THE ENDOGENOUS AND EXOGENOUS PERCEPTION OF BUCHAREST CITY. A CONNECTING ELEMENT IN THE RURAL-URBAN RELATIONSHIP

DANIELA STOIAN[*], DANIEL PEPTENATU,
CRISTIAN DRĂGHICI, ANDREI SCHVAB

Seen from a geographical point of view, this paper outlines the importance of urban perception from both an endogenous as well as an exogenous perspective not only for the strictly administrative area of the city, but also in terms of exceeding those limits to the rural area. The authors chose as a case study a complex city with a manifold population and a diversified and mosaic structure, in the same time the most important economical, political, administrative, social, cultural and educational pole in Romania, namely Bucharest. Therefore, at constant periods, respectively 2006, 2008 and 2010 the urban image could be analyzed at different scales of spatial and temporal levels, with a clear outside and inside perspective, using observation and survey approach. Considering the rich data collected in the three year period, we focus in this paper on the overall image of the city, while making at the same time reference to the importance of the perception in the rural-urban context.

Key words: *urban perception, urban image, rural-urban interface, Bucharest.*

Introduction

The present paper deals in an original way with already known and intensely debated concepts, but without being discussed as elements based on a subtle interdependence. The *urban perception* is a commonly used tool in behavioral geography, whose foundations were laid in the early 60ˢ of the XX century. Behavioral geography is a branch of the socio-urban geography, analyzing mainly the decision making effects of each individual or human group in relation to the environment. In other words, this branch deals with active mental processing of knowing and understanding the close-by space. (Downs, R. and Stea, D., 1977) In time, the perception, hidden under the term of "urban image", has become increasingly interesting for the spatial analysis, the apogee being reached by Kevin Lynch (1960) and the team of researchers P. Gould/R. White (1974), whose contribution can be seen in the development of mental maps in

---
[*] University of Bucharest, Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics, Bucharest, Romania, d_stoian@yahoo.com

geography. For a better understanding of this concept and its importance in the context of regional development, perception should be emphasized, as it will be understood in this paper as the capacity of filtering the information received out of the environment (see *Fig. 1, right*) (Werlen, B., 2000), or as the relationship between the objective reality and the imaginary world influenced by inner elements (emotion, knowledge, interests, etc.) and external stimuli of each individual[1] (see *Fig. 1, left*). (Stoian, D., 2011)

As an instrument of urban image and identity development, the urban environment perception is based on three different scales:

1. information field (extending from the environment in which an individual lives up to that in which he gained information indirectly – through media, books, other people),
2. contact field (core of the informational field, environment directly perceived by the individual), and
3. interaction field (the environment in which individuals come into contact by phone, letter, being mainly a reciprocal relationship) (Werlen, B., 2000).
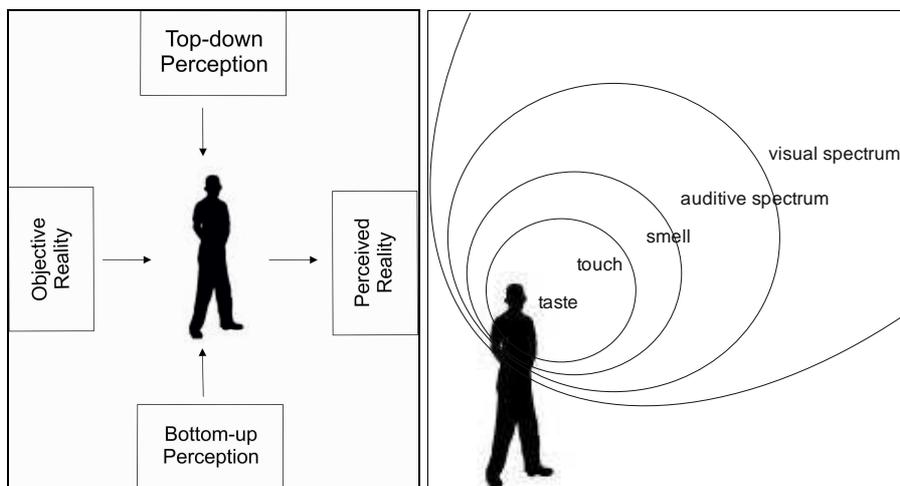
Fig. 1. Construction of urban image (left) (*Source:* Stoian, 2011); Environmental perception (right) (*Source:* after Werlen, B., 2000)

