

DIMITRIE GUSTI'S "KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION IN THE SERVICE OF THE NATION". BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In the autumn of 1938, King Carol II ratified the Social Service Law proposed by Dimitrie Gusti. The law was the culmination of Dimitrie Gusti's entire activity, as it generalized on a national scale his ideals of raising the Romanian nation through scientific research, raising the self-awareness of Romanians, and training creative elite personalities. Thus, in the autumn of 1939, students from Romanian universities carried out a research and uplifting internship in the villages (where about 80% of the country's population lived). To understand the work, they were to do, D. Gusti published the book "Knowledge and Action in the Service of the Nation"⁴⁶⁵. The book contains the sociological, ethical, and political system that formed the basis of the Law of Social Service together with the main results of the work undertaken by the "Prince Carol" Royal Foundation up to 1939. As then, the book is relevant for young people in Romania who are interested in the development of the country. Also, together with "The Bucharest School of Sociology" (Mircea Vulcănescu) the book represents one of the most comprehensive syntheses of the Romanian sociologist's thinking.

Keywords: Bucharest School of Sociology, Dimitrie Gusti, Social Service Law, social development.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Service Law brought together students from different areas of study, who were not familiar with sociology, not even the whole social science system of D. Gusti. The Gustian social science system, which has in its center the social will concept, was the framework for the three months of work done by these students in 1939 to graduate from university. From this perspective, the book had the function to present in a synthetic way the Gustian's system, offering a justification for Social Service Law and attraction for future activities in Romanian villages. Today, it can have the same function for the public who is interested in understanding of Gustian sociological, political and ethical thinking and mostly for today's students who are looking for ways to develop Romania.

The book takes the form of a collection of articles and speeches of D. Gusti. It has two volumes which are arranged chronologically in three parts, each containing several chapters, entitled: "Principles", "Sociological Knowledge" and "Social

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Action”. At the end is the final form of the Social Services Act, published in the government official gazette. The present review aims to present the book of the Romanian sociologist, but also calls on other authors (Mircea Vulcănescu, Radu Baltasiu) to complete his ideas.

PART ONE. PRINCIPLES

The first chapter aims to set out the basic ideas and principles of Gustian way of nation improvement. Dimitrie Gusti was one of the intellectuals who tried in Romanian interwar historic period to theorize and implement plans for advancing Great Romania along Mihail Manoilescu, Virgil Madgearu, or Constantin Stere⁴⁶⁶. The central idea of the Romanian sociologist was – there is no improvement of the nation without a scientific understanding of its current state through monographic research. He believed that the results of a monograph of the nation offered the elites the possibilities of improving the nation. These possibilities are judged according with the Gustian ideal – the transformation of an individual into a personality who can maximize these possibilities. The nation’s ideals become reality by applying reforms to the nation’s current social reality. Monographic sociology, nation, ethic, and politics are the first concepts with which the book ushers in.

The Nation in Gustian sociology

Since the Gustian intention was to uplift the nation, the book begins with a theoretical framework of the nation concept. From the very first pages, the Romanian sociologist responds indirectly to contemporary critics⁴⁶⁷ who claimed that the science of the nation cannot be a science, in the fullest sense of the word, because it is based on a subjective approach. D. Gusti demonstrates that science is able to serve the nation without losing its objectivity if the researcher is able to distinguish between the judgments of ascertainment, which attempt to find an answer to the question “What is social reality like?” and value judgments (specific to the field of study of ethics) which answer the question “What should social reality be like?”.

“Indeed, the human mind can have two attitudes of knowledge towards social reality:

1. either establishes its current state, seeking to investigate it as it is, in which case it makes findings of fact;

⁴⁶⁶ Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac „Proiecte de modernizare ale României” [“Romania’s modernization projects”] in Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac, *Istoria Socială. Actualitate și Problematică [Social history. Actuality and Problematic]*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2017.

⁴⁶⁷ See „«Naționalismul» sociologiei românești și «empirismul» ei” [“The ‘nationalism’ of Romanian sociology and its ‘empiricism’”] in Anton Golopenția, *Opere Complete [Complete Works]*, Vol. I, *Sociologie [Sociology]*, edition compiled and annotated by prof. dr. Sanda Golopenția, Introductory study by prof. dr. Stefan Costea, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2002, pp. 85–88.

2. either they try to appreciate reality in comparison with the moral ideal, showing how it should be, in which case they work with value judgements”⁴⁶⁸.

Dimitrie Gusti has drawn the lines of a sociology of the nation in accordance with the changing international context after the First World War. After the war, nations from Eastern Europe won the fight with the imperial states. Nations from Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian Empires achieved their independence. In this way, nations became the most complete social unit. A social unit that does not need another unit to manifest itself. The second justification for a science of nations, then, was the emergence of a new form of social unity in Eastern Europe.

