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# Human Factor's Role in the Individualisation of Țara Beiușului's Territorial System

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## Introduction

Speaking about territory through its main and functional cells, the territorial systems, we concern about one of the newest tendencies of the Regional Geography, and in Romania as well. From this point of view this paper tries to analyse a specific region that is called „țara”, as Țara Beiușului.

The term „țara” although has a lot of semantic aspects even in the Romanian Language, it also has a very pregnant archaic scent, only at its bare pronunciation people can think at different aspects, some of them continually thinking at their own country, while others at their birth place, but in both cases the affective connotation of this word is very deeply. The word has Latin origins; „terra” was common in all documents of Cancelaria belonging to the King or the Pope during the Middle Age and was used to show the forms of local autonomy of Romanians. Nowadays we are the witnesses of a real rebirth of this notion of „țara” along with the Regional Geography.

In Romania „țările” are a very specific type of geographical regions, with a special place throughout the regions. Their originality resulted from their particular way of appearance, but it is still alive in the actual features. Their specific regional coherence is due to their multiple spiritual entities, born from the ancestors' connections between man and space. This regional coherence generates a feeling of belonging to this space and community, changed after that in collective conscience and even in their style of life. All these are included in series with some proper attributes:

- the historical origin (their illustration as regions in time);
- the geographical position (the majority of them are both Peri-Carpathian and depressions territories, their geographical position going to the maintenance of the archaic and independent character through isolation);
- a pregnant Romanian character (the population of these „țări” is in a very high proportion consisted of people belonging to the Romanian ethnic group);
- the community of language, faith, traditions and customs (the regional cohesion is given by the indissoluble spiritual entity between the human factor and his space/place of life, which increases in time, and in the end it will receive the attribute of a mental space).

## Methodology

The methodology of this paper is that of territorial systems, and it was introduced in the Regional Geography in Romania in the last years, and the first persons who spoke about this were I. Ianoș (2000) and P. Cocean (2002).

According to Ioan Ianoș (2000), territorial systems are „functional ensembles consisted in some elements and relations that have some final aims”.

I. Mac (2000) gave the definition of territorial system as „any geographical integrative entity existing as a material in space functions by an exchange of mass, energy and information between its constituents and between itself as a whole and the environment”.

From these two points of view it is clear that the definition of the regional systems functions in this case, as well, the attribute „territorial” being only a condition for their existence as a substructure of the whole territory. With such a formation of the territorial system it is obvious the fact that the region is a particular type of the territorial system, which developed depending on a series of processes and dealing with integration and territorial disparities, so the region as a territorial system will be named by the collocation of regional system.

### The limits of the regional system of Țara Beiușului

This regional system brings out a really complex problem, in that of its limits, being a direct consequence of its complexity during ages in a relatively closed space, which keeps the most authentic Romanian features, although with systemic functional valences.

According to the methodological conception regarding Țara Beiușului as a regional system, its limits are somewhat functional and they are not identical with the physico-geographical limits of Beiuș Depression. The limits of Țara Beiușului, as a regional system, were established according to the statements offered by the last theoretical studies that mentioned that a system-region or a regional system is the same in what the area and the space that is coordinated by its polarisation centre are regarded. Therefore, for Țara Beiușului it is obvious that at a regional level the polarisation is given by the Beiuș Town, the centre with the highest demographical potential and with important cultural tradition, as well.

