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PhD THESIS

Summary

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL ASPECTS

I. 1. THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAME OF THE RESEARCH

1. 1. Purpose and objectives
1. 2. The methodology of research

I. 2. THEORETICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE GEOGRAPHIC REGION

- I. 3. “THE LAND” – MEANINGS AND SIGNIFICANCES
- I. 4. THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA AS A SYSTEM - REGION
- I. 5. THE HISTORY OF THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHES

CHAPTER II. DESIGNATION AND DELIMITATION

II. 1. THE DESIGNATION OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

II. 2. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LIMITS OF THE REGION

CHAPTER III. THE NATURAL COMPONENTS OF THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

III.1. THE ROLE OF THE GEOTECTONIC AND GEOLOGIC COMPONENTS IN THE DELINEATION OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

III. 2. THE RELIEF AND ITS ROLE IN THE STRUCTURING OF THE REGIONAL SYSTEM

- III. 2. 1. Morphometric parameters of the loviștean relief
- III. 2. 2. The genesis of the loviștean relief – condition for the age and variety of the forms
- III. 2. 3. The current forms and processes
- III. 2. 4. The geomorphologic regionalization of the Land of Loviștea
- III. 2. 5. The role of the relief in the structuring of the regional system

III. 3. THE CLIMATIC PARTICULARITIES CHARACTERISTIC FOR THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

- III. 3. 1. The climatogen factors
- III. 3. 2. The air temperature
- III. 3. 3. The relative humidity of the air
- III. 3. 4. The nebulosity
- III. 3. 5. The duration of the sun’s brightness
- III. 3. 6. The rainfalls
- III. 3. 7. The air pressure
- III. 3. 8. The wind
- III. 3. 9. Particular climatic phenomena

III. 4. THE HYDROGRAPHICAL COMPONENT OF THE LOVIȘTEAN REGIONAL SYSTEM

- III. 4. 1. Major coordinates of the hydrographical component
- III. 4. 2. The factors which influence the formation and repartition of the water resources
- III. 4. 3. The water resources. Typology
 - III. 4. 3. 1. The underground waters
 - III. 4. 3. 2. The hydrographical network
 - III. 4. 3. 3. The lakes
 - III. 4. 3. 4. Hydrological risk phenomena

III. 5. THE BIOPEDOGEOGRAPHICAL COMPONENT OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

- III. 5. 1. Vegetation
- III. 5. 2. Fauna
- III. 5. 3. Protected areas
- III. 5. 4. The edaphic cover of the Land of Loviștea

CHAPTER IV. THE ANTHROPIC COMPONENT OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA – ELEMENT OF SYSTEMIC FACTOR DE INDIVIDUALIZATION

IV. 1. GEODEMOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS

- IV. 1. 1. The emergence and the establishment of the population in the Land of Loviștea
- IV. 1. 2. The edification of the population's stem
- IV. 1. 3. The numerical evolution of the population
- IV. 1. 4. The density of the population
- IV. 1. 5. The dynamic of the population
 - IV. 1. 5. 1. The natural movement of the population
 - IV. 1. 5. 2. The territorial mobility of the population
- IV. 1. 6. The general demographic balance
- IV. 1. 7. The structures of the population
 - IV. 1. 7. 1. The population's structure on rural or urban areas
 - IV. 1. 7. 2. The gender structure of the population
 - IV. 1. 7. 3. The age structure of the population
 - IV. 1. 7. 4. The ethnical structure
 - IV. 1. 7. 5. The linguistic structure
 - IV. 1. 7. 6. The religious structure
 - IV. 1. 7. 7. The occupational structure
 - IV. 1. 7. 8. The structure of the population in terms of the level of education
 - IV. 1. 7. 9. The matrimonial structure

IV. 2. THE HABITATIONAL COMPONENT OF THE LOVIȘTEAN TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

- IV. 2. 1. The typology of the loviștean village
- IV. 2. 2. The urban area of the Land of Loviștea
- IV. 2. 3. The locative fund in the Land of Loviștea
- IV. 2. 4. The technical infrastructure of the territory
 - IV. 2. 4. 1. The water supply system, the sewerage system
 - IV. 2. 4. 2. The natural gas supply system
 - IV. 2. 4. 3. The electricity supply system
 - IV. 2. 4. 4. The information mediums
 - IV. 2. 4. 5. The communication system

CHAPTER V. THE SOCIAL ASPECTS

V. 1. THE MEDICAL AND SANITARY INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

- V. 1. 1. The sanitary infrastructure
- V. 1. 2. The medical and sanitary personnel
- V. 1. 3. The accessibility to sanitary services

V. 2. THE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

V. 3. THE CULTURAL COMPONENT OF THE SYSTEM

CHAPTER VI. THE ECONOMY OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

VI. 1. THE AGRICULTURE. TYPOLOGY AND FORMS OF AGRICULTURAL CAPITALIZATION

- VI. 1. 1. The agricultural fund in the Land of Loviștea
- VI. 1. 2. Representative cultivations
- VI. 1. 3. Rearing activities

VI. 2. THE INDUSTRIAL CAPITALIZATION IN THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

VI. 3. THE COMMERCIAL PHENOMENON

VI. 4. THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

VI. 5. THE TOURISTIC PHENOMENON

VI. 5. 1. Natural touristic resources

VI. 5. 2. The anthropic touristic potential

CHAPTER VII. THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA AS A SPATIAL MENTAL PROJECTION

VII. 1. DEFINITION

VII. 2. DELIMITATION

VII. 3. STRUCTURE

VII. 4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOVIȘTEAN MENTAL SPACE

VII. 5. CONTINUITY AND MODERNITY IN THE LOVIȘTEAN MENTAL PERCEPTION

CHAPTER VIII. THE SYNTHESIS OF THE LOVIȘTEAN TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

VIII. 1. The functions of the Land of Loviștea

VIII. 1. 1. The defense (the strategic) function

VIII. 1. 2. The cultural function

VIII. 1. 3. The economic function

VIII. 1. 4. The administrative function

VIII. 2. SWOT ANALYSIS

VIII. 2. 1. Strong points

VIII. 2. 2. Weak points

VIII. 2. 3. Opportunities

VIII. 2. 4. Threats

VIII. 3. THE CHOREMA OF THE LOVIȘTEAN TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES

ANNEXES

Key words: Land of Loviștea, region, limit, system, systemic components, mental space, functions, SWOT analysis, chorema.

INTRODUCTION

The approach of the Land of Loviștea by means of a regional geographical study presumes an attentive proneness towards the entire territory, but also towards the inter-relational components in order to reveal those characteristics which define it as a distinct territorial system.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL ASPECTS

The methodological frame of the research

The methodological frame in which the research of the Land of Loviștea was carried out comprises a series of principles, methods and means of analysis with special emphasis on the arsenal characteristic for the Regional Geography, seen and analyzed in complementarily with other geographical disciplines. The basic principles of the study are represented by the spatial one, by the principle of causality, of the integrality, of the historicism, of the regionalism, the principle of the uniqueness and the principle of the functionality. Among the used methods, the most important proves to be the regional one

due to the fact that permits the conspicuousness of the characteristic elements of the region.

Theoretical aspects regarding the geographical region

The presence of the term “region” in the title of the current paper highlights the distinct importance of the concept. The origin of this term comes from the Latin word *region*, *-onis*, which poses a multitude of suppositions. According to the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (1996), the term *region* is defined as a stretch of land, a territorial-administrative unit with a certain degree of homogeneity and common features, but which can also be defined by the terms area, land, region, place, part etc. V. Mihăilescu (1968) remarks the importance of the geographical region and defines it as “the reference unit of the geographical research, (...) which is a territory confined by distinct external (of the landscape) and internal characteristics (in terms of structure and functionality) as well as by the achievement of a unit derived from the relations between components and between the components and the entire assembly”. According to P. Cocean (2002) the region is “a geographic space with a centripetal gravity, an open system with a balanced feedback”. J. Benedek (2004) defines the region as being “the form of analysis of the society’s spatiality, more precise the operative form of the analysis of space”.

As a result, the literature brings more and more new meanings to this term, highlighting its definitive characteristics and predicting its future conditions of development.