---

[1]   In the social perception (but also in psychology, where the subject is analyzed out of the neuropsychological point of view) two key processes are taking place in shaping perception, respectively the top-down (indirect) and bottom-up (direct) perception. The first deals with the interpretation of the information and knowledge already accumulated by that time, while the second processes information gathered through the senses transmitted to the brain.

Ianoş (2004) develops in his study *"Dinamica urbană. Aplicaţii la oraşul şi sistemul urban românesc"*[2] the interaction between the objective reality of the city and the actors that processes the information, dividing them in two categories: direct observers (individuals who live and have they daily activities in the city), and indirect observers (those who form an indirect image of the place through the information received from media or third parties).

The image composed through direct and indirect perception represents finally an important component in the qualitative analysis of the living space and the relation between the city and the immediate peripheral regions, but also in stimulating branding and marketing activities. Therefore, in the first case the focus is set on the external quality resulting in a negative, positive or neutral image, having as a further result urban topofilia, topofobe or topoindiferent reaction (Ianoş, I., 2004), while in the second case the economic, social, cultural and political-administrative perception is highlighted.

An analysis of the urban image can't be strictly defined in the administrative limits of the city.

The influence exercised on the suburban area and also the urban – suburban mutual dependence, contribute as well at the topofile and topofobe processes. The same suburban space, defined by Iordan (1973) as the "area around an urban center having a close connection to it", known in the German literature as "Hintergrund" or "Umland" (Hofmeister, B., 1994), was lately confused with the term of "interface", a fix or variable area that constitute a bond between rural and urban space. In 1997 Siverstone, R. (quoted by Johnston, R. J. *et all.*, 2005), noticed that the suburban area represented "the attempt to marry town and country" exactly what is intended by the phrase **"rural – urban interface"**. Due to the evolution of human society, the suburban area in developed countries is no longer the main source of supply for the urban population. Its function changed into one of absorption of the urban inhabitants. Therefore it is important to extend the analysis upon the urban perception to the bordering area, being finally an important element of connection by sending information, opinion, feelings, etc. from the urban to the rural area. In other words, the positive or negative urban image can provide advantages and disadvantages in relation to the environment, a theoretical influence which may be seen as waves, where an urban pole plays the role of a central point.

Materials and Methods

To be able to determine the urban image and the way in which Bucharest city is perceived, a well known method in sociology and social geography has been used, respectively the questionnaire. The long-term study took into

---

[2] Engl.: *Urban dynamics. Appliance at Romanian cities and urban systems.*

consideration several analyzed factors and varied scales of time and space. First of all the study was divided in three single periods of time, at constant phases: 2006, 2008 and 2010. Queries have been taken at different spatial scales: at urban level, at district level, at micro-regional and at public square level. Along with these aspects the responders had been classified according to their age group, educational level, marital status or place of origin. The investigation of the overall image of Bucharest was embedded in a complex series of open and closed questions, designed to verify and to extend the general and particular aspects of the perception. Thus, the research has been enriched with matters about housing preference within the city, main factors that contributed to the urban image formation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction elements in regard to the resident district and Bucharest as a hole, attractiveness and unattractiveness of the central public squares and the reason for their attendance, and so on. To increase the level of objectivity, some elements have been studied out of two perspectives: the endogenous (through the responses of the residents of Bucharest) and exogenous (from the perspective of individuals living outside the city). In the three years, data were collected to a cumulative total of 1156 eligible questionnaires, 180 in 2006, 574 in 2008 and 405 for the year 2010 (see *Table 1*). If in 2006 the research had been focused on collecting information about the urban image within the city area and at district level with an accentuated view on the exogenous and endogenous opinion, in 2008 a thoroughgoing study searched for answers at micro-regional level. Because of the morphological and structural aspects 28 areas had been selected in the capital city as follows:

