

The Impact of Politicking in Solving Administrative Problems: the Territorial-Administrative Reorganization of Cetatea Alba County (1939)

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Abstract

Relevance. The problem of effective territorial organization of subnational public power is a particularly important one for the social and economic development of contemporary states. Knowing the evolution of the territorial-administrative delimitation of a subnational territorial collectivity is relevant for establishing its current territorial dimension.

The purpose of the paper is to examine the impact of politicking on the decisions regarding the territorial organization of subnational public authorities in the interwar period by studying a concrete case - the modification of the territorial-administrative delimitation of Cetatea Alba County (the current administrative entity of Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, Odesa region) in 1939, when it was part of the Dniester Land, Romania.

Results. By the Administrative law of 1938, the position of sub-prefect was abolished. That is why in the budget of the Ministry of the Interior for the period 1939/1940, the positions of the former sub-prefects could no longer be included. In order to solve the problem, the political decision-makers entered in the budget 71 positions of praetors with the salaries of the former sub-prefects.

As a result, the decision was made to create in each county a new constituency with a smaller area and with the preferred residence in the capital of the county so that these new praetors can be, in case of need, also the deputies of the prefects.

The public authorities of Cetatea Alba County performed this decision and created a new territorial constituency (plasa) – Bairamcea, with the residence in the commune with the same name.

Conclusions. Often, decisions regarding the establishment of the territorial dimensions of subnational territorial collectivities are influenced not only by objective realities and conditions but also by subjective factors such as, for example, the phenomenon of politicking. Politicking left a deep mark on the political and socio-economic development of interwar Romania, influencing important political decisions, with a major impact on the country's development.

Keywords: politicking, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, Cetatea Alba County, Dniester Land, territorial organization, territorial collectivity

Вплив політиканства на вирішення адміністративних проблем: територіально-адміністративна реорганізація повіту Четатя Алба (1939)

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Анотація

Актуальність. Проблема ефективної територіальної організації субнаціональної публічної влади є особливо актуальною для соціально-економічного розвитку сучасних держав. Знання еволюції територіально-адміністративного розмежування субнаціонального територіального утворення є актуальним для встановлення його поточного територіального виміру.

Метою дослідження було вивчити вплив політиканства на рішення щодо територіальної організації субнаціональних органів публічної влади в міжвоєнний період шляхом вивчення конкретного випадку – зміни територіально-адміністративного розмежування повіту Четатя-Алба (сучасна Білгород-Дністровська адміністративна одиниця, Одеська область) у 1939 році, коли він входив до складу румунського подністров'я.

Результати. Адміністративним законом від 1938 року посаду підпрефекта було скасовано. Тому в бюджеті Міністерства внутрішніх справ на період 1939/1940 роках посади колишніх підпрефектів вже не могли бути включені.

Щоб вирішити проблему, політичні діячі зарахували до бюджету 71 посаду преторів із зарплатою колишніх підпрефектів. У результаті було прийнято рішення створити новий округ з меншою територією в кожному повіті для забезпечення їх посадами. Органи державної влади повіту Четатя-Алба виконали це рішення і створили новий територіальний округ (пласа) - Байрамча з резиденцією в однойменному населеному пункті.

Висновки. Часто на рішення щодо встановлення територіальних розмірів субнаціональних територіальних утворень впливають не лише об'єктивні реалії та умови, а й суб'єктивні чинники, такі як, наприклад, явище політиканства. Політиканство залишило глибокий слід у політичному та соціально-економічному розвитку міжвоєнної Румунії, вплинувши на важливі політичні рішення, з великим впливом на розвиток країни.

Ключові слова: політиканство, Білгород-Дністровський, Cetatea Alba County, Дністровська земля, територіальний устрій, територіальна сукупність

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Introduction

The problem of effective territorial organization of subnational public power is extremely important for the social and economic development of contemporary democracies. The political decision-makers, in the process of drawing up and adopting decisions regarding the establishment of territorial boundaries for subnational territorial collectivities, must take into account the economic, social, political, administrative and cultural factors that influence the development of the said society at that particular stage in time.

Many times, these decisions are influenced not only by objective realities and conditions but also by subjective factors such as, for example, the phenomenon of politicking. Politicking has left a deep mark on the political and socio-economic development of interwar Romania, influencing important political decisions, with a major impact on the country's development.

The purpose of the research.

In this paper, I examined a concrete case regarding the impact of politicisation on the decisions regarding the territorial organization of subnational public authorities in the interwar period - the case of the change in the territorial-administrative delimitation of the Cetatea Albă County, which was part of the Dniester Land in 1939.