“The Land” – meanings and significances

The term “land” has a Latin origin (*terra*) which has embraced throughout the time different meanings; in this study only the geographical connotations presenting a greater significance. V. Surd (1993) considers “the land” as a “geographic space with a variable extension, well confined, with its own economical, political, social and cultural organization and relatively homogenous from an ethnical point of view”. Analyzed from a regional perspective, the lands are assimilated to some regions with distinct features, defined as “mental, ethnographical constructions which have as a common denominator the fundamental characteristics of the Carpathian archetype space edified within its structures and private impetus throughout the centuries...” (P. Cocean, 2004). At the same time “*the lands are wombs of territorial identity which create favorable frames for the identification of some functional entities in the territorial planning and regional development measures*”. Are defined by inconsistent elements, of stability (the unaltered preservation of some old practices) and dynamism (metamorphose of certain features) thus resulting the flexibility of the “lands” and their capacity of adaptation to the current time (Oana Ilovan, 2009). Thenceforth, the “land” represents a peculiar unit which resulted from the need of safety (their primordial purpose was that of defense), later evolving in the pre-state formations of the Middle Age thus functioning as local autonomy of the Romanian population.

The Land of Loviștean as a system - region

The territorial loviștean system comprises the characteristic territory (which can be divided in two sub-systems found in interactions: a natural one and an anthropic one).

An important feature of the system is represented by the polarization carried out by the settlement which possesses the characteristics of a “central place” represented by the town of Brezoi.

The history of the scientific researches

The territory superposed over the Land of Lovișteea appeared in the scientific literature under varied topics and designations, from the Brezoi-Titesti or Titesti-Brezoiu Basin, to the Lovișteea Depression, Lotru valley and even under the name of Land of Lotru. This territorial unit was the subject of many scientific papers from different fields of study: history, geography, economy, ethnography, sociology. Many of the papers which made a reference to this area approached for example the entire southern Carpathian area or the Olt Defile, many of the studies representing general analysis, and less an integrated approach or a detailed introspection of the region. In 1935 a first complex paper which approached this region was printed – *The Land of Lovișteea. A Historical Geography* (I. Conea). The author carries out a genuine historical and geographical “radiography” of the region, starting with the first mentioning in the historical documents, and continuing with relevant references regarding the localization, the limits, the population, the region’s toponymy and onomastics, only to finish with the historical function of the Lovișteea. L. Badea, in his study regarding the *Lovișteea Depression* approaches the name and geographical position of the unit, its limits, as well as aspects regarding the geology of the depression, details regarding the relief and also the characteristics of the intra-Carpathian oicumenic space and the current state of the environment.

The monographical studies carried out by different local personalities revealed their concernment for their birthplaces, as well as their attachment and affiliation to a distinct mental space.

CHAPTER II. DESIGNATION AND DELIMITATION

The term “loviște” possesses a large number of definitions, the root of the term coming from the Slavonic term “lov” which means “blow”, *loviti* “to catch, to grasp”; another version would be the term *loavă* (fortune, happy coincidence). Also in Slavonic, the term loviște designates a “closed space” or a “hunting place” (“a place with lots of hunting and especially a lot of fish”, I. Conea, 1935). “Also, the term loviște is found in the old Romanian language, but with other significance, namely that of opening, depression” (I. Conea, 1935), this last one being also the most often used in the scientific literature (the sense of opening or depression describes the general aspect of the region, namely a depressionary area surrounded by mountain massifs).

The settlement of the limits of the Land of Lovișteea

The settlement of the limits of the region is a difficult process which has to take into consideration a multitude of factors and criteria. For the Land of Lovișteea, and manifested by means of a series of particularities related to characteristic behavior, dialect, architecture, traditions and folklore, as well as to the economic profile of the region, the appraisal of the criteria which resulted in the delimitation of the region in regards to the

surrounding entities represents the basis of the detailed geographical analysis. The most important criteria used in the delimitation of the analyzed area have as a starting point the natural component, and continues with the economical activities characteristic for this area, as well as with the social and historical determinants and with the particularities of the settlements and households.

The natural limits describe the territory superposed over the Lovișteea Depression and over the surrounding mountain massifs (Lotru, Făgărăș, Cozia), very stable units with a threshold/discontinuity role.

The institutional limits. The natural frame somehow “forced” the marking of the official limits of the region since their settlement couldn’t surmount the obstacle imposed by the relief. Throughout the history, the Land of Lovișteea embraced a number of functions which determined certain limits, especially by means of its strategic position (at the border of the Romanian State with the Austro-Hungarian Empire). Nowadays, the region belongs entirely to the Vâlcea County, occupying its northern part and extending over 8 localities and seven communes: Boișoara, Câineni, Mălaia, Racovița, Voineasa, Titești, Perișani and the town of Brezoi; is neighbored by the Alba and Sibiu Counties towards the northern part, by the Argeș County towards the east and by the Hunedoara and Gorj Counties in the western parts.

The social limits take into consideration the features of the human component of the region (identity, religious, cultural, ethnical and ethnographical affiliation) displaying behavioral or occupational differences. For the Land of Lovișteea these limits have determined the appraisal of distinct micro-regions, the Popular Lovișteea superposed over the territory of the Boișoara, Câineni, Racovița, Perișani, Titești communes and the Lotru River Valley which extended towards Brezoi, Mălaia and Voineasa.

The functional limits. The mountain space characterized by the presence of a rough relief appears as a barrier in the development of the center of the settlements, from a functional point of view representing a complex space, characterized by the presence of several important resources (in this regard are to be mentioned the forestry resources or the touristic and agro-pastoral potential of the area). At the opposite side, the lower depressionary area characterized by the flatness of the relief forms (the Brezoi-Titești Plateau) has offered proper habitation conditions (hence being an intensely humanized space), while from a functional point of view the region is characterized by the primary activities, and especially by the agricultural ones.

The complex limits of the region have been established based on a cumulative criteria used in the delimitation (such as morphologic, mental, political-administrative criteria etc.).

CHAPTER III. THE NATURAL COMPONENTS OF THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

The role of the geotectonic and geologic components in the delineation of the Land of Lovișteea is reflected by the current relief of the region, with distinct features, according to the characteristic levels. The depressionary area is in fact a post-tectonic sedimentary basin (had functioned as gulf of the Getic Basin) formed by sedimentary deposits (slightly friable rocks which have determined the appearance of the

characteristic forms and parameters). The mountain space resulted from the orogenic cycles and was affected by a series of ruptures, folding, dislocations and faulting being formed by crystalline rocks (with increased hardness and which have determined the appearance of other types of relief forms).

Therefore, in middle Cretaceous (by means of the orogenic movements) the configuration of the Southern Carpathians occurred, the following stages (affected by ruptures, folding and sinking) determining the formation of the depressionary area. In the Senonian period, the tecto-genetic movements led to the finalization of the current configuration of the region's relief, respectively to the local sinking of the crystalline and to the appraisal of the mountain massifs.

The relief and its role in the structuring of the system. First of all, *the relief* contributes to the settlements of the region's limits, carries out the function of support for the rest of the systemic components, imposes certain directions of manifestation of the geographical processes and phenomena and determines a certain typology in the utilization of the space.

The general aspect of the relief of the Land of Lovișteea is the amphitheatre disposal, on altitudinal levels starting with approximately 300 meters in the Olt alluvial plain and reaching approximately 2400 meters, in the Făgăraș Mountains.

The main units and sub-units of the relief are: the Southern Carpathians: the Făgăraș group – the Făgăraș Mountains (their western part), the Coziei Mountains (the northern part), the Parâng group – the Lotrului Mountains (the eastern part), the Latoriței Mountains, the Căpățâni Mountains (the eastern part), the Lovișteea Depression: the higher part (with the Cărbunaru peak and Dealu Cordoia peak), the 800-850 meters level which represents the hilly area and the lower level of the depression (the Brezoiu Basin, the Titești Basin), the Olt River valley.

This altimetric palette imprints distinctiveness in the occurrence of the parameters of the loviștean relief.

The hypsography is highlighted by 11 *isohypses* (from 200 m until 2400 m). Maximal altitudes, over 2200 m, are found in the mountain massifs which surround the depressionary area, except for the southern part, where the altitudes possess more decreased values. The largest part of the territory is comprised between 600-800-1000m, the Lotru River Valley, the Brezoi-Titești Basin and the Căineni widening representing only a few examples in this case. Minimal altitudes (of 400-600 or under 400 m) are encountered only in the alluvial plain of the Olt River.