1. Splaiul Independenţei – M. Kogălniceanu Blvd. – Regina Maria Blvd. – Universităţii Square – Carol I Blvd. – Mântuleasa Str. – Corneliu Coposu Str.
2. Calea Plevnei – V. Pârvan Str. – M. Kogălniceanu Blvd. – Regina Elisabeta Blvd. – Lascăr Str. – Ştefan cel Mare Ave. – Lascăr Catargiu Blvd. – Dacia Blvd. – Mircea Vulcănescu Str. – Dincu Golescu Str. – Witing Str.
3. V. Lascăr Str. – Dacia Blvd. – Calea Moşilor – Mihai Bravu Ave. – Calea Călăraşi – Mântuleasa Str. – Carol I Blvd.
4. Calea Călăraşi – Mihai Bravu Ave. – Baba Novac Str. – Câmpia Libertăţii Str. – Liviu Rebreanu Str. – Râmnicu Sărat Blvd. – Râmnicu Vâlcea Blvd. – Calea Vitan – Lucian Blaga Str. – Unirii Blvd. – Dimitrie Cantemir Blvd. – Corneliu Coposu Str.
5. Dimitrie Cantemir Blvd. – Mărăşeşti Str. – Mircea Vodă Str. – Splaiul Unirii – Plugarilor Str. – Calea Văcăreşti – Tineretului Blvd. – Calea Şerban Vodă

6. Dimitrie Cantemir Blvd. – Calea Şerban Vodă – Mărăşeşti
   Str. – Istrati Str. – Gazelei Str. – George Coşbuc Blvd. – Libertăţii
   Blvd. – Splaiul Independenţei

7. Libertăţii Blvd. – George Coşbuc Blvd. – Gazelei Str. – Fabrica de
   Chibrituri Str. – Spătarul Preda Str. – Progresului Str. – Calea
   Rahovei – Petre Ispirescu Str. – Drumul Sării Blvd. – Geniului
   Blvd. – Splaiul Independenţei

8. Mircea Vulcănescu Str. – Dacia Blvd. – Lascăr Catargiu Blvd. – Ion
   Mihalache Blvd. – Ion Mincu Str. – Aviatorilor Blvd. – Constantin
   Prezan Blvd. – Mărăşti Blvd. – Expoziţiei Blvd. – Aviator Popişteanu
   Str. – Clăbucet Str. – Calea Griviţei – Orhideelor Ave. – Calea
   Plevnei – Witing Str. – Dincu Golescu Blvd.

9. V. Lascăr Str. – Dacia Blvd. – Calea Moşilor – Colentina Ave. – Plumbuita
   Str. – Râul Colentinei Str. – Şipca Str. – Barbu Văcărescu Str. – Circului
   Alee. – Ştefan cel Mare Ave.

10. Colentina Ave. – Gherghiţei Str. – M. Dracea Str. – Vasile Predescu
    Str. – Dragonul Roşu Str. – Doamna Ghica Str. – Pantelimon
    Ave. – Iancului Ave.

11. Mihai Bravu Ave. – Iancului Ave. – Pantelimon Ave. – Doamna
    Ghica Str. – V. Lascăr Str. – Vergului Ave. – Basarabia Blvd.

12. Camil Ressu Blvd. – Liviu Rebreanu Str. – Lotrioarei Str. – Lunca
    Mureşului Str. – Liviu Rebreanu Str. – Nicolae Grigorescu
    Blvd. – Constantin Brâncuşi Str. – Baba Novac Str. – Mihai Bravu
    Ave. – Basarabia Blvd. – 1 Decembrie 1918 Blvd. – Postăvarului Str.