“The nation is the only social unit, which is self-sufficient, in the sense that it does not require for its full realization a more comprehensive social unit, being able to create its own world of values, to establish an end in itself and to find the means to achieve it, i.e., the power of organization and progress in its own composition”⁴⁶⁹.

Once Dimitrie Gusti has argued the reasons behind the need for a sociology of the nation, he gives a definition of the nation as follows:

“Nation is a voluntary synthetic creation, a social unit, representing a voluntary system with cosmic, biological and psycho-historical motivation, with social will as the *causa movens* of the nationhood process and with creative manifestations, in the spiritual, economic, juridical and political realms of national life, which form the national culture”⁴⁷⁰.

According to the definition, social will appears as a central concept because the emergence of the nation is closely linked to the degree of social will of its members. Only an ethnic group with social will becomes a nation, a social unit in which common identity becomes a value and an ideal for the action of the members of the unit.

What is the mechanism behind the transformation of individuals will in a social will? The answer lies in the first part of nation definition – “a voluntary synthetic creation”⁴⁷¹. Dimitrie Gusti didn’t mention explicit the mechanism behind, but

⁴⁶⁸ „Într-adevăr mintea omenească poate avea două atitudini de cunoaștere față de realitatea socială:

1. fie că stabilește starea ei la un moment dat, căutând să o cerceteze așa cum este ea, în care caz emite judecăți de constatare;

2. fie că încearcă să aprecieze realitatea în raport cu idealul moral, arătând cum ar trebui ea să fie, în care caz lucrează cu judecăți de valoare”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *Cunoaștere și acțiune în serviciul națiunii [Knowledge and action in the service of the nation]*, The Book of Teams, Bucharest, Royal Cultural Foundation “Prince Charles”, Vol. I, 1939, p. 12.

⁴⁶⁹ „Națiunea este singura unitate socială care își ajunge sieși, în înțelesul că nu cere pentru deplina ei realizare o unitate socială mai cuprinzătoare, fiind în stare să-și creeze o lume proprie de valori, să-și stabilească un scop în sine și să-și afle mijloacele de îndeplinire, adică forța de organizare și propășire în propria ei alcătuire”, in *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁰ „Națiunea este o creație sintetică voluntară, o unitate socială, care reprezintă un sistem voluntar cu motivare cosmică, biologică și psiho-istorică, cu voința socială drept *causa movens* a procesului de naționalizare și cu manifestări creatoare, pe tărâmul sufletesc, economic, juridic și politic al vieții naționale, care formează cultura națională.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Mircea Vulcănescu did. Social will does not result from an arithmetical sum of individuals' will. Only the subordination of individual will to a common ideal transform them into social will (M. Vulcănescu called this process the “socialization of the will”). Ultimately, the process will produce an elite that is empowered by the masses to represent the will of a nation. In a democratic country, the socialization of the will is theoretically done through elections.

“Everything happens as if society were the support of an autonomous will, having, in other words, a personality of its own; the subtle process by which society acquires personality is clarified by the operation of socializing individual wills. This socialization is achieved by subordinating individuals to a common purpose”⁴⁷².

The ideals pursued by the members of a nation are rooted in the collective identity given by the four “frames” (“cadre”). Humans act in a social context, which, according to Dimitrie Gusti, is composed by four elements: biological, geographical, psychological, and historical. The main difference between the perspectives of Dimitrie Gusti and other sociologists (like G. Tarde) upon the social context is the freedom of human beings. The four frames do not causally determine social actions, but condition their existence, because ultimately, social units will act according to their specific social will, which finds in frames motives and potentialities. Frames seem to have two functions in the Gustian system: they are the source of motivation for future actions, and at the same time they are the elements which the “social will” will process to achieve the ideals it sets itself. In the case of a nation, Dimitrie Gusti discovered four frames: cosmological (the shared territory), biological (“unity of race in the nation consciousness”⁴⁷³), psychological (the conscious scale of national identity) and historical (a shared destiny consciousness given by a shared past manifestations).

A nation has a space of manifestation, which can be the territory itself or the territory where the members of a nation are at that moment. For example, in the Balkan Peninsula there are several groups of Romanians called Aromanians, Megleno-Romanians and Istro-Romanians. Their existence can expand the action of the Romanian nation in geographical space. Even though the current studies do not make a clear distinction between races, Gusti's biological framework still has a scientific value. More than an actual common race, nations can have a kin consciousness. And D. Gusti claimed that it is more relevant to the collective identity of a nation than the actual common biological traits of its members. The psychological framework is related to the “state of mind” provided by national identity – the perception of dignity. A nation can have low dignity when it perceives its culture as inferior to others. A historical frame means a nation has its own line of advancement in history,

⁴⁷² „Totul se petrece ca și cum societatea ar fi suportul unei voințe autonome, având, cu alte cuvinte, o personalitate proprie, procesul subtil prin care societatea capătă personalitate e lămurit prin operația socializării voințelor individuale. Această socializare se înfăptuiește prin subordonarea indivizilor unei finalități comune.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Școala Sociologică de la București [Bucharest School of Sociology, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House]*, 1998, p. 52.

