

The territorial evolution of Piatra-Neamț urban space in the context of geographical and historical premises

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ABSTRACT: The study approaches the problematic of the urban territorial evolution of Piatra-Neamț regarding the geographic and historical factors. The objective of the study was to identify and to analyze the evolution stages of this city from its very beginning, 2000 years ago. There was established as a reference point the morphology of the territory with the altitude levels and the communist regime period analyzing the stages of evolution before, during and after this political regime. The extending of the territory was analyzed according to three altitude levels that define the morphology of the territory. The territorial evolution presents oscillations and constraints induced by the morphological factors, and by the political regime. The result is a detailed study of the territory extending and a relevant cartographic representation consisting in the territorial evolution map of Piatra-Neamț city.

KEY WORDS: territorial evolution, morphology, communism, Piatra-Neamț, urban extending

1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to analyse the evolution of Piatra-Neamț urban territory and to realize the territorial evolution map. We took as reference a geographical factor: the morphology of the territory, and a historical factor: the communist regime administration, because there was no previous study focused on the territorial evolution of Piatra-Neamț city.

In order to achieve this goal we analysed the territorial evolution of this space since the ancient period of the settlement, 2000 years ago (A. Andea et. all, 2010) until 1945. We analysed the territory evolution of Piatra-Neamț in the communist period and after the communist period until present. The main result consists in the territorial evolution map, which is a relevant support for future geographic studies regarding this area.

2. Materials and methods

The study was realised especially by bibliographical research and by the research done during the field trip (May 2014). Relevant for this theme was the study of Ungureanu (1980) regarding the territorial and economic evolution of Piatra-Neamț city, and also the *Romanian History* vol. IV (Andea et al., 2010) consulted in order to achieve the geographical and the historical premises for the urban evolution of Piatra-Neamț. The urban general plan of the city (2006, revised in 2010) was used to reveal the actual planning of the city and the functionality of the areas. We consulted and analysed topographic maps: 1:25.000 scale, satellite images 1:5000 scale and a map of Piatra-Neamț city from 1929, 1:25.000 scale (Urbanism Direction of Piatra-Neamț city) and we used digital cartography (GIS software) in order to realise elevation map and territorial evolution map. Territorial evolution map was realised based on the information achieved from the old documents and studies such as: the *Monographic History of Piatra-Neamț city* (Verșescu, 1971), *Neamț County a hundred years ago* (Matasă, 1935) and based on the old map consulted (1929).

3.3. Results and discussion

Piatra-Neamț city has three altitude levels:

- 450 metres average altitude, the most extended, including the urbanized area, this is an overlay to Bistrita valley and Subcarpathian area and represents 59% from the entire surface of the city.
- level with altitudes between 450-650 meters characterises the mountain area and it is occupied by the forests, this has an extension of 30% from the surface of the territory.
- the last level has 11% and it is represented by the altitudes over 650 meters, the tops of the hills and the plateaux.

The localisation of Piatra-Neamț city, at the contact between two distinct morphological units and one river confluence determines specific characteristics regarding geological, geomorphological, climatic, hydrographical and bio-geographical factors such as: landslides which constraint the territorial extending and land use, thermic inversions in all seasons, high fragmentation of the territory, various ecosystems, etc.

The evolution map of Piatra-Neamț city (Fig. 2) was elaborated confronting the collected data and information from the bibliographic sources such as the monographic study of Apavăloae (2004) and *Romanian History*, vol IV (2010) and from the territory observations such as the actual extending process through the peripheral areas (Ursuleți, Viișoara area, Dumbrava Roșie). It also had, as a basic sketch, the territorial evolution of the studied territory realised by Ungureanu (1980) which represented a minimal base for the elaboration of the evolution map. The map reflects the genuine steps in Piatra-Neamț territorial evolution, emphasizing the most significant periods of evolution and their consequences in territorial development.

Historical and political factors have influenced the development process of this area since the antique period with the construction of the first political and administrative settlements. Between the 3rd and the 13th century, the analysed territory has been through a permanent political instability generated by the great migrations, which also affected the economical and the social development. Since the beginning of the 13th century, in this space has been individualised a powerful fortification built by a Romanian population, which has been remarked for its

organization and for its politics and socio-cultural characteristics, generating the feudal system (Romanian History, vol. IV, 2010).