13. Octavian Goga Str. – Calea Vitan – Fizicienilor Str. – Camil Ressu
    Str. – Nicolae Grigorescu Str.

14. Olteniţei Ave. – Urcuşului Str. – Pridvorului Str. – Calea Văcăreşti – Izvorul
    Rece Str. – Drumul Găzarului – Sergent Niţu Vasile Str. – Giurgiului Ave.

15. Progresului Str. – Constantin Istrati Str. – Cuţitul de Argint Str. – Calea
    Şerban Vodă – Pieptănari Blvd. – Bachus Str. – Cârlibaba Str. – Amurgului
    Str. – Alexandria Ave. – Antiaeriană Str. – Calea 13 Septembrie

16. Drumul Găzarului – Emil Racoviţă Str. – Turnu Măgurele Str. – Pogoanelor
    Str. – Acţiunii Str. – Giurgiului Ave.

17. Emil Racoviţă Str. – Turnu Măgurele Str. – Drumul Jilavei – Adierii
    Str. – Drumul Cheile Turzii – Olteniţei Ave. – Stolnici Str. – Săvineşti
    Str. – Lunca Bârzeşti Str. – Olteniţei Av. – Niţu Vasile Str.

18. Alexandriei Ave. – Amurgului Str. – Cârlibaba Str. – Bachus Str. – Pieptănari
    Blvd. – Giurgiului Ave.

19. Aviatorilor Blvd. – Mircea Eliade Blvd. – Calea Floreasca – Gh.
    Tiţeica Str. – Barbu Văcărescu Ave. – Circului Alee – Ştefan cel
    Mare Ave.

20. Pantelimon Ave. – Vergului Str. – Morarilor Str.

21. Pallady Str. – Nicolae Grigorescu Str. – Drumul Lunca Cetăţii – Drumul Lunca Bisericii
22. Prelungirea Ghencea – Condorului Str. – Drumul Cooperativei – Nandru Str. – Bulgăraş Str. – Valea Oltului Str. – Valea Ialomiţei Str. – Drumul Taberei – Sibiului Str. – Cara Anghel Str.
23. Drumul Taberei – Valea Ialomiţei Str. – Valea Oltului Str. – Timişoara Blvd. – Valea Cascadelor Str. – Iuliu Maniu Blvd. – Geniului Blvd. – Drumul Sării – Ghencea Blvd.
24. Iuliu Maniu Blvd. – Piscul Crăsani Str. – Lacul Morii Str. – Virtuţii Ave. – Arieşu Mare Str. – Baia de Arieş Str. – Lacul Morii Str. – Splaiul Independenţei – Cotroceni Blvd.
25. Splaiul Independenţei – Virtuţii Ave. – Calea Crângaşi – Calea Giuleşti – Orhideelor Ave.
26. Calea Crângaşi – Lămâiului Ave. – Fiordului Str. – Chitila Triaj Str.
27. Turda Str. – Mareşal Averescu Str. – Mărăşti Str. – Bucureşti-Ploieşti Ave. – Ion Ionescu de la Brad Str. – Gh. Ionescu Şiseşti Str. – Bucureştii Noi Ave. – Griviţei Str.
28. Pipera Ave. – Nordului Ave. – Elena Văcărescu Str. – Gârlei Str. – Madrigalului Str. – Gheorghe Ionescu Ave. – Sileşti Str. – Jandarmeriei Str. – Bucureşti-Ploieşti Ave. – Aerogării Blvd. – Berca Str. – Avionului Str.