⁴⁷³ „În aceeași măsură, trebuie să se dea atenția răsunetului pe care îl are unitatea rasei în conștiința unei națiuni.”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, 1939, Vol. I, p. 11.

or the members of a nation have a common fate. In this sense, all past manifestations of a nation provide the framing for the new ones.

A nation with will manifests itself in four directions: economic, spiritual (art, science, philosophy, and religion), political and juridical. The achievements of its members in these areas compose the national culture. Thus, Gusti corrected the general perception that a nation's culture consists solely of spiritual elements. Romanian sociologist also gives meaning for the concept of nationhood – how a nation converts frames for its own advantage. Of all manifestations, the most important is the spiritual, because it provides the justification for the existence of a nation and involves the creation of ideas (religious, artistic, scientific, and philosophical) that can be of universal value.

“The geographical landscape, the race, the historical past and the collective soul are gradually nationalized, they become instruments for the advancement and affirmation of the nation (...)”⁴⁷⁴.

The Gustian system of social science tackled the nation problem theoretical and methodological. Perceived as a whole, the nation cannot be properly comprehended by what Dimitrie Gusti called the inductive (statistics, folklore, ethnography, and previous monograph conducted – F.L. Pay), and deductive methods (such nation's psychology studies). After a critical analysis of them, the Romanian thinker underline the necessity of a new method for understanding the nation – monography. The main problems noted by D. Gusti in the inductive and deductive methods are the researcher risks many errors of reasoning if he works with second-hand data (as in statistical studies), or if he uses direct but unsystematic or fragmentary data (ethnography or monograph conducted according to F.L. Pay). The Gustian monograph overcomes these difficulties because it succeeds in maintaining the direct observation of the facts with an understanding of the whole that it aims to understand. In simple terms, the Gustian monograph is a sociological method of direct, systematic, and integral observation of society.

“(...) the monograph is the systematic study of social units in precisely defined areas, such as frames and manifestations, using the method of direct (participatory) observation”⁴⁷⁵.

Thus understood, the monograph innovates sociological research by showing the need for studying the social by a multidisciplinary team of researchers for each frame and manifestation coordinated by a sociologist. To produce valid data, each be aware of the conditions required for a monographic observation. This must be: 1)

⁴⁷⁴ „Peisajul geografic, rasa, trecutul istoric și sufletul colectiv se naționalizează treptat, devin instrumente de propășire și afirmare ale națiunii ...”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 1939, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁵ „(...) monografia reprezintă studiul sistematic al unităților sociale pe domenii precis delimitate, de tipul cadrelor și manifestărilor, prin metoda observației directe (participative).”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *Sociologia militans. Introducere în sociologia politică [Sociologia militans. Introduction to political sociology]*, Vol. I., Bucharest, 1934, p. 72, apud Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în Sociologie [Introduction to Sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing house, 2007, p. 455.

honest and objective; 2) insightful; 3) complete; 4) controlled and verified; 5) collective – through the collaboration of specialists; 6) informed and prepared – based on theory and 7) intuitive⁴⁷⁶.

The benefits of monographic research go beyond the scientific aspect. In the case of the students who were to be part of the royal teams in the summer of 1939, Dimitrie Gusti shows that monography also have an educational, cultural, and administrative function. The students had the chance to verify and see on the field the theoretical aspects learned in university. For the state, the monography is the source of cultural pragmatism – the synthetic expression of Govern through science.

“In other words, cultural pragmatism is the synthetic expression of governance through science, i.e., the administration of a community through systematic, verifiable knowledge of society’s needs”⁴⁷⁷.

The sociological studies of villages were viewed by D. Gusti as fundamental for a Cultural State, which is the state that encourages the development of Romanian creation through cultural personalities and with a system of social mobility based on the competence criteria.

“At the individual level, the cultural state is focused on cultural personality, i.e., vocation ... At the level of the social system, the cultural state is therefore centred on the hierarchy of powers, which in turn ensures the just-correct character of governance”⁴⁷⁸.

The sociological monography of the villages was part of a larger plan. Thus, Gusti endeavoured to carry out in four years “the Science of the Nation” – a monographic investigation of all villages (about 15.000), towns and historical regions of Romania, whereas the “Law of Social Service” represented the legal framework for his ambition. As well as students, all Romanian intellectuals would have taken part in research in their country. Gusti also successfully created a system of research centres in each of the historical regions of Greater Romania. These were connected to the main universities in the country (*e.g.*, in Chişinău, Chernivtsi, Timișoara, Iași, Bucharest, etc.). Unfortunately, World War II and the ensuing forced communization stopped short the Romanian sociologist’s progress.