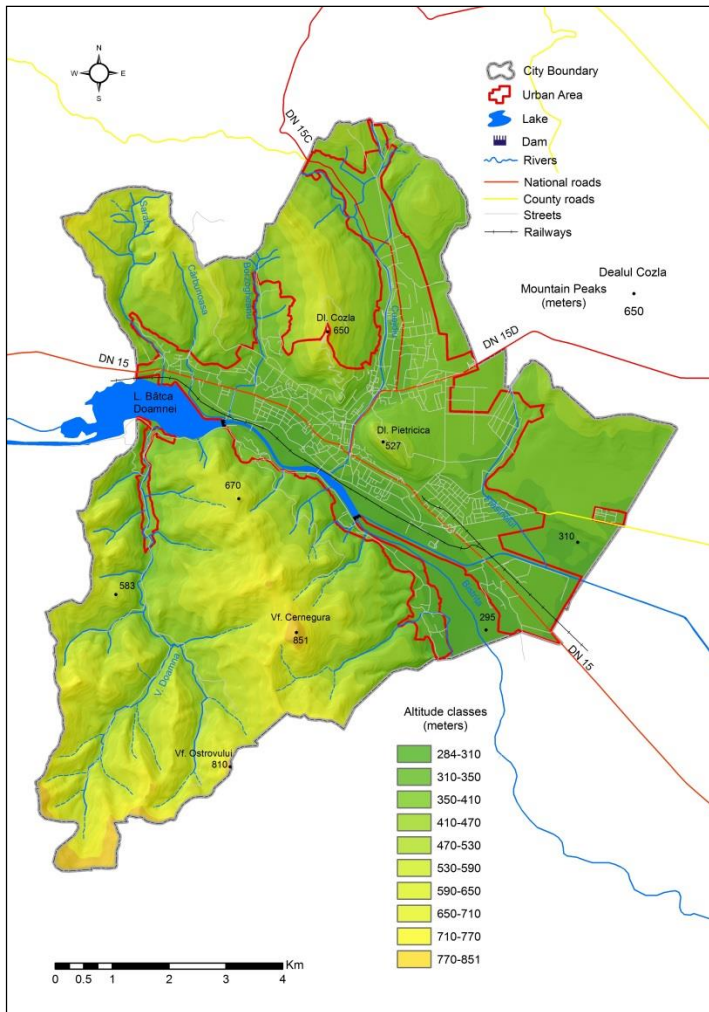


Figure 1 Elevation map of Piatra-Neamt city area.

This form of organisation determined the extending of the built area on Bistrita's terraces: the buildings of The Court and the buildings around this ensemble, also in the 16th century the built area was occupying the banks of Cuedj river, Valea Viei and the terraces of Bistrita river from Western and North-Western part. The 17th finds this area suffocated by thefts, the Turkish, the tartars and the polish population robbed and burnt to the ground the most part of the settlement. In the meantime, the fights for the Moldavian throne continued and generated a political instability that has affected the development and the extending process (Romanian History, vol. IV, 2010).

After 1900 Piatra-Neamt was officially declared city. The inter-war period brought an increase for the economy, society and culture but the World War II brought stagnation and decline. After this period the city entered in a constant development process, was declared the residential and administrative city for Bacau region, after the administrative reform from 1968 it was declared residential city for Neamt district.

After the 1989 revolution the economy and the society of Piatra-Neamț suffered stagnation and even decline in terms of the industrial development, the changing in political regime and the transition to market economy determined an industrial decrease period. During this time many factories streamed or even stopped their activity. Today the services are dominant in Piatra-Neamț. During the economic crisis the city developed due to the European Funds which were very well used for the development of tourism and infrastructure. The most important factors that acted as a base for the urban development were the economic ones, and Piatra-Neamț city had a reputation as a commercial centre, it was also called “Piatra Fair”. During the communist period, the forced industrialising process generated a diminishing in commerce and an increase in production. After 1989, took place the economic transition and the commercial activities were privatised.