In this presentation we will focus only on the overall perception of Bucharest city, analyzed for the three years, exemplifying the perception deviations at local and regional level, following the structure below:

1. Overall image of Bucharest city and the determining factor in shaping it.

   a. Overall perception from the inner perspective (2006, 2008)
   b. Overall perception from the outer perspective (2006)

2. Urban image at district level.

   a. Perception of districts from the inner perspective (2006)
   b. Perception of districts from the outer perspective (2006)
   c. Housing preference (2006, 2008)

3. Urban endogenous image at micro-regional level (2008).

Table 1

**Questionnaire centralization for the years 2006, 2008 and 2010**

	Total no. of questionnaires	Inhabitants	Non-inhabitants			Educational level			Age group			
			Wallachia and Oltenia	Transylvania	Moldova and Dobruja	primary studies	secondary education	higher education	≤ 30	31-45	46-59	≥ 60
2006	180	124	18	22	16	29	49	46	41	29	30	24
2008	574	574	0	0	0				234	159	105	76
2010	402	402	0	0	0	40	143	219	175	127	49	51
TOTAL	1156	1100	18	22	16	69	192	265	450	315	184	151

Results and Discussion

Bucharest has faced important changes in the urban structure and morphology during its history, visible present today in the mosaic appearance of the city. Especially the brutal intervention of the socialism era led to significant functional and aesthetic disruptions, a heritage whose negative effects are felt even after 20 years after the regime change. However, Bucharest remains a major pole of attraction at national level being its primer political, administrative, educational, cultural, social and economic function. The city has been shaken in the recent years and the drastic changes transformed a predominantly industrial city to one in which the service branch dominates all other activates. The effects of the recent changes are visible at both direct and indirect level of perception. In the first category we are talking about those changes easy to be observed in the environment such as the new skyscraper built without an actual urban planning that doesn't match with the surrounding building line, the overcrowded traffic due to a rising number of cars staying in direct opposition to a city unable to meet the housing needs for parking spaces and infrastructure. As a secondary

category one should mention those unnoticeable items, as for example noise or gas emissions. (Peptenatu, D. *et all.*, 2010)

    Given the complexity of the perceptive sensations and the theoretical foundation of the urban image, in recent years an attempt had been made in understanding and exemplifying of those. A first effort in determining the urban image of Bucharest revealed the fact that the overall perception tends to a rather negative opinion of both its inhabitants as well as of its visitors. (see *Fig. 2*) More exactly, 50% out of the 180 opinions for the year 2006, considered the urban image of the city acceptable; while around 25% considered the same image unacceptable and only ¼ of the respondents had a good or a very good view on Bucharest. However no major deviations had been registered between exogenous and endogenous perception differences.
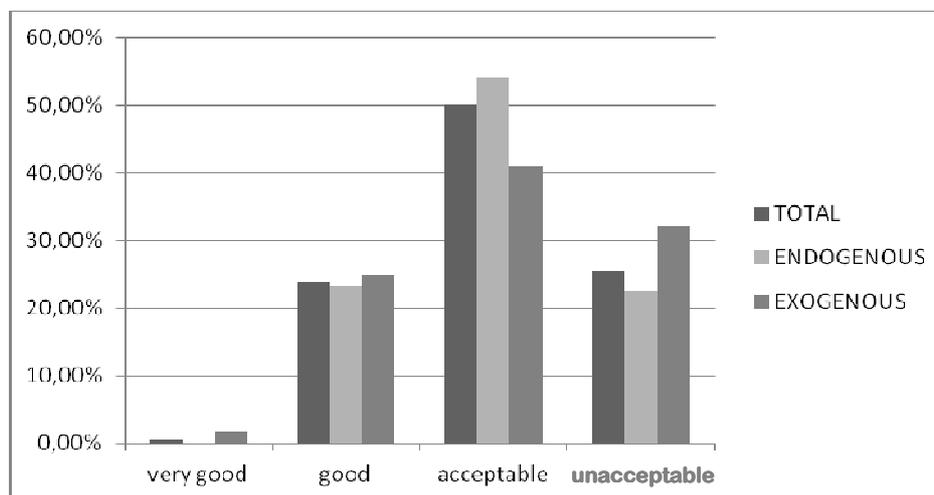
Fig. 2. Exogenous and endogenous image of Bucharest city, 2006

    Among the main factors which determined the formation of the overall positive image stood the physiognomy and the general economic condition of the city should be mentioned, meanwhile the general state of cleanliness and infrastructure were the main factors in building a negative perception of Bucharest.

