

## Abstract

The habilitation thesis entitled "New Challenges in Human Geography" presents some of the relevant scientific results obtained after holding the PhD thesis in 2008. The themes presented within the paper are part of the field of individual and team researches and cover a wide range of scientific concerns. On the one hand, it is about the deepening of some topics previously analyzed and in connection with different aspects of the industry, and on the other hand, it is about topics developed many times relying on a series of scientific findings and convictions.

The structure of the paper consists in three parts. The first section refers to the main scientific, professional and academic achievements, concentrated in two directions. The first direction was called *The Geography of Industry and Services*, in this part being synthesized the results obtained in the analysis of the role of the industry over time in the development of human settlements, together with the service activities enhancements, fundamental for the economy of current cities. The creative industries are gradually becoming an important part of the local economy, getting more important because of the globalization influence in different areas, either in the former industrial structures or service ones, or ex-nihilo. At the end of this part, the participation of the industry and services in the national territorial development is highlighted in some case studies, this being considered in relation to the process of metropolization. The second research direction, *Urban Geography. The built urban heritage*, concentrates the results achieved in the urban environment with regard to the analysis of the built heritage as a whole, but also of the technical and industrial heritage that plays an essential role today in preserving the territorial identity. The built urban heritage has different trends, challenges and threats. Nowadays, many actions for the preservation and valorization of the heritage are taken into account in the spatial and socio-economic restructuring policies and measures, the examples of good practice being an advantage in shaping new projects for recovery important sites for the history and the identity of local communities. The technical and industrial heritage is analyzed from the perspective of preservation, valorization by reconversion and its revitalization. It can participate in the partial or complete economic restructuring process of some areas thanks to new activities in the field of tourism and creative industries, together with those that have already shaped the economic life of these areas. Last but not least, this second research direction also refers to the study of how to intervene during crisis phase and other situations of emergency resulted of the economic transformations produced over the time and areas that have an impact on the socio-economic life of the settlements.

Starting from the reanalysis of the basic concepts in the context of their application at the level of the studied areas, some models of evolution and development strategies are elaborated by correlating different geographic phenomena and processes with the reality of the moment, based on a complex systemic analysis that allows shaping the modeling trends of territories evolution.

In the second section of the habilitation thesis are described the directions of development in didactic and research career, which, in fact, represent a continuation of the research of some older and newer topics of interest, but also the deepening of some present scientific preoccupations connected to the territorial dynamics. These will be developed in the future scientific researches and PhD studies and will be oriented towards the theoretical relationship with the applicative purpose, important for the

establishment of new research hypotheses on multiple plans. The directions of development aim at: the settlements smart approach and, more specifically, extending the analysis and application of the principles underlying this concept to the rural settlements, taking into account the importance of increasing the quality of life in rural communities; the built heritage approach from the perspective of urban regeneration as a complex process involving a multitude of interconnected aspects that all relate to economic and social development together with an optimization of local resources utilization and cultural heritage conservation; in the urban regeneration process, the analyzes will focus on identifying solutions for the economic functionality through functional reconversions tailored to the assets of the territories and aiming at reducing disparities found inside these; the systemic approach within the territorial entities, analyzed on first hand from the point of view of the relations between their components and, on the other hand, with the external environment whose good functioning contributes to the support of local development; the sustainable approach of the territories, linked to the smart and systemic approaches, will rely on the respect of the principles of economic management of natural and human resources.

The last section of the habilitation thesis, the third one, contains the list of references for the previous sections and regroups books, but also numerous indexed ISI Web of Knowledge and in other international databases articles published in national and international renowned journals in the field.