

The purpose of this study – *The Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia between the Jiu and the Bistrița Vâlcii rivers. Human Geography* – was to get a detailed knowledge of the human reality, of the socio-economic changes experienced by the population and settlements of the Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia. The analysis focused on three aspects: evolution, structure-functionality and typology. This approach is based on a big volume of information found in specialist works of geography, history, sociology, territorial planning, statistics and modern data quantification methods. Therefore, it is clearly an inter-disciplinary study.

Field investigations have been associated with bibliographical, cartographic, statistical data, diagrams and figures highlighting the type of organisation of the area under discussion, as well as its spatial and social entities: natural components, population, settlements, social and economic relations, etc.

The Oltenia Subcarpathian depressions have in time developed mostly a rural habitat. Our analysis had in view three levels: 1) *the nature-man relationship* in the Subcarpathian Corridor between the Jiu and the Bistrița Vâlcii rivers, part of the Getic Subcarpathians; 2) *the commune and the town*, the administrative units involved in numerous demographic and socio-economic aspects, and 3) *the village* and its groups of population.

The main goal was to emphasise the characteristic features of the population, settlements, and economy, the geographical landscape and development prospects. The work contains ten chapters.

The characteristic features of the natural factors (landform, geology, climate, water, vegetation, soil and subsoil resources) in the Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia are analysed in detail and correlated with the human element. The demographic indicators used emphasise the structural transformations in the settlements' social-economic and political life, as well as the specific types of demographic evolutions. Statistical data have been supplemented and correlated with field observations on local customs and traditions. Recent evolutions in the network of settlements are increasingly influenced by the economic and social-political factors. Local interests focus on the modality in which natural and human resources can be put to best account. This interest is expected to influence the organisation of the territory and, at the same time, augment the region's habitat potential.

Since the present work has a geographical character, one will find in it maps on various scales illustrating the phenomena discussed and helping the reader to "visualise" general elements and details alike. Statistical information (processed in the form of indicators suitable to a complex analysis of human geography) and other types of information found in the bibliographical references consulted and in field investigations have been synthesised and processed (cartographic schemata, tables and graphs) to best illustrate the contents of this study; suggestive photographic images are also included.

