The Urban Systems in the Age of Globalization
Geographical Studies with focus on Romania

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The collapse of the communist political system and of the bipolar world order has created the premises of generalized economic, political-ideological or cultural globalizing connextions, a phenomenon associated with the proliferations of the increasingly more powerful transnational companies and supra-national organizations.

Instead of the assertion of national states, characteristic of the early 20th century, what we are witnessing now is the emergence of a denationalization trend, the establishment of a system of global governance, capable to sustain and redefine the power of states, and of a global interdependent system very vulnerable to resources, technologies, as well as ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. The development of transnational companies and organizations has eroded the distinctions between domestic and foreign business, between local and regional economies, on the one hand, and the global economy, on the other, a situation favouring multilateral negotiations regarding the processes of integration. Moreover, the multilateral connextions among economic, cultural and political globalization reduced the state's political power and control instruments.

Against this background, the proliferation of regional, international and transnational actors, of government and non-government organizations and institutions has increased the number and volume of global interactions of permeability and at the same time diminished the state's capacity to produce the political tools capable to maintain a good management of globalizing fluxes. As a result, towns have actually become cores of polarization of these fluxes. On the other hand, globalizing fluxes bring about complex changes in the urban structure and in physiognomy as well, that is greater ethnical and social diversity which results in the segregations of the urban space – of its texture and the quality of the built-up stock, also of services, and of the cultural landscape, ending up in the creation of cosmopolitan cities.

From a cultural viewpoint, the boundary between heterogeneity imposed by the autochthonous substrate and cultural heterogeneity, which is the outcome of globalizing fluxes, is one of the most controversial issues in interpreting the ever more frequent cultural interactions. At the same time, the tendency of autochthonous traditional elements to enter the globalizing stream is ever so obvious. Thus, the argument of heterogeneity is increasingly opposing the globalizing stream, cultural identities inducing indigenizing currents that stand up against the globalizing stream. Indigenizing currents are the arbiter of the rural, of the traditional and of autarchy, while the globalizing stream represents the urban and especially the cosmopolitan city.

The book attempts to explore the complexity of these interactions in Romania, also pointing out convergences and complementarities with similar phenomena manifest elsewhere in Europe, as well as particularities induced by the autochthonous elements specific to this country.