    In 2008 a slight change is to be noticed, so that over 43% of the respondents consider the capital city having a good or a very good image, while the remaining 57% tend to agree Bucharest having an acceptable or an unacceptable image. (see *Fig. 3*)

    The main factor of dissatisfaction remains the overall state of cleanliness and the infrastructure. A much lower share in forming an acceptable or an unacceptable image had the city physiognomy, the economic situation and particularly the high price of various life aspects, the size of the city or issues

concerning the public safety. A good and a very good view are due to the physiognomy and surprisingly because of the state of cleanliness and infrastructure. An important fact in this case is the economic situation underpinning the job opportunities.
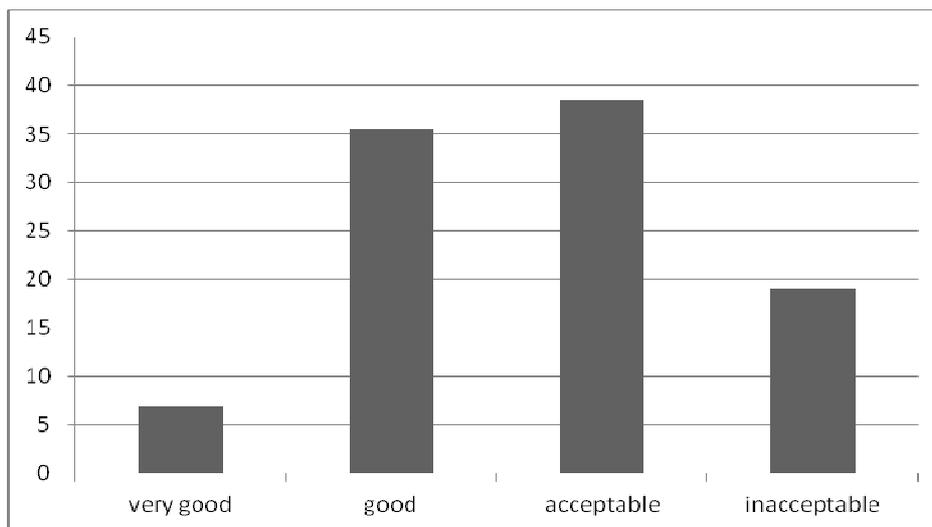

Fig. 3. The urban image of Bucharest – endogenous perspective, 2008

The analysis of contentment and satisfaction at district and subdistrict level shows for both years, 2006 and 2008 similar maximum and minimum values. Negatively percived from inside as well as from outside there are districts like: Ferentari, Rahova, Berceni, Griviţa, Giuleşti and Crângaşi. On the opposite side one could remark the districts of Primăverii, Drumul Taberei, 1 Mai and Vitan. In most cases it is easy to identify some similarites between the disreputed and the appreciated districts and the long term history of the same areas. Where the Rahova and Ferentari districts are to be found there lived even since the middle age a population belonging to the lower level of society (Giurescu, C. I., 2009). In the same aspect, the Primăverii and Floreasca districts got their fame in the first half of the nineteenth century. (*Magazin Istoric*, 2005)

Considering the neighborhoods with low attractivity in living and leaving aside the differences in the number of quastionaires for the two study years 2006 and 2008 it is to be noticed a partial overlapping of oppinion (see *Fig. 4* and *Fig. 5*). Ferentari is keeping its first position in the both analyzed years[3], followed up close by the Pantelimon-Salaj district (especially for 2008) and Berceni (especially in 2006). The fragmentation of the residential areas and the

---

[3] Data from endogenous and exogenous view were taken into account.