The fragmentation of the relief established the degree of accessibility of the loviștean space. The fragmentation density of the relief is in accordance with the relief forms, in the areas where the water courses possess an increased denudation potential, the fragmentation density records increased values, between 1.7 and 3.2 km/sq km (these areas are quite limited). The majority of the surfaces are placed in the density category ranging between 0.7-1 and 1-1.7 km/sq km. The lowest values, between 0 and 0.25 km/sq km are recorded in the flatter areas, where the denudation potential of the rivers is low. The fragmentation depth records the lowest value in the depressionary area (below 100 m) and the highest in the mountain area (600-800m), the medium potential being defined by the values ranging from 200 to 500 m. This indicator had a significant impact in the accession and anthropization of the space, being hence the reason why the depressionary area which has the lowest values of the fragmentation depth is also the most intensely

populated in comparison with the mountain areas where the conditions of the relief (and implicitly the increased values of this parameter) determined a much reduced human impact (these areas are capitalized by means of pastoral and touristic activities).

The inclination of the versants defines different categories of versants: with reduced slopes ranging from 0 to 2 degrees, characteristic for the alluvial plains, to slopes with 2-6 degrees which appear isolated within the loviștean territory being characteristic for the areas slightly inclined located in the nearness of the Vidra lake and in the meadows of the smaller rivers, while the surfaces with a medium inclination are marked by slopes ranging from 6 to 17 degrees and are characteristic for the Titești Basin and for the western part of the region. The most inclined surfaces (steep slopes) with values of 17-32 degrees or more appear on a large part of the loviștean territory defining the southern versants of the mountain massifs located in the southern part of the region, as well as of those located in the north-western part and the watersheds.

The exposition of the versants determines a certain caloric behavior of the soil, with implications in the humidity regime, in the geomorphologic processes as well as in the agricultural utilization and exploitation of the land. In this regard, there is a classification of the versants: the sunny ones – are the versants with a southern and south-western exposure, the semi-sunny versants – are those with south-eastern and western exposure, the semi-shaded versants – are those with an eastern and north-eastern exposure and the shaded versants – are those north and north-eastern oriented.

The climatic particularities of the region. The geographical position (especially in regards to the southerner Carpathian chain) offered from a climatic point of view, the status of a sheltered region, a situation which determined the lack of the extreme pluviometric periods (either dry or rainy) as well as the apparent state of climatic calm (with the existence of the gentle winds) and reduced thermal amplitudes. In strict correlation with the morphologic element, the loviștean climate (as a part of the moderate temperate continental climate) is characterized by a hilly and mountain climate, with altitudes ranging from 500 m (in the depressionary area) to over 1000 m (in the mountain area), a fact which determined an annual average temperature of 8 degrees Celsius, an average annual rainfall of 850 mm and an atmospheric calm of 70%. Based on the general characteristics of the climate of the Land of Loviștea we consider it as an element of favorability in the stabilization of the population, with influence on other systemic components (such as vegetation, relief, soils, waters, anthropic activities).

The hydrographical component. Concerning the role played by the hydrographical component in the delineation of the land-type region, firstly we have to mention the conditioning imposed by the hydrographic network in the establishment of the human settlements as well as of the rest of the anthropic activities. The importance of the hydrographical resource is due to the localization coordinates of the region, respectively to the main arteries (*ab aqua Lothur vocata que fluit ab aqua Olth*), the two main water courses being considered as determinant elements of the loviștean territory. On these two arteries (as well as on their important tributaries) the accession of the loviștean space occurred, which later resulted in the establishment of the linear settlements (with households developed on both sides of the rivers, with an elongated structure as a result of their adaptation to the environmental conditions). The name alone of the “land” (“loviște” signifies a territory with lots of hunting and fish) reveals the importance of the hydrographical component with reference to the abundance of fish.

Also, one must not neglect the support function of the hydrographical network in the development of the wood exploitation and refinement (the water transport of the logs and their refinement in the saw mills) and wool treating processes (both card and milled wool), two important resources which determine the occupational coordinates of the Loviștean population. The remarkable hydro-energetic potential of the rivers in the Land of Lovișteea was not only inferred but also exploited, a situation which resulted in the construction of the largest hydro-energetic system within the inner Romanian Rivers, namely the one built on the Lotru River – the Vidra Lake, the secondary adduction system and the Ciunget Hydro-energetic Plant. The presence of the valley of the Olt River which crosses from north to south the “land” imposed the distribution on this direction of the fluxes of matter, energy and information. The hydrographical component of the regional Loviștean system functioned as an attractive element for the anthropic component, offering proper spaces for its establishment (alluvial plains, terraces, semi-flat smoother slopes), as well as source of nourishment (especially fish), support for the main economical activities (such as milling, wood exploitation and refinement, wool refinement) and a basis for the development of the hydro-energetic, touristic and recreational potential of the region.

The biopedogeographical component of the Land of Lovișteea is influenced by the characteristics of the relief, by the hydrographical network, climate, by the geographical position, thus presenting a great floristical, faunistical and edaphical diversity which resulted in a diversification of the landscapes. Within its territories, all four level of vegetation characteristic for our country are encountered. The level of the broadleaf forests (consisting in nemoral species, with the dominance of the durmast, hornbeam, field maple and beech trees) reaches altitudes of 1200m, the coniferous forests which possess the largest spreading appear in mixture with beech species from 1300 m, while the higher altitudes are dominated by the presence of the coniferous forests characteristic for the boreal level, followed by the subalpine grass lands characterized by the presence of shrubby stratum. The alpine level is represented by a distinct floristic component with species adapted to severe climatic conditions (of powerful winds). As a dynamic element of the biotic component, the fauna possesses a great diversity, influenced in its spreading by the type of habitat and by the degree of anthropization and human intervention. The faunistic elements can also be grouped in categories, but due to the fact that within the Land of Lovișteea the dominant vegetation is the forestry one, the fauna is mostly represented by mammals. Apart from the fauna of the forests and grasslands, we must mention the presence of an azonal fauna, represented by the fauna characteristic for the meadows, as well as by the fauna of the anthropic areas (localities and cultivated lands) and the aquatic fauna.

The edaphical component of the Land of Lovișteea is analyzed in accordance with the steps of the relief. The depressionary area is dominated by the presence of the cambosoils with the eutricambosoils and districambosoils types. These types of soils appear in conditions of a wet climate, the vegetation which develops on these soils being mostly arboreal, with different associations of durmast, beech species in mixture with coniferous species. The spodosoils class is characteristic for the mountain area with altitudes of over 1500-1700 m. The climatic conditions where these soils are developed are characterized by low temperatures and increased rainfalls. They were formed on a diverse parental material (sandstones, conglomerate rocks and schist) being encountered

on different slopes with different inclinations and expositions, as well as on the peaks or on the beads of the former leveling surfaces. These soils are mostly covered with grassland vegetation.

CHAPTER IV. THE ANTHROPIC COMPONENT OF THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA

The population of the Land of Loviștea, by means of its typology, structure and dynamics highlights the active element of the system and, in the same time, reflects the changes which have occurred throughout the time, within the system. The demographical component's most important feature is that it has allowed the functionality of the region.

The loviștean system of settlements is the result of the interactions between the anthropic element and its space, simultaneously expressing the way in which the natural resources were capitalized.

The demographic potential of the Land of Loviștea, by means of a qualitative and quantitative analysis, highlights the uniform distribution of the anthropic elements, with the positioning of the town of Brezoi in the middle of the geo-demographic "ebullience" [in this manner see only the its role as a district residence center, its declaration as town in 1968, is role as the region's polarizing center and a corollary of the most complex functions of the region (medical, educational, cultural, economic and administrative)].

Regarding the *numerical evolution of the population* from the Land of Loviștea, between 1838 and 2007, three stages of this phenomenon can be observed. The first stage is characterized by an increasing and continue tendency specific for the 1838-1977 period, when, from a numerical point of view the population increased with approximately 500%; the second stage characteristic for the 1977-2002 period recorded a decreasing tendency in the total number of the population with approximately 10.000 inhabitants. The third stage, characteristic for the 2002-2007 period recorded a stationary tendency in the total number of the population.

As shown in the case of the numerical evolution, the population density also recorded fluctuations, the highest values being recorded in 1977.