The investigation methodology had as epistemological support the scientific knowledge of the phenomenon of politicking in the administrative life of interwar Romania and the impact it had on the territorial organization of the subnational public administration. The objective of the paper is to elucidate how a political decision can unjustifiably change the territorial organization of subnational territorial collectivities on the example of Cetatea Albă County, a component part of the "Dniester" Land. In the process of achieving the objective of the paper there were used several scientific research methods, relevant for conducting the investigation of the researched problem. The interdisciplinary approach constituted a defining element of the investigation process, involving the integration of different fields of social sciences, allowing mutual methodological and conceptual influences. The empirical part of scientific investigations presents the qualitative analysis of the available data: a) documents and reports issued by competent institutions and authorities, and b) scientific publications that directly or tangentially studied the researched problem.

Research results.

Politicking in interwar Romania.

The phenomenon of politicking was and is a present factor in Romania's political life. Political parties, engaged in the struggle to take and maintain the power, place a high stake on the possibility of making appointments to public authorities, both at the national and local levels, this being one of the best means of mobilizing their militants and supporters. The higher the level of poverty in the social environment, the wider the political clientelism, political doctrines and programs, as

well as "ideal" or "noble" goals having a reduced capacity to engage the impoverished population in the party activities. Considering this situation, Romanian society is in a vicious circle. The excessive politicization of society results in the establishment of an ineffective and corrupt political and administrative system, a fact that contributes to the perpetuation and the deepening of the phenomenon of poverty and, consequently, to the reproduction of the clientelist model (Pepine, 2011).

The phenomenon of politicking has deep roots in Romanian society. There are testimonies in the academic works of the time, in the press of the respective period, in the speeches and public manifestations of the intellectuals of those times about the way in which the respective phenomenon manifested itself in the first half of the 20th century.

In the third edition of the work "Romanian culture and politics" (1904), C. Rădulescu Motru offered the following definition for the phenomenon of politicking: "a kind of political activity, or rather, a skillful practice of political rights, through which some of the citizens of a state tend, and sometimes succeed, to transform public institutions and services, from means for the achievement of the public good, as they should be, into means for the achievement of personal interests" (Radulescu-Motru, 1904, p. III). In the opinion of C. Rădulescu Motru, politicking can have a double origin: it is the product of the degeneration of true politics - "understood and honestly practiced politics", or from a "mismatch between the mechanism of political life and the soul of the People called to practice it". In the first case, the old political activity is "exhausted, ossified, and therefore cannot master the constitutional forms, which, left to themselves, degenerate into a sterile mechanism", and in the second case, the political activity has not yet reached the level of maturity to be able to "animate her external mechanism". In both cases cited, the mechanism substitutes itself to the real political life, losing its "role of being a means for achieving the public good, and is identified with the personal interests of those who claim to be its defenders". And what had been "a means for the elevation of the totality of the people, later becomes a goal, which hides the individual interest" (Radulescu-Motru, 1904, p. IV).

A few years later, the famous scholar and pedagogue Spiru C. Haret, analysing the political life in Romania, stated: "... over time the word politics has deviated from its true meaning and came to mean something completely different than what it was invented for. Today politics is defined as all kinds of means, more or less correct and honest, which are put in motion by the people who are in charge of public affairs, to impose their ideas and, by extension, it is said that in the politics are engaged as well those people who, without any training, without devotion, and without self-sacrifice, consider that the field of labour for the public interests is as proper as any other for the creation of a personal status. But to this kind of activity,

to distinguish it from the other, now is beginning to be given, with a tinge of contempt, the name of politics, and those who practice it are called politicians". In his understanding, "the statesman does politics for whom the strengthening of the political situation or otherwise, of himself or his partisans, comes before his duties to the country and who believes that it is permissible that the party's interests to come before the national ones; one who, devoid of good faith and shame, does not shy about changing his beliefs whenever he has something to gain by doing this. The speculator of the votes is also doing politicisation, whether he is a minister or a simple election agent paid a few lei a day" (Haret, 2010, pp. 31-32).

The professor C. Stere in the *Constitutional Law* course held at the University of Iasi in the 1910-1911 academic year, stated the following regarding the role and place of political parties in Romanian society: "According to the current conception, to the conception that you will find in newspapers, public meetings and conversations, it has come to be that the word party is confused with the idea of a clique, a gang, an association exploiting the advantages of the power. And then the party government paints itself in very dark colours, neglecting all the higher interests of the nation and sacrificing them to the personal interests of a handful of people, who made an association to exploit the advantages of power" (Stere, 2016, p. 331).

Politicization as a phenomenon was also omnipresent in the political life of interwar Romania. In a work of G. Hazu, in which he analysed the phenomenon of politicization associated with feminism, published in 1934, he considered that for the good progress of things "it is absolutely necessary for Romanians to renounce what is called "politics", because "as it is understood and practiced in our country, by parties in electoral overbidding, by those politicians who have connections with the business world and therefore, are under its influence, as well as by all politicians who make politics a lucrative job, it has become a nuisance on the country's head and a danger for its future" (Hazu, 1934, p. 3).

The brief quotes from the works of the intellectuals of the time presented are proof of the fact that in interwar Romania the phenomenon of politicization was the *modus vivendi* of the politicians of that period. I also found the fact that the works and university courses of the cited authors, although they were conceived and developed in the first half of the XX century, have not lost their significance and relevance and many points of view, opinions and ideas expressed are also valid in the present.

The establishment of the regime of monarchical authority and the implementation of "a new and authentic system of administration"

After the coup d'état of February 10, 1938, a regime of monarchical authority was established in Romania, which introduced the state of siege and censorship, political parties were banned and numerous politicians were arrested.

The king announced that he formed a government with people "unchained" from party activity, which "will depoliticize the administrative and economic life of the state, will make the constitutional changes that correspond to the new needs of the country." On February 27, 1938, within a ceremony held at the Royal Palace, in the presence of all members of the government, a new Constitution was promulgated (Scurtu, & Out., 2003, pp. 391-392). Charles II also established a new party, the National Renaissance Front, open to all citizens. All the state officials were obliged to be members of this party in order to keep their positions. This was the first mass party in the history of Romania (Pop, & Bolovan, 2007, p. 603).

In order to strengthen the power of the monarch and his discretionary control over the administrative system, a new administrative law was drafted and adopted, thus accrediting the idea that the elimination of the political factor from the administration, the promotion of values and legality, the prompt and correct resolution of citizens' requests could be achieved only as a result of the implementation of a new and authentic administration system (Scurtu, 2011).

The counties of Romania, according to the new administrative law, published in the Official Gazette no. 187 from August 14, 1938, were grouped in 10 lands (Administrative Law of August 14, 1938, pp. 3772-3801). The lands were regional territorial constituencies, endowed with legal personality and were administered by royal residents, who were assigned wide competences in the following fields: administrative, economic, social and cultural. Each ministry had an external service that worked alongside the royal resident, with the exception of justice, the army, foreign affairs, autonomous public regencies, higher education institutions and commercial administrations (GCSNA, F. 1/1938).

The ten lands were: *Olt*, with the seat in Craiova, comprising 6 counties; *Bucegi*, with the residence in Bucharest, comprising 10 counties; *Marii*, with the residence in Constanta, comprising 4 counties; *Dunarea de Jos*, with the residence in Galati, comprising 10 counties; *Dniester*, with the residence in Chisinau, comprising 4 counties; *Prut*, with the residence in Iasi, comprising 9 counties; *Suceava*, with the residence in Cernauti, comprising 7 counties; *Mures*, with the residence in Alba Iulia, comprising 9 counties; *Somes*, with the residence in Cluj, comprising 7 counties; *Timis*, with the residence in Timisoara, comprising 5 counties (Nistor, 2000, p. 125). Some of the created lands have overlapped to the geographical-historical provinces: Timis – to Banat, Olt – to Oltenia, Suceava – to Bucovina (Cocan, 2010, p. 6). The ten counties of the *Dunarea de Jos* Land included 45 constituencies (plase), 2 municipalities, 8 residence urban communes, 14 non-residence urban communes, 10 suburban communes and 699 rural communes (GCSNA, F. 88/1940, p. 14).

The lands created aimed, as far as possible, to unite counties located in different provinces. For example, the "Dunarea de Jos" Land comprised ten counties of interwar Romania: eight counties from the Romanian Old Kingdom (Braila, Covurlui, Falcui, Putna, Ramnicu-Sarat, Tecuci, Tulcea, Tutova) and two from Bessarabia (Cahul and Ismail).

An exception, in this sense, was the Dniester Land, which included only four Bessarabian counties: Cetatea-Alba, Lapusna, Orhei, Tighina (GCSNA, F. 88/1940, p. 14). Dinu Simian, former undersecretary of state, was appointed as royal resident of the Dniester Land, by royal decree, for a period of 6 years (Royal Decree No. 2.920 of August 13, 1938), and Gheorghe Glod was also appointed as general secretary of the Land, by royal decree who, at the time of his appointment, held the positions of general administrative inspector in the Ministry of Justice and temporary adviser to the Legislative Council (Royal Decree No. 2.931 of August 13, 1938).

Territorial-administrative resizing of Cetatea Alba County in 1939

To exemplify the statement regarding the scope of the phenomenon of politicization in interwar Romania, I present an episode related to the territorial reorganization of the counties in Romania through the creation, in 1939, of an additional constituency in each county. The case of Cetatea Alba County which was part of the Dniester Land will be elucidated.

On April 1, 1939, the Directorate of the State Administration of the Ministry of Interior issued an address to the Royal Resident of the Dniester Land in which he was informed that according to the provisions of the Administrative Law of 1938, the position of Subprefect has been abolished "it was no longer possible to provide the positions of former subprefects in the Ministry's budget based on the 1939/1940 exercise".

There were registered 71 positions in the budget of praetors with the salaries of the former subprefects so that these persons keep their salaries. These salaries, being considered as personal rights, they could only be paid to the holders, and in case of vacation, "they will be considered as positions of I-st class praetors, with the corresponding salaries fixed by law".

The solution to the created problem was formulated as follows: "a new constituency will be created in each county with a smaller constituency and with the residence preferably in the county's capital so that these new praetors, in case of need, to be also deputy prefects".

The Royal Resident was obliged to present to the Ministry of Interior the decisions regarding the establishment of the new constituencies "as soon as possible" (IMA, Fund. 153, Inv. 1, F. 503, p. 105).

On April 10, 1939, the Local Administration Service of the Dniester Land sent to the prefect of Cetatea Alba County the decision of the Ministry of Interior, the 3981/939 number, by which it was decided to establish one constituency in each county. The Cetatea Alba

Table 1.

Distribution on constituencies of the communes from Arciz, Sarata, Liman and Tuzla constituencies, which will undergo changes through the establishment of a new constituency (Bairamcea, with residence in Bairamcea commune)

No.	The name of the communes that will form the new constituency	The name of the district where the communes come from
ARCIZ CONSTITUENCY with the residence in Arciz commune		
1.	Arciz	Arciz
2.	Arcizul Nou	"
3.	Brieni	"
4.	Burgugi	"
5.	Deljiler	"
6.	Ferșampenuaz - Mare	"
7.	Ferșampenuaz Mic	"
8.	Friedental	"
9.	Denevitz	"
10.	Gnadental	"
11.	Pavlovca	"
12.	Plotzk	"
13.	Selioglu	"
14.	Taşlăc	"
15.	Teplitz	"
BAIRAMCEA CONSTITUENCY with the residence in Bairamcea commune		
1.	Bairamcea	Sarata
2.	Caira	"
3.	Culevcea	"
4.	Chebabcea	Tuzla
5.	Divizia	"
6.	Iaroslava	Sarata
7.	Manăși	Liman
8.	Mansburg	"
9.	Postal	"
10.	Sergheevca	Sarata
11.	Uspenca	"
LIMAN CONSTITUENCY with the residence in Cetatea Albă town		
1.	Băile Bugaz	Liman
2.	Băile Sergheevca	"
3.	Budachi	"
4.	Budachi Cordon	"
5.	Păpușoi	"
6.	Saba Colonie	"
7.	Saba Târg	"
8.	Sofiental	Liman
9.	Turlachi	"
TUZLA CONSTITUENCY with the residence in Tuzla commune		
1.	Burnaz	Tuzla
2.	Martaza	"
3.	Noul Caragaci	"
4.	Sagani	"
5.	Sârăria	"
6.	Tuzla	"
7.	Tropoclo	"
8.	Zolocari	"
9.	Nicolaeni	Liman
SARATA CONSTITUENCY with the residence in Sarata commune		
1.	Acmanghit	Sarata
2.	Camcic	"
3.	Friedensfeld	"
4.	Gnadenfeld	"
5.	I. Gh. Duca	"
6.	Lihtental	"
7.	Mihaileni	"
8.	Nadejdea	"
9.	Plahteevca	"
10.	Sarata	"
11.	Tătărăști	"
12.	Vădeni	Arciz

Source: Ismail Municipal Archive, Fund 153, Inv. 1, F. 503, p. 102.