higher number of respondents within the study of 2008 reveals some more repellent neighborhoods, especially in the central part of the city.
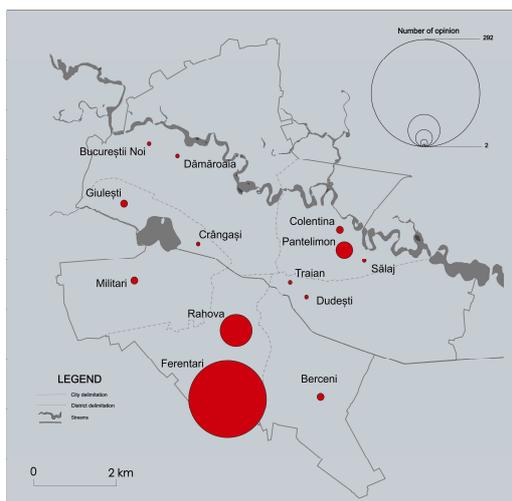
Fig. 4. Neighborhood with low
attractiveness in living, 2006
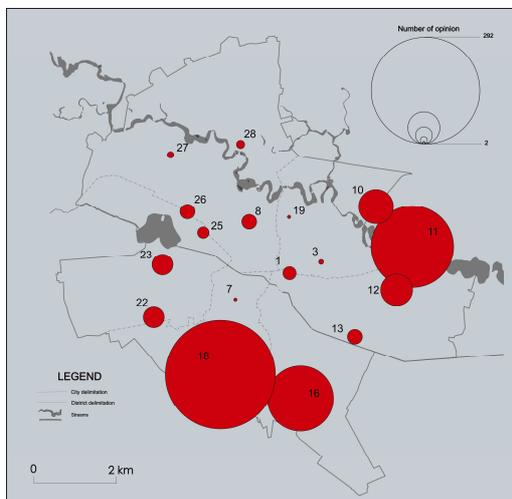
Fig. 5. Areas with low attractiveness
in living, 2008

By analyzing the urban perception, the research reaches its maximum valence in understanding the housing options, the migratory flow and the quality of life and living. This illustrates that not only the economic and demographic

statistical data are of importance in geographical determining but also the study
of public opinion can prove to be an important factor in the territorial dynamic.

Aknowledgments

REFERENCES

DOWNS, R., STEA, D. (1977), *Maps in Minds: Reflections on Cognitive Mapping*, Harper and
Row, New York.
LYNCH, K. (1960), *The Image of the City*, M.I.T. Press & Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
GOULD, P., WHITE, R. (1974), *Mental Maps*, Penguin Books, New York.
WERLEN, B. (2000), *Sozialgeographie*, Verlag Paul Haupt, Bern, Stuttgart, Wien.
STOIAN, D. (2011), "Structura şi dinamica spaţiului public deschis. Proiecţia acestora în peisajul
urban din Bucureşti", *Teză de Doctorat*, manuscris.
IANOŞ, I. (2004), *Dinamică urbană. Aplicaţii la oraşul şi sistemul urban românesc*, Editura
Tehnică, Bucureşti.
PEPTENATU, D., PINTILII, R., DRĂGHICI, C., STOIAN, D. (2010), "Environmental Pollution
in Functionally Restructed Urban Areas: Case Study – The City of Bucharest", în *Iran
Journal of Environmental Health Science and Engineering*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 87-96.
IORDAN, I., (1973), *Zona periurbană a Bucureştilor*, Editura Academiei RSR, Bucureşti.
HOFMEISTER, B. (1994), *Stadtgeographie*, Westermann, Braunschweig.
JOHNSTONE, R. J., GREGORY, D., PRATT, G., WATTS, M. (2005), *The Dictionary of Human
Geography*, Blackwell Publishing.
GIURESCU, G. C, (2009), *Istoria bucureştilor*, ediţia a II-a, Editura Vremea, Bucureşti.
*** *Magazin Istoric* (2005), "Luna Bucureştilor" 9 Mai-9 Iunie, număr special editat de Fundaţia
Culturală Magazin Istoric şi Primăria Municipiului Bucureşti.