

A DECADE OF "ROMANIAN REVIEW ON POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY"

Ten years have passed since the Romanian geographical community enriched with a new scientific periodical, the Romanian Review on Political Geography. It was unusual and daring to have such an idea at that time when Political Geography was vaguely known in the community and confusions with Geopolitics were very often. But the desire to make known the results of their research was higher for those only few really interested in the field of political geography than the difficult conditions of the time.

The idea of producing a scientific review was also meant to resume the tradition of the Romanian geographers to approaching subjects and topics like ethnicity and spatial identification, the nation-state and its frontiers and boundaries or the geopolitical role of Romania within Europe and the Balkans, those who addressed such issues being outstanding names of Romanian science before the second World War: Ion Conea, Simion Mehedinți, Vintilă Mihăilescu, N. Al. Rădulescu, Sabin Manuilă, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru or Anton Golopenția, to name only a few of them. Their work and interest in geopolitics and political geography in the 30's and 40's were brutally interrupted by the imposing of the new political regime in East Europe, regime which has determined a half a century gap in the development of these disciplines. The conditions were not so favorable in Europe also, due to the association between German geopolitics and political geography, but the social and political conditions in Romania were among the most restrictive and the approach to this topic was forbidden. Not only political geography was suffering, but the entire human geography was negatively affected.

Revive interest in this discipline occurred after 1989 with the opening of Romanian society, the period in which first works in political geography have appeared, in individual volumes or in different annals of universities. The interest has been driving by the dynamism of political-territorial and ethno-political transition period in Romania and in Eastern Europe.

The appearance of the Romanian Review on Political Geography noted the concentration of young researchers towards this direction of study but also of researchers with long experience in Romanian geography, who "diverted" a part of their time used for traditional topics towards this new field. Thus, the review had a remarkable impact on Romanian geographers, especially on human geographers, but also on academics whose previous concern was for example, climatology or geomorphology. The review had also a positive impact on students' perception of Political Geography and their interest in this discipline has resulted in changing its status as an academic discipline, at bachelor or master degree, from an optional course to a compulsory one in all major Romanian universities. The review became more cited in the geographical community and even competed by other publications in the field.

Intended as a forum of scientific debate and innovation for Romanian geographers in this long time ignored and banned discipline, the review has drawn also the interest of many researchers from other countries of the world who find a good opportunity to share their scientific experience and results within the pages of this publication, some of them being well-known scholars of the scientific

community. It is worth mentioning that Polish geographers had a very important contribution to the development of the review, common issues in the geography and politics of Poland (the first department of political geography in East Europe was found here) and Romania being often found in its summary.

Passing over the difficulties inherent in the continued publication, the Romanian Review on Political Geography reached its seventeenth volume in its 10-year issue. Quantitative speaking, 176 authors have published 101 scientific materials in the field of electoral systems, processes and behavior, geopolitical approach of the Romanian and European space, cultural identity and spatial behavior, local government and regional policy, international migrations, border dispute and cooperation, political ecology etc. Thirty-seven articles were submitted by 44 contributors from Poland, France, Italy, Canada, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Republic of Moldova. Some issues were dedicated to a specific topic like electoral geography (No. 1/2001), ethnic geography (No. 2/2001 and 2/2005) or traditional geographical regions (“the lands” in No.1 /2007).

The review managed to maintain its scientific orientation and, by contributions of authors exclusively from academic community, to avoid the politicization of the research and will continue to be open to all those interested in exploring the spatial dimension of political processes and phenomena.

The timeliness of publication, the perseverance and initiative of the editorial team, the editorial content and the international diversity of the authors were among its strong points which help it to be included in the panel of the most prestigious scientific reviews within Romanian geography and supervised also by the Commission on Political Geography of the International Geographic Union since 2006. At Romanian standards, the Romanian Review on Political Geography became the leading publication in the field of geography as evaluated and classified by the National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education.

Even though some trends and topics from international political geography had not been covered within RRRPG’ pages, subjects have been diversified during time and new themes were added on specific regional problems to theoretical inquires. We are being constantly concerned with improving the level of contributions and we want to make known the fact that Political Geography evolves in this part of Europe. We will continue to encourage the development of new research directions in Romanian political geography but also to maintain its traditional themes.

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