The natural movement of the population

The general birth rate recorded in the Land of Loviștea, for the period 1966-2007, is situated in the national tendency, with increasing values between 1966 and 1977, followed by a sudden and continuous decrease until 2002, only to record an almost stationary tendency between 2002 and 2007.

The general mortality rate in the Land of Loviștea for the above mentioned period of time reveals a stationary tendency between 1966 and 1977, followed by an alarming increase towards the year 1992, only to record a slight and continuous decrease in the present time.

The natural demographic balance recorded fluctuant values, from a slightly increased rate to a sudden drop, recording in 1992 values close to 0 (decreasing birth rate and increasing mortality rate). Following the year 2002, the decreasing tendency seemed to be slightly pronounced recording the first negative values; after this threshold, the situation seemed to slightly improve, the values of the natural demographic balance

recording an insignificant increase, without exceeding though the limit between the negative and the positive values.

The territorial mobility of the population

The geo-demographic situation of the Land of Lovișteea is constantly modified through migration. The decline recorded in the economy of the localities led to some “delicate” situations with matching consequences: the reduction of the employments/the increase of the number of unemployed persons, the changing of the residence from the urban areas to the rural ones or vice-versa or, the departure abroad of a large number of inhabitants. For the year 2002 the migratory demographic balance for the Land of Lovișteea recorded negative values.

The general demographic balance is negative (a deficiency caused by the massive outputs from the system in comparison with the inputs).

The structures of the population

The population's structure on rural or urban areas shows the dominance of the rural space in comparison with the urban area, this last one appearing relatively late, namely in 1968 when Brezoi became a town (also being the only town within the Land of Lovișteea).

The gender structure of the population. The masculine population of the Land of Lovișteea, for the year 1977 was dominant, a tendency which can be extrapolated for all the localities within the analyzed region until 1992, when, the masculinity rate recorded a decreasing value to the detriment of the feminine population.

The age structure of the population. For the year 2002, the young population represented approximately 25% of the entire population (the maximal value was recorded by the Racovița commune – 31.8%, while the minimal value was recorded by the Voineasa commune – 20.85%), with an almost equal percentage of the elder population (within Brezoi the percentage recorded by the elder population was of 15.06% - the lowest value recorded within the entire analyzed region, while a value of 31.30% which is also the highest, was recorded in the Boișoara commune), while the mature population represents approximately 50% of the entire population.

The aging tendency of the population is quite obvious (the increase of the adult and elder population to the detriment of the younger population). This tendency represents the answer of the human resource to the limited potential of the sustaining components, combined with the decrease of the birth rate and the elongation of the medium life expectancy. The young – elder population ratio is very important for the future evolution of a population and can emphasize the degree of demographic aging, the threshold value for a population to be considered old being of 0.42. In all the loviștean localities this threshold value is exceeded and only one conclusion can be drawn: in the Land of Lovișteea the population is elder presuming the display of all the deriving consequences of this situation.

The ethnical structure. By means of its position in the Romanian territory, as a contact unit between the regions located on both sides of the Southern Carpathians, the Land of Lovișteea is characterized by an ethnic mosaic, but with the net dominance of the Romanian population (98.59% in 2002).

The linguistic structure. In the Land of Lovișteea, where the Romanian ethnicity is dominant, the spoken language in most of the cases is the Romanian language, with a few small exceptions, where the Roma population speaks the Rromani language or where the Hungarian population speaks, besides the Romanian, the Hungarian language as well.

The religious structure. Additional to the dominance of the Romanian population in the Land of Lovișteea, there is a dominance of the orthodox cult as well (98.42% in 2002), and even though the ethnical palette of the region is quite large but not with many representatives; there are also other religions identified within the analyzed unit. The Hungarians who have established here were either Catholics or Protestants. Nowadays, a more and more significant input is brought by the neo-protestant cults such as the Baptists, the Pentecostals and the Adventists.

The occupational structure of the population. The active population in the Land of Lovișteea represents approximately 40% of the total population, while the percentage of the occupied population reaches approximately 30%. Regarding the percentage of the occupied population in each of all the three economical branches, for the year 2002, an almost equal percentage can be observed, but with the dominance of the occupied persons in the secondary branch (approximately 35%).

The structure of the population in terms of the level of education. In the Land of Lovișteea a dominance of the population with medium and gymnasium studies is dominant, while the population with a higher education is poorly represented. This situation is due to the fact that, within the region we encounter a deep-seated rural conception, the population is aged and the region is poorly developed from an economical point of view. The highest number of the persons with a higher education is characteristic for the urban area, but this fact doesn't necessary mean a more increased concern for studies in comparison with the rural area, but can be considered as a consequence of the larger number of inhabitants and of the technical and residential endowments of the urban areas, which also involves the employment of a higher qualified labor force. The presence of a large number of illiterate persons shows some serious problems with matching consequences (both health and social problems).

The matrimonial structure of the population reveals a continuous and decreasing tendency of the concluded marriages within the localities of the Land of Lovișteea, while the divorce rate records some increasing values.

The habitational component of the loviștean territorial system

The system of settlements from the Land of Lovișteea was formed based on the conjunction of several diverse parameters (natural, historical, demographic and economic) which supported the appraisal of the population and the emergence and development of the settlements. Strongly connected to the dynamic component, the settlements appeared right after the localization of the population, even though the evidences showing their existence are of a much recent period. The written evidences are characteristic for the second millennium, especially for the 15th and 16th centuries, but, based on the archeological evidences, we can easily infer the oldness of these settlements, previous to the Roman domination period.

The loviștean system of settlements undergoes a typical classification of its components forasmuch as the demographic proportion, the typology and the volume of the economical, social and administrative activities diversified. The role as central place

for the loviștean system of settlements is played by the town of Brezoi, not only as a result of its spatial localization, relatively in the center of the unit, but also by means of its resources, provided services and relations with the adjacent spaces.

The territorial-administrative situation of the Land of Lovișteea suffered, throughout the time, different changes, until 1968 (when the current territorial division of Romania had taken place) being a part of the Argeș County (the eastern part of the region, up to the Olt River Valley, respectively the Boișoara, Titești, Perișani, Racovița and Câinenii Mici communes) and of the Vâlcea County (the case of the Câinenii Mari, Brezoi, Mălaia and Voineasa communes). After the year 1968 all the settlements passed under the “jurisdiction” of the Vâlcea County, a situation which is still characteristic for the present times as well.

Taking into account the configuration of the relief and the presence of certain water sources (water, ores, fertile lands etc.) the loviștean population generated a certain type of settlements, with the dispersion of the households around the entire area of the settlement, so that the heart of the locality is frequently mistaken with household area itself. Also, there are situations where the households are grouped, especially in the nearness of the rivers and of the smoother surfaces, but the characteristic type of settlement for the Land of Lovișteea is the dotted about type.

In the Land of Lovișteea, the density of the rural settlements recorded some reduced values, from 0.6 villages/100 sq km in Voineasa (which also represents the minimal value of this parameter), to 11.99 villages/100 sq km in Racovița (the highest recorded value). The regional average value is quite reduced, 2.30 villages/ 100 sq km. This situation is the result of the reduced number of villages (a total of 40 villages) in regards to the entire surface of the region (1431.32 sq km). The distinctiveness resulted from this parameter is referring to the reduced number of villages per commune and implicitly per region. Within the entire territory, there are a total number of 41 settlements, the town of Brezoi- the only urban area comprising a total of 7 out of the 40 rural settlements (even though in this case there is a strict reference to the rural settlements, we considered important to mention the urban area as well due to the fact that, besides the actual town, the localities comprised within this territory possess genuine rural characteristics).

The typology of the villages in dependence with the numbers of inhabitants reveals a limited palette of settlements, with different sizes (very small, small and medium sized villages), but with the dominance of the very small and small villages. The first category of very small rural settlements contains a total number of 14 villages with less than 200 inhabitants per settlement, or even fewer than 100 inhabitants (the case of the Corbu, Priloge, Râu Vadului villages). This value represents 35% of the total number of settlements, each commune possessing villages with such reduced demographic size. The small sized villages with 200 to 500 inhabitants give the definitive aspect of the region by means of its 40% of the total rural settlements. This category also contains settlements from every locality, but with the specification that Racovița and Perișani are centers of commune. The medium size villages with 500-1500 inhabitants cover 25% of the total number of villages, many of them representing communal centers.