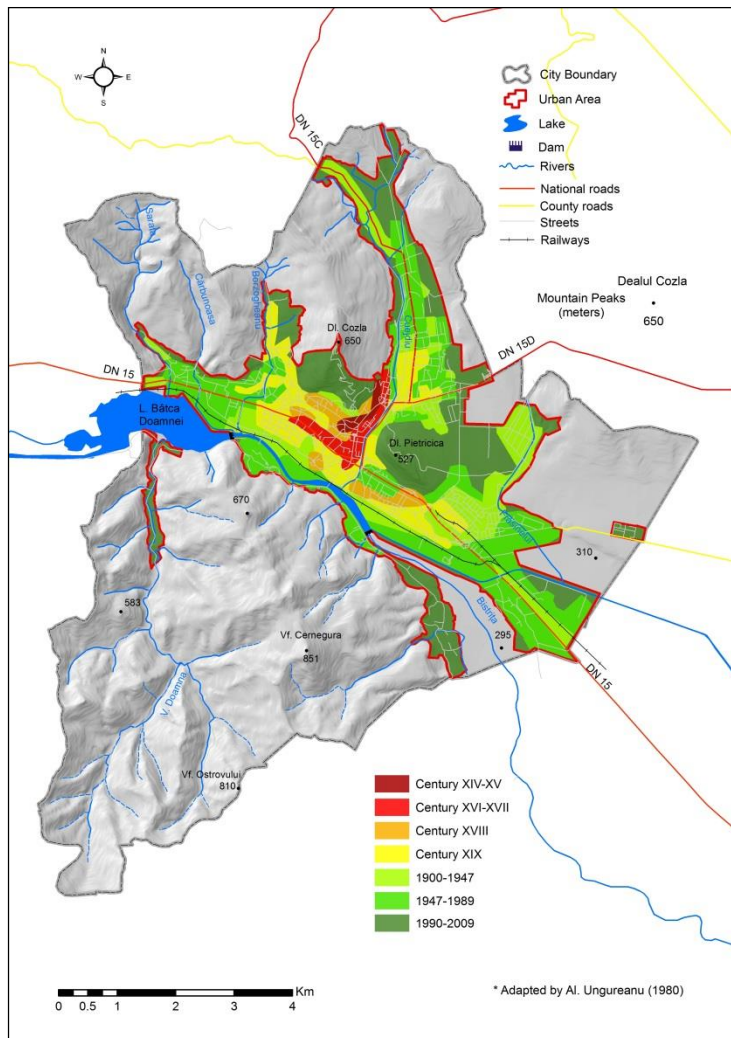


Figure 2 Territorial evolution of Piatra-Neamț city.

The industrial activities from Piatra-Neamț city have developed since the beginning of the 20th century, at that time in the peripheral areas were built paper factories, wood factories and textiles factories. The industrialisation process increased during the communism and the urban life intensified through the massive working force and the construction of the working neighbourhoods Dărmănești and Mărăței. After 1989 the industry declined and the population

decreased due to the migration phenomena for finding a job. The evolution of the analysed territory presents different stages regarding intensity and degree. Ungureanu (1980) includes the urban space from Bistrița valley in the category of the tentacle development cities, following the limits imposed by the relief.

The territorial extending of the administrative territory was different from o period to another so the medieval period has an accelerated development during Ștefan cel Mare's reign, when Piatra had in administration all the territories around but because of the political instability and the migratory attacks the settlement had a slow territorial evolution summing a surface of only 230 ha (Apăvăloae, 2005).

Once with the industrial revolution, the territory of Piatra-Neamț city enlarged with the inclusion of Marașei village, Precista village, Valea Viei and Bordeie village. The 20th century presents a slow increase in extending because of the two belligerent actions. In 1990, the city territory was extending on a 1350 ha surface (Apăvăloae, 2005), due to the industrial development from the South-Eastern part of the settlement, imposed by the communism economical politics and also due to the new neighbourhoods built for the working population moved here from different villages of the Neamț district.

3.1. Pre-communist period

Piatra-Neamț has its origins in the ancient times, over 2000 years ago, with the remaining still visible at Bâta Doamnei area. In this area the romans destroyed the dacian centre and built a new fortification on Troian Hill (Dragotescu, 1994, 2004). The great migrations from the medieval period affected the territorial and economical evolution. Since the 12th century Romanian people built stabile fortifications that allowed the development of the political and social system and the consolidation of the settlement but also the defining of its specific. The first documentary attestation of the city of Moldavia was only in the 14th century, under the name of Piatra of Crăciun, an Earl that built here his residence.

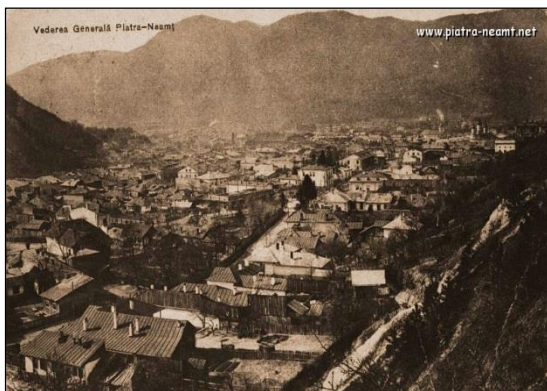


Figure 3 Sight from Pietricica Hill, 1897.

Piatra, as a fair city consisted in two parts with a very tight connection: The Court, situated on the 15-20 metres terrace of Bistrița river (the actual place of „Petru Rareș,, College) and the commercial and manufacture neighbourhood situated on the meadow terrace of Cuejd river, along the Old Lane, today Ana Ipătescu Boulevard (Apăvăloae, 2005) (Fig. 2). Between the 16th and 17th century it is registered a significant territorial evolution due to the inclusion of Mărășei village, from the left shore of Bistrița river. During the 18th century, the commerce and the manufacture activity evolved and the city polarised the surrounding area. This fact brought an administrative

function for the city of Piatra as it was declared residential city for the county and annexed Precista village, upper on the left shore of Bistrita river, Bordeie village and Valea Viei village. Economic development determined the extending process along Cuejd river bank and industrial development in Gara Veche neighbourhood.