PART TWO. ON SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Dimitrie Gusti discovered a unified system for understanding the society in which all concepts and ideas are linked. We will see how the definition of nation and

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 89–96.

⁴⁷⁷ „Cu alte cuvinte, pragmatismul cultural este expresia sintetică a guvernării prin intermediul științei, adică a administrației unei comunități prin cunoașterea sistematică, verificabilă a nevoilor societății.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁴⁷⁸ „La nivelul insului, statul cultural este concentrat pe *personalitatea culturală*, adică pe *vocație*. (...) La nivelul sistemului social, statul cultural este centrat, deci, pe ierarhia competențelor, care, la rândul ei, asigură caracterul *drept-corect* al guvernării.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 214.

the monographic analysis of society are derived from the Gustian system of social science.

Social will and the Gustian system of social sciences

In the centre of the system is the notion of social will and its dual existence: as something done, finished, and something in process:

“The whole conception is centered on the idea of will and on the double way of its existence as a phenomenon and as a process, as a ready-made act and as a power of act”⁴⁷⁹.

Dimitrie Gusti described this dual existence by “the theory of social circuit”.

“Social reality is made up of a circuit in which half is actual social reality and the other is created through collective knowledge and action based on an ideal”⁴⁸⁰.

If the social will follows an ideal, and this ideal is derived by a value judgement Gusti reaches the conclusion that sociology can’t give alone a whole understanding of society. For this reason, sociology is part of a trio along with politics and ethics, and these three form the Gustian Social sciences system. Ethics makes value judgements about the future action of society, politics discovers the ways through which the ideal comes alive. Sociology offers judgements of ascertainment about the way the society exists in the present and why it is in this way.

Ethics, politics, and sociology aren’t the only parts of the social sciences system. In the late nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century, the world of science had contradictory arguments about the existence of sociology. The main perspectives were: sociology is a synthesis of existent social sciences (economy, anthropology, ethnography etc.) or sociology can’t be a science because its work can be done by the particular social sciences mentioned before. Dimitrie Gusti supported the first argument and demonstrated that sociology has two objects of study: society as a whole and pure sociological fact.

Sociology tries to understand how different social actions (economical, spiritual, political and juridical) have a meaning in the whole system. Dimitrie Gusti showed that sciences alone can’t understand the action of humans without understanding the whole in which people act. Sociology still needs cooperation with sciences. Striving to understand the whole, sociology loses the depth and needs the other sciences to compensate this loss.

“Sociology studies society as a whole in its large articulations, in its nature, functions and overall determinations, but it cannot exhaust this reality down to its smallest

⁴⁷⁹ „Întreaga concepție e centrată pe ideea de voință și pe îndoita modalitate de existență a acesteia ca fenomen și ca proces, ca faptă gata făcută și ca putere făptuitoare.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴⁸⁰ „Realitatea socială este formată dintr-un circuit în care o jumătate «este realitatea socială actuală», iar cealaltă este creată prin cunoaștere și acțiune colectivă în virtutea unui ideal.”, in Radu Baltasiu, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

details, which is why it does not abolish, but rather calls for and makes possible other sciences dedicated to one or another aspect of society”⁴⁸¹.

Dimitrie Gusti shows that sociological, ethical and political study complement each other. Sociology, as detailed in the last sub-chapter, needs ethical and political analysis because people pursue ideals (ethics) and use means (politics) to achieve them. They react to the determinations of the frameworks by a common will directed towards an ideal. Therefore, to explain their actions the sociologist must understand the reasons behind their various choices. Ethical ideals are given a solid ground by sociological analysis and are guarded against becoming utopias. The same with politics which have access to the facts it seeks to change to be effective. From ethical judgements politics understands the ideal it must achieve.

“Ethics cannot establish the social ideal without considering social reality, i.e., sociology, and the means to achieve it, i.e., politics. In the same way, politics cannot establish the means of social achievement without knowledge of the ideal to be achieved and the reality to be reformed, in other words it needs both sociology and ethics. And finally, sociology cannot fully understand the nature of social life unless it considers its voluntary character, the fact that it pursues ends and wields means, which is what ethics and politics in particular study”⁴⁸².

On the phenomenology of society

The object of sociology is “social reality” which is:

“a system of complex parallel manifestations of social units, conditioned by natural and social frames and motivated by social will”⁴⁸³.

Social reality differs from other realities mainly because of social will. Only social will explains why two families, for example, have the same framework, but differ in manifestations. People aren’t robots, who act like the phenomenon of nature by the cause-effect relationship. They have autonomy because social will brings life to humans’ ideas and ideals.

Social will is an abstract concept, in concrete society the sociologist analyses the forms of social units, manifestations, frames, social processes, social tendencies. These will be presented one by one.

⁴⁸¹ „Sociologia studiază societatea ca totalitate în articulațiile ei mari, în natura, funcțiunile și determinările ei de ansamblu, nu poate însă epuiza această realitate până în cele mai mici amănunte, de aceea ea nu desființează, ci dimpotrivă reclamă și face cu puțință celelalte științe dedicate unuia sau altuia din aspectele societății.”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *Cunoaștere și acțiune în serviciul națiunii [Knowledge and action in service of the nation]*, The Book of Teams, Bucharest, Royal Cultural Foundation “Prince Charles”, Vol. II, 1939, p. 30.

⁴⁸² „Etica nu poate stabili idealul social fără să țină seama de realitatea socială, adică de sociologie și de mijloacele care îl pot realiza, adică de politică. Tot așa politica nu poate stabili mijloacele de realizare socială fără cunoașterea idealului de îndeplinit și a realității menită să fie reformată, cu alte cuvinte ea are nevoie atât de sociologie cât și de etică. Și în sfârșit sociologia nu poate înțelege complet natura vieții sociale, dacă nu ține seama de caracterul ei voluntar, de faptul că urmărește scopuri și mănuieste mijloace, întâmplări pe care le studiază în chip special etica și politica.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁸³ „Realitatea socială (...) este un sistem complex de manifestări paralele ale unor unități sociale, condiționate de cadre naturale și sociale și motivate de voința socială.”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., 1938, pp. 33–34.

Social units are active forms of organization of people who share a common identity (soul interdependence, as Dimitrie Gusti called it)⁴⁸⁴. Social units are active forms of organizations of people who share a common identity (soul interdependence, as Dimitrie Gusti called it). According to their autonomy they are divided into self-sufficient social units, such as the nation, and social sub-units, forms of human organizations that need other units to exist⁴⁸⁵. These are distinguished by the type of social will that moves them. There are communities (the individual will is completely subordinate to the social will, *e.g.*, the family)⁴⁸⁶, institutions and groups of people (created by the free will of individuals)⁴⁸⁷. The interaction between the members of these units generates a common will which is manifested economically (for the satisfaction of needs that can be endless needs) and spiritually (religious, artistic, philosophical, and scientific). These manifestations are “constitutive” because they contain the essence of social relations.

“If we look at the matter or content of social relations between people, which in turn constitute the units, *i.e.*, forms of human coexistence, we find that they are always either economic or spiritual in nature”⁴⁸⁸.

However, the constitutive manifestations (economic and cultural) cannot organize by themselves. Therefore, society regulates itself through political and legal manifestations (the “regulative manifestations”). Legal manifestations are made of formal judicial system and informal rules. These are designed to regulate present social activity. Future social activity is regulated by political manifestations, which are composed of all the means used by the social will to achieve its objectives.

Human activity occurs under certain conditions, called “frames” by Dimitrie Gusti. They are of two types: social (historical and psychological) and natural (cosmic and biological). Social frames are “the influence of social facts on society”⁴⁸⁹. The influence of past events on present social reality is the historical framework, and the pressure exerted on members of society by current events is the psychological frame⁴⁹⁰. Any unit exists in a natural context (geographical position, territory, etc.) and has certain biological characteristics (*e.g.*, a certain sex ratio, a different age pyramid).

The continuous updating of frameworks, *i.e.*, the manifestation of social will in the four ways (economic, spiritual, political, and legal) is called a “social process” and can be either short-term or long-term. A long-term social process can develop into a social trend.

⁴⁸⁴ Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., 1939, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁸ „Dacă urmărim materia sau conținutul relațiilor sociale dintre oameni, care la rândul lor constituiesc unitățile, adică formele de conviețuire omenească, vom găsi că ele sunt întotdeauna sau de natură economică sau de natură spirituală.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁹ „Altele reprezintă influența faptelor sociale asupra societății.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

The link between frames and manifestations is not causal. Dimitrie Gusti attaches great importance to social will as it explains the difference between physical and social causation. We have seen above that social will gives a certain autonomy to social units from their social and natural context.

Social determinism and “The Law of sociological parallelism”

Since at the basis of society lies an autonomous force⁴⁹¹ – the social will – the cause-effect relationship in sociology is distinct from that in the natural sciences. Therefore, to understand why people, act, Gusti proposes not to apply the determinism of the natural sciences to sociology. He introduces “the social determinism”, which is twofold: internal (from will) and external (from frames):

“The difference is that in the realm of nature a cause always has the same effect because determinism starts from it alone, whereas in the realm of society a factor favours, therefore makes possible, as a pure condition, a manifestation which has its proper origin in the power of the will. In this way, social causality appears to us to be twofold: internal, originating from the will, and external, originating from its conditions of realization”⁴⁹².

This finding leads to the idea there is no element of society (frames or manifestations) which directly determines another, but any element of reality is a condition for the other, this being called the law of sociological parallelism.

“I even though it necessary to formulate this truth as a principle or a law, which I called *the law of sociological parallelism*. It's a parallelism which consists of three parts. A parallelism between manifestations: they cannot be reduced to one another, as Marxists do, for example, by reducing spiritual, juridical, and political manifestations to economic ones, for in fact they all exist at once and determine one another, being parts of the social whole, of society as a whole. Secondly, a parallelism between frameworks: as we have noted, frameworks do not condition social life separately but all at the same time (...) Finally, thirdly, a parallelism between frameworks and manifestations, which follows from the first two”⁴⁹³.

⁴⁹¹ Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 1939, pp. 51–52.

⁴⁹² „Deosebirea e că în domeniul naturii o cauză are întotdeauna același efect, pentru că determinismul pornește numai din ea, câtă vreme în domeniul societății un factor favorizează, face cu putință deci, ca o pură condiție, o manifestare care își are originea propriu zisă în puterea voinței. În chipul acesta cauzalitatea socială ne apare dublă: lăuntrică, pornită din voință și exterioară, pornită de la condițiile de realizare.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁹³ „Am crezut chiar că e nevoie să formulăm acest adevăr ca un principiu sau ca o lege, pe care am numit-o legea paralelismului sociologic. E vorba de un întreit paralelism. Un paralelism între manifestări: acestea nu pot fi reduse una la alta, cum fac de pildă marxiștii prin reducerea manifestărilor spirituale, juridice și politice la cele economice, căci de fapt toate există deodată și se determină reciproc, fiind părțile componente ale întregului social, ale societății ca totalitate. În al doilea rând un paralelism între cadre: după cum am remarcat cadrele nu condiționează separat viața socială ci toate în același timp ... În sfârșit în al treilea rând, un paralelism între cadre și manifestări, care decurge din primele două.”, in *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

The genesis of society

Sociality – human’s quality of being a social being⁴⁹⁴ – takes on a new perspective in Gustian sociology. Man is social even before he is socialized by his psychological structure. This fact is called “sociological apriorism” and is the basis of the genesis of society. Compared to the surrounding world and the animal world, man has one more feature – he has access to self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is accompanied by affections: self-love, sympathy, and religiosity. The second affect generates the bonds between people and thus the “consciousness of us” or “collective consciousness” emerges. In other words, man’s quality of being a social being arises because of self-consciousness and sympathy. This is the substratum of society.

The bonds between people due to sympathy generate common ideas and the possibility of common actions. But common ideals become reality through the social will, because, Dimitrie Gusti believes, will is “largely self-determining”⁴⁹⁵ force in the universe that does not need a cause to generate it. Without social will, society would have been merely an unfulfilled potential.

“Self-consciousness through one of its fundamental affections, sympathy, creates the power of social life, a power realized through will, which then leads, through its teleological mechanism, to the completion of the elementary unity of life: social unity”⁴⁹⁶.

PART THREE. SOCIAL ACTION

In the third chapter, Dimitrie Gusti focuses on the practical aspects of developing the Romanian villages. The advice for the proper conduct of fieldwork came from the experience of the Bucharest Sociological School, which since 1925 had been organizing sociological monographs in Romanian villages. Since all the work carried out by Dimitrie Gusti was an expression of his own philosophy, it is impossible to understand the plan to develop (“raise”) the villages without describing the links between sociology, ethics, and politics. Thus, we will see that the Social Service Law was more than an act of village upliftment. By bringing students into the service of the peasants, by raising the consciousness of the peasants about their own destiny and by attempting a national monography, the Social Service Law aimed at the upliftment of Romania. Therefore, before writing about the advice and examples by which students were taught to work in the villages, we will describe the theoretical, ethical, and political aspects of Gustian’s thinking.

⁴⁹⁴ Ion Ungureanu, *Paradigme ale cunoașterii societății [Paradigms of Knowledge of Society]*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1990, p. 23.

⁴⁹⁵ Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 1939, pp. 51–52.

⁴⁹⁶ „Conștiința de sine printr-unul din afectele ei fundamentale, simpatia, creează puțința vieții sociale, puțință realizată prin voință, care duce apoi, prin mecanismul ei teleologic, la încheierea unității elementare de viață: unitatea socială.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 52.

As we have seen above, sociology, ethical and political studies are closely intertwined in Gusti's paradigm. Monographic campaigns were the first stage in the work of uplifting the villages, but they would have been worthless without a clear vision of the ethical purpose of the social reform that emerged through the studies. The ethical ideal in Dimitrie Gusti's thinking represents:

“(…) the highest possible ascent, the infinite ascent, an impressive indication of the path to follow”⁴⁹⁷.

Even though he thinks sociologically, Dimitrie Gusti does not give up the individual when he wants to explain society. The ideal of social unity becomes reality through a certain type of individual – the social personality, which develops himself to develop others.

“This development [of individual qualities] must and can take place not so much as a force inimical to society, but as a creative synthesis of a true human personality, which develops its qualities in such a way as to be useful to the collective”⁴⁹⁸.

The ideal for social units is to maximize the potential offered by their frameworks. Hence the organic link between monographic sociology and Ethics. The monograph discovers possibilities that have been actualized through social will, also called “social manifestations”, but also those that have not been actualized but can become reality. To become reality, the common will has to be reoriented towards the discovered possibilities, and those who succeed in this are cultural personalities. For social units aspire to an ideal realized on a smaller scale in the way of being of cultural personalities:

“The maximum personality, which creates culture is, according to D. Gusti, the supreme ideal of individuals as well as of collectivises, to which all their activities must be subordinated”⁴⁹⁹.

Cultural personalities are those members of a social units who choose their actions based on social conscience and the highest ideal. Social conscience makes them sympathetic to the problems of others, and morality broadens their will. In this way, they become aware at the same time of the social frameworks and the “highest form” of future manifestations. These autonomous personalities act vocationally⁵⁰⁰. Mircea Vulcănescu defines this personality as follows:

“The term of this synthesis is personality: the unity of conscious and freely chosen ends and means, combining both affective and intellectual reason in its decisions. Raised, by the gradual lengthening of the will, from the primitive state, in which ends

⁴⁹⁷ „Idealul înseamnă înălțare cât mai sus, ascensiune infinită, o impresionantă indicare a drumului de parcurs.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 52 (note 4).

⁴⁹⁸ „Această dezvoltare trebuie și poate să aibă loc nu atât ca forță dușmană societății, ci ca o sinteză creatoare a unei adevărate personalități umane, care își dezvoltă calitățile, în așa fel ca să le fie utile colectivității.”, in Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 1939, p. 227.

⁴⁹⁹ „Personalitatea maximală, creatoare de cultură este, după Dimitrie Gusti, idealul suprem al indivizilor ca și al colectivităților, căruia trebuie să i se subordoneze toate activitățile acestora.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁵⁰⁰ Radu Baltasiu, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

and means are imposed upon it, to the higher state, in which it chooses its ends and creates its means autonomously, developed through self-knowledge and self-love, enlarged by sympathy for others, to the solidarity of man with the whole world, in the act of religiosity, the autonomous personality, as D. Gusti calls it, is an eternal effort of self-realization”⁵⁰¹.

The work of The Royal Teams in villages

Dimitrie Gusti viewed the uplifting of the village from a cultural perspective. Inspired by the peasant schools set up in the second half of the 19th century by the Danish bishop N.F.S. Grundtvig, the Romanian sociologist tried to create a fertile contact between peasants and culture to develop the villages across all their manifestations. The goal of this contact was to transform the mentality of the village, which meant bringing it closer to the ideal of maximum making use of their context. The passive village was to become an active one, aware of its present and future and eager to “develop to its full capacity”. This transformation was possible thanks to the contact between the villagers and the Royal Teams, which tried, during a period of three months, to raise the social awareness of the villagers, to show them that development is possible.

The uplifting of the village depended on the extent to which the members of the Royal Teams “were elevated in return”. This is why the “Prince Carol” Cultural Foundation organized “schools of equipage” where, in addition to the theoretical aspects of the Gustian system, students were socialized in the spirit of the school, whose model was Dimitrie Gusti, i.e., in the spirit of cultural personalities. In a lecture given at such a school, the Romanian sociologist demonstrated how a member of the royal team should be and behave: to be autonomous⁵⁰², to be aware of his role in the team, to have faith in himself and in the Romanians⁵⁰³ and to remain always active, using his will continuously⁵⁰⁴.

The Royal Teams consisted of students and their tutors who were to draw up a minimal monograph of the village based on census sheets in the first month. The research was carried out in teams (according to settings and events) and observations were verified in common meetings. Over the next two months, the teams acted based on a village needs plan drawn up following the monograph and tried, under specific conditions, to implement it. The monograph and this plan were always revised when new information emerged.

⁵⁰¹ „Termenul acestei sinteze este personalitatea: unitatea de scopuri și mijloace conștiente și liber alese, îmbinând, deopotrivă, motive afective și intelectuale, în hotărârile ei. Ridicată, prin lungirea treptată a voinței, de la starea primitivă, în care scopurile și mijloacele i se impun, la starea superioară, în care-și alege scopurile și-și creează mijloacele în chip autonom, dezvoltată prin cunoașterea și iubirea de sine, lărgită prin simpatia pentru alții, până la solidaritatea omului cu lumea întreagă, în actul religiozității, personalitatea autonomă, așa cum o numește D.Gusti, e un veșnic efort de autorealizare.”, in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁵⁰² Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 1939, pp. 122–123.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Following a statute of the “Prince Carol” Royal Foundation, the students identified the villagers who could become the future cultural personalities of the village and attracted them to the work they were carrying out after the monograph had been drawn up. These villagers were invited to be part of the Cultural Centres. Set up during the monographic campaigns, the Cultural Centres had the function of continuing the work started by the Royal Teams. They were made up of village elites (teachers, priests, civil servants, and peasant representatives) co-opted during the three months and were supported by the Prince Charles Royal Foundation.

The organization of Cultural Centres presents several innovations for the study of social reform. Dimitrie Gusti had implemented a model of “total reform”⁵⁰⁵. Any developing activity in the village was to be carried out simultaneously along four lines associated with the health, economic, soul-spiritual and mind cultures.

“Its [the Cultural Centre’s] programme is to provide every social group with the means of culture. For public health it provides physical education, sports grounds, bathing facilities, medical dispensaries, etc. For the organization of work, it provides agricultural, viticultural, and veterinary education, sets up production and sales cooperatives, provides modern equipment, and builds workshops. For the culture of the soul and intellect, founding school libraries, museums, lecture halls, theatres, etc.”⁵⁰⁶.

Innovation is still relevant today because social reforms address parts of society separately, thus negating the whole. In other words, social reforms do not consider the law of sociological parallelism in their approach to social problems.

The Act of Social Service

The last part of the book presents the reasons behind the Social Service Law, followed by the objects of these laws. In the justifications given for the approval of the Social Service Act there are both aspects and practical activities preceding of the Gustian philosophy. From the chapter is clear that the “Social Service Law” is an extension of the thinking of Gustav, or even the culmination of this thinking, since it has succeeded to generalize on a national scale its own way of development, not only of the village, but of the whole Romanian nation. This law pursued simultaneously:

- 1) to create a national elite formed by cultural personalities and connected to the problems of Romania (whose population was 80% in the villages);

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁵⁰⁶ „Programul său [al Căminului Cultural] consistă în a pune la dispoziția fiecărui grup social mijloacele de cultură. Pentru sănătatea publică vine cu educație fizică, terenuri de sport, instalații de băi, dispensarii, etc. Pentru organizarea muncii, o educație agricolă, viticolă, veterinară, înființări de cooperative de producție și de vânzare, procură instrumente moderne de lucru, construcții de ateliere. Pentru cultura sufletului și a intelectului, fondații de biblioteci școlare, muzee, săli de conferințe, de teatru, etc.”, in *Ibid.*, p. 231.

2) to raise the self-consciousness of the Romanians through the monographic study of the whole nation and through the contact between the Royal Teams with peasants from Romanian villages.

To fulfil these aspirations, the Social Service Law established: (1) a Social Research Institute of Romania, (2) a new form of organization of the village elite – the cultural dormitory, (3) peasant schools to create this elite and (4) a three-month work internship for students in the villages of Romania as a condition for graduation.

The law succeeded in unifying Dimitrie Gusti's major achievements until then: the creation of the Romanian Social Institute, the Seminar of Sociology, the implementation of monographic campaigns (Mircea Vulcănescu)⁵⁰⁷. Students' work in the villages contributed to the creation of cultural personalities (the aim of Gusti's higher education). The activity of the Romanian Social Institute was present in the Social Service Law in the monographic study of the problems faced by the peasants and the organization of the work to solve them at the local level through cultural centres.

MAIN REFLECTIONS

“Knowledge and Action in the Service of the Nation” is a synthesis of Gustian thought applied in various forms up to 1939. The Law of Social Service continues the series of creations that emerged from the sociological, political, and ethical system that came to a halt with the installation of the communist regime in Romania after World War II. The book presents the main ideas of D. Gusti.

- 1) Sociology is to be militant without neglecting its objectivity if the researcher distinguishes between judgments of value and judgments of ascertainment. The scientific products are the source of ethical judgement and social reform (political action);
- 2) The nation is a voluntary creation of people who share a common identity provided by the frames;
- 3) Sociology needs monographic study to fully explain the social action. Without the monographic spirit, it risks becoming one-sided and subject to errors of judgement;
- 4) The individual is social before his socialization, by his psychological structure (“sociological apriorism”). But the driving force of society remains the social will because it is a self-determining force. Put together, the will and self-consciousness confer originality and autonomy to social units.
- 5) Social will exists phenomenologically in the form of social manifestations. Social units actualize part of the frames (potentialities).
- 6) The ideal of individuals and societies is to become a maximum personality, creator of culture.

⁵⁰⁷ Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*

- 7) The Gustian sociological system took shape in the work of village uplifting and guided the actions of the Royal teams during all the years of monographic research.
- 8) The work of uplifting the villages was primarily a cultural activity, having, among others, the scope of developing cultural personalities.
- 9) The Cultural Centre continued the work of the teams and brought together the village's elites to develop the village. The Gustian ethical ideal of maximizing the potentialities is only possible through the social reform produced at the same time in the four cultural directions (health, spirit, soul, and mind).
- 10) The Law of Social Service was the first legal attempt to get to the knowledge of the whole nation at the same time with its righteous development.

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