The Land of Lovișteea is a poorly urbanized region, Brezoi being the only town within its territories and having a total number of 6859 inhabitants (in 2002). Its affiliation in the urban category occurred in 1968 when, from strategic and not

necessarily functional reasoning was declared a town, being hence supported by an intense policy of industrialization sustained by the communist regime. By means of its adjacency to an intense wooded territory, the town of Brezoi became an important center for the wood exploitation and refinement processes.

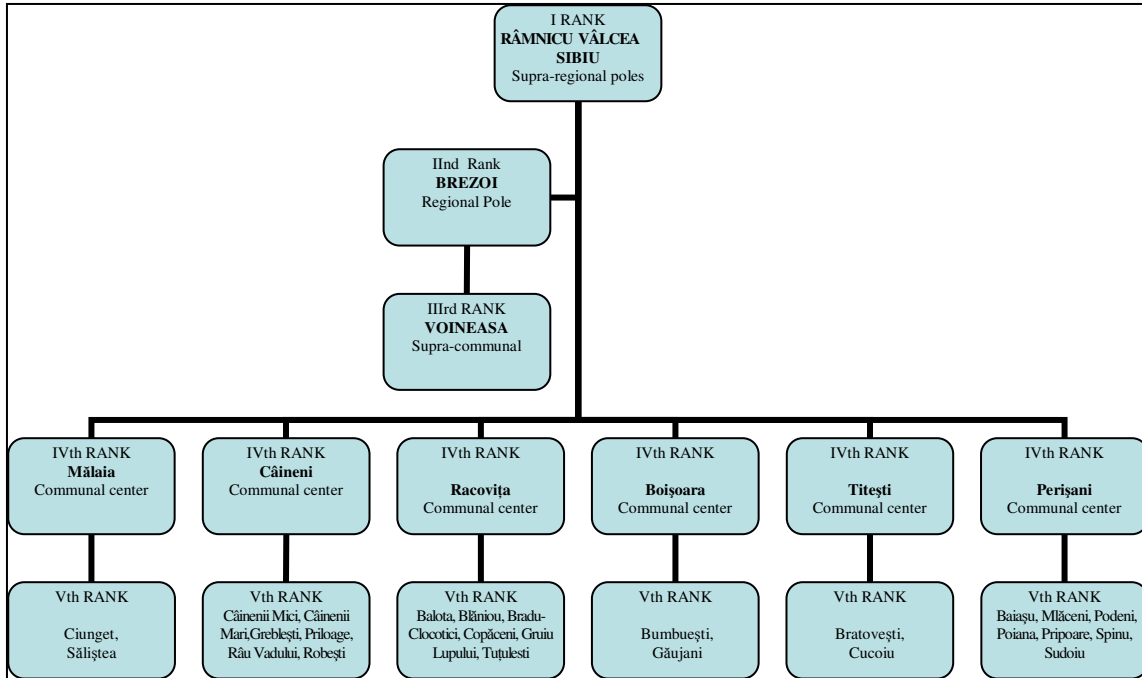


Fig. 1. – *The holarchy of the polarizing centers for the population of the Land of Loviștea*

The locative fund in the Land of Loviștea. The dwellings of the population from the Land of Loviștea represent the primary nucleus which shelters the human element participating to the delineation of the overview of the region by means of its characteristic architecture and at the same time and along with the impress of the intrinsic image of the dwelling contributes to the individualization of the mental space. Due to the specificity of this geographical region, the rural households from the Land of Loviștea do not possess a great spreading of the courtyard; on the contrary, for an economy of space, the households are comprised by the inhabited house, a barn or a stable, a courtyard and possibly a kitchen garden located on the back of the house.

Regarding the numerical evolution and the dynamic of the locative fund from the Land of Loviștea (for the period 2003-2007), a slight increase for the entire region, in the number of households can be observed, more pronounced in the urban area. The current situation is not a result of the increase in the number of the population, but of the increasing requirements of the population and of the demand for comfort in strict correlation with the increase of the level of economic welfare, and in some cases as a result of the abroad migration of the population. We consider this slight but constant increasing tendency as an important indicator of the quality of life of the inhabitants, which we can presume that has improved in the recent years, a fact which can be highlighted by the inhabitable surface per inhabitant. This ratio permits an accurate interpretation of the situation characteristic for the analyzed region regarding the inhabitable surface which corresponds to each individual.

Table 1. – Inhabitable surface/inhabitant (2007)

Locality	Total inhabitable surface (sqm)	Total of the stable population (number)	Inhabitable surface/inhabitant (sqm)
Brezoi	92163	6990	13,18
Boișoara	26070	1484	17,56
Câineni	39899	2502	15,94
Mălaia	29458	1924	15,31
Perișani	32310	2490	12,97
Racovița	24709	1878	13,15
Titești	20306	1144	17,75
Voineasa	34191	1661	20,58

*Vâlcea County Department of Statistics

Another important indicator in the analysis of the residential infrastructure in the Land of Lovișteea is represented by the inhabitable surface per dwelling ratio, in this case a dominance of the limited surfaces, with values ranging from 27 to 38 sq m/dwelling being observed.

Table 2. - Inhabitable surface/dwelling (2007)

Locality	Total inhabitable surface (sq m)	Existing dwellings (number)	Inhabitable surface /dwelling (sq m)
Brezoi	92163	2770	33,27
Boișoara	26070	956	27,26
Câineni	39899	1136	35,12
Mălaia	29458	770	38,25
Perișani	32310	1008	32,05
Racovița	24709	824	29,98
Titești	20306	584	34,77
Voineasa	34191	892	38,33

*Vâlcea County Department of Statistics

The technical infrastructure of the territory. Any region, regardless of its spatial expansion, possesses a certain degree of equipment of its territory, and based on some specific indicators, the level of development of the region can be observed (the interdependence relation between the technical equipment of the region and the standard of living of the population from that region).

The water supply system, the sewerage system

The water supply system for the inhabitants from the Land of Lovișteea is made from the main rivers (from the Olt River, from the Lotru River and from the Boia Mare River). Even though these rivers possess a remarkable hydrologic potential, an insufficiency in the water supply of the households can be observed, existing a large number of households which haven't been fastened to the water supply system, in many of the cases these systems lacking completely.

Table 3. - The drinkable water supply network (km)

Locality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Brezoi	12,8	52,5	52,7	54,5	54,5
Boișoara	0	20	22,5	22,5	22,5
Câineni	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3
Mălaia	50	5	5	5	5
Perișani	6,3	6,3	6,3	15,8	15,8
Racovița	0	0	0	0	0
Titești	4	4	4	4	0
Voineasa	10,6	10,6	10,6	10,6	10,6

*Vâlcea County Department of Statistics

The sewerage system characteristic for the Land of Loviștea is defined by its presence within the urban area and by its absence in the rural one, with only one exception (within the Voineasa locality the length of the sewerage system in of 1 km).

The natural gas supply system within the Land of Loviștea is completely inexistent.

The electricity supply system of the localities sustains the national energetic system by means of the presence of the hydro-energetic plants from the Olt, Lotru and Boia rivers. The transport of the electricity towards consuming areas is made throughout a system of high tension power lines.

The technical equipment of the Land of Loviștea, with its insufficient endowments, especially in the rural areas demonstrates a poor territorial development and modernization.

The information mediums. The most used information mediums of the inhabitants from the Land of Loviștea are represented by the postal and telephonic services.

The communication system. By means of its communication systems, the Land of Loviștea establishes connections with the rest of the Vâlcea County as well as with other surrounding counties.

The road system is represented by a large number of roads, from the European ones to the communal or forestry ones. All access roads from the Land of Loviștea (as a part of the Oltenia South-Western Development Region) are under the administration of the Craiova Regional Department for Roads and Bridges.

E 81 is a part of the 4th Pan-European Road Transport Corridor from Pitești to Râmnicu Vâlcea and Sibiu, being the only European road which crosses the region and which has taken over the routing of the 7th national road, along the Olt River Valley. It's of a great importance, especially by means of the established connections between Transylvania and Oltenia, and from here to the rest of the regions, but also by means of its intense traffic for the cargo transport. This road crosses the Land of Loviștea on a north-south direction, on the following route: Râu Vadului-Câinenii Mari-Câinenii Mici-Robești-Balota-Tuțulești-Călinești-Proieni-Corbu, and the Câineni, Racovița and Brezoi localities.