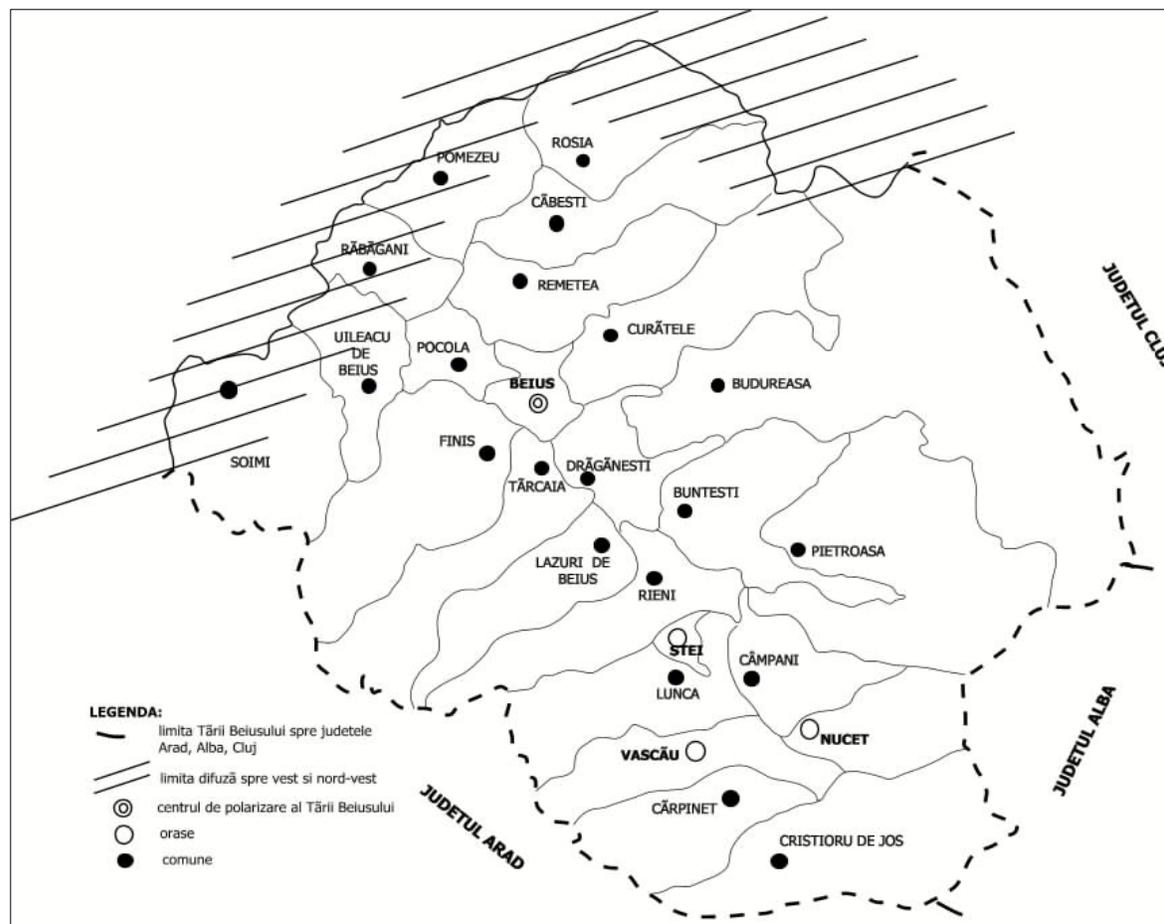


Figure 1. The limits of regional system of Țara Beiușului.

The limit is clear only in the mountain area, being obvious that the Beiuș Town polarises all the settlements around due to the existence of the morphological obstacle of the Apuseni Mountains and also taking in consideration the limit of the county established in the highest

mountain space that stopped the gravitation through other towns as: Huedin, Câmpeni, Abrud, Brad, Sebeș. Subsequently, the limit of this regional system through the mountain area superposes the administrative territorial limit of all the communes polarised by Beiuș Town and the limit of Bihor County with Cluj, Alba, Hunedoara and Arad counties.

Slightly complicated is the limit from the West and North-West parts, where the influence of Beiuș continuously decreases. Although, from the morphological point of view, the territory traversed by Topa Valley is situated in the West part of Drăgoteni Passage and Forău Knoll (the morphological limit between Țara Beiușului and Holod Depression) and this does not gravitate anymore to the axis of Pocola Depression, but to Holod Gulf, and even a part of these settlements are polarised by Beiuș, while the communes of Răbăgani and Pomezău belong to Beiuș Depression.

Towards the narrow path of Crisul Negru River the situation is more or less alike, because even the access to Beiuș is only along the narrow path on a not modernised road and in nearby there is Tinca locality with a supracomunal role of polarisation, the communes of Șoimi and Uileacu de Beiuș also belong to Țara Beiușului. Another fact that certifies all these is the name of some of them such as: Urviș de Beiuș, Poclusa de Beiuș, Sânicolau de Beiuș.

