation of the settlement it had an important role by offering a high degree of protection against foreign armies, during the industrial period the relief became an obstacle for the mobility of the population to specific areas of the city but also for the location of industry.

During the post-industrial period the city followed a different path, reacting more promptly to the internal needs and of its citizens. The city became more and more opened to the national and international reactions, an important node of the national transport network, the most important city of the Central Development Region. The functional areas changed too, a few separate areas were created: the commercial one, the Civic Center with financial and administrative functions, residential areas (Tractorul, Bartolomeu Nord, Noua. Conversion zones also developed: from agro-zootechnical units to mixed sub-areas, in production and service areas of small and middle-sized units, of communal households or to communal dwellings, from quarries to recreational areas, from industrial and service areas to residential areas. The hypothesis that stated that the city has a major potential for developing real estate projects and shopping centers was confirmed, Brasov has become during this stage a

site of great transformations of urban landscape, on the fields that a few years ago lied industrial platforms there are now real estate buildings and commercial areas.

It can be stated that Braşov is a city in transition, that had many important urban, social, economic changes, that has a major potential for development, with on going projects that focus on the tertiary sector of economy, a relatively stable number of inhabitants, a work force that is qualified for different fields of industry and less for services, with an image of a city based on tourism and recreational activities – sectors that the authorities take into account for creating a brand image but still lacks the urban planning projects of the Civic Center and of the industrial platforms, business and recreational tourism (Poiana Braşov resort is focused on winter activities) and the air transport sector. These premises favored the city to adapt after the 90's in order for it to become a part of the evolutionary trend of the post-industrial society: the recovery of the urban identity by redeveloping the hystoric center, well preserved and anchored in the collective imaginary but also by the revival of the touristic sector; the advanced integration of the residential areas throught the transport network into a integrated urban construction which diversified the classic residential function

(the diffusion of the proximity services, reurbanizing of the economic activities); the relatively easy reconversion of the industrial areas into areas of post-industrial activities and of commercial services without creating discontinuities of the urban space.

These domains are still to be analyzed in the future, representing topics of research for the papers that will focus on Braşov during the post-industrial period and which will demonstrate if all the deficiencies were solved and if the already functional ones proved their importance and utility.

Concluding, it can be stated that, unlike many of the Romanian cities, even compared to some of the cities in Transilvania, Braşov managed after the 1990's a faster reconversion of the urban functions and to better redesign its morpho-functional areas, the city being thus very close to a post-industrial status.

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