From the beginning of the 19th century appeared new urban functions: railway transportation, industrial and economic functions. On these premises the territorial extending has an exceeded rhythm and the urbanized area individualised with all the neighbourhoods. The industrial process develops and this determined a considerable peripheral extending for the city.

The first half of the 20th century presented a slow development due to the World Wars and their consequences among the population and activities in this space. Therefore, the urban development included parcelling the properties from Ciritei and Gara Veche neighbourhoods, the building of the railway station from the southern part of the city and the extending of the territory towards Borzoghean river. Also, in this period were included into the urbanized area: Dărmănești village, from Cuejd river, Sarata, from the western part of the city, Vânători - the south-eastern part of the city and the settlement from the right shore of Bistrița: Văleni and Chindia.

3.2. Communist period

In this period massive changes were induced in the territorial evolution of the city due to the changes in administration, politics and due to the forced industrialisation process which also determined the horizontal and vertical development. The city extended and had a dynamic evolution, the increase of the population due to forced industrialisation determined the increase of the constructions density and the rebuilding and reorganisation of Mărăței, Precista and Dărmănești neighbourhoods by edification of blocks summing 32.000 apartments for 81% from the population of the city (Fig. 3).

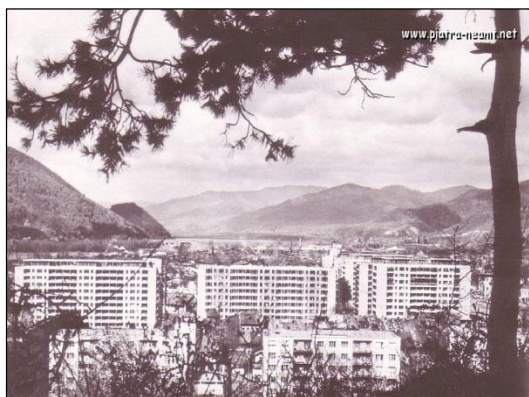


Figure 4 Sight from Cozla Hill, 1969.

Political-administrative function increased after 1968, with the new administrative reorganisation of the territory. The surface of the city was stable and had extended to the peripheral area with the industrial buildings.

3.3. Post-communist period

The radical changes that happened after 1989 generated functional modifications for Piatra-Neamț city, which lead to the necessity of adapting the territory to the new conditions imposed by the economic context, affected by the inflation. Therefore, the industrial areas degraded and became dysfunctional being closed the units from Gara Veche, Ciritei and Precista.

The next years the building areas extended to Roman Way and 1 May neighbourhood. Speranța neighbourhood was built and in Sarata-Ursuleți area were built villas. The Villas constructions extended also on the right side of Bâta Doamnei Lake, in Doamna area and soon in Valea Viei neighbourhood and in the old residential area. The transportation infrastructure develops and commercial buildings were built, as well as warehouses, and leisure and entertainment spaces. The various functions of the city in this period determined a functional determination of its areas.

The first urbanized area of the city presented stability through the years, through the evolution periods despite the changes suffered by the administrative territory. There were situations of territorial involution determined by the local conditions: relief, economy, politics, which led to the disappearance of the following neighbourhoods: Chindia, Setia, Tătărași, Bordeie and a part of Valea Viei neighbourhood.

After the communist regime the intense use of the land imposed a territorial organisation and an urban planning that generated pressure among the natural base, especially on Cozla Hill because of the tourism development strategy (ski slope and gondola system that generated landslides), Pietricica Hill, Bâta Doamnei Hill (because of the massive deforestation until the declaration of the Goșmanu-Tarcău Forest Reservation) and Vulpea Hill (construction materials exploitation).

4. Conclusions

During the communist period the extension of the territory was intense due to the industrial development which included the main neighbourhoods and the administrative territory extended through the peripheral areas.

The main communication routes developed and extended along the rivers that fragment the mountain area and connect with the other urban centres and with the rural settlements polarized.

Tourism development determined preserving measures and sustainable strategies, restrictions in some areas (Cozla Hill) but also measures for areas affected by geomorphologic processes (southern part of Cozla Hill).

The actual territorial evolution of the city consists in the building process of secondary residencies and touristic infrastructure in the northern part of the city but also in the eastern and southern part. This expansion will determine in a short period of time the extending of the territory by the inclusion of new areas in the administrative territory.

An important phenomenon in the urban space evolution is the increase of the built space density and, of course the increase of the pressure among the land, especially in the old residential neighbourhoods with buildings situated in a high geomorphologic risk area. On the other hand, the intensive use of the territory in these areas generates an aesthetic and functional rehabilitation of the infrastructure for the peripheral areas where the population is heading for living.

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