DN 7 A connects the localities from the Lotru River Valley and meets with E 81 at Brezoi, and with DN 67C at the Obârșia Lotrului locality and continues westwards, towards Petroșani.

DN 67 C is an important roadway known as Transalpina or the “Royal Road” being located at the highest altitude in Romania (the Urdele pass, 2145 m). This artery possesses a multitude of utilities (such as touristic, strategic or pastoral) and connects Oltenia with Transylvania by means of an extremely attractive natural landscape. In the case of the Land of Loviștea this road network crosses the region from the western part, on a north-south direction, on a total length of approximately 40 km.

DJ 703 M connects the localities from the eastern part of the region, respectively the Perișani and Cornet localities.

DJ 703 H connects the Surdoiu and Poiana villages (from the Perișani commune) and continues in the Argeș County.

Besides these road arteries, the entire region is crossed by other locally important roads (such as the communal or the forestry roads), very used by the population, in many cases, even more than the larger ones.

Another category of roads, important for the Land of Loviștea is represented by the traditional pastoral roads “the pathways” used in shepherding. Many of these roads were used for the connection of the isolated settlements with the pastures.

The railway transport is of a secondary importance due to the lack of the electrified lines. The access is represented by the normal and simple railway line spread alongside the Olt River Valley (an area extremely difficult to approach) being a part of the 200 Railway which connects the town of Sibiu with Râmnicu Vâlcea.

CHAPTER V. THE SOCIAL ASPECTS

The social security is a measure capable of assuring a certain life standard of the population from a given territory, regardless of the means found at its disposal (by means of the assertion of different policies and specialized programs). In the Land of Loviștea, a large number of the population (approximately 2.5% of the entire population of the region) is recorded in the database of the Department for Social Protection. In this database, different under-privileged categories are included such as: unemployed persons, children and adolescents, as well as other categories of the population.

Table 3. – *The number of the social security beneficiaries (at June, 30th, 2010)*

Locality	Total	Single persons	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	more than 5 persons
Brezoi	86	29	23	15	9	8	2
Boișoara	17	13	4	0	0	0	0
Câineni	47	1	9	15	13	6	3
Mălaia	8	8	0	0	0	0	0
Perișani	114	65	18	13	8	14	8
Racovița	104	36	24	14	8	14	8
Titești	42	20	12	3	3	3	1
Voineasa	6	4	2	0	0	0	0

* Vâlcea’s County Department for Social Conscripton

The retired persons represent another category of the population with special needs, even though their income is the result of their labor activities carried out throughout their active period. The highest recorded value (from a numerical point of view) is found in the Perișani and Căineni communes, where approximately 25% of the total population fits this category, followed by the Boișoara, Mălaia and Voineasa communes with some lower recorded values, while Brezoi records only 3% of the entire population included in this category. The quantum of the average retiring pension represents an indicator capable of allowing a life standard analysis of the persons to which is addressed to. The highest value is characteristic for the town of Brezoi where the average retiring pension is of about 653 lei, higher values being recorded in the case of the Mălaia and Voineasa localities. In fact this situation is somehow characteristic for the entire western part of the region as a result of the harsh labor conditions in which the current retired persons worked, the majority of them being employed in the wood exploitation and refinement activities. The lowest recorded values are characteristic for the Titești, Perișani and Boișoara localities, where the quantum of the average retiring pension is around 460 lei.

The medical and sanitary infrastructure of the territorial system

The Land of Lovișteea benefits from a medical and sanitary aid below the national threshold (718 inhabitants per doctor and 199 inhabitants per sanitary personnel), possessing a total number of 1655 inhabitants per doctor and 1037 inhabitants per sanitary personnel. In many of the rural settlements only primary medical care is provided, for other specialized services, the rural inhabitants being forced to appeal to other medical facilities from the urban areas (such is the case of the Brezoi Town Hospital). Also, the quality of the medical act is usually lower in the rural areas, mostly due to the lack of the required medical equipment.

The educational infrastructure

The educational units characteristic for the loviștean territory are of a local importance, mostly primary and gymnasium education being provided. The largest number of educational units is found in the urban area, where 4 units are encountered among them, the only high school of the entire region. In the rest of the settlements different sized primary and gymnasium schools are encountered, depending on the numerical potential of the pupils from those settlements. From a technical and residential point of view, the most precarious situation is found in the schools from the rural areas. The endowment with didactic materials is meager; many of the educational units requiring rehabilitation measures in regard to their laboratories as well as their endowment with the necessary equipments in order to achieve the required professional preparation standards. For example, the essential endowments for the development of a well established informational educational system are quite modest (5 personal computers per 100 pupils – representing the regional average value).

In regards to the number of the enrolled pupils in an educational form (primary, gymnasium, high school or professional and trade schools), for the year 2007 a total value of 2272 pupils is identified. Among them, the largest part is enrolled in the primary and gymnasium educational system (approximately 85%), while the only 8.8% of the

total number of pupils is enrolled in a high school structure and 5% of the total number of pupils is enrolled in a professional or trade school structure.

The didactic personnel is in accordance with the number of pupils, the largest part (approximately 90%) being employed in the primary or gymnasium educational system, while only 9% of the didactic staff is employed in the high school structures.

The Ioviștean cultural component is represented by the libraries, by the community centers and by the Brezoi House of Culture. The analysis of this component revealed an insufficiency of the cultural infrastructure as well as of the characteristic cultural manifestations.

CHAPTER VI. THE ECONOMY

The agriculture of the Land of Iovișteea appears as an important (forasmuch as a large part of the economical activities are developed within the primary field of activity), but not sufficiently attractive and efficient element for the local population involved in this type of activities. Without any other activities, the agriculture remains the primary source of nourishment and income, for an important category of the population. The characteristic form of agriculture for the Land of Iovișteea is the subsistence one. The total surface of the region is of 1657.44 sq km and only 275.96 sq km is represented by agricultural surfaces, which is only 17% of the entire surface. This situation is partially due to the natural restrictive elements (relief, climate, soils). In the category of the agricultural surfaces, the largest part is represented by the grasslands and natural hayfields, while the cultivated surfaces (with cereals, vegetables and fruit trees) possess reduced surfaces.

Table 4. – The agricultural surfaces (2007)

Locality	Agricultural surface (ha)	% of the total surface	The total surface (ha)
Brezoi	677	2.99%	22612
Boișoara	4556	57.06%	7984
Câineni	3601	14.13%	25477
Mălaia	3231	8.21%	39322
Perișani	4016	25.46%	15773
Racovița	1539	26.37%	5836
Titești	1682	65.72%	2559
Voineasa	8294	17.95%	46181
Total	27596	16.64%	165744

* Vâlcea County Department of Statistics

In the structure of the agricultural fund, three types of surfaces are identified: the arable lands, the orchards and the grasslands and hayfields. In the first category, numerous types of cultures are included (cereals, potatoes, different vegetables and fodder plants).

For the entire region, *the arable surface* occupies only 6.73% of the entire territory, with differentiations from a settlement to another, depending on the climatic parameters, on the soil fertility and on the economic profile of the settlement.

The rearing activities represent the most important element of the Ioviștean agriculture, based on the increased number of surfaces occupied by grasslands and

natural hayfields as well as on the perpetuation of the traditions regarding the ovine and cattle breeding. Nevertheless, nowadays the total number of the different species is much diminished.

Table 5. – *The number of animals from the Land of Lovișteea (2009)*

Locality / species /heads	Bovines	Swine	Ovine	Caprine	Birds	Caballine	Bees (families)
Brezoi	350	260	1300	990	2324	103	420
Boișoara	1834	838	9759	546	2886	322	220
Câineni	736	838	9800	1013	2995	138	76
Mălaia	360	226	320	620	2027	32	0
Titești	650	600	4500	70	5500	250	0
Perișani	1203	388	12500	215	5500	350	200
Racovița	399	120	2500	66	1500	120	270
Voineasa	210	421	1420	30	1800	0	160

*Vâlcea County Department for Agriculture and Rural Development

The agriculture could become leverage in the development and revival of the region by means of the promotion of the traditional characteristic natural and bio products (such as of the Lovișteea Cheese, or the Lovișteea Plum Brandy), which nowadays are more and more difficult to find.

Fishing and hunting. The importance of these activities derives from their complementarities with the rest of the occupations, currently their status as basic activities being considerably reduced.