Thus, the limit of Țara Beiușului as a regional system is the same with the administrative limit of three towns (Ștei, Nucet, Vașcău) and 22 communes, and all this space is polarised by Beiuș. The communes that belong to Țara Beiușului are: Criștioru de Jos, Cărpinet, Câmpeni, Lunca, Rieni, Pietroasa, Buntești, Drăgănești, Lazuri de Beiuș, Târcaia, Finiș, Pocola, Remetea, Căbești, Roșia, Curățele, Budureasa, Uileacu de Beiuș, Șoimi, Răbăgani și Pomezău (figure 1).

### **The human factor in the regional system of Țara Beiușului**

As it was also shown by the methodology proposed in this paper, the regional system of Țara Beiușului is a well-structured ensemble in which its components are in a permanent relation for a specific purpose and they all properly combine each other in a type of space organisation that is different from that of the neighbouring territorial systems. Having the quality of a well-structured system we can notice that it encompasses a lot of components, each one of them being a system organised on a hierarchic level in its own complexity.

Aiming at analysing the regional system of Țara Beiușului we can distinguish a few main components at an immediate inferior level of a natural and anthropic macro-system. The human factor belongs to the anthropic macro-system consisted in three main elements with a systematic function: population, settlements and human activities (I. Ianoș, 2000). Its role for the regional system of Țara Beiușului is very important, and even its setting up as a region is established at the collective conscience level, and the actual physiognomy and functionality of the system are determined by the way in which this factor interferes with the others in order to create a specific type of space organisation. During ages, by its quantitative and qualitative aspects, the human factor imposed the emergence of the quality of țara for this space, resulted from the indispensable connections between the inhabitants of these places and their living space, perceived afterwards and intensively re-felt at a collective mental level that is proper and different from the neighbouring spaces. Țara Beiușului's individualisation as a specific region of Romania was a long standing process, conditioned by historical events, but rooted in the geographical position and morphological characters that confer it a relative isolation and a close character. In what the inhabitants are concerned, Pavel C. (1928) underlined: „all their past, following the isolation is reduced only to the conservation instinct. Through valleys' bents, through mountains' steep messes and openings they preserved as in a museum, the people, the language and also the customs of ancestors along with some remarkable local colours.” From the temporal point of view, this individualisation took place at more synchronic and successive levels, nowadays, one of them being perceived only as relict structures in the mentality of the local population: at political, economic, and cultural levels.

The first premises for the establishment of Țara Beiușului were of political nature, materialised in the appearance and the maintenance in this area of a deeply Romanian political organisation represented by knezdoms and voivodeships that lasted for ages despite all pressures and efforts done by the oppressors to impose their own forms. Consequently, in the natural shelter offered by the morphological environment, the Romanian people maintained their

own local autonomy and lived their life by their own laws, a fact certified by the existence of their own juridical organisation, in the shape of a judgement chair. Having in mind the political level, the individualisation of Țara Beiușului is older than the first documentary attestation, which reminds us about the knezdoms and voivodeships. The first statements about Țara Beiușului in the documents of period dated from the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century when it was registered as „the first feoff of Hungarian Catholic Bishopric of Oradea” (Pavel C., 1928).

Țara Beiușului's individualization took place at a social level as well, resulting from its specific element represented by its deeply Romanian character and the ethnical structure being its basis, where the predominant part is the Romanian ethny (table 1, figure 2), although during ages a lot of efforts were made to increase the number of Hungarian elements in this depression.

Both the toponimy and the traces of the cultural material clearly demonstrate that the ancient inhabitants of Țara Beiușului were the Romanians. The Hungarians came here, as well as in other Romanian territories, because they were members of the army's vanguard and their aim was to defeat the new conquered territories.

Table 1. The ethnical structure of population (by mother tongue) in Țara Beiușului (1880).

No.	Commune	The total number of population	Romanians	Hungarians		Others
				total	(%)	
1	Beiuș	2.947	1.367	1.313	44,55	267
2	Nucet	807	558	50	6,19	199
3	Stei	377	363	-	-	14
4	Vascau	2.570	2.322	146	5,68	22
5	Budureasa	2.287	2.158	19	0,83	109
6	Buntești	3.769	3.610	25	0,66	134
7	Căbești	2.870	2.762	19	0,66	88
8	Câmpani	1.853	1.785	1	0,05	67
9	Cărpinet	2.433	2.328	13	0,53	92
10	Criștioru de Jos	2.191	2.104	6	0,27	81
11	Curățele	2.905	2.783	19	0,65	103
12	Drăgănești	2.224	1.971	166	7,46	87
13	Finis	2.354	933	1.269	53,90	152
14	Lazuri de Beiuș	2.180	2.100	13	0,59	67
15	Lunca	2.253	2.151	14	0,62	92
16	Pietroasa	2.865	2.722	29	1,01	114
17	Pocola	1.813	1.671	30	1,65	112
18	Pomezău	3.073	2.879	73	2,37	121
19	Răbăgani	2.001	1.887	60	2,99	54
20	Remetea	3.470	2.751	582	16,77	137
21	Rieni	2.175	2.086	23	1,05	66
22	Roșia	2.006	1.874	1	0,04	131
23	Șoimi	3.426	3.272	42	1,22	112
24	Târcaia	2.151	1.053	1.016	47,23	82
25	Uileacu de Beiuș	2.927	2.126	707	24,15	94
<b>26</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>59.927</b>	<b>51.616</b>	<b>5.636</b>	<b>9,40</b>	<b>2.597</b>

Their aim in Țara Beiușului was to supervise Finis Fortress because of its location at that specific time, exactly at the Easter border of the Empire. This role is also demonstrated by the Hungarians' position in Țara Beiușului. They maintained themselves in the hearth of depression without ingoing towards centre. Under the Hungarian domination Țara Beiușului was a national space with its own institutions and organizations, exactly the same way other national territories from Ardeal were: Țara Maramureșului, Țara Hațegului etc. A strong argument for the oldness of Romanians and their continuity in Țara Beiușului is provided by the illustration of Beiuș domain in 1712, consisted in 127 villages, and 9 of them had a mixture of Romanian and Hungarian population (Ana Ilea, 1987).

Nowadays, of about 200 villages, only 7 of them still have a mixture of Romanian and Hungarian population. Analyzing the ethnical structure of population, by mother tongue, from Țara Beiușului at the 1880 Census the appearance, even in a small number, of people belonging to the Hungarian Language, in almost all the villages, can be surprising although it is

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exactly known that the Hungarians did not go into the centre. An explanation can be found in the correlation between ethnical structure, by mother tongue, and the confessional structure mentioning that in these villages the Jewish religion exists as well. Thus, we can notice that Jewish people were settled in Țara Beiușului, but by their mother tongue they were included by the Hungarians.



Figure 2. The ethnical structure of population in Țara Beiușului (1880).

Religion was another important element of social individualization for Țara Beiușului. Most of the Romanian population kept the Orthodox religion (only a few of them passed to the Greek-Catholics) despite the Calvinist offensive in this space. The Orthodox priests played a very important role in the maintenance of their national character.

The Census of 1880 provided us some arguments in this respect, the Orthodox Church having 82,14%, the Greco-Catholic Church 7,5%, therefore it obviously appears the domination of the Romanians' religion with 89,66% (table 2 and figure 3).

Table 2. The confessional structure of population in Țara Beiușului (1880).

No.	Commune	The total number of population	The orthodox religion		The greco-catholic religion	The roman-catholic religion	The reformat religion	Others
			Total	(%)				
1	Beiuș	2.947	645	21,88	923	524	566	289
2	Nucet	807	150	18,58	423	229	2	3
3	Stei	377	377	100,00	-	-	-	-
4	Vascau	2.570	2.388	92,91	14	119	9	40
5	Budureasa	2.287	2.261	98,86	4	1	-	21
6	Buntești	3.769	3.735	99,06	-	-	1	33
7	Căbești	2.870	2.832	98,67	9	2	3	24
8	Câmpani	1.853	1.852	99,94	-	-	-	1
9	Cărpinet	2.433	2.413	99,17	-	-	-	20
10	Criștioru de Jos	2.191	2.171	99,08	4	1	1	9
11	Curățele	2.905	2.878	99,07	3	3	1	20
12	Drăgănești	2.224	1.865	83,85	183	3	146	27
13	Finiș	2.354	53	2,25	967	16	1.314	4
13	Lazuri de Beiuș	2.180	2.161	99,12	-	-	-	19
14	Lunca	2.253	2.235	99,20	-	9	-	9
15	Pietroasa	2.865	2.805	97,90	8	31	4	17
16	Pocola	1.813	1.065	58,74	707	10	9	22
17	Pomezău	3.073	2.987	97,20	3	5	26	52
18	Răbăgani	2.001	1.924	96,15	2	3	5	67
19	Remetea	3.470	2.660	76,65	206	-	570	34
20	Rieni	2.175	2.143	98,52	2	6	-	24
21	Roșia	2.006	1.995	99,45	-	1	-	10
22	Șoimi	3.426	3.360	98,07	15	8	10	33
23	Târcaia	2.151	1.071	49,79	17	5	1.056	2
24	Uileacu de Beiuș	2.927	1.175	40,14	1.021	1	706	24
25	<b>Total</b>	<b>59.927</b>	<b>49.201</b>	<b>82,14</b>	<b>4.511</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>4.429</b>	<b>804</b>

Another element of social individualization since Middle Age is represented by the rights and privileges of Romanians from Țara Beiușului in their relation to the Feudal lords who admitted, even if indirectly, their individuality. Some of their rights were: the right to choose the priest, the judgment right, some trade privileges and taxation facilities, which other ones had to pay for to the Federal lord of their territories (Ana Ilea, 1987).

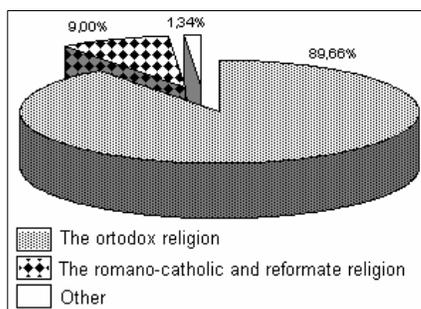


Figure 3. The confessional structure of population in Țara Beiușului, 1880.

Later on, the economic element also interfered in the individualization of this space. During the 18th century the economic life was prosperous and represented by manufactures (the smithery of Vașcău, the beer domain's house of Beiuș) and agriculture, as well.

A very important role was played by the fairs from Beiuș and Vașcău. In this context the appearance of handicrafts at a settlements' level is something usual, being also conditioned by the existence of local raw materials, the tradition of manufactories, the reduced productivity of the agricultural land and the existence of market sale.

It is known for a fact that the specialized trade did not reach in any other part of the country such a high level as it did here, in Țara Beiușului. There are a lot of centres recognized for pottery Lelești, Valea de Jos, Săliște de Vașcău, Criștior; for dowry chest making in Budureasa, for rustic furniture in Tărcăița, for iron and wooden agricultural tools in Beiușele, Burda; for pots and units of measurement of the wood dishes in Gurani; for weaving in Pietroasa; for thick long coating in Sârbești; and for furrier's establishment in Poienii de Jos (Stefănescu, B. et al., 2001).

In conclusion, complementary to the dominant agricultural activities, the Romanian people of Țara Beiușului have developed an economic system that permitted them to produce all they needed at a local level, within the village. After that, the trade between villages started to take place in Beiuș's fair. This kind of economic life permitted an economic autarchy for this space, which reminded us about Julliard's "auto-sufficiency", that it is considerate to be enough for the existence of a geographical region.

The last part of this process of individualization the Romanian character of Țara Beiușului was the cultural element. As it was also normal, at a cultural level, the individualization had manifested from the beginning of the 18th century, at the same time with the appearance of the first schools of Romanian Language, along with the churches. The establishment of Beiuș Gymnasium in 1828 by Samuil Vulcan Bishop represented the beginning of a long process for the Romanian intellectuality, and all of this took part later in the fight for our national liberation.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, we consider that it was clearly demonstrated the role of the human factor in the individualisation of this space as a specific region, namely "Țara", in which the preservation of the Romanian elements was maintained at all levels. Although, from the administrative, politic, and judicial point of view, Țara Beiușului does not have any connotation, but its reverberations at a collective conscience level are still very strong and they include it in the category of mental spaces.

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