The industrial capitalization in the Land of Lovișteea. The highest concentration of the industrial units, as well as the largest number of employed persons in this field is held by the town of Brezoi, followed by the localities from the western part of the region, Voineasa and Mălaia which hold the primacy of the energetic (by means of the objectives and number of employed persons within this industry) and extractive industries (the exploitations of the pegmatite with mica and feldspar from the Vasilatu, Voineasa and Cataractele Lotrului mines).

As percentage of employed persons, the industrial phenomenon occupies a third of the total number of employed persons, the dominant industries in this regards being the processing industry, the energetic one and the construction industry (different constructions).

The processing industry holds 37% of the total employed persons which activate in the industry. In this category are included the wood refinement processes and the obtaining of the wooden products, followed by the refinement of dairy products with the obtaining of the milk derived products. For the first category the Mălaia commune is significant due to the presence of timbering factory, with old traditions in the wood refinement processes (the „Lotru”, „Vasilatu”, „Carpatina” and Pak Forest factories). Due to the fact that the raw material (the wood) is abundant and accessible, the wood refinement industry is the most developed within the region. In this regard, we mustn't neglect this resource's role for the Land of Lovișteea, because its exploitation and refinement led to the coagulation of a distinct space around the polarizing center Brezoi, a situation which perpetuated throughout the time and which is manifested still. In other

words, one of the factors which sustained the emergence of the land type region was represented by this resource and by its exploitation.

Regarding the refining of the dairy products a processing unit is encountered in Perișani where different characteristic products are obtained: “the Lovistea Cheese”, “the Perișani Truckle Cheese”. These products are traditional products, registered and certified by the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The energetic industry is characteristic for the western part of the region and it's represented by the localities spread alongside the Lotru River Valley where numerous hydro-electrical units are found.

The extractive industry from the Land of Loviștea is based on the rich digging of pegmatite with feldspar and mica from the Vasilatu, Voineasa and Cataractele Lotrului mines.

The commercial phenomenon. The commerce characteristic for the Land of Loviștea is deeply rooted in its history, when, along with the settlement at the border of the former historical provinces (the Romanian State and Transylvania) – a favorable situation by means of its easy access to the Olt River Valley, an intense commercial phenomenon was flowering. In that period a great variety of products was commercialized, from different animals to animal products or other manufactured products. In the communist period the commerce was unfolded in each village by means of two characteristic units, namely the mixed village store and the buffet. In time, the palette diversified and food stores, vegetable and fruit stores, or other stores which had different chemical, textile or shoe products appeared. Characteristic were the supplying stores of the workers from the forestry industry – such as the SAM (Serviciul Alimentar pentru Muncitori – the Food Service for the Workers). In the post-communist period the commerce diversified even more, the private initiative appeared and diverse new units were established (the commercialization of food, drug or building materials). Even with these new stores, the most commonly known modality of trade and commerce of products remained the Titești Fair. This gathering was born from the necessity to trade products, to socialize and even from matrimonial reasons, addressed especially to the population occupied by the transhumant shepherding who did not had within their villages where to purchase the necessary products due to the fact that they stood in the mountains for the entire summer period. This fair lasted even a month, different traders arriving from Oltenia, Muntenia and Transylvania to sell or to buy animals, wooden products, wool, skins etc. The product trade was carried out outside their area of descent, many situations being encountered when the loviștean traders loaded their goods (clapboards, timber, furniture, different traditional technical instruments, wool) in the carloads and headed towards the larger markets of the urban centers (such as Sibiu or Râmnicu Vâlcea) or towards lower areas where this type of products were lacking. Usually the trade was carried out “full up” which meant that, for a box full of maize flour, an equal quantity of cereals was traded.

The characterization of the trades and commercial relations within the loviștean space represent a stumbling rock for the researchers, due to the fact that this phenomenon does not possess an appreciable dimensionality and the lack of the official information darkened even more this intercession. The main products traded by the loviștean

population are the traditional ones (animal products such as meat, wool, skins, honey, berries and wooden products).

The service industry represents an important element for the economy of the Land of Lovișteea, sustained by the private initiative after 1990. Nowadays this sector is based on a wide range of activities such as banking, juridical, insurance, transport, constructions, educational or health services. Taking into account the fact that the input of the human element in the service industry is determinant, a representative indicator of assessing its dimensionality is represented by the percentage of the population employed in this field, in relation to the entire occupied population.

Table 6. – *The number of the population employed in the service industry (2007)*

Locality	Employed in services	Total employees
Brezoi	335	826
Boișoara	37	76
Câineni	87	314
Mălaia	67	308
Racovița	67	193
Perișani	77	185
Titești	33	45
Voineasa	55	387

* Vâlcea County Department of Statistics

As one can observe, the largest number of employed persons in the service industry is within the urban area, as a result of the size of the locality and of its importance in the region (a polarizing center from an industrial, juridical, educational, sanitarian point of view). Within the rural areas, localities such as Câineni, Mălaia, Racovița or Perișani recorded values of the employed persons of 60 to 90 persons, while the last places are occupied by the Voineasa, Boișoara and Titești localities with values ranging from 30 to 60 employees.

The touristic phenomenon in the Land of Lovișteea. Having as a starting point the remarkable touristic potential (both natural and anthropic), the touristic phenomenon is characterized by a distinct development and contributes along with the shepharding and wood refinement, to the completion of the economic profile of the region. The largest extent of the touristic phenomenon is characteristic for the western part of the region, the Lotru River Valley representing a propagation axis of the touristic flux towards the mountain area. The attractive elements of these places are determined by the presence of the Lotru, Latoriței and Căpățâni Mountains and by the wild valley of the Lotru River. Characterized by a sheltering climate (offered by the orographic barrier of the mountains), with a clean and fresh air, this area determined the establishment of a very well known climacteric resort, namely the Voineasa resort which offers the perfect place for relaxation. The biogeographic component of the region enhances the number of attractions of the area by means of the dominance of the forestry vegetation which shelters wild hunting or endemic species. Another attractive area, from a natural point of

view is represented by the western extremity of the Făgăraș Mountains located at the north-eastern part of the region. Towards the south are located the Cozia Mountains which shelters one of the Romania's most spectacular protected areas – the Cozia National Park. Last but not least, the attraction of the region is completed by a segment of the Olt Defile (Turnu Rosu-Cozia), which by means of its spectacular relief forms delights the visitors, even those who only transit the region. Other elements of attraction are the large number of protected areas spread within the region's territory: the Cristești reserve, the Jnepenișul Stricatul Reserve, the Piciorul Boului Pit, the Călinești-Brezoi forest, the Latorița forest, the Gâlcescu circus, the Latorița mountain lake, the Miru-Bora reserve. These are, from a touristic point of view the natural elements with a polarizing role, within the Land of Lovișteea.

The touristic anthropic potential is generated by the presence of numerous historical findings, from the Dacian and Roman periods, up to the traces of the Second World War. Attractive is also the traditional architecture, the wooden house with a porch representing the central element of the villatic universe. The combination between the ethnographical elements and folklore in a unique and authentic assembly (by means of the mixture of elements from Oltenia, Muntenia and Transylvania) represent another reason for the touristic flux of the region. The ethno-folkloric events (nedei - villatic festivals, traditions and customs related to shepharding, to the religious holidays, to the important events in the village's life such as the wedding etc.) contributes to the cultural and attractive heritage of the region. Also, one must not neglect the large number of barrier lakes built for energetic purposes of the Lotru River valley. Also, in this manner the presence of the halidoms is to be mentioned, along with the monuments dedicated to the heroes of our kind and the traditional activities such as weaving, the vintage, harvesting the maize, the hayrack etc.

CHAPTER VII. THE LAND OF LOVIȘTEA AS A SPATIAL MENTAL PROJECTION

The primary activity to which we refer in the study of this component, essential for the land type regions, begins with the delineation of the territory where the mental space is manifested by means of certain distinct features. If in the case of the territorial delineation the morphometric elements were emphasized, the mental delineation involves certain human attributes (of experience, of perception and assumption). The characteristics of the region's relief (depressionary area, mountain space) led to the manifestation of certain mental distinctiveness resulting two types of mental micro-spaces: an enclosed one (with reference to the heart of the Land of Lovișteea or the Popular Lovișteea as defined by I. Conea) namely Boișoara, Titești, Perișani, Căineni, Racovița and an "opened" mental space ((Brezoi, Mălaia, Voineasa). The influence of the mountain space in the ethno genesis of the Romanian people (an aspect meticulously emphasized by P. Cocean in his paper *The Carpathians as an archetype mental space of the Romanian people*, 2004-2005) is quite remarkable. In this regard we need to emphasize the importance of the reference of the loviștean population to the Carpathian space, from an economical (in terms of resource exploitation), social (in terms of defense) and especially spiritual point of view (aspirations and beliefs).

The central figure of the mental space is the **man**, a corollary of all the determinant causes and effects, by means of its relations with the territory on which he inhabits. The basis of the pyramid is represented by the **earth**, the loviștean's most precious asset. In this case, the earth does not carry out only the function of support, but, by means of the man's attachment towards it, embraces remarkable characteristics. Regarding the *attachment to the ancestral land* (land, property, fallow ground) for the Land of Loviștea an acerbic development of an earth's cult can be observed, which under any circumstance mustn't be alienated. **The forest**, as a product of the land, represents another important element of the loviștean inhabitant's universe, especially by means of its contribution to the establishment of the population (the forest played a sheltering and refuge role as well as source of nourishment and income). The wood was used as a "trading piece" for the loviștean population, either as a rough resource or finite product.

The mental space is defined by the **household**, with its central element, that *axis mundi* of the household universe, namely the **parental home**. **The house and the loviștean household** are distinct elements which singularize the loviștean habitat in comparison with the neighboring areas and with other land type regions.

Regarding the contribution of the people to the delineation of the loviștean mental space, several important characteristics which differentiate the loviștean population from the rest of the neighboring populations (inhabitants from the Mărginimea Sibiului region or from the Argeș County) are to be mentioned. In this regard as distinct physical features is the medium height of the individuals, well proportionate, with olive-colored complexion, brown hair, brown eyes and with an oval face. The spiritual profile of the loviștean population "betrays" a faithful man, who fears of God and who respects the dogma and clergy, as well as its community. From a social point of view, the loviștean inhabitant appears as a sociable, unflinching, ambitious, proud, respectful, honest, perfectionist man; regarding its psychological portrait, the loviștean possesses a choleric behavior.

The unwritten law represents a marker of the loviștean population which sets up the way of things; it's practical an entity which cumulates all the practices, all the customs, all the traditions and all the manifestations which govern the human existence, playing a primordial role in the generation of the local distinctiveness. For the loviștean community, other important aspects are represented by the mythical manifestations, the *nedeia* and by other rituals which accompany important events in the man's existence.

All the components of the loviștean mental space lose their credibility and importance in front of God, which represent the superior element which bows and incorporates all values. As a mostly Christian-Orthodox population (over 98% of the entire population) the loviștean population conforms to the ecclesiastical dogmata, the central figure in the service of God being the cleric which rejoices over the prerogatives and respect of a remarkable personality. The Church, as a material element which relates the man with the Divinity possesses a well established place within the community, being located on the highest morphologic units (such as crests) in order to be seen from every angle and for the population to comprehend its importance (as a difficult place to reach).

The capitalization of the mental potential, as a component of the sustainable development of the Land of Loviștea as well as its assertion on a regional, national or even European scale represents the leverage towards the economical, social and cultural revival of the "land". This objective can be achieved by means of the preservation of the

cultural identity and by the conservation of the mental space (both material and immaterial) as a modality of assuring the social identity and solidarity.

CHAPTER VIII. THE SYNTHESIS OF THE LOVIȘTEAN TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

The functions of the Land of Loviștea

The defense function of the region was the primary condition for becoming a land (its strategic importance was sustained by numerous historical and archeological evidences).

The cultural function is sustained by a multitude of aspects: by the traditional architecture, by its ethnographic distinctiveness, by the traditions and customs which accompany different events and moments of the rural life, the traditional folk costumes, the culinary particularities of the region, as well as the ecclesiastical life of the community.

The economic function relies on the agrarian characteristics of the Land of Loviștea (rearing activities), as well as on the handicrafts (such as the artistic manufacturing of the wood or of the wool), exploitation and refinement of the forestry resource and on the touristic potential of the region.

The administrative function was determined by the localization of the town of Brezoi as a polarizing central place, located at the crossing of the gravitational axes (represented by the Olt and Lotru Rivers). This locality distinguished by means of its technical, residential well developed infrastructure as well as by means of its qualified human resource, its viable industry (electrical, forestry or light industry) and by its remarkable touristic potential.

The chorema of the loviștean territorial system

The chorematic representation of the Land of Loviștea surprises the essence of the territorial analysis by means of highlighting the favored/or un-favored areas in regards to certain elements, or fluxes of matter, energy or information which disseminate within or outside the system, as well as the network of points (with a central, sub-regional or supra-regional role).

The region presents itself as a space governed by the Brezoi regional pole and by the supra-regional poles Râmnicu Vâlcea and Sibiu and by (but on a smaller scale) Curtea de Argeș. The town of Brezoi forms the central area of the unit not only in regard to its polarizing role, but also by means of its geographical position (approximately in the center of the region) as an urban locality rank (with all the deriving consequences) and especially by its location at the interference of the fluxes from the two main important axes of the region, as well as by its role as an interference area between the traditional and modified (by means of innovation) mental spaces. Important is also the dynamic of the population which reveals the most active elements of this “place” (the highlighting of the confessional, ethnical, linguistic structures of the population). The propagation axes of the fluxes (especially in the case of the population) are more and more used, especially by the younger segment of the population who travels outside the “mother-region”

towards the other two towns with a supra-regional polarizing roles, in search of other alternatives of development.

The chorematic representation of the Land of Lovișteea represents a modality of systematize the entire region by means of surprising the distinctive elements, of preserving its identity and unity manifested throughout its polarization of its regional center and by the convergence of the fluxes towards this center.

CONCLUSIONS

The Land of Lovișteea was mentioned under this designation in the historical documents even since the 13th century, nowadays presenting itself as a distinct unit, with characteristics determined by the interrelations between its components.

The analysis of the natural component of this regional system revealed several elements of favorability, starting with **the relief** which with its friendly forms was offered proper conditions for the establishment and development of the anthropic component (*protection, support and source of income, etc.*), continuing with the sheltering **climate** (continental temperate moderate climate without any major excesses) and the **hydrographical component** (as an attractive element for the anthropic component – spaces adequate for its establishment (terraces, glacia), source of nourishment (lots of fish), support function for the economical activities (milling, wood exploitation and refinement, wool refinement), important hydro-energetic, touristic and recreational potential) and the **biogeographical elements** (a great ecological diversity, with numerous species of plants and animals, mostly alpine and sub-alpine resulting a great variety of landscapes). Once becoming aware of these qualities of the space the “germ” of the population began its exploitation, developing characteristic forms of inhabitation, thus becoming a unique entity, with distinct mental characteristics.

Taking into account the configuration of the relief and the presence of certain sources (such as water, wood, cores, fertile lands etc.) the loviștean population generated a certain type of settlements, with the dispersal of the households on the entire land, but the characteristic type of village remained the dotter about type. The only town within the region is Brezoi, with a total population of 6859 (in 2002). By means of its adjacency to an intense wooded territory, the town of Brezoi became an important center for the wood exploitation and refinement processes. At the same time, the town of Brezoi possesses the quality as a central place of the regional system, being hence responsible with the polarization of the entire loviștean territory, a situation which is determined especially by its localization at the crossing of the main gravitational axes of the system (namely the Olt River Valley and the Lotru River Valley).

The economic activities sustained the functionality of the system, by means of the forestry, pastoral and touristic exploitation, its distinct feature being therefore its resilience.

The Land of Lovișteea is also a territory governed by a complex semi-enclosed mental space, possessing a remarkable ethnographic distinctiveness based on the mixture of different Oltenian, Transylvanian or Muntenian elements.

The bond between the two physical – geographical, economically and mentally distinct units (the *eastern* depressionary area governed by primary economical activities,

with a traditional and conservatory mental space and the *western* mountain area dominated by tertiary activities (mainly touristic activities) and a modified mental space) is represented by the gravitational axis of the Olt River and by the polarizing function, over both sub-units, of the town of Brezoi.

Consequently, the Land of Lovișteea represents a practical example of a **land type region**, with a distinct **mental projection**, an **example of territorial organization** and a **